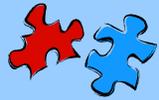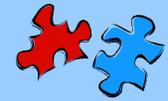# Best Practices in Assessment: Choosing the Right Tools for the Job

Sandra Hess Robbins, M.Ed. & Leah Gongola, Ph.D.

Autism Society of America National Conference, 2008

SCERTS

Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, and Transactional Supports

Barry M. Prizant, Amy M. Weatherby, Emily Rubin, Amy C. Laurent, & Patrick J. Rydell

Characteristics	Critical Assessment Information
• Curriculum-based & Criterion-referenced • Age range: preschool to elementary • Curriculum developed for children 8 months to 10 years • Comes with 2 volume set, planning worksheets, protocols, summary forms, tracking logs • Scored by a familiar adult • Serves as an educational model	• Compatible with any instructional approach • Examines social communication & emotional regulation • Measures progress of adults in ability to implement transactional supports • Appropriate for verbal and pre-verbal children • Functional goals for children with significant challenges

Best Practices in Assessment

Assessment should be authentic: It takes place in natural environments rather than contrived situations

Naturalistic observations of children should be done in a variety of circumstances with an array of assessment techniques and tools

Information should be derived from collaborative relationships between professionals and families

Assessment should allow for accommodations and modifications to be made for children with disabilities

Outcomes should be aligned with the curriculum and outline children's strengths and emerging skills

Assessment should be conducted at regular intervals

Assessment should be individualized and appropriate for the child and family: it recognizes diversity in learning styles, abilities, and culture and language

Information should be communicated to parents in a meaningful and proactive format

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

ABLLS

Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills

James W. Partington, Ph.D., BCBA

Characteristics	Critical Assessment Information
• Criterion-referenced • Data driven • Criterion clearly specified and measurable to ensure acquisition • Provides curriculum guide for educational programming • Input from team • Allows for modifications and variations (e.g., typing response as opposed to written) • Considers prompting and student independence	• Acquisition and fluency information • Generalized responding (home, school...) • Spontaneity (without prompts) • Summarizes performance from A to Z (e.g., **a**cademic, **b**ehavior, **c**ooperation...) • Identifies splinter skills Identifies and prioritizes critical skills (task analyzed)

ABAS II

Adaptive Behavior Assessment System Second Edition

Patti Harrison & Thomas Oakland

Characteristics	Critical Assessment Information
• Norm-referenced • Age range: birth to 89 years • Comes with a manual and rating forms for various ages • Can use self report or information from team • Quick to administer: About 20 minutes to complete, 5-10 minutes to summarize scores • Not curriculum based but curriculum compatible • Functional items can be used as intervention priorities	• Diagnose or classify adaptive concerns • Identify adaptive strengths and limitations • Document and monitor progress toward adaptive functioning • All areas look at adaptive functioning (communication, community use, functional academics, home/school living, health and safety, leisure, self-care, self-direction, social, & work)

Assessing Children with Autism

Assessment should cover multiple areas of functioning: Intellectual and communicative skills, behavioral presentation, and functional adjustment

Results should be viewed within the broader context of overall developmental levels: consideration of unusual developmental profiles

Assessment should document children's unique strengths and weaknesses: important not to generalize from an isolated splinter skill

Observation should take place in both facilitating and detrimental environments

Results should be viewed in the broader context of a child's typical level of functioning and response to daily real life demands

Assessment should take behavioral difficulties in consideration: Skill versus behavior deficit

AEPS

The Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System

Diane Bricker, Ph.D.

Characteristics	Critical Assessment Information
• Curriculum-based & Criterion-referenced • Age-range: birth to 6 years • Comes with 4 volume set, administration guide, test, curriculum, protocols, language observation, summary forms, family report, graph, & progress record • Scored by familiar adults	• Serves as a linked system and curriculum framework •Examines fine motor, gross motor, adaptive, cognitive, social-communication, & social • Developmental model • Allows for adaptations and modifications • Composed of functional goals