

# The Importance of Assessment

## – Using the HELP

Staff training

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# Agenda

- What do you want to know about Early Steps
- Assessment
- Measuring progress
- Introduction to the HELP
- Developmental age levels (DAL's)
- OSEP HELP report
- Reporting progress in monthly provider reports.

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- A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide features three balloons: a light green one at the top, a light blue one in the middle, and a light purple one at the bottom. Each balloon has a string and several small yellow triangular shapes radiating from it, suggesting movement or light.
- What do you want to know about Early Steps?



# Assessment (ESSO definition)

- The ongoing procedures used by appropriate qualified personnel throughout the period of a child's eligibility to identify the following:
  - A. The child's unique strengths and needs and the services appropriate to meet those needs.
  - B. The resources, priorities, and concerns of the family and the supports and services necessary to enhance the family's capacity to meet the developmental needs of their infant or toddler with a disability.

# Why is frequent assessment important.

- To monitor progress so the intervention plan can be adapted as needed.
- To monitor achievement of goals.
- Goal based intervention has been found to be more successful than general intervention.

Your team needs you! We need up to date information to help with decision making.

# What types of assessment can be used.

- Formal test and measures
- Informal observations
- Data records,
- Check lists
- Graphs
- Photographs
- Video's

# When should assessment occur?

- Initially to give a baseline.
- Every session
- Every month
- At the end of authorization period (6-months)
- Prior to transition
- Reported in initial assessment page E.
- Reported in progress note
- Reported in monthly report
- Reported prior to team review
- Reported at transition conference.





# What is the HELP?

- One tool authorized by ESSO for assessment of children in the Early steps program.
- An assessment tool for children 0 - 3.
- Not a standardized or norm-referenced test and is not used for eligibility determination.
- A curriculum based assessment.
- Used as an on-going assessment tool to track the progress of the children we serve.



# Components of the HELP

- HELP Strands
  - HELP Checklist
  - HELP Charts
  - HELP Activity guide
  - HELP at Home
  - HELP when the parent has disabilities
  - HELP family-centered interview
  - HELP OSEP report
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# HELP Domains

- HELP assessment is divided into 7 Domains
  - 0.0 Regulatory/Sensory Organization
  - 1.0 Cognitive
  - 2.0 Language
  - 3.0 Gross motor
  - 4.0 Fine Motor
  - 5.0 Social Emotional
  - 6.0 Self Help



# HELP Strands & Skills

- Each domain is divided into strands.
- Each strand has a number
  - E.g. Strand 1.3 is in the cognitive domain, sound awareness.
- Each strand is made up from skills.
  - The skills are listed in a sequential order.
  - Each skill is built on the skills listed before it.
  - The numbers may not be in order as the skills were based on the HELP checklist which isn't divided into strands.

# Developmental Age levels

- Each skill has a DAL assigned. This DAL was determined according to research in the literature. It is often reported as a range s opposed to a single age, due to the variations of age of attainment reported.
- These DAL's have not been tested by the authors of HELP and have not been determined through testing with a normal population.



# How to perform the assessment

- No special kit is needed as the assessment is not standardized
- Use toys and items in the natural environment as much as possible.
- Observe the child in natural situations first.
- Offer toys and materials to encourage the skill you are looking for.
- Ask the parents to be actively involved in eliciting the skill
- Record the skill on the HELP Strands using the code for credits.
- Finish assessing if the child loses interest or becomes tired and continue at a later date.

# Giving credit for the skills.

+ Skill or behavior is present

- Skill is not present

+/- Skill appears to be emerging

A Skill or behavior is atypical or dysfunctional.

N/A Not appropriate or applicable

For domain 0.0 Regulatory/Sensory

A+ Hyper responsive

A- Hypo responsive



# OSEP HELP Report

- Page 1 – instructions
- Page 2 – Scoring key
- Page 3 – Child and tester info
- Page 4 – Strands relevant to positive relationships
- Page 5 – Acquires and uses skills
- Page 6 – Takes appropriate action
- Page 7 summary of progress



# Rule of Thumb

- There are always exceptions to rules!!!
- Report the highest skill achieved in each strand unless...
- There is a wide age range listed for the skill
- There is a several month gap between skills
- A child is older or developmentally higher than the age range for the last skill in the strand.

Age range of highest credit skill is greater than age range of next skill which could not be accomplished

Date	Credit	Skill #	Age	Skill
	+	1.40	6.5-7.5	Retains two of three objects offered
	+	1.45	8-10	Retains 2 and reaches for third object.
	-	1.47	8-10	Retrieves object using other material
	-	1.46	8-11	Overcomes an obstacle to obtain object.

Approximate developmental age range would be 8-10 months and describe what he could do.



# Report "OK" "NA" or "NT"

- Use OK if a child is age appropriate or has achieved the highest skill for the strand.
- Use NA if it is not appropriate to assess that strand (e.g begins at age 2, or child has disability).
- Use NT for not tested.



# Atypical Development

- Use A to describe a skill or strand that shows atypical development
- E.g 24-28A would show atypical function at a 24-28 month level.
- Strand 0.0 regulatory/Sensory Organization is reported as OK, or atypical.
- Strand 1-5 is not in hierarchical order so don't report the DAL.



# When to complete the HELP

- Collier, Lee, Hendry & Glades County
  - Within 30 days of referral (hand in at next monthly billing)
  - Prior to each team review
  - When changes in status have occurred
  - Prior to transition conference 33 months of age.



# Improving our reporting!

- Our goal is to obtain the best outcomes for the children and families in the program.
- We need your help.
- We need more accurate information.
- How is the child progressing, is the plan working how do you know??
- Involve parents in data collection.



# The monthly report

- The monthly report is used to let the rest of the team know the progress toward the goals.
- The monthly report will be reviewed by a team member and if there has been a supporting LHCP assigned to the primary provider they will review the report, and forward any concerns to the PSC.



# Great things we've noticed!

- Requesting help from the team if the child is not making the expected progress.
- Informing the team the child has mastered the goal, and needs a team review.
- Reporting specific progress since last month (e.g. now says "mama eat").
- Reporting progress across different routines

# Review the new monthly report.

- A few things we want to see less of:
  - The provider is not working on the IFSP goals
  - The child has achieved the goals long ago.
  - “child is progressing” but no details
  - Non age appropriate strategies (i.e teaching the child to read).
  - The strategies did not correspond to the goals.
  - The same report month after month

# Thank you

- Thank you to everyone who puts so much effort into the program for our children and families.



- We want to continue to improve our program and strive to be the best we can be.

# Resources

- [www.vort.com](http://www.vort.com)