



NEWS

From Harcourt Assessment, Inc.

Contact:
Mark Slitt
210.339.5399

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**HARCOURT ASSESSMENT INTRODUCES
EARLY CHILDHOOD OBSERVATION SYSTEM™**

**WITH HANDHELD COMPUTER, ECHOS™ MAKES IT EASY FOR TEACHERS
TO MONITOR PROGRESS OF YOUNG LEARNERS IN GRADES K - 2**

**Teachers Can Observe and Record Benchmark Behaviors in Seven
Developmental Areas Based on National and State Standards**

SAN ANTONIO – Leading test developer and publisher Harcourt Assessment, Inc. has introduced the Early Childhood Observation System™ (ECHOS™), which combines technology with ongoing observation in the classroom to help teachers easily monitor the progress of young learners and guide instruction in grades K - 2.

Designed to work on the Palm OS® handheld computer, ECHOS makes it easier for teachers to do what they already do -- observe their students in the classroom while they are naturally engaged in every-day activities and monitor what grade-level skills, knowledge or behaviors a student consistently demonstrates or needs to develop.

"The beauty of ECHOS is that it enables teachers to teach and assess at the same time," said Don Barfield, vice president of educational products for Harcourt Assessment. "Because children learn and grow in different ways and at different rates, it can be challenging to assess and monitor the progress of an entire classroom. We developed ECHOS to provide a simple, uniform method for observing and monitoring the progress of young learners and then provide teachers the feedback and information they need to develop effective classroom strategies to ensure that all students can demonstrate essential grade-level skills."

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Teachers who have tried ECHOS have reacted favorably. "The teachers loved using the handheld computers for assessing the kids! They were simple and made recordkeeping very easy," said Annette Alberti, a reading specialist and Title I coordinator from Pleasant Grove, Calif.

ECHOS was developed with the guidance of a national panel of early childhood and subject matter experts to ensure that ECHOS evaluates the whole child across the following seven developmental areas: Language and literacy; mathematics; social and personal skills; science; social studies; physical development and fitness; and creative arts.

Based on their observations of specific benchmark behaviors in these seven areas, teachers can assign one of four performance levels: Not yet demonstrating, emerging, progressing or consistently demonstrates.

Teachers can download their observations to a personal computer and receive immediate feedback from Web-based classroom and student reports that help them plan and implement effective instruction. Home reports in English or Spanish also provide suggested activities that can help parents reinforce or develop their child's skills.

While ECHOS was designed to operate most efficiently on a handheld computer, the system is flexible, so teachers can record their observations on paper then enter them into a personal computer and still receive the same student, classroom and home reports.

Web-based interactive professional development is available to help teachers learn to use ECHOS effectively. It includes instruction on observational assessment, as well as video highlights of early elementary classrooms and teachers.

ECHOS is aligned to the guidelines and standards of the following organizations: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC); International Reading Association (IRA); National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE); National Research Council Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children; National Council of Teachers of

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Mathematics (NCTM); Center for Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Education (CSMEE); National Council for the Social Sciences (NCSS); Center for Social and Emotional Education (CSEE); National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE); National Arts and Education Information Network (ArtsEdge); National Association for Music Education (MENC); National Dance Association (NDA); Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

Based in San Antonio, Harcourt Assessment is a leading provider of high-quality assessment instruments and testing programs used by educators, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, human resource professionals, admissions and credentialing professionals, and businesses. Through the development of custom statewide educational testing programs, Harcourt is helping more than 20 states meet the accountability requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

The company is a unit of Harcourt Education, which is the global education brand of Reed Elsevier Group plc (NYSE: RUK and ENL). Reed Elsevier is a world-leading publisher and information provider operating in the science and medical, legal, education and business-to-business industry sectors.

For more information about ECHOS, visit www.echosonline.com.

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