Screening and Assessment in Child Welfare: Using the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse’s Measurement Tools Section

Jared Martin and Brent Crandal
Evidence-Based Measurement, Well-Being, & Child Welfare

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Overview

• Measurement Across Time & Disciplines

• Changes in Child Welfare, Changes in Measurement

• Measurement in Child Welfare: Assessment, Screening, & Well-Being
  – Screening for Mental Health Needs in CW as a Model


“Whatever exists at all exists in some amount. To know it thoroughly involves knowing its quantity as well as its quality.”

Safety
Permanency
Well-Being
Out of 10 Young People in Child Welfare with Significant Mental Health Needs....
33% Receive Mental Health Services

Assessment, Screening, & Well-Being

• Specific type of assessment: Screening
Among kids involved in CW, there are some who need to be referred to MH services...
Main Screening Approaches to Identify Mental Health Needs in CWS
1. NO USE OF SCREENING TOOL

- AKA The Eyeball Test or “Needs-Based Screening”
- No standardized tools used in screening process OR tools used after referral decision already determined
NO USE OF SCREENING TOOL

Strengths

• Least resources and time needed (only upfront)
1

NO USE OF SCREENING TOOL

Concerns

• Strong evidence this approach is ineffective

• Referrals heavily impacted by bias, memory, and judgment

• No direct report from youth/families
Tools used to standardize process and document worker perceptions during assessment process; information later used to make referrals.
- e.g., CANS, MHST, SDM
Strengths

- Access to respondents (workers)
- Can reduce errors caused by memory or inconsistency between workers (not always)
- Sometimes includes collateral information
USE OF INFORMATION CONSOLIDATION TOOL

Concerns

- Though typically effective for safety and permanency, not an evidence-informed approach for well-being
- Heavily relies on perceptions, judgment, and training (for accuracy and consistency)
- Often influenced by bias
- Does not include direct report from youth/family
3 USE OF EVIDENCE-INFORMED MEASUREMENT TOOL(S)

• Evidence-informed tool(s) completed (by caregivers, youth, and others) in the assessment process to influence referral decision making
USE OF EVIDENCE-INFORMED MEASUREMENT TOOL(S)

Strengths

• Research supporting accuracy and consistency of information provided
• Direct feedback from the youth/family
• Eliminate dependence on memory, bias, and/or judgment alone
• Reduce inconsistency between workers
• Can include collateral information
• Can enhance approach #2
Considerations

- Can require more upfront resources and time
- Implementation needs to be thoughtful
- Training and ongoing oversight is needed to ensure appropriate use
Effectively & Efficiently Implemented

Understanding & Using the CEBC Measurement Tools Section

Jared Martin, MA
California Evidence Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC)
Objectives

• Brief overview of the CEBC
• Walkthrough of the CEBC measurement tool section
• Review what makes a measurement tool evidence-informed
• Highlight some considerations for measurement tool selection
The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC)

In 2004, the California Department of Social Services, Office of Child Abuse Prevention contracted with the Chadwick Center for Children and Families, Rady Children’s Hospital-San Diego to create the CEBC.
CEBC Mission

To advance the effective implementation of evidence-based practices for children and families involved with the child welfare system

Program Registry

Selecting & Implementing Programs
Additional Information

To learn more about the program registry & implementation section:

• Recorded Webinars
  http://www.cebc4cw.org/cebc-webinars/

• Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Section
  http://www.cebc4cw.org/faqs-2/
Why Does the CEBC Have a Measurement Tools Section?

The CEBC re-launched the measurement tool section in February 2015 as a means to:

• Continue to bridge the gap between research and practice

• Allow child welfare workers to effectively identify & efficiently meet the needs of children, youth, and parents.

• Help give parents, children, and youth a voice
The Goal of the Measurement Tool Section

- To detail select measurement tools that could be used by child welfare workers
- To promote research supporting each listed measurement tool
- To review tools that are commonly used in the field or marketed/used in California
Welcome to the CEBC:
California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare

The mission of the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC) is to advance the effective implementation of evidence-based practices for children and families involved with the child welfare system.

- Searchable database of child welfare related programs.
- Description and information on research evidence for specific programs.
- Guidance on how to make critical decisions regarding selecting and implementing programs.
- Tools and materials to provide support for choosing, implementing and sustaining a program.

View Programs
Select and Implement Programs

The CEBC is funded by the California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) Office of Child Abuse Prevention and is one of their targeted efforts to improve the lives of children and families served within child welfare systems. The CDSS contracted with Rady Children's Hospital – San Diego to create and oversee the CEBC.
Welcome to the CEBC:
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Program Registry

The primary goal of the CEBC Program Registry is to provide a searchable database of programs that can be utilized by professionals that serve children and families involved with the child welfare system. The programs are arranged by topic area. Within each topic area is a definition and clear information on the requirements (e.g., target population and goals) that must be met by each program in order to be included in the specific topic area. The requirements for which outcomes the research evidence on a program must demonstrate in order to be rated within each topic area are also listed. Each individual program description contains easily accessible and vital information, including, at a minimum, a CEBC Scientific Rating, citations and summaries of relevant published peer-reviewed research studies conducted on the program, a brief description of the program, and training and contact information.

