

## การรับเข้าศึกษาต่อระดับประถมศึกษาปีที่ 1: การประเมินที่เหมาะสม

### *First grade Admission: An appropriate assessment*

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#### บทคัดย่อ

หลายทศวรรษที่ผ่านมา หัวข้อเกี่ยวกับแบบทดสอบความพร้อมที่มุ่งเน้นการวัดและประเมินความสามารถเชิงวิชาการของเด็กปฐมวัยยังคงเป็นประเด็นที่นักการศึกษาปฐมวัยได้นำมาอภิปรายร่วมกันอย่างต่อเนื่องมาโดยตลอดในแวดวงสังคมไทย เนื่องจากอิทธิพลของการสอบคัดเลือกอย่างเป็นทางการส่งผลให้เด็กอายุ 5-6 ปี ต้องทดสอบเพื่อรับการคัดเลือกเข้าศึกษาต่อในระดับประถมศึกษา ในมุมมองทางการศึกษาปฐมวัย การใช้คะแนนจากแบบทดสอบเพื่อจำแนกและตัดสินรับเด็กปฐมวัยเข้าศึกษาต่อในระดับประถมศึกษาเป็นการนำไปสู่ประเด็นปัญหาเนื่องจากเด็กจะได้รับโอกาสเพียงครั้งเดียวในการแสดงความรู้ความสามารถให้ปรากฏในขณะทดสอบเท่านั้น จึงไม่สอดคล้องกับความต้องการของเด็กเป็นรายบุคคล อีกทั้งไม่สามารถประเมินทักษะที่แท้จริงของเด็กที่มาจากภูมิหลังที่ต่างกันได้ ดังนั้นการประเมินที่เหมาะสมในการเข้าศึกษาต่อระดับประถมศึกษาปีที่ 1 ควรสมดุลระหว่างการใช้แบบทดสอบของโรงเรียนและแนวทางการประเมินตามสภาพจริง รวมทั้งการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลจากแฟ้มสะสมผลงานของเด็กนับว่ามีความจำเป็นเช่นกัน นอกจากนี้ประเด็นสำคัญที่ต้องคำนึงถึงในการรับเด็กเข้าศึกษาต่อระดับประถมศึกษาปีที่ 1 คือ ความรู้ ข้อจำกัด กระบวนการของการทดสอบในสภาพการณ์ที่เด็กคุ้นเคย และทฤษฎีที่เกี่ยวข้องกับพัฒนาการและการเรียนรู้ของเด็ก

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#### Abstract

For more than a decade, early childhood educators have been discussing the issue of school readiness tests. These tests provide a focus for children's academic status in Thai society. Due to the influence of formal testing, children between 5 and 6 years of age have been required to take school readiness tests prior to primary school reception. In the early childhood field, using scores from tests to classify and evaluate children for entry to first grade is problematic as children are given only one opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do. Additionally, it is not suited to the individual needs and differences of young children, and available measures may not accurately reflect the skills of children from diverse backgrounds.

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Consequently, an appropriate assessment for first grade suitability should be balanced between a school-made test and authentic assessment. It is necessary to analyze the information from the children's cumulative files of sample work. Importantly, first grade admission requires knowledge of testing, the limitations of and the procedures for dealing with children, the establishment of familiar situations, an awareness of child learning and development theories.

**Keywords:** Readiness test, Authentic assessment, Young (or early years) children

## Introduction

In Thailand, many parents prefer to send their children to pre-school institutions in both the public and private sectors, starting as early as 2-3 years of age. There, young children learn many useful social skills, some simple mathematics, and early and elementary reading and writing as they make sense of their world. They stay in the school until the age of six when they must, by law, go to a government or private school. These children come from a diverse range of backgrounds and have widely different abilities. Therefore, as readiness tests are routinely used in schools as admission criteria and a measure of academic status, making preparations to succeed is essential prior to primary school entry. Obviously, most parents become extremely competitive in the hope that their child would be accepted to the most prestigious schools. Scores from readiness tests are generally used to judge whether children are ready for promotion to formal schooling, normally in the first year of primary school. Around the country, test preparation for formal schooling has become an educational norm. Teaching is designed to

prepare children to do well on certain school-made tests, and good test scores make the early childhood institution more accreditation.

