



Getting Ready to Get the Most out of Your Child Assessments



Why Do We Assess?

- **Improve children's learning**
 - **Meet the needs of children who are struggling**
 - **Challenge children who are excelling**
- **Identify key challenges in our classrooms**
- **Figure out what resources we need**



Objectives

- 1. Preparation:**
 - **Planning for assessment**
 - **Organizing for assessment**
 - **Assuring assessment quality**
- 2. Examine how to use information from assessments to support children's growth**



Additional Resources

- ***But What Does It All Mean? Key Concepts for Getting the Most out of Your Assessments***



Planning for Assessment: Key Questions

- **What do I need to learn:**
 - About individual children?
 - Classrooms?
 - The center/program as a whole?
 - Key subgroups?
 - **What types of assessments should I conduct?**
 - Choose assessment tools that respond to what you need to learn
 - Use a variety of techniques
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Planning for Assessment: Key Questions, Cont.

- **How often should I conduct assessments?**
 - **Assessments should be ongoing.**
 - **Perhaps identify one or two techniques (e.g., checklists, work sampling, the assessment that accompanies your curriculum) and work on developing teachers' expertise.**



Planning for Assessment: Key Questions, Cont.

- **How often should I analyze assessments?**
 - **Analysis provides opportunity to adjust instruction to meet children's needs.**
 - **Comparing fall and winter scores is especially important—*time left in the year to adjust instruction!***
 - **Comparing spring with winter or fall scores helps plan for next year.**
 - **Ongoing analysis allows for frequent, smaller scale changes.**



Planning with Teachers

- **Work with teachers to make sure all important information is captured:**
 - **For assessments that teachers or other staff members need to directly administer to children, identify when this will occur.**
 - **Plan together how they will systematically integrate assessments into their activities.**



Organizing for Assessment: Help Teachers Get Ready

- **Make sure teachers have the resources they need to conduct assessments.**
 - **Charts, notebooks, files, etc.**
 - **Access to the computer**
 - **Support from other staff**



Organizing for Assessment: Set Aside Time for Reflection

- **Plan sessions in which managers can work together to analyze assessments.**
- **Make time to review assessments at the classroom level.**
- **Set periodic meetings:**
 - **For you to discuss issues with specific teachers**
 - **For teachers to work together to understand assessments and plan responses**



Assuring Assessment Quality: What You Get When You Assess

- **Data = Information you collect about children, families, and classrooms**
 - Information on children's progress for reporting purposes
 - Ongoing observational assessments
 - Attendance records
 - Information about families
 - Etc.
 - **In other words, any information you can use to improve child learning!**
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Assuring Assessment Quality: Accurate Data

- **The birth date problem:**
 - The birth year on record would mean the child is 12
 - Parent says birthday is different than what is in your records
 - Two different birth dates recorded for one child
 - **Quality data avoids the birth date problem. It is:**
 - **Correct**
 - **Complete**
 - **Consistent**
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Tips for Assuring Data Quality

- **Train (new) teachers in:**
 - Your program's methods for recording important information (e.g., birth dates) in program records.
 - Recording information in assessments.
 - Interpreting assessment results.
- **When reviewing data, look for unusual patterns.**
- **Ask questions such as:**
 - Do I believe the results?
 - Is there enough information for different teachers to come to the same conclusion?



Objectives Revisited

- ✓ **Preparation:**
 - ✓ **Planning for assessment**
 - ✓ **Organizing for assessment**
 - ✓ **Assuring assessment quality**
- **Examine how to use information from assessments to support children's growth**



Draw on All of Your Data

- **A variety of assessments**
 - **Observational assessments (e.g., *Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum, High/Scope COR*)**
 - **Standardized assessments (e.g., *Learning Accomplishment Profile [LAP]*)**
 - **Portfolios**
 - **Information from ongoing assessments**
 - **Family and child background info (birth date, home language, disability information)**
 - **Attendance records**
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Identify Formats Easy to Interpret

- **Automatic reports (if available) that summarize information:**
 - **At the classroom, program, or center level**
 - **For different subgroups of children (by age, home language, disability status, etc.)**
 - **Summary tables (checklists, spreadsheets, etc.) for whole classes**
 - **Standard scores from standardized assessments that allow for comparisons to other groups of children**
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Reflecting on the Data

- Are there *patterns* in the data? For example:
 - Do classrooms or the program as a whole continually improve in one area while lagging in another?
 - ◆ For example, literacy outcomes continue to improve, but no growth in mathematics
 - Do certain classrooms always score the highest or lowest on average?
 - ◆ For example, one classroom always has the lowest vocabulary scores
 - Do classrooms have particular strengths?



