



Best Practices in Early Childhood Assessment

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Objectives

- Describe the relationship between developmental domains and the importance of assessing the “whole child.”
- Describe best practices in early childhood assessment.

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Things Young Children Do



Make a necklace with beads.



Read stories.



Count blocks and write the number.



Use a magnifying glass to investigate.



Interact with peers.



Draw and paint.



Write a story.

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Domains: NAEYC

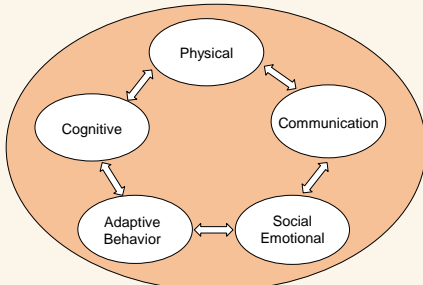
- Physical Development/Health/ Self-Help Skills
- Social-Emotional Development/ Self-Help Skills
- Approaches to Learning
- Cognitive Abilities
- Language

(National Association for the Education of Young Children)
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Domains: IDEA



Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act
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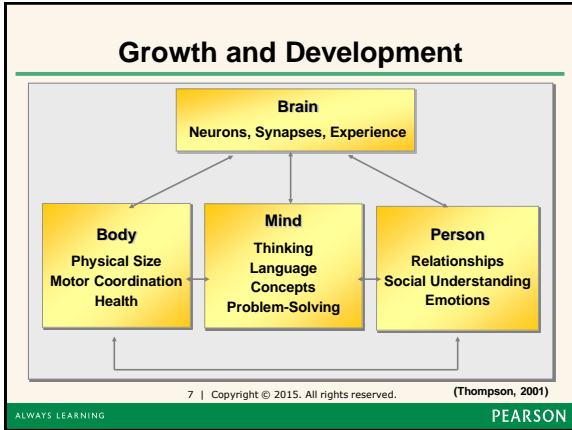
Influences on Development

- What are the factors that facilitate young children’s development of complex behaviors?
- What are the possible developmental outcomes when facilitative factors are absent during a child’s early years?

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Early Childhood

What should we teach children ages birth through age 8?

How will we know if they are developing as expected and learning what we want them to learn?

How will we decide if programs from infancy through primary grades are doing a good job?


(Joint Position Statement NAEYC and NAECS/SDE)


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Assessment Answers Questions

Assessment

 Tool or Process

 Used to answer specific questions about various aspects of children's knowledge, skill, behavior, or personality.

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What is Assessment?

A systematic process for measuring student achievement.

1. Identify learning goals and objectives.
2. Plan and implement learning activities.
3. Use tests and other assessment tools to assess students' learning progress.

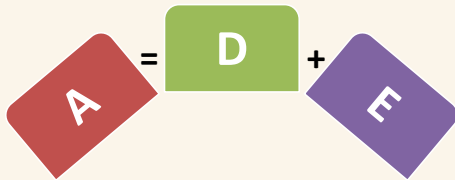
(Linn & Gronlund, 1995)

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What is Assessment?



Assessment = Documentation + Evaluation

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Deciding What to Teach

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Predictors of Later Achievement

Language and Literacy	Mathematics	Social and Emotional and Cognitive Functioning
Vocabulary Knowledge	Knowledge of numbers	Independence
Alphabet Knowledge	Knowledge of number sequence	Responsibility
Phonological Awareness		Self-regulation
		Cooperation

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Top 10 Predictors for Identifying Young Children At Risk – Child/Academic Variables

10. Inability to follow directions (executive functioning)
9. Poor gross motor skills (clumsy)
8. Trouble interacting with peers
7. Late talking
6. Slow vocabulary growth
5. Easily distracted/lack of attention (executive functioning)
4. Articulation difficulties
3. RAN difficulty
2. Poor phonemic awareness
1. Lack of letter naming/math skills

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Social, Emotional, Behavioral Competencies

Across a range of studies, the emotional, social, and behavioral competence of young children (such as higher levels of self-control and lower levels of acting out) predict their academic performance in first grade, over and above their cognitive skills and family backgrounds.

