



# Developmental Outcomes and Assessments for Young Children

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# Overview of Comments

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- Introduction
- General Issues: Why Measure?
- Assessment Instruments: How to Measure
- Assessment Implementation:  
Performing Assessments and Using Results
- Conclusion



# Why Measure? Benefits of Assessment

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- Benefits the child
- Nature of the information, data collection and data use
- Beneficial assessments:
  - Multiple sources, multiple dimensions, administered by highly qualified assessors, and are reliable and valid



# Appropriate Purposes

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- Monitor course of development
- Identify & serve young children at risk
- Identify children & families who need specialized programs & support services
- Communicate about children's progress
- Plan and measure instruction
- Evaluate effectiveness of quality of programs and services in the aggregate



# Proper Role of Child Assessment

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- To see what children can do, inform teaching, benefit the child and family, & relate to what the child is learning
- NOT to label or categorize children, define them as failures, or deprive them of stimulating opportunities



# Proper Role of Child Assessment

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- To inform the overall successes of a program and the learning of each child
- To gather data for a *specific* purpose



# Assessment Instruments: How to Measure

## Direct assessment vs Observation

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- Developmental delays; lack of experience with concepts and language
- To determine an intervention program
- Most young children should NOT be given standardized tests particularly for admission to preschool program or screening to determine moving to the next level or be retained in PK or K.
- The younger the child, the more likely the results of standardized tests are inaccurate.



# Appropriate Assessment Strategies

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- Observation: Primary source
- Basic question: How is this child doing?
- Enable adults to see children in different contexts, the details of children's learning, and better support learners
- Teachers can teach to the child—not to the test



# Appropriate Assessment Strategies

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- Observation
  - Observe all domains of development
  - Use checklists and interviews with children to acquire information about their understanding of concepts and topics
  - Collect samples of children's work to have a longitudinal record of a child's progress



# Assessment Implementation

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- Who should assess children?
  - Early childhood teachers
  - Competence in numerous areas related to assessment so they can find out what children know, can do, and care about



# Assessment Implementation Training Needed in Following Areas

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- Recognizing unethical, illegal, & otherwise inappropriate assessment methods and uses (e.g., confidentiality, unprofessional behavior)
- Choosing and developing appropriate assessment methods (e.g., children's rights, purposes, methods used)
- Using data to make decisions about individual children, curriculum planning, & program improvement (e.g., ongoing)
- Communicating assessment results to various audiences (e.g., documenting children's efforts and progress in ways that are accessible to laypersons)



# Conclusion

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- Teachers are crucial to the assessment process and require appropriate training to be effective.
- Key question: How did the learning activities improve children's learning and life?
- All early childhood assessments should take into account the family, care settings, and cultural contexts of the developing child.
- Optimally, assessments should be carried out within such contexts.