

## Minibibliography

### *Early Identification of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Children (Aged 0-5)*

Revised December 2005

Compiled by Evelyn Shaw, MEd, Susan Goode, MLS, PT,  
Sharon Ringwalt, PhD, CCC-SLP, & Betsy Ayankoya, MEd

When assessing young children for early intervention or special education services, practitioners need to be especially sensitive to the multitude of cultural and linguistic variations that exist among children who require assessment and their families. Appropriate procedures need to be in place to determine which language will be used during the assessment process and to ensure that the screening and assessment instruments and procedures being used are appropriate for that child. It is critical to obtain a non-biased picture of the child's abilities. Interpreters must be available if needed and professionals conducting the assessment should be skilled and knowledgeable about the cultural implications of the assessment process. These and other considerations will help practitioners to determine whether certain patterns of development and behavior are caused by a disability or simply the result of cultural and linguistic differences.

This minibibliography provides a selection of articles, guidelines and reports that address these issues. Many of the abstracts come from the ERIC database (<http://www.eric.ed.gov/>). The rest are those provided by the source, unless edited by the compilers for brevity or to comply with copyright. Databases searched include ERIC, PsycINFO, and CINAHL. Some of the search terms used include "early identification," "cultural differences," "early intervention," and "early childhood."

---

Barrera, I. (1996). Thoughts on the assessment of young children whose sociocultural background is unfamiliar to the assessor. In S. J. Meisels & E. Fenichel (Eds.), *New visions for the developmental assessment of infants and young children* (pp. 69-83). Washington, D.C.: Zero to Three.

**ABSTRACT:** Careful thought must be given to the use of assessment procedures when the world views, expectations, values and behaviors of the assessor do not reflect those of the family being assessed. This article explores various dimensions of sociocultural diversity, as these relate to families of young children and the professionals who are responsible for assessing children's development. It also discusses the important role of the "culture-language mediator" in interpreting across sociocultural differences.

---

Bergeson, T., Wise, B. J., Gill, D. H., & Shureen, A. (1999). *Evaluation and assessment in early childhood special education: Children who are culturally and linguistically diverse*. Olympia, WA: Washington Office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Retrieved January 11, 2005, from <http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/pubdocs/CLD.pdf>

ABSTRACT: This manual provides procedures and resources for assessing birth to 6 year olds who are culturally and linguistically diverse. Information from a variety of sources on language learning, the impact of culture on behavior, information-gathering strategies, tests, and the referral process is summarized. It is intended to guide the evaluation of children who have immigrated from other countries, live in communities that have maintained non-Anglo cultural traditions, and speak primarily languages other than English.

---

Brown, W., & Barrera, I. (1999). Enduring problems in assessment: The persistent challenges of cultural dynamics and family issues. *Infants and Young Children*, 12 (1), 34-42.

ABSTRACT: This article explores the role of culture in assessment and the challenges of cultural dynamics and family issues relative to six areas of assessment: the target of assessment, the setting, the methods, the personnel, the uses, and the fusion of assessment with intervention.

---

Burnette, J. (2000). *Assessment of culturally and linguistically diverse students for special education eligibility* (ERIC Digest). Arlington, VA: ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education. Retrieved on January 11, 2005, from <http://ericec.org/digests/e604.html>

ABSTRACT: In addressing the problem of assessing culturally and linguistically diverse students for special education eligibility, this paper organizes suggested strategies according to four principles: (1) convening a full, multidisciplinary assessment team (to include parents, educators, assessors, and a person familiar with the student's culture and language); (2) using pre-referral strategies and interventions to determine whether difficulties stem from language or cultural differences, a lack of educational opportunity, or from a disability); (3) determining the language to be used in testing (assessment of language dominance and proficiency); and (4) conducting a tailored, appropriate assessment of the child and environment that combines nonbiased, appropriate instruments with other sources of information (observations, interviews) from a variety of environments to produce a multidimensional assessment.

---

California Department of Education. (1998). *Observing preschoolers: Assessing first and second language development* [Video]. Sacramento, CA: Author.

ABSTRACT: This videotape demonstrates an assessment process for teachers to use with preschoolers who are culturally and linguistically diverse that focuses on observation, documentation and discussion. It provides information on making an assessment plan, collecting information, creating a portfolio, meeting with family and staff, and modifying the curriculum. Although the area of language development is emphasized, the process can also be used in other areas of child development. For ordering information go to <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/>

---

Center for Innovations in Special Education. (1999). *Cultural and linguistic diversity and IDEA: An evaluation resource guide*. Columbia, MO: Author.

