Introducing the New COR Advantage

SEAMLESS ASSESSMENT FROM BIRTH THROUGH KINDERGARTEN

by Ann S. Epstein and Beth Marshall

In daily team planning, teachers share anecdotal notes about children to plan supportive experiences for individual children and the group as a whole.

HighScope has announced the release of the new COR Advantage, the latest online version of the Child Observation Record (COR), which seamlessly integrates child assessment from birth through kindergarten. COR Advantage is aligned with the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, Common Core Standards for kindergarten, state early learning standards, and the standards of national organizations in content areas such as literacy, mathematics, and science. It is integrated with the HighScope Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs) at all age levels, easily scored, research-based, and readily shared through reports generated for administrators, funders, and parents. COR Advantage helps teachers support early learning in all areas of development.

COR Advantage Development

COR Advantage is based on the latest research about young children, and reflects new knowledge about brain development and behavior. Revising this widely used and respected assessment tool was a multistep process aimed at updating its content and extending its structural (age) range, while retaining the simple format users count on. A team of experts, comprising HighScope staff members and external reviewers, contributed diverse perspectives from early childhood theory and research, assessment, program practices (caregivers and teachers), professional development (staff training), administration, and educational policy and advocacy. A technical design team worked with the developers to create the instrument's user-friendly online interface, including reporting tools and links to teaching resources.

COR Advantage Content and Organization

COR Advantage assesses development from infancy through kindergarten in eight content areas: Approaches to Learning; Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development and Health; Language, Literacy, and Communication; Mathematics; Creative Arts; Science and Technology; and Social Studies. An additional content area, English Language Learning (ELL), can be used with children whose primary language is other than English. Each content area contains items that address key concepts in early learning, for a total of 34 items plus the two ELL items. Based on objective anecdotal notes about the child, recorded over time by a trained and knowledgeable rater, each item is scored on an eight-level scale ranging from 0 (lowest) to 7 (highest). To help observers score

COR Advantage Categories and Items

APPROACHES TO LEARNING
A. Initiative and planning
B. Problem solving with materials
C. Reflection

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
D. Emotions
E. Building relationships with adults
F. Building relationships with other children
G. Community
H. Conflict resolution

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH
I. Gross-motor skills
J. Fine-motor skills
K. Personal care and healthy behavior

LANGUAGE, LITERACY, & COMMUNICATION
L. Speaking
M. Listening and comprehension
N. Phonological awareness
O. Alphabet knowledge
P. Reading
Q. Book enjoyment and knowledge
R. Writing

MATHEMATICS
S. Number and counting
T. Geometry: Shapes and spatial awareness
U. Measurement
V. Patterns
W. Data analysis

CREATIVE ARTS
X. Art
Y. Music
Z. Movement
AA. Pretend play

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
BB. Observing and classifying
CC. Experimenting, predicting, and drawing conclusions
DD. Natural and physical world
EE. Tools and technology

SOCIAL STUDIES
FF. Knowledge of self and others
GG. Geography
HH. History

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING (IF APPROPRIATE)
II. Listening to and understanding English
JJ. Speaking English

COR Advantage reliably and validly, explanations are provided for every area, item, and level, with two anecdotal examples for each level (see right).

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The eight scoring levels of the COR provide an overlapping continuum so that children can be scored at the developmental and ability level appropriate for them. Thus, for example, infants and toddlers will generally be scored at levels 0–2, but it would not be uncommon for an older toddler to score a level 3 on some items. Likewise, preschoolers will typically score at levels 2–5 but may rate higher or lower on any given item. Based on the child's age and developmental level, users are given a suggested starting point for scoring but can scroll up or down to the level

COR Advantage is integrated with the HighScope Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs) at all age levels, from birth through kindergarten.

Sample Item From Science and Technology

BB. Observing and classifying

Being a good observer is an important skill for budding scientists to develop. Infants and toddlers use all their senses to observe. Preschoolers begin to sort things into categories — big and small, loud and quiet, rough and smooth, to name just a few. They discover similarities and differences in people, objects, and events. Over time, their classifications are based on an increasing number of attributes or characteristics.

LEVEL 0
Child explores objects using different senses.

The child observes his or her environment using one or more senses. A variety of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures are all of interest to the child.

■ 1/15
At choice time, Naomi mouthed a bottle brush from her treasure basket.

■ 6/25
At choice time, Randall rubbed the soft felt ball across his face.

LEVEL 1
Child uses a sound or hand sign to name an object.

The child, by making a sound such as "ba-ba" for bottle or "bo-bo" for brother, connects the sound with the object. Thus, the child indicates an understanding that things have names.

■ 10/18
At nap time, Cheyenne picked up her blanket and said, "Bee-bee."

■ 3/20
At choice time, looking at the mesh bag of toys hanging above his head, Alvie said, "Moo." When Crystal (his caregiver) asked, "Do you want the cows to play with?" he nodded and repeated "Moo."

LEVEL 2
Child uses the same word to name more than one object.

The child generalizes and may overgeneralize category labels, using one label for a group of similar objects, such as applying the word (or sign for) *dog* to all four-legged animals.

■ 4/18
At snacktime, when Sean was handed his sippy cup of milk, he drank from it and said "Mmm, juice!"

■ 9/4
At outside time, when Emma saw a squirrel on the playground, she said, "Kitty!"

LEVEL 3

Child sorts or matches things and may identify things as being the same or different.

The child sorts or matches objects and may indicate whether objects are the same or different. The child may say *same* or *different* or use other words, such as "These go together" or "That doesn't belong in this pile." At this level, the child does not yet explain the reason or state the attribute upon which the sorting is based.

