



## NATIONAL CENTER ON

## Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning



### Disabilities Services Newsletter

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## Ongoing Child Assessment to Support Learning

Assessments help to guide the development of goals and to monitor children's progress. They also help to individualize teaching practices and home visiting strategies, and to measure child outcomes. In this issue, learn more about how to use the assessment process to gather information for making decisions and informing interventions. This is a critical component of services for young children who have or are suspected of developmental delays or disabilities and their families.

### Read About It



*Ayala, a little girl in Ms. James's Head Start classroom, was recently found eligible for IDEA services because of a language delay. Ms. James has the results of the assessment she completed on Ayala, but wants to learn more about supporting her language development while waiting for the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting to be held and goals developed. As a first step, she met with Ayala's parents to find out more about her language use at home, and now wants to gather more information about Ayala's language in the classroom. Ms. James asked the disabilities coordinator for help in*

*figuring out her next steps. The disabilities coordinator set up a time to observe in the classroom and meet with Ms. James.*

#### Using the ELOF to Inform Assessment

In Head Start programs, child assessment instruments must be aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five (ELOF). This implementation guide includes information on aligning child assessment instruments with the ELOF. Learn more about making informed decisions about keeping, supplementing, or replacing an assessment instrument. Find guidance on the considerations for selecting assessment instruments for children with disabilities.

#### Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices: Assessment

The DEC Recommended Practices on assessment provide practices that teachers, home visitors, coordinators, and other caregivers can use to improve learning outcomes. These practices also promote the development of young children who have or are suspected of developmental delays or disabilities. Whether concerns focus on

general development or on a specific area like language or motor skills, assessment is key. It can be used to inform planning, decision-making, individualizing interventions, and monitoring children's progress. Use of the ELOF to inform assessment can be valuable. The developmental progressions and indicators in the outcome domains can be used to help ensure that all aspects of development are addressed. They also help ensure that appropriate assessment materials and strategies are used.

Examples of the assessment practices that the disabilities coordinator and education staff like Ms. James can draw on to support a child like Ayala are:

- Work as a team with the family and other professionals to gather information
- Use materials and strategies that are appropriate for the child's age and level of development, and accommodate the child's sensory, physical, communication, cultural, linguistic, social, and emotional characteristics
- Use a variety of methods, including observation and interviews, to gather information from multiple sources, including the child's family and other significant individuals in the child's life
- Obtain information about the child's skills in daily activities, routines, and environments such as home, center, and community

## Take a Look

### **Assessment Practice Guides for Practitioners: Authentic Child Assessment**

Authentic child assessment includes methods and strategies to identify the contexts and adult behaviors that best promote a child's participation and learning. In this practice guide, education staff like Ms. James can explore how to observe children's engagement in everyday activities and the learning opportunities that occur in these activities. Discover children's strengths and abilities and ways to support a child's participation and learning. Find downloadable materials for practitioners, helpful video examples, and more resources.

### **Ongoing Child Assessment**

Review these 15-minute In-service Suites on Ongoing Child Assessment. The series includes Preparing for Assessment, Collecting and Using Information, Interpreting Information, and Strengthening Your Program. The In-service Suites provide tips, tools, and resources for teachers and supervisors. They also provide information that both the disabilities coordinator and Ms. James could use to inform planning for Ayala. See the next two resources, below, for more detailed information about two of the suites.

## Try It Out

### **Using Checklists**

In this In-service Suite, learn simple ways teachers like Ms. James can develop and use checklists to collect data on child progress. Find tips, tools, and resources for teachers and supervisors including the **Skill Assessment Checklist**. Ms. James could use the Skill Assessment Checklist to document Ayala's progress on specific skills like expressive language. Try out the checklist in your classroom. An example is provided, as well as a blank copy of the Skill Assessment Checklist for your own use. Also, find materials for trainers.

## Improve Your Practice

### **Planning for Assessment**

Explore this In-service Suite to find out how teachers can plan for conducting ongoing assessment of children's learning in the preschool classroom. Use the Assessment Tracking Chart to keep track of the assessment information you collect in your classroom. There are tips, tools, and resources for teachers, supervisors, and trainers.

### **Family Engagement and Ongoing Child Assessment**

Use this set of guides to explore strategies for sharing child assessment information with parents. Consider the responsibilities and perspectives of parents and program staff related to sharing information. Find ways for

programs to partner with families to support children's learning and to enhance the relationships between staff and families. This resource is intended for the entire Head Start and Early Head Start community and professionals in the early childhood field.

## Families, Too!

### **Practice Guides for Families: Participating on My Child's Assessment Team**

Share this one-page guide with family members to prepare them for their child's assessment. Each guide includes tips for implementing practices, an example of what the practice looks like, how to know it is working, and a video example. Find links to resources where families can learn more about assessment.

*Note: The resources provided are only a sampling of the resources available on these practices.*

## Ongoing Features

### **Free Access to a Specially Selected Article from Young Exceptional Children (YEC)**

Read the YEC article, [In the Eyes of the Beholder: Cultural Considerations in Interpreting Children's Behaviors](#). It is available to readers of this newsletter until Nov. 30, 2017.

### **Head Start Disability/Inclusion Network**

Engage with the Head Start disability/inclusion community around the country in an online community hosted on the MyPeers platform. Our community currently has more than 1,000 members who are sharing resources, engaging in conversations, and asking questions. [Register now](#) as a member of MyPeers. If you are already a member of MyPeers, find the Head Start Disability/Inclusion Network community under "All Communities" and select the blue "Join" button.

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## We Want to Hear from You

The Disabilities Services Newsletter is produced monthly by the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning. Submit questions or suggestions for 2017 newsletter topics to [ecdtl@ecetta.info](mailto:ecdtl@ecetta.info).

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Office of Head Start (OHS) | 330 C Street, SW | 4th Floor Mary E. Switzer Building | Washington, DC 20201  
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov> | 1-866-763-6481 | [Contact Us](#)

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