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kansas in service training system

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KU LIFE SPAN INSTITUTE
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The University of Kansas

Using Assessments for the Purpose of Program Planning

By 2012 KITS Summer Institute Presenter
Jennifer Grisham-Brown, Ed.D.

Introduction by Karen Lawson

Introduction: *Jennifer Grisham-Brown, Ed.D. will be a presenter during the KITS 2012 Summer Institute. She is a professor in the Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education program and faculty director of the Early Childhood Laboratory School at the University of Kentucky. She is co-author of two books on blended education in early childhood education (Blended Practices in Early Childhood Education and Blended Assessment Practices in Early Childhood Education – in press). Her research interests include authentic assessment, tiered instruction, and inclusion of children with significant disabilities. Dr. Grisham-Brown is co-founder of a children's home and preschool program in Guatemala City called Hope for Tomorrow, where she accompanies students for the education abroad program.*

Early childhood assessment is an issue that challenges many teachers of young children. Assessment for young children is most typically defined as a process of "gathering information about children for purposes of making decisions" (Early Childhood Research Institute on Measuring Growth and Development, 1998, p.2). There are four decisions early childhood professionals make using assessment information. These include:

- determining a child's need for special education services;
- deciding what to teach young children;
- monitoring the success of instruction; and
- evaluating the effectiveness of early childhood programs (Grisham-Brown, Hemmeter, & Pretti-Frontczak, 2005; Grisham-Brown & Pretti-Frontczak, 2011).



Jennifer Grisham-Brown will be a presenter at the 2012 Summer Institute.

This article will focus on the second of these reasons; deciding what to teach young children or *program planning assessment*. From program planning assessments, early childhood providers gain information on children's abilities across developmental and content areas, their interests and preferences, and the priorities and concerns of children's families (Grisham-Brown & Pretti-Frontczak, 2011). The specific focus of this article will be on strategies of *how* to collect assessment information to make programming decisions.

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Using Assessments... continued

High quality program planning assessment should be conducted using *authentic assessment practices*. Authentic assessment has been defined as “...the systematic recording of developmental observations over time about the naturally occurring behaviors and functional competencies of young children in daily routines by familiar and knowledgeable caregivers in the child’s life” (Bagnato & Yeh Ho, 2006, p.42). The definition of authentic assessment provides information about *how* to collect assessment information for young children. *Observing* young children in environments in which they spend time is the primary method for collecting programming planning assessment information. Grisham-Brown, et al. (2005) First, providers should decide *who* will conduct the observation. Most classrooms have teaching assistants and/or therapists who can share in the overwhelming responsibility of observing and recording children’s behavior. Second, providers need to consider *what* they will observe. Within any given activity, many examples of developmental skills and processes will be noticed. Before beginning an observation, the provider should decide which skill area (e.g., social-communication) and/or specific skill (e.g., social initiations) will be observed. Third, providers need to determine *how* to conduct the observation. Observations may be conducted on groups of children or an individual child. In some situations, it may be important to watch groups of children to determine their interactions and play skills. Sometimes, teachers may need to focus on an individual child and his/her interactions with the environment and others. A final consideration for conducting program planning assessments is *where* to conduct the observation. As is implied in the definition above, assessments should be conducted in *daily routines*. Each child’s daily routines may be different. Some young children spend all day in center-based programs where they may be observed interacting with friends in the dramatic play area, being read to by an adult, eating a meal or snack, or playing on the playground. Others may spend their day with caregivers in a home setting. In those settings, the child might be observed while eating a meal or snack, playing in their yard, or interacting with a sibling. All of these settings provide observers with opportunities to watch children engage in activities with which they are familiar, thereby increasing the probability of seeing a true picture of the child’s abilities.

Since the purpose of program planning assessment is to determine what to teach young children, additional

information on *what* to observe is needed. The definition of authentic assessment emphasizes the importance of observing *functional competencies*. These are skills that children need in order to participate in their daily routines.

