NAEYC Program Standards and Accreditation Assessment Items
Standard 4: Assessment of Child Progress

Definition of Standard 4

The program uses a variety of formal and informal assessment approaches to provide information on children's learning and development. These assessments occur in the context of reciprocal communications between teachers and families, and with sensitivity to the cultural contexts in which children are developing. The program uses assessment results to inform decisions about the children in their care, to improve teaching practices, and to drive program improvement.

Rationale

Teachers' knowledge of each child helps them to plan an appropriately challenging curriculum and to tailor instruction that responds to each child's strengths and needs. Further, systematic assessment is essential for identifying children who may benefit from more intensive instruction or intervention or who may need additional developmental evaluation. This information ensures that the program meets its goals for children's learning and developmental progress as well as informs program improvement efforts.

The Assessment of Child Progress Standard is made up of five topic areas (4.A, 4.B, 4.C, 4.D, and 4.E).

Topic Areas

❖ 4.A—Creating an Assessment Plan
❖ 4.B—Using Appropriate Assessment Methods
❖ 4.C—Identifying Children's Interests and Needs and Describing Children's Progress
❖ 4.D—Adapting Curriculum, Individualizing Teaching, and Informing Program Development
❖ 4.E—Communicating With Families and Involving Families in the Assessment Process

4.A—Creating an Assessment Plan
Topic 4.A addresses the need for assessment plans that describe assessment purposes, methods, and uses of the results.

Recommended Best Practices

Criteria in Topic 4.A
4.A.01
4.A.02
4.A.03
4.A.02

For children of all ages, it is important for programs to conduct assessments of their progress. Assessments are used to support children's learning and are conducted using a variety methods, such as observations, checklists, rating scales, and individually administered tests.

Programs should have a written child assessment plan that describes the purposes of assessments and procedures, and how the results of assessments are to be used. Assessments may have multiple purposes. They may be conducted to identify children's interests and needs and to describe their developmental progress and learning. Child assessments may be used to inform curriculum improvement or to plan program improvement. Teachers may learn from assessments how they need to adapt their teaching practices or their learning environments. Child assessments are a means to communicate with families. Developmental screenings are a form of assessment. When indicated, the results of a child assessment may lead to a referral for diagnostic assessment.

Well-articulated **child assessment plans** should also address the conditions under which children will be assessed; when and how frequently assessments occur; the confidentiality of assessment records; ways families may contribute to the assessment process; and how the program shares assessment results with families.

4.B—Using Appropriate Assessment Methods

Topic 4.B addresses the importance of choosing assessments that look at all aspects of children's development and that are sensitive to family backgrounds and children's special needs.

Recommended Best Practices

Criteria in Topic 4.B
4.B.06
4.B.01
4.B.02
4.B.04
4.B.03
4.B.05

It is important that teaching staff share an understanding of the purposes, values, and uses of assessments in their program, and can explain these to others. Programs should use a variety of assessment methods that are meaningful and accurate. Choose assessment methods that are sensitive to, and informed by, family culture and experiences, children's abilities and disabilities, and children's home language(s). Conduct assessments in settings familiar to the children.

Assessments should be comprehensive. Obtain information on all areas of children's development and learning, including cognitive skills, language, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, health, and physical development (including self-help skills).

Programs may choose to use norm-referenced, standardized tests. If used, the primary purpose of these kinds of assessments should be to seek information about children's eligibility for special services or to collect information about overall program effectiveness. When a program uses these types of published assessment instruments, a program professional must read and evaluate information from the publisher about the standardization sample, standardization procedures, scoring, reliability, and validity, to ensure that the results obtained with the instruments are valid for the program's purposes. Norm-referenced assessments should be employed in combination with informal methods, such as observation, checklists, rating scales, and work sampling. Informal assessments may also come from a published source or may be developed by the staff of the program.

Staff-developed assessment methods typically include child portfolios, observation notes, and checklists. If staff-developed assessment methods are used, they should align with curriculum goals and provide an accurate picture of all children's abilities and progress. Staff must ensure that these types of assessments are appropriate and valid. They must provide meaningful and stable results for all learners, including dual language learners and children with special needs. Staff-developed assessment methods should provide teachers with clear ideas for curriculum development and daily planning and should be regularly reviewed to be certain that they are providing the needed information.

4.C—Identifying Children's Interests and Needs and Describing Children's Progress

Topic 4.C addresses the need for developmental screening and assessment of each child, which is conducted by teachers who have the expertise and skill to integrate the information into curriculum goals.

