

# Background: PSRA

## What is the PSRA?

- The PSRA is a one-on-one direct assessment measure authored by Radiah Smith-Donald for the Chicago School Readiness Project to evaluate children's self-regulatory skills.
- The assessment consists of 10 tasks adapted from lab based assessments of effortful control (impulse control), compliance (following adults' directions), and executive function (attention/planning).
- Assessors complete a PSRA direct assessment codesheet and a 28-item assessor report (adapted from the Leiter-R socio-emotional rating scale).

## Selected PSRA Tasks

Task	Description	What it Tests
Balance Beam	<i>"Walk along this line as slowly as you can"</i>	Attention/Planning
Pencil Tap	<i>"Tap 1 time when I tap 2 times"</i>	Attention/Planning
Tower Clean Up	Clean up blocks from the tower	Following Adult's Directions
Toy Sort	Clean up fun, small toys	Following Adult's Directions
Toy Wrap	<i>"Don't peek while I wrap this surprise"</i>	Impulse Control
Snack Delay	Wait to retrieve M&M from under clear cup	Impulse Control

# Key Processes: Deployment of a Reliable Field Assessment Staff

## Staff Development

Recruitment Training Certification

### Recruitment

Our assessors are recruited primarily from graduate programs in related fields from around the Chicago metropolitan area. The majority of our assessors are graduate students, probably because the time commitment for assessors is difficult to meet while holding another job with regular work hours. We have, however, also worked with several education professionals.

Successful applicants for the assessor position must have experience working with children. They must be available during school hours and be able to provide their own transportation to and from test sites (although we make every effort to place assessors in locations convenient for them). Ideal candidates will have professional experience in data collection and working with young children, as well as Spanish language proficiency.

### Training Schedule

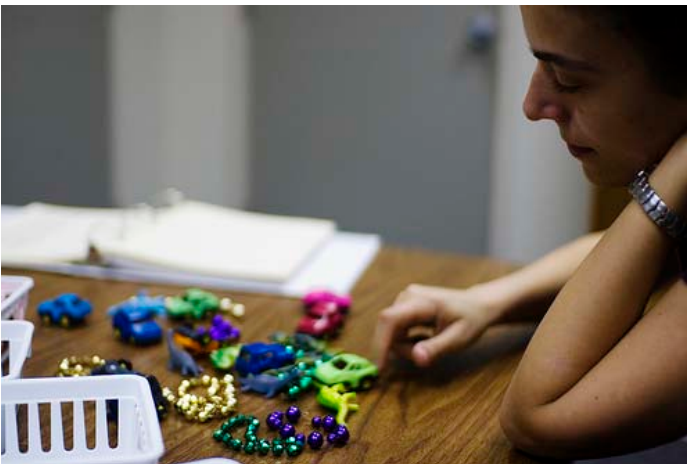
15 min - Introduction to PSRA  
30 min - Video of an assessment  
15 min - Q&A about assessment  
30 min - Instructive role play  
45 min - Individual role play  
15 min - Certification process description  
15 min - Introduction to reliability  
30 min - Troubleshooting tips  
15 min - Training on video camera and timer use  
90 min - Assessor report training



### Certification

**Step 1: Preliminary Certification**  
Assessors conduct the assessment with an adult playing the role of the child. The assessment is evaluated by two certifiers. This round is designed to test assessors' familiarity and comfort level with the script.

**Step 2: Release Certification**  
Assessors conduct an assessment with a child who is not participating in the study. The assessment is videotaped and later evaluated by a certifier. This round is designed to test assessors' execution of the script as well as their ability to work comfortably and appropriately with children.