(Raver & Knitzer, 2002)

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Self-Regulation

- The internal mechanism that enables mindful, intentional, and thoughtful behaviors.
- Self-regulation involves:
 - the ability to control one’s impulses and to *stop* doing something.
 - the capacity to *do* something (e.g., awaiting one’s turn).

(Bodrova & Leong, 2008)

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Vocabulary = Critical to Reading

Children learn word meanings through conversations with other people.

- They often hear adults repeat words and use new and interesting words.
- The more words they hear, the more word meanings they learn.

(National Reading Panel Report, 2000)

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Research on Vocabulary (Hart & Risley)



Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children. (1995; 4th printing, January 2003). Brookes Publishing.

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Domains: NAEYC

- Physical Development/Health/ Self-Help Skills
- Social-Emotional Development/ Self-Help Skills
- Approaches to Learning
- Cognitive Abilities
- Language

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Head Start Domains

- Physical Development & Health
- Social & Emotional Development
- Approaches to Learning
- Language Development
- Literacy Knowledge & Skills
- Mathematics Knowledge & Skills

- Science Knowledge & Skills
- Creative Arts Expression
- Logic & Reasoning
- Social Studies Knowledge & Skills
- English Language Development

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Assessing Learning

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The Assessments We Use!

- Fairness
- Multiple Sources of Information
- Familiar Context and Setting
- Continuity

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Position Statements

- NAEYC (2009)
- Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework
- Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
- NASP
- Zero to Three

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Position Statements: Themes

Assessment Measures Should be

- Developmentally Appropriate
- Authentic
- Technically Adequate
- Inclusive of families
- Used to improve instruction
- Guided by ethical principles
- Connected to beneficial purposes
- Culturally/Linguistically Appropriate
- Multi-source, multi-method

Supported by PD

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NAEYC (2003)

Make

ethical appropriate valid reliable

assessment a central part of all early childhood programs.

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Ethical Principles

Young children are not denied opportunities or services.

Use multiple assessments to make decisions about children.

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Appropriate Assessment

Select assessments that are designed for and validated for use with children whose ages, cultures, home languages, socioeconomic status, abilities and disabilities, and other characteristics are similar to those of the children with whom the assessments will be used.

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Who Are We Comparing?

Developing an assessment tool for 4-year-olds.

To whom would you want to compare the performance of a child in preschool?

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Reliability & Validity

- What would you want to know about the test, its items, and its scores?
- What makes a test “good?”

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Reliability & Validity

Think of your car key.

- When you put the key in the ignition, does it start the engine?
- In other words, *does the key do what it's supposed to do?*
- If it does, then the key is *valid*: it starts the engine.



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Reliability & Validity

Think of your car key.

- Does the key start the engine *every time*?
- If it doesn't do the same thing every time, would you think of it as being reliable?
- If it *does* do the same thing every time, then the key is reliable.



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Reliability & Validity

Think of a broken scale, that always reports your weight as 10 pounds less than your actual weight.

If the scale is *always* off by 10 pounds, it *is* reliable.

... BUT ...

If it's always *off* by 10 pounds, it is *not* valid.



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Two Purposes of Assessment

Assessment to support learning and instruction.

Assessment to identify children who may need additional services.

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Selecting Assessments

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Questions about Children

- How much have the students in my Pre-K class learned this month?
- Does Susie have a disability that interferes with learning?
- Has James made progress this month?
- What is Juan's rank relative to the other children in my class?
- Has James mastered the skills that will allow him to be successful in Kindergarten?

Different tools answer different questions.

