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ABSTRACT

The Parent Teacher Kindergarten Student Assessment instrument (PTKSA) described here was developed over a 4-year period and used extensively at each stage of its revision, with the goal of evolving a feasible and sensitive pre-primary pupil profile or early childhood education inventory. Intended for use by both parents and teachers at the beginning and end of the kindergarten year, the PTKSA is presented as a vehicle for meaningful home-school interaction early in a child's school life. The items are described as developmental and easily observed in a home or school setting. The basic idea involves: (1) parents making judgments about their own child at home, (2) the teacher making independent judgments on the same items at school, and (3) parent and teacher reviewing these judgments together and planning accordingly. A sample is given, involving 243 pupils and 11 teachers, of eight items from the 28-item PTKSA. Items are from four categories: (1) Use of Symbols (counting, reading words, time-awareness); (2) Motor Skills; (3) Language Development; and (4) Behavior (cooperation, consideration for others, choice-making). Also presented are correlations between PTKSA and other test instruments, including the Boehm Test of Basic Concepts, used in the formal assessment procedure by the school district in which PTKSA has been developed. (BF)

A PARENT-TEACHER JOINT ASSESSMENT OF THE ENTERING AND EXITING KINDERGARTEN CHILD - 1972-76

Parents are a great untapped resource in the assessment of their child's learning needs and progress. Although parents are often asked for demographic information that is considered to be relevant to the child's developmental history and less often they are asked to provide specific stimulation and learning opportunities for the child at home, there is a noticeable absence in the literature of the use of parents as a resource in assessing their child's skills and aptitudes, strengths and weaknesses, abilities and disabilities. However, if parents are to become partners with the teachers in being responsible for the child's learning progress, then both should have a common base of operations and a joint understanding of what the other is expecting of the child.

In a simplified statement, to assess the child's present functioning means to "size up his competencies and skills" in relation to some developmental continuum, expectations, or performance objectives on which he will be evaluated. Most of the effort in the area of pupil assessment has dealt with test administration and pupil performance. Testing as the "choice of methods" has to do with "objectivity." "Subjectivity" also has its value. Scriven and Stake have legitimized the use of human judgment in assessment and evaluation. Contrary to the scientific canons of "objectivity", evaluators consistently recognize that people can be the most efficient and effective information processors. The willingness of evaluators to exploit the incomparable ability of humans to collect, store, and integrate information and render judgments has been a most profitable resource to them.

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This assessment procedure was first initiated with about 250 pupils and five kindergarten teachers in 1972 in a calculated effort:

1. to take advantage of the parent's knowledge and expectations for their child,
2. to create a common ground for parents and teachers to begin to discuss the child's needs and progress, and
3. to force teachers to observe each child individually, early in the school year.

Each successive year up to the present has brought about item and content, changes, however the basic idea of (1) parents making judgments about their own child at home, (2) the teacher making independent judgments on the same items at school, and (3) sitting down and reviewing these judgments together and planning accordingly, has remained the same.

The initial response of parents is typically non-believing and then enthusiastic. Parents can not believe that we actually want to know what they can tell us about their child. Although there is a new group of parents each year, they respond the same. Teachers are more reluctant than parents in this effort, at first. This procedure forces teachers to justify their decisions about each child in a face to face confrontation with the parent early in the school year. It takes about two years for teachers to really want to use it instead of the more traditional pupil progress report system.

Procedure: Each kindergarten child takes the parent's copy of the "Parent-Teacher Kindergarten Student Assessment" home with him on the first day of school. A cover letter to parents is included. The Pupil Profile sheet is not included in the parent's copy. Parents check the items and return the form with

child. Within a few days 99 percent of them will be returned (with a few reminders from the teacher). Less than one percent of the parents will refuse to check the form for their child. The same process is repeated in the spring.

A parent questionnaire during the past year, provided the following respones for the 243 parents involved, to the question:

Do you feel that this type of information should be shared with the teacher early in the school year?

