Rationale:

Assessments of children, personnel, and programs are conducted through a variety of formal and informal procedures to document and evaluate growth and progress; to design instruction that is informed by children's developmental abilities; to make decisions about interventions, accommodations, and referrals; to identify teaching strategies that are best suited to facilitate development and curriculum; and to make decisions related to personnel and program effectiveness. Because assessment data guide decisions that affect individual children, staff members, and program plans, early childhood professionals must identify the purposes of assessment, use reliable and valid assessment procedures and instruments, and implement various methods of interpreting and sharing assessment data.

Knowledge:

Assessment and evaluation practices must be valid, reliable, and sensitive to the cultural and linguistic background of the child. They must also be appropriate for the developmental behavior being assessed.

- These practices include observing children in natural situations and documenting observations through a variety of strategies that include anecdotal records and observational checklists; work samples such as drawings, writing samples or dictations; and photographs or videotapes of children's behaviors, creative constructions and playful activity throughout the day.
- Families share information about their children's interests, activities, behaviors, developmental progress, health, and prior experiences.

Assessment procedures must be planned in accordance with up-to-date information on appropriate methods, sensitivity to individual and cultural differences, and with regard to the overall purpose of assessment.

- Informal assessments and initial screenings are used to determine whether additional assessment and/or consultation are needed.
- Formal standardized assessment data are used with informal assessment data to assist in screening and serving children who may need medical or educational interventions.
- Observation, documentation, and assessment procedures are used to meet the unique needs of children.
- Observational strategies are used to identify children's interests, abilities, and areas for growth.
- Observations are documented in a variety of ways and used to modify the curriculum in response to observational data.

Two-way communication with families allows early childhood professionals to plan for and implement assessments, while families benefit from being informed of assessment results that will guide the child's growth and development.

- The influences of family, environment, culture and language, and diverse ways of learning are recognized and used to present information in a positive, non-threatening, and constructive manner when interpreting assessment results.
- Families are involved in the development and implementation of Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs).
- A variety of professionals collaborate in the development and implementation of IFSPs and IEPs.
- Observations are shared with families to celebrate growth and work collaboratively to address concerns and challenges.

Confidentiality of assessment results must be maintained in accordance with legal and ethical considerations.

Practices Based on Knowledge:

Grounded in knowledge and comprehension of typical and atypical child development, early childhood professionals in all types of settings must:

1. Assessment Plan and Procedures

Plan assessment procedures that:
- Use formal and informal methods to identify and document children's interests, strengths and challenges.
- Employ assessment theories used for decision making and curriculum planning.
- Implement assessment practices and interpret results with sensitivity to individual differences in children's ability levels as well as families' cultures, languages, and environmental factors.
- Reflect the overall purpose of assessment and articulate the limits of norm-referenced standardized assessments.

2. Communication with Families

Communicate with families to share assessment plans and information as well as to plan follow-up services and developmental learning experiences based on assessment.

3. Confidentiality

Maintain confidentiality of assessment results in accordance with ethical and legal considerations, including the importance of avoiding negative labeling of children.

Competency	Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
Early childhood professionals at ALL LEVELS have knowledge related to:	Professionals at Level I implement practices according to program guidelines and policies. They:	Professionals at Level II demonstrate the skills present at the previous level. In addition, they work independently and take initiative in designing environments to facilitate development. They:	Professionals at Level III demonstrate the skills present at the previous levels. In addition, they design, assess, and modify the learning environment to meet children's changing needs. They also model excellent practices and encourage others to develop proficiency in skills. They:	Professionals at Level IV demonstrate the skills present at the previous levels. In addition, they provide leadership for planning, implementing, assessing, and modifying the program to ensure continuous improvement. They conduct inquiry to advance the understanding of best practices for their communities. They:
1. Assessment Plan and Procedures				
1.1 Assessment Planning	Follow instructions for implementing assessment plans by: • Maintaining records about occurrences (e.g., food intake, accidents, health indicators, interests, skills) • Collecting and filing work samples • Providing clear, accurate, and objective information about interactions with individual children to families and other professionals according to program policies and guidelines • Recording frequency and duration of specific child behaviors according to instructions	Identify sources of assessment data (e.g., naturalistic observations, anecdotal records, work samples, parental interviews) and plan a variety of methods to document behaviors and interests on a regular schedule	Create systematic plans and procedures for ongoing assessment of individual children using both formal and informal assessment procedures. This includes: • Selecting assessment tools that are valid, reliable, and sensitive to cultural and linguistic backgrounds of children • Creating a schedule for ongoing and periodic collection of assessment data • Planning how results will be used • Planning methods for communicating with families about assessment results	Plan, implement, and evaluate systems for ongoing assessment of individual children in all areas of development and behavior in order to identify: • Interests • Needs • Developmental progress • Possible need for diagnostic testing