**ABSTRACT:** This guide provides introductory information on developmental and cultural issues that may affect evaluation of culturally and linguistically diverse children for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Although much of the information in this document may be useful for determining instruction and strategies, the primary focus is on helping teams determine a student's eligibility for special education services. It begins by reviewing developmental and cultural issues that may affect a student. Then, relevant IDEA requirements are discussed, including requirements for administering tests in the native language of the child unless it is clearly not feasible to do and providing notices and evaluation reports in the parents' native language. The next section discusses referral for evaluation for infants and toddlers and for school-age children. Language considerations, cultural considerations, instructional considerations, and developmental considerations are highlighted. The last major section deals with evaluation considerations. Each section lists references and additional resources that might be useful. For ordering information go to <http://cise.missouri.edu/publications>

---

Crowley, C. J. (2003). *Diagnosing communication disorders in culturally and linguistically diverse students* (ERIC Digest). Arlington, VA: ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education. Retrieved on January 11, 2005, from <http://ericec.org/digests/e650.html>

**ABSTRACT:** This digest discusses the difficulty of assessing the speech and language of culturally and linguistically diverse students and recommends strategies for identifying communication disorders. It begins by reviewing what qualifies as a communication disorder, discussing the limitations of speech and language tests, and outlining test considerations. Critical information that needs to be gathered to determine if there is a communication disorder is then highlighted and includes: (1) comprehensive data concerning the student's significant current and past exposure to particular languages and dialects, and consideration of the student's proficiencies in those languages and dialects; (2) data about the student's speech and language skills in a number of settings and covering different types of language, such as social language and more demanding uses, such as for comparison, synthesis, and problem solving; (3) parent/long-time caregiver reports that include developmental history, parent's education, family history, and parent's perceptions; (4) teacher interviews and portfolio reviews on overall school performance; (5) outcomes of tasks designed to probe particular areas of speech and language; and (6) information on the student's ability to learn. The digest closes by discussing factors that evaluators need to analyze to determine whether any apparent difficulties are due to a communication disorder.

---

ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education, Council for Exceptional Children. (2001). *Serving the underserved: A review of the research and practice in child find, assessment, and the IFSP/IEP process for culturally and linguistically diverse young children*. Arlington, VA: Author. Available free through the ERIC database at <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>

**ABSTRACT:** This publication presents a digest of research and recommended practices for the first steps of providing early intervention services for young children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Chapter 1, "Initial Identification and Referral: Child Find, Screening, and Tracking: Serving Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Children and Families" (Shireen Pavri and Susan Fowler), examines the initial identification and referral stages of the intervention process. It also examines the screening and tracking processes that follow. Chapter 2, "Evaluation

and Assessment: Conducting Culturally Sensitive Child Assessments” (Mary McLean), focuses on the next step in the process, evaluation. It presents principles and strategies for culturally and linguistically sensitive assessment planning and offers guidelines for reviewing the appropriateness of assessment materials, with particular attention given to issues of linguistic diversity. Chapter 3, “Developing the IFSP and IEP: Embracing Cultural and Linguistic Diversity during the IFSP and IEP Process: Implications from DEC Recommended Practice” (Chun Zhang and Tess Bennett), covers the activity that may be seen as both the end of the child find and assessment process and the beginning of the intervention process, developing the Individualized Family Service Plan and the Individualized Education Program. Chapter 4 contains a list of related resources.

---

Feil, E. G., Walker, H., Severson, H., & Ball, A. (2000). Proactive screening for emotional/behavioral concerns in head start preschools: Promising practices and challenges in applied research. *Behavioral Disorders*, 26(1), 13-25.

**ABSTRACT:** This study assessed the cross-cultural psychometric characteristics and validity of a multiple-gating screening procedure used by the Early Screening Project (ESP) to screen and identify 126 children at risk for behavioral problems in Head Start centers. Results indicate that the ESP was effective in identifying children exhibiting serious behavioral problems.

---

Hepburn, K. S. (2004). *Building culturally & linguistically competent services to support young children, their families, and school readiness*. Retrieved December 1, 2005 from <http://www.aecf.org/publications/data/cctoolkit.pdf>

**Abstract:** This tool kit provides guidance, tools, and resources to assist communities in building culturally and linguistically competent services, supports, programs, and practices related to young children and their families. By offering services in culturally and linguistically meaningful ways, communities can engage all families and support young children being ready for school. The tool kit defines cultural and linguistic competence and its priority for communities, with attention to: (1) diversity and the cultural context of the family and community; (2) understanding the impact of culture on child development; (3) planning and implementing culturally and linguistically competent services; (4) implications for early childhood services and school readiness; and (5) strategies for preparing personnel and implementing culturally and linguistically competent services and supports. Effort has been made to be inclusive of health, mental health, early intervention, and other services systems. Annotated and on-line resources are offered at the end of each section of this guide.

