PRESENTER NOTES
CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

This guide offers suggestions for presenting ***Ongoing Child Assessment: Children with Disabilities***. This in-service suite includes a PowerPoint presentation and supporting materials. Please use and adapt these materials as needed for specific audiences.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- PowerPoint presentation (18 slides)
- Projector and audio equipment
- Learning Activities:
  - » *Breaking an IEP Goal into Small Steps*
  - » *Individual Assessment Planning*
  - » *Counting Behaviors* (Video)
  - » *Interpreting Data*
  - » *Teacher–Specialist Collaboration*
- Tips for Teachers
- Tools for Teachers
  - » *Assessment Planning Matrix*
  - » *Decision-Making Chart*
- Tools for Supervisors
  - » *Assessment Practices Observation Form*
  - » *Guide for Supporting Teachers: Making Decisions to Adjust Teaching*
- Helpful Resources
- Flip chart or similar large paper, and markers for writing participant ideas

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- The purpose of this presentation is to provide participants with information on how to use ongoing assessment to provide quality teaching and learning for children with disabilities.
- This is one in a series of in-service suites regarding ongoing child assessment.
- Consider reviewing other in-service suites about ongoing child assessment that provide additional information on related topics (planning for assessment, data collection methods, etc.).
- Learning activities offer practice opportunities for participants to plan for assessment, break goals down into smaller parts, and collaborate with specialists around ongoing child assessment.
- Consider potential follow-up activities and bring appropriate materials (journals, postcards, etc.).

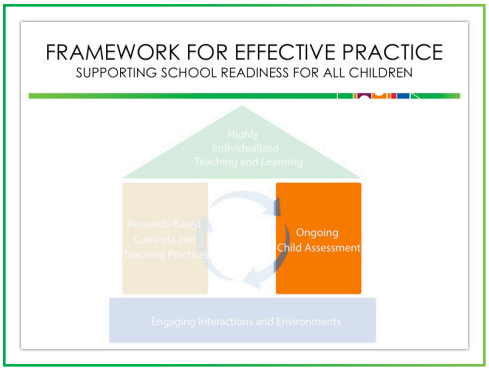
SLIDE 1:
ONGOING CHILD ASSESSMENT: CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Introductions:

- Begin the training by giving participants background information on yourself.
- Provide an opportunity for participants to introduce themselves.
- Conduct an icebreaker activity to promote participation.

Examples:

- Ask participants to share a favorite experience about a child in their classroom who has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) (a behavior that surprised them, a skill that exceeded expectations, a funny anecdote, getting to know a family, etc.).
- Ask participants to think of a challenge they set for themselves and share how they kept track of progress toward their goal.



EMPHASIZE

Using ongoing child assessment to inform teaching helps teachers better prepare children with disabilities for kindergarten.

SLIDE 2:
NCQTL'S FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE EVERYDAY PRACTICE

Introduce NCQTL.

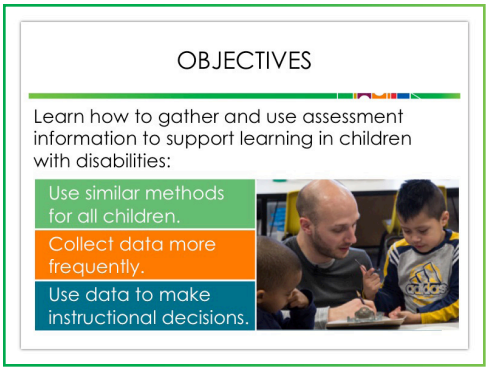
The four components of the House Framework support school readiness for all children:

- The foundation represents effective and engaging interactions and environments.
- The pillars represent research-based curricula and teaching practices, and ongoing child assessment.
- The roof represents highly individualized teaching and learning.
- All four components interact with each other and are essential to effective practices.

This in-service suite fits into the *Ongoing Child Assessment* pillar of the House. Regular assessments of children's progress are instrumental in supporting school readiness for all children. This presentation focuses on using ongoing, intentional child assessment, sometimes with modifications, to provide quality teaching and learning for children with disabilities.

NOTE

Remind participants that any record of child progress (including video, work samples, and photographs) must be treated consistent with their program's record-keeping policies, especially in regards to ensuring appropriate confidentiality of information.



EMPHASIZE

Data collection methods work for all children, including those with disabilities.

