



# Keeping it Real

*The Day-to-Day Context of Social and Emotional Assessment for Children and their Families*

Photography: Shannon Stevenson

Vanessa Lapointe, PhD, R. Psych.

# + Children and Families of 2011

- Family 1 – Single mom, 2 girls
- Family 2 – 2 parent family, girl & boy
- Family 3 – 2 adoptive parents, 1 girl



# + Children and Families of 2011

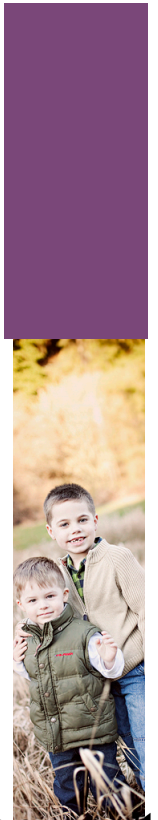
- Multifaceted
- Complex layers
- Supporting cast



# +Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory



- **Microsystem**  
e.g. parent, teacher
- **Mesosystem**  
e.g. home, church, school
- **Exosystem**  
e.g. teacher training, religion, gov't
- **Macrosystem**  
e.g. dominant beliefs and ideologies



# + Approaches to Assessment

- There will not be a single observation, a single measure, a single approach, a single source that could ever even come close to capturing the “essence” of each of these families
- The exceptional families of 2011 require that we are exceptional in our approaches to assessment
- When we know better, we must do better





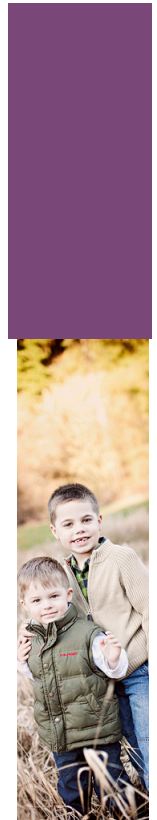
# 5 Keys to “Real” Assessment

Making a difference for families and children

Vanessa Lapointe, PhD, R. Psych.

# + Approaches to Assessment

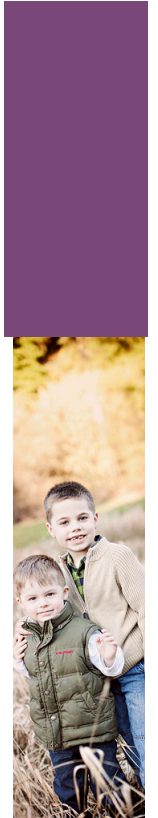
## 1. A hierarchy of needs



# + Approaches to Assessment

## 2. What is your role?

- Sometimes a child or family or circumstance can present itself as incomprehensibly huge and complex
- Sometimes your “piece” is not at all what you had in mind
- Momentum can be cultivated in the most unexpected ways

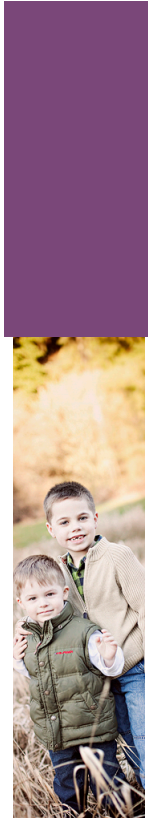




# + Approaches to Assessment

## 3. Who are you?

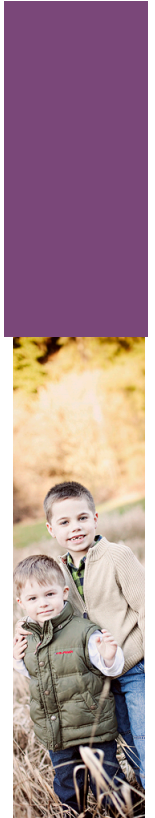
- What is the package that you bring with you into your interactions with this family?
  - Biases
  - Experiences
  - Limitations
  - Skill set



# + Approaches to Assessment

## 4. Understanding “process”

- What is your position in the process of someone else’s life?
- How does this step pave the way for the next?
- Know that change has a course it must follow – sometimes our role is simply to step in and walk alongside for a small part of that journey.



# + Approaches to Assessment

## 5. Go big or go home...sort of...

### ■ Multimethod:

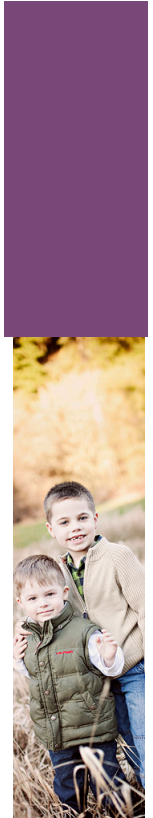
- Direct Observation; Rating Scales; Interviews; File Review; Standardized Assessment; Formal versus Informal; developmentally informed; etc.

### ■ Multisource:

- Child; Parent; Other Family Members; Teachers or other care providers; Community; etc.

### ■ Multisetting:

- Home; School; Clinic; Play; Community



*Slide Credit: Dr. Deborah Amaral*



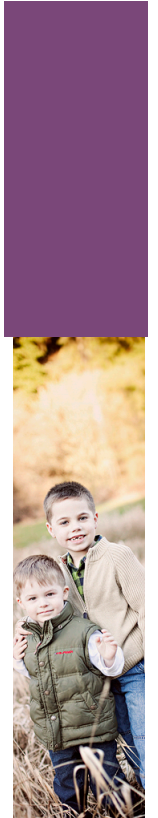
# A Family Update

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# + A Family Update

The journey continues...

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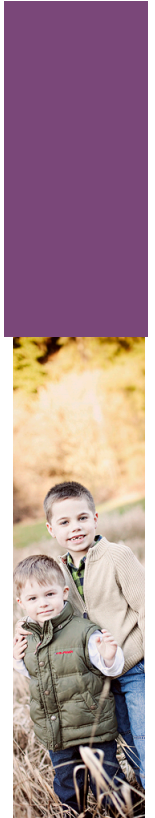


# In Summary...

# + Keep on...

What you do matters...immensely!

- Your approach to assessment with families and children can be the catalyst for change
- Your intuitive understanding, thoughtful approaches, and holistic lens can be synergistic in supporting a family
- Know who you are and what your role is
- Be *part* of the process
- Know the *whole* child
- ***You must trust the change you endeavor to create***





**The Wishing Star**  
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Shannon Stevenson*