Assessment and Screening

At College of Southern Idaho Head Start/Early Head Start a variety of screening and assessment tools are used to evaluate young children: The ESI, speech and language, height and weight, DECA, vision, and hearing are screenings that will be completed with each child within 45 days of enrollment. The ongoing assessment tool used is the Child Observation Record (COR) that is aligned with our High/Scope Curriculum. This is completed three times per year, supported with anecdotals and children’s work.

Assessment is the basic process of finding out what the children in the classroom, individually and as a group, know and can do in relation to each child’s optimum development and to the goals of the program. With that knowledge, teachers can plan appropriate curriculum and effective instructional strategies to help children develop and learn, monitoring their progress along the way.

In the current climate you are likely to hear the term assessment used for almost any type of appraisal of young children for a range of purposes. Many people use the term loosely, as a broad label for any all of the varied ways we might determine “where a child is” in development and learning – maybe a vocabulary test, a brief observation, a fine motor skills checklist, a diagnostic reading test, or a height and weight measurement.

Why We Assess Young Children:

- To monitor children’s development and learning
- To guide planning and decision making
- To identify children who might qualify for special services
- To report to and communicate with others

Assessment information is also used for program evaluation and for accountability (e.g., to determine whether the program meets state or federal mandates regarding student achievement). Classroom teachers are responsible for ongoing assessment throughout the year.

Screening is a brief, relatively inexpensive, standardized Procedure designed to quickly appraise a large number of children to find out which ones might need to be referred for further assessment.