In general, Thai educators believe that formal testing is an absolute requirement for meaningful assessment of children. Formal tests are frequently used because they are a quick and relatively inexpensive method of assessment and allow comparisons among the same-age children (Maeroff, 1991; Willis, 1990). They also believe that only scores on the school readiness tests can determine whether, and how many, children have learned. Too often, assessment is thought of as a test to evaluate how much information a child has retained. In addition, many parents have faith in testing, which has been greatly emphasized by the media and school educators during the last 10 or 15 years. Currently, there are a lot of tests used to select young children entering first grade, such as screening test, intelligence test, and readiness test. Schools frequently use the scores from these forms of tests to assess young children's suitability for entry.

Assessment of children's educational achievements in early childhood education

has been debated for more than a century. With all this controversy, what should Thai early childhood teacher exactly do? There are crucial differences between assessment and testing, and there is crucial misunderstanding as well. Tests are generally used for selection of preschool children entering primary school and are the most controversial part of assessment. According to the position statements of the International Reading Association [IRA] and National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], the formal testing is not recommended to use before third grade, and preferably fourth grade (IRA & NAEYC, 1998). Even though more formal assessments may be appropriate on occasions, the challenge for teachers is to decide when testing is necessary or when it might be beneficial to use. The use of testing in Thailand has been debated for children of all ages, and there is a variety of school readiness tests designed for measurement young children's academic readiness for first grade instruction in Thailand. For example, the Test of Academic Readiness (TAR), which consists of six domains: verbal, visual, memory, math, logical, and general knowledge (Tanachit, 2010).

Assessment of young children for primary school entry seems to have taken over education lately; many preschool teachers feel that they are no longer teaching; but they need to prepare children for tests. Nowadays, the required uses of tests for entry to first grade in Thailand are under consideration and each

school could use its own test. Thai teachers are facing all kinds of school-made tests that are incongruous with the appropriate practices. Tests have become increasingly high stakes, and they are now used for teacher and school evaluations as well as for promotion and graduation decisions. Some pre-school teachers feel pressure from either administrators or the teachers in upper grades to provide young children experiences with readiness testing. The pressures to raise scores on tests and an effort to meet the demand for accountability have caused a narrowing of teaching to meet only the academic needs of young children. Even if the majority of teachers of young children distrust the use of school readiness tests as a mean of assessing achievement, they may feel an obligation to administer them.

Due to the problems with and concerns about school testing, an emerging trend to adopt alternative assessment lessens many areas of concern to teachers. Authentic assessment is an alternative strategy that makes a great connection between children and their real life situation (Worthen, 1993). These methods include observation, recording, narrative reports of children's progress, open-ended questions, exhibits, demonstrations, hands-on experiments, and creating learning activities and experiences. Many teachers believe that alternative assessment, both for them and the young children involved, are worth the time in spite of the inconvenience. Although many Thai teachers prefer alternative,

performance based assessment, it is difficult to elicit acceptance of developmentally appropriate assessment due to the different beliefs and expectations about assessment among teachers, administrators, school board members, parents, and the community. The future of appropriate assessment remains controversial. The concept of developmental appropriateness can also be extended to issues related to the assessment of children entering primary school in Thailand.

### **The purposes of assessment: transition to first grade**

A firm understanding toward the purpose of assessing young children can help teachers make a determination on what kinds of assessments would be most appropriate. What skills are considered to be necessary for a child as entering to a primary school? When seeking an appropriate assessment, the child's developmental achievements, including social, emotional, language, literacy and motor development, may also be addressed. In addition, assessment of individual children might serve one of the following purposes: to get the child's best performance across a range of tasks, to allow children to feel comfortable rather than be pressured to perform; or to assist a child with assessing his or her own progress.

Determining young children's developmental achievement demands special consideration. Decisions about assessment need

to be made on the basis of the purposes for assessment. Decisions regarding the purposes of assessment should begin with discussions among all the stakeholders - parents, educators, and other members of the community, as appropriate. Before teacher can decide how to measure children's progress, they need to consider why they are testing. You may want to keep in mind that: (a) plans, strategies, and assessment instruments are differentially suited for each of the potential purposes of assessment; (b) an overall assessment should include the four categories of educational goals: knowledge, skills, dispositions, and feelings; (c) assessments made during children's informal work and play are most likely to minimize the many potential errors of various assessment strategies (Katz, 1997); and (d) assessing children's abilities accurately requires evidence of their performances in familiar situations more than their performances in artificial testing situation (Fields, Groth & Spangler, 2008).

