

5 Tips for Remaining Objective During Screening

Extra assistance given to a child during screening may influence the child's performance and could invalidate the results. Prompting, giving unnecessary encouragement, or providing unscripted demonstrations can mask the child's actual strengths and needs, making it challenging to detect a child's delayed or advanced development.



Reduce test anxiety

Some children feel anxious when they see an examiner recording performance, so you may wish to hide the tablet or Data Sheet you're using to record the child's answers. Perhaps rest it on your lap or on a chair next to you so that the table blocks the child's view of it.



Avoid telling the child specifics about his or her performance

Use verbal reinforcement and show interest and enthusiasm in the child's effort (e.g., "Okay!" or "Thank you!") but DO NOT indicate whether the child's response was correct or incorrect. Be careful not to show feelings of disappointment when the child gives an incorrect response or feelings of satisfaction when the child is doing well.



Do not give the child reminders

It can be tempting for an examiner or teacher to provide reminders as a form of encouragement, such as "You know this. We did it yesterday." Reminders may cause the child to give a response that is not representative of his/her true knowledge or abilities, potentially invalidating the child's screening results.



Reinforce effort throughout the screening

You may wish to give the child a sticker between assessments to show your appreciation for his or her effort. Remember, however, to reward the child's effort THROUGHOUT the screening, not only when the child is successful on screening tasks.



Avoid gazing at the correct choice

Occasionally, a child is alert to where the examiner is looking and will use this as a cue to responding. If the child gives a correct response based on where the examiner is looking, performance may be inflated.

Now you're ready to screen!