

## **SLP Small Group Summaries**

### **Where are you at the NOW Play Project?**

Assessment tools are being adapted which integrate digital resources and interactive games.

### **What are the challenges that come with developing culturally sensitive assessment?**

Assessment involves measures of validity, but this is not a first priority. Infusing understandings of speech pathology in the classroom is of high relevance regarding bridging divides between language and literacy. This divide insinuates that speech pathologists do not have time for literacy, which is why NOW Play's current message is that the two are inherently connected.

When assessing Indigenous children, a challenge that exists involves the dimensions of learning that cannot be boxed into graded outcomes. It is important to understand that Indigenous children do not need to "fit" into mainstream tools, given their entirely unique life experiences. Further, it is necessary to disregard deficit models that some assessment tools may take as they align more closely with some cultures than others. Tools must be tailored to specific communities so that strengths may be built on in accordance with cultural views.

### **What are the challenges that come with supporting Indigenous Children?**

A first step to consider is asking children for their input about their language development. It is also necessary to consider the support that students receive outside the education space. Speech pathologists develop supportive relationships – the challenge that exists is how to make support consistent throughout the years. This must be a community undertaking with leaders who believe in the well-being of their children. Asking each community about appropriate and necessary support, allows for school practices to be both relevant and culturally sensitive.

Challenges exist on systemic levels as evidenced by a current lack of schools available, understaffing of teachers working in schools given issues with turnover, and students leaving their communities because they have no choice to continue studying.