In this presentation Dr. Meisels will mention several assessments. He is an author of one of them—the Work Sampling System—and a consultant to the company that publishes them, Pearson Assessments. These assessments will be cited solely to illustrate the points raised in the lecture, rather than to promote the assessments or imply an endorsement by any particular institution.
What Observational Assessments Can Do

- Evaluate a wide range of children’s skills and knowledge
- Provide data for teachers to differentiate their teaching and include diverse students
- Demonstrate student progress over time
- Inform parents about their children’s learning
- Keep the focus on instruction, not high-stakes

What Policymakers Want to Know

“Are Children Learning?”
“Are public funds being used wisely?”

Problems with the Common Core Standards for Young Children

1. Top down construction
2. Sky high expectations
3. Performance, not content
4. Relevance to ELL and Sped
5. Potential for misuse

Critical Issues About Standards in Early Childhood

- How flexible, adaptable, and open to individual variability they are.
- *Content standards* should show the “what” of performance.
- *Performance standards* should assess the “how” of performance.

A Better Way to Answer Policymakers’ Questions

Conduct program evaluations that are faithful to the contexts of teaching and learning

What Program Evaluations Can Do

- Demonstrate that program variations are related to child outcomes
- Show how the program interacts with various child, family, and community contexts
- Determine if the services delivered produce anticipated outcomes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Elements to Include in a Program Evaluation</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Child outcomes</td>
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<td>• Structural variables</td>
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<td>• Dynamic variables</td>
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<th><strong>Accountability vs. Program Evaluation</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>• Accountability focuses on how well children perform in relation to a normative sample.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Evaluations show how effectively a program is achieving its goals.</td>
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The best way to evaluate a child’s performance is to study performance, not something else.

The best way to improve a child’s performance is to teach the child, not test the child.