69% Definitely Yes	25% Probably Yes	5% Don't Know	1% Probably No	0 Definitely No

Teachers, professing the desire not to be biased by the parent judgment of the child, prefer to wait until they get to know the child before looking at the parent copy. About four weeks after school begins teachers can make good to excellent judgments about the child's functioning. Teachers are encouraged to contact parents for conferences at this time if there are wide discreprencies between what the teacher and parent see in the child. Usually the first parent teacher conference (using this instrument as a basis of interaction) is between six to nine weeks after school begins. Teachers check the profile sheet only, using a copy of the instrument for reference. An aide or volunteer can transfer the parent judgments to the profile sheet. The same process is repeated at the end of the school year.

One unexpected side effect of this procedure was the parent's readiness to learn from the range and scope of the items. Parents use it as a means of grasping the broader perspective of kindergarteners' learning that will probably contribute to school success. From the parent questionnaire the following question was asked:

Did you find this task and the items helpful to you as a parent in gaining perspective on the kindergarten child?

48% Definitely Yes	36% Probably Yes	9% Don't Know	6% Probably No	1% Definitely No

Parents tend to rate their children high at the beginning of the year and be more in agreement with the teachers by the end of the school year. Inexperienced teachers tend to rate children either extra high or extra low rather consistently. (Some very scant data analysis indicates that both parents and teachers who rate children high do in fact have children who make more progress. This hypothesis will be pursued further with the data that is being collected.)

The following four pages give a sample of eight items from the twenty-eight on the Parent-Teacher Kindergarten Student Assessment instrument. The descriptions for each items are intended to be developmental in sequence so that by marking one of them as the "best description" for the child it is assumed that he will be able to do all of the previously given behaviors consistently. The percent of pupils who were judged by parents and teachers to be functioning at that level in the sequence is given under each descriptor. There were 243 pupils and 11 teachers involved in this particular sample. The unusually good closeness of fit across so many parents and teachers for each item is at least interesting. An examination of several hundred pupil profile sheets indicates that there is indeed a good closeness of fit, better in the spring than in the fall, as Tables I and II indicate.

TABLE I. Example of eight items from the joint Parent-Teacher Kindergarten Assessment instrument with the percent of pupils who were judged by parents and teachers to be functioning at that level in the sequence.

I. Use of Symbols

B. Counting

	1 Counts aloud from 1 to 10	2 Can count five objects touching each one as counted	3 Can count ten objects touching each one correctly	4 Can count ten objects correctly without touching each one	5 Can tell how many objects by glance (up to five objects)
Parents-Fall	1%	3%	24%	38%	34%
Teachers-Fall	2%	5%	39%	37%	16%
Parents-Spring	0%	1%	13%	29%	57%
Teachers-Spring	0%	1%	8%	22%	69%

D. Reading Words

	1 To my knowledge recognizes no words	2 Recognizes own name	3 Reads familiar words such as stop, go, exit, etc.	4 Reads many words	5 Reads easy books
Parents-Fall	3%	36%	45%	13%	3%
Teachers-Fall	3%	49%	42%	6%	0%
Parents-Spring	0%	17%	44%	24%	15%
Teachers-Spring	0%	14%	34%	31%	21%

TABLE I. (continued)

E. Awareness of Time

	1 Appears confused and unable to handle simple schedule	2 Uses time poorly; tends to waste time	3 Can tell when familiar activities come in a sequence	4 Task sequence oriented; makes good use of time	5 Skillful at handling schedules; plans and organizes well
Parents-Fall	1%	10%	71%	18%	0%
Teachers-Fall	4%	5%	71%	19%	1%
Parents-Spring	0%	3%	59%	36%	2%
Teachers-Spring	0%	2%	35%	53%	10%

II. MOTOR SKILLS

A. Basic Movement Skills and Rhythm: Running, Climbing, Hopping, Walking, Skipping, Marching

	1 Frequently falls or bumps into objects	2 Walks and runs easily	3 Can hop and jump using both feet together	4 Can balance on each foot separately	5 Skips confidently
Parents-Fall	1%	2%	53%	28%	16%
Teachers-Fall	0%	13%	68%	16%	3%
Parents-Spring	0%	1%	54%	30%	15%
Teachers-Spring	0%	2%	51%	34%	13%

