

Choosing an Appropriate Assessment System

Amy Lynn Shillady

How should early childhood educators select an appropriate assessment tool? First, it is important to understand what a developmentally appropriate, valid, reliable, and ethical assessment looks like. Some background research can provide this information. The joint position statement “Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment and Program Evaluation,” with expanded resources, from NAEYC and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAEYC & NAECS/SDE 2003), includes recommendations and indicators of effectiveness, frequently asked questions, and other resources that can serve as a guide in the selection of assessment tools (online at www.naeyc.org/resources/position_statements/CAPEexpand.pdf).

The next step is to identify the age group for whom the assessment tool will be used (infant/toddler, preschool, etc.), the goals of the program, the purposes for which the assessment will be used, and other factors such as children’s culture, languages, and abilities or disabilities.

The good news is that there is a wide variety of assessments to choose from and that a great deal of information about them is available online. There are numerous tools and systems designed to measure overall development, literacy, or social/emotional development.

A few of the many assessment options that are appropriate for preschool children are listed in the accompanying chart, which also describes important elements such as the adaptability of the assessment system and the preparation required. (These data are for informational purposes only. NAEYC does not endorse any of the assessment materials presented. Assessment tools and systems are developed for specific purposes and should not be used in ways that fall outside those designated guidelines.)

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Assessment Tools for 3- to 5-year-olds

Assessment Tool	Assessment Domain(s)	Type of Assessment	Sample Items	Preparation	Contact Information
<p><i>The Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum</i> (Dodge, Colker, & Heroman 2002) Spanish version available</p>	<p>Assesses social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development</p>	<p>Teacher Observational Rating Scale (Teachers observe and document children's learning, analyze observation notes, and use the Developmental Continuum to identify what step the children have reached for each of the Creative Curriculum's 50 objectives.)</p>	<p>Curriculum Objective: Classifies objects (each step represents the developmental point in a sequence that children typically demonstrate as they progress toward mastering an objective.) Forerunners: Finds two objects that are the same and comments or puts them together Step I: Sorts objects by one property such as size, shape, color, or use Step II: Sorts a group of objects by one property and then by another <i>E.g., 10/29 – Sandra sorted leaves by size, then color.</i> Step III: Sorts objects into groups/subgroups and can state reason</p>	<p>Training is offered through national conferences, on-site workshops, technical assistance services. For more information about on-site training: Phone: 800-637-3652, ext. 22, or e-mail: StaffDev@TeachingStrategies.com</p>	<p>Teaching Strategies, Inc P.O. Box 42243 Washington, DC 20015 Phone: 800-637-3652 Fax: 202-364-7273 Web site: www.teachingstrategies.com</p>
<p><i>Note:</i> Data are provided for informational purposes only. NAEYC does not endorse any of the assessment materials presented.</p>					
<p><i>The Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)</i> (LeBuffe & Naglieri 1998) Spanish version available</p>	<p>Assesses social/emotional development (initiative, self-control, and attachment)</p>	<p>Teacher and Parent Observational Rating Scale (Teachers and families each complete the DECA for the child and review the results together.)</p>	<p>“During the past 4 weeks, how often did the child...” <i>Calm herself/himself down when upset?</i> “Place a check mark next to the word that tells how often you saw the behavior.” ___ Never ___ Rarely ___ Occasionally ___ Frequently ___ Very frequently</p>	<p>DECA Program Training Options include basic implementation training, local program mentor training, and other training opportunities such as “Classroom Strategies for Reducing Behavioral Concerns.” For more training information: Phone: 866-TRAINUS or e-mail: DECA@Devereux.org</p>	<p>The Devereux Foundation 444 Devereux Dr. Villanova, PA 19085 Phone: 610-542-3109 E-mail: DECA@Devereux.org Web site: www.devereuxearlychildhood.org</p>

