OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Gina Peterson and Emily Elam
College of the Canyons

LibreTexts™

Observation and Assessment in Early Childhood Education

Gina Peterson and Emily Elam

College of the Canyons

This text is disseminated via the Open Education Resource (OER) LibreTexts Project (https://LibreTexts.org) and like the thousands of other texts available within this powerful platform, it is freely available for reading, printing, and "consuming."

The LibreTexts mission is to bring together students, faculty, and scholars in a collaborative effort to provide an accessible, and comprehensive platform that empowers our community to develop, curate, adapt, and adopt openly licensed resources and technologies; through these efforts we can reduce the financial burden born from traditional educational resource costs, ensuring education is more accessible for students and communities worldwide.

Most, but not all, pages in the library have licenses that may allow individuals to make changes, save, and print this book. Carefully consult the applicable license(s) before pursuing such effects. Instructors can adopt existing LibreTexts texts or Remix them to quickly build course-specific resources to meet the needs of their students. Unlike traditional textbooks, LibreTexts' web based origins allow powerful integration of advanced features and new technologies to support learning.

LibreTexts is the adaptable, user-friendly non-profit open education resource platform that educators trust for creating, customizing, and sharing accessible, interactive textbooks, adaptive homework, and ancillary materials. We collaborate with individuals and organizations to champion open education initiatives, support institutional publishing programs, drive curriculum development projects, and more.

The LibreTexts libraries are Powered by NICE CXone Expert and was supported by the Department of Education Open Textbook Pilot Project, the California Education Learning Lab, the UC Davis Office of the Provost, the UC Davis Library, the California State University Affordable Learning Solutions Program, and Merlot. This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. 1246120, 1525057, and 1413739.

Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation nor the US Department of Education.

Have questions or comments? For information about adoptions or adaptions contact info@LibreTexts.org or visit our main website at https://LibreTexts.org.

The LibreTexts name, logo, and book covers are trademarked by LibreTexts, Inc. (a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization) and protected against unauthorized use.

This text was compiled on 08/26/2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About this Book

Licensing

1: Observation and Documentation - The Key to Intentional Teaching

1.1: The Role of Observation

1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer

1.3: Observations can be Spontaneous or Planned

1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation

1.5: The Role of Documentation

1.6: Objective versus Subjective Observation Evidence

1.7: Recognizing Your Biases

1.8: Ethical Guidelines when Observing Children

1.9: Observation and Documentation Dos and Don’ts

1.10: Conclusion and References

2: Quality Counts

2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap

2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike

2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality

2.4: A Look at Standard Industry Practices

2.5: The Role of the Teacher in High-Quality Practices

2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices

2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms

2.8: Conclusion and References

3: Using Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques to Gather Evidence

3.1: Taking the First Step - Gathering Baseline Data

3.2: Understanding the Child

3.3: Let’s Get Started

3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques

3.5: Conclusion and References

4: The Purpose, Process and Practice of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating

4.1: Introduction

4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children

4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs

4.4: Conclusion and References

5: How to Plan Effective and Meaningful Curriculum

5.1: Introduction

5.2: What is Curriculum?

5.3: Benefits of Implementing Meaningful Curriculum
5.4: A Teachers Role
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle
5.7: Conclusion

6: Using Documentation and Assessment to Communicate with Families

6.1: Introduction
6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art
6.3: Assessing Children's Development
6.4: Family Conferences

Index

Glossary

Detailed Licensing

This page titled Observation and Assessment in Early Childhood Education (Peterson and Elam) is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

About this Book

OBSERVATION and ASSESSMENT in Early Childhood Education

An Open Educational Resources Publication by College of the Canyons

Created by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam

Peer Reviewed by Kristin Beeve and Clinton Springer

Editors: Alexa Johnson & Trudi Radtke

Cover: Ian Joslin

Version 1.0

2020

ZERO TEXTBOOK COST

Acknowledgements

College of the Canyons would like to extend appreciation to the following people and organizations for allowing this textbook to be created:

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

Chancellor Dianne G. Van Hook

Santa Clarita Community College District

College of the Canyons Distance Learning Office

Have Feedback or Resources to Share?

Catch a typo? Want to suggest a change to improve the book? Please send us your feedback in this survey .

Did you use this book and make changes? Did you create supplementary resources (PowerPoints, activities, test/quiz banks, etc.)? Please put a creative commons license on those and share them back with us by joining and uploading them to the Google Group . If you are having issues, please contact Jennifer.Paris@canyons.edu .

