

Assessment Processes

Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation
Standards Early Interventionists/Early Childhood
Special Educators

4.1



Early Childhood Personnel Center

www.ecpcta.org

Standard 4

Candidates know and understand the purposes of assessment in relation to ethical and legal considerations. Candidates choose developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate tools and methods that are responsive to the characteristics of the young child, family, and program. Using evidence-based practices, candidates develop or select as well as administer informal measures, and select and administer formal measures in partnership with families and other professionals. They analyze, interpret, document, and share assessment information using a strengths-based approach with families and other professionals for eligibility determination, outcome/goal development, planning instruction and intervention, monitoring progress, and reporting.



Component: 4.1

- Candidates understand the purposes of formal and informal assessment, including ethical and legal considerations, and use this information to choose developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate, valid, reliable tools and methods that are responsive to the characteristics of the young child, family, and program.



Objectives

- Describe the legal basis for assessment in Part C and Part B (619).
- Describe ethical principles to guide the assessment process in Part C /Part B (619).
- List the purpose and examples of formal assessment tools used in EI/ECSE.
- List the purpose and examples of informal assessment tools used in EI/ECSE.
- Identify assessment principles and strategies to use when assessing children who are culturally and linguistically diverse.
- Describe how to ensure the assessment process is responsive to the characteristics of the young child, family, and program.

Definitions

- **Assessment:** Gathering quantitative and qualitative information for purposes of educational decision-making
- **Standardized Test:** Reliability established by obtaining an average score of a significantly large number of individuals as a standard of comparison



Legal Basis for Assessment in Part B/619 and Part C of IDEA

- **1975 – PL 94-152:** Education of All Handicapped Children Act
- **1986 – PL 99-457:** Mandated FAPE for 3-5 (Part B/619), incentives for serving infants and toddlers (Part H)
- **1990 – PL 102-119** Reauthorized and extended Part H and amended Part B/619
- **1997 – PL 105-17/IDEA '97** reauthorized IDEA, changed Part H to Part C and strengthened expectations

Non-Discriminatory Practices

- Part C (under 3 years)
 - Native language/other communication mode
 - Administered by qualified personnel
 - No single procedure is sole eligibility criterion
 - Procedures not racially or culturally biased



Non-Discriminatory Practices

Part B (Preschool)

- Native language/other communication mode
- Administered by qualified personnel
- No single procedure is sole eligibility criterion
- Procedures not biased against the disability
- Use of multidisciplinary team, including an expert in suspected disability
- Tests validated for intended use



Types and Purposes of Assessment

In EI/ECSE Practice



Early Childhood Personnel Center

www.ecpcta.org

Formative and Summative Assessment

- Formative assessment:
 - Embedded into intervention/instruction and is ongoing
 - Produces multiple sources of data on a child's progress
- Summative assessment
 - Represents one point in time
 - Produces one source of data on the child's progress



Purposes of Assessment

- Screening
- Diagnosis / Eligibility
- Program Planning
- Monitoring Progress
- Program Evaluation/Accountability



Purposes of Assessment: Screening

- To identify/refer young children needing more comprehensive evaluation
- Most often a questionnaire/checklist e.g., Ages and Stages Questionnaires
- Developmental, autism and sensory screening often done at well-child visits



Screening assessment, continued

- Child Find
 - Mandated – requires states to develop programs for identifying children with delays/disabilities
 - Child Find built into health, educational, and community systems and function as a hub for referral to EI
 - [Learn the Signs, Act Early](#) – a CDC resource

Activity

- What kind of screening tools have you used in your work?
- How have you shared the results of screening assessments with families?
- Discuss the process of referring children and families for evaluation and identify any barriers you have encountered



Evaluation:

Types of Assessment Measures

- Norm-referenced
- Criterion / Curriculum Referenced
- Judgment-Based
- Informal
- Ecological Measures
- Play-Based Measures



Norm-Referenced Measures

- Compare individual performance to that of a representative group
- A summative test: one-time “snapshot”
- Produce standard scores – e.g., DAEYC-2
- To be norm-referenced, norms must be developed specifically for the measure



Uses of Norm-Referenced Measures

- Screening
- Eligibility
- Diagnosis



Limitations of Norm-Referenced Measures

- Does not facilitate a representative performance: strange environment, tasks, evaluators, etc.
- May be culturally biased
- Inappropriate for children with specific disabilities (sensory/physical impairments)
- Norms may not be adequate



Criterion/Curriculum - Referenced Measures

- Based on a specific set of skill objectives
- Performance compared to developmentally-sequenced standard of mastery
- May generate age-equivalent scores
- Provide formative information



Uses of Criterion/ Curriculum - Referenced Measures

- Program Planning
- Monitoring Progress
- Eligibility



Limitations of Criterion/ Curriculum – Referenced Measures

- Sequences may not be relevant to all populations
- May not show interrelatedness of areas of development
- Do not provide a summative “snapshot” from one point in time to another



Discuss

- What examples of Criterion/Curriculum-Based Assessment have you used or observed being used?
- What was the purpose of the assessment?
- How were the results of the assessment used in that instance?



