Authentic Child Assessment

This checklist includes key characteristics of authentic assessment practices for observing child participation in everyday activities, the real-world learning opportunities that occur in the activities, child behavior in the everyday learning opportunities, and the learning opportunities that provide a child the richest array of competency-enhancing learning opportunities.

The focus of authentic assessment practices is identifying the everyday contexts for child learning, the behavior a child will acquire in these settings, and the environmental and interactional or instructional strategies for promoting child competence while engaged in the activities. Authentic assessment links context-specific assessment information to functional intervention practices.

DEC Recommended Practices: Assessment 2, 4, 6, 7, 9

Copyright © 2026 ECTA Center *https://ectacenter.org/decrp*

ecta Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

Practitioner

Child

Date

Instructions

Rate how often you used each practice characteristic:

1. Seldom (0–25%)
2. Sometimes (25–50%)
3. Often (50–75%)
4. Almost always (75–100%)

Practice Characteristics

	1	2	3	4
1. Observe the child's participation in everyday (family, classroom, or community) activities and routines.	○	○	○	○
2. Query the child's primary caregivers (for example, parents and teachers) about the everyday activities that make up a child's everyday experiences.	○	○	○	○
3. Identify the context-specific child functional behavior (through observation or caregiver report) that are used in everyday activities.	○	○	○	○
4. Ascertain the child behaviors (for example, strengths, interests, and preferences) that sustain child engagement in everyday activities.	○	○	○	○
5. Determine which materials (for example, objects and toys) and adult interactional or instructional behavior are associated with optimal levels of child competence.	○	○	○	○
6. Identify which everyday activities, learning opportunities, materials, and adult behavior will be used to support and strengthen child acquisition of functional competencies in a number of different context-specific activities and routines.	○	○	○	○
7. Monitor and analyze child learning and progress to determine needed changes in everyday child learning opportunities.	○	○	○	○