Looking for resources? See what has been compiled in the Google Group .

© 2018, California Community Colleges, Chancellor's Office.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License .

This page titled About this Book is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

Licensing

A detailed breakdown of this resource's licensing can be found in ***Back Matter/Detailed Licensing***.

This page titled Licensing is shared under a license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam.

1: OBSERVATION AND DOCUMENTATION - THE KEY TO INTENTIONAL TEACHING

To provide children with a safe and nurturing learning environment and to maintain program effectiveness, teachers must incorporate observation, documentation and assessment into their daily routines. To truly be effective, teachers must develop skills and strategies that are grounded in best practices. In this chapter you will be presented with information that highlights how observation and documentation can be used as a key strategy to ensure intentional teaching. You will examine the initial steps to take to becoming a skilled observer, and you will reflect on how to objectively document the interactions that you see and the conversations that you hear. It is important to note that becoming a skilled observer takes time and practice, and that learning how to incorporate observation, documentation and assessment into your regular routines and daily duties requires some thoughtful consideration.

1.1: The Role of Observation

1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer

1.3: Observations can be Spontaneous or Planned

1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation

1.5: The Role of Documentation

1.6: Objective versus Subjective Observation Evidence

1.7: Recognizing Your Biases

1.8: Ethical Guidelines when Observing Children

1.9: Observation and Documentation Dos and Don’ts

1.10: Conclusion and References

This page titled 1: Observation and Documentation - The Key to Intentional Teaching is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

1.1: The Role of Observation

Observations are conducted every day in early childhood classroom environments. Teachers are constantly surveying the environment and completing safety checks to make sure the equipment and materials are safe for the children to use. Teachers also perform daily health screenings to ensure their children are healthy enough to participate in program activities. Beyond the standard safety check and health screening, teachers have many other important tasks and duties that they must do in order to maintain a copacetic classroom environment. Intentional teachers use their observations to plan and implement curriculum, set up engaging learning environments, monitor the children's social interactions, track behaviors, communicate with families, and assess each child's progress and development. Essentially, observations help teachers be more accountable. By conducting regular observations intentional teachers can:

1. Evaluate program effectiveness
2. Evaluate teacher effectiveness
3. Make improvements to ensure quality practices
4. Plan and implement developmentally appropriate curriculum
5. Measure and assess a child's development
6. Develop respectful family partnerships
7. Understand the cultural practices and family structure
8. Select effective learning strategies to support and accommodate the diverse needs of children
9. Ensure ethical conduct and professional standards of practice
10. Teach with confidence

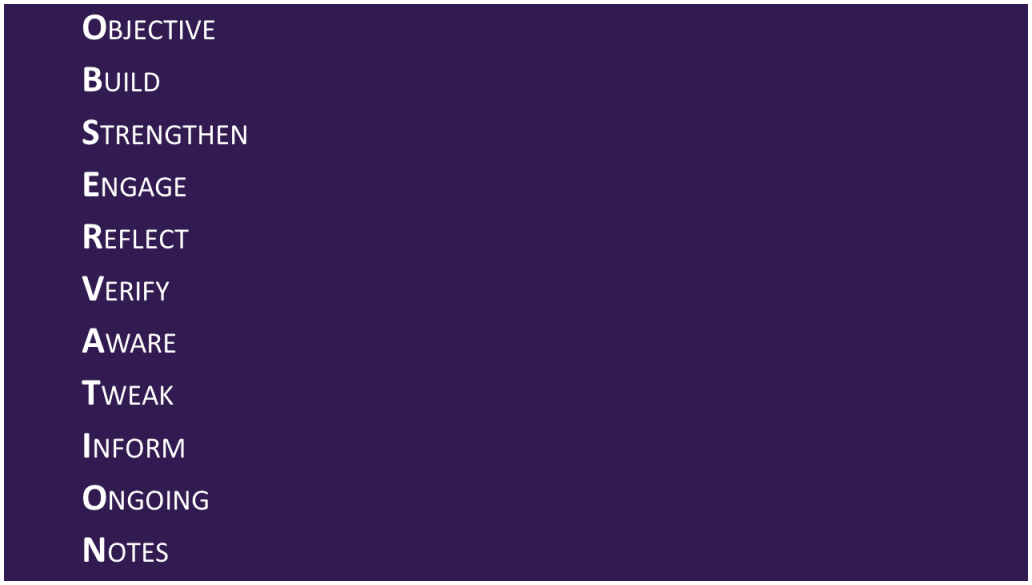

Figure 1.1: COC OER [1]