---

Kester, E. S., & Peña, E. D. (2002). Language ability assessment of Spanish-English bilinguals: Future directions. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 8(4). Retrieved January 11, 2005, from <http://PAREonline.net/getvn.asp?v=8&n=4>

**ABSTRACT:** This paper summarizes relevant research on bilingual language development and discusses the implications for bilingual language assessment. It discusses limitations in current language ability testing practices for children who are exposed to two languages and proposes future directions for the development of assessment tools and practices with these children.

---

Laing, S. P., & Kamhi, A. (2003). Alternative assessment of language and literacy in culturally and linguistically diverse populations. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 34(1), 44-54.

**ABSTRACT:** This article explores some problems and recent solutions to the use of norm-referenced testing of children who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD). It describes two promising procedures to provide unbiased assessment of CLD children’s language and literacy: the use of processing-dependent measures and of dynamic assessment measures.

---

Lequerica, M. (1995). A culturally sensitive approach to serving low-income Latino preschoolers. *Infant-Toddler Intervention: The Transdisciplinary Journal*, 5(2), 193-205.

ABSTRACT: This article describes a pediatrically based, culturally sensitive, interagency screening program for developmental delays among Latino low-income preschoolers (n=52). Children with severe to moderate delays and age-eligible children were referred to preschool programs.

---

Lynch, E. & Hanson, M. (2004). Family diversity, assessment, and cultural competence. In M. McLean, D. Bailey & M. Wolery (Eds). *Assessing infants and preschoolers with special needs* (3rd ed., pp. 71-99). Columbus, OH: Merrill Publishing Co.

ABSTRACT: This chapter discusses the rationale for increasing cultural competence in the assessment process and strategies for improving practice. The implications of varying family characteristics on planning assessments, deciding upon assessment strategies, gathering information, and sharing assessment data with families are raised in light of the changing demographics in the United States. This is followed by a discussion of strategies that can be used to increase cross-cultural competence in the assessment process and guidelines for improving assessment practice with families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Strategies for working effectively with interpreters are addressed followed by a comprehensive discussion of the components of the assessment process.

---

McCabe, L. A., Hernandez, M., Lara, S. L., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2000). Assessing preschoolers' self-regulation in homes and classrooms: Lessons from the field. *Behavioral Disorders*, 26(1), 53-69.

ABSTRACT: In the *Games As Measurement for Early Self-Control (GAMES)* study, a battery of self-regulation assessments appropriate for use with ethnically diverse children from low-income families was created. Respondents were 71 English- and/or Spanish-speaking children. Findings indicate that many laboratory and clinical assessments are appropriate for home and classroom administration.

---

McLaughlin, B. (1998). *Assessing the development of a first and a second language in early childhood: Resource guide*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education.

This guide discusses the relationship between assessment and curriculum development and provides recommendations for the assessment of language development in young children who are culturally and linguistically diverse. It includes a description of the following six steps of the California Early Language Development Assessment Process (CELDAP): make a plan, collect information, create a portfolio, write a narrative statement, meet with family and staff, and modify the curriculum. See companion video, *Observing Preschoolers: Assessing First and Second Language Development*. Both can be ordered from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/>

---

McLean, M. (1998). Assessing young children for whom English is a second language. *Young Exceptional Children*, 1(3), 20- 25.

ABSTRACT: This article discusses the challenges of evaluating and assessing young children who are culturally and linguistically diverse. It presents recommendations and strategies for gathering prereferral information, selecting instruments that are culturally appropriate and nonbiased, and devising an assessment plan. Screening and assessment practices must be carefully evaluated in terms of cultural or language biases that could cause either over- or underrepresentation of children from various cultural and linguistic groups.

---

Moore, S. M., Beatty, J., & Pérez-Méndez, C. (1995). *Developing cultural competence in early childhood assessment*. Boulder, CO: University of Colorado at Boulder.

**ABSTRACT:** This manual presents recommendations for interacting with culturally and linguistically diverse families in the following five areas of early childhood assessment: gathering background information; working with interpreters and cultural mediators; adapting formal measures and using informal measures; interpreting assessment information; and sharing information with families. It includes self-reflection tools for practitioners to use for assessing their own cultural competence.

