



PURPOSE

WHY TRAINING IN EVALUATION? From our experiences in early childhood education settings, many of us value the care and education these programs provide. We believe that high quality care and education helps children to thrive. We know, too, that each child is a marvel, a miracle whose true worth is beyond measure and whose development can only be appreciated, not quantified.

Yet improvement in children's programs requires that we define high quality carefully, and then evaluate program services according to these standards. Only then can we provide the technical assistance necessary so that all programs will prepare children optimally to be ready for school.

Child evaluation, too, is important. Too many children with developmental concerns go without early intervention services in the preschool years because no-one has screened their development and referred them for further evaluation. In order to use a curriculum appropriately, the teacher must know each child's knowledge base and skill set before planning developmentally appropriate classroom activities – the process of curriculum-based child assessment. Finally, by comparing a child's scores on an objective, standardized test at the beginning and the end of a school year, we can tell something about what the child has learned.

Fortunately, we have clear guidelines on both the importance of evaluation in early childhood programs and the ethical and research guidelines governing the best use of each type of evaluation. This training module includes a synthesis of relevant studies, research reviews, and position statements from authoritative organizations in early childhood education and psychology.

The **MAIN GOAL** of the professional seminar is to equip leaders in the field with the basic terms and types of evaluation in early childhood programs, and how these are used in daily practice. These include the evaluation of children (screening and assessment), the link between child evaluation and curriculum usage, and overall program evaluation, including the use of standardized tests in pre-post assessments.

The **SECOND GOAL** of the seminar is to link leaders in the field with details about each type of evaluation that can be used to fully inform stakeholders in the community (parents, professionals and policy makers) who must make evaluation decisions.

We expect that knowledge gained in this professional seminar will be returned to local communities in order to disseminate the basics of evaluation to broader audiences. To help with this, we have included materials designed to be used with different audiences.

MATERIALS

- The **POWERPOINT SLIDES** are written simply, with just the outline of information or definitions on each slide. They can be used with audiences who know very little or a great deal about evaluation.
- The **NARRATIVE SECTION** is designed so that you can pick and choose what information to present along with the slide shows. You can choose slides and a handout for a presentation to pediatricians on the importance of developmental screening programs in the community...or an hour presentation to coalition members discussing the importance of using multiple measures in evaluating program quality.
- The **RESEARCH ABSTRACTS** are long summaries, with implications for practice and personnel preparation. The **FULL TEXT** of each major article, review or position statement is included as well.
- A variety of **SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES, HANDOUTS AND REFERENCES** have been included, so that the trainer can find further information on any topic.
- This module is only a beginning. We encourage you to do your own research on the topics of direct need in your community, and build on the material we have provided.
- **FINALLY, thank you for caring about children, families and your community.**