

*Enhancing the lives of children with disabilities*

### **Why do therapists, psychologist, and teachers test young children?**

- To help decide if more in depth evaluation is necessary
- To determine if a child's development is atypical as compared to other children
- To identify difficulties the child may be having early so that intervention can begin early.
- To determine if the child is eligible for services funded by the government.
- To determine what services are needed.
- To track the child's progress over time.

### **What do developmental tests measure?**

Developmental tests usually assess a child's development compared to typically developing children.

A test may evaluate a variety of areas of development including social interaction, movement, behavior, cognitive, language, and functional development. Some tests only evaluate one or two of these areas.

### **What's involved?**

Depending on the test, a therapists, psychologist, or teaching may observe your child while playing, ask your child to perform specific activities, (like following a toy with his/her eyes, stacking blocks, naming pictures, rolling or sitting), or ask a parent or child care provider about the child's skills. Each test will have different rules or guidelines for administration. The accuracy of the test results depends on the therapist, teacher or psychologist following the rules for that individual test.

### **What do the scores mean?**

The meaning of scores from developmental screening or testing depends on the individual test and the type of score. The person administering the test should be able to explain the results in detail and the meaning of those results for each individual child.

Scores on Developmental Tests alone should not be used to make a diagnosis or determine if intervention or services are needed. Scores on Developmental tests are a source of useful information that should be combined with information from other sources to make decisions about a child's needs.

### Reference

Long, TM, Cintas HL. 1995 Handbook of Pediatric Physical Therapy, Williams & Wilkins, Baltimore MD.