

Asking the Right Questions, Getting the Right Answers: Evaluating Young Children for Special Education Services

Example of Informal Assessment Measures

This section provides examples of informal methods of collecting assessment information. These examples provide a format for collecting information that will be especially useful in the development of specific interventions, establishing baseline, and monitoring progress after intervention.

**Compiled by Misty Goosen, Ed.S. & David P. Lindeman, Ph.D.
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Kansas Inservice Training System
Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities
2601 Gabriel, Parsons, Kansas 67357
620-421-6550 ext. 1618
kskits.org**

Using Informal Assessment Measures

IEP teams should avoid over reliance on norm referenced standardized tests in the evaluation process, given that young children develop at variable and rapid rates, attend for short periods of time and are generally more active than sedentary. These tools cannot be used for progress monitoring purposes because they cannot be administered frequently and they are not sensitive to small changes in skill level. In addition, norm referenced standardized tests do not reflect local general curriculum or age appropriate activities, and therefore cannot be used to develop PLAAFP statements with baseline data.

Informal assessment measures such as structured observations, skill checklists, rubrics, rating scales, work samples, elicited responses, and test-teach-test methods are good alternatives for collecting information that reflects children's abilities within age appropriate activities, across environments, and can be used in progress monitoring. Informal measures can easily be incorporated into everyday classroom routines and do not interfere with general instructional time should these measures be used later on in progress monitoring. For these measures to be reliable they must include clear statements of the skill/behavioral expectations for student performance and yield ratings or judgments about the performance that are both accurate and consistent over time. When informal assessments are reliable and measure accurately what they intend to measure they can be considered a valid assessment tool and are a very appropriate means of collecting information in the initial evaluation process.

Informal assessments can be used to answer the question "How does the disability or delay impact the child's ability to access, participate, and progress in appropriate activities?" Appropriate activities include things such as:

- Listening to stories
- Looking at books
- Engaging in dramatic play
- Participating in groups (small & large)
- Playing with peers
- Singing songs
- Constructing things (blocks, clay, other)
- Drawing/painting

These activities and other age appropriate activities are reflected in the Kansas Early Learning Document – Early Learning Standards (KSELD). Informal assessments could be used to measure performance within the KSELD-ELS using benchmarks and age appropriate indicators as guides. The KSELD-ELS is a good resource for discussing issues about the general curriculum, age expectations, and the impact of the delay on child performance.

Ecological Congruence Assessment for Classroom Activities and Routines

Teacher: _____ Target Child: _____ Date: _____ Classroom: _____

Activity	Children's Participation	Helping Issues	Notes
Arrival & Departure	Is the child doing the same thing as peers? Yes No If no, what is the child doing? What are peers doing?	Does child require more help than peers? Yes No If yes, what type of help? . getting engaged . staying engaged . dealing with peers . no skills for this activity	Describe help needed:
Snacks & Meals	Is the child doing the same thing as peers? Yes No If no, what is the child doing? What are peers doing?	Does child require more help than peers? Yes No If yes, what type of help? . getting engaged . staying engaged . dealing with peers . no skills for this activity	Describe help needed:
Toileting Self Care	Is the child doing the same thing as peers? Yes No If no, what is the child doing? What are peers doing?	Does child require more help than peers? Yes No If yes, what type of help? . getting engaged . staying engaged . dealing with peers . no skills for this activity	Describe help needed:

Teacher: _____ Target Child: _____ Date: _____ Classroom: _____

Activity	Children's Participation	Helping Issues	Notes
Free Play or Center Time	<p>Is the child doing the same thing as peers? Yes No If no, what is the child doing?</p> <p>What are peers doing?</p>	<p>Does child require more help than peers? Yes No</p> <p>If yes, what type of help?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . getting engaged . staying engaged . dealing with peers . no skills for this activity 	Describe help needed:
Group Time	<p>Is the child doing the same thing as peers? Yes No If no, what is the child doing?</p> <p>What are peers doing?</p>	<p>Does child require more help than peers? Yes No</p> <p>If yes, what type of help?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . getting engaged . staying engaged . dealing with peers . no skills for this activity 	Describe help needed:
Art or Creative Expression Activities	<p>Is the child doing the same thing as peers? Yes No If no, what is the child doing?</p> <p>What are peers doing?</p>	<p>Does child require more help than peers? Yes No</p> <p>If yes, what type of help?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . getting engaged . staying engaged . dealing with peers . no skills for this activity 	Describe help needed:

