



I Consented to this Assessment, So Now What?

ECE Pre-Conference Workshop

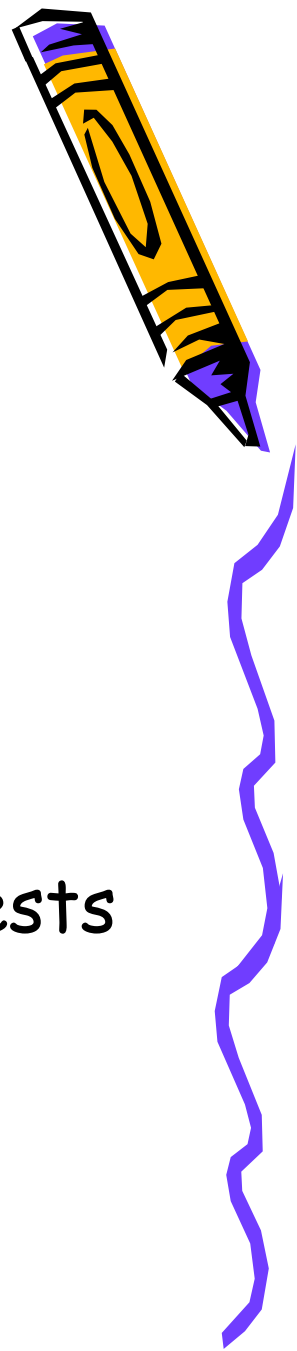
May 22, 2003

Bill McKee & Georgina Robinson

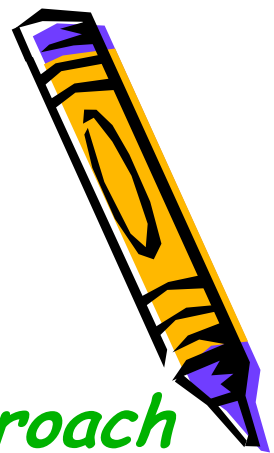


Agenda

1. Describe assessment from a family empowerment perspective
2. Rights related to assessment
 - Parental concerns and fears
 - An assessment experience
 - Questions about assessment
3. Assessment Procedures & Types of Tests
4. Assessment outcomes
5. Stuff to think about



Assessment from a Family Empowerment Perspective



Traditional Approach

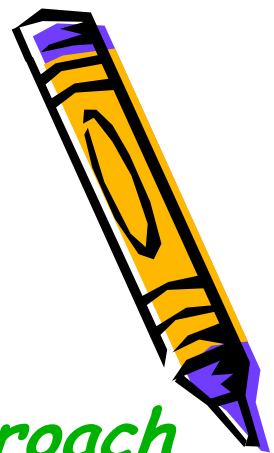
- Expert model: professional is all-knowing
- Professional has expert "power-over" the client

Empowerment Approach

- Collaborative Model: Professional learns, then facilitates knowledge sharing. All have expertise
- Parents and professionals share "power-with" each other



Assessment from a Family Empowerment Perspective



Traditional Approach

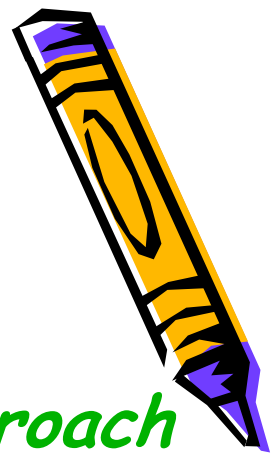
- Professionals identify child and family deficits and problems
- Focus of assessment is on child characteristics

Empowerment Approach

- Parents and professionals identify strengths, positive attributes, and focus on possibilities for change
- Focus of assessment is on interaction of child, environment, teaching variables



Assessment from a Family Empowerment Perspective



Traditional Approach

- Leads to diagnostic label (deficit-driven)
- Jargon and technical language is used

Empowerment Approach

- Leads to intervention action plan (solution-driven)
- Assessment and intervention discussed in language parents can understand



Assessment from a Family Empowerment Perspective



Traditional Approach

- Interventions focus on the student
- Professionals make the decisions

Empowerment Approach

- Interventions focus on student, peers, teacher, parents, environment and instruction
- Parent decision-making is encouraged and strengthened



