Child Observation and Assessment
Session 7
Handout: *Assessment Vocabulary*

These are some common terms used in early childhood assessment.

Aggregation

A process of grouping distinct information and reporting it as a summary; provides information about groups rather than individuals

Anecdotal records

Written notes that record important assessment information about what children say or do during everyday activities

Assessment-instructional cycle

The ongoing process of observing children during everyday activities; monitoring their progress by documenting those observations; interpreting information gathered; making adjustments to instruction

Checklist

An assessment tool that lists skills and behaviors; used to collect information on specific behaviors for an individual child or group of children

Criterion-referenced assessment

A measure where children's progress is compared to learning standards or outcomes, usually descriptions of what children are expected to know and do at specific stages

Curriculum-based assessment

A form of criterion-referenced assessment where objectives in the curriculum are the basis for assessing progress

Data

Factual information gathered through observation and documentation

Data analysis

Thorough evaluation of assessment or other data with the goal of finding useful information to make informed decisions

Documentation

Detailed records collected to describe and understand children's learning progress and development

Early learning standards

Statements that describe expectations of outcomes for young children from birth to age 5

Formal assessment

A process of gathering information to make judgments about children's abilities using standardized tools

Formative assessment

Information collected with the goal of providing support for children's learning

Informal assessment

A process of gathering information to make judgments about children's abilities using non-standardized tools

Kindergarten readiness assessment

An assessment of what children know and are able to do as they enter kindergarten

Norm-referenced assessment

A standardized tool where children's progress is compared to a group of peers, called a *norming group*

Ongoing child assessment

Observing, gathering, and recording information about children's learning and development during regular environments and routines for the purpose of evaluating children's progress and making teaching decisions

Portfolio

A collection of children's work carefully chosen over time to document their skills and development

Progress monitoring

The process of systematically observing and collecting information on a child's progress over time, often used with children with disabilities

Reliability

Information from an assessment tool or method that is consistent over time and across observers

Screening

A brief procedure, often using a screening instrument, to evaluate whether a child may be at risk for a developmental delay and may need further evaluation to identify developmental or health risks

Standardized test

A testing tool that is given, scored, and interpreted in a standard manner; either criterion- or norm-referenced

Summative assessment

An assessment that sums up children's progress at the end of a defined instructional period

Validity

The ability of an assessment tool or method to measure what it is supposed to measure

REFERENCES

National Head Start Association. (n.d.) *Kindergarten entry assessments.* https://www.nhsa.org/kindergarten-entry-readiness-assessments

Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning. (2016, January). *Guiding principles on early childhood assessments for educators and professionals: birth to age 8 (grade 3).* http://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/Early%20Learning/Early%20Learning%20Standards/Resources.pdf

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning. (2014, Spring). Tips for teachers: Assessment glossary*.* In *Ongoing Child Assessment: An Overview* [In-service suite]. https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/no-search/iss/ongoing-child-assessment-overview/overview-glossary.pdf