

# Slide Handouts: Assessment – Ask the Expert



Recommended Practices Modules

Module 7

## Module 7: Lesson 1

Assessment: Ask the Expert

Welcome to Module 7 Lesson 1. Assessment: Ask the Expert.

# Lesson Objectives

The objectives of this lesson are:

- To describe practices that support assessment.
- To identify key characteristics of recommended practices related to assessment.

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The objectives of this lesson are to describe practices that support assessment, and to identify key characteristics of recommended practices related to assessment.

# Introduction

- What are the practices that support assessment?
- What does the research say about effective practices that support assessment?
- Why are these practices important?

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This lesson will help you understand why assessment practices are important in your work with children by considering the following questions: What are practices that support assessment? What does the research say about effective practices that support assessment? Why are these practices important?

## What are practices that support assessment?

“Assessment is the process of gathering information to make decisions. Assessment informs intervention and, as a result, is a critical component of services for young children who have or are at risk for developmental delays/disabilities and their families.” (DEC, 2014, p.8).

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According to the Division of Early Childhood, “Assessment is the process of gathering information to make decisions. Assessment informs intervention and, as a result, is a critical component of services for young children who have or are at risk for developmental delays/disabilities and their families.”

# DEC Recommended Practices

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- A1. Practitioners work with the family to identify family preferences for assessment processes.
- A2. Practitioners work as a team with the family and other professionals to gather assessment information.
- A3. Practitioners use assessment materials and strategies that are appropriate for the child's age and level of development and accommodate the child's sensory, physical, communication, cultural, linguistic, social, and emotional characteristics.
- A4. Practitioners conduct assessments that include all areas of development and behavior to learn about the child's strengths, needs, preferences, and interests.
- A5. Practitioners conduct assessments in the child's dominant language and in additional languages if the child is learning more than one language.
- A6. Practitioners use a variety of methods, including observation and interviews, to gather assessment information from multiple sources, including the child's family and other significant individuals in the child's life.



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The 2014 DEC Recommended Practices include the following assessment practices. Review the practices. You may download a handout with the practices listed if you want to have it on hand. Click continue when you are ready to move forward.

# DEC Recommended Practices

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A7. Practitioners obtain information about the child's skills in daily activities, routines, and environments such as home, center, and community.

A8. Practitioners use clinical reasoning in addition to assessment results to identify the child's current levels of functioning and to determine the child's eligibility and plan for instruction.

A9. Practitioners implement systematic ongoing assessment to identify learning targets, plan activities, and monitor the child's progress to revise instruction as needed.

A10. Practitioners use assessment tools with sufficient sensitivity to detect child progress, especially for the child with significant support needs.

A11. Practitioners report assessment results so that they are understandable and useful to families.



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**Dr. Jane Squires answers questions about assessment.**

**What Does the Research Say?**

Assessment includes the gathering of information to make informed decisions related to providing individualized services and supports to young children and their families. Assessment practices are central to identifying children who are eligible for Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE), designing services and supports for these children and families, and for monitoring and evaluating their progress over time. Research on early childhood assessment supports several key principles.

- 1) Using a collaborative process involving parents, family members, and practitioners (Bricker, Macy, Squires, & Marks, 2013; Squires, Bricker, & Twombly, 2015);
- 2) Selecting assessments that target universal, functional skills that are critical for young children to be successful in their environment, and are able to measure small changes in behavior (Bricker, Pretti-Frontczak, Johnson, & Strake, 2002; Johnson, Rahn, & Bricker, 2015; Bagnato, McLean, Macy, & Neisworth, 2011)

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Ask the Expert. Dr. Jane Squires answers questions about assessment. What does the research say? Why is this important? Read the information from Dr. Squires. Use the continue button on each slide to move forward. If you would like to download a handout for future reference, you may do that at the end of this section by clicking the download button. The document will open in a new window.

3) Gathering assessment information across authentic activities, play, and everyday routines (Johnson et al., 2015; Bagnato, 2007; Bagnato, Neisworth, & Pretti-Frontczak, 2010);

4) Selecting assessments with evidence to support them, including validity, reliability, and utility (McLean, Hemmeter, Snyder, 2014; Odom et al., 2005; Macy, Bagnato, Macy, & Salaway (2015); and

5) Assuring linguistically appropriate and culturally sensitive assessment practices are used with children and families (Duran, Cheatham, & Santos, 2011; McLean et al., 2014; Losardo & Notari-Syverson, 2011).

### Why Is This Important?

Family centered, evidence-based assessment practices undergird effective intervention. Each of the assessment processes--screening, eligibility determination, individualized planning, monitoring child progress, and measuring child and program outcomes-- yields important information for decision-making.

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Using valid and reliable assessments will enhance intervention efforts and lead to improved short and long-term outcomes for young children and families. Assessment practices, carefully aligned and intertwined with formal and informal supports and services, will increase the success of our collective efforts to promote young children's development (McConnell & Rahn, 2016).

### Bottom Line

By following several key assessment principles, practitioners will be guided in making optimal decisions related to intervention practices.


Use of technically adequate screening and eligibility assessments will assure children are identified and served in appropriate programs in a timely manner. Implementing effective curriculum based assessments for intervention, and collecting and evaluating on-going data on child progress will assure children receive targeted, functional intervention and make consistent on-going progress. Using accurate, linguistically and culturally sensitive family-guided assessments will yield data that inform and optimize child progress--ultimately improving our ability to support all children and families in meeting their short and long-term goals.

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### About the Expert

Jane Squires is a professor of Early Intervention/Special Education at the University of Oregon. She is Co-Director of the Center on Human Development and oversees research and outreach projects in the areas of developmental screening, implementation of screening systems, early identification of developmental delays, and the involvement of parents in monitoring of their young children's development.

She and her Early Intervention team are currently conducting research on a curriculum-based assessment focused on early childhood social emotional competence.

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# Summary

In this lesson, we learned that assessment is critical in supporting each and every child and his or her family in meeting their short and long-term goals. Using key assessment principles, practitioners can make optimal data-driven decisions related to intervention practices.



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# Check Your Knowledge



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Now let's take a moment to check what you've learned.

# References and Resources

RPMs | Early Childhood Recommended Practice Modules

References

Module 7: Assessment

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References

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This concludes Module 7 Lesson 1. To learn more, see the resources here. After downloading, you can close the window. Thank you for participating.