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ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS FOCUSING ON
PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S ABILITIES

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 - Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2 - Preschool Assessment.....	3
Chapter 3 - The Role of Assessment Instruments.....	6
Chapter 4 - Assessment Guidelines.....	10
Chapter 5 - Elements of Assessment Instruments.....	13
Identification.....	13
Description.....	14
Administration.....	21
Technical Aspects.....	25
Additional Comments and References.....	30
Chapter 6 - Assessment Instrument Selection.....	31
Chapter 7 - Assessment Instrument Descriptions.....	33
The Brekken Drouin Development Spotcheck.....	36
The Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Early Development.....	41
Circle Preschool Individual Assessment.....	45
Developmental Profile.....	49
Developmental Resource: Behavioral Sequences for Assessment and Program Planning.....	57
Humanics National Child Assessment Handbook and Form.....	62
Learning Accomplishment Profile.....	67
The Lexington Developmental Scale.....	72
Memphis Educational Model Providing Handicapped Infant Services.....	80
Portage Guide to Early Education.....	85
Preschool Attainment Record.....	89
Sewell Early Education Development Record.....	95
Skill Checklists.....	100
Uniform Performance Assessment System.....	103
Chapter 8 - Summary.....	109
References.....	115

TABLES

Table 1 - Salient Features of Assessment Instruments.....34
Table 2 - Developmental Areas of Assessment Instruments.....35

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Information on 14 criterion-referenced preschool assessment instruments is provided through detailed descriptions of each instrument and two tables which highlight their characteristics. The emerging trend in early childhood education towards program-oriented assessments of preschool children's abilities and its role is presented. This type of assessment serves the purpose of facilitating relevant curriculum development documenting children's developmental changes and enhancing communication and knowledge of child development to parents. It is the responsibility of early childhood educators to be informed about general and specific sequences of developing skills and behaviors in children. The identification of children's level of development should be done in a thorough, systematic and accurate manner using assessment instruments rather than based on "gut-level" feelings. General assessment guidelines and aspects of assessment instruments are presented to guide early childhood educators in making informed decisions concerning the selection and use of developmental assessment instruments. Elements of each instrument included in the analyses are: (a) identification information; (b) a description of the measure including purpose, recommended ages, method and developmental areas; (c) administration procedures which also include scoring and interpretation information; (d) technical aspects covering the instruments' item selection, reliability and validity;

(e) additional comments and; (f) additional relevant references. Several criteria (e.g. focuses on three to five year olds, accessible for review, etc.) were used for selecting the 14 instruments reviewed in the body of the paper using the systematic outline. Some overall strengths and weaknesses of the assessment instruments are highlighted in the summary.