For example, in order to participate in dramatic play, children need to hold and release objects, initiate and maintain interactions with peers, put on/take off dress-up clothing, and use problem solving skills to manipulate toys. The best way to identify the functional competencies that young children need to learn is to use a curriculum-based assessment (CBA). A CBA links assessment and curriculum content and is used to help determine children’s entry points into a program, as well as how to make program adjustments (Losardo & Syverson, 2011). Pretti-Frontczak, Vilardo, & Kennely (2005) developed a set of guidelines for selecting a high quality CBA. Some of the elements providers should consider when selecting a CBA include alignment with state and program standards, capacity for use with children with a wide range of developmental abilities, coverage of all developmental areas, and strategies for family involvement. Some of the commonly used early childhood CBAs include *Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System for Infants and Young Children* (Bricker, 2002), *The Carolina Curriculum for Infants and Preschoolers with Special Needs* (Johnson-Martin, Jens, Hacker & Attermeier, 2004), *Teaching Strategies GOLD* (Teaching Strategies, 2011), and *Work Sampling System* (Meisels, Jablon, Marsden, Dichtelmiller, & Dorfmann, 2001). Bagnato, Neisworth and Pretti-Frontczak (2010) have overviewed all commonly used early childhood CBAs in their book *Linking Authentic Assessment and Early Childhood Intervention: Best Measures for Best Practices* (2nd edition).



The final component of the authentic assessment definition that informs program planning assessment involves engaging families and others who are familiar with the child in the process. Hall, Rutland, & Grisham-Brown (2010) indicate that families can be involved in the assessment process as a consumer, informant, team member, and/or advocate. Families should receive information about how teachers are addressing their child’s needs during classroom activities. As well, families and caregivers can share information about their child’s abilities such as how

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Using Assessments... continued

their child communicates, moves around the environment, and interacts with others. Families should inform early childhood providers about their concerns and priorities for their child. Also, families can help gather information during observations as an assessment team member. They may interact with their children as other team members observe or validate that the observations are indicative of their child's typical behavior. Finally, families can be advocates for their child during the assessment process by confirming or refuting assessment results, and taking an active role in planning and implementing the assessment.

The primary way to gather information from families and caregivers is through interviews. In order to ensure the accuracy of information gathered from families, early childhood providers should use effective communication skills (Turnbull & Turnbull, 1990). Hall, et al. (2010) recommend the use of open-ended questions to facilitate positive interviews with families. As opposed to questions that result in a yes/no or one-word response, open-ended questions allow families to expand on the question. For example, if a provider asks a parent or caregiver to describe mealtime, the provider may learn how the child interacts with others in the family, uses utensils while eating, and/or the child's food preferences. One strategy for gathering assessment information from families of young children is called *Reach for the Stars: Planning for the Future* (Haynes & Grisham-Brown, in press). In the *Reach for the Stars* process, early childhood providers use "maps" to learn information about different aspects of a child's life. For example, one map is called the *Gifts/Contributions* and allows families to describe characteristics of their child that might be useful to others who are just beginning to know the child. Family members may say that their child is "full of energy", "serious", "fun-loving", or "determined". Each of these characteristics provides insight into the child's personality. Another "map" is called *Things that Work/Things that Don't Work*. By using this map, providers may learn that a child works best when someone gets on the child's level and uses simple phrases to give directions.

Conversely they may learn that what doesn't work for the child is to have his/her daily schedule disrupted without notice. Regardless of the method used, it is imperative that early childhood providers actively seek input from families and caregivers when conducting program planning assessments.

Early childhood providers are increasingly challenged to conduct assessment for a variety of reasons. Arguably the most important purpose is to determine how to design instruction. The use of authentic assessment practices is the primary way for collecting program planning assessment information. Observing children in natural routines and activities, relying on high quality CBAs to guide those observations, and interacting with families are critical aspects of conducting assessment that will help teachers know *what to teach, where to teach, how to teach, and who will help them do it*.

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Using Assessments... conclusion on Page 4

Using Assessments... conclusion

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Turnbull, A. P., & Turnbull, H. R. (1990). *Families, professionals, and exceptionality: A special partnership*. New York: Merrill/Macmillan

may end up using assessment tools or methods that are not used in the way intended, and therefore are neither useful nor beneficial, and potentially become harmful to the young children being assessed. Professionals who devalue the collection and use of assessment information to make instructional changes may be providing inadequate or inappropriate services to the children they serve. For these reasons, it is critical that early childhood professionals understand the appropriate uses and potential misuse of assessment as it applies to young children. Professionals must be cognizant of the rationale for collecting and using assessment data, understand the principles for selection and administration of specific tools, identify methods for collecting information in an ongoing manner, and be able to analyze and apply that information to make appropriate instructional decisions.

