

# Curriculum-Based Assessment Rating Rubric

## Curriculum-based assessment:

- Curriculum-based assessments are “a form of criterion-referenced measurement wherein curricular objectives act as the criteria for the identification of instructional targets and for the assessment of status and progress” (Bagnato & Neisworth, 1991, p. 97).
- Curriculum-based assessments provide a direct assessment of a child’s skills upon entry into a curriculum; guide development of individual goals, interventions, and accommodations; and allow for continual monitoring of developmental progress (McLean et al., 2004).
- “[Curriculum-based] assessment cannot and should not represent a single point in time and ongoing decisions should be continuously made based on data when programming for young children” (Grisham-Brown, Hemmeter, & Pretti-Frontczak, 2005, p. 87).

## Why use the curriculum-based assessment rating rubric:

- The curriculum-based assessment rating rubric was developed to help teams determine the quality of various assessments for use with young children. Quality is defined as the extent to which an assessment meets the standards set forth by recommended practice and research (e.g., AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999; Bagnato, Neisworth, & Munson, 1997).
- The rating rubric is composed of 17 elements that represent recommended assessment practices. Each element is defined beginning on page six (6).
- The rubric can be used to guide teams in selecting an appropriate assessment for a variety of purposes including: identifying children’s strengths, interests, and emerging skills, developing meaningful IFSP/IEP goals and objectives, planning and individualizing intervention efforts, measuring child progress, and producing accountability data to meet federal and state requirements.

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## Directions for scoring the rubric:

1. Become familiar with assessment to be reviewed. How assessments are rated will vary depending upon how they are constructed **and** how they are implemented in actual practice.
2. Become familiar with the rubric and what is meant by each of the elements.
3. For each element, determine the column that most closely matches the characteristics of the assessment (Unsatisfactory = 0, Basic = 1, Satisfactory = 2, Excellent = 3) and assign a score for each element or indicate which characteristics are true of the assessment under review.
4. Add the total score for each assessment reviewed and consider adopting the one with the highest rating or consider if necessary characteristics are evident to warrant adoption of the assessment.

<b>Element</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory (0)</b>	<b>Basic (1)</b>	<b>Satisfactory (2)</b>	<b>Excellent (3)</b>
Adaptable for Special Needs	No consideration of special needs	Limited consideration of special needs through the assessment process and instrument does not allow for additional accommodations or modifications for special needs	Upfront considerations for special needs are not comprehensive, but assessment allows for some accommodations and/or modifications for special needs	Considers and provides specific strategies and procedures for accommodating and/or modifying the assessment for special needs
Aligns with Federal/State/Agency Standards and/or Outcomes	Does not align with Federal/State/Agency Standards and/or Outcomes	Aligns with less than half of the big ideas or concepts from Federal/State/Agency Standards and/or Outcomes	Aligns with more than half of the big ideas or concepts from Federal/State/Agency Standards and/or Outcomes	Aligns with a clear majority or all of the big ideas or concepts from Federal/State/Agency Standards and/or Outcomes
Appropriateness for Population	Does not meet the needs of population being served and cannot be adapted or supplemented to meet their needs	Meets the needs of population being served with significant adaptations to the assessment	Meets the needs of population being served with minimal adaptations to the assessment	Meets the needs of population being served (options for making adaptations are built into the assessment allowing for flexibility and avoids penalizing children with disabilities)
Collaboration	Assessment is to be completed by one team member	Several team members work to complete the assessment, but work independently (i.e., separate protocols or sections are to be completed by different professionals)	Several team members work to complete the assessment together but fail to encourage active family involvement. May still encourage summaries by individual professionals	Encourages all team members (including families) to work together to complete the assessment in multiple and varied settings, and the assessment is summarized as a whole

