New Voices Assessment: An Online Tool to Support Interdisciplinary Assessments

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http://www.necfoundation.org/

Purpose

- The purpose of the New Voices tool is to address a critical need for more equitable and widespread access to high quality AAC assessments and device recommendations.
Rationale

- Limited access to interdisciplinary assessment services
  - Major metropolitan areas
  - Coordinated systems across regions, states, provinces
- High costs of comprehensive AAC assessment
  - Preliminary information gathering and preparation
  - Direct assessment time
  - Prescribing and securing funding for AAC technologies

North Carolina as an Example

- 85% decline in availability of services.
- Diminished external support to offset high costs.
- In a 12-month period during 2006-2007, 2,419 requests were made to our state assistive technology project for AAC assessment services.
  - They requests could not be met.
- An estimated 750 children across the state are in immediate need of assessment services.

The New Voices Assessment Tool ...

- Increases the efficiency of existing teams
  - Reduces intake and planning time
  - Takes advantage of local expertise
  - Generates reports in multiple formats simultaneously
- Allows individual allied health professionals, educators, and/or parents to initiate the assessment process
  - Guides the collection of relevant information
  - Supports professionals working in tandem
The New Voices Assessment Tool

Flowchart

Client in Need

Steps:

1. Assess client's needs
2. Evaluate client's progress
3. Provide additional support

Client in Need
**STEP 1:**
Related Service Professional Initiates Assessment (usually Speech & Language Pathologist)

Seeks information and input from family.

Completes questions regarding language and communication.
The program decides what additional information is required. Directs speech-language pathologist to find other professionals as required.

<other related service professional>
Completes questions regarding motor, cognition, and other areas.

The program compiles the information for the initiating related service professional to validate. Directs initiating related service professional in correcting or securing additional information as needed.
The New Voices Tool includes assessment questions in the following areas:

- Receptive Language
- Expressive Language
- Communication Competence
- Oral Motor
- Cognitive Development
- Sensory
- Access
- Positioning

Question Development Process

- Work with members of existing assessment teams to identify necessary information.
  - Team members generate first draft.
  - Questions are vetted by NEC New Voices Assessment teams.
- Determine relationships among questions and flow.
  - Respond only to relevant questions.
  - Gather all available information.
Reviewing and Changing Responses

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<th>Description</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Don't like using your tablet?</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Don't like using your computer?</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Don't like using your desktop?</td>
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Generating Reports

- Multiple report formats provided.
- Generate multiple reports simultaneously.
- Option to upload personalized report templates.

Future Development

- Continue to refine questions and flow.
- Complete report generating process.
- Streamline child registration and evaluator invitation process.
- Investigate the time savings and increased access to assessment services.
  - Survey attached to New Voices Tool
  - Online focus group interviews with users