


New York City Department of Health

**CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY  
APPROPRIATE EVALUATIONS:  
WHAT EVERY EI EVALUATOR IN NYC  
NEEDS TO KNOW**

Module 4: The Critical Questions Including Language Acquisitional History



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Spring 2016

HOW TO INCREASE THE ACCURACY OF ALL  
EVALUATIONS: CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Parent concerns? **When did parent begin to  
become concerned?**  
**Is caregiver more or less concerned now? Why?**

HOW TO INCREASE THE ACCURACY OF ALL  
EVALUATIONS: CRITICAL QUESTIONS

**What does the spend his/her day?**  
Childcare? By whom? Where?  
Daycare?  
Mommy and me?

HOW TO INCREASE THE ACCURACY OF ALL  
EVALUATIONS: CRITICAL QUESTIONS

**Any progress or regression in the past 3 to 6  
months?**

HOW TO INCREASE THE ACCURACY OF ALL EVALUATIONS: CRITICAL QUESTIONS

**Language/dialect acquisitional history?**  
**For *all* children.**

HOW TO INCREASE THE ACCURACY OF ALL EVALUATIONS: CRITICAL QUESTIONS

**Parent's highest educational level?**

HOW TO INCREASE THE ACCURACY OF ALL EVALUATIONS: CRITICAL QUESTIONS

**Family history of speech-language problems?**  
**Family history of academic problems?**

HOW TO INCREASE THE ACCURACY OF ALL EVALUATIONS: CRITICAL QUESTIONS

**Significant changes in the family structure?**

HOW TO INCREASE THE ACCURACY OF ALL  
EVALUATIONS: CRITICAL QUESTIONS

**Did the child's performance/behavior reflect  
his/her typical skills?**

HOW TO INCREASE THE ACCURACY OF ALL  
EVALUATIONS: CRITICAL QUESTIONS

**Is the child clumsy?  
How are gross and fine motor skills?**

HOW TO INCREASE THE ACCURACY OF ALL  
EVALUATIONS: CRITICAL QUESTIONS

**10 examples of child's best communication skills  
and where it breaks down.**

HOW TO INCREASE THE ACCURACY OF ALL  
EVALUATIONS: CRITICAL QUESTIONS

**Developmental milestones.  
Significant medical history.  
Reliability of informant.  
Hearing status.**

### Language Acquisitional History: NYC Multidialectal and Multilingual Environment



### Child's neighborhood environment

*"The neighborhood in which the family lives consists of multi-ethnic, culturally diverse people from Italy, Romania, Argentina, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. Family gatherings and those with friends all center around Spanish language use..."*

### LANGUAGE BACKGROUND AND USE

- Alex is an only child. His mother is bilingual in Spanish and English but reports that she is more comfortable in English unless she is with others who are speaking Spanish. Alex's father is a monolingual-English speaker.
- While Alex's mother is interested in him acquiring Spanish, she tends to speak only English with him unless her mother is in the room. Alex's maternal grandmother is from Bogota, Colombia. She has taken care of Alex all day since he was 4 months old and uses Spanish virtually all the time she is with him. Alex's first word was "agua."

### LANGUAGE BACKGROUND AND USE

- More recently, Alex's daily exposure to English has increased. His school is monolingual-English and he is there now five full days a week. The SLP that Alex has been seeing since March 2014 is a monolingual-English speaker because, his mother indicated, it is difficult to find a bilingual SLP.
- During the evaluation, Alex responded to Spanish in English, but this was likely influenced by the fact that the evaluator used English during the parent interview. Nonetheless, Alex can understand Spanish but has significantly stronger language skills in English.

## Language Analysis Section

### *Metalinguistic Understanding of Bilingualism*

- The mother reported that Alex is developing a metalinguistic understanding of the two languages in his life. Recently the mother decided to read a book to Alex in Spanish, one that was in English print and that he had heard a number of times in English. As the mother read the book in Spanish, Alex almost immediately said, "No, stop it, Mommy" while pointing to the print text and saying, "Do this, Mommy" asking her to read the book as it is written, in English.