School assessment typically refers to assessment of young children around school entry - right before primary school, at primary school entry, or very early in the first year of primary school. The school assessment methods vary according to their purposes and designs. Using primary school admission tests in order to assess young children's progress and attainments in 5 to 6 years of age, requires teachers' understanding toward how young children grow and develop, particularly in their social and emotional development. To help

children feel relaxed when assessing them, teachers should keep the ideas and questions relevant to children. In addition, to ascertain children's potential, the process of assessment should focus on a safe place for their emotions, feelings and ideas.

### **The risks of assessing young children**

Apparently, in Thai context, life has become very competitive for young children for formal testing is being overused on them for acceptance. As an educator, the author believes that admission testing does not always illustrate an overview of children's intelligent development, particularly in the early years. It is important to consider that the child should not be forced into narrow conformity to meet the requirements of educational trends. On the contrary, young children should be able to make their own mistakes and learn from them. Indeed, they also need to enjoy life instead of thinking exclusively about exams, at least until they get older.

In general, many Thai primary school teachers use a modified form of the readiness tests with different expectations at the beginning of first grade in order to identify children who are likely to have learning difficulties. However, there are several problems about using school readiness tests to make important decisions regarding school entry. It is acknowledged that there are several important limitations of school readiness assessments. All methods of assessment make errors: the errors

made by readiness of young children (<http://www.fairtest.org>). For example, most tests for assessing reading ability have the same flaws as the outmoded approaches to reading (Clay, 1993; Cunningham & Allington, 2007; Tierney, 1998). They emphasize sub-skills of reading, and while possessing validity in content, lack reliability because of the circumstances under which they are administered. In addition, for young children, the artificial testing situation totally invalidates the results (Gullo, 2006a; Kohn, 2001). For early childhood educators, school tests are not appropriate for young children for not only do they not measure the things children need to learn, they also do not give an accurate picture of what they are trying to measure. Test scores do not tell the teacher why a child made errors, nor do they give information which is useful for helping children to improve.

Some people believe that formal testing is an absolute requirement for meaningful assessment of children, and that only the scores on the tests can determine how much students know and what they can do. Nevertheless, there is much disagreement over these tests. Some people say the tests can provide teachers with information on children and save time in selection. In the writer's opinion, school readiness tests are not appropriate for assessing preschool children's entry at first grade for several reasons. Firstly, they increase the levels of stress in young children, with entry into school being understood as a

crisis of stress for the child (NAEYC, 1988). In addition, the test may not support young children's healthy development as most young children feel anxious while taking the test. Early childhood experts have stated that testing decreases learning by increasing pressure and stress on children and on teachers (McNeil & Valenzuela, 2000).

Furthermore, the children who score poorly are often labeled 'not ready', 'failure' or 'slow learners', and these labels trend to stay with them throughout their education. These labels may well become self-fulfilling predictions because people expect it to come true, with negative consequences for the individual child and society. Secondly, the readiness tests examine only skill testing in isolation, which may be a test weakness rather than a measure of real performance. For instance, in some schools, a rating scale was devised by the elementary school teachers to make decisions about selection to primary school. The scale was heavily weighted with motor items, such as the ability of child to tie his/her shoes, which does not necessarily equate with academic success in learning. In addition, research results in some readiness tests suggest evidence of unreliable and invalid measures. For example, the classification properties of the Gesell school readiness screening test were found to be rather weak, with a range proportion of false negative errors in identifying at-risk students on the low end of the scale (Banerji, 1991). Another

important limitation is that a test given at one point in time cannot be assumed to reflect the child's development a relatively short time later. This is because young children's behaviors are dynamic and unstable, as befits their status of human development (Gredler, 1992). It is also not fair for the children who are not allowed to enter school. Young children are unstable test-takers. Testing of them is not recommended as they have not attained the developmental capacity to understand the purposes of formal testing. Young children's abilities and aptitudes are not likely to have stabilized, perhaps because they are sometimes confused by being asked questions that they think the tester must already know the answer too. There is reason to suggest that the younger the child being evaluated assessed or tested, the more the errors that are made (Shepard, 1994; Ratcliff, 1995). Finally, some test items may be too difficult for a particular child, or they may not be culturally fair because of linguistic biases. The items may not be within the child's repertoire where young children from different backgrounds, such as low-income families, are exposed to a restricted language experience or where they lack social maturity. Problems arise where difficult words, which may be not relevant to the child's home language, are included in the test. The child may have difficulty understanding the instructions given to him or her. Furthermore, most tests are not based on current theories of child development. They are too academic because they involve

paper-and-pencil tasks rather than concrete activities. Therefore, the readiness tests cannot give very accurate results of a child's competencies because of the limitations of what they measure. These factors would make the tests unfair for the child and would yield incorrect results. As a consequence, assessing young children by using school readiness tests is not appropriate for assessing pre-school children at first grade because it does not help assessors determine the cause of the difficulty and may lead to an assumption that there is a deficit in the child, rather than in the child's environment.

