



## Brief Overview of the Ounce Scale Assessment System

The Ounce Scale is an observational assessment for evaluating infants' and toddlers' development over a period of three and a half years - from Birth to 3 1/2. Its purpose is twofold: (1) to provide guidelines and standards for observing and interpreting young children's growth and behavior, and (2) to provide information that parents and caregivers can use in everyday interactions with their children.

### The Ounce Scale has three elements:

- **The Observation Record** provides a focus for observing and documenting children's everyday behaviors and provides data for making evaluations about development.
- **The Family Album** provides a structure for parents to learn about and record their child's development as they write down what they see, using photos, telling stories, and responding to observation questions that are the same as the ones in the caregiver's Observation Record.
- **The Developmental Profile** enables caregivers and other staff to evaluate each child's development and progress over time, comparing their observation data to specific performance Standards.

A User's Guide, the Standards for the Developmental Profiles, and Reproducible Masters are also available to assist you in implementing the Ounce Scale.

### The Ounce Scale is organized around six major areas of development:

1. **Personal Connections** – *It's About Trust*: How children show that they trust familiar adults.
2. **Feelings About Self** – *Learning About Me*: How children express who they are.
3. **Relationships With Other Children** – *Child to Child*: What children do around other children.
4. **Understanding and Communicating** – *Baby and Toddler Talk*: How children understand and communicate.
5. **Exploration and Problem Solving** – *Seek and Solve*: How children explore and figure things out.
6. **Movement and Coordination** – *Body Basics*: How children move their bodies and use their hands to do things.

The Ounce Scale provides an interactive system of documentation, monitoring, and evaluation of development for Early Head Start programs, early intervention programs, (including children at risk for special needs or those with disabilities), and other home and center based infant, toddler, and preschool childcare in the community. It provides a meaningful way to evaluate children's accomplishments, areas of difficulty, and approaches to learning. There is guidance to thinking about future goals so that family and caregivers can work together. Families and caregivers using the Ounce Scale learn to observe their children and to use this information to enhance relationships and support development.