

# The Importance of Families to the Assessment Process

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Where have we been?  
Where are we going



# Assessment Trends in ECSE

- **From age-based, deficit model to strengths-based developmentally appropriate model**



# Assessment Trends in ECSE

- **From standardized to individualized for interests, culture, and characteristics of the child**

# **Assessment Trends in ECSE**

- **From performance-based (what has been learned?) To active and authentic (what can be learned?)**
- **How does the child learn?**  
**Implications for intervention**

# Assessment Trends in ECSE

- **From items missed to examining processes underlying skills**
  - **Engagement**
  - **Executive function**
  - **Theory of mind**
  - **Sensorimotor processes**



# Assessment Trends in ECSE

- **From scripted directions to following the child's lead in play (interests, motivation, abilities)**





# Assessment Trends in ECSE

- **From multidisciplinary (domain specific) to transdisciplinary (holistic)**

# Assessment Trends in ECSE

- **From Western culture-specific (or translated tests) to culturally adaptable**







# Assessment Trends in ECSE

- **From peripheral family involvement to meaningful engagement in all aspects of the assessment**





# What are the implications of these trends?

- All of the trends imply authentic assessment is important
- Family engagement is necessary for an authentic approach
- The family's input contributes to the body of evidence needed for valid assessment results



# Why?

- Family information contributes to differentiating disability from difference

# Disability vs. Difference

- Family background
- Family experiences
- Biological/health history
- Values/expectations
- Risk vs. Protective factors







# Importance of Culture

Preliminary information forms are just one aspect

- History
- Family strengths
- Perceptions
- Priorities

# Examine Influence of Culture

- Past education/therapy or treatment
- Expectations for next education experience
- View of disability and intervention
- Use adaptations for multilinguals
- Dynamic approach to looking at languages
- Differences in age expectations







# Why Is Family Engagement In The Actual Assessment Important?

- A family facilitator (FF) supports participation
- FF Provides information about the play
- Family members validate what is seen (or explain what is different)
- FF points out facilitation strategies
- Obtains additional information
- Involves the family in the play





# Information Gained During The Assessment

- Enables families to better understand the team observations
- Provides examples of strategies they can try at home





# Why Is A Post-assessment Debriefing Important?

- The debriefing lays the foundation for the subsequent report and IEP
- Both are more meaningful when the family has seen the assessment and been involved in discussion
- Understanding reduces confusion and potential confrontation





# Families Leave The Assessment With Information

- Strengths (child and family)
- Ready for (vertical/horizontal)
- Ideas for home

# Families Should Be True Members Of The Assessment Team

- Before
- During
- After



# True Family Engagement

- Results in more authentic assessment
- Results in more holistic and valid results
- Is more meaningful for families

Comments? Questions?

