

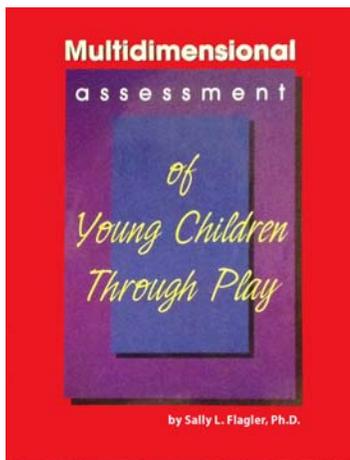
PreschoolFirst Assessment Tool Research & Foundation

The PreschoolFirst curriculum and assessment framework is built on the work of pediatric neuropsychologist Dr. Sally Flagler, author of the *Infant-Preschool Play Assessment Scale* (I-PAS). This criterion-referenced assessment instrument was formulated through an initial clinical model developed at the University of North Carolina's School of Medicine while Dr. Flagler was working there. During this period, she developed a comprehensive evaluation checklist for young children that could be used by a variety of personnel, based on existing criteria and norms, with young children. Initial findings were shared at the research meeting of the national *Developmental Evaluation Center* in 1990. Dr. Flagler then worked with a team of pediatricians, occupational and speech therapists, psychologists, and nurses who were assessing young children using a developmental model to refine the information she had gathered during her first year analysis.

During the second year, the items were revised based on the data collected in the clinic during the

first year. In 1991, Dr. Flagler completed a comprehensive evaluation of all the existing tools currently on the market related to infant, toddler, and preschool developmental guidelines. She also researched the field to make sure that the checklist included all the appropriate critical skills for early development. An extensive review of the field was conducted at that time, including reviews of any *in vivo utilization* of early developmental norms.

During the third and fourth years, the original checklist underwent a series of further revisions. Programs such as Head Start in Goldsboro, North Carolina, preschool teams in Wake County, North Carolina, and preschool programs in Norman, Oklahoma put the tool to use. Data collected from these field trials were incorporated into the final revisions. Additionally, a number of departments at the University of North Carolina Children's Hospital, (the School of Allied Health, Speech Department, Departments of OT and PT, and the Pediatric Step-Down Unit) provided the final input and reactions from nurses and pediatricians.



Private therapists provided additional input to ensure that the developmental checklists were developmentally sound and appropriate for use in evaluating young children (age 0-5) prior to final publication. Feedback

from the National Association of School Psychologists and the National Association for the Education of Young Children indicated that it was one of the most comprehensive and developmentally sound instruments in the field for the play-based assessment of young children. The scale, and its accompanying book, *Assessing Young Children Through Play*, were also reviewed by a number of psychologists around the country.

The final version of the assessment scale was also shared with the State of North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction for inclusion in their approved assessment tools for preschool populations. Since its approval, the I-PAS has been used at multiple preschool sites, e.g., Orange County (North Carolina) Head Start, Dayton, Ohio preschool programs, WAGES Head Start in Greensboro, North Carolina, and preschool teams in Wake County (North Carolina) Public Schools.

In 2005 the *Infant Preschool Play Assessment Scale (I-PAS)*, the foundation of the PreschoolFirst assessment tool, was reviewed as an assessment instrument by the Early Childhood Outcomes Center and was accepted as a play-based tool for collecting outcomes on the Child Outcomes Summary Form. The Infant-Preschool Play

Assessment Scale (I-PAS) is a validated assessment tool used in North Carolina, Texas, Illinois, Wisconsin, and a variety of other states across the United States.

PreschoolFirst analyzed all 460 behaviors utilized in the I-PAS and correlated each to a set of developmental milestones published by the American Academy of Pediatrics. PreschoolFirst worked with Dr. Flagler to further refine and develop 37 additional behaviors to ensure all essential developmental milestones are accurately represented in each PreschoolFirst age group within the assessment component of the resource.

Child Outcomes Summary Form Sources Reference Page

CHILD OUTCOMES SUMMARY FORM

Table 2: Sources of information used to complete child outcomes summary form

➤ Early Childhood Behavior Rating Scale
➤ Early Coping Inventory
➤ Early Learning Accomplishment Profile (E-LAP)
➤ Early Prevention of School Failure
➤ Early Screening Project (ESP)
➤ Every Move Counts
➤ Expressive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test
➤ First STEPS (Screening Test for Evaluating Preschoolers)
➤ Fluently Preschool Speech & Language Screening Test
➤ Functional Emotional Assessment Scale (FEAS)
➤ Functional behavior assessment (FBA)
➤ Get it, Got it, Go
➤ Goldman Frisbie Test of Articulation
➤ Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP)
➤ High Scope Child Observation Record (COR)
➤ Hodson Assessment of Phonological Processes
➤ Hodson Phonological Processing Analysis
➤ Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDI)
➤ Infanib
➤ Infant Preschool Play Assessment Scale (I-PAS)
➤ Infant Scale of Communicative Intent
➤ Infant Toddler Symptom Checklist
➤ Infant Vision Check List
➤ Infant-Toddler Sensory Profile
➤ INSITE Developmental Checklist
➤ Integrated Motor Assessment Screening
➤ Integrated Scales of Development
➤ Interview
➤ Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC)
➤ Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test, 2 nd Ed. (KBIT)
➤ Kaufman Speech Praxis Test

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After a final review of current literature, including research in the fields of early childhood education, developmental pediatrics, and autism, the scale was incorporated into PreschoolFirst as the basis for its online assessment tool. Additionally Dr. Flagler helped identify 290 key behaviors within the assessment tool. These *Key Behaviors* are nationally considered to be “essential” – the most pivotal items inherent in developmental milestones and those most closely related to crucial skills for continuing development.

In 2007, PreschoolFirst researched and developed 20 additional behaviors to further integrate early literacy developmental behaviors into the resource. Research was based upon the *GUIDANCE for the EARLY READING FIRST PROGRAM*, and the *Continuum of Children’s Development in Early Reading and Writing*, a [position statement of the International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children](#). PreschoolFirst developers gave close consideration to the goals in both Phase I and II of the *Continuum of Children’s Development in Early Reading and Writing*.

A formal academic review of all early literacy research, new behaviors, developmental criteria, and play behavior procedures was provided by the noted early childhood development expert and author, Margaret B. Puckett, Ed.D. prior to the final addition of the new behaviors. PreschoolFirst’s objective is to provide learning opportunities which meet multi-level demands within an early learning environment. By no means does this research suggest that we believe every child or most children should master all the early literacy behaviors associated with the goals in both phases prior to kindergarten entry.

PreschoolFirst integrated these 520 behaviors into a collection of hands-on, play-based learning experiences organized into classroom activities and 16 themes typically used by early childhood educators. All curriculum, learning experiences, and activities support the *Guidelines for Curriculum Content*; the *Guidelines for Appropriate Assessment for Planning Instruction and Communicating with Parents* published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC); and follow the play-based research and recommendations of Dr. Flagler regarding play and the developmental process.

PreschoolFirst employs an ongoing formative observational approach to connect programs, educators and parents and help them work together for the child’s benefit. Educators observe each child play or participate in activities which incorporate age appropriate behaviors and then mark that child’s success according to a Likert scale based on each behavior’s criteria. The suggested use of and specific input for the Likert scale was provided by the National Association Of School Psychologists’ (NASP) Early Childhood Task Force.

PreschoolFirst behaviors and curriculum for 18-66 month-old children fully aligns with the PreK early learning guidelines used in all states, and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. Educators can easily find and plan age appropriate curricular activities related to a specific indicator, guideline or benchmark that developmentally supports child growth and progress.