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Early Years Evaluation (EYE) – Direct Assessment

The Early Years Evaluation (EYE) is designed to assist educators in assessing the skills of children aged 3 to 6 years as they prepare for and make the transition to school. The EYE consists of two complementary components: the EYE-Teacher Assessment (EYE-TA), a teacher rating scale, which was discussed in detail in the previous CRISPfact, and the EYE-Direct Assessment (EYE-DA), an individually-administered measure of developmental outcomes, the focus of this CRISPfact.

Background
The ability to read is a fundamental skill for children’s success at school, and ultimately for their long-term health and economic well-being. Although the transition to kindergarten is important, the most critical transition is from ‘learning to read’ to ‘reading to learn’. For most children this occurs at about age 8 or 9, usually by the end of the third grade. If children are not able to read with ease and understand what they have read when they enter fourth grade, they are less able to take advantage of the learning opportunities that lie ahead.

Teachers and researchers have worked together to determine how we can best assist students who encounter difficulty in learning to read. Their combined efforts show:

• foundational skills for learning to read begin to develop long before children enter school;
• children enter school with diverse levels of early literacy skills;
• children with weak early literacy skills encounter more difficulty learning to read;
• children who are not ready to read can be identified in kindergarten;
• most reading difficulties can be prevented with early identification, excellent classroom instruction, and appropriate intervention.

What does the EYE-DA assess?
The EYE-DA evaluates aspects of early child development in four developmental areas that are closely related to emergent literacy skills. They are:

• Awareness of Self and Environment
• Cognitive Skills
• Language and Communication
• Gross and Fine Motor Development

Unique Features and Benefits of the EYE-DA
The EYE-DA is administered by teachers or school support personnel who are experienced in working with young children. The web-based data entry system allows evaluators to enter the scores online. Results are computed, and a report on the individual child is available immediately for teachers and parents. Data at the school and community levels can also be made available.

Information about developmental strengths and weaknesses gives teachers the necessary feedback to help each child enjoy a positive transition to school. Parents receive a short report listing each of the developmental areas illustrating their child’s results. Many districts have special activities planned for children who are identified as ‘experiencing difficulty’. The EYE-DA can be administered in about 30 minutes. Children love doing the EYE-DA.

Kids Come First in New Brunswick
The EYE-DA was piloted in New Brunswick in 2007/08. Parents and teachers found the information provided by the EYE-DA reports informative and helpful in preparing children for kindergarten entry. School districts and the New Brunswick Department of Education recently decided to administer the EYE-DA to all students entering kindergarten in the fall of 2008 as part of the When Kids Come First provincial education plan. The Band Operated Schools in the province are also participating in this initiative.

Learning to read early and well is good for students, good for schools, and good for society!

For more information on the Early Years Evaluation, please contact: info@ksiresearch.com


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