

# SCREENING & ASSESSMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD



Observing, documenting and assessing each child's development and learning are essential processes for educators and programs to plan, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of the experiences they provide to children.

NAEYC, 2020



It is important to use multiple methods of assessment to get a complete picture of a child's learning and development. Authentic assessments take in information about children's skills during natural situations, like eating a meal with family or playing in a preschool classroom. Whenever possible, use real, authentic approaches to assessment and family input as part of your assessment process!

## KEY QUESTIONS ABOUT ASSESSMENT



### DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

Sometimes called Diagnostic Assessment, evaluations are designed to figure out if a child has a delay or disability and might benefit from services. Specialists such as occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, and special education teachers are often a part of the team. Evaluations should include a variety of tools for assessing children:

- Parent questionnaires
- Teacher questionnaires
- Observations
- Standardized assessments

Example: Connecticut's IDEA Part C system "Birth to Three" teams complete evaluations with families to determine eligibility for early intervention services (EIS). If eligible, further child and family assessments are done to help with program planning.

- Helps identify when more assessment may be needed
- Catches possible developmental delays or other disabilities early
- Can help children and families get the support that can lead to better outcomes

Example: The Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ and/or ASQ-SE) is completed by families through Help Me Grow or the Sparkler App. Families are supported with reviewing the results and referrals for evaluations if needed.



### EVALUATION

This type of assessment supports children and families by giving us information that can help:

- Set goals with families
- Create strategies
- Plan activities
- Inform instruction
- Shape curriculum

Example: The CT Documentation and Observation for Teaching System (CT DOTS) helps teachers gather information through natural observations, planned experiences, and family input. This information gathered can be used right away to inform how teachers and families support children. This information can also be summarized to give an overall profile and track progress.

Families in Birth to Three are supported by the use of authentic curriculum-embedded assessments on an ongoing basis.



### ONGOING ASSESSMENT

\*Examples include assessments designed to gather information about child development that are supported by OEC. Providers may use other types of assessments, including ones that gather information about family resources or early childhood environments. Providers should consider the *Key Questions about Assessment* when making any assessment decisions.