<b>Element</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory (0)</b>	<b>Basic (1)</b>	<b>Satisfactory (2)</b>	<b>Excellent (3)</b>
Comprehensive and Integrated	Assessment only covers a single content area (e.g., Literacy) or a single developmental area (e.g., Communication)	Assessment covers either several content areas <b>or</b> several developmental areas but not both	Covers several content <b>and</b> developmental areas but they are not integrated (i.e., it is not clear how areas overlap and are related)	Assessment integrates <b>all</b> content and developmental areas considered important for young children's growth and learning
Cultural Sensitivity	No consideration of cultural influence	Limited consideration of cultural influences through the assessment and instrument does not allow for additional adaptations for these cultural influences	Upfront considerations and adaptations are not comprehensive, but assessment allows for adaptations for cultural influences during the assessment process	Considers and adapts for cultural influences throughout the assessment
Family Involvement in Assessment Process	No opportunities for family involvement	Minimal opportunities for involvement, mostly passive roles (e.g., answering questions, observing but not participating)	Several opportunities for passive and active family involvement (e.g., families are encouraged to answer questions and to observe and participate by gathering information or scoring protocols)	Multiple opportunities for active family involvement that can be tailored to an individual family's needs (e.g., families help select assessment times, locations, and instruments)
Instructions and Information	Instructions and information for using the assessment, particularly with diverse populations are vague	Instructions and information are somewhat clear, but do not allow for a change in presentation format or procedures to accommodate the children being assessed	Instructions and information are somewhat clear, and allow for a change in presentation format or procedures to accommodate the children being assessed	Instructions and information are very clear (even for untrained members of the team) <b>and</b> specific strategies or examples of how to vary presentation formats or procedures are provided to ensure accommodations are made for the children being assessed

<b>Element</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory (0)</b>	<b>Basic (1)</b>	<b>Satisfactory (2)</b>	<b>Excellent (3)</b>
Materials and Activities	Uses inappropriate materials and activities	Uses developmentally appropriate materials <b>OR</b> activities	Uses developmentally appropriate materials <b>AND</b> activities but are limited in depth or interest to individual children	Uses a variety of developmentally appropriate and adaptable materials and activities relevant to individual children
Methods of Assessment	Uses a single method of gathering information in a single often unfamiliar setting a single team member	Uses a single method of gathering information but in familiar settings with familiar people	Uses multiple methods of gathering information during a single time period, but in a familiar setting with familiar people	Uses multiple methods of gathering information, across time, familiar settings and events, and with familiar people
Multiple Means of Expression	Child is allowed to show their knowledge and skills across <b>all</b> items through a <b>single</b> means of expression	Child is allowed to show their knowledge and skills across <b>most</b> items through a <b>single</b> means of expression	Child is allowed and encouraged to show their knowledge and skills across <b>some</b> items through <b>multiple</b> means of expression	Child is allowed and encouraged to show their knowledge and skills across <b>all</b> items through <b>multiple</b> means of expression
Overall Format	No specific structure and difficult to implement	Clear structure <b>OR</b> easy to use	Clear structure and easy to use	Clear structure, easy to use and allows flexibility by all team members
Reliability (Psychometric property)	Does not indicate if multiple assessors agree on the scoring and if the child will score similarly on items when assessed within a short amount of time	Multiple assessors do not agree on the scoring and child scores differently when assessed within a short amount of time	Multiple assessors agree on the scoring <b>OR</b> child scores similarly on items when assessed within a short amount of time	Multiple assessors agree on the scoring and child scores similarly on items when assessed within a short amount of time

<b>Element</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory (0)</b>	<b>Basic (1)</b>	<b>Satisfactory (2)</b>	<b>Excellent (3)</b>
System for Documenting Progress	Measures skills with large gaps in developmental sequences	Measures skills with moderate gaps in developmental sequence to note some progress	Measures skills with few gaps in developmental sequences to note subtle progress made by children, particularly those with severe disabilities	Measures skills with incremental steps to note even minimal progress made by children, particularly those with severe disabilities
Time and Training	Significant time/resources and training required to complete the assessment	Significant time/resources OR training required to complete the assessment	Manageable amount of time/resources required to complete the assessment	Manageable amount of time/resources required to complete the assessment and can be embedded into daily classroom routine
Usefulness for Intervention	Assessment information serves no purpose related to intervention	Assessment information has limited use and is not linked to daily plans or individual intervention plans	Assessment information can be used in multiple ways and is somewhat linked to daily plans or individual intervention plans	Assessment information can be used for multiple or interrelated purposes (PLOP, goals and objectives, and monitoring progress) and is linked to daily plans or individual intervention plans
Validity (Psychometric property)	Does not indicate if administration of the assessment leads to improved outcomes and if it measures important developmental skills that accurately portrays the child's abilities	Administration of the assessment does not lead to improved outcomes and poorly reflects the child's abilities	Administration of the assessment leads to improved outcomes OR measures important developmental skills that accurately portrays the child's abilities	Administration of the assessment leads to improved outcomes and measures important developmental skills that accurately portrays the child's abilities

