

# Assessment Processes

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

4.2



Early Childhood Personnel Center

[www.ecpcta.org](http://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: 4.2

- Candidates develop and administer informal assessments and/or select and use valid, reliable formal assessments using evidence-based practices, including technology, in partnership with families and other professionals.



# Objectives

- Describe the psychometric properties of assessment measures, including types of validity and reliability.
- Identify criteria for selecting and administering formal assessment tools
- Identify criteria for selecting and administering informal assessment methods
- Describe the key elements of an authentic assessment
- Describe the use of technology in the assessment process



# Understanding and Evaluating Assessment Tools: Why Is This Important?

- EI/ECSE professionals **select and evaluate** appropriate assessment measures
- Should **understand limitations** of assessment
- **Cross-disciplinary professionals need a shared understanding** of what assessment results mean, their limitations, and how to explain simply to families



# Formal Assessment Tools in EI/ECSE

- Formal assessment tools used in EI/ECS are not always designed to capture authentic and accurate data about young children's functional competencies in meeting the challenges of real-life routines (Bagnato et al, 2014)



# It's Up to You: Be a Knowledgeable Consumer

(Bagnato et al., 2014)

- Formal assessment tools: Review the evidence base and the user manual
- Determine whether or not assessment content is developmentally appropriate for your purposes and specifically designed, developed, and field validated and/or normed for young children, especially those with disabilities



Early Childhood Personnel Center

[www.ecpcta.org](http://www.ecpcta.org)

# Psychometrics

- Psychometrics: the science of measuring mental capacities and processes



Early Childhood Personnel Center

[www.ecpcta.org](http://www.ecpcta.org)



# Reliability

Reliability: the consistency of assessment tool performance

- Does the assessment consistently measure when repeated:
  - Over time?
  - When given by different people?



# Reliability: A Simple Example

- Measures the same distance each time you walk once around your high school track
  - Measures the same if someone else uses it
  - Other conditions like weather do not change the result



# Four Common Forms of Reliability

- Procedural and scoring reliability
- Test-Retest
- Internal Consistency
- Inter-Rater



# Validity

Validity: the extent to which an assessment tool performs the function for which it was intended

- Does the assessment measure what it is supposed to measure?

# Validity: A Simple Example, Expanded

- Although our pedometer shows reliability, it needs to measure the actual distance correctly
- If it consistently measures our half-mile track as a quarter-mile distance, it is not a valid instrument



# Types of Validity

- Content validity
- Criterion validity
- Construct validity: convergent/discriminative
- Instructional validity
- Social validity/acceptability



# Discussion

- Common item in comprehensive assessments for young children: stacks three blocks
- What kinds of validity may be relevant to consider when a child does or does not perform this task?



# Selecting the Right Assessment Tools





# Formal and Informal Assessments

## Formal

- Norm-referenced
- Criterion/Curriculum-Based
- Rating scales/checklists with age-equivalent or standard scores
- Ecological or play-based tools with age-equivalent or standard scores
- Reliability/validity tested

## Informal

- Individualized data-collection forms
- Individualized rating scales or checklists
- Anecdotal report/portfolio
- Reliability checks with other observers to support accuracy



# Criteria for the Use of Formal Assessment

- Eligibility
- Qualification for new services
- Formal documentation of progress required by educational programs (summative)
- Curriculum-based assessment measures to formally measure progress



# Criteria for the Use of Informal Assessment

- Collect **individualized data** on specific child goals and objectives
- Inform ongoing progress and need for modification
- Monitor fidelity of intervention approach
- Designed by teachers/providers/families
- Implemented across settings and routines