### **Theoretical requirements of an appropriate assessment**

It is acknowledged that young children are difficult subjects to assess accurately because they are active, have short attention spans, exhibit wariness with strangers, and demonstrate inconsistent performance in an unfamiliar environment (McCauley, n.d.). There are certain theoretical requirements that a test must meet individual children in order for a test to be appropriate. Assessment should reveal more than what is directly observable; as mentioned earlier, the child's response is not always an accurate representation of what the child is capable to do (Grieve, 1992). Assessing young children's entrance to primary school should not equate ability with a single quantitative score. Ideally, the test should look beyond

what the child has scored and include the opportunity for children to show their problem solving ability and their reasons for a given response. As many children perform better in a comfortable situation, with the parents in close contact, a test should allow for this if necessary. Informal relaxed settings where the child can be as much as at ease as possible are recommended when undergoing assessment. To determine what children are ready to learn and what processing capabilities the children can draw on to understand and respond to new experiences, teachers need to be able to assess children's potential for learning.

### **An appropriate assessment system for young children**

As part of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the right to basic education is one whereby children can develop their abilities and become a useful member of society (Trim, 2000). Therefore, primary schools ought to accept all six-year-old children without any formal tests. However, as assessment has a significant role in Thai society in screening children for school readiness, it is essential that the examiner follows testing procedures properly and efficiently. When children fail to perform in ways that a school expects, the assessors must understand why and consider whether the child does not have the development for a task, or he or she has simply not had experiences with the particular context

in which the task is embedded (Bredenkamp & Rosegrant, 1993).

After entering primary school, teachers should give children time for balanced living that includes school and home relationships as well as for recreation and play. Provision for authentic assessment tests which are a more suitable evaluation for children can also be made. Teachers should evaluate students by maintaining accurate and complete records underlying all assessments (Jerome, 2000). In the writer's opinion, this shows a respect for children. Thus, determining children's achievement demands special consideration and assessment of the progress and attainments of children in the 6 - 8 year age range, and it requires the understanding that they grow and change rapidly and that they can be easily distracted by assessment procedures.

For early childhood educators, choosing appropriate assessment tools which are more suited to the needs of young children is critical. These tests will look different from those used to assess older children to better match the unique needs of children in their early years of schooling. Young children are typically active and do not listen well. Many outside the field of early childhood education advocate that increasing attention be given to the development of academic skills of young children. However, it is important to understand what a developmentally appropriate, valid, reliable, and ethical assessment looks like. The assessors should

identify the age group for whom the assessment tool will be used, understand the purposes of using assessment, and consider other factors such as the children's culture, languages, and abilities or disabilities (NAEYC, 1995). It is also important that an appropriate assessment gives a picture of the whole child, which is not the same thing as provided by testing. In addition, readiness tests for entry to primary school should not be used since children's readiness depends on various factors affecting their progress, as mentioned above. Furthermore, children's individual differences, such as age, gender, language experiences, socio-economic status, income, parent's level of education, and their ethnic and language background, have an effect on their school entry assessment scores. As referred to research reported by Burkam & Lee (2002) entitled 'Inequality at the starting gate: Social background differences in achievement as children begin school' is a good example. The research was published by the Economic Policy Institute Websites. This report showed that the inequalities of children's cognitive ability are substantial right from "the starting gate." The Researchers observed differences in young children's achievement scores in literacy and mathematics by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (SES) as they begin kindergarten. The study found that there were substantial differences by race and ethnicity in children's test scores as they began kindergarten. This study confirms that socioeconomic status was quite strongly related



to cognitive skills. This finding has important implications for developing the school made tests as selection instruments for entry to first grade. It can therefore be assumed that formal tests results to sort young children into or out of first grade needs special attention because young children do not have the experiences to understand what the goal of formal testing are. Hence, assessors should be cautious in many categories of factors affecting young children's cognitive scores, such as race, ethnicity, family educational expectations, socioeconomic status, and language background.