## Definitions of Rubric Elements

**Adaptable for Special Needs** – Specific strategies and procedures for making accommodations and/or modifications for children with special needs is critical. *Accommodations* are acts/procedures used to level the playing field and provide equal access and opportunity without substantially altering what children are expected to learn and be able to do. Examples of accommodations include altering instruments, toys/materials, allowing various response formats, altering the settings and/or timing. *Modifications* are defined as substantial changes in practices and expectations. Examples of modifications include changes in instructional level, content, and performance criteria, and changes in test form or format including alternate assessments (Wrightslaw, 2003)

*DEC Recommended Practice, authenticity standard*

**Aligns with the Federal/State/Agency Standards or Outcomes**– Alignment considers the degree to which the assessment documents children’s performance toward federal, state, or agency standards or outcomes. Alignment is the process of linking curriculum, assessment, classroom instruction, and learning to a set of standards that describes what students should know and be able to do. The goal of alignment is to ensure that classroom instruction and learning activities support adopted standards and assessments (taken from [www.startest.com/glossary.html](http://www.startest.com/glossary.html)).

*DEC Recommended Practice, acceptability standard*

**Appropriateness for Population** – The assessment is intended and can be used with the population of children and families being served (NAEYC and NAECS/SDE, 2003; Pretti-Frontczak, 2002). For example, if working in an inclusive setting, the assessment can be used with children with and without disabilities. The assessment is also consistent with the program’s philosophy and goals. “To the extent possible, test content should be chosen to ensure that intended inferences from test scores are equally valid for members of different groups of test takers” (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999, p. 44).

*DEC Recommended Practice, congruence standard*

*AERA, APA, & NCME, standard 3.6*

**Collaboration** – The assessment can be used by a group of people (educators, service providers, and families) who together contribute to complete the assessment process (Howard, Williams, Port, & Lepper, 2001).

*DEC Recommended Practice, collaboration and convergence standards*

**Comprehensive and Integrated** – Encompasses all dimensions of children’s early development and learning. In other words, the assessment covers all content areas (e.g., Literacy, Mathematics, Science) and developmental areas (e.g., motor, communication, social-emotional) showing the interrelatedness of early development.

*DEC Recommended Practice, utility standard*

**Cultural Sensitivity** – Assessment is culturally and linguistically responsive (NAEYC and NAECS/SDE, 2003). Culture refers to “customary beliefs and patterns of and for behavior, both explicit and implicit that are passed on to future generations by the society they live in and/or by

a social, religious, or ethnic group within it” (NAEYC, 1997). Further, the term *culture* includes ethnicity, racial identity, economic class, family structure, language, and religious and political beliefs, which profoundly influence each child’s development and relationship to the world (NAEYC and NAECS/SDE, 2003). “Testing practice should be designed to reduce threats to the reliability and validity of test score inferences that may arise from language differences” (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999, p. 97).

*DEC Recommended Practice, equity standard*  
*AERA, APA, & NCME, standard 9.1*

**Family Involvement** – The assessment process should follow family-centered principles and offer a continuum of options for families regarding participation. Family-centered principles include (1) involving families in all aspects of the decision making processes (e.g., Dinnebeil & Rule, 1994); (2) creating partnerships with families (e.g., Whitehead, Jesien, & Ulanski, 1998); (3) providing families with all information and support needed to enable them to address the developmental and educational needs of their children (e.g., Trivette, Dunst, Hamby, & LaPointe, 1996); and (4) acknowledging and supporting the cultures, values, and traditions of families (e.g., McWilliam & Bailey, 1993).

