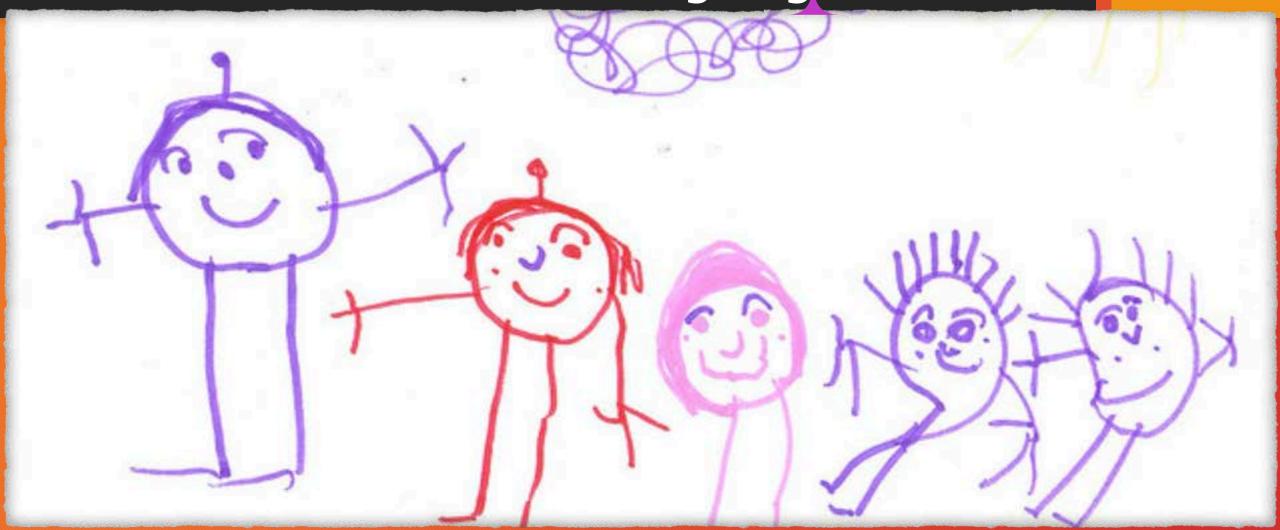
The Importance of Families to the Assessment Process

Toni Linder
Professor Emerita
University of Denver

Where have we been? Where are we going



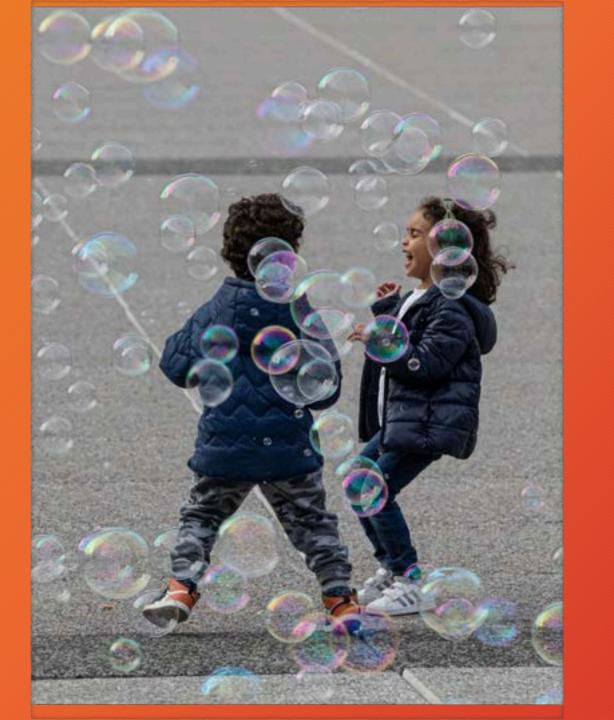
 From age-based, deficit model to strengths-based developmentally appropriate model

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

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

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

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



 From multidisciplinary (domain specific) to transdisciplinary (holistic)

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



© 2003 jeremy ginsberg

 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?