Reflecting on the Data, cont.

- Do I see *growth over time*?
 - Where are children's scores relative to their own scores earlier in the year?
 - Key question!!!
- How do children's scores compare to:
 - Other children in Head Start?
 - National averages?
 - Expectations for achieving certain milestones or standards?



Reflecting on the Data, Cont.

- **What is the story beyond averages?**
 - **What is the distribution of scores? In other words, do most children score near the average, or are the scores spread out?**
 - **Are there extreme scores (low or high)?**
- **Which children (individuals or groups) are learning the most and which children are scoring the highest?**
 - **Not necessarily the same child/group!**



Reflecting on the Data, Cont.

- **What might patterns and growth reflect? For example:**
 - **Curriculum emphasis**
 - **Teacher experience**
 - **Characteristics of children such as age, home language, or disabilities**
 - **Need for services**
 - **Consider alternative explanations.**
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Reflecting on the Data, Cont.

- ***Always ask:*** Do I have any concerns about data quality? Is it:
 - **Correct ?** Has information been accurately recorded?
 - **Complete?** Am I missing important parts of the story?
 - **Consistent?** Do different sources of information tell the same story?
 - ◆ **Different assessments**
 - ◆ **Different teachers/assessors**

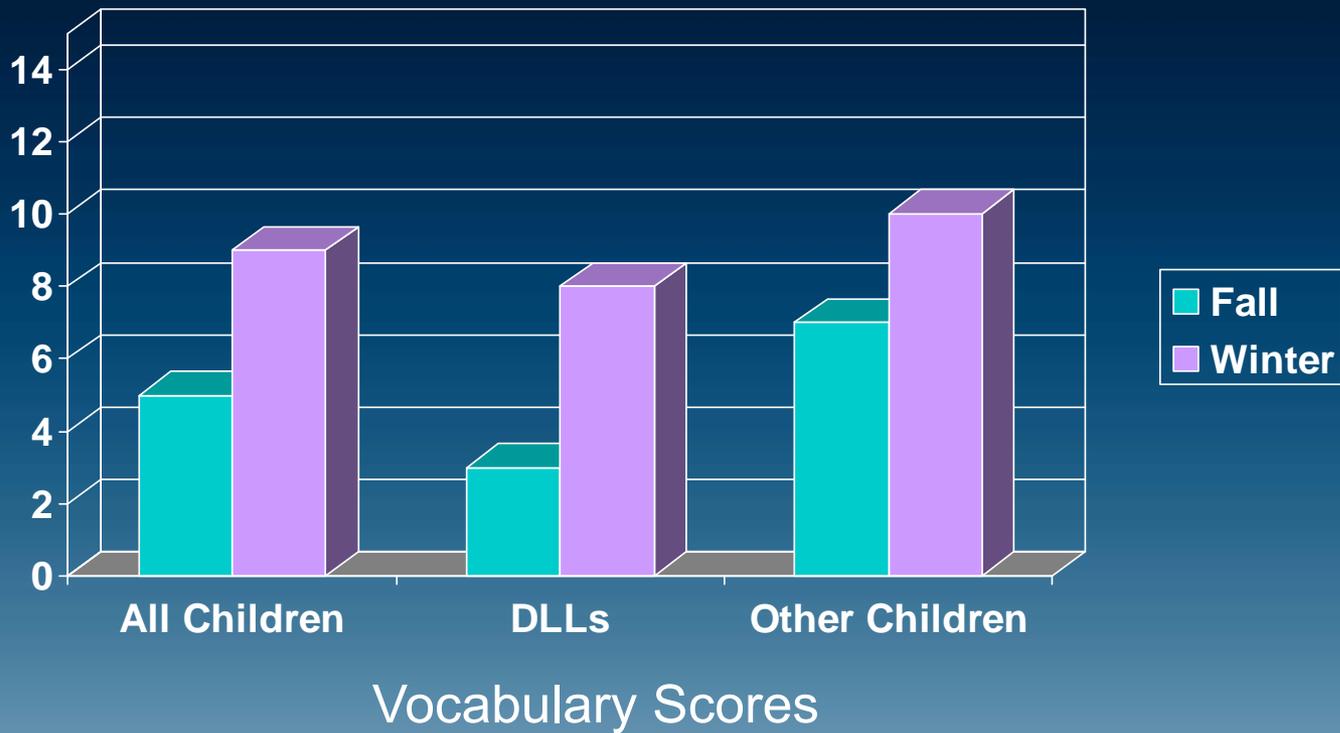


Reflecting on the Data, Cont.