SLIDE 3: OBJECTIVES

Acknowledge that children with IEPs or Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) are in Head Start Programs. Head Start regulations specify that at least 10% of the children enrolled in Head Start programs must be children with disabilities. As a result of this regulation, Head Start teachers have children with disabilities in their classrooms.

How can you use assessment in your classroom with children who have disabilities?

As with all children, you do this by purposefully watching them during everyday activities in your classroom to track how much they are learning. Then you use this assessment information to adjust your teaching by making use of research-based curricula and teaching practices.

Children with disabilities may require more specific teaching strategies, and more frequent and precise ongoing assessment to monitor their learning needs.

Three key messages:

- Commonly used information gathering methods work for all children.
- Collect data more frequently on individual goals or objectives.
- Use the data to make informed decisions and individualize lessons and learning activities.

NOTE

If applicable, mention to participants that other in-service suites about ongoing child assessment provide further details about planning for assessment, methods of gathering information, interpreting data, and partnering with families.

Length of video: Approximately 4 minutes

SLIDE 4:
VIDEO: STRATEGIES FOR ALL CHILDREN

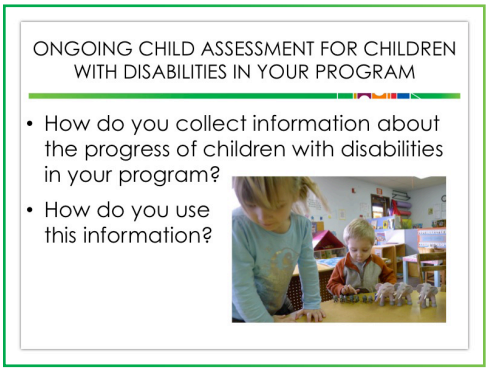
Introduce the video.

This is a video about teaching children with disabilities in the classroom. ECE teachers and administrators discuss how they incorporate children's individual goals into lesson plans and how they use ongoing assessment information to monitor children's learning.

VIDEO

Points to highlight from the video:

- Many of the strategies used with all other children are useful for children with disabilities.
- Some specialized strategies are particularly helpful when a child has a disability.
- Teachers and specialists work collaboratively to support the learning and development of children with disabilities.
- The assessment-instructional cycle is used when children's individual goals are incorporated into lesson plans.



SLIDE 5:
ONGOING CHILD ASSESSMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN YOUR PROGRAM

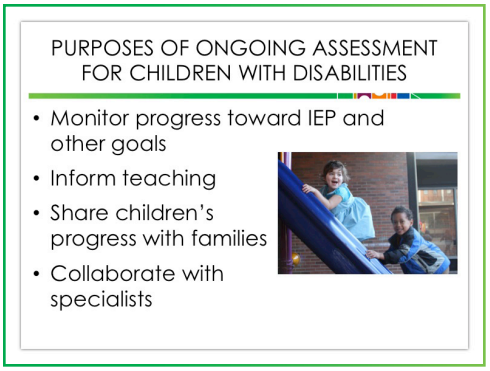
Now that we have heard from some teachers, you can share ideas from your own program:

- How do you currently collect and use ongoing child assessment information in your program for children who have disabilities?
- How do you gather and share information with families?

Take a moment to think about or jot down your answer before we begin sharing.

DISCUSSION

Participants share examples about the use of ongoing child assessment for children in their program who have disabilities.



EMPHASIZE

Data from assessment information helps teachers adjust lessons and activities to meet the special needs of children.

SLIDE 6: PURPOSES OF ONGOING ASSESSMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Here are some of the purposes of ongoing assessment for children with disabilities.

Monitor progress.

Children with disabilities have an IEP, or an IFSP, that identifies goals specifically for each child. Teachers monitor children with IEPs for progress toward their IEP goals, as well as the goals that have been set for all children.

NOTE

Children under age three with disabilities have an IFSP. In a few states, all preschool-age children with disabilities have an IFSP.

Inform teaching.

If assessment shows slow or no progress, teachers can use the data to decide how to change their lessons and activities to help the child. When a child has an IEP, teachers may need to collect assessment information about smaller learning steps, more often, to show progress and inform teaching.

Share with families.

For all children, two-way communication between teachers and families helps provide a comprehensive picture of a child's learning at home and in the classroom. Encourage families to share information about what the child is learning at home and in the community. Communicate information about a child's progress in school in a family-friendly and linguistically responsive way.

Collaborate with specialists.