Assessment from a Family Empowerment Perspective

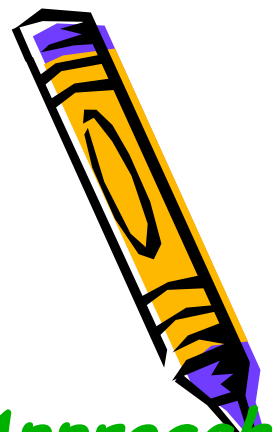
Traditional Approach

- Expert remains source of “all knowledge”



Empowerment Approach

- Parents and teachers increase their knowledge and skills, sense of effectiveness, and ownership of the plan they helped to create



Rights Related to Assessment

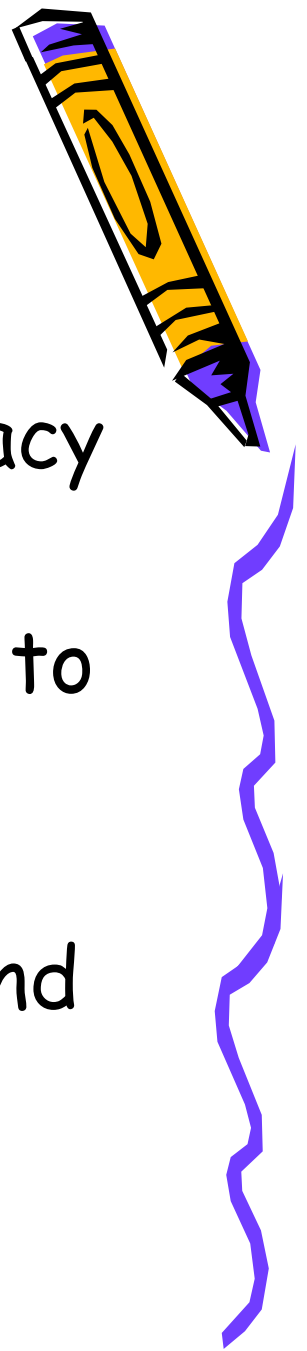


Parents are entitled to:

- Informed written consent before any assessment occurs.
- Assessment results to be explained in language they can understand.
- A written copy of the assessment report.
- Test results kept confidential and shared only with specific written consent.



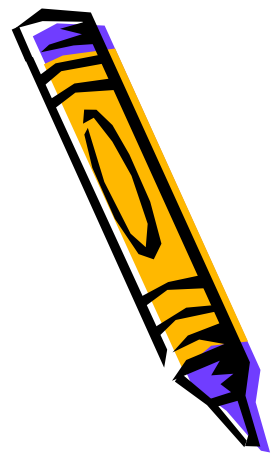
Recognizing parental fears and concerns about assessment

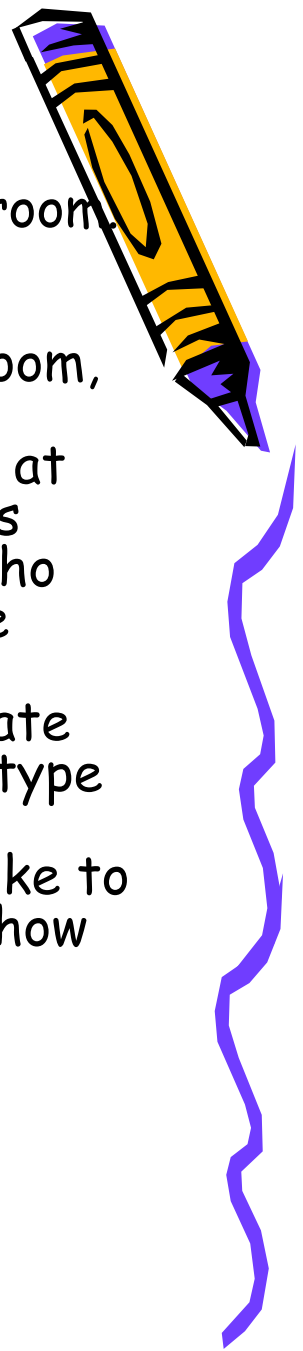


- Fear of judgment, invasion of privacy
- Fear that their child will be found to have a problem
- Fear of their child being labeled and stigmatized



An Assessment Story...