This year our Summer Institute will focus on the topic of assessment in early childhood, specifically as it is applied to making decisions related to instruction or intervention. Information provided by nationally recognized experts at this four-day event will reflect recommended practices, professional standards, and position statements established by major national organizations, including the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC); the Division for Early Childhood (DEC); the Head Start Program Performance Standards; the American Educational Research Association (AERA); and the National Association for School Psychologists (NASP).



KITS 2012 Summer Institute: Linking Assessment, Instruction and Individualized Interventions

June 5-8, 2012
Wichita State University Hughes
Metropolitan Complex
Wichita, Kansas

Register TODAY at:

<http://kskits.org/training/KITSSummerInst.shtml>

When applied to the field of early childhood, the word “assessment” too often drums up negative images. Differing beliefs, expectations, and at times misconceptions regarding the assessment of young children may keep professionals from appropriately collecting, analyzing, and utilizing meaningful data to make important instructional/intervention decisions. As the pressure for “accountability” mounts, early childhood professionals may find themselves in discussions regarding formal assessments and high stakes testing. In these situations, the misinformed

Day 1, Tuesday, June 5:

Stephen J. Bagnato, Ed.D., NCSP, University of Pittsburgh

LINKing Authentic Assessment and Early Childhood Intervention: Best Measures for Best Practices

Day 2, Wednesday, June 6:

Jennifer Grisham-Brown, Ed.D., University of Kentucky

Using Assessments for the Purpose of Program Planning

Day 3, Thursday, June 7:

Terrie Rose, Ph.D., LP

From the Baby's Point of View: Ensuring the Development of Mentally Healthy Children Through Assessment and Early Intervention

Day 4, Friday, June 8:

Gregory Cheatham, Ph.D., University of Kansas
Methods for Collecting and Using Information to Promote Friendships and Social Skills





The Collaborative Calendar of Events

View at www.kskits.org/training



DATE	EVENT/CITY	CONTACT / REGISTRATION
4/12/12	<i>The Magical Do's to Helping Children Follow Instructions</i> - Topeka	Risa Flanders - 785-272-4060 Ext 7152 or rflanders@capper.easterseals.com
4/12/12	<i>A Multi-disciplinary Discussion using a Behavioral, Nutritional, Oral Motor and Sensory Issues Approach to Evaluate Children with Oral Aversion and Feeding Difficulties</i> – Webinar	https://kansasasd.webex.com/kansasasd/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=663659396
4/13/12	<i>Part C Network Coordinators Meeting</i> – Newton	https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/D5RYSLY
4/26/12	<i>Sensory Strategies for Better Behavior</i> – Topeka	Risa Flanders - 785-272-4060 Ext 7152 or rflanders@capper.easterseals.com
4/26-27/12	<i>2012 Kansas Association for Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health (KAIMH) Annual Conference - Building Foundations for Young Children</i> – Hutchinson	http://www.cvent.com/d/lcqlns/4W
4/30/12	<i>Sensory Strategies for Better Behavior</i> – Lawrence	Risa Flanders - 785-272-4060 Ext 7152 or rflanders@capper.easterseals.com
5/3/12	<i>CEC/DEC Collaborative Webinar: Implementing Tiered Instruction for Diverse PreK Learners: Effective Teacher Decision Making at Tier One.</i>	888-232-7733 or http://www.cec.sped.org/scriptcontent/custom/events/webinar_detail.cfm?
5/3-4/12	<i>Evaluation and Eligibility Training</i> – Dodge City	http://ksdetasn.org/cms/index.php/register-for-event
5/9/12	<i>Database Managers Meeting</i> – Hutchinson	https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2GMFSFX
5/11/12	<i>Use of Land and Aquatic Based Therapy to Address Functional Limitations in Children with ASD</i> – Topeka	Risa Flanders - 785-272-4060 Ext 7152 or rflanders@capper.easterseals.com
5/14/12	<i>The Magical Do's to Helping Children Follow Instructions</i> – Lawrence	Risa Flanders - 785-272-4060 Ext 7152 or rflanders@capper.easterseals.com
5/31/12	<i>Children's Brains, Neuroplasticity and Pediatric Intervention: What's the Evidence?</i> – Kansas City, MO	www.childrenstlc.org/conference
6/1/12	<i>Family Service Coordination Training</i> – Manhattan	https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Y9WTYGD
6/5-8/12	<i>KITS 2012 Summer Institute: Linking Assessment, Instruction and Individualized Interventions</i> – Wichita	http://kskits.org/training/KITSSummerInst.shtml