## Ongoing Evaluation

Assessor Certification

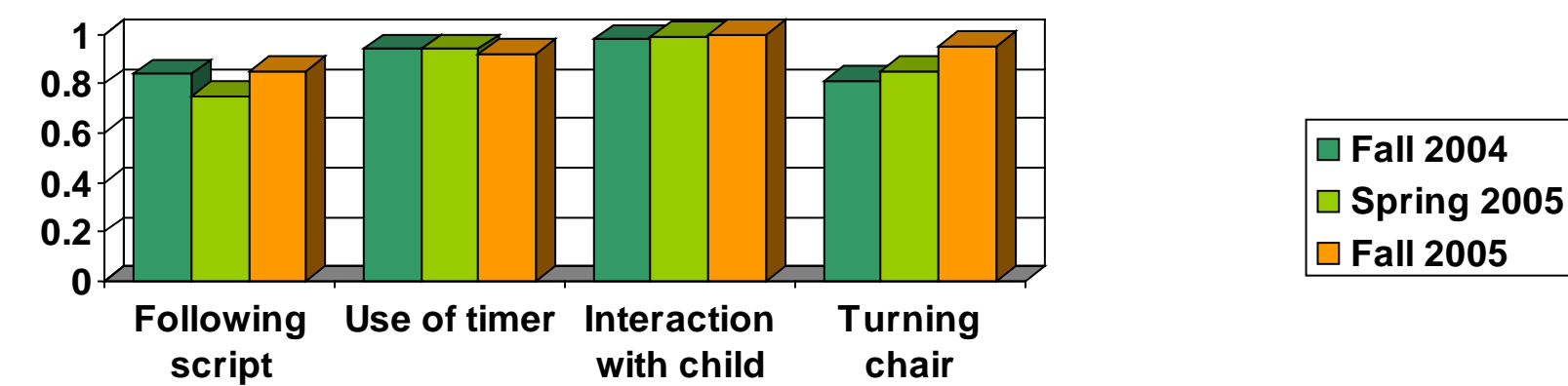
Inter-rater Reliability

### Ongoing Evaluation Process

- Performance against certification criteria**
- Evaluates whether assessors are conducting assessments correctly and consistently
  - Taped assessments are scored using PSRA Assessor Certification Scoresheet
  - Error-free rates are reported as raw percentages
  - Problem criteria/tasks are identified and addressed
- Inter-rater reliability**
- Evaluates reliability of the data entered into assessment forms
  - Taped assessments are double-coded using PSRA Codesheet and Assessor Report
  - Consistency of assessor and coder responses on these forms is evaluated using standard statistical analysis

### Assessor Performance

Select Criteria (error-free rates in raw percentages)



### Inter-rater Reliability: Fall 2004

Task	Alpha
Balance Beam	.90
Pencil Tap	.89
Tower Clean Up	.98
Toy Sort	.83
Toy Wrap	.97
Snack Delay	.73

## Remediation

Case Studies of Remediation Tools

### Case Study #1: Remediation of Assessor Performance on "Following of Script"

**Problem:** Decline in error-free rate from 84% in Fall 2004 to 75% in Spring 2005 on "following of script" criterion

**Diagnostic:** During Spring 2005 coding, two experienced assessors were observed exhibiting considerable "assessor drift". The error-free rate of these two assessors on the "following of script" criterion was only 31%. Notes from coding suggested that assessors were not reading script, but ad-libbing what they perceived as substance of script based on their experience and comfort level with script

**Remediation:** Training materials were changed. Instead of asking assessors to "follow the script", materials directed assessors to "read the script verbatim". All experienced assessors were required to undergo recertification before Fall 2005. Recertification allowed for detailed feedback for experienced assessors before resuming fieldwork

**Results:** Error-free rate for "following of script" criterion rose to 85% in Fall 2005

### Case Study #2: Remediation of Assessor Performance on "Turning of Child's Chair"

**Problem:** Relatively low (<90%) error-free rate on "turning of child's chair" criterion during Fall 2004 and Spring 2005

**Diagnostic:** This criterion only applies to two tasks: Toy Wrap and Toy Wait. Analysis of these two criteria revealed that error-free rate during Toy Wrap task was acceptable (94% in Spring 2005), while error-free rate during Toy Wait task was quite low (76% in Spring 2005). Assessors seemed to forget to turn child's chair back towards table for Toy Wait task if child turned himself around in chair

**Remediation:** Issues with Toy Wait task were highlighted during assessor training and included in "Troubleshooting Tips" (a document given to each assessor that provides detailed descriptions of most common errors made during assessments)

**Results:** Error-free rate for "turning of child's chair" criterion rose to 95% in Fall 2005