Assessment Story

- Clint is a 6 year-old boy in Mrs. Pratt's grade one classroom. He is new to the school this year. Two months into the school year Mrs. Pratt approaches the principal with concerns about Clint's disruptive behavior in the classroom, his avoidance of all academic tasks, and especially the difficulties he is having interacting with other children at recess and lunch time. Mrs. Pratt is concerned, and says that Clint reminds her of a student she had last year who had a diagnosis of high-functioning Autism. Knowing the type of funding and support this type of diagnosis generates, Mrs. Pratt asks the principal if she can initiate an assessment to see if Clint would be eligible for this type of help. In particular Mrs. Pratt would like a classroom assistant who could work 1-1 with Clint, and she would like to work with a psychologist who could help her figure out how to improve Clint's behavior.



- The principal meets with Clint's mother, Mrs. Dimero. She states that the school "has some concerns" about Clint's "learning differences" and would like an assessment to be conducted. She tells Clint's mother that there will be a two year wait for the district psychologist to see Clint, but if she is willing to get a private assessment done that may make Clint eligible for the type of help he needs sooner.
- Mrs. Dimero, anxious to do all she can to get her son the help she needs agrees to the private assessment. She asks the principal for a referral. The principal gives her the name of Dr. Sapperton, a psychologist that has conducted many psycho-educational assessments privately for families at the school.
- Mrs. Dimero contacts Dr. Sapperton, and states that she would like an assessment of Clint's "learning differences." Dr. Sapperton states that she will see Clint, but there will be a 5 month waiting period as she is so busy.





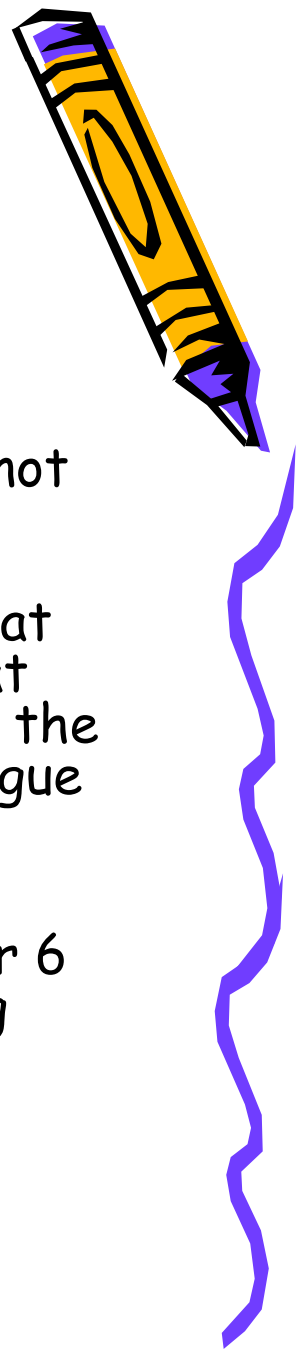
- 5 months pass.
- Finally, Clint is seen by Dr. Sapperton. Dr. Sapperton conducts a psycho-educational assessment. The assessment consists of an IQ test and an achievement test. The findings suggest that Clint has an average level of intelligence and his achievement is also average for his age and grade. No significant "learning differences" are noted. Dr. Sapperton does note however, that Clint has some "unusual" repetitive behaviors, avoids eye contact, and often tried to switch the topic of the assessment to one about trains and vehicles, his favorite topic.



Mrs. Dimero takes the assessment to the principal. After reading the assessment, the principal tells Mrs. Dimero that there are some serious problems. This assessment does not provide any evidence for the need for additional support, not even learning assistance for any "learning difficulties." She also tells Mrs. Dimero that if Clint had received a diagnosis of something like "autism spectrum disorder" he would have been eligible to receive funding for a teaching assistant in the classroom. As this report does not support the Autism diagnosis, the principal is concerned that Clint will not be able to cope in a regular classroom in the upcoming year, his teacher will not be able to continue to work with Clint without that support, and Clint may need to be placed in a segregated behavior program.

Shocked to be hearing the words "autism" for the first time, as well as the dismal prognosis for Clint's school placement, Mrs. Dimero leaves the meeting and quickly calls the psychologist.





- The psychologist tells Mrs. Dimero that assessment of autism is not her area of expertise, and that she does not feel qualified to make such a diagnosis. Dr. Sapperton's primary area of training is in assessment of learning disabilities and she approached the assessment with that focus. Dr. Sapperton tries to reassure Mrs. Dimero that from what she knows of autism, Clint may have some of the characteristics, and she refers Mrs. Dimero to a colleague who specializes in this field, Dr. Silverberg.
- The wait to see Dr. Silverberg, however, will be another 6 months, too late to get anything in place for the coming school year!