Assessment Tool	Assessment Domain(s)	Type of Assessment	Sample Items	Preparation	Contact Information
<p><i>High/Scope Pre-school Child Observational Record (COR)</i> (High/Scope Staff 1992) Spanish version of Family Report Forms and Parent Guides included</p>	<p>Assesses initiative, social relations, creative representation, movement and music, language and literacy, and mathematics and science</p>	<p>Teacher Observational Rating Scale (Teachers observe and document children's learning and analyze observation notes to identify what step the children have reached for each objective.)</p>	<p>Observational Item: Making Choices and Plans Level I: Child indicates a choice by pointing or some other action. <i>E.g., 11/21 – At circle time, Alem pointed to the game she wanted to play.</i> Level II: Child expresses a choice in one or two words. Level III: Child expresses a choice with a short sentence. Level IV: Child makes a plan with one or two details. Level V: Child makes a plan with three or more details.</p>	<p>Training options include one- and two-day workshops, week-long institutes, and multiple-week courses at High/Scope Foundation headquarters in Michigan or on-site by request. For more training information: Phone: 734-485-2000, ext. 218, or e-mail: training@highscope.org</p>	<p>High/Scope Educational Research Foundation 600 N. River St. Ypsilanti, MI 48198-2898 Phone: 734-485-2000 Fax: 734-485-0704. E-mail: info@highscope.org Web site: www.highscope.org</p>
<p><i>Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation (SCBE)</i> (LaFreniere & Dumas 1995)</p>	<p>Assesses social/emotional development (social competence, emotional expression, and adjustment)</p>	<p>Teacher Observational Rating Scale</p>	<p>“Accepts compromises when reasons are given.”</p>	<p>Training Manual provides observational, documentation, and scoring procedures.</p>	<p>Western Psychological Services (WPS) 12031 Wilshire Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90025-1251 Phone: 800-648-8857 Fax: 310-478-7838 E-mail: custsvc@wpspublish.com Web site: www.wpspublish.com</p>

Assessment Tools for 3- to 5-year-olds (cont'd)

Assessment Tool	Assessment Domain(s)	Type of Assessment	Sample Items	Preparation	Contact Information				
<i>Preschool Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs)</i> (Early Childhood Research Institute on Measuring Growth and Development 1998)	Assesses language and literacy skills (picture naming, alliteration, and rhyming)	Standardized Test administered by teachers on an individualized basis (using stimulus cards)	Sample Rhyming Stimulus Card: "Point to the one [sweep finger across three pictures at bottom of card] that rhymes or sounds the same as ____ [point to and say the name of the top picture]."	Background information, assessment instructions, stimulus materials, and data reporting resources can be downloaded at www.getgotgo.net	Early Childhood Research Institute on Measuring Growth and Development University of Minnesota 202 Pattee Hall 150 Pillsbury Dr., SE Minneapolis, MN 55455 Phone: 612-624-8020 Fax: 612-625-2093 Email: pries005@umn.edu Web site: www.getgotgo.net				
<i>Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy (TROLL)</i> (Dickinson, McCabe, & Sprague 2003)	Assesses literacy skills (language use, reading, and writing)	Teacher Observational Rating Scale (Teachers can rate competence in English and in child's native language)	"Does child recognize his or her own first name in print?" <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>No</u></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>Yes</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> </tr> </table>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	1	2	Training Manual provides observational, documentation, and scoring procedures.	Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement University of Michigan School of Education Rm. 2002 SEB 610 E. University Ave. Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1259 Phone: 734 647-6940 Fax: 734-615-4858 E-mail: ciera@umich.edu Web site: www.ciera.org
<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>								
1	2								
<i>The Work Sampling System</i> (Meisels et al. 1995)	Assesses personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies, the arts, and physical development and health	Observational checklists, portfolios, and teacher and parent summary reports	Portfolio Core Item in the Scientific Domain: <i>E.g., Dante's collection of data on plant growth from 5/1 to 6/1</i>	To request on-site training or to learn more about Pearson Early Learning Center's Summer Institute training workshops: Phone: 888-832-9378 or 800-782-0801	Pearson Early Learning Center P.O. Box 2500 Lebanon, IN 46052 Phone: 800-211-8378 Fax: 800-841-8939 E-mail: customer_service@pearsonearlylearning.com Web site: www.pearsonearlylearning.com				



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