Links to Other Training Calendars

- KDHE – Infant-Toddler Services: www.ksits.org
- KSDE - TASN: www.ksdetasn.org
- KCCTO child care or CDA advisor trainings: www.kccto.org
- Families Together: www.familiestogetherinc.org
- Children's Alliance Training Team: www.childally.org/training
- ChildCare Aware of Kansas: www.ks.childcareaware.org
- Capper Foundation: www.capper.easterseals.com
- Council for Exceptional Children: www.cec.sped.org
- Kansas Children's Service League: <https://www.kcsl.org>
- Kansas Head Start Association: www.ksheadstart.org



Annual Family Service Coordination Training

Friday, June 1, 2012
 Manhattan Conference Center
 Register at
www.surveymonkey.com/s/Y9WTYGD



Best Practice in Early Childhood Services Awarded for Services 2011-2012



Part B – Early Childhood Preschool Programs

Each year all early childhood programs in the state of Kansas, serving children with disabilities, are invited to submit an application to the State Department of Education. These applications reflect interventions or services conducted in a manner considered a “best practice” in the field of early childhood special education. Each submission is reviewed by a panel of professionals from across the state and scored according to specific criteria.

Two programs were honored for their educational services during the annual meeting of the **Kansas Division for Early Childhood**, in Wichita on Friday, February 24, 2012. Each program received a certificate of recognition and \$1,250 to use as an added resource for their services.



Carol Affholder and Kathleen Cook accept the award for the ECSE Program of the Olathe Public School District.

Early Childhood Special Education Program of the Olathe Public School District

The Teaching Intensive Programming and Play Skills - **Early Childhood Special Education Program of the Olathe Public School District** is recognized for the application of the principles of a continuum of services and least restrictive environments for young children with autism. This program is designed with the overall goal of preparing children with autism to be prepared to enter their neighborhood school when they reach kindergarten. Based on the individual strengths and needs of each child, the early childhood program provided the necessary level of support for the child to be successful. Each component of this program is designed to support each child in the service program that is least restrictive and meeting their learning goals while progressively moving to an inclusionary service setting.

Contact: Carol Affholder, Early Childhood Special Education Services, Olathe Public Schools, 1700 W Sheridan, Olathe, KS 66061, Phone: 913.780.7403, Email: caffholderhlc@olatheschools.org



Kay Smith accepts the award for the Jackson Heights Early Childhood Special Education Services.

Jackson Heights Early Childhood Special Education Class

The **Jackson Heights Early Childhood Special Education Class** is recognized for application of best practice in the Developmentally Appropriate Activities in Pre-Science. The Kids Investigating and Discovering Science (KIDS) program was developed through a strong partnership with the school's administration as well as the high school science class. This innovative program for fostering pre-science skills with preschool age children has specifically identified outcomes for the preschool age children as well as their high school learning partners. The program's outcomes reflect the Kansas Early Learning Guidelines and are designed to foster social/emotional skill development as well as foundational concepts for science pre-academic skills.

Contact: Kay Smith, Jackson Heights Early Childhood Special Education Services, 12763 266th Rd, Holton, Ks 66436, Phone: 785.364.8162, Email: Kay.Smith@jhcobras.net



Best Practice in Early Childhood Services Awarded for Services 2011-2012



Part C – Early Intervention tiny-k Programs

Each year the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the Kansas Inservice Training System, based on applications from across the state, recognize early intervention tiny-k programs for the application of best practices related to their services. These applications reflect interventions or services that are conducted in a manner that is considered best practice in the field of early childhood special education. As in the past, tiny-k networks had the opportunity to submit an application that focused on one area from a number of program components. These applications were reviewed by professionals from across the state and considered for recognition. One program in the state received the honor this year.

The **Pottawatomie/Wabaunsee Infant-Toddler Services** are recognized for application of best practice in the area of professional development. This program is using the medium of video recording in the development of colleague-to-colleague coaching and performance feedback. Through the use of video, professionals partner with peers to reflect on their early intervention practices while focusing on strengths of each other and building trusting working relationships. This program uses the primary coaching model while focusing on skills of staff in working with families.

