



Assessing Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Challenges and Solutions

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Agenda

- Discuss the challenges and principles of assessing children with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Discuss federal and state assessment mandates that impact young children with ASD
- Review key early childhood recommended assessment practices
- Understand the need for linking assessment and instruction
- Evaluate three (3) assessments



Challenges of Assessing Children with ASD

- Child/Student challenges
 - Unusual developmental profiles
 - Broad range of syndrome expression
 - Variability in IQ
 - May lack communicative ability
 - Behavioral difficulties
- Team challenges
 - High level of expertise required
 - Various disciplines necessary
- Assessment challenges
 - Traditional assessments may bias results for children with ASD (e.g., require the ability to verbalize, work rapidly, cope with transitions etc.).
 - May not have been developed and/or tested on target population



Principles of Assessment for Young Children with ASD

- Multiple areas of functioning
- Developmental perspective
- Variability of skills
- Variability of behavior across settings
- Functional adjustment
- Social dysfunction
- Behavioral difficulties



NCLB—trickle down effect

- Accountability and standards
- Measurement focus, not curriculum
- Federal government spending
- Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) expected to produce outcome data on the effectiveness of EI and ECSE



OSEP's Response

- Required states to submit outcome data in their Annual Performance Report (APR)
- Funded the Early Childhood Outcomes Center to do research, make recommendations, and assist states



Three Child Outcomes

1. Positive social-emotional skills
2. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication/literacy)
3. Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs

OSEP Reporting

- Baskets for Time One
 - (a) Percentage of children performing as same age peers
 - (b) Percentage of children not performing as same age peers
- Baskets for Time Two
 - (a) Percentage of children who did not improve functioning
 - (b) Percentage of children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers
 - (c) Percentage of children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it
 - (d) Percentage of children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers
 - (e) Percentage of children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers

Office of Early Learning and School Readiness Requirements

Part B (section 619)

- Two State Required Instruments to Address Child Outcomes
 - Ages and Stages Questionnaire-Social Emotional (ASQ-SE)
 - Get It, Got It, Go (GGG)
- Part B programs are also encouraged to use curriculum based instruments and other measures to gather information on children

Early Childhood Assessment Standards

- Identify children's present level of performance and can monitor the effects of intervention
- Provide information that is acceptable to families and professionals
- Uses authentic assessment practices (e.g., observations and conversations in natural environments)
- Allows for accommodations and modifications for children with disabilities

Standards Continued

- Identify children's strengths and emerging skills and detects even small amounts of progress
- Allows for data from across methods, time, sources to be combined
- Are designed and have been tested for use with target population
- Promote teamwork and collaborative decision-making

Linking Assessment and Instruction



What

- Direct connection between what is assessed and what is taught
- Assessment drives instruction and ongoing assessment revises instruction

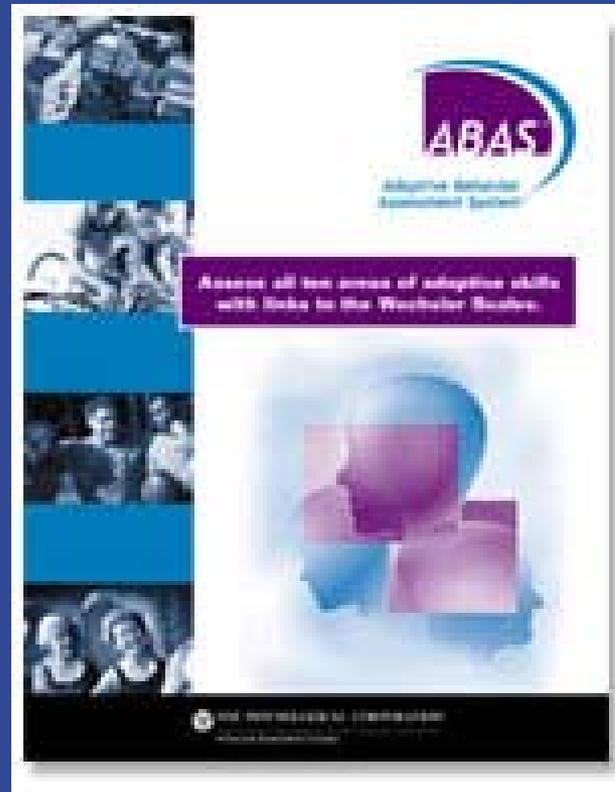
Why

- Establishes a baseline
- Emphasis is on functional goals
- Gain an understanding of strengths, emerging skills, and needs
- Understand the impact of instructional efforts

