



Preschool Assessment

**Closing the Gap
between Science
and Practice**

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Plan for Today's Presentation

- **Nora S. Newcombe, Ph.D.**, James H. Glackin Distinguished Faculty Fellow, Temple University
 - Introduction and Overview
- **Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, Ph.D.**, Stanley and Debra Lefkowitz Distinguished Faculty Fellow, Temple University
 - Language & Literacy Assessment
- **Aquiles Iglesias, Ph.D.**, Acting Dean of the Graduate School, and Professor of Communication Sciences, Temple University
 - Assessment of English Language Learners
- **Herbert Ginsburg, Ph.D.**, Jacob H. Schiff Professor of Psychology and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University
 - Assessing Mathematical Skills
- **Marsha Weinraub, Ph.D.**, Laura H. Carnell Professor of Psychology, Temple University
 - Assessing Social-emotional Development
- **Anita Kochanoff, Ph.D.**, Visiting Assistant Professor of Psychology, Temple University
 - Recommendations for Currently Available Assessment Tools



Social & Emotional Development

Marsha Weinraub, Ph.D.

Laura H. Carnell Professor of Psychology

Temple University

mweinrau@temple.edu



National Academy Of Sciences Report “Neurons to Neighborhoods”

The emotional and social development of young children is as critical to school readiness as language and cognitive development



Need to Consider the Whole Child as an Integrated System

- Developments in reading and math proficiency are dependent on the child's ability to maintain attention and gain from interactions with adults and materials
- Needed focus on the determinants of self-regulation and engaged learning (Blair, 2002)
- Emotionality places a central role in the development of higher-order cognition



What do Kindergarten Teachers Consider Most Important Dimensions of School Readiness?

- Verbally communicate thoughts (84%)
- Enthusiastic and curious (76%)
- Can follow directions (60%)
- Is not disruptive in class (60%)
- Is sensitive to others' feelings (58%)
- Takes turns and shares (55%)
- Pays attention (42%)
- Knows the letters of alphabet (10%)
- Can count to 20 or more (7%)



Social and Emotional Competence

- Many social and emotional competencies emerge in the preschool and K years
 - “All I Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten”
- Social and Emotional Competence is composed of both:
 - Behaviors
 - Social thinking skills



Skills for Readiness

- **Focusing and shifting attention are necessary for:**

- Listening skills
- Following directions
- Planning

- **Controlling Emotions and Behavior are necessary for:**

- Prosocial Behavior with Peers
- Effective Relationships with Adults

The achievement of these skills leads to positive relations with teacher and peers and creates a positive learning context and a child ready to learn



Assessment: Prosocial Behavior

- Positive interactions with adults
- Social awareness
- Showing concern for others
- Initiating positive interactions with peers
- Cooperating with others (sharing & turn-taking)
- Working toward group goals
- Resolving conflicts without resorting to aggression



Assessment: Problem Behaviors

It is necessary to assess both positive prosocial behaviors as well as problem behaviors. There are three main categories of problem behaviors:

- Under-control problems (e.g., aggressive children)**
- Over-control problems (e.g., socially withdrawn children)**
- Developmental issues (e.g., toilet training)**



Basic Issues in Measurement

- Context is critical
- Appropriate use of assessment in ongoing interactions
- Difficult to assess in single standardized measure
- Need for multiple reporters
 - Both teachers and parents are likely to have some biases in their reporting that need to be taken into account



Emerging Issues in Measurement: Readiness is Regulation

- Great Interest in the Assessment of Executive Functions or Fluid Intelligence
- Assesses foundational skills necessary for effective social and cognitive performance
 - Inhibition/Self Regulation
 - Attention
 - Working Memory
 - Planning
- **Requires substantial basic research to assess best measures and predictive validity to behavior over time**