*DEC Recommended Practice, collaboration and convergence standards*

**Instructions and Information** - The instructions and information variable refers to all questions, directions, instructions and all other statements that are made to the child being assessed and the ways in which this information is allowed to be presented to the child.

**Materials and Activities** – Appropriate materials include those (a) the child is familiar with, (b) are fitting to the individual child’s emerging skills, (c) that consider cultural influences, and (d) that are free from biases. Activities should parallel those of the child’s daily routine with familiar people.

*DEC Recommended Practice, congruence and convergence standards*

**Methods of Assessment** – “In testing individuals with disabilities for diagnostic and intervention purposes, the test should not be used as the sole indicator of the test taker’s functioning” (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999, p. 108). Assessments should promote the use of multiple methods (e.g., work samples, checklists, anecdotal notes) from multiple sources (reports, observation, direct tests) across settings/activities (Bagnato, Neisworth, & Munson, 1997; NAEYC and NAECS/SDE, 2003).

*DEC Recommended Practice, authenticity standard*  
*AERA, APA, & NCME Recommended Practice, standard 10.12*

**Multiple Means of Expression** – Ensures children have a variety of formats for responding, demonstrating what they know, and for expressing ideas, feelings, and preferences. In addition, children have options in their use of resources, toys, and materials, addressing individual strengths, preferences, and abilities. expression allow children to learn from the instruction and use material in ways that work for them, and to control or manipulate their environment as they are able (DEC, 2005).

**Overall Format** – Test developers attended to the layout or framework of forms and manuals. Considerations were made for modifications, practicality, time required to observe, and filling out paperwork (Pretti-Frontczak, 2002).

*DEC Recommended Practice, acceptability standard*

**Reliability** – The ability of the assessment to be consistent when used with multiple observers, with multiple children, and across time (McLean, Wolery, & Bailey, 2004). “The reliability of a test describes its ability to provide stable test results if the same individual is tested twice with the same test” (Davoli, 1996, p. 356-357). Reliability coefficients should be .80 or higher for a test to be considered reliable.

*DEC Recommended Practice, congruence standard*

**System for Documenting Progress** – “Monitoring allows teachers to track children’s performance on individually targeted behaviors as well as broad outcomes. Monitoring also allows for the systematic collection of comparative data to determine the significance or affect of instruction and intervention on individual children or groups of children” (Grisham-Brown, Hemmeter, & Pretti-Frontczak, 2005, p. 114). Progress toward Federal accountability requirements should also be considered (e.g., progress toward OSEP child outcomes).

*DEC Recommended Practice, sensitivity standard*

**Time and Training** –The assessment should be conducted in an amount of time that is manageable given current resources (Pretti-Frontczak, 2002). Consideration should be given to the need for professional development and technical assistance to ensure staff are trained and can use the assessment reliably and with validity. The assessment also needs to be feasible (i.e. affordable).

*DEC Recommended Practice, acceptability standard*

**Usefulness for Intervention** – The ability of the assessment to assist in the planning and revision of interventions (Bagnato & Neisworth, 2002). In other words, results from the assessment are easily understood by all team members and used to guide/revise intervention (i.e., a strong link from assessment to curriculum and intervention is evident). Further, the information gained from the assessment is helpful and ultimately improves outcomes for young children and families (i.e., has treatment utility/validity).

*DEC Recommended Practice, utility standard*

**Validity** – Validity refers to the ability of an assessment to measure what it is intended to measure (McLean, Wolery, & Bailey, 2004). “The [assessment] should set forth clearly how test scores are intended to be interpreted and used” (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999, p. 17). Important to consider if the measure has been “tested” under conditions similar to those where and with whom you will use it. “In testing individuals with disabilities, test developers, test administrators, and test users should take steps to ensure that the test score inferences accurately reflect the intended construct rather than any disabilities and their associated characteristics extraneous to the intent of measurement” (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999, p. 106).

*DEC Recommended Practice, congruence standard*

*AERA, APA, & NCME Recommended Practice, standard 1.2 and 10.1*

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