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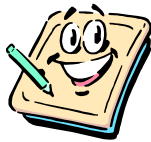
Issue 4

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A Report That Makes Sense

By Kathleen Trumbull



A great deal of effort, expertise, and resources go into a comprehensive child evaluation/assessment. The written evaluation/assessment report should reflect the depth of information gathered during the evaluation/assessment process in such a way as to provide a written portrait of the child to the child's family and the IEP team members. The report should:

- ◇ Provide a written and legal account of the evaluation/assessment processes and procedures;
- ◇ Be written in family-friendly language;
- ◇ Encapsulate the evaluation/assessment information and interpret findings;
- ◇ Function as a reference for intervention decisions; and
- ◇ Provide recommendations about program eligibility.

Rather than layer together findings from various evaluators, the report should be formatted so as to synthesize the information gathered from the multidisciplinary team members. It should provide a clear and comprehensive picture of the child's developmental status as an integrated whole.

Suggested Sections of a Report

Section I: Introduction and Background Information

The purpose of this section is to convey information to help readers gain an orientation to the report and understand the experiences of the child **prior** to the evaluation/assessment process. Information in this section should contain:

- ◇ Demographic information about the child and family;
- ◇ Referral information;
- ◇ Family concerns, priorities, and questions; and
- ◇ Composition of the evaluation team.

This section should also answer the following questions:

- ◇ Who is this child?
- ◇ Who is this child's family?
- ◇ What prompted the assessment?

Section II: Procedures and Tools

This section presents a description of the procedures and tools used to gather the evaluation information. This section is not a presentation of assessment results, scores, or interpretations. Multiple sources, multiple tools, and multiple occasions or settings to obtain a valid appraisal of the child's strengths and needs must be demonstrated in this section.

Section III: Findings

The purpose of this section is to convey information that helps readers understand what the child has accomplished and what the child is ready to learn. Information in this section should answer the following questions:

- ◇ What are this child's developmental and functional abilities in all of the developmental

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domains?

- ◇ What related considerations affect this child's performance? (e.g., cultural/linguistic differences, environmental factors, health/sensory capacities, personality, temperament, etc.)

Section IV: Conclusions and Next Steps

The purpose of this section of the report is to convey to the readers the meaning of the findings and the implications for program planning. This is the closing chapter to the child's story as revealed in the report and needs to provide meaningful guidance to the child's family and service providers. Information in this section should answer the following questions:

- ◇ What do these findings mean for understanding the child's strengths and needs?
- ◇ What next steps might enhance the capacity of the family and other service providers for promoting optimal development for this child?
- ◇ Does the child meet program eligibility requirements?

Remember that although you will provide an eligibility statement, the determination of eligibility is a decision made by the IEP team (6.31.2.10.F NMAC) as a final step in the evaluation process. The role of the written report is to provide data that enables the team to make an informed decision. Your report should not state that a child qualifies for special education. That determination belongs to the team. Instead, you should highlight in your report how the child's performance compares to the criteria associated with potential categories of eligibility.



It is important to back up professional interpretations with supporting assessment data. Technical language and jargon can be a problem. Be careful to state the findings and information in clear terms that can be understood by non-professionals or professionals from different disciplines.

Once generated, evaluation reports should be distributed to the child's family and all IEP team members including the classroom teachers. The

information in the report should guide IEP team members to generate IEP goals and intervention strategies into daily routines and activities, and in making decisions about appropriate service.

New Mexico Guidelines for Early Childhood Assessment Reports provides in-depth information about preparing and writing reports that makes sense. These can be found at the following website: www.ped.state.nm.us/seo/preschool/index.htm. A sample of an assessment report that exemplifies these guidelines can be found on the Preschool Network website at: cdd.unm.edu/ec/PSN/.



LINKing Assessment and Early Intervention: An Authentic Curriculum-Based Approach

Bagnato, S.J., Neisworth, J.T., and Munson, S.M. (1997). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

BOOK REVIEW

Parents and professionals make decisions on the basis of information derived from evaluation and assessment procedures – at least to begin with. When considering the educational and developmental fates of children, a solid basis for making decisions is needed. This book provides information about evaluating children that will assist in bridging the gap between assessment and evaluation and the resulting early intervention planning. The authors provide six standards for developmentally appropriate assessment materials and practices. They then examine an array of curriculum-based assessment instruments, systems, and procedures providing a LINK index to each of the six standards which are used as criterion for their appraisal of the tools.