For children with disabilities, teachers work collaboratively with families and specialists such as early childhood special educators or therapists. Ongoing assessment information is used by teachers and specialists as they work together to help individual children make meaningful progress.

DISCUSSION

Provide examples of how assessment has served some of these purposes based on your own experiences.

Alternately, ask participants to share examples of their own practices in relation to the items listed.

EMPHASIZE *

Collect information on small steps—and frequently.

SLIDE 7:
PLANNING ONGOING ASSESSMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Teachers plan how to gather information about the progress of *all* children in relation to the Head Start Framework and their program's curriculum. As you incorporate a child's IEP goals into your classroom lessons, it is also important to gather information about their progress.

Collect information about small steps.

An IEP contains the annual, individual goals for a specific child. It may or may not include smaller, intermediate objectives or steps that lead to the goal. The teacher, with the help of the specialist, can add smaller, incremental steps, if necessary. The number of steps vary, depending on the child's needs and the nature of the goal.

When IEP goals are broken down into smaller, clearly defined steps, teachers can address learning objectives of a manageable size.

Collect information frequently.

Because children with IEPs often have highly individualized goals and objectives, they may require daily or weekly collection of assessment information. Teachers find it helpful to collect progress information during everyday activities and gather data when several adults are available.

SLIDE 8:
BREAKING DOWN GOALS INTO SMALLER STEPS

A goal can be made easier by specifying smaller amounts of time, or fewer items, people, or locations.

A child can first learn the skill with a small quantity or for a short duration, and progress until the annual goal of a larger quantity or longer duration is achieved. For example, for a goal such as "engages in conversation with others," the first step can be to initiate and maintain one full verbal exchange; the next step can increase the number of consecutive exchanges to two or three.

Another way to make a goal easier is to provide help.

Sometimes children can reach annual goals by first performing a task with a great deal of help. Eventually they can perform the same task independently. For example, a child who describes properties of materials during a science experiment may need a full verbal model to start, then just a verbal cue or encouragement to reach the final goal—being able to offer a description independently.

Complex skills can be broken down into step-by-step, or separate, components.

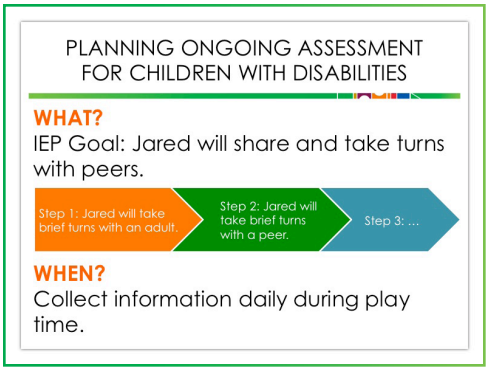
If the goal involves a sequence of steps such as getting dressed, the child might first develop a single skill and then add skills until they can perform the entire task.

Sets of related skills can be sequenced in a logical teaching order from simple to more complex.

For example, to help a child reach a goal of drawing pictures that represent people, a teacher may start by first having a child draw simple shapes (e.g., circle, cross), and then go on to draw increasingly more complex shapes (rectangles, triangles, etc.).

NOTE

For more information on breaking down goals into smaller steps, refer to the *Embedded Teaching and Learning: Breaking Down Goals* in-service suite.



SLIDE 9:
PLANNING ONGOING ASSESSMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Jared's IEP includes a goal to share and take turns with other children. His teacher, Crystal, is helping Jared accomplish smaller learning steps that will lead to this goal. Crystal is teaching Jared to share a toy he is using during play time when an adult asks him for a turn. Once Jared is able to give an adult a turn, Crystal plans to teach him to take turns with a cooperative peer. Crystal continues to track Jared's progress toward his IEP goal by collecting ongoing assessment data on each successive step.

NOTE

Provide additional examples of breaking down goals into smaller steps.

LEARNING ACTIVITY:
BREAKING AN IEP GOAL INTO SMALL STEPS

In this activity, participants practice breaking down an IEP goal into smaller steps.

