Selecting the Most Appropriate Assessment Tool October 2008

Based on the extensive work of the EC Assessment Work group as presented in KY EC Continuous Assessment Guide, quality early childhood assessments need to:

- address all relevant domains, measure developmentally appropriate skills, learning strategies, and learning styles, and be conducted in natural, authentic situations;
- be ongoing and closely related to curriculum development and program planning, and provide [early childhood educators] with guidance for how to design child-centered curriculum (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1995);
- result in information that is useful in planning children’s experiences and making decisions (Bagnato, Neisworth, & Munson, 1989; Bredekamp, & Rosegrant, 1995);
- result in determination of both skills and processes that young children need to learn (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1995);
- involve multiple informants, including the family (Bagnato, Neisworth, & Munson, 1989; Bredekamp, & Rosegrant, 1995) and yield understandable information that is easily related to families and other team members;
- help [early childhood educators] modify environments and practices in order to maximize child learning (NAEYC & NAECDS/SDE, 2003);
- yield understandable information and data easily related to families
- help program staff identify children for more focused intervention (NAEYC & NAECDS/SDE, 2003); and
- provide information that is used to benefit children.

Please refer to the KY EC Continuous Assessment Guide for additional information, especially the Classroom Instructional Assessment section.

In addition, consider the following factors when selecting the most appropriate instrument for your school, student, or child:

1. Choose the instrument that best measures the population you serve. Consider the ability levels, language needs, adaptive needs, and family factors as you select an instrument.
2. Choose an instrument that your teachers, providers, staff can be trained to reliably administer. Consider whether your staff can administer an instrument that involves significant time for individual administration, observations, portfolio collection, and family input.
3. Choose an instrument that will allow progress to be demonstrated for your population. If the ability levels of your students vary considerably, choose an instrument that will allow for measurement of skills at many developmental levels. If you serve children with developmental delay, consider an instrument that measures progress in small increments.

Through the HDI TIPP project, the following trainings are available: Screening, Classroom/Instructional Assessment, and Authentic Methods for Assessment. To register for any of these trainings, go to the Training into Practice Project website at www.ihdi.uky.edu/tipp; and click on Training Opportunities: Kentucky’s Continuous Assessment Guide.