Sample of CBA Rubric

Element	Unsatisfactory (0)	Basic (1)	Satisfactory (2)	Excellent (3)
Adaptable for Special Needs	No consideration of special needs	Limited consideration of special needs through the assessment process and instrument does not allow for additional accommodations or modifications for special needs	Upfront considerations for special needs are not comprehensive, but assessment allows for some accommodations and/or modifications for special needs	Considers and provides specific strategies and procedures for accommodating and/or modifying the assessment for special needs
Aligns with Federal/State/Agency Standards and/or Outcomes	Does not align with Federal/State/Agency Standards and/or Outcomes	Aligns with less than half of the big ideas or concepts from Federal/State/Agency Standards and/or Outcomes	Aligns with more than half of the big ideas or concepts from Federal/State/Agency Standards and/or Outcomes	Aligns with a clear majority or all of the big ideas or concepts from Federal/State/Agency Standards and/or Outcomes

Adaptive Behavior Assessment System (ABAS[®] II)



<http://www.harcourt-au.com/default.asp?action=article&ID=107>

Adaptive Behavior Assessment System (ABAS[®] II)

Assessment Type: Norm-referenced

Authors: Patti Harrison & Thomas Oakland

Publication Date: 2003

Ages: Birth - 89 years

Areas: Communication, Community Use, Functional Academics, Home/School Living, Health and Safety, Leisure, Self-Care, Self-Direction, Social, and Work

Purpose: To diagnose or classify adaptive concerns, identify adaptive strengths and limitations, and to document and monitor progress toward adaptive functioning

Assessment Evaluation and Programming System (AEPS®)



<http://www.brookespublishing.com/store/books/bricker-aeps/index.htm>

Assessment Evaluation and Programming System (AEPS®)

Assessment Type: Curriculum-based, criterion-referenced

Authors: Diane Bricker, Ph.D., Kristie Pretti-Frontczak, Ph.D., JoAnn Johnson, Ph.D., & Elizabeth Straka, Ph.D.,
CCC-SLP

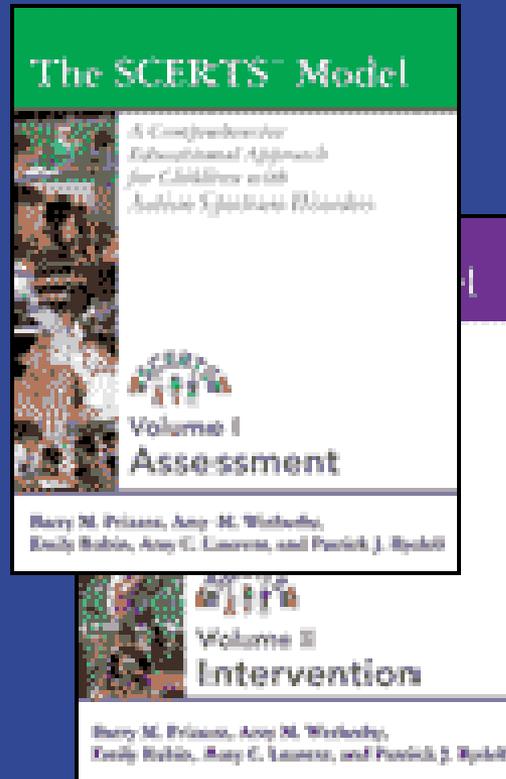
Publication Date: 2002

Ages: Birth – 6 years

Areas: Fine Motor, Gross Motor, Adaptive, Cognitive, Social-Communication, Social

Purpose: To serve as a linked system and curriculum framework for meeting the needs of young children within the context of their family and community.

The SCERTS™ Model



<http://www.brookespublishing.com/store/books/prizant-8183/index.htm>

The SCERTS™ Model

Assessment Type: Curriculum-based, criterion-referenced

Authors: Barry M. Prizant, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Amy M. Wetherby, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Emily Rubin, CCC-SLP, Amy C. Laurent, Ed.M., OTR/L, & Patrick J. Rydell, Ed.D.

Publication Date: 2006

Ages: Preschool and elementary age

Areas: Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, Transactional Support

Purpose: Serves as an educational model designed to enhance communication and social-emotional abilities of children with ASD and related disabilities.

Application Activity



- Divide into pairs or small groups
- Locate your CBA rubric
- Review the additional packets at your table which contain sample pages from the three assessments
- Review the packets and/or actual full sets of assessment materials
- Select a standard or two from the CBA rubric
- Rate the assessment materials to determine their applicability for use with young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Conclusion

- Assessing young children with ASD presents several challenges
- State and federal law requires assessment regardless of challenges
- Recommended practices offer a starting place for applying effective assessment practices
- Emphasis should be on implementing a linked system of assessment and instruction for young children with ASD