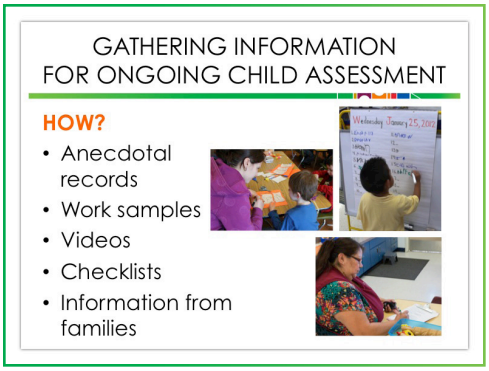
If desired, divide a large group into smaller groups.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Breaking an IEP Goal into Small Steps* learning activity and review directions.

DISCUSSION

If desired, bring small groups together for a whole group discussion.



SLIDE 10:
GATHERING INFORMATION FOR ONGOING CHILD ASSESSMENT

The teaching team uses a number of ways to gather ongoing assessment information for all children. Since the learning goals of children with disabilities are often broken down into smaller steps, assessment information is gathered more frequently and children are monitored closely to see how they are progressing.

Teachers document key information with **anecdotal records** about what they see or hear children doing. Other common strategies are to collect **samples or photos of children's work**, record **videos** of pertinent classroom activities, and use **checklists** to note children's progress in specific skill areas.

Teachers also gather **information about children's development from families.** For example, at daily arrival time, a teacher might ask family members about how a child communicates or plays at home. During a parent-teacher conference, the teacher can learn what the family has observed the child doing at home and in other settings.

LEARNING ACTIVITY:
INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT PLANNING

In this activity, participants practice completing an individual assessment form for planning daily data collection for a child with a disability.

Divide a large group into smaller groups.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Individual Assessment Planning* learning activity and review directions.

DISCUSSION

If desired, bring small groups back together for a whole group discussion.

GATHERING ASSESSMENT INFORMATION FOR A CHILD WITH A DISABILITY

Jared briefly shares a toy he is using during play time when an adult asks him for a turn.	
Monday	- - + +
Tuesday	- + -
Wednesday	+ + - + +
Thursday	+ + + + + +
Friday	+ + +

SLIDE 11:
GATHERING ASSESSMENT INFORMATION FOR A CHILD WITH A DISABILITY

Crystal, Jared's teacher, uses a data collection form to gather information about his progress toward sharing and taking turns. Each time the adult asks Jared for a turn with his toy during play time, the form is marked to show whether Jared gave the adult a brief turn. This daily information about Jared's progress helps inform teaching.

LEARNING ACTIVITY:
COUNTING BEHAVIORS

In this activity, participants practice observing and counting the behaviors of a child who is learning spatial concepts. The video *Counting Behaviors-Spatial Concepts* is found on the additional slide included with this in-service suite. Mention to participants that the assessment and data collection method practiced in this learning activity can be used with all children, including children with disabilities.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Counting Behaviors* (Video) learning activity and review the directions.

VIDEO

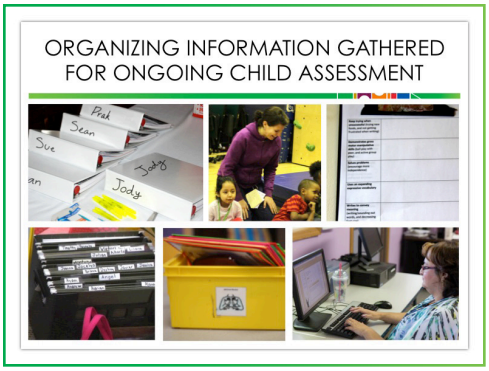
Participants use the data collection form to mark correct and incorrect responses.

DISCUSSION

Have participants share their observations.

NOTE

This video was filmed in a Head Start classroom located in the community room of a residential apartment complex.

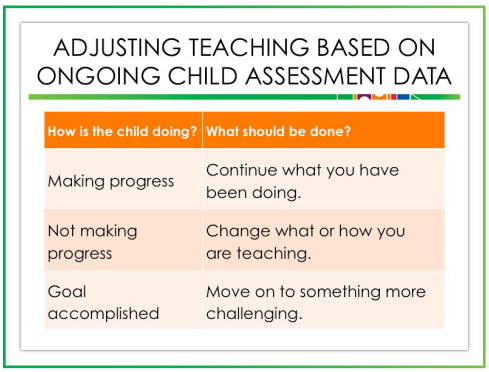


SLIDE 12:
ORGANIZING INFORMATION GATHERED FOR ONGOING CHILD ASSESSMENT

Teachers can choose from a number of ways to file assessment information—portfolios, notebooks, paper and computer filing systems, individual note cards, and computerized assessment systems.