Pin It! Observation

Observation is defined as "the process of gathering information about objects and events using senses of sight, smell, sound, touch and taste, noticing specific details or phenomena that ordinarily might be overlooked" (CDE, 2016 p. 64).[2]

If we want to understand children, we must first watch them and listen to them. Then, we must try to make sense of what we observed and give it meaning. The role of observation is to provide teachers with information and evidence that they will need to make informed decisions on how to best support the children in their care. With each observation, you will get a glimpse into a child's developing mind. Not only will you see a child's personality emerge, you will be able to see what a child can do. As you watch your children, you will see how they problem solve when conflicts arise and how they cope with the stress from being in a group setting. You will learn about their individual needs and their cultural practices. When you watch children closely, their

interests and abilities are revealed. With each observation, you will gain useful insight that will help you become an intentional teacher.

This page titled 1.1: The Role of Observation is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer

To truly observe a child, you must be present, knowledgeable, inquisitive and intentional. With every observation, you will sharpen your skills as you learn how to effectively gather objective evidence and detailed data.

Be present: To capture all the individual mannerisms, subtle social nuances, non-verbal body language and dynamic conversations that occur throughout the day you must be attentive, focused and ready to go at any given moment. Children move fast. When we blink, we are bound to miss some little detail or precious moment, that's a given. Being present takes considerable effort and careful planning.

Be knowledgeable: Understanding the core concepts of early childhood education is extremely important if you are to set reasonable expectations and plan developmentally appropriate learning experiences. Familiarizing yourself with child development theories will help you understand and appreciate why children do what they do. Learning about the key principles in early care and education will provide you with a solid foundation and a wide range of instructional strategies to support a child's development.

Be inquisitive: Think of yourself as a researcher. Your primary mission is to investigate the children in your care by routinely gathering evidence, using a variety of observation methods and tools. As a good researcher you will need to ask some thoughtful questions. These questions will guide you as you plan purposeful observations and as you select your method of observation. Here are some sample questions you may ask yourself: What activities interest Max? How many times did Stevie hit today? What skills did Hazel master today with this activity, and what skills need further support? How long did Zoey stay engaged while playing in the sandbox? What milestones will this activity support? By a sking thoughtful questions, you will learn more about the children in your care and you will do a better job at supporting each child's individual needs. Rather than fixating on a child's behavior, in time you will begin using focused observations to try and figure out the reasons why a child acts the way they do.

Be intentional: As you organize learning experiences, set up the classroom and outside environment, assess children's developmental progress, engage in activities, and interact with your children and families – you must have a thoughtful plan of action in place. "Intentional teaching means that everything you do as a teacher has a specific goal and purpose" (Gordon & Browne, 2016 p. 103). Even as spontaneous situations arise, intentional teachers must make the most of teachable moments. Intentional teachers conduct regular observations and gather objective documentation data to be accountable for the actions they take, the plans they generate and the assessments they make.

This page titled 1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

1.3: Observations can be Spontaneous or Planned

Spontaneous observations occur all the time. Whether teachers are actively engaged with their children during an activity or in the background cleaning up after an activity, teachers have numerous opportunities to see and hear some wonderful developments as they randomly occur. According to Piaget, children require long uninterrupted periods of play and exploration so that they can discover things for themselves. If we truly believe that children are capable of socializing, problem solving, and creating complex systems with rules, then we can successfully use spontaneous observations to capture a child's development as it unfolds naturally.

As intentional teachers, we can also appreciate when teachable moments arise unexpectedly. These golden moments are noteworthy as well. For example, as we witness a child attempting to master a milestone, we may provide some verbal support or guidance to scaffold the child's learning. For example, when Abraham is becoming frustrated with not being able to get a piece of his puzzle to fit, a teacher might ask, "What happens when you turn the piece around?" During spontaneous situations, we must remember to simultaneously make mental notes so that we can later write down and reflect on a more formal plan of action that can be later used to help the child achieve their developmental goals.

