

Hawaii Early Learning Profile, HELP® 0-3

Embracing Evidence Based Practices

Curriculum Based Assessment: *HELP 0-3* Strands when used with *Inside HELP* and *HELP at Home*, is an ongoing curriculum-based, authentic, and criterion-referenced family centered assessment process. This process identifies the developmental strengths and needs of infants and toddlers across and within developmental domains, as well as identifying family concerns, priorities and resources as they relate enhancing the development of their child. Assessment findings link directly to *HELP at Home*, an on-going family-centered curriculum to support identified needs and priorities using relationship based activities carried out within everyday routines.

There is an expanding evidence base related to the benefits of using “authentic and curriculum-based assessments” such as HELP, rather than relying solely on standardized tests, especially for planning individualized interventions and measuring progress in small increments. For example: Bagnato, S. J., Neisworth, J.T., Pretti-Frotczak, K. LINKing (2010) *Authentic Assessment & Early Childhood Intervention, Best Measures for Best Practices, 2nd Ed.* Baltimore: Brookes and, Neisworth, J.T. & Bagnato, S. J. "The MisMeasure of Young Children: the Authentic Assessment Alternative". *Infants and Young Children*, 17(3):198-212, 2004.

Face and content validity background for the development of the HELP 0-3 process is detailed in the introduction of *Inside HELP: History of HELP and Development of Inside HELP* and also available online: <http://www.vort.com/training/help3.html>. Age ranges for HELP's 0-3 curriculum skills, behaviors and developmental milestones were drawn from numerous standardized norm referenced tests, infant research and literature. These resources are listed in the "References" section of *Inside HELP, Administration and Reference Manual*.

Concurrent validity of HELP® and five other curriculum-based assessments with two norm-referenced assessments were examined with infants and preschoolers who had diverse developmental delays. Results supported the concurrent validity of CBA's and showed that when compared to the five other CBA's, the HELP showed the most moderate and representative results and provided an exact match with the Gesell Developmental Schedules (norm referenced assessment) criterion. Bagnato S.J., & Murphy, J.P. (1989) Validity of curriculum-based scales with young neuro-developmentally disabled children: Implications for team assessment. *Early Education and Development*, 1(1), 50-63.

Additional Reliability and validity studies are being pursued at this time.

Journal articles that included using HELP® in their studies to demonstrate the benefits of early intervention have included: Moeller, M.P. "Early Intervention and Language Development in Children Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing" *Pediatrics*, Sep 2000; 106: 43. Coplan, J. Jawad, A.F., "Modeling Clinical Outcomes of Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. *Pediatrics* 2005:116; 117-122. Belcher, H., Butz, A. M., Wallace, P. et. al. "Spectrum of Early Intervention Services for Children With Intrauterine Drug Exposure." *Infants & Young Children*. 18(1):2-15, 2005.

Evidenced based practices in natural environments. The following are examples of how the HELP 0-3 process embraces and reflects the seven key evidenced based practices for providing early intervention services in natural environments outlined by the *Workgroup on Principles and Practices in Natural Environments (November, 2007)*.

Principle 1. Supporting sensitive parent-infant interactions and relationships.

- *Inside HELP* includes guidelines for assessing supportive parent-infant interactions, and guidelines for understanding and interpreting the child's skills and behaviors within the context of caregiving relationships and environments.
- *HELP at Home* is written from child's point of view--each hand-out provides empathetic statements and information from the baby's point of view, and helps 'reframe' challenging behaviors.

Principle 2. Supporting safe environments.

- *HELP at Home* includes safety alerts when applicable on hand-outs related to the activities and materials suggested in the handout, and, includes specific hand-outs for "Keeping me safe at home"--based upon the Consumer Product Safety commission guidelines)
- *Inside HELP* recommends using only safe materials during the assessment process, and, highlights opportunities to inform families about keeping their baby safe.

Principle 3. Providing assessment and interventions in the real world of everyday experiences and interactions with familiar people in familiar contexts.

- *Inside HELP* has "observation opportunities" rather than strict assessment guidelines for each HELP Skill;
- *Inside HELP* includes Sample Functional Outcome Statements in the Preface for each Strand.
- *HELP at Home* has activities that are tied to everyday routines such as mealtimes, play, and diapering.
- *HELP Family-Centered Interview*: Provides interview questions that center around everyday meaningful activities (such as mealtimes, playtimes, sleeping), to help families identify concerns, priorities and resources.

Principle 4. Encouraging and supporting parents in decision-making at every step of the EI process.

- *Inside HELP*, *HELP at Home*, and the *HELP Family-Centered Interview* provides families with clear, jargon-free information to help them make informed decisions,
- *Inside HELP* provides guidelines for encouraging and supporting parents through every step of the assessment process in the "Instructions-General

Guidelines and Precautions" section.

- "Family-Friendly Interpretations of the Strand Concept, Assessment and Purpose" are included in the preface for each Strand in *Inside HELP*
- *HELP at Home* gives a clear explanation on each page describing what baby is "learning" and why it is important. Suggestions are also included for supporting each family's role in the assessment process in *Inside HELP*'s instructions, "Conducting the Assessment"
- User instructions in *HELP at Home* provide guidelines for using and selecting hand-outs to support family's preferences.

Principle 5. Including information and activities that are based upon research, and, integrated with expert opinion, experiences and professional wisdom about what makes sense.

- All *HELP at Home* activities and *Inside HELP* assessment information are based upon research and an integration of interdisciplinary experts' experience. E.g. sleep positions based upon American Academy of Pediatrics; how to respond to "crying" based on various reported research in journals and child development literature, encouraging motor development through dynamic approaches according to research findings in OT/PT journals, social-emotional behavioral interventions for challenging behaviors in accordance with http://challengingbehavior.org/do/resources/tacsei_resources_all.htm
- The way the activities are presented in *HELP at Home*, (e.g., from child's point of view, emphasis on parent child interactions, suggesting activities rather than prescribing definitive 'treatments') reflect available evidence about how parents learn best.

Principle 6. It is important to assess and address the "quality" of the child's skills and behaviors, not just skills and behaviors.

- *Inside HELP* provides clear definitions and examples of quality concerns to observe for individual HELP skills and strands • *HELP at Home* hand-outs include applicable information to families and "when to seek more help".

In summary, HELP 0-3 follows and supports evidenced based best practices but is not intended to provide standardized evaluation, single "scores" or diagnosis. Age levels used with HELP are considered "approximate developmental age ranges in which developmental skills typically may emerge" and, should be considered as a complement and supplement to a full range of resources and supports for assessment and intervention with infants and families.