What is an appropriate assessment system for determining young children's entry into primary school in Thai society? The answer from educators in the field of early childhood education is the way in which a systematic procedure for obtaining information from observation, interviews, portfolios, and other sources can be used to make judgments about the characteristics of young children. Determining individual child eligibility for the entry at first grade should use more than one kind of assessment and more than one context. To promote young children to the first grade by using a single objective test for that purpose is a serious misuse of tests since a child's score on a test is only one measure of what he or she knows. Currently, educators use the term authentic assessment to define the practice of realistic involvement by children in the evaluation of their own achievement. Authentic assessments are performance-based, realistic

and instructionally appropriate (Pett, 1999). The assessment approach should be based upon appropriate expectations for the learning and development of children in preschool, and primary school years.

What does authentic assessment look like in practice? As teachers interact with young children, they are in a continual process of observing and listening, as well as evaluating what they are seeing and hearing. The uses of assessment methods are developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, inclusive of families, and done with clear and beneficial purposes. How should schools select an appropriate authentic assessment tool for children's entrance into the primary school? The answer is that there are numerous tools and systems designed to measure overall development, language and literacy, or social/emotional development.

One method of authentic assessment would be a portfolio system for each child that includes detailed teacher observation in several areas. It is a daily, ongoing process in safe, comfortable, and familiar surroundings. This instrument can be implemented in a number of ways: (a) as a response to a child's interest or shared experience which provides wider opportunities by introducing new objects, events, people; (b) by supporting and enhancing exploration by asking open-ended questions and allowing for constructive error; (c) by helping children make connections and refine understanding; and (d) helping children

apply learning to new situations and provide meaningful situations in which to use learning (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1993). There are only two major components of the portfolio assessment process. The first is documentation which is mental and written observations, audio and videotapes, a photograph of the child engaged in activities, and work samples. These are organized in a systematic way so that each child has a folder, notebook or portfolio of documentation that represents what she is learning and how she is growing in her skills and knowledge (Gronlund, 2006). The second is systematic observation in several forms, such as narrative records, time sampling, event sampling, and modified child study techniques including checklist, rating scale and shadow study. The following are details of each form of observation that schools need to understand before assessing a child for entry to primary school: (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1995; Sharon, 1996)

1. Narrative Records are one method for recording which include:

Anecdotal record. This is used to gather information that is not collected by looking at samples of children's work. As with sample collections, anecdotal records need to be written at regular intervals. They must be factual, free of opinions and non-judgmental. They can be recorded during or after the event as children interact with their surroundings.

Running record. This is a sequential record over a given time, recorded while the

behavior is occurring. It is used to document what children are doing in the particular situation.

1.3 Specimen description. These are detailed notes on an identified situation, recorded while the behavior is occurring, often with the aid of video or audio recordings. The description is used to discover cause and affect relationships in individual children's behaviors. Diary description. This is a chronological record of individual children's behavior, made after the behavior occurs. It is used to provide information about children whose behaviors the teacher needs to understand more fully.

Log or journal. This is a recording of brief details about each child in the group, usually made after the behavior occurs, and it is used to describe the status and progress of every child in the group over time.

2. Time Sampling is an observation of what happens within a given period of time, coded with tallies or symbols while the behavior is occurring. It is used to document the frequency of specific behavior.

3. Event Sampling is an observation of an event that has been defined in advance and what happens before and after, recorded briefly while the event is taking place. Event sampling is used to observe and record children's social-personal interactions with the teacher and other children as a basis to plan desirable interventions.

4. Modified child study techniques are a variety of techniques originally used in child

study research, adapted for use by teachers, and they include the following: (a) Checklist is a list, on which the teacher checks the behaviors or traits observed before, during, or after the behavior occurs; (b) Rating scale is a list of behaviors made into a scale, using frequency of behavior, level of mastery, etc., which the observer checks before, during, or after the behavior and (c) Shadow study is a detailed, in-depth observation of one child at a time, done by multiple staff members, using mostly narrative methods. It is used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of individual children and, in so doing, to enhance understanding of all children.

During systematic observation, children should be observed when they are playing alone, in small groups, in large groups, at various times of the day and in various circumstances. Systematic observation must be objective, selective, unobtrusive, and carefully recorded (Bertrand & Cebula, 1980, cited in Grace & Shores, 1991). As indicated earlier, a portfolio includes documentation and observations in several forms:

1. Narratives, which are useful for recording children's activity. They have the advantages of being open ended and flexible, and also provide a wealth of information about children.

2. Time Sampling, which can be more objective than narrative records. It is less time consuming, and it offers a way to observe and record two or more children simultaneously.