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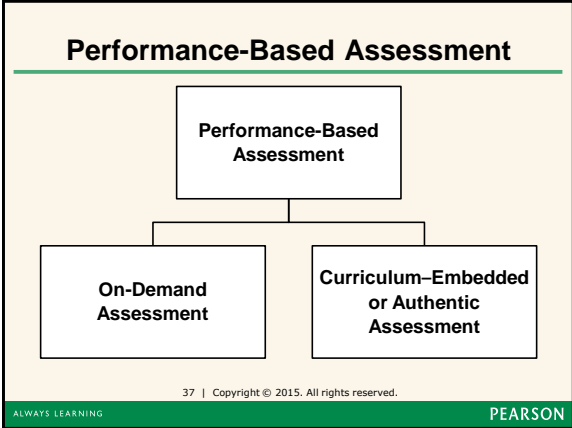
Different Types of Tests

Type of Test	Purpose
Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates child's previous accomplishments.• Compares child's performance to<ul style="list-style-type: none">– the average scores of a comparison group (norm-referenced), or to– clearly defined criteria of performance (performance-based).
Readiness	Identifies a child's knowledge of specific skills and information.
Developmental Screening	Identifies children who may be at risk for school failure and who, therefore, may need early intervention.
Diagnosis	Confirms the presence and extent of a disability.

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Performance-Based Assessment

On-Demand		
Teacher determines when it's time for children to demonstrate their skills and knowledge	Children perform skills or demonstrate concepts on demand	Correct answers or responses may be predetermined

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Performance-Based Assessment

Curriculum-Embedded or Authentic		
Teacher embeds learning opportunities throughout the curriculum and classroom environment	Children engage in classroom activities while teachers and assistants observe and document children's learning	Children engage in and demonstrate learning in different ways

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Are the child's accomplishments
consistent with expectations?

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Examples of Achievement Tests

Tool	Grade/Age	Areas Assessed
AIMSweb Test of Early Literacy	K - 1st gr.	Letter Naming, Letter Sound, Phoneme Segmentation, Nonsense Word
AIMSweb Test of Early Numeracy	K - 1st gr.	Oral Counting, Missing Number, Number Identification, Quantity Discrimination
Kaufman Survey of Early Academic and Language Skills (K-SEALS)	3:0-6:11 yrs.	Expressive, Receptive, Number, Letter & Word
Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement-Second Edition	4:6-25 yrs.	Reading, Mathematics, Written Language, Oral Language
Wechsler Individual Achievement Test-Third Edition	4:0-50:11 yrs.	Reading, Mathematics, Written Language, Listening Comprehension, Oral Expression
Work Sampling System	Pre3-Grade 3	Personal & Social Development, Language & Literacy, Mathematical Thinking, Scientific Thinking, Social Studies, The Arts, Physical Development and Health

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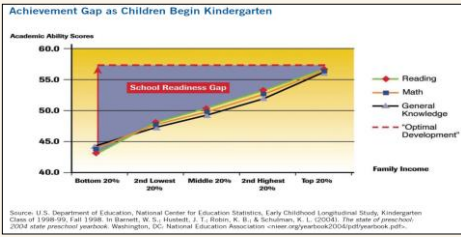


What is the child's knowledge of
readiness skills?

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Kindergarten Readiness



(Klein & Knitzer, 2007)

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Examples of Readiness Tests

Tool	Grade/Age	Areas Assessed
Boehm-3 Preschool	3:0–5:11 yrs.	Basic Concepts
Boehm-3	K–Grade 2	Basic Concepts
Bracken School Readiness Assessment-III	3:0–6:11 yrs.	Early Academic Concepts (colors, letters, numbers/counting, sizes/comparisons, shapes)
Metropolitan School Readiness Test-6th Edition: Level I	PreK–beg K	Literacy Development
Metropolitan School Readiness Test-6th Edition: Level II	Mid, end K–beg Gr 1	Beginning reading and mathematics development

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Is the child at risk for school failure?

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Examples of Developmental Screening Tests

Tool	Grade/Age	Areas Assessed
Behavioral and Emotional Screening System (BASC-2 BESS)	PreK–grade 12	Behavioral and emotional strengths and weaknesses
CELF-5 Screening Test	5:0–21:11 yrs.	Morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics
Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning-Fourth Edition (DIAL-4)	2:6–5:11 yrs.	Motor, Concepts, Language, Self-Help, Social-Emotional
Early Screening Inventory-Revised (ESI-R)	3:0–5:11 yrs.	Visual Motor/Adaptive, Language & Cognition, Gross Motor

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What are the Causes for Persistent Learning Difficulties?
 Does the Child Have a Disability?