---

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2005). *Screening and assessment of young English-language learners*. Retrieved December 2, 2005 from [http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/pdf/ELL\\_Supplement.pdf](http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/pdf/ELL_Supplement.pdf)

**Abstract:** In 2003 the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education published the joint position statement “Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment, and Program Evaluation: Building an Effective, Accountable System in Programs for Children Birth through Age 8.” The position statement explains what effective assessment looks like for all young children. One of the indicators of a good assessment is that it is linguistically and culturally responsive for all children, including those whose first language is not English. The purpose of this supplement to the original position statement is to: (1) explain and expand on the meaning of “linguistically and culturally responsive”; (2) discuss issues specifically related to the screening and assessment of young English-language learners; and (3) make recommendations to increase the probability that all young English-language learners will benefit from appropriate, effective assessments of their learning and development. Readers of this document should first read the full position statement (<http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/pdf/pscape.pdf>).

---

National Association of School Psychologists (Producer). (2003). *Portraits of the children: Culturally competent assessment* [Video and CD-ROM]. (Available from the Council for Exceptional Children at <http://www.cec.sped.org/bk/catalog2/index.html>).

**ABSTRACT:** This multimedia professional development resource package highlights four culturally diverse case studies that feature students from pre-school to high school age levels with challenging learning issues. Interviews with leading psychological assessment experts and experienced general educators, related services personnel, ESL (English as a Second Language) specialists, administrators, and parents create meaningful discussion on: (1) the use of interpreters; (2) bilingual assessment; and (3) the role of culture, race, and language on school performance. The CD-ROM includes: (1) the entire video in an interactive format; (2) a User’s Guide with suggested previewing and post-viewing discussion questions; (3) extensive hand-outs, reference lists, and Web links; and (4) OSEP discretionary grant information.

---

O’Connell, J. C. (1998). *Project Apache: A reservation, community-based early intervention program for Apache infants and toddlers with special needs and their families. Final report*. Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University.

**ABSTRACT:** This final report describes the outcomes of Project Apache, a reservation, community-based early intervention program designed to develop comprehensive services to Apache infants and toddlers who are at risk of developing a disability and their families. The project uses a home-based service delivery program with paraprofessional aides to assist in implementing the family intervention plan. A reservation-based referral process was put into place with the cooperation of the Indian Health Service to identify at the earliest possible time infants who are at-risk for

becoming developmentally delayed. Family and child assessments are used that are more dynamic and ongoing, as opposed to linear and sequential. The project found that formal assessment instruments were ineffective in working with the White Mountain Apache families and that information should be obtained through informal interviews and observation. The paraprofessionals were found to be very effective at securing this information. A list of recommended developmental assessments is provided, along with a list of successful interventions. The report describes the referral process, assessments, development of Individualized Family Service Plans, interventions, and program evaluation. Recommendations for providing services to Indian populations are made throughout the report. Available free through the ERIC database at <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>

---

Oregon Department of Education. (2003). *Guidelines for determining eligibility for EI/ECSE programs in Oregon*. Salem, OR: Author. Retrieved January 11, 2005, from [http://www.ode.state.or.us/gradelevel/pre\\_k/eiecse/guidelinesearlyinterchildprog.pdf](http://www.ode.state.or.us/gradelevel/pre_k/eiecse/guidelinesearlyinterchildprog.pdf)

This manual on determining eligibility for early intervention and early childhood special education (EI/ECSE) programs in Oregon includes a section on cultural competence in EI/ECSE evaluations. It provides a link to a second document entitled *Special Education Assessment Process for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students* (<http://www.tr.wou.edu/eec/AssessmentProcess2001.pdf>), which although primarily geared toward school-age evaluations, also contains much valuable information for preschool evaluations.

---

Paradis, J. (2005). Grammatical morphology in children learning English as a second language: Implications of similarities with specific language impairment. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 36(3), 172-187.

**Abstract:** This study finds that expressive language characteristics of children learning English as a second language are similar to characteristics of English that is spoken by monolingual children with specific language impairment. Twenty-four typically developing children aged four to seven who had been learning English as a second language for an average of 9.5 months participated in the study. The author found that their language accuracy rates and speech error patterns were similar to those that have been reported for monolingual children of the same age with specific language impairment. In addition, their performance on the Test of Early Grammatical Impairment was in the range of the clinical population, even though none of these children were considered language impaired. Both analyses point to the possibility that typically developing children who are learning English as a second language can be mistaken as language impaired. The results provide information that can be used to set appropriate expectations of error patterns and rates of grammatical development in the early stages of learning English as a second language. The results also demonstrate that the use of English standardized tests with nonnative English-speakers is not a good practice. Suggestions are provided for points to consider when assessing English language learners.