TABLE I. (continued)

III. Language Development

I. Ability to Follow Directions

	1 Often does not follow directions	2 Usually follows one step verbal directions but needs individual help	3 Follows directions that are familiar without additional help	4 Follows two step directions when given once	5 Remembers and follows three step directions
Parents-Fall	0%	5%	57%	25%	12%
Teachers-Fall	4%	11%	54%	23%	8%
Parents-Spring	0%	4%	45%	39%	13%
Teachers-Spring	0%	3%	31%	45%	21%

IV. BEHAVIOR

A. Cooperation

	1 Continually disrupts any situation	2 Uncooperative, disrespectful to adults and other children	3 Cooperates when an adult is present	4 Cooperates without adult encouragement	5 Assumes leadership role in peer group
Parents-Fall	2%	20%	22%	46%	10%
Teachers-Fall	4%	9%	41%	31%	15%
Parents-Spring	1%	15%	15%	49%	20%
Teachers-Spring	0%	4%	25%	40%	30%

TABLE I. (continued)

H. Consideration for Others

	1 Disregards feelings of others	2 Aware of feelings of others but ignores them	3 Aware of others' feelings and can identify those feelings	4 Considerate of others' feelings but little reaction	5 Awareness of others' feelings and takes appropriate actions
Parent-Fall	0%	20%	43%	33%	4%
Teachers-Fall	1%	12%	54%	29%	4%
Parents-Spring	0%	12%	39%	45%	4%
Teachers-Spring	0%	6%	26%	46%	21%

J. Choice-Making

	1 Unable to make choices	2 Needs guidance to make choices	3 Able to make choices	4 Usually makes good choices without guidance	5 Makes choices wisely
Parents-Fall	0%	7%	41%	35%	16%
Teachers-Fall	1%	12%	47%	37%	3%
Parents-Spring	0%	3%	24%	51%	22%
Teachers-Spring	0%	1%	24%	49%	25%

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	Fall Assessment Mean	Fall Assessment S.D.	Spring Assessment Mean	Spring Assessment S.D.
I. USE OF SYMBOLS: (0-25)*				
Parents	14.29	3.10	16.91	2.30
Teachers	12.44	3.25	16.82	2.53
II. MOTOR SKILLS (0-15)				
Parents	11.15	1.91	11.90	1.64
Teachers	9.72	1.79	11.99	1.70
III. LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT (0-45)				
Parents	32.61	5.27	34.84	5.95
Teachers	29.02	4.46	34.99	5.30
IV. BEHAVIOR (0-55)				
Parents	40.61	7.17	42.78	6.37
Teachers	38.55	7.08	44.85	7.42

N = 243 pupils and 11 teachers
* Possible range of scores

TABLE II: Mean scores for both the parents' judgments and teachers' judgments for all pupils involved in this study presented by the four areas assessed.

Deane Darnell, A Parent-Teacher Joint Assessment of Entering Kindergarten Child. A Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Washington D.C. 1976.

The district has a kindergarten assessment procedure which involves the teacher and her aide administering a formal assessment to each child. This assessment covers five areas of development: Personal-Social, Motor, Aesthetics, Language, and Cognitive. The district procedure is geared to assess the child in relation to 56 predetermined kindergarten performance objectives. However, there are obvious similarity between what the teacher is looking for in the district wide assessment procedure and what is being asked for in the Parent-Teacher Kindergarten Student Assessment (PTKSA). In fact the PTKSA has been revised with these similarities in mind during this past summer. The data seen in Tables II through VII is based on the 1975-76 version of this instrument. Next year the correlations should be better between the two different assessments.

