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MEASURING AND REPORTING CHILDREN'S PROGRESS TOWARD IEP GOALS

By Kathleen Trumbull

From the joint position statement of NAEYC and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education:

"Policymakers, the early childhood profession, and other stake holders in young children's lives have a shared responsibility to.... make ethical, appropriate, valid, and reliable assessment a central part of all early childhood programs. To assess young children's strengths, progress, and needs, use assessment methods that are developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, tied to children's daily activities, supported by professional development, inclusive of families, and connected to specific, beneficial purposes: (1) making sound decisions about teaching and learning, (2) identifying significant concerns that may require focused intervention for individual children, and (3) helping programs improve their educational and developmental interventions."

As assessment and progress reporting systems are developed, it is critical to keep in mind that assessment and intervention are cyclical. Assessment information leads directly to planning intervention strategies and curricula. Integrating continuous observation-based

assessment information results in ongoing modification of goals, objectives and, consequently, strategies for working with individual children. This cyclical assessment-intervention process results in a dynamic and responsive approach to working with children and families. (Linder, 1993)

The ultimate goal for children is to be able to function more completely, competently, adaptively, and independently in their natural environments. A developmental approach to assessment incorporates a "whole-child" perspective into the planning process and supports professionals in promoting whatever skills are necessary for children to attain this ultimate goal. When utilizing a developmental approach to assessment, many developmental areas are sampled and child differences are highlighted so that the child's previous performance serves as the baseline for monitoring progress. Developmental assessment demands that professionals monitor children's progress based on past performance as the referent rather than on group norms. (Neisworth and Bagnato, 2000)

Assessment information is best gathered in the child's natural context through observation and systematic documentation of those observations. Longitudinal, repeated assessments assist professionals in examining previous assumptions about children and to modify the ongoing program accordingly. Assessment information should be reported at least every 90 days in a manner that is useful for planning goals and objectives and modifying instructional and therapeutic strategies. A summative annual progress report becomes the basis to modifying the child's IEP goals and plan.

Observation is a method for assessing children that provides a means of monitoring a child's progress without "testing" the child. Several methods for recording observations include:

Anecdotal records: Specific but brief descriptions of children's behavior.

Running records: Observations that keep a record of events as they occur. The time and flow of the activity is critical to the observation. The concept is to record

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everything that takes place.

Event recording: A record of a behavior each time it occurs – the observer selects a specified period of time during the day and a clearly defined behavior is recorded each time the behavior is observed.

Duration recording: The focus is on how long a clearly defined behavior lasts rather than how often it occurs – this method collects information concerning the persistence of behavior, therefore, the definition of the behavior must be very clear about when to start and stop recording.

Work sampling: A method used when the adult is interested in what children produce – the evaluation of these products can include measures of completion, accuracy, number of attempts, creativity, skills, etc.

Checklists: These generate a considerable amount of data each day – some of the data revolves around the skills that children demonstrate, activity preferences and amount of time children engage in activities. Checklists are best used when a great number of behaviors are to be observed.

Professionals analyze the observational data to identify where children are developmentally in comparison to the preschool curriculum and/or identified preschool learning outcomes. Reflection on the progress of each child subsequently helps professionals make decisions that will support each child’s growth and development.

Transdisciplinary Play-Based Intervention; Guidelines for Developing a Meaningful Curriculum for Young Children. Toni W. Linder. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. 1993.

DEC Recommended Practices in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education. Susan Sandall, Mary E. McLean, Barbara J. Smith. Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children. 2000.

CHECK IT OUT!!!

Our newsletter is now available online at our website:

<http://cdd.unm.edu/ec/psn>

This includes an archive of all of our past newsletters as well.



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• **Harriet’s Corner...**from the Special
• Education Bureau, Public Education Department,
• Harriet C. Forman, Preschool Consultant
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Welcome Back! A new year is about to begin, and with it comes the many challenges and rewards of serving children with special needs and their families. Your leadership is so important to your district! We appreciate your hard work.

This summer you should have received a memo from Sam Howarth, State Director of Special Education, clarifying the school district’s responsibility to serve children with disabilities prior to their third birthday. Dated June 30, 2004, the memo indicated that “*A child with a disability who enrolls in the public school’s preschool program and who has his third birthday during a school year may receive special education and related services from the beginning of that school year.*” Children are eligible for service in the public school whether or not they received services from Part C. It is a parental choice where to receive services.

We are working on a side-by-side comparison of Part C and Part B eligibility and services so that you can inform parents of their options and they can choose what is best for their family. There are different eligibility criteria, for example, between Part C and Part B, that could be crucial in the child’s qualifying for services. When that information is compiled, we will distribute it to school districts and early intervention providers.