Rights Related to Assessment



Parents are entitled to ask questions:

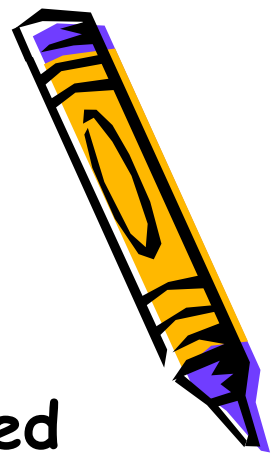
- What is the purpose of this assessment? How will it help my child?
- What is your experience in assessing children with these sorts of difficulties?
- Are there any risks in having the assessment?
- Who will see the assessment results and how will they be used?
- What types of tests and assessment procedures will be used?



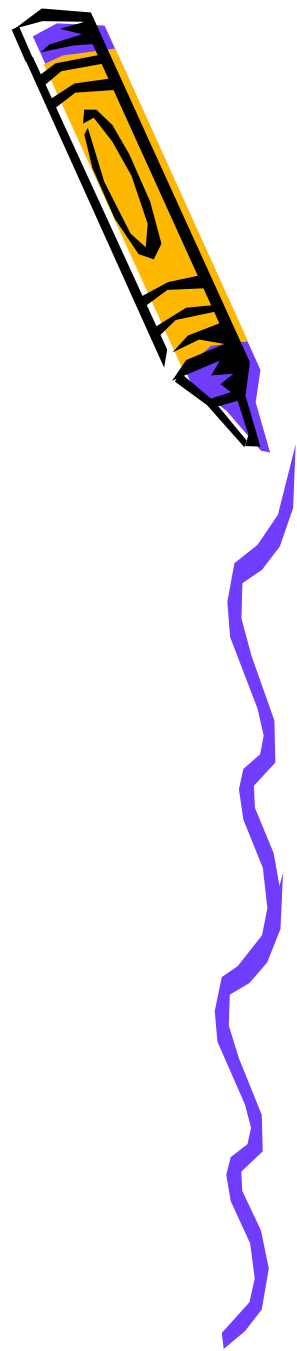
Assessment Procedures

Assessment questions and purpose established

- Information gathered from parent, teachers and school team, as well as previous assessments and reports from other professionals
- Report cards, work samples
- Informal skill measures
- Observations in a variety of settings
- Structured observations



Assessment Procedures

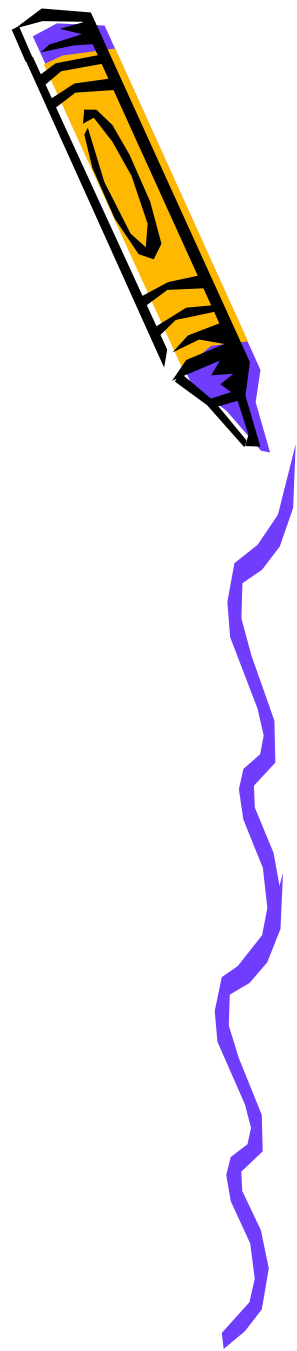


- Clinical interviews
- Rating scales
- Instructional environment assessment
- Functional behavior assessment
- Individually-administered tests