Teacher: _____ Target Child: _____ Date: _____ Classroom: _____

Activity	Children's Participation	Helping Issues	Notes
Transitions In Classroom	<p>Is the child doing the same thing as peers? Yes No If no, what is the child doing?</p> <p>What are peers doing?</p>	<p>Does child require more help than peers? Yes No</p> <p>If yes, what type of help?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . getting engaged . staying engaged . dealing with peers . no skills for this activity 	Describe help needed:
Transition to Playground	<p>Is the child doing the same thing as peers? Yes No If no, what is the child doing?</p> <p>What are peers doing?</p>	<p>Does child require more help than peers? Yes No</p> <p>If yes, what type of help?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . getting engaged . staying engaged . dealing with peers . no skills for this activity 	Describe help needed:
Outdoor Play	<p>Is the child doing the same thing as peers? Yes No If no, what is the child doing?</p> <p>What are peers doing?</p>	<p>Does child require more help than peers? Yes No</p> <p>If yes, what type of help?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . getting engaged . staying engaged . dealing with peers . no skills for this activity 	Describe help needed:

Wolery, M., Brashers, M.S., Grant, S., & Pauca, T. (2000). *Ecological congruence assessment for classroom activities and routines in childcare*. Chapel Hill, NC: Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center. Note: This form may be reproduced without permission when providing citation information.

Test-Teach-Test: Observation Form

Child's Name: _____ Date: _____

Target skill(s) list	Correct response required-describe	Learning environment	Test Description of attempt at target skill by child	Teach Description of attempt at target skill with support (being taught)	Test Description of attempt at target skill after support is withdrawn

Goosen, M. (2004). *Asking the right questions: Getting the right answers*. Parsons, KS: Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities. Note: This form may be reproduced without permission when providing citation information.

Source: Burton, V. J., & Watkins, R.V. (2002). Dynamic assessment: Understanding children's development. In M. M. Ostrosky, & E. Horn (Eds.), *Assessment: Gathering meaningful information* (pp. 68-69). Missoula, MT: Division for Early Childhood

Group Engagement Rubric

Name: _____

Date: _____

	4	3	2	1	points
Participation in Group Activities	Student proactively contributes to the group activity by offering ideas and asking appropriate questions more than once per activity.	Student proactively contributes to the group activity by offering ideas and asking appropriate questions once per activity.	Student rarely contributes to the group activity by offering ideas and asking appropriate questions.	Student never contributes to the group activity by offering ideas and asking appropriate questions.	
Listening Skills	Student listens when others talk and incorporates or builds off of the ideas expressed by others.	Student listens when others talk during group activities (looks at speaker, watches demonstrations).	Student does not listen when others talk during group activities (looks around, fiddles).	Student does not listen when others talk during group activities and often interrupts verbally and/or behaviorally when others are speaking.	
Compliance	Student complies with the request of the teacher without prompting.	Student complies with the request of the teacher with verbal prompts.	Student complies with the request of the teacher with verbal and physical prompts.	Student does not comply with the request of the teacher.	

Total Points _____

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Sharing Rubric

Name: _____

Date: _____

	4	3	2	1	Points
Sharing	Shares toys and/or materials with others without prompting.	Shares toys and/or materials with others with minimal prompting.	Shares toys and/or materials with others with prompting.	Does not share toys and/or materials with peers others.	
Non-Verbal/Verbal Communication in Sharing Episode	Looks at person, smiles, asks politely for person to share item.	Looks at person, asks politely for person to share item.	Asks politely for person to share item.	Grabs item without asking.	
Coping During Sharing Episodes	Independently accepts “no” regarding request to share, without becoming upset and indicates he/she will wait a little longer.	Independently accepts “no” regarding request to share without becoming upset.	Accepts “no” regarding request to share with support from adult or peer.	Becomes upset (crying, whining, pouting, aggression) when others refuse to share.	

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