Contact: Anna Nippert, Pottawatomie/Wabaunsee Infant-Toddler Services, 510 E Hwy 24, Wamego, KS 66547, Phone: 785.456.7366, Email: nipperta@usd320.com



Anna Nippert and staff from the Pottawatomie/Wabaunsee Infant-Toddler Services accept an award for Best Practice during the 2012 KDEC Conference.

**World Autism
Awareness Day
April 2**



**Week of the Young Child
April 22-28, 2012**



**National Children's Mental Health
Awareness Day
May 9, 2012**



Part B ECSE Preschool Coordinator's Corner

KSDE Early Learning Services Unit Website

<http://ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=2284>

Our website has information, reports and documents about Early Childhood programs, including Parents as Teachers, ECSE Part B, Kansas Pre-K, 4 Year Old at Risk and our Birth to Five State Early Childhood Documents from our annual regional summits.

Early Childhood Outcomes Outcomes Web System (OWS) Part B Indicator 7

<http://www.kskits.org/ta/ECOOutcomes/Index.shtml>

The KITS early childhood team and the Part B ESCE Coordinator provided a breakout session at the KDEC conference to provide guidance, including a data drilldown guide to support Part B ECSE preschool programs in understanding early childhood outcome data, evaluating current early childhood outcome reporting process, and identifying patterns in the data that can lead to improved services to Kansas children and families. The KITS website (above) has a section called Understanding Your ECO Data that includes the drill down guide and other helpful information and documents.

School Readiness Data Task Force

The Task Force is finalizing its work and made recommendations to be shared with KSDE leadership, the Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund, and the State Early Childhood Interagency Leadership Team later this spring. Once recommendations have been accepted, they will be available for sharing across the state. All documents from the School Readiness Data Task Force are online at:

<http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4681>

Transition from Part C to Part B ECSE Preschool – Part B Indicator 12



KSDE has requested Technical Assistance from Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center (MPRRC) and the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) to assist with updating the Memorandum Of Agreement (MOA) between KDHE and KSDE for children transitioning from Part C to Part B in Kansas. Our first meeting was held on March 8th with a group of stakeholders from KDHE, KSDE, KITS and the State ICC transition task force to begin this process. In addition to the updated MOA, we will also be releasing a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document to address more specific guidance areas for transition.

If an LEA/district needs technical assistance with transition, please contact Tiffany Smith at tsmith@ksde.org or go to the TASN website to request Individualized Technical Assistance with KITS at <http://ksdetasn.org/cms/>

Early Childhood Special Education Indicator Technical Assistance

Please go to the TASN website to request Individualized Technical Assistance or to get information regarding the Kansas SPP Indicator Improvement Resources, Public Reports and other useful links. <http://ksdetasn.org/cms/>

There are many resources available regarding Early Childhood Transition (Indicator 12), Early Childhood Outcomes (Indicator 7) and Least Restrictive Environment (Indicator 6) for Early Childhood, as well as the other Part B Indicators.



Submitted by Tiffany Smith,
ECSE Part B Coordinator
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tsmith@ksde.org

Part C Coordinator's Corner

Happy Spring from Kansas Infant Toddler Services! We are very busy with grand plans and many projects. But before I get to the plans and projects, I am excited to announce the arrival of our newest team member, **Kelly Jorgensen**. Kelly joins the Infant Toddler Services staff as a Program Consultant. She comes to KDHE from the Ottawa-Wellsville Infant Toddler Program where she was a Family Services Coordinator, data manager and office manager. Kelly brings a variety of early childhood experiences to this position; in addition to her experience in Part C, she has worked at a local SRS office in child protective services, as a child care center director and Parent Educator with Parents as Teachers. She lives in Ottawa with her husband and her high school aged daughter. Kelly also has two other daughters who are in college: one at Fort Hays State and one at The South Dakota School of Mines & Technology. We are very excited to have her on our team. Join me in welcoming Kelly to KDHE!

Now, on with the projects...

It wouldn't be spring without the **annual network grant application process**. We are putting the final touches on the packet and Network Coordinators should be receiving their packets soon, if they haven't already. This year's process will be a little different from the past. We are incorporating the **Mission and Key Principles for Providing Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments** into the application. Timelines for the application process are:

- March 21, 2012 - Distribution of application materials
- May 21, 2012 - Applications received in Topeka by 5 p.m.
- June, 2012 - Notification to community networks and contract development



More information about the new process will be shared at the **April Coordinator's meeting in Newton on April 13, 2012**. Registration for that meeting can be found at

<http://www.kskits.org/~kskits/cgi-bin/CollCal/EventDetails.php?EventID=490> .



