

# Assessment Process

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

4.3



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# 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: 4.3

- Candidates analyze, interpret, document, and share assessment information using a strengths-based approach with families and other professionals.



# Objectives

- Describe the purpose and content of the strengths-based formal assessment report
- List strengths-based teaming and communication strategies for sharing assessment results with families and other professionals



# Function of Early Intervention Evaluation

- Assess five developmental domains: functioning is examined systematically and comprehensively
- Establish eligibility for services
- Provide baseline for skill attainment over time
- Formulate recommendations for intervention
- Generate short-term goals for intervention planning



# Purpose of Assessment Report/Feedback to Families

- Creates a basis for intervention
- Organizes observations
- Presents, integrates and interprets data
- Creates a record for future reference
- Generates recommendations
- Presents the “big picture”



# Synthesizing and Interpreting Assessment Results

- Results are reported across domains – Interdisciplinary data combined to create a permanent record
- Cross-disciplinary collaboration is needed to create a functional and family-friendly summary report
- High-quality assessment synthesis and reporting necessary for effective IFSP/IEP planning



# Potential Pitfalls

- May create a picture that does not resonate with families: pathology or deficit-based approach
- May not represent an accurate range of child capabilities
- May oversimplify complex information or “pull” for specific services





# Linking Authentic Assessment to Effective Intervention Using:

- Family centered practices
- Strength-based approaches
- Cultural relevance/responsiveness
- Interdisciplinary collaboration/systems focus
- Transdisciplinary collaboration/systems focus



# Family-Centered Practices in Assessment

- Service providers are equal partners, families are experts on their child(ren) and family
- Recommendations align with family concerns and priorities
- Maintain confidentiality and educate parents on their rights within the system
  - [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)
- Use jargon-free and effective communication



# Strength-Based Approach

- Concentrates on the *inherent strengths* of children and their families
- It is a philosophy and a way of viewing children and their families as resourceful, resilient, and self-determined



# Family-Centered and Strength-Based Evaluation Reports: 2 Basic Concepts

- Families need to access and process the information intellectually – **is the information easy to understand?**
- Families are always emotionally invested in the assessment process – **how will families respond?**



# Making Evaluation Summaries Easy To Understand

- Organized by domain rather than by assessment tool
- Jargon-free and functional descriptions of child performance
- Easy-to-read summaries by domain and summative paragraph at the end
- Description objectives - free of opinion/ inferences



# Evaluations Always Include:

- Purpose of assessment
- Methods and procedures used
- Results
- Who contributed to the assessment
- Eligibility determination



# How Will Families Respond? Strengths-Based and Family-Centered Evaluation Summaries

- Presents the child as fundamentally competent
- Delays described from the standpoint of ability
- Intervention presented as a means to promote optimal functioning and inclusion
- Adapted for primary language and culture of family



# Activity: Strength-Based Language

Revise the statements below:

- Carlos' expressive language is deficient
- Sasha has very poor social skills
- James lacks persistence and gave up quickly when making a block tower





# Strength-Based Language

## Revised:

- Carlos uses some gestures, but does not yet use words to communicate his needs and wants
- Sasha loves playing alone, but does not yet demonstrate age-typical social skills
- James benefitted from adult support when he was working on making a block tower



# How Will Families Respond? Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Families

- Perceptions about disability/delay highly personal for all families
- CLD families less likely to engage in EI/ECSE services
- Every culture holds a unique view about typical development
- Communication in family's primary language essential

# Collaborating With Interpreters During Meetings With Families



<https://youtu.be/vp01thQBbeY>



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# IFSP/IEP Planning: Family-Centered Practice

- Listening actively
- Showing empathy
- Respecting family perspectives



# Active Listening

## Furthering response

- “can you tell me more about...”

## Paraphrasing

- “It sounds like you...”

## Responding to affect/emotion

- “I notice that you...”

## Clarifying

- “I’m not sure I understand, can you explain that again?”

## Summarizing

- “So let me make sure I understand...”



# Participatory Practices

- Consistently include families in decision-making process
- Families use data from evaluation and information from all team members to make critical decisions
- When family choices and priorities are valued, both family and child outcomes are enhanced



# Support Family Well-Being

- Acknowledge unique circumstances and changing priorities
- Consider social identities of all kinds
  - Culture, gender, sexuality, SES, marital status, age, neurodiversity/disability
- Acknowledge stressors
  - Trauma, mental health issues, medical conditions



# Using Assessment Results for Planning: Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration With Families

- Making sense of multiple sources of assessment from a range of service providers can be overwhelming to families and challenging for professionals
- During the assessment and planning period, service providers can engage in effective communication to create a **unified plan** about sharing results with families





# Strategies for Effective Collaboration Between Professionals/Families

- Defining roles – Will one provider take the lead?  
How will each provider support the plan?
- Exchanging information – obtaining consent to  
share across Team members

# Strategies for Effective Collaboration Between Professionals/Families

- Communication logs – developed collaboratively, easy to use, private -digital or physical (notebook)
- Planned data-sharing: how will data will be measured and shared?
- Regular meetings with Team/Family



# Activity

Watch the “IFSP Development” video on the next slide before discussing the following questions;

- Was this IFSP meeting conducted using a family-centered approach? Why or why not?
- Did the team employ a strengths-based approach? What examples can you give from the video to support your answer?
- How did this team choose to collaborate in the course of this assessment report?



# Activity: IFSP Development



## Lily's Assessment and IFSP Development

<https://youtu.be/yzIEOuZFao8>



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# Resources and References

- [Standard 4: Assessment Processes | The Early Childhood Personnel Center \(ecpcta.org\)](#)
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# Resources and References

- Towle, P., Farrell, A.F., Vitalone-Raccaro, N. (2008). *Early Intervention Evaluation Reports: Guidelines for Writing User-Friendly and Strength-Based Assessments. Zero to Three*
- Zhang, C., Bennett, T. *Facilitating the Meaningful Participation of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families in the IFSP and IEP Process (2003)*. Focus of Autism and other Developmental Disabilities 18(1) 51-59.



# Disclaimer

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