Types of Tests

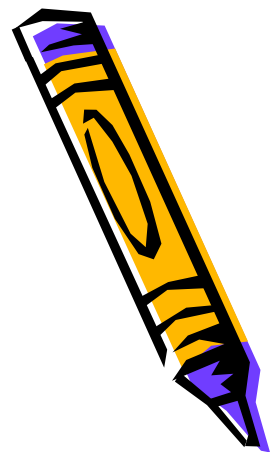
- Standardized, norm-referenced
 - Intelligence tests
 - Achievement tests
 - Cognitive process measures
 - Personality measures
- Criterion-referenced
- Curriculum-based
- Diagnostic



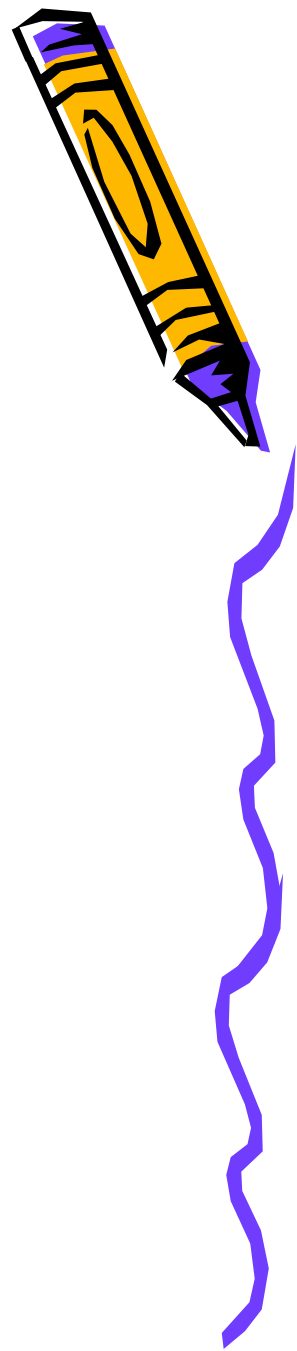
Assessment Outcomes

Parents are entitled to:

- be invited to a meeting to discuss the results of the assessment.
- bring someone to take notes (e.g., parent advocate).
- ask for clarification of any aspect of the assessment, interpretation, or recommendations
- make decisions without pressures of time.



Stuff to think about



- Does the assessment answer the assessment questions?
- How do we know this?
- What does this mean?
 - short-term?
 - long-term?



More stuff to think about



- What are the recommendations?
- Are recommendations consistent with assessment outcomes?
- Do recommendations integrate parent and teacher input, values, abilities, resources and perspectives?



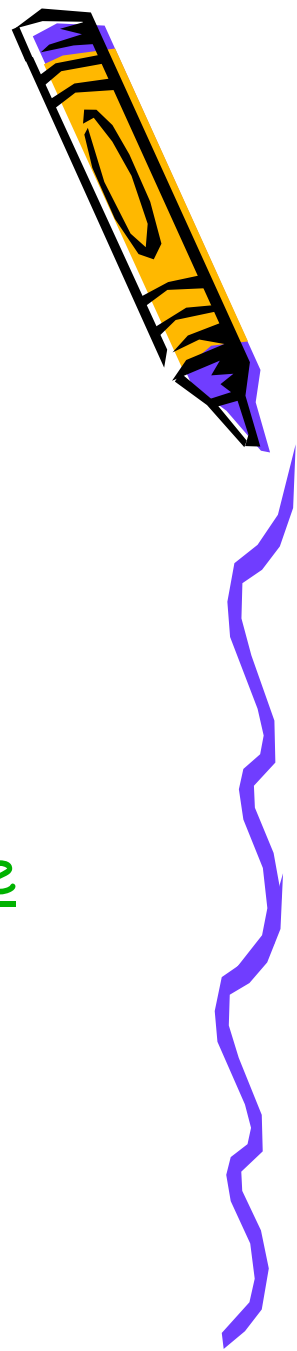
Even more stuff

What are the details of implementation?

- Who, what, where, when, how, with what resources and materials?
- Are goals and expectations clearly defined, in measurable terms?
- How will progress be monitored?
- Is there a schedule for reviewing progress?
- Is there a written record or agreement?



Resources for Parents and Teachers



- Know your rights: Facts for guardians and children
<http://www.knowyourrights.ca/>
- B.C. Ministry of Education, Special Education Resources: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialled/>
- National Association of School Psychologists Position on Early Childhood Assessment:
http://www.nasponline.org/information/pospaper_e_ca.html
- NASP Psychological Tests handout for parents



Questions?