- **Special questions for special groups**
 - **Example: Dual language learners**
 - ◆ **What language(s) are the assessments in?**
 - ◆ **How well do children understand concepts in their home language?**
 - **Example: Children with disabilities**
 - ◆ **Impaired motor development: Are children making progress in key motor tasks such as putting on jackets, running smoothly, or jumping in place?**
 - ◆ **Language delays: Are vocabulary scores improving? Are language delays slowing growth in other areas?**



Subgroups: Dual Language Learners (DLLs)





Distribution of Vocabulary Scores: Transportation Unit

Where and how are gains happening?

		Number of Words Correct				
	Average	≤ 5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25
Start of Unit	4.5	68%	27%	3%	2%	
End of Unit - 1	13.1	3%	10%	84%	1%	2%
End of Unit - 2	13.1	7%	30%	43%	11%	9%



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Calculating Percentages

**Percentage = (Number of children in each category)
divided by (Total number of children)**

Total number of children: 100

	Number of Words Correct at Start of Unit			
	≤ -5	6-10	11-15	16-20
Number of children in each category	68	28	3	2
Calculating the percent in each category	$=68 / 100$	$=28 / 100$	$=3 / 100$	$=2 / 100$
Percent in each category	68%	28%	3%	2%



Examine Curriculum Content

Program A

- Self
- Our families
- Thanksgiving
- Food
- Cars
- Furniture

Program B

- Self
- Our families
- Animals
- Careers
- Tools
- Farms



Examine Curriculum Content: Vocabulary in Units on Self

Program A

- **Body parts (knee, foot, leg, eyes, ears, mouth, elbow)**
- **Emotion words (happy, sad, mad, worried)**
- **Comparisons (bigger/smaller)**
- **Descriptive words (basic color words, pretty, strong)**

Program B

- **Body parts (chin, earlobe, hip, spine, pupil)**
- **Emotions (proud, excited, contented, gleeful, silly, confident, upset, frustrated, disappointed)**
- **Comparisons (longer/shorter; faster/slower; louder/quieter)**
- **Descriptive words (colors – primary and secondary; exquisite, gorgeous, strong/weak, energetic)**



Key Questions on the Curriculum

- **Is the curriculum meeting the needs of or appropriate for:**
 - All children?
 - Specific subgroups?
 - Individuals?
- **Are teachers using data to inform the amount of time and support children need with different activities within the curriculum?**
- **Is the curriculum being implemented with fidelity (that is, correctly and completely)?**



Develop an Action Plan

- **When children in a program do not show acceptable levels of progress (relative to other groups or specific criteria/milestones):**
 - Look at the program planning
 - Share ideas among teachers
 - Consider how resources are being used
 - Consider if additional services are needed
 - **Decide when changes are needed:**
 - For individual children
 - At the classroom level
 - At the program level
 - **Show sensitivity for teachers**
 - **Celebrate successes**
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Plan to Assess Progress

- **Look at the ongoing data collection:**
 - **What concepts and skills are you documenting?**
 - **How are they changing over time?**
 - **Are you checking that the children generalize the skills or concepts to new situations?**
 - **Do children use the skills or concepts in different contexts?**
 - **Do they practice skills in multiple ways?**
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Check Out Additional Resources

- **For teachers:**
 - **The presentations “Ongoing Assessment” and “Documentation Tools” provide additional information about how to collect data and do instructional assessments using observation and various documentation techniques**
 - **Guided practice exercises give teachers an opportunity to reflect on, interpret, and practice using various documentation techniques**



Check Out Additional Resources

- **For you:**
 - ***But What Does It All Mean? Key Concepts for Getting the Most out of Your Assessments***
 - **Additional resources for learning about assessment, including other training materials, are described in the annotated bibliography on the website**



Objectives, Revisited

- ✓ **Preparations:**
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