

# STANDARDS IN ACTION

ASSESSMENT FOR INDIVIDUALIZATION 1302.33(b)(1-2)



## ▲ THE CURRENT SITUATION

Judi, educational director for the ABC Head Start Program, is evaluating her program's current ongoing assessment practices, with the hopes of discovering areas where they can improve in their use of assessment information to individualize instruction. She wants to support her program meeting the Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.33(b)(1-2), which requires programs to use “standardized and structured assessments” to “evaluate the child’s developmental level and progress in outcomes.” The standard also requires programs to use child assessment information to individualize and improve teaching practices.

Judi decides to pull the teachers together to talk about their current practices, reflect on the challenges and areas of strength in the current assessment practices, and discuss strategies for using child assessment information to better support individualized learning and improve teaching practices.

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## ▲ THE SOLUTION: FIRST THINGS FIRST

Before meeting with the teachers, Judi takes some time to look at the online assessment records the teachers have been documenting. The program uses an online assessment system, which is aligned with the Early Learning Outcomes Framework. Judi has spent the past year helping teachers be more intentional about their documentation to ensure they collect meaningful information and accurately determine children’s levels on the standardized scale. While viewing data from multiple classrooms, Judi notices that many children across the program are performing below expectations for their age ranges in mathematics. This leads Judi to ask herself several questions:

- In which areas of mathematics are children struggling most?
- How well do teachers understand the assessment tool and how to score children on the scale?
- How are teachers using data about children to individualize instruction in mathematics?

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### THE SOLUTION: NEXT STEPS

When Judi meets with the teachers, she uses bar graphs to present aggregated and classroom-level child data regarding mathematics knowledge and skills. She provides data specific to different math skills, such as numerical operations, measurement, and geometry. She asks teachers to review the data together and reflect on what it may mean. They observe that across classrooms, children seem to be below the expected ranges for their ages in geometry. Judi asks them to look deeper into the documentation they have collected around children's knowledge and skills in geometry. As the teachers review the documentation, they recognize that many children are scoring above expected ranges for their ages. They also decide that in some cases, there wasn't enough information to make a reliable decision about the child's skill level. In other circumstances, there was no documentation regarding geometry.

The teachers responded thoughtfully:

- After realizing many children had knowledge and skills above expectations for their ages, they decided to look at their materials and learning opportunities and make sure they were providing appropriate challenges for all children.
- Because they noticed some children did not have enough documentation, they decided to work together to identify learning centers and learning opportunities that support geometric thinking and intentionally document children's knowledge and skills when they are engaged with those materials.
- After recognizing the challenges they have with teaching and assessing geometry, they asked Judi to observe in their classrooms and help them identify opportunities to support learning in geometry and document children's knowledge and skills.

### THE SOLUTION: THE STORY CONTINUES

The teachers agree to meet again and share what they have learned from this process and to review assessment data again to look for improvements, both in child learning and in their assessment data. They will also share what they learned after working with Judi to better understand their teaching practices around geometry. Judi agrees to provide them with some resources from the ECLKC to support their understanding of how children learn geometry and how they can better support children's learning through their classroom materials and instructional practices. With a plan in place, the teachers feel prepared to better meet the needs of their children, knowing there will be lessons learned along the way.



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## SELECTED RESOURCES:

- 15-minute In-service Suites, Ongoing Child Assessment  
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/child-screening-assessment/article/ongoing-child-assessment>
  - o Collecting and Using Information (four in-service suites)
  - o Interpreting Information (one in-service suite)
- EHS TA Paper #15: Observation: The Heart of Individualizing Responsive Care  
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/ehs-ta-paper-15-observation.pdf>



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