



# Research News

March 2008  
Volume 1, Number 1

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## Do Teacher Ratings Match Independent Interviews?

This past year, a number of studies were conducted by Office of Early Childhood Education (OECE) of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). The first study asked whether teacher observations using the Child Assessment Profile (CAP), and independent interviewers using the Preschool Mini Assessment (PMA), agreed in their assessment of children's skills. The results were surprising because teachers and objective interviewers agreed about children with high ratings, but not about children with **low** ratings! Most children with high CAP ratings received similar scores on the PMA; however, almost 90% of children with "below average" CAP ratings were rated by independent interviewers as "above average" on the PMA.

**This study shows some children are capable of much more than teachers realize. Here are some examples of the differences between interviewers and teachers (overall for all children):**

### *Letter Recognition*

Classroom teachers indicated **66%** of all children can identify ten letters (CAP Item 18 recognizes, matches & names 10 letters). PMA interviewers found **75%** of children correctly identified 10 letters.

### *Sorting*

Classroom teachers indicated **74%** of all children can correctly sort (CAP Item 31 Matches, sorts & regroup shapes). Interviewers found **97%** correctly sorted objects presented to them.

### *Counting*

Classroom teachers indicated **73%** of all children can count. Interviewers found over **90%** correctly responded to counting instructions.

### *Comparison*

Classroom teachers indicated **68%** of all children can compare quantities. Interviewers found **90%** correctly compared quantities.

This study underscores the importance of understanding each child. As you know, OECE depends on classroom teachers to conduct child observations and record ratings. Parents also depend on teacher perceptions, which need to be as accurate as possible.

### **Recommendations:**

- ▶ Teachers need to take special care before assigning low ratings to children. Double-check if a child can perform a particular skill before rating him/her low.
- ▶ When you are not quite sure about a particular child, compare your perception with another teacher who has worked with the child. Be cautious about influencing their judgment.

### **We want to know what YOU think!**

You may e-mail us at [contactus@ecechicago.org](mailto:contactus@ecechicago.org) or go to the Office of Early Childhood Education Web site under teacher resources: <http://www.ecechicago.org/teacher/> for additional resources. Stay tuned! Results from other studies will be published in forthcoming newsletters!