We hope your transition IEPs are in place and ready for children to start on the first day of school. If you have questions about the lists we sent, please call (505) 827-6462 or email me at hforman@ped.state.nm.us.

Buff up your new shoes! Cut the tags off your new outfits! The school bell’s about to ring! We hope it’s a great year for you!



Classroom Activity

Mr. Munch Mouth

This activity supports a child's ability to make healthy, nutritious food choices.

Materials needed: Plain Styrofoam burger box (approximately 5" X 5"); craft "animal eyes"; markers; cut out, laminated pictures of various foods some nutritious and some high in sugar or salt or caffeine.

Cut two holes in the back of the top of the burger box to fit your index and middle finger into and one hole in the back of the bottom of the burger box to fit your thumb into so you can open and close the box like a puppet with your fingers.

Decorate the box with the craft eyes and markers so that the front of the box looks like a face.

Name the puppet "Mr. Munch Mouth".

Explain to the children that Mr. Munch Mouth eats only foods that are nutritious and help him to grow

healthy. At group time, give each child a food picture. Let the children tell "Mr. Munch Mouth" what they are going to feed him. "Mr. Munch Mouth" either opens his mouth and accepts the food because it is nutritious (i.e., "Thank you. I love milk because it helps me build strong bones and teeth.") or shakes his head "no" and declines it with an explanation (i.e., "I don't eat cake because it has too much sugar and does not help me grow." Or "I don't drink coke because it has caffeine and fills up my tummy so I don't have room for good and nutritious foods.") The group activity will model to the children which foods are nutritious and which foods should be eaten in moderation or not included in one's food choices.

Later children can play this game together. One child can work the puppet's mouth and another child feeds him the cut out pictures of foods. The child feeding the food states what the food is and Mr. Munch Mouth either opens his mouth to "eat" the food or shakes his head "no" and does not open his mouth to eat the food.



Book Review—Basics of Assessment: A Primer for Early Childhood

Educators. Oralie McAfee, Deborah J. Leong, and Elena Bodrova. National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington, DC. 2004.

Webster's defines *primer* as "a small introductory book on a subject" and *Basics of Assessment* is exactly that. Like any good primer, this little book uses clear, non-technical language to explain assessment's purposes, processes, and tools. The book focuses primarily on the assessment of children in typical classroom settings for the purpose of supporting their development and learning. It conveys the many positive things that can happen during, and as a result of, sound, sensitive, systematic assessment of children's development and learning. Classroom vignettes and samples of children's actual work help translate abstract concepts and approaches into experiences you can identify with.

Basics of Assessment doesn't tell you everything you need to know about assessment. Instead, the authors describe the basic concepts and vocabulary of child and classroom-oriented assessment in today's achievement-focused environment. A glossary covers assessment related terms that an early childhood professional is likely to encounter and an extensive reference section provides the reader with lots of options for further professional development.

Professional Development Opportunities:

Check out the early childhood training calendar on the CDD Early Childhood Division website at: <http://cdd.unm.edu/ec/calendar.html>

2004 Annual Southwest Conference on Disability

September 29—October 1, 2004

Wyndham Sunport Hotel, 2910 Yale SE

Albuquerque, NM

For more information: <http://cdd.unm.edu/swconf2004>

PSN Videoconference, October 8 and 29, 2004

IEP Outcomes: Measuring and Reporting Progress

Conference sites: Oct. 8—Las Cruces and Farmington

Oct. 29—Las Vegas, Roswell, and Albuquerque

Call Melanie Barnhart at 505-272-9924 for more information.

2004 NAEYC National Conference

November 10—13, 2004

Anaheim, CA

www.annualconference.naeyc.org

REACH, Telehealth Videoconference

Topic TBD. Presenter: Fletcher Scott, CDD Project SET

Conference sites: Albuquerque, Lordsburg, Las Cruces, and Alamogordo

Call Sandy Heimerl at 505-272-0096 for more information.

More Professional Development Opportunities...

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| REACH Telehealth Videoconference, October 15, 2004 | DEC International Conference |
| Nutrition and Feeding Issues | December 5—8, 2004 |
| Conference sites: Albuquerque, Lordsburg, Las Cruces, Alamogordo | Chicago, IL |
| Call Sandy Heimerl at 505-272-0096 for more information. | www.dec-sped.org |
| Overview of Autism Spectrum Disorder and Techniques for Teaching | Task Analysis & Desensitization |
| October 23, 2004 | November 13, 2004 |
| Presenter: Zoe Migel, LMSW | Presenter: Zoe Migel, LMSW |
| Las Cumbres Learning Services, Espanola | Las Cumbres Learning Services, Espanola |

For more information on these two workshops at Las Cumbres, call Zoe Migel at 505-753-4123.

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