Assessment and Young Children with Disabilities

Kathy Hebbeler
SRI International

CEELO Roundtable
San Francisco, CA   June 2013
The Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Center

• Funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)

• Mission: to provide leadership and TA to states to build outcome measurement systems for Part C and 619 programs.

• Worked with stakeholders to identify outcomes and the parameters of the measurement system (2003 to present).

• First data reported in February 2007
The Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Center

- 3 child outcomes
  - Positive social emotional skills (including positive social relationships)
  - Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication [and early literacy])
  - Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs
- Child Outcome Summary (COS) process
  
  www.the-eco-center.com
The Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy)

• A new 5-year Center funded by OSEP to assist states with improving Part C and Part B preschool data
• Provide TA to Part C and 619 programs:
  – Build better data systems
  – Link to their state’s coordinated EC data system
  – Link to their state’s longitudinal data system
  – Improved capacity to use data

www.dasycenter.org
Young children with disabilities are in all of these programs.
Assessing young children with disabilities

- Good EC assessment is good EC assessment
- Principles that apply to typically developing children apply to children with disabilities
  - See NAEYC position statement
    http://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/cape
Considerations Related to Assessment of Young Children with Disabilities

- Universal design
- Construct irrelevant variance
- Adaptations
- Floor effects
- Sensitivity to growth
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

- Principles for curriculum development
- Give all individuals equal opportunities to learn.
- Blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone

http://www.cast.org
Principles of UDL

1. Provide multiple means of representation
2. Provide multiple means of action and expression
3. Provide multiple means of engagement
Construct Irrelevant Variance (CIV)

- Child has the concept but does not get credit for the item because
  - Can’t point
  - Can’t speak
  - Can’t attend for even short periods of time
  - Can’t understand the instructions
  - Etc.

- Major problem with rigidly standardized direct assessments.

  **Standardizing the conditions does not standardize the experience for the child.**
DAP please

• Assessments with rigid administration procedures create validity issues for children with disabilities

• But, they also create validity issues for young children in general….

• Valid assessment of young children requires giving children multiple opportunities to demonstrate competence
Response to Intervention (RTI) and EC

• Making informed instructional decisions based on assessment results

• Emerging challenges:
  – How many assessments??
  – Quality of tier 1 (even in state Pre-K)
  – Can an entire class be at tier 2?
  – Relationship to identification for special education

• Joint paper from DEC/NAEYC/NHSA