For information on selecting and implementing evidence-based practices, please click on Implementation on the sidebar.
Measurement Tools for Child Welfare

Measurement tools for well-being in child welfare consist of both screening tools and assessment tools. The CEBC provides information on select screening and assessment tools that may be commonly used by staff in the child welfare system in order to help child welfare agencies evaluate the research supporting each tool. In order to be included on the CEBC, the tool must meet the following requirements:

1. Has a manual and/or training available that describes how to administer and score it
2. Is used in the child welfare field
3. Does not require a clinical license to be used and interpreted
4. Has established psychometrics (e.g., specificity, sensitivity, reliability, or validity) and/or be commonly used in California

Screening Tool vs. Assessment Tool

The CEBC defines a screening tool as a brief questionnaire or procedure that examines risk factors, mental health/trauma symptoms, or both to determine whether further, more in-depth assessment is needed on a specific area of concern, such as mental health, trauma, or substance use. Since the goal is to identify specific needs among a broad group, screening is usually done with a large population, like all children referred to Child Welfare Services or all children entering out-of-home care. A positive result on a screening tool should result in a referral for a more thorough assessment.

The CEBC defines an assessment tool as an in-depth questionnaire or procedure used to understand a child’s and/or family’s strengths and needs, such as functioning, family and individual history, symptoms, and the impact of trauma. The focus of the CEBC is on tools used during assessments done by child welfare staff, and not on tools used during clinical assessments that may be completed by licensed mental health or medical professionals.

Measurement Tool Rating Scale

Click here to access the Measurement Tool Rating Scale.

List of Measurement Tools

Click here to access the list of measurement tools highlighted on the CEBC.
Requirements

To be listed on the CEBC, a tool must:

- Have training or a manual available
- Not require a clinical license
- Be used in the child welfare field
- Have sound psychometrics published in a peer-reviewed journal

Please note: the measurement tool section is not intended to be comprehensive
Important Terms

- **Reliability** - The extent to which the same result will be achieved when repeating the same measure or study again

- **Validity** - The degree to which a result is likely to be true and free of bias
Important Terms

**Sensitivity** - A measure of how well a test identifies people *with* a specific disease or problem.
Important Terms

**Specificity** - A measure of how well a test *excludes* people *without* a specific disease or problem.

Tests can also report those with an issue as negative *(false negative)*.
The research evidence was assessed for each screening and assessment tool and a rating was provided. Please note that all ratings are based on the English version of the measure unless otherwise noted in the tool’s description.

A - Psychometrics Well-Demonstrated

○ 2 or more published, peer-reviewed studies have established the measure’s psychometrics (e.g., reliability and validity, sensitivity and specificity, etc.).

B - Psychometrics Demonstrated

○ 1 published, peer-reviewed study has established the measure’s psychometrics (e.g., reliability and validity, sensitivity and specificity, etc.).

C - Does Not Reach Acceptable Levels of Psychometrics

○ A preponderance of published, peer-reviewed studies have shown that the measure does not reach acceptable levels of psychometrics (e.g., reliability and validity, sensitivity and specificity, etc.).

NR - Not Able to Be Rated

○ Published peer-reviewed studies demonstrating the measure’s psychometrics (e.g., reliability and validity, sensitivity and specificity, etc.) are not available.
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Measurement Tools Highlighted on the CEBC

A basic description of each tool is available through the links below so that comparisons can be made between tools. Access/purchase and contact information is also provided. Please note that the list below reflects the measurement tools that the CEBC has reviewed to date and is not a comprehensive list of well-being measurement tools used in child welfare.

Tools Used for Screening Mental Health Needs

- Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Third Edition (ASQ-3™)
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional (ASQ:SE)
- Mental Health Screening Tool, The (MHST)
- Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT)
- Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers, Revised, with Follow-Up (M-CHAT-R/F)
- Mood and Feelings Questionnaire (MFQ)
- Mood and Feelings Questionnaire-Short Form (MFQ-SF)
- Mood Disorder Questionnaire, The (MDQ)
- North Carolina Family Assessment Scale (NCFAS)
- Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) for Adolescents
- Pediatric Symptom Checklist-17 (PSC-17)
- Screen for Childhood Anxiety Related Emotional Disorders (SCARED)
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

Tools Used for Assessing Family Attributes

- Child Abuse Potential Inventory (CAPI)
- Family Assessment Form (FAF)
- Family Development Matrix Outcomes Model
- Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KiPS)
- Protective Factors Survey (PFS)

Other Tools

- Child Exposure to Domestic Violence Scale (CEDV)
- Ohio Youth Problems, Functioning, and Satisfaction Scales (Ohio Scales)
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Information Provided on Each Tool

• Scientific Rating
  o Currently listed: 14 A’s, 4 B’s, 0 C’s, and 2 NR’s

• Description of Tool
  o Target population, time to complete, completed by, modalities, scoring information, languages available, training requirements, and availability

• Developer Contact Information

• Summary of Relevant Research
Future of Measurement in Child Welfare

• Measurement in child welfare is an emerging field. Expect to see more tools to come!
  – Additional trauma tools currently under review
  – Additional measurement tool areas, including life skills

• How child welfare measures well-being is new (expect training and more attention on this topic)
Tool Selection Considerations

• Features of the measures
  – Length/time to complete
  – Cost
  – Translations and cultural appropriateness
  – Informants
  – Age range
  – Research support

• Organizational factors
  – Timing of administering tool
  – Culture change
  – … among other factors

Utilize the CEBC to identify tool features; contact the tool developer or the CEBC for additional TA needs
Questions?

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