Competency	Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV

1.2 Assessment Procedures	Observe and gather other forms of information on children's:
	• Needs
	• Interests
	• Health status
	• Approaches to learning
	• Progress in developmental areas:
	  • Cognitive
	  • Social- emotional
	  • Physical
	  • Linguistic
		Use various methods for recording development on an ongoing basis to track progress of individual children. Examples include, but are not limited to:
		• Observation
		• Checklists
		• Rating scales
		• Work sampling
			Select and schedule procedures for screening for health and developmental progress using formal and/or informal procedures that:
			• Help measure progress toward curriculum goals
			• Are reliable and valid
			• Provide information that helps plan curriculum
			• Are sensitive to needs of English-language learners
			• Are sensitive to children with special needs
				Oversee the program's assessment procedures by planning, implementing, evaluating, and revising assessment programs with attention to:
				• Necessary staff training
				• Regular assessments
				• Sensitivity to cultural and linguistic backgrounds
				• Periodic screening for health status, and developmental milestones
				• Follow-up with norm-referenced assessment when indicated by screening
				• Adaptation of curriculum based on assessment data
				• Procedures for follow-up intervention, if needed

1.3 Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs)	Demonstrate awareness of the role of assessment data in writing IFSPs and IEPs	Use assessment data to construct IFSPs and IEPs	Integrate assessment data from a variety of sources to make decisions and to create IFSPs and IEPs	Oversee the program's use of assessment data to construct IFSPs and IEPs
1.4 Responsive Use of Assessment Data	Stay aware of actions needed to implement an IEP, IFSP, or, for developmentally advanced children, an individually designed enrichment program for any child identified as in need of tailored approaches	Design learning environment and plan activities based on assessed skills and behaviors of individual children	Identify relevant environmental risk factors that impact developmental progress and make referrals when appropriate for diagnostic testing and/or follow-up for special services	Provide support for program assistants and/or staff to facilitate: • Implementation of curricula based on assessed interests, skills and behaviors of individual children • Consultative services needed when making referrals for diagnostic testing or implementation of recommendations for individual children
1.5 Multidisciplinary Teams	Provide information about any child as needed and requested by a multidisciplinary assessment team	Participate as a member of a multidisciplinary assessment team when needed	Initiate request for multidisciplinary assessment as needed and participate as a team member when appropriate	Make arrangements for multidisciplinary assessment when needed

Competency	Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
2. Communication with Families				
2.1 Listening to and Learning from Families	Listen attentively to family members as they share observations of child behavior or skills and record the information to inform others of important considerations in planning activities	Use systematic procedures to obtain from family members pertinent information regarding child's interests, strengths, and challenges in order to plan the learning environment and curricular activities	Model for others and help others develop competency in using systematic procedures to obtain information from family members regarding child's developmental skills, interests, and needs	Involve families in devising systematic methods for family members and professionals to share observations and/or assessments of children's interests, behaviors, and abilities
2.2 Sharing Assessment Results	Share results of informal observations with family members regarding: • Achievement of new develop-mental milestones • Areas of concern or special strengths and opportunities • Child's interests	Use a variety of formal (e.g., conferences) and informal ways (e.g., conversation) to share assessment results with family members, keeping in mind that information must be shared in a way that is sensitive to family values and background	Share with families on a regular basis (two or three times a year): • Reports of child's progress in a way that is sensitive to family values, culture, and the language spoken in the home • Information about why and how the assessment was done and how the results will be used	Create policies and procedures to guide assistants and/or staff members in sharing assessment information with families

Competency	Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
3. Confidentiality				
3.1 Maintaining Confidentiality	Maintain confidentiality in regard to observations or records of each child's behavior and/or developmental progress	Share oral and written information with families and other professionals (within guidelines for confidentiality) in order to facilitate collaborative work on behalf of children	Model and help others understand guidelines and methods of maintaining confidentiality	Inform staff or assistants and families of confidentiality guidelines that include information on: • Who has access to children's assessment results • Laws and regulations regarding family members' right to gain access to files, with special attention to legal issues (e.g., to foster parents, non-custodial parents, or other designated care-givers) • What steps are taken to keep records confidential • How the assessment information will be used
3.2 Avoiding Negative Labeling	Avoid negative labeling when sharing assessment information When referring to a person with a disability, refer to the person first rather than the disability using "People-first" language (e.g., person with autism rather than autistic person)	Consistently use respectful language when referring to a person with a disability (i.e., refer to the person first rather than the disability and help others learn to use "People-first" language)	Share assessment information with family members and colleagues in a constructive manner that leads to planning that optimizes development	Nurture ability of assistants and/or staff members to avoid negative labeling when sharing assessment information with colleagues or family members and when making reference to any person with a disability