They can organize that information by using the domains of the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework or of their program's assessment instrument(s).

Assessment information is used to track the progress of children with disabilities toward their IEP goals. Teachers use this information when they discuss the children's progress and next learning steps with specialists and the children's families.



SLIDE 13:
ADJUSTING TEACHING BASED ON ONGOING CHILD ASSESSMENT DATA

As they do for all children, teaching teams collaborate with families to interpret assessment information and use the data to adjust teaching strategies. They use research-based curricula and teaching practices, and input from families.

Just as teachers and specialists find that children with highly individualized goals and objectives may require more frequent collection of assessment information, that information needs to be interpreted more frequently to be sure children with disabilities are learning and to inform teaching.

Children who have accomplished learning goals are ready to focus on a new learning goal. Jared, for example, is learning to briefly share and take turns with adults. Soon, Jared is likely to be ready to move on to his next small learning step.

If ongoing child assessment shows that a child with an IEP is not progressing as expected, teachers, families, and specialists work collaboratively to change what or how they are teaching.

LEARNING ACTIVITY: INTERPRETING DATA

In this activity, participants work in small groups to examine assessment information, practice graphing data, and analyze information to determine next steps for instruction.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Interpreting Data* learning activity and *Tools for Teachers: Decision-Making Chart,* and review directions.

DISCUSSION

Bring the large group back together and ask participants to share key points from their small group discussion.

NOTE

Refer to the in-service suite, *Ongoing Child Assessment: Using Data to Inform Teaching* for more information on interpreting assessment data.

SLIDE 14:
SUPPORT FOR ONGOING ASSESSMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Support for teaching teams comes in many forms. The team may work with a specialist such as an early childhood special educator or therapist to monitor a child's progress, use assessment information, and **build collaborative relationships** that make use of each person's competencies. They can work together to gather assessment information, determine goals, problem-solve to select teaching practices, monitor progress, and make needed adjustments.

Teachers and specialists also **form partnerships with families** to gather information on a child's learning at home and in the community. They engage families in various ways: in gathering assessment information, promoting their child's learning, and in making instructional decisions.

Crystal, for example, worked with an early childhood special education teacher to break down Jared's IEP goal about sharing and taking turns with other children into smaller steps. Crystal shares her expertise about classroom instruction and Jared's performance, and the specialist provides ideas about individualized special instructional techniques. Crystal, the specialist, and Jared's parents select practices to monitor Jared's learning at home and in school. Jared's parents share their views on his strengths and needs, and work together to understand his progress. Jared's parents help decide what steps to take next to help him learn.

Resources and supports that help teachers successfully plan, implement, and improve ongoing child assessment in general also apply to working with children with disabilities. These resources might include training and technical assistance, assessment supplies, or coaching and peer mentoring.

NOTE

For more information on collaborative consultation, refer to articles and books on this topic listed in the *Helpful Resources* handout. For more information on engaging families in ongoing child assessment, refer to the in-service suite, *Ongoing Child Assessment: Partnering with Families*.

LEARNING ACTIVITY: TEACHER–SPECIALIST COLLABORATION

In this activity, participants read a vignette and role play how a teacher and a specialist might work together to interpret a child's assessment data and plan for the next steps.

Ask participants to pair with a partner.

HANDOUT

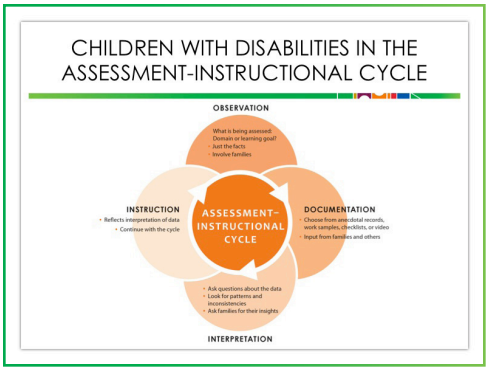
Distribute the *Teacher–Specialist Collaboration* learning activity and review directions.

DISCUSSION

Bring the large group together and ask participants to share different ways they work with specialists:

- What are the benefits of collaboration?
- What are some challenges?

Record answers.



EMPHASIZE

The steps in the assessment–instructional cycle repeat continuously for each child.