- ◼ 2/6
  During cleanup time, Quon was putting away the dinosaurs when he noticed a block in the dinosaur bin. He took it out and said, "That doesn't go there!"
- ◼ 9/28
  At work time, in the house area, Johanna put red cups by the red plates and blue cups by the blue plates.

LEVEL 4

Child sorts things based on one characteristic (attribute) and describes the reason.

The child categorizes objects based on one shared property (such as size, color, texture, sound) and states what that common property or similarity is. The child may occasionally make an error in sorting, or the properties in one of the child's subgroups may overlap with those in another subgroup (such as "beads" and "big beads").

- ◼ 6/19
  At small-group time, Henry took his basket of shells and grouped them into piles of large and small. When Beth (his teacher) handed him another shell, he said, "This goes here, with the small ones. Only the big shells go in this pile."
- ◼ 4/3
  At work time in the toy area, Carrie put all the dogs in one pile and all the cats in the other. She said, "I'm separating them. Cats here and dogs there. Sometimes they like to fight."

LEVEL 5

Child sorts based on two characteristics and gives the reason.

The child sorts objects based on two properties and states the reason. For example, the child might pick out all the buttons that have four holes and are shiny in a group and explain what he or she is doing.

- ◼ 8/18
  During a field trip to the park, Charles collected stones. He showed them to Saxon (his teacher) and said, "I'm looking for all the small stones that are smooth. I really like them."
- ◼ 10/6
  During work time, in the toy area, Shaneka said, "I want to get all the yellow dinosaurs that can fly. They are going to be my birds." She picked out all the yellow dinosaurs that had wings.

LEVEL 6

Child intently or repeatedly observes something and describes his or her discoveries in detail.

The child studies an object or event intently and then describes what he or she has observed. To be scored at this level, the child must include multiple details in the description. For example, the child might say of soil that it is different colors, has large and small stones, smells damp, has bugs crawling in it, and is warmer in the sunny areas than the shady ones.

- ◼ 10/3
  At recess, Ezra picked up a leaf, studied it, and said, "This is a maple leaf. I can tell because it has points on it and looks like the hockey team shirts. I like maple leaves the best because they turn colors. See, this one used to be green. Now it also has red and yellow in it."
- ◼ 12/4
  During center time, Naomi looked at a bug in the terrarium with a magnifying glass and compared it to pictures of bugs in a book. She said, "I think this is a beetle" and then made a beetle out of clay with a shell, antennae, and eyes. She used a toothpick to score its legs with hairlike marks.

LEVEL 7

Child divides a category into sets, divides the sets into subsets, and describes the characteristics of each subset and how it relates to the original category and to the other subsets.

The child's ability to classify encompasses multiple properties and subsets. He or she subdivides objects or events into groups and subgroups, describes in detail what differentiates them, and says how each subgroup relates to the original (overall) category and to the other subgroups. For example, the child might divide living things into plants and animals; subdivide animals into pets, farm animals, and wild animals; and state that a pig can be either a pet or a farm animal.

- ◼ 6/7
  During center time, Tyler filled in a graphic organizer to describe the relationship between the city and the country. He explained that people who live in both need homes. He drew an apartment on the city side and a house on the country side. "But some city people have a house," he said. Tyler drew streets in the city and trees in the country. "Lots of places have streets and trees, but there's more plants in the country," he told Mrs. Swan. In another bubble of the organizer, Tyler compared transportation by drawing cars and people walking in both the city and country. Later he added a bus and a train to the city side.
- ◼ 3/19
  During morning work, Erik created a Venn diagram to compare and contrast healthy and unhealthy foods. On the healthy side he drew and labeled eggs, salad, and an apple. On the unhealthy side, Erik drew ice cream and candy. "Look," he said. "This is apple candy, but it's not good for you because it's candy." In the middle he put a large plate of spaghetti. "It's good for you, but not if you eat this much," he said.

appropriate for each child. This system accommodates children with special needs and developmental delays, as well as those whose early learning may be more advanced in some content areas than others.

COR Advantage is integrated with HighScope's key developmental indicators (KDIs) at all age levels.

COR Advantage Validation

Like all HighScope assessment tools, COR Advantage is undergoing rigorous validation by research staff with consultation from outside experts. The instrument was field-tested for reliability and validity with 250 children in 8 sites representing diverse program settings and a wide range of child abilities and family backgrounds. Depending on the children's ages, COR Advantage

ratings were validated against scores on the Bayley-III or Woodcock-Johnson-III. A national validation study with approximately 40 diverse sites is also planned and will provide further data on the measure's use and application (see related article, p. 17).

COR Advantage is an exciting addition to the HighScope family of authentic child and program assessment tools. To learn more about the instrument, and how you can use it to observe and support the development of children from infancy through kindergarten, visit the HighScope website at www.highscope.org. ■

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Reactions to COR Advantage

Here is what researchers, administrators, and practitioners who participated in the development and field-testing of COR Advantage are saying:
— *[COR Advantage] is a great assessment tool! It is comprehensive and clear.*
— *The instrument reflects current research and knowledge.*
— *I very much like the 8 levels encompassing birth through kindergarten.*
— *[COR Advantage] is user-friendly. The descriptions add great depth to the measure.*
— *Having this tool directly correlate with the KDIs was a fabulous idea. This will simplify teachers' observations and enable them to concentrate their efforts on one set of indicators.*
— *The direct integration of the concepts in Numbers Plus and Growing Readers is also a big advantage.*
— *While recently completing our accreditation process with NAEYC, we again were grateful for our use of HighScope, which made the task straightforward and successful. Thank you for your dependable and contemporary product.*

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