Another project we are working on is the migration of the **Infant Toddler Services Database** to an exclusively web based system. On **May 9, 2012** in **Hutchinson**, there is a data managers training. All Part C data managers, coordinators and others who enter information into the ITS database are encouraged to attend. Bring your laptops and join us for a day of "hands-on" experiences learning about the ITS database. Information and registration can be accessed at:

<http://www.kskits.org/~kskits/cgi-bin/CollCal/EventDetails.php?EventID=597>

We are busy putting the final touches on our **Statewide IFSP** document and supporting documentation. Thank you to everyone who has provided us with feedback. We are still optimistic that it will be ready to go by July 1, 2012. It is our plan to provide training on **June 1, 2012** at the annual **Family Service Coordination Training**. This year's training will be held in Manhattan. For more information and registration go to

<http://www.kskits.org/~kskits/cgi-bin/CollCal/EventDetails.php?EventID=492>

We are still working on revising the Procedure Manual to align with the Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The five sections that have been completed so far are in on the Kansas ITS website at www.ksits.org and are out for public comment until April 9, 2012. We also have one more Public Hearing scheduled for April 6, 2012 and information about locations can be found on our website as well. Training on the new regulations is in the planning stages. Look for more information to follow as soon as it is available.

Have a great spring and remember:

"Spring's greatest joy beyond a doubt is when it brings the children out."

- Edgar Guest

Submitted by Sarah Walters
Part C Infant-Toddler
tiny-k Coordinator
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Early Childhood Resource Center

Try It Before You Buy It

Try It Before You Buy It. Sounds simple enough, but seldom is the opportunity available. Now, more than ever, purchasers need to spend their money wisely and get what works for them the first time. The KITS Early Childhood Resource Center allows any person who educates young children birth to eight years of age to borrow from the ECRC. Our purpose is to provide access to a continuously updated collection of materials on topics related to children birth to eight who are identified with special needs.

Since some assessments or measuring tools cost \$250 and up for a starter kit, taking advantage of the KITS ECRC can potentially save a program hundreds of dollars. For example, the AEPS is \$239 for the manuals. The Transdisciplinary Play-Based Assessment is \$329. Our newest addition is the *Get Ready to Read!* by Whitehurst and Lonigan. *Get Ready to Read!* provides a brief, research-based screening tool to help you evaluate a child's readiness for learning how to read and write. Specifically designed for preschoolers, this practical instrument also gives you activities to develop young children's literacy skills.

Test results identify what step the child has reached on the path to reading. The 20-question assessment incorporates visual and auditory items that allow children to demonstrate their skills in: print knowledge, book knowledge, phonological awareness, phonics and writing.

So remember, if you need to examine an assessment or screening tool, contact the KITS ECRC. Our entire catalog is searchable online at <http://www.kskits.org/ECRC>

Get Ready to Read! Information copied from www.pearsonassessment.com

**DID YOU
KNOW...**

... that any person who educates young children birth to eight years of age may borrow from the ECRC, including you?

Our entire catalog is searchable online at www.kskits.org/ECRC.

New to the ECRC For Spring 2012

- Ensher, G.; Clark D. (2011). *Relationship-centered Practices in Early Childhood: working with families, infants & young children at risk*. Baltimore, MD. Brookes Publishing.
- Janko-Summers, S; Chazan-Cohen, R. (2012). *Understanding Early Childhood Mental Health: a practical guide for professionals*. Baltimore, MD. Brookes Publishing.
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- Kein, A.; Starkey, P.; Ramirez, A. (2003). *Pre-K Mathematics Curriculum*. Pearson Early Learning. Minneapolis, MN.
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Contact the ECRC

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All Children Can Read - and More

If you are not currently working with a child who is deaf and blind, and you heard the recent announcement of a new website created by the National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB) called *All Children Can Read*, you might have filed this information away for another day. In reality, this website contains practical information on effective teaching related to early emergent literacy that has application for many of the young children in our practices. High quality pictures, video clips, and articles illustrate strategies for teaching book and print awareness, creating adapted books, using music and finger plays, and embedding opportunities for communication throughout the day. There are also instructional strategies related to early writing skills. Practical examples of recommended strategies are presented in a user-friendly, interactive manner utilizing existing resources in the child's natural learning environment. Additional topics under development at this site include vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and expanding literacy.

