 **Beyond Bubbles and Blocks**  

Tips for EI Home Visitors



**Did you Know?**

**The Latin word for assessment is to “sit beside and get to know”.[[1]](#footnote-1) Functional assessment** is described as the process of gathering information about how **a child uses their skills to participate in their day-to-day activities and routines**. Functional assessment “…happens in the real-life contexts of the family, culture, and community rather than in isolation.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Information is gathered through **observation, active listening and asking good questions**. The information gathered informs our actions during early intervention services and throughout the IFSP process. It provides the information needed to develop high quality functional outcomes, determine services, and to identify natural learning opportunities during EI visits.

Functional assessment is **ongoing**. It does not end with the initial IFSP. We learn new information about the child and family and the changes that occur throughout the child’s enrollment in EI. Functional assessments should occur during all EI visits.

**Questions to** C**onsider:**

* How is the child participating in the activity?
* What types of support does the child need to participate?
* What setting does the routine take place, at childcare, at the grocery store, in the yard, at a cousin’s house?
* What will it look like when the child is participating successfully?

**Family Engagement Tips:** When families share their observations, we develop a more complete and more accurate picture of the child. It’s important to let families know that you value their observations and participation in ongoing functional assessment. Giving families concrete examples of the kinds of information you would like them to share is helpful. Involving families in functional assessment is more than asking questions, going over questionnaires, or creating developmental profiles.

**It involves:**

* Listening to the family’s story,
* Observing and asking about the child’s everyday routines and activities related to engagement, independence, and social relationships,
* Asking parents to show or describe what happens in everyday routines/activities,
* Observing parent/caregiver/child interactions, and
* Observing the child playing.[[3]](#footnote-3)

**The Early Intervention Division** offers:

* Authentic Assessment course and Functional Assessment Grab & Go, found on the [Training on Demand](https://hsmc.customers.my-lms.net/login/index.php) website.
* EI On the Fly Podcast: Functional Assessment Series found on [mass.gov website](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/early-intervention-podcast).

1. Authentic Assessment Online Module. Retrieved from: [https://hsmc.customers.my-lms.net/totara/dashboard](https://hsmc.customers.my-lms.net/totara/dashboard/) Click on courses, scroll to Authentic Assessment [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Retrieved from The W’s of Functional Assessment: What, Why, Who, When, and Where handout found on the Training On Demand website under the Grab and Go: Functional Assessment. <https://hsmc.customers.my-lms.net/totara/dashboard/>

   [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Functional Assessment.pptx. Retrieved from Functional Assessment Grab & Go found on the TOD Website. <https://hsmc.customers.my-lms.net/course/view.php?id=19> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)