Judgment-Based

- Family and professional perceptions of child status and progress
- Employ rating scales, checklists, structured interviews
- Often used for screening purposes
- Not a direct measure - strength in collective opinions



Uses of Judgment-Based Measures

- Supplements norm- and criterion-referenced measures
- Eligibility, especially for under 3 years “[informed clinical opinion](#)”
- Program planning
- Monitoring progress



Limitations of Judgment-Based

More subjective

- Scale levels mean different things to different people
- Scope of judgment (today vs. last 6 mos.)
- Clarity of item
- Judgment influenced by recent events
- Not easy to demonstrate validity/reliability



Early Childhood Personnel Center

www.ecpcta.org

Ecological Measures

- Characterizes the social and physical qualities of the child's environment
- Transactional view: important to understand access to social interaction and inclusion across contexts
- Can be standardized - e.g., the CLASS assessment



Uses of Ecological Measures

- Program planning
 - Identifies dimensions to improve interactions
- Monitoring progress of the child's social engagement as changes are made
- Program evaluation (pre/post)



Limitations of Ecological Measures

- May require special skills
- May require a non-participant observer
- Same limitations as other types of measures



Play-Based Measures

- Use play as an overarching framework for observing children's developmental capacities
- Support a holistic view of the child's typical behavior in the context of a natural setting
- Include opportunities to observe interactions with parents, caregivers, peers
- Judgment-based, often criterion-referenced, and may include elements of ecological assessment



Informal Measures

- Individualized checklists or rating scales designed to collect data and monitor progress
- Teacher/provider-made
- Informal observation/anecdotal data
- Unstructured interviews with family, early care providers, others
- Collection of individual artifacts/portfolios for the purpose of documentation



Convergent Assessment

A synthesis of information from multiple settings, measures, persons, domains, and occasions

- to produce a valid appraisal of developmental status
- to accomplish the related assessment purposes



Choosing Assessments: LINK Criteria for EI Assessments

- **Authenticity:** Does the assessment focus on actual child behavior in real settings?
- **Convergence:** Does it rely on more than one source of information?
- **Collaboration:** Does it involved cooperation and sharing, especially with parents?



LINK Criteria for EI Assessments, continued

- **Equity:** Does it accommodate special sensory, motor, cultural, or other needs rather than penalize children who have such needs?
- **Sensitivity:** Does it include sufficient items for planning lessons and detecting changes?
- **Congruence:** Was it developed and field-tested with children similar to those being assessed?



Activity

Watch the “[Play-Based Assessment](#)” video below, before discussing the following questions;

- What do you think might be the **purpose**(s) of this assessment?
- What **types** of assessment did you see used here?
- Using the **LINK criteria**, did this assessment process include some or all of these elements?
 - ✓Authenticity – Convergence – Collaboration
 - ✓Equity – Sensitivity - Congruence
- What else might you have wanted to include in this child’s assessment process, or know more about?



Activity



<https://youtu.be/u4kkpwc0zAA>



Early Childhood Personnel Center

www.ecpca.org

Planning Assessment With Linguistically Diverse Families – Asking the Right Questions

- How long has the child been communicating in/exposed to home language?
- Are difficulties present in both languages?
- Are there concerns in multiple settings?
- Will assessment be conducted in both languages? By whom?



Dual Language Learners and Disability

- DLLs with disabilities tend to perform as well if not better on various measures of language and cognitive development than do their peers with disabilities who speak a single language
- Can learn a new or second language successfully
- [Iris Center: Evaluating Dual Language Learners](#)



References and Resources

- Acar, S., & Blasco, P.M. (2018). [Guidelines for Collaborating With Interpreters in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education](#). *Young Exceptional Children*, (21)3, 170-184
- Bagnato, S.J; Neisworth, J.T., Pretti-Frontzak,K. (2010) *LINKing Authentic Assessment and Early Childhood Intervention: Best Measures for Best Practices, 2nd Ed.*



References and Resources

- Cheatham, G.A; Santos, R.M; Kerkutluoglu, A.(2012). [Review of Comparison Studies Investigating Bilingualism and Bilingual Instruction for Students with Disabilities](#). Focus on Exceptional Children, 45(303), 1-12
- [Iris Center: Evaluating Dual Language Learners](#)
- Linder, T. (2000). *Transdisciplinary play-based assessment*. In K. Gitlin-Weiner, A. Sandgrund, & C. Schaefer (Eds.), *Play diagnosis and assessment* (p. 139–166). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.



References and Resources

- McLean, M.E; Wolery, M., Bailey, D.B. (2004). *Assessing Infants and Preschoolers with Special Needs*. Brookes
- Pena, E.D., Halle, T.G., (2011). *Assessing Preschool Dual Language Learners: Traveling a Multiforked Road*. *Child Development Perspectives*, 5(1), 28-32



Disclaimer

This is a product of the Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC) and was made possible by Cooperative Agreement #H325B170008 which is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.



Early Childhood Personnel Center

www.ecpcta.org