Recommended Best Practices

Criteria in Topic 4.C
4.C.01
4.C.02
4.C.03

All children enrolled in the program should receive developmental screening within three months of program entry. Screening instruments should meet professional standards for standardization, reliability, and validity and have normative scores available on a population relevant to the child being screened. Developmental screening should include assessment of children's health status and their sensory, language, cognitive, gross motor, fine motor, and

social and emotional development. Programs should also have a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the screening program. Results of developmental screenings are used to make referrals to appropriate professionals, when indicated. Program staff should have methods for following up on any referrals made as a result of developmental screenings.

Teachers should be among those who assess the developmental progress of each child. Staff who know and work with the children in different ways can collect information across the full range of children's experiences. Teachers are also best positioned to refer back to curriculum goals and developmental expectations when interpreting assessment data.

4.D—Adapting Curriculum, Individualizing Teaching, and Informing Program Development

Topic 4.D emphasizes regular observation of children to gather information to help teachers make decisions about teaching practices and curriculum development.

Recommended Best Practices

Criteria in Topic 4.D
4.D.01
4.D.03
4.D.04
4.D.03
4.D.04
4.D.05
4.D.06
4.D.07
4.D.08

Teachers or others who know the children and are able to observe their strengths, interests, and needs on an ongoing basis conduct assessments to inform classroom instruction and to make sound decisions about individual and group curriculum content, teaching approaches, and personal interactions. Teaching teams should meet at least weekly to interpret assessment results and use them to align curriculum and teaching practices with the interests and needs of the children. Teachers and other professionals associated with the program also use assessment results to inform curriculum development, guide curriculum planning, and monitor progress. They also use assessment methods and information to individualize teaching and design goals for individual children.

Teachers of infants talk to, observe, and interact with them to assess development and encourage use of language (e.g., smiles, sounds, eye contact, and cooing). These observations are used to modify the curriculum, interactions, and care. For older children (toddlers, twos, preschoolers, and kindergartners), teachers talk with, interact with, and observe individual children and encourage their use of language to assess their strengths, interests, and needs. They use the information gathered to plan and modify the curriculum and their teaching.

4.E—Communicating With Families and Involving Families in the Assessment Process

Topic 4.E discusses the importance of communicating with families about all the areas of their child's development, using both formal and informal opportunities to exchange information and to make them aware of confidentiality and disclosure policies.

Recommended Best Practices

Criteria in Topic 4.E
4.E.04
4.E.01
4.E.02
4.E.03
4.E.06
4.E.05
4.E.07

Staff work to ensure that families are comfortable with the assessment method(s) used in the program. Programs should provide families with ongoing opportunities to share the results of observations at home to contribute to the assessment process. In turn, programs should provide information to family members—either verbally or in writing—about their child's development and learning at least quarterly, with written reports at least twice a year. Teachers, families, and relevant specialists must have regular opportunities to participate in conferences to discuss each child's progress, accomplishments, and difficulties both in the classroom and at home. Teaching staff should use the conferences to plan further learning activities.

Families should be given information about the choice, scoring, and interpretation of screening and assessment methods. The information includes the purpose and use for which an assessment is designed, the interpretation of the results, and the meaning of the results in terms of future learning opportunities for their child. The program should inform families about the way teaching staff or others have been trained to use assessment procedures and interpret results, as well as the conditions under which their child will be assessed (e.g., group size, time constraints, familiarity with adults involved). All families should have access to, or information about, the specific instruments used.

Communications with families about their child's assessments should be sensitive to family values, culture, identity, and home language. The program staff should provide families with a full explanation of confidentiality. This includes listing who will have access to individual child screening and assessment results (as well as the reasons for their access), sharing regulations governing access to files and familial rights, and explaining the procedures used to keep individual child records confidential. Families should receive a full explanation of how and why children's individual screening results and assessment information will be represented, used, and interpreted.

Standard 4 Site Visit Assessment Items

Item count summary: *Total items = 19; infant items = 19; toddler items = 18; preschool items = 18; kindergarten items = 18; school-age = 18*

Source of evidence key: *CP = Class Portfolio; CO = Class Observation; PP = Program Portfolio; Previsit = previsit evaluation of documentary evidence*

Assessment category key: *(R) = required criterion/item; (E) = emerging practice criterion/item*

Topic area____ *Criterion of origin*	Item ID	Assessment item_____ *Definition, examples, guidance*	Source of evidence	Age category
4.A *4.A.02*	728	Show that your written child assessment plan describes how children are assessed (e.g., by whom; in groups or individually; timeline; familiarity with adults involved).	PP	ITPKS
4.A *4.A.03*	738	Show that in your written child assessment plan, one stated purpose of assessments is to inform planning for overall program improvements.	PP	ITPKS
4.B *4.B.05*	750	If child portfolios are used as an assessment method, show or explain how you make them meaningful and relevant for dual language learners. *Rate as NA if the program does not use child portfolios as an assessment method.* *Child portfolio: A collection of information, samples, and artifacts of a child's developmental progress. These portfolios are used to document the child's work, serve as a method to share the child's progress with others, and inform plans for further learning. Child portfolios may be physical (binder, folders) or digital (computer software, online).*	CP	ITPKS
4.B *4.B.05*	751	If child portfolios are used as an assessment method, show or explain how the results are used to create activities or lesson plans. *Rate as NA if the program does not use child portfolios as an assessment method.* *Child portfolio: A collection of information, samples, and artifacts of a child's developmental progress. These portfolios are used to document the child's work, serve as a method to share the child's progress with others, and inform plans for further learning. Child portfolios may be physical (binder, folders) or digital (computer software, online).*	CP	ITPKS

