

# Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic: How virtual assessment, videorecording, and other technologies can be used to learn what children know and can do



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### Background

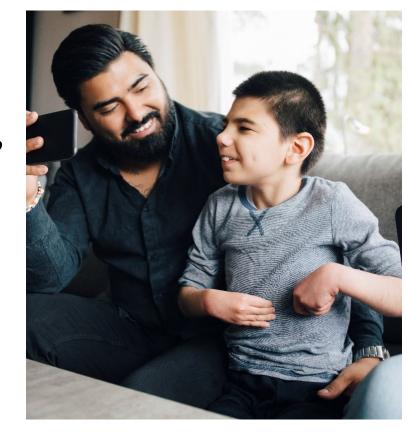
The COVID-19 pandemic required that early intervention and preschool special education programs adopt new ways to conduct assessments. One solution was the use of virtual assessment (VA).

### **Project Goals**

- Increase the body of knowledge on equitable and innovative approaches for integrating technology into authentic assessments for young children with disabilities.
- Build capacity of the field to use technology to support authentic assessment through disseminating tools, resources, and decision-making frameworks.

### Methods

- 67 interviews with early intervention and preschool special education state coordinators, local program directors, practitioners, and families from 9 states.
- 2 focus groups with practitioners.



### **Benefits and Challenges of Virtual Assessment**

# Benefits

### **Assessment Process**

Logistics

Families and

**Technology** 

### Child is assessed in everyday settings and situations.

- With VA, families are active participants, preparing them for involvement in children's services.
- Many programs are confident in the assessment results.
- Programs reported switching to an authentic assessment tool so they could use VA.
- VA allows more people to participate in the assessment (e.g., parents at work).
- VA and recordings support collaboration among professionals.

### • Eligibility assessments can be completed more quickly.

- VA provides programs with more flexibility in assigning staff.
- VA addresses personnel shortages; assessor does not need to live near family.
- Practitioners spend less time driving.

# technologies.

- Many families feel comfortable using a variety of
  - Some families lack necessary technology (some programs address this with loaner equipment).

signatures).

- Internet quality is inconsistent.
- Some families lack technology knowledge or are intimidated by technology (some programs address this by introducing families to the technology before the assessment).

Some programs reported challenges

in completing forms and obtaining

some programs report using digital

necessary signatures (although

- Some practitioners felt the information was more limited compared with in-person assessment.
- Some practitioners believe VA should not be conducted at all.

Challenges

## **Current State of Virtual Assessment in El and ECSE**

- There is more use of VA in early intervention (EI) than in early childhood special education (ECSE).
- In some states, the state decides to offer VA; in others, it is locally determined.
- The most common use of VA is to determine eligibility.
- VA is sometimes paired with virtual service delivery, but not always.
- Both professional and family perceptions of VA vary.
  - From "It's great" (maybe even better than in person) to "I don't like it"

### What's Next?

- Develop and validate decision-making frameworks for state and local administrators on adopting and implementing VA.
- Create a variety of additional resources to support implementation of VA and other technologies.



Visit our website inteca-idea.org to learn about updates and new resources.

