

CPAA Alignment to NAEYC Developmental Criteria



NAEYC ALIGNMENT



**Children's
Progress**

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is the world's largest organization working to improve the well-being of children from birth through age eight. At Children's Progress, we share the same vision and strive to help all children achieve their full potential by providing teachers with developmentally appropriate tools. As such, we have made sure that our computer-based formative assessment adheres closely to NAEYC guidelines that outline developmentally appropriate practices in early education.

On the following pages, you will find a series of NAEYC-established guidelines (including specific considerations for assessment and technology), followed immediately by our responses.

All guidelines discussed here can be found in NAEYC Position Statements, accessible online: <http://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements>

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General

Development advances when children are challenged to achieve at a level just beyond their current mastery (NAEYC, 2009).

The CPAA is based on psychologist Lev Vygotsky's research on the *zone of proximal development (ZPD)*. Using our software, children demonstrate not only what they can already do independently, but also what they are capable of doing when provided with *scaffolding* (targeted assistance). Scaffolding within the CPAA functions much like the support of a teacher. It gives students the opportunity to perform just beyond their level of present mastery and helps teachers immediately pinpoint what students are ready to learn next.

By adapting to each response, the CPAA presents questions that are at an appropriate level of difficulty for each child. The reports that teachers receive immediately after each assessment clearly explain where students show independent knowledge and where they need some assistance. In other words, the CPAA outlines each child's ZPD. By exposing students to material just beyond their current level of mastery, the CPAA ensures that each child's development advances in a challenging yet appropriate manner.

Development and learning proceed at varying rates from child to child, as well as at uneven rates across different areas of a child's individual functioning (NAEYC, 2009).

What is known about each child as an individual ... has implications for how best to adapt and be responsive to that individual variation (NAEYC, 2009).

Each child has individual learning needs and a unique growth pattern. For this reason, we've designed the CPAA to deliver questions of varying difficulty to children across a wide range of ability levels.

Each concept is treated separately to ensure that students can display their abilities in that concept accordingly. The CPAA's adaptive structure allows it to react accordingly to individual strengths and weaknesses to best identify each child's unique learning needs.

Assessment of young children’s progress and achievements is ongoing, strategic, and purposeful. The results of assessment are used to inform the planning and implementing of experiences, to communicate with the child’s family, and to evaluate and improve teachers’ and the program’s effectiveness (NAEYC, 2009).

The CPAA is administered several times throughout the year and its instantly generated reports are designed to help drive strategic, practical next steps both in the classroom and system-wide.

Reports at the student level provide detailed information that teachers can use to differentiate instruction and communicate with families about learning needs and progress. Group reports at the school and district level help administrators in program planning and effective resource allocation.

Many aspects of children’s learning and development follow well documented sequences, with later abilities, skills, and knowledge building on those already acquired (NAEYC, 2009).

Eugene Galanter, the co-founder of Children’s Progress and Professor Emeritus at Columbia University, has done extensive research in this area and published numerous papers such as “The Ideal Teacher” and “Two Models of a Student”. His seminal book, *Plans and Structures of Behavior*, sparked the cognitive revolution in psychology.

The CPAA’s scope and sequence of content has been built based on a learning framework derived from such accepted academic research on the normative progression of children’s development and concept acquisition.

Children demonstrate different modes of knowing and learning and different ways of representing what they know (NAEYC, 2009).

The CPAA presents content in an engaging multimedia format in order to help children who excel through various modalities to achieve their potential. Moreover, the CPAA provides children with opportunities to see questions through multiple representations. For example, if a child answers a mathematics question incorrectly, the same question might then be scaffolded and presented a second time with the addition of on-screen manipulatives, or by changing a bar graph to a pictograph. This flexibility is built into the CPAA to provide children with more opportunities to demonstrate what they really know.

Children develop and learn best in the context of a community where they are safe and valued, their physical needs are met, and they feel psychologically secure (NAEYC, 2009).

Unlike some traditional assessments, which place children under pressure to perform, or in an unfamiliar testing environment, the CPAA allows children to feel at ease as they complete the assessment independently on the computer. The friendly characters and positive feedback within the assessment ensure that the testing experience is engaging, and neither jarring nor intimidating.

In addition, the fact that the adaptive CPAA software presents questions at the just right level helps to eliminate the frustration that students may experience with traditional assessments that present content that may be too easy or too difficult for them.

Assessment

Assessments are appropriate for ages and other characteristics of children being assessed (NAEYC and NAECs/SDE, 2003).

The CPAA is based on a learning framework derived from accepted research on children's development. The graphics, scenarios and verbal feedback are designed specifically for young students in Pre-K through grade 3, including children of varying socioeconomic levels and cultures.

Assessment instruments are in compliance with professional criteria for quality (NAEYC and NAECs/SDE, 2003).