<http://literacy.nationaldb.org/>

If you *are* currently working with infants, toddlers, or preschoolers with deafblindness or multiple-severe disabilities, you likely have already discovered the main NCDB website, funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). At the home page, you can select resources for families, learn about new initiatives, explore training and technical assistance available online, or explore links to related information and services, including NCDB products, conferences, and research summaries. <http://www.nationaldb.org/>

- At *Tools and Instruments* practitioners can download the *Classroom Observation Instrument for Educational Environments Serving Students with Deaf-Blindness*.
- *Tools for TA* include online modules, many with video, on a range of topics of interest to practitioners, family members, and paraeducators working with children who have multiple and severe disabilities, including impairments of vision and hearing. Families and professionals alike will appreciate the video of Jane Berstein (Berstein Bears author) sharing experiences of raising a daughter diagnosed with optic nerve hypoplasia. Other topics range from basic introductory level, e.g., *Introduction to Learners with Deafblindness*, *Person Centered Planning*, *School Based Therapy*, and *Who's on My Child's Team and What are They For?* to more complex issues of the anatomy of hearing loss, eye

conditions, communication issues, sensory integration, and transition planning.

- *Teaching Resources* include the Perkins School for the Blind on-demand webcasts presented by international experts on vision impairment and deafblindness. For example, there is an interview of Dr. Jan van Dijk of the Netherlands whose method of child-guided assessment of children with deafblindness challenged many of our professional instincts about working with children with severe-profound sensory impairments. Among the topics addressed by various experts in the thirty webcasts currently posted are developing a communication portfolio, early literacy for students with multiple disabilities or deafblindness, mealtime, social skills, teaching Braille reading, tactile graphics, adaptive PE, and orientation and mobility.

Among the many links to related resources developed by state and national centers is a link to five online university courses developed through the Early Intervention Training Center for Infants and Toddlers with Visual Impairments at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Materials for the courses can be downloaded from the center's archives at

<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~edin/Resources/modules/index.cfm>

Course titles include:

- Family-Centered Practices for Infants and Toddlers with Visual Impairments
- Visual Conditions and Functional Vision: Early Intervention Issues
- Developmentally Appropriate Orientation and Mobility
- Communication and Emergent Literacy: Early Intervention Issues
- Assessment of Infants and Toddlers with Visual Impairments

If these topics are of interest to you, you may also want to explore materials related to enhancing communication skills of young children with multisensory impairments available from the KITS Early Childhood Resource Center, including the video series by Rowland, Schweigert, and Stremel.

<http://www.kskits.org/ecrc>

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Ready Freddy

PATHWAYS TO KINDERGARTEN SUCCESS



Looking for tools and strategies to support all kids, families and teachers during the transition to kindergarten? The Ready Freddy model developed at the University of Pittsburgh defines quality kindergarten transition as including activities and interactions that

- Welcome families and children into kindergarten,
- Prepare children for learning in a formal setting,
- Lower anxiety (for children, families, and teachers),
- Foster parent involvement and on-time enrollment/attendance, and
- Build a continuum of learning experiences between home and school.

Pathways to Kindergarten Success was developed in part to support a community where many students (and families) were entering kindergarten with no formal preschool experience. The Ready Freddy model emerged through a combination of literature review, community feedback, and field experience. Key elements include:

- Transition teams,
- Summer Kindergarten Clubs,
- A welcoming environment for both students and parents,
- A frog mascot (Freddy) to help build awareness of the importance of kindergarten transition for all involved.

Many of the online tools and resources for parents could be easily adapted for any community, including:

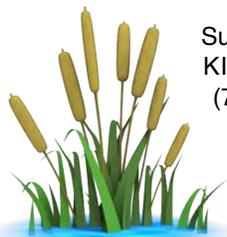
- Parent-child activity calendar
- Interactive audio book Ready Freddy Goes to School
- Ready Freddy Songs
- List of books to read with children
- The ABCs of my Child, a parent worksheet for child's new teacher
- All About Me booklet

For schools, communities and transition teams, key resources include:

- School Leader's Guide to Transition
- Ready Freddy Facilitator's Guide
- Kindergarten Clubs Curriculum
- Video: Hands Across the Hill: A Kindergarten Transition Event

To view or download any of these materials visit

<http://www.readyfreddy.org/resources/materials.html>



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