



Assessment Tip Sheet

CHILD ASSESSMENT

WHAT IS CHILD ASSESSMENT?

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 a developmental delay or disability and their families.



WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY ABOUT CHILD ASSESSMENTS?

According to Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – Part C, assessment means the ongoing procedures used by qualified personnel to identify the child's unique strengths and needs and the early intervention services appropriate to meet those needs throughout the period of the child's eligibility under this part and includes the assessment of the child, consistent with paragraph (c)(1) of this section. IDEA § 303.321 ensures that an assessment of each infant or toddler with a disability must be conducted by qualified personnel in order to identify the child's unique strengths and needs and the early intervention services appropriate to meet those needs.

The assessment of the child must include the following –

- (i) A review of the results of the evaluation conducted
- (ii) Personal observations of the child; and
- (iii) The identification of the child's needs in each of the developmental areas in § 303.21(a)(1).



All evaluations and assessments of the child and family must be conducted in a nondiscriminatory manner, in the native language of the child or family, by a multidisciplinary team.

The Wisconsin Administrative Code – Dept. of Health Services, Chapter 90.09 identifies the following with regard to assessment of a child:

(a) Initial assessment.

1. Once a child is determined under s. DHS 90.08 to be eligible for early intervention services, the EI team shall, as needed, carry out additional observations, procedures and testing to assess and determine the child's unique developmental needs. All assessment tests and other materials and procedures shall comply with DHS 90.08 (Z)(d).
2. Following the assessment under subd. 1., the EI team shall prepare a report. This report need not be a separate document but may be made part of the EI team's report under s. DHS 90.08 (Z)(h) or the IFSP under s. DHS 90.10.
3. The service coordinator shall provide the child's parent with a copy of the assessment report.

(b) Ongoing assessment.

Ongoing assessments shall be carried on as needed by either the EI team or the IFSP team. All ongoing assessments shall meet the requirements in par. (a).

Wisconsin's Birth to 3 Program Operations Guide

see chapter 7 on Assessments



WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT CHILD ASSESSMENT IN PART C EARLY INTERVENTION?

The Council for Exceptional Children: [Division of Early Childhood Recommended Practices](#) for Authentic Child Assessment encourage practitioners to:

- Work with the family to identify family preferences for assessment processes.
- Work as a team with the family and other professionals to gather assessment information.
- 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.
- Conduct assessments that include all areas of development and behavior to learn about the child's strengths, needs, preferences, and interests.
- Conduct assessments in the child's dominant language and in additional languages if the child is learning more than one language.
- Use a variety of methods, including observation and interviews, to gather assessment information from multiple sources.
- Obtain information about the child's skills in daily activities, routines, and environments such as home, center, and community.
- 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.
- Implement systematic ongoing assessment to identify learning targets, plan activities, and monitor the child's progress to revise instruction as needed.
- Use assessment tools with sufficient sensitivity to detect child progress, especially for the child with significant support needed.
- Report assessment results so that they are understandable and useful to families.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF CHILD ASSESSMENT FOR PART C EARLY INTERVENTION?

Information gathered through assessment:

- Forms a holistic understanding of eligible children, their abilities, their environment, and potential early intervention services.
- Forms the basis for developing the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) that best supports each unique child's development.
- Helps the early intervention (EI) team to develop functional, participation-based, and measurable IFSP outcomes.
- Informs the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Child Outcome rating process.
- Helps parents and caregivers in understanding and supporting the child's development.

WHAT ARE THE CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHILD ASSESSMENT IN PART C EARLY INTERVENTION?

- **Selection:** Which age-anchoring instrument best meets identified needs?
- **Application:** How will the DEC Recommended Practices be implemented in the assessment process?
- **Team:** Which EI team members will participate in the assessment process?
- **Consistency:** How will a consistent assessment process be ensured for all families?
- **Timing:** At what points in the IFSP process will child assessment take place?
- **Results:** How will information gathered be shared with families and other team members? Used to support decision making? Inform intervention?