

## APPENDIX A-E

### Arena Evaluation

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The organization of an arena evaluation is based on the concept of a primary facilitator. One member of the team is designated to serve as primary facilitator by interacting with the child and eliciting the main sample of structured behavior. This does not mean that other team members are forbidden to interact with the child. For example, the physical therapist may need to "lay hands" on the child to assess muscle tone even though another team member is the primary facilitator. It does mean, however, that if there is an instrument or instruments that serve as the more structured part of the evaluation, all team members may need to become proficient at administration. The primary facilitator may be designated as such because the needs of the child best match his or her discipline, because of a relationship established with the child or family, or because of other considerations which may arise. A parent facilitator may also be designated to record parents' input and answer their questions throughout the evaluation. The following has been suggested by Foley (1990) as a possible sequence to follow during the arena evaluation:

#### Greeting and Warm Up

Family and team members visit, child is allowed to explore and get to know team members.

#### Formal Task-Centered Sequence

The main assessment instrument is administered by the primary facilitator. Other team members observe and may score discipline-specific instruments or make clinical notes.

#### Snack Break and Refueling

Snack and bathroom break provides an opportunity to observe self-help skills and parent-child interaction.

#### Story Time and Teaching Samples

A story time format may be used to expand the language sample or a brief teaching sequence might be used to observe how the child processes new information and generalizes learning to new materials.

#### Free Play

The child's spontaneous movement and interaction with toys will be observed. With older children, bringing in a peer at this point may allow observation of social interaction skills as well.

#### Brief Staffing and Feedback

The team members pause to formulate impressions while the parent facilitator collects the parents' comments about the session. Parents and other team members will then come together to share initial impressions so the parents have some closure and do not go away with undue anxiety. A formal staffing with results of the evaluation will be held at a later time.

Whether or not formal evaluation instruments are used, the advantages of the arena evaluation method described above are many. The evaluation is conducted in an environment where the child feels comfortable with a primary facilitator who has established rapport with the child. The sequence of evaluation tasks and activities is flexible and can be made to fit the pace and interests of the child. The parent can remain with the child to reduce anxiety and facilitate the child's involvements and motivation. The professional members of the team will witness the same sampling of child behavior, each adding expertise from his/her discipline to build a holistic impression of the child's development.

Appendix C includes a list of instruments commonly used in evaluation and assessment of infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Most of these instruments can be utilized in the arena evaluation format.