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Revealing and capitalising on young children's mathematical potential.

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Summary: With ongoing concerns about environments that push teachers toward increasingly structured assessments, thus reducing opportunities to observe young learners' mathematical capabilities, the publication of this special issue on formative assessment is especially significant and timely. The articles illustrate how we cannot rely solely on standardized achievement tests to determine learners' actual mathematical competencies, or to determine their learning potential, or to fully identify possible areas in need of further development. In this commentary I first consider some of the important issues examined in the articles and then turn to Ginsburg's general principles listed in his opening article. These principles are particularly helpful in not only guiding early assessment but also in providing quality mathematics education to young children. Building on ideas featured in this issue, I offer suggestions for how we might reveal and capitalise on young children's mathematical talents. Examples from analogical and mathematical reasoning, spatial and numerical relations, numerical problem solving and posing, and combinatorial reasoning are presented.

Classification: D61 D62 C31 C32 D20

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