Conducting Formal Assessments
What is Assessment?

• “Assessment is a process of collecting data for the purpose of making decisions about individuals and groups”

(Salvia & Ysseldyke, 2007)
Conducting Assessments

• Collect background information:
  – Performance data on objectives
  – Maintenance and generalization data on objectives
  – Medical and physical conditions
  – Medications and dietary restrictions
  – Challenging behaviors
  – Likes and dislikes
  – Physical and sensory abilities
  – Communication skills
Why Do We Assess?

To...

- make decisions about individuals and groups
- show direction of progress
- visualize achievement (by graphing)
- plan instruction
- have documentation
- determine eligibility
- diagnose
- screen
- determine the least restrictive environment (LRE)
- for accountability
- evaluate the program, instruction, or system in use

(Salvia and Ysseldyke, 2007)
Types of Assessments

• Formal assessments
  – Consist mainly of standardized tests
    • Criterion-referenced assessment
    • Norm-referenced assessment

• Informal assessments
  – Non-standardized procedures
    • Case history: Interviews
    • Observational measures
    • Performance-based assessment
    • Dynamic assessment
Who may be involved in formal assessment?

• Formal assessment may include any of the following based on student needs:
  – School Psychologist
  – Special Education Teacher
  – Social Worker
  – Related Service Providers:
    • Occupational Therapist
    • Physical Therapist
    • Speech Language Pathologist
    • Etc.
  – General Education Teacher
  – Parent
  – Student
Assessment Flow Chart

Identify Student Needs

Conduct Evaluations
- Family/Educational History
- Social/Emotional/Behavioral
- Academic
- Functional
- Etc.

Report
- Write
  - Formal report
- Or
  - IEP present levels
- Share with parents and team
Components of Formal Assessments

• Observations of student
  – Various times, settings, instructional contexts if possible

• Social/Educational/Family History
  – Generally conducted by interview

• Standardized measures
  – Standardized evaluations

• Informal measures
Deciding what to assess

• Ask teachers, parents, student what they see as the student’s needs
  – Questions to ask:
    • What does the student do well? Struggle with?
    • Are you concerned about the student’s development/learning/communication in any area?
    • How is the student’s social/behavioral functioning in the school setting?

• Review the student’s educational file
• Observe the student in various settings
Observations

• Observations should be conducted to obtain information on the student and determine/confirm areas to assess.

• For more information, see Powerpoint on “Informal Observations”
Assessment Areas

Potential areas for evaluation include:
• Cognitive
• Academic
  – Reading, math, writing
• Social/Behavioral
• Motor
  – Fine, gross
• Communication
  – Receptive, expressive
• Sensory
  – Vision, hearing
Common Tests: High Incidence

- Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement – III (WJ-III)
- Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests – Revised (WRMT-R)
- KeyMath-3
- Test of Written Language
- Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS)
- Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL)
- Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM)

For detailed information, see “Assessment Tools – High Incidence” tip sheet
Common Tests: Low Incidence

- Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales
- Expressive Vocabulary Test (EVT-2)
- Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-4)
- Adaptive Behavior Inventory
- Functional Communication Profile
- Assessment for Persons Profoundly or Severely Impaired (APPSI)

For detailed information, see “Assessment Tools - Severe” tip sheet
Reporting Results

• In writing
  – formal reports
  – IEPs
    • Present levels statements
    • Progress reports

• In meetings
  – with parents
  – General and special educators
  – Related service providers
  – Related arts and physical education teachers
A note on confidentiality

• Remember:
  – Information about the student should only be shared with those directly working with the student
  – Do not share information with those outside the school setting, physicians, other schools or family members without written permission from the student’s legal parent or guardian