---

Pavri, S. (2001). Developmental delay or cultural difference? Developing effective child find practices for young children from culturally and linguistically diverse families. *Young Exceptional Children*, 4 (4), 2-9.

**ABSTRACT:** This article considers the extent to which Child Find procedures discussed in the literature are responsive to families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Discussion of the legal basis for Child Find activities targeting these young children and challenges in early identification of children from diverse backgrounds is followed by seven suggested guidelines and possible resources for developing culturally sensitive Child Find programs.

---

Santos, R. M., Fowler, S., & Corso, R. (2002). *CLAS collection 1: Appropriate screening, assessment, and family information gathering*. Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

ABSTRACT: This resource describes the complexity of the assessment and information gathering process when providing early intervention services to ethnically diverse families. It outlines steps to help ensure that each phase of the process is appropriate to the varied needs of children with disabilities and their families. It is part of a series that is meant to help educators confront racial, linguistic, and cultural biases in the school system, as well as in their own teaching styles.

---

Schuman, A. (2002). Help or hindrance? Staff perspectives on developmental assessment in multicultural early childhood settings. *Mental Retardation*, 40(4), 313-20.

ABSTRACT: Thirty-five staff members' views on developmental assessment in a multicultural early childhood setting are described and used to initiate a critique of current practice in assessment of young children. Staff expressed a range of opinions from endorsement to frank rejection of the utility, validity, and ethics of developmental assessment.

---

Shapiro, B. J., & Derrington, T. M. (2004). Equity and disparity in access to services: An outcomes-based evaluation of early intervention child find in Hawai'i. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 24(4), 199-212.

Abstract: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates Child Find activities to promote early identification of children and referral for Part C services. This study examined the equity of access to referral and enrollment in Part C services across various subpopulations in Hawai'i. Results for low-income and immigrant households were reassuring. Access for children from military families appeared to be less equitable. There was conflicting evidence related to access for children whose parents spoke little English. Uninsured children experienced the greatest disparity in access. Recommendations to improve Child Find services for these subpopulations are provided.

---

State of New Mexico Public Education Department, Special Education Office. (2001). *Technical assistance document for nondiscriminatory assessment of culturally and linguistically diverse preschool students*. Santa Fe, NM: Author. Retrieved January 11, 2005, from [http://www.ped.state.nm.us/seo/assessment/preschool\\_cld.pdf](http://www.ped.state.nm.us/seo/assessment/preschool_cld.pdf)

ABSTRACT: Studies have shown that, historically, bias during the assessment and evaluation process has resulted in the over- and under-representation of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) children in special education programs. The purpose of this technical assistance document is to provide evaluators with guidelines for evaluating CLD preschool children, in order to reduce bias in the identification, evaluation, and placement of these children in special education programs. These "Best Practices" are founded on the nondiscriminatory evaluation principle, embedded within the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997, and the New Mexico Administrative Codes (NMAC).

---

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Early Childhood Research Institute on Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services. (2001). *Review guidelines: Child find*. Champaign, IL: Author. Retrieved January 11, 2005, from <http://clas.uiuc.edu/review/ChildFind.pdf>

ABSTRACT: These *Review Guidelines* are intended to help service providers and individuals involved in personnel preparation determine the congruence between the beliefs, values, and practices of the individuals in your community and current recommended practices in early childhood/special education. The *Review Guidelines* will first help you consider the overall effectiveness of presentation of a material. Next, questions follow which pertain specifically to the content area of Child Find.

---

Zevin, D. (1998). *Assessing and fostering the development of a first and a second language in early childhood: Training manual*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education.

**ABSTRACT:** This training manual was developed to train early childhood educators of limited-English-proficient (LEP) children. It includes the following eight modules: (a) oral language development; (b) evaluating and assessing oral language development; (c) authentic assessment and the first three steps of the California Early Language Development Assessment Process (CELDAP) (make a plan, collect information, and create a portfolio); (d) CELDAP steps 4-6 (write a narrative statement, meet with family and staff, and modify the curriculum); (e) prior experiences with language assessment; (f) principles and practices of assessment management; (g) the change process; and (h) training and peer coaching. For ordering information go to <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/>

*To search the ERIC databases or access the references herein,  
see <http://www.nectac.org/chouse/>*



Copyright National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center 2005

This minibibliography is produced and distributed by the NECTAC Clearinghouse on Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education, a component of the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC), pursuant to contract ED-01-CO-0112 from the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education (ED). Contractors undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express their judgment in professional and technical matters. Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the Department of Education's position or policy.