Unlike narratives, however, it is closed ended, limited to what happens in the specified time interval, and lacking in behavioral and contextual details.

3. Event sampling, which is like time sampling, is objective and potentially helpful to teachers trying to gain insight into individual behavior and classroom management issues. Like time sampling, event sampling is closed ended and limited, thus lacking the richness of the narrative methods.

4. Checklist, which is based on instructional objectives and the development associated with the acquisition of the skills being monitored.

5. Rating scales, which are appropriate to use when the behavior to be observed has several aspects or components, such as a child's success at following directions in different situations.

Both checklists and rating scales have the advantage of being relatively easy to design, undemanding of time, and applicable to more than one child at a time. However, they are limited to the specified traits or behaviors, lacking information on the context or quality of the behavior, and they are subject to the observer's interpretation. Obviously, the portfolio process to gather children's information can more easily measure the developmental progress and learning of young children. Furthermore, the assessment procedures should include informal tests, which would be used to help identify the skills

and strengths that children already possess. Assessment activities should involve the child's family through interviews to gather information about the child's developmental skills, how he/she spends his/her time, and what concerns and goals they have for him/her. At the same time, questions and requests are effective, and the easiest means of gathering information is asking direct, open-ended questions of individual children. For example, asking children about their activities often yields insights into why they behave as they do.

Raising questions about the appropriate assessment system for young children at entry or reception at primary school involves using a balance and a combination of school readiness tests and authentic assessment, as mentioned earlier. This will promote young children to the next grade that better suits their needs and differences and also serve for high-stakes test purposes. Thai society has placed significant pressure and accountability on the early childhood teacher; thus, authentic assessment should be used as an additional technique to supplement formal testing and to provide greater balance. In order to better assess the depth and quality of children's work, authentic performances are seemingly beneficial. However, authentic assessment is not yet accepted or understood by Thai society, and many teachers need to practice and learn appropriate techniques. Because alternative assessments are not universally accepted, are time consuming and lack standardization,

implementation has been slow or nonexistent in many schools plans (Franzee & Rudnitski, 1995). A combination of school readiness tests and alternative assessment strategies is needed because each one has the potential to contribute to young children's growth. In the case of testing, a test should be conducted to facilitate planning or access individual strengths and weakness but not determine school eligibility. School tests may be employed for each particular child, and the assessors should explore documents from parents and significant others that may aid the assessment. Nevertheless, authentic assessment procedures should indicate which of the strategies and resources available are judged appropriate in order to help each child.

## **Conclusion**

In choosing an appropriate assessment system for determining suitability for entry into elementary school, readiness tests or formal testing should not be used as a single measure in order to assess young children's developmental achievement for three main reasons. Firstly, it is not fair for young children because they are given only one opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do. Secondly, it cannot be used to ensure that individual young children's needs are met. Thirdly, there may be cultural or linguistic test biases given their variety of backgrounds, and it does not measure the individual diversity of young children. Finally, it can harm young children and deny

them their educational opportunity. Ideally, schools should accept all young children on the basis of children's rights of eligibility for primary school admission. Until that position is reached in Thailand, an appropriate assessment should be balanced between school testing and alternative assessment, including appropriate school tests and observations such as narrative records from various sources, at various times and in different setting or contexts. It is necessary to analyze the information from the children's cumulative files of sample works to know how far they have come since the beginning of the pre-school year. Importantly, assessing children for entry to first grade requires knowledge of testing, the limitations of and the procedures for dealing with children, the establishment of familiar situations and awareness of child learning and development theories. As well, teachers should focus on what is age-appropriate, individually appropriate, culturally appropriate, and the abilities to perform certain skills that are necessary for growth, rather than on the

concept of Intelligence Quotient. It appears that choosing both methods of assessment, as noted above, is the best way to select children entering primary school. They are efficient and important tools used in the service of young children to provide educational opportunity, instructional enrichment and meaning for children, which are relevant to their lives as they involve concrete and 'hands on' activities. In considering these issues about testing for early childhood and first grade teachers, teachers should ask themselves, "Why am I doing this?" Consideration of the uses and limitations of the tests, their possible misuses and the risks of assessing young children must be made. It can definitely conclude that a test is not the assessment. Developmentally appropriate assessment is a preferred process for detecting the developmental progress of a child that may include authentic assessment for suitable purposes. Lastly, it needs to be sure that the means being used to assess children is always appropriate for the children.

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