

The Decision Tree

Child Indicator Seeds for Success



What about Bob's Developmental Progression of Functional Skills?

Why this is so hard?

While all children follow general sequences of development, Bob will develop in unique ways, depending upon his personality, context, and experiences. In determining the extent to which Bob's functioning meets age expectations, the team must look at the overall pattern, rather than specific fragments of his development.

Included in each of the three child indicators are a continuum of functional skills that can be thought of in terms of developmental progression of abilities. For example, within Indicator #1 (positive social relationships), the progression of development begins through a positive caring relationship between Bob and his mother. As Bob grows, he develops a sense of self through relationships with family members, other caregivers and adults, and peers. As relationships expand to include making friends Bob learns to get along with others and follow social rules and expectations. Embedded in these stages are a multitude of behaviors that are important for Bob to develop in order to build and maintain positive social relationships in age-expected ways.

Another example of how we can consider the development progression of specific skills is with Bob's development of pretend play behaviors (Indicator #2: acquiring and using knowledge and skills).

Stage 1: Bob picks up a spoon, looks at it, puts in his mouth, bangs it on the floor, and drops it.

Stage 2: Bob picks up the spoon and pretends to eat.

Stage 3: Bob uses the spoon to feed a doll.

Stage 4: Bob mixes up some pretend food in a pan with the spoon. He uses the spoon to put some pretend food in a dish. He then proceeds to eat, using the same spoon.

Stage 5: Bob goes to the shelf. He takes a plate, cup, and saucer and carefully places them on the table. He returns to the shelf and gets a spoon, knife and fork with which he completes the place setting. His mother sits at the table. Bob says "Soup mom". He feeds her with the spoon.

Children also progress in independence and ability to meet their own needs (Indicator #3), such as moving about their environments, eating, drinking, toileting, and following health and safety rules. In general, as each indicator is explored during the child indicator process, keep the complexity of child development in mind and ensure focus on functionality of skills and behaviors versus isolated skills and milestones.



"He who would learn to fly one day must first learn to stand and walk and run and climb and dance;

One cannot fly into flying."

Friedrich Nietzsche



Thinking about skills in terms of developmental progression is important for understanding where a child is on a trajectory of functional development.

Learn more about developmental progression and how to promote growth and participation in daily routines available through Brooks Publishing:



Early Intervention Every Day!

Embedding Activities in Daily Routines for Young Children and Their Families

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