

The Decision Tree

Child Indicator Seeds for Success



February is Plant the Seeds of Greatness Month!



Get out your gardening gloves!
It is time to Plant the Seeds of Greatness in the month of February.

Did you know that was this month? I've never heard of it, but it makes sense to spend February planting the assessment seeds we gathered last month. So let's grow with it! Personally, I think we should plant the seeds of greatness every month, but I'll take February for starters.

If you are unhappy with how your Assessment for Service Planning is going, this month has been set aside to sit-back and reflect on what you can do to improve your skills. Hopefully you took some time in January to swap ideas, experiences and resources with your colleagues as was suggested. Now is the time to turn your goals into realities.

I have personally spent some time this month reflecting on what I would change in my own assessment practices. I would like to rely more on natural observations of a child and less on the traditional quantitative assessment. And while I will still need to use a comprehensive evaluation tool, I would like to put more focus on natural observation and explore how a child engages in activities in familiar settings with familiar adults, take time to explore family questions and concerns and explore how I can use this information to identify meaningful, functional outcomes and family supports.

Here are some of the natural observation practices I plan to focus on this month. *Anne Brager*

Natural Observations	Variables	(Traditional) Quantitative Assessment
Family plays active role with assessors to elicit and analyze child's performance	Involvement of Family	Family members observe child perform discrete skills
Takes place in child's environment with familiar people, furniture, toys, routines	Environment	Testing protocol and people unfamiliar to child, especially if in clinic or office
Child interacts with familiar caregivers while early intervention providers observe	Rapport	Unfamiliar adult(s) direct child through structured activities
Child's toys, routines, and activities are used, with modifications if needed All children are considered to be "testable"	Materials	Unfamiliar materials are used, often by a succession of assessors Children are not expected to complete all test items
Variations encouraged in conditions, directions, language, materials, sequence, and content	Procedures	Presentation of test items is in a prescribed manner, based on an invariable sequence of items
Child's typical performance is observed Establishes baseline for supports and services Stresses integrated report or goals of child behavior and learning	Results	Assigns developmental levels or scores based on selected skills, often irrelevant for a particular child Separate reports or goals often generated for each developmental domain
A child's progress is assessed within a specific context , highlighting next steps and modifications	Assessing progress	Administration of same test protocol often shows negligible change Child's context is irrelevant

(Linder, 1993)