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INTRODUCTION

The data sheets in this booklet and on the accompanying CD were designed to support teams in their efforts to systematically collect accurate information to make important decisions regarding intervention and instruction of students with disabilities. Data collection is one of the critical elements of an effective, efficient, and accountable program that supports student development and learning. Data form the basis for monitoring student progress, evaluating the effectiveness of instruction, determining the accuracy of programming, and collecting ongoing assessment information. Although the importance of data is very apparent, many intervention teams struggle to develop reasonable and sustainable methods of gathering information about student performance and progress.

Why Is Collecting Data So Difficult?

1. Teams face a lack of time and resources. Teams rarely have time to develop new data sheets for every Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) goal or outcome. And if they decide to use data sheets developed by someone else, there are few comprehensive collections of data sheets readily available.

Show Me the Data! provides a comprehensive compilation of data sheets to assist teams in the careful and ongoing collection of information on student performance and progress across a diverse range of domains, ages, and abilities. The generic data

Show Me the Data!

sheets are appropriate for students of any age and/or ability, whereas the data sheets focusing on specific skills may be more appropriate for young children or children with significant cognitive delays. The majority of the data sheets allow providers and families to collect information through observation in a variety of settings and within the context of meaningful, developmentally appropriate activities.

2. Once teams have data sheets that are appropriate and easy to access, they often face a second obstacle. They must create a system that works for their particular program. Diversity in service delivery models, populations, professional disciplines, and frequency of intervention requires a certain level of customization of data sheets and the development of a system that meets the needs of staff members and families. The system must allow for easy maintenance and consistent data collection for all staff members. (Information is more meaningful when data are collected systematically and habitually.) Changes in students, especially the development of young children, can occur quickly, so data collection procedures must be responsive enough to capture the rapid growth and learning that can occur in a short period of time.
3. Even when teams have created systems to meet the unique needs of their organization and population, a third and very common problem is figuring out what to do with the data once they have been collected. When data are gathered using standard procedures and on a regular basis, the information can be displayed visually through graphs, enabling team members to make decisions more efficiently. In addition, the visual display of data allows interventionists and families to view the same information and use trends in the data during joint decision making. *Show Me the Data!* provides samples of completed data sheets and easy-to-use graphs that can serve as a model for teams to display their data visually and evaluate intervention effectiveness and program efficacy.