## LANGUAGE BACKGROUND AND USE

The mother reported that at home the family speaks only English. The child is with her Spanish-speaking nanny five days a week, seven hours a day. The family is from Jamaica and speaks Jamaican Creole and Standard American English at home. She also reported that the child's two older siblings who are 8 and 10 speak Jamaican Creole, Standard American English, and speak African American English with their peers at school.

## What you may be asking...

### **Question 1: Will BEI accept MDEs in which there was no standardized test used to establish a development delay?**

**YES.** However NYSDOH EI regulations and guidance state that an evaluator should use a standardized instrument when it is appropriate to the child's culture, language and developmental concern and the instrument has appropriate levels of sensitivity and specificity. It is incumbent on the MDE team to determine whether specific instruments meet the above requirements in relation to the unique characteristics of the child.

NYCDOH Q and A, March 2016

### **Question 1 (con't) : Will BEI accept MDEs in which there was no standardized test used to establish a development delay?** **YES.**

Regardless of whether a standardized instrument is used or not, all evaluators must

- Provide detailed clinical observations, informed clinical opinion and parent perceptions and observations about their child's development and any other pertinent information such as medical history, family history, etc. to support the child's reported level of functioning and developmental domain status.
- Reference developmental milestones and clinical clues/risk factors from *NYSDOH Clinical Practice Guidelines*.

NYCDOH Q and A, March 2016

**Question 1 (con't): Will BEI accept MDEs in which there was no standardized test used to establish a development delay? YES**

When a standardized instrument is used, scores should not be used in isolation to establish a child's eligibility status.

Special attention should be given to whether test/instrument items or skills presented are appropriate to assess given specific knowledge of the individual child's prior experiences, the relevance for the individual family's culture and background and the functional relevance and the individual child's ability to acquire skills.

NYCDOH Q and A, March 2016

**Question 2: Are evaluators required to use a standardized test for an English speaking child?**

**No.** If an evaluator determines that a standardized test is not appropriate to the child's culture, language and developmental concern, or the instrument does not represent the child's developmental level, evaluator should provide written justification in the evaluation report why such instrument or instruments are not appropriate or available for the child.

NYCDOH BEI Q and A, March 2016

**Question 2: Are evaluators required to use a standardized test for an English speaking child? No.**

Evaluators should provide detailed information based on informed clinical opinion, parent interview and behavioral observation to support the child's developmental level and developmental domain status.

Evaluators must document procedures and methods of how developmental delay status and eligibility is determined in accordance with NYSDOH regulations and guidance documents.

NYCDOH BEI Q and A, March 2016

**[www.LEADERSproject.org](http://www.LEADERSproject.org)**

Grammar Fundamentals for a Pluralistic Society

Differential Diagnosis in a Preschool Evaluation

Disorder, Difference, or Gap? A School-Age Disability Evaluation


Model Speech-Language and Psychological Evaluations

Test Reviews of most commonly used tests

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Research Assistants: Marcos Sastre, Grace Frutos  
Illustrations: Tina Yeung  
Video: José Font Bullrich  
Featuring: Abigail Reinoso  
Many thanks to all the children and their families who participated in this project.

**Special Thanks To:**  
NYC Department of Health and Mental Health  
Bureau of Early Intervention  
Marie Casalino, M.D., MPH, Assistant Commissioner,  
Lidya Lednyak, M.A., Jeanette Gong, Ph.D., Faith Sheiber, Ph.D.,  
and The Evaluation Standards Unit

**Support and Funding Provided By:**  
Teachers College, Columbia University  
The Wyncote Foundation

Reference this material as:  
Crowley, C. J. (2016). Culturally and linguistically appropriate evaluations: What every EI evaluator in NYC needs to know. Module 4. Available from [www.LEADERSproject.org](http://www.LEADERSproject.org)  
  
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