4.B *4.B.05*	1512	If child portfolios are used as an assessment method, show or explain how you make it meaningful and relevant for children with special needs. *Special needs: Physical or mental health conditions that require special education services, such as early intervention or individualized supports. Special needs can also be adverse life conditions (such as poverty or family stress) that call for social services, family supports, or monitoring.* *Child portfolio: A collection of information, samples, and artifacts of a child's developmental progress. These portfolios are used to document the child's work, serve as a method to share the child's progress with others, and inform plans for further learning. Child portfolios may be physical (binder, folders) or digital (computer software, online).*	CP	ITPKS
4.C *4.C.01 (E)*	756 *(E)*	Show that the children receive a vision and hearing screening. *Health screenings, such as vision and hearing screenings, may be conducted separately (at separate times, and by different parties) from the other types of developmental screening.*	PP	ITPKS
4.C *4.C.01 (E)*	757 *(E)*	Show that the children receive a developmental screening that evaluates language, cognitive, gross motor, fine motor, and social and emotional development. *Developmental screening: A brief standardized procedure designed to quickly appraise a large number of children to find out which children need further evaluation. Screening typically is a process that includes use of a norm-referenced instrument, information provided by a child's teacher, and information provided by a child's family.* *Examples of developmental screenings: Mullen Scales of Early Learning; Brigance; DIAL 3; DENVER II; Ages and Stages; ESP: Early Screening Profiles; ESI-R (Early Screening Inventory).* *Fine motor development: Refers to the improvement of small muscle movements and control, usually in the fingers and hands.* *Examples of fine motor development: Turning/twisting hands and wrists, pouring liquids without spilling, fastening clothing, writing, pounding nails with control.*	PP	ITPKS
4.C *4.C.03*	761	Show one example of how you refer to curriculum goals when interpreting assessment data.	CP	ITPKS
4.D *4.D.01*	763	Show two examples of how information from an observational assessment you conducted was used to create an individualized activity.	CP	ITPKS
4.D *4.D.01*	764	Show two examples of how information from an observational assessment you conducted was used to create an individualized teaching approach.	CP	ITPKS
4.D *4.D.02 (E)*	766 *(E)*	Show that teaching teams are scheduled for planning time at least weekly, during which they do not supervise awake children.	PP	ITPKS
4.D *4.D.02 (E)*	767 *(E)*	Show or describe how teaching teams are expected to use the results of child assessments to design activities or lesson plans that meet the needs and interests of the children.	PP	ITPKS

4.D *4.D.02 (E)*	768 *(E)*	Show or describe how teaching teams adjust their teaching strategies to meet the needs and interests of the children based on information gained from child assessment outcomes. *Examples of teaching strategies: Small and large group activities, teacher-or child-directed activities, "expanding upon" activities, modeling behavior, asking children open-ended questions, and encouraging children to maintain being engaged in activities.*	PP	ITPKS
4.D *4.D.06*	778	Show or describe two examples of how you modify your interactions and caregiving routines for infants, based on observations or anecdotal notes. *Anecdotal notes: Written narrative descriptions recorded after the observed behavior(s) occurs.*	CP	I
4.E *4.E.01*	783	Show or describe two examples of how you provide ongoing opportunities for families to contribute their observations from home to the child assessment process. *Information solicited one time only, at enrollment, is not considered to be ongoing unless there are additional opportunities for families to update such information over time.*	CP	ITPKS
4.E *4.E.02*	785	Show that your program's written child assessment plan states that families are provided written reports about their child's development and learning at least two times a year.	PP	ITPKS
4.E *4.E.04*	787	Show or describe how you explain your child assessment methods to families and how you assure that families are comfortable that these methods will meet the child's needs. *Examples of assessment methods: Classroom-based assessments, standardized tests, developmental screenings, diagnostic evaluations.*	PP	ITPKS
4.E *4.E.06*	792	Show that you provide families with information about how teaching staff or others have been trained to conduct child assessments.	PP	ITPKS
4.E *4.E.02*	1514	Provide two examples of the written child assessment reports that are shared with families (completed within the past year, and with identifying information obscured).	PP	ITPKS