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Examples of Tests for Classification and Diagnosis

Cognitive Domain	Grade/Age	Areas Assessed
Differential Ability Scales-Second Edition	2:6– 7:11 yrs.	Verbal Reasoning, Nonverbal Reasoning, Spatial Reasoning, School Readiness, Working Memory, Processing Speed, Special Nonverbal Composite
Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children-Second Edition	3:0–18:0 yrs.	Sequential, Simultaneous, Planning, Learning, Knowledge
Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence-Fourth Edition	2:6–7:7 yrs.	Full Scale IQ, Verbal Comprehension, Visual-Spatial, Fluid Reasoning, Working Memory, Processing Speed

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Examples of Tests for Classification and Diagnosis

Language Domain	Grade/Age	Areas Assessed
Clinical evaluation of Language Fundamentals-Fifth Edition	5:0-21:11 years	Core Lge, Receptive Lge, Expressive Lge, Lge Content, Lge Structure, Lge Memory
Preschool Language Scale-Fifth Edition	Birth-7:11 years	Total Language, Auditory Comprehension, Expressive Communication
Expressive Vocabulary Test-Second Edition (EVT-2)	2:6-90:0+ years	Expressive Vocabulary
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Fourth Edition (PPVT-4)	2:6-90:0+ years	Receptive Vocabulary

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Examples of Tests for Classification and Diagnosis

Tool	Grade/Age	Areas Assessed
Bruininks-Oseretsky Test of Motor Proficiency-Second Edition (BOT-2)	4:0-21:0 yrs.	Fine Motor Precision, Fine Motor Integration, Manual Dexterity, Bilateral Coordination, Balance, Running speed, Upper-Limb Coordination
Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales-Second Edition (Vineland-II)	Birth-90:0 yrs.	Communication, Daily Living Skills, Socialization, Motor, Maladaptive Behavior

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Developing a Comprehensive, Balanced Assessment Program

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Balanced Assessment

... strategic use of formative, interim, and summative measures of student performance in a way that

- addresses immediate student needs,
- informs ongoing instructional adjustments, and
- guides long-term educational improvement.

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Balanced Assessment

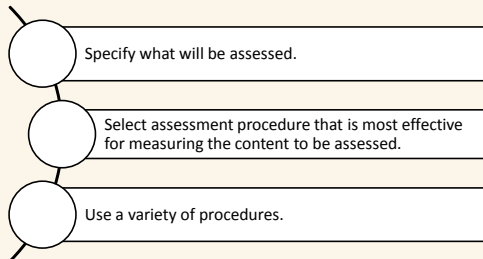
	Formative	Benchmark	Summative
Frequency	Daily/Ongoing	Three times a year	End of year
Purpose	Immediate feedback to students and families	Feedback to teachers and families on student progress	Annual Feedback Is student ready for next grade?
Level	Student-centered	Classroom/school-centered	School/district/state-centered

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In Summary . . .



(Linn & Gronlund, 1995)

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A Balanced Assessment Program

Includes interacting quality assessments and assessment methods that

- inform instruction,
- enhance student learning and engagement, and
- guide continuous educational improvement.

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Selecting Assessments

Tool	Question
Performance-Based Assessment	What are child's previous accomplishments?
School Readiness Assessment	What is child's relative knowledge of specific skills and information?
Developmental Screening	Is the child at risk for school failure?
Norm-referenced Tools	Does the child have a disability? What are the causes for persistent learning difficulties?

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Selecting Assessments

Fairness

Multiple Sources of Information

Familiar Context and Setting

Continuity

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Resources

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Gentile, L. (2011). The Oral Language Acquisition Inventory-Second Edition. Minneapolis, MN: Pearson.

Klein, L., & Knitzer, J. (2007). Promoting effective early learning: What every policymaker and educator should know. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University.

Linn, R. L., & Gronlund, N. E. (1995). Measurement and assessment in teaching. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Merrill.

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Resources

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Comments and Questions

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