The Boehm Test of Basic Concepts (1969) is the only standardized test used district wide. For those who are unfamiliar with this test, it is designed to measure children's mastery of concepts considered necessary for achievement in the first years of school. After using this instrument with large numbers of kindergarten pupils over the past five years, it has been found to be the most feasible and useful instrument available for the cost and effort involved. (I have used it in numerous combinations with other instruments and it has withstood all the tests.) The correlations found in Table VII strongly suggest that the Language Development portion of this instrument is assessing some of the same level of functioning as the Boehm Test of Basic Concepts.

TABLE III. Correlations between "Use of Symbols" on the PTKSA* and the district prescribed kindergarten assessment procedure for cognitive functioning.

		COGNITIVE ASSESSMENT Fall	Spring
Use of Symbols	Parents	.39	.59
	Teachers	.49	.65

TABLE IV. Correlations between "Motor Skills" on the PTKSA and the district prescribed kindergarten assessment procedure for motor development.

		MOTOR DEVELOPMENT Fall	Spring
Motor Skills	Parents	.25	.34
	Teachers	.48	.49

TABLE V. Correlations between "Behavior" on the PTKSA and the district prescribed kindergarten assessment procedure for personal-social development.

		PERSONAL SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT Fall	Spring
Behavior	Parents	.29	.48
	Teachers	.65	.55

TABLE VI. Correlations between "Language Development" on the PTKSA and the district prescribed kindergarten assessment procedure for language development.

		LANGUAGE (DISTRICT) Fall	Spring
Language	Parents	.49	.55
	Teachers	.58	.61

*Parent-Teacher Kindergarten Student Assessment.

TABLE VIII. Correlations between "Language Development" on the PTKSA and the Boehm Test of Basic Concepts.

		BOEHM TEST OF BASIC CONCEPTS Fall	Spring
Language Development	Parents	.63	.64
	Teachers	.72	.73

When the individual area totals (Symbols, Motor, Language, Behavior) were entered into a multiple regression and analysis to see which factors predicted first and second grade Gates-MacGinitie Reading test scores (Vocabulary and Comprehension), the following statements can be made with confidence:

> Language Development (as measured here) was a fair predictor of both the Vocabulary and Comprehension scores on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Achievement Test at both the first and second grades.
>
> Interestingly, parent Fall judgments were better than teacher judgments in either Fall or Spring in predicting first and second grade reading achievement scores.
>
> Behavior (as measured here) was the second best predictor of both Vocabulary and Comprehension scores on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test in both first and second grade.*

Noteworthy is the fact that this instrument has been revised significantly since that sample of children was assessed in kindergarten during the 1972-73 and 1973-74 school years. In fact each year there have been changes until the form that you are seeing now contains only a few unchanged statements from the original document. However, these changes have been in the direction of improved sensitivity and accuracy of the instrument for both the parents and teachers. Initially many of the statements were written in terms such as often..... usually.....average.....superior while the later revisions have attempted to

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*FOOTNOTE: When the Metropolitan Readiness Test and Boehm Test of Basic Concepts results were entered into the multiple regression analysis they were better predictors of first and second grade reading success.than the parent and teacher judgments on this instrument. The Parent-Teacher Kindergarten Student Assessment was a better predictor of reading success than sex, age or preschool experience however.

eliminate these more subjective judgmental terms and focus more on behavior descriptions that are developmental in sequence.

1. If you are looking for a method to bring entering kindergarten pupils' parents and teachers together on a common ground, this offers some possibilities.

2. If you are looking for a way to broaden the scope of what parents consider to be important in school learning, this is a good approach.

3. If you are looking for a way to get away from the typical "progress reporting system" that is characterized by the formal report card, this process has possibilities.

4. If you are looking for a means of screening entering and exiting pupils' abilities and disabilities that is inexpensive and relatively accurate, this method has possibilities.

5. If you are looking for a diagnostic instrument to determine whether a child has specific perceptual or language disabilities, this will not serve your purposes as well as some other instruments.

6. If you are looking for something that will give most of the work to the parent and very little to the teacher, this isn't it.

7. If you are looking for a simple inexpensive device that gives you detailed prescriptive information about each child, this isn't it.

If you use it please let me hear from you from time to time.

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9/1/76