The CPAA is proven to have construct validity, and external validity is ongoing. A document outlining the reliability of the assessment is available upon request.

What is assessed is developmentally and educationally significant (NAEYC and NAECs/SDE, 2003).

The object of the Children's Progress assessment is a comprehensive, developmentally and educationally important set of goals. These goals are based on criteria established by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and aligned with each state's grade-level standards.

Assessment evidence is used to understand and improve learning
(NAEYC and NAECS/SDE, 2003).

The CPAA provides teachers with in-depth information about their students through individual and class reports, detailing both performance and progress. Practical suggestions for translating this information into specific activities that can improve student learning are also included. Recommended activities are based on performance and a targeted set is suggested for each child as well as the whole classroom.

Administrators can use their reports to understand and improve learning system-wide (at the school, district, city or state level). Extensive demographic data helps monitor and understand learning differences between groups that are tracked for AYP. Moreover, historical data makes it easy to evaluate improvement over time. This type of reporting helps administrators identify and meet resource needs to improve learning. The CPAA can also be used within an RTI framework for universal screening and progress monitoring.

Assessments use multiple sources of evidence gathered over time
(NAEYC and NAECS/SDE, 2003).

The CPAA is designed to be administered multiple times (3-6) throughout the school year, and can be delivered more frequently for students who may need to be monitored more closely.

Assessment (English Language Learners)

Assessment of young English-language learners should... [include] appropriate adaptations to meet the needs of children whose home language is not English (NAEYC, 2005).

Children's Progress recognizes the value of assessing in a child's home language. Our assessment is currently available in both English and Spanish. To ensure that the translation of the assessment from English to Spanish has been completed accurately, Children's Progress has partnered with academic researchers at the University of Texas at El Paso.

Assessments of young English-language learners are used primarily to understand and improve children’s learning, to track, monitor, and support development in all areas, including language development, and to identify disabilities or other special needs (NAEYC, 2005).

The CPAA is designed to deliver insights about the needs of each child and help teachers adjust instruction accordingly. By assessing Spanish-speaking English language learners in their home language with the CPAA, educators can quickly distinguish between learning difficulties and English language acquisition.

CPAA assessment content is culturally and academically appropriate and fair to students. This ensures the most reliable data for ELL educators, allowing for effective tracking and monitoring.

Technology

In addition to actually developing children’s abilities, technology provides an opportunity for assessment (NAEYC, 1996).

Technology offers a myriad of opportunities for assessment that are impossible with traditional paper and pencil tests (which are inherently monolithic in nature). By focusing first and foremost on the student, the technological platform of the CPAA enables an efficient, developmentally appropriate assessment experience.

The software contains a patented matrix that “grows” dynamically with each child. It automatically adapts to each child’s abilities, offering assessment that is always on-target as well as appropriate scaffolding that pinpoints each child’s learning needs. The student-centric nature of the CPAA is further enhanced through visually stimulating animation and feedback. The interactive presentation of the assessment makes it more engaging and enjoyable for the child. Finally, the immediacy of CPAA technology saves classroom time and makes both assessment administration and data analysis more efficient for teachers.

The power of technology to influence children’s learning and development requires that attention be paid to eliminating stereotyping of any group and eliminating exposure to violence, especially as a problem-solving strategy. (NAEYC, 1996).

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As early childhood educators become active participants in a technological world, they need in-depth training and ongoing support to be adequately prepared to make decisions about technology and to support its effective use in learning environments for children (NAEYC, 1996).

Children’s Progress is committed to the professional development of all educators, and offers training that focuses not just on how to use our assessment and reporting software, but also on best practices in practically implementing formative assessment and differentiating instruction. Ongoing, high-quality support is available online and over the phone. All members of the Children’s Progress customer support team hold an M.Ed. degree.

Glossary

adaptive assessment – Testing that adjusts to each student’s ability level. Students who demonstrate mastery are shown more difficult content and vice versa. This type of testing is efficient, as it eliminates questions that are too easy or too difficult and leaves only what is appropriate for any given student.

formative assessment (compare to *summative assessment*) – Testing FOR learning that is intended to be performed early and continuously within a learning sequence to help teachers identify where to focus instruction to benefit each student. Results are used to decide whether curriculum or learning activities need to be modified.

RTI – a multi-tier approach to early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs that begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all students.

scaffolding – Targeted assistance (hinting) provided to students to help them grasp a concept that they are right on the cusp of learning. This term originates from the work of psychologist Lev Vygotsky. According to Vygotsky, to ensure the most positive progression for each student, instruction should be targeted in the zone between what the student can do independently and what he or she can do with a bit of scaffolding or assistance.

zone of proximal development (ZPD) – a term coined by psychologist Lev Vygotsky to refer to the gray area between what a student can do independently and what he or she can *almost* do independently (and is capable of doing with a bit of assistance). This is the area where instruction can be most beneficial for each student.

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