SLIDE 15:
CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN THE ASSESSMENT–INSTRUCTIONAL CYCLE

The assessment-instructional cycle refers to the ongoing and interrelated decision-making process that takes place during child assessment. Teachers continually make informed decisions about what to observe and why, and they choose the best ways to gather and document information about children's behaviors. They also decide how to organize, interpret, and use the information to guide and adjust their instruction. Throughout the process, teachers seek input from families and share information with them.

In this in-service suite, you have learned that the same basic assessment-instructional cycle is used for all children. Teachers sometimes find it helpful to modify specific parts of the process to address the unique needs of children with disabilities.

Here are four points to keep in mind:

Observation:

Focus observations on smaller steps. Observation and documentation are central to assessment, but observations of children with disabilities might focus on smaller learning steps.

Document:

Document more frequently. More frequent documentation could yield more useful assessment data.

Interpretation and hypothesis setting:

Interpret collaboratively. Input from families and specialists provides a more accurate understanding of a child's behavior. Together, teachers, families, and specialists use assessment information to identify meaningful and more effective changes in teaching for each child.

Instruction:

Individualize instruction. Specialists can provide valuable support to teachers when a child with a disability needs specialized teaching techniques.

DISCUSSION

Provide an example from your own experience of the assessment-instructional cycle that led to improved teaching for children with disabilities.

Alternately, ask participants to share examples of when they have changed their teaching, based on information from ongoing assessment.

Length of video: Approximately 1 minute

SLIDE 16:
VIDEO: TEACHER–SPECIALIST COLLABORATION

Let's consider how a teacher and a specialist collaborate around ongoing child assessment with children who have disabilities.

Introduce the video.

This is a short clip from the video we watched earlier in this session. As we watch it again, we'll focus on how the teacher and the specialist work together.

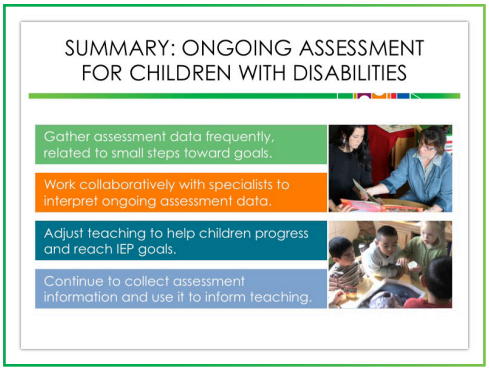
VIDEO

DISCUSSION

Ask participants to share comments about this video:

- What are some ways you would collaborate with the specialist?
- What are your thoughts about this video clip now, compared to when we saw it earlier?

Record answers, if desired.



SLIDE 17:
SUMMARY: ONGOING CHILD ASSESSMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Let's summarize the use of ongoing child assessment with children who have disabilities.

- **Gather information** about children's progress from families and use a variety of documentation strategies. You may need to collect assessment information about smaller learning steps, more often, to show progress and inform teaching.
- **Partner** with specialists and families to interpret data and decide whether children are making progress toward their learning goals and objectives.
- **Decide where to make adjustments** in teaching to better help children with disabilities learn and reach IEP goals.
- Finally, remember that **the cycle of assessment and teaching is ongoing;** you continue to check on children's progress and make improvements in teaching to help children with disabilities progress.

DISCUSSION

Distribute handouts if not distributed during presentation.

- Distribute and review the *Tips for Teachers* handout. This handout includes suggestions for assessing children with disabilities.
- Distribute and review the two *Tools for Supervisors* handouts. These are meant for participants who are supervising programs or grantees.
- Distribute the *Helpful Resources* list and review key resources.
- Distribute and review *Tools for Teachers: Assessment Planning Matrix*. This handout includes an example and a blank activity matrix that teachers can use to collect assessment data in their classroom. The *Decision-Making Chart* outlines the steps teaching teams can follow to interpret data and adjust teaching.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

SHARE THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS WITH PARTICIPANTS:

- Ask a colleague to help collect ongoing assessment information for a child with a disability while you lead a classroom activity.
- Read an item from the *Helpful Resources* list and use at least one new idea in your program.
- Contact the family of a child with a disability to share information about their child's progress toward a goal at school and gather information about progress at home.
- Consult with a more experienced teacher about using the ongoing assessment information you have gathered to improve teaching for a child with a disability.

SLIDE 18:

CLOSING

Provide participants with NCQTL contact information and encourage them to visit our website for additional resources that support effective assessment and teaching practices in the classroom.