

# 7 Tips for Establishing Rapport During Screening

Children are generally slow to warm up to and cooperate with an unfamiliar person. They may refuse to answer questions, attempt to leave the screening area, become tearful, or alternately grab for test materials or play with toys they brought with them. The following suggestions may help make the assessment process comfortable, enjoyable, and even fun for both you and the child.



## 1 Engage with caregiver first

If a parent/caregiver is present, engage the parent/caregiver first. Ask the parent how his/her child will be most comfortable during the screening. This helps put both the parent and the child at ease.



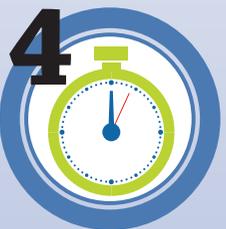
## 2 Create a welcoming environment

Thank the child beforehand for participating. Explain that you will be presenting several different kinds of games and tasks. Ask the child to do the best that he/she can.



## 3 Use clear and pleasant requests

Statements like, “*Come with me. We are going to draw and play with some shapes*” work well to guide adherence to the screening. Do not ask the child whether he/she would *like* to participate, since a refusal can be challenging.



## 4 Set time expectations

To help the child understand how long the assessment session will be, you may wish to have the child turn the dial of a timer to a predetermined point. Explain to the child that when the timer goes off, he/she will have a chance to play.



## 5 Be flexible

Offer choices if the child refuses to participate in the assessment process. For example, say, “*Would you like to play with blocks or draw some shapes first?*” Switch to another task if the child refuses to engage in a particular assessment in the screen. After the child feels more secure, return to the earlier assessment.



## 6 Reduce distractions

If the child has difficulty focusing on a single item on a child page, cover the other items with blank sheets of paper.



## 7 Incorporate “wiggle breaks”

Because it is unlikely that young children can remain seated throughout screening, “wiggle breaks” should be interspersed among assessment items. It is acceptable to move to the floor, back to the chair, and even under the table!

## Now you're ready to screen!