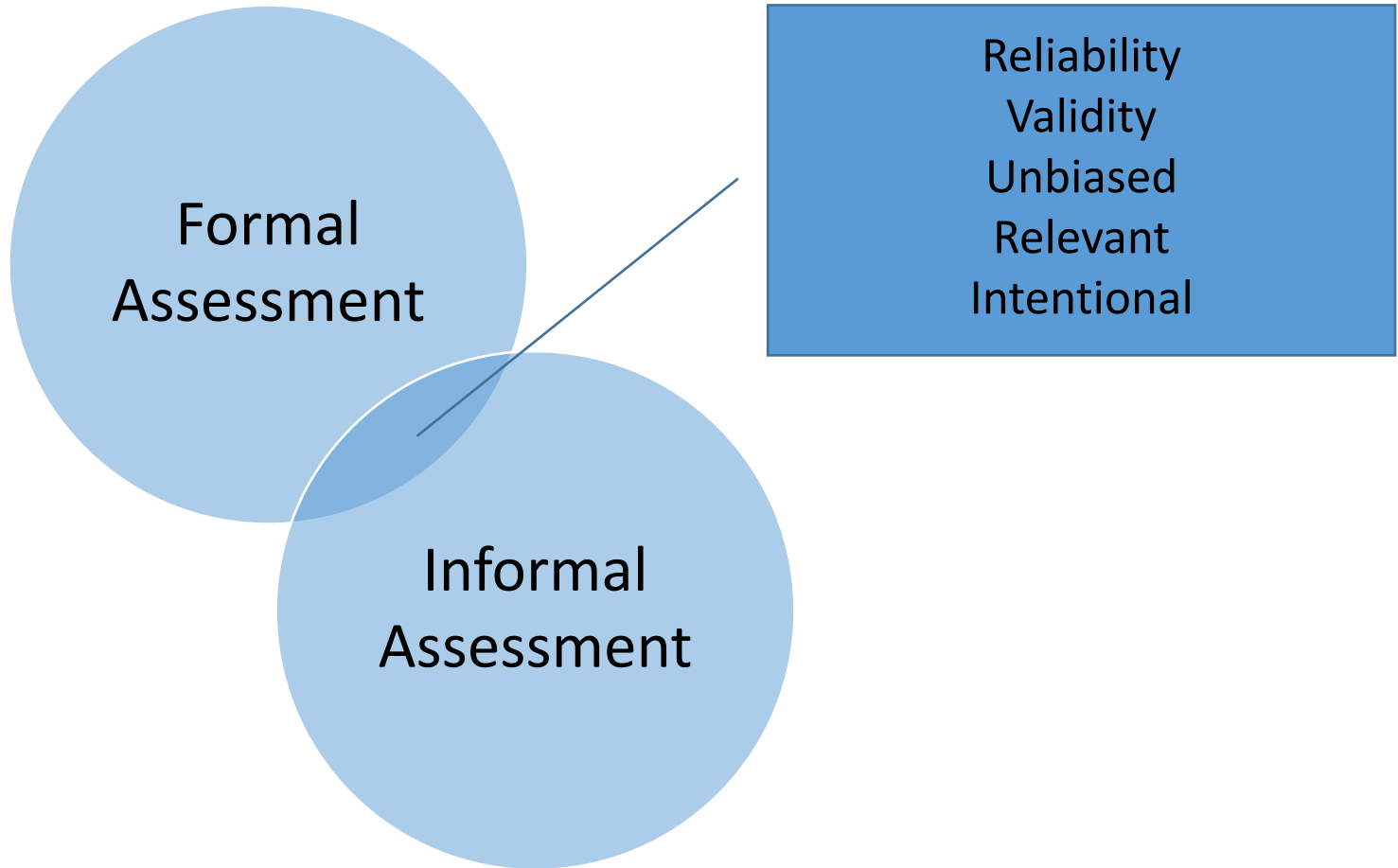


# Informal Data Collection Is Critical to Success!

- Ensures that small but important steps toward success are measured
- Provides valuable feedback to families and providers/teachers
- Makes change visible



# The Overlap



# Using Best Practices: Authentic Assessment

“... the systematic recording of developmental observations over time about the naturally occurring behaviors and functional competencies of young children in daily routines by familiar and knowledgeable caregivers in the child’s life”

*Bagnato, S. J., & Yeh-Ho, H. (2006)*



Early Childhood Personnel Center

[www.ecpcta.org](http://www.ecpcta.org)

# Authentic Assessment: 5 Characteristics

Ongoing

Holistic

Naturalistic

Collaborative

Useful



# Ongoing

- Assessment process continues throughout program planning to document progress, modify intervention plans, and monitor improvement over time





# Holistic

- Inclusive of all developmental domains
- Inclusive of relevant formal academic assessments
- Inclusive of culture and linguistic preferences
- Inclusive of child's strengths and deficits
- Inclusive of medical information



# Naturalistic

Occurs:

- during normal routines and activities
- during play
- in a familiar environment
- with familiar people
- across settings



Early Childhood Personnel Center

[www.ecpcta.org](http://www.ecpcta.org)

# Collaborative

- Recognize family as a reliable and valid source of information
- Recognize role as a team member
- Recognize the need for accommodations and modifications



# Always Include:

- Family's priorities, hopes and dreams for their child
- Relevant information about child's strengths and needs
- Objective information on what is working and not working
- Multiple assessment tools
- Consideration of the need for assistive technology



# Authentic Assessment



<https://youtu.be/CjE3tSxhDDg>



Early Childhood Personnel Center

[www.ecpcta.org](http://www.ecpcta.org)

# Activity

Watch the video on the next slide:

- How might the use of video contribute to the overall reliability, validity, and authenticity of the assessment process?



# Technology: Enhancing Authentic Assessment



<https://youtu.be/uqzOTWJITIU>



Early Childhood Personnel Center

[www.ecpcta.org](http://www.ecpcta.org)

# Resources and References

- Bagnato, S.J; Neisworth, J.T., Pretti-Frontzack,K. (2010) *LINKing Authentic Assessment and Early Childhood Intervention: Best Measures for Best Practices*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.
- Bagnato SJ, Goins DD, Pretti-Frontczak K, Neisworth JT. Authentic Assessment as “Best Practice” for Early Childhood Intervention: National Consumer Social Validity Research. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*. 2014;34(2):116-127. [doi:10.1177/0271121414523652](https://doi.org/10.1177/0271121414523652)
- [Results Matter Video Library](#) – Colorado Department of Education



# Resources and References

- [Standard 4: Assessment Processes | The Early Childhood Personnel Center \(ecpcta.org\)](#)
- McLean, M.E; Wolery, M., Bailey, D.B. (2004).  
*Assessing Infants and Preschoolers with Special Needs.*

# Resources and References

- 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.



# 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](http://www.ecpcta.org)