Anyone looking for appropriate evaluation and assessment measurement procedures can use this guide to analyze and select the best combinations of curriculum-embedded and curriculum-compatible assessment materials to match the idiosyncratic needs of their children and their programs. Moreover, the authors hope that their

(Book Review continued from Page 2)

book will enable professionals to fundamentally change their early childhood assessment practices by adopting observation and evaluation systems that are authentic, curriculum-based, and developmentally appropriate.

You can check this book out from either the Center for Development and Disability's Resource Center, LINC, located on the first floor in the Midtown Center West Building (2300 Menaul NE, Albuquerque) or at one of our satellite libraries located in the Family Resource Center at the University of New Mexico—Taos (115 Civic Plaza Drive.) For library hours or more information, contact Cynthia Suniga, LINC, at (505) 272-0281 or Brandy Corry, UNM-Taos, at (505) 758-1395.

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oung children, especially children with speech delays or impairments, need fun and engaging opportunities to strengthen speech production muscles. Here is an activity that any preschool child, regardless of disability or developmental status, will enjoy. Encourage the children to copy your tongue movements as you tell the story.



MRS. LINGUA

Once upon a time there was a very tidy lady whose name was Mrs. Lingua. Mrs. Lingua was always cleaning her house.

Every morning, even before she had her breakfast, she would wash her house from top to bottom. First, she would wash the ceiling, like this: *(Run your tongue back and forth between the upper teeth and upper lip.)* Then she would wash the walls, like this: *(Run your tongue between the teeth and cheeks on both sides.)*

When the ceiling and walls were very clean, she would wash the floor like this: *(Run your tongue back and forth between the lower teeth and the lower lip.)*

Classroom Activity



Now that her house was all clean, she would go to the basement and wash her clothes. *(Make a washing machine noise by tightening and placing your lower lip over your lower teeth and repeatedly and rapidly placing the top of your tongue against the lower lip and then pulling it away.)* When her clothes were washed, she would take them out in the back yard to hang them out. *(Stick tongue straight out and try to touch it to the top of your nose.)* While she was hanging up her washing, she usually saw her neighbor and when she saw her neighbor, she usually talked and talked. *(Move tongue from side to side.)* When she was through hanging the clothes, she went back into her house, *(bring the tongue back into the mouth)* and shut the door *(close lips)*.

When the washing was done, she had to put away her clothespins, *(place tongue in left cheek)* and then her clothes basket, *(place tongue in right cheek)*.

By this time Mrs. Lingua was very hungry, so she made herself a cup of tea and drank it *(make sipping sounds and then swallow)*. Mrs. Lingua was now so tired that she went right up to bed *(yawn and the pop tongue)* and went to sleep *(place tongue behind upper front teeth)*.



Check it Out—the Preschool Network's website at <http://cdd.unm.edu/ec/psn> for many resources relating to early childhood special education and preschoolers with special needs.



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>

Understanding and Working with Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Sept. 9, 2005 in Silver City, NM and Sept. 22, 2005 in Taos, NM—from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. For further information on registration, fees, and locations, contact Rita Crozier at (505) 272-1852 or (800) 270-1861 or email her at rcrozier@salud.unm.edu.

DEC 2005—21st Annual International Conference on Young Children with Special Needs and Their Families. October 14 and 15, 2005 at the Portland Hilton and Executive Tower, Portland, Oregon. For more information or to register online, go to www.dec-sped.org/annualconference.html.

Social, Sensory, and Behavior in Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorders. October 6, 2005 in Silver City, NM and on October 22, 2005 in Taos, NM—from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. For further information on registration, fees, and locations, contact Rita Crozier at (505) 272-1852 or (800) 270-1861 or email her at rcrozier@salud.unm.edu.

1st Annual New Mexico Interdisciplinary Early Care and Intervention Conference. October 14, 2005 in Albuquerque, NM at the Albuquerque Marriot Pyramid North—from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. For more information on registration and fees, contact Harrie Freedman at (505) 272-0325 or by email at hfreedman@salud.unm.edu.

Assessment, Communication, and Structured Teaching for Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder. November 3, 2005 in Silver City, NM and on November 17, 2005 in Taos, NM—from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. For further information on registration, fees, and locations, contact Rita Crozier at (505) 272-1852 or (800) 270-1861 or email her at rcrozier@salud.unm.edu.

Developing Functional, Routines-Based IEP Goals. November 4, 2005 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Video-conference sites in Las Cruces and Albuquerque. For information on specific locations and registration, contact Melanie Barnhart at the Preschool Network at (505) 272-9924 or by email at mbarnhart@salud.unm.edu.



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