Let's review the advantages and disadvantages associated with spontaneous observations**.**

- ***Advantages:*** Being in the moment allows you to enjoy your children, and children appreciate your presence. When you are present, you can celebrate a child's success or provide positive reinforcements to help them master major milestones. While being spontaneous, you can focus on the child's interests and pose thoughtful questions to extend and enrich their learning experience. When a teacher keeps a low profile, a child is less likely to be self-conscious or nervous.
- **Disadvantages**: The longer you wait to document your spontaneous observation evidence, the harder it will be to remain objective and recall the vital details which is important when tracking behaviors or assessing development. Also, the more time that passes, the more difficult it will be to access accurate data. For example, by not documenting the children's dialogue or capturing their key quotes in a timely manner, you may find it difficult to remember their actual word choices and use of vocabulary which is essential for assessing a child's expressive language development.

Let's now discuss focused or **planned observations**. Becoming a skilled observer takes practice. At first you may be slightly overwhelmed with trying to incorporate an official observation time into your already busy schedule. You may struggle with finding that delicate balance between knowing when to interact with your children and realizing when to step back and observe. Once you do observe, you might be surprised by the amount of evidence you have collected on each child. What's more, you will have to sift through all the evidence, and that can be both time consuming and exhausting. Since your time is limited and you cannot possibly observe everything, incorporating a planned observation will help you navigate through your busy day and you will be able to gather more specific evidence (Grouland & James, 2013).

This page titled 1.3: Observations can be Spontaneous or Planned is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation

When should I observe?

From the moment a child walks into their classroom until the time they leave, opportunities to learn are occurring. Some observations will happen spontaneously, while others will be scheduled. To see a child's full potential, you will need to observe at various times throughout the day. For example, some children are slow-to-warm and it may take them some time to get acclimated before they can fully engage and interact with others. If a child is slow -to-warm, the morning drop-off may not be the best time to document their social development. You will want to track them throughout the day, at various times (including transition times and snack/meal times), to get a full picture of who they are and what they can do.

Where should I observe?

Many times, observations are centered around structured, teacher-directed activities. This is, in fact, a perfect time to witness what major milestones a child has mastered. However, observing a child while they are exploring in the dramatic play area (*inside*) or while they are in the sandbox area (*outside*) can prove to be just as enlightening. During child-directed play or open exploration, you will no doubt be able to document many of the developmental skills as suggested in the DRDP or Rating Scales, especially how they communicate, cooperate, solve dilemmas and create. Because children can play and learn differently while they are inside as compared to when they are outside, it is necessary to observe in both environments. Likewise, it is important to observe in all activity areas and play spaces.

What observation method should I use?

Use a variety of methods to record and document your children. You will want to "try out" several tools and techniques to find your "go to" method. Because each tool has a specific purpose or focus, using a variety of methods will provide you with sound documentation data to better understand the whole child's development. Note: In the next chapter, you will examine the various tools and techniques more closely.

Who should I observe?

You will want to observe each child as individuals, and you will want to track group interactions. Becoming aware of who is in your class is necessary if you are going to create a caring classroom community and respectful learning environment. Look for those who are the leaders in your group; find out who needs more one-to-one support and who are your helpers; watch for who plays with who. This insight can help you organize peer scaffolding opportunities which can free up some of your time. As a gentle reminder, sometimes we connect with certain children for one reason or another, and other times a child may challenge us. Either way we need to regularly observe each child with an open mind and an open heart, and we need to look at children with a clear lens that is free of bias. Each child needs your attention; each child has unique gifts; and each child needs your support.

What is the focus of my observation, what am I looking for?

With focused observations, there usually is a specific goal in mind. For example, you might want to know what milestones a child has mastered. For that, you would use a developmental checklist to "check-off" all the skills the child was observed doing. Maybe you want to learn what the child's interests are and what they like to play with. For that, you can use a frequency count to tally up all the areas and activities the child used during that observation. Keep in mind that you can observe several skills and competencies across multiple domains during one observation. For example, one day you might set out a math activity and the children are expected to create patterns using colorful beads and pipe cleaners, While they work and play, you can listen to the children's conversations as they describe the patterns they are making; and you can note their fine motor development based on how well they string the beads onto the pipe cleaner; you can also see how they shared space and materials with their peers. Although this was a math activity, many other areas of development can be observed.

This page titled 1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

1.5: The Role of Documentation

One of the cornerstones of a high-quality early care and education program is the practice of observing, documenting and assessing children's development. According to NAEYC (2009), in order to make formative decisions that will guide what goes on in the classroom, there needs to be an organized system in place to collect information. When we record our observations and collect data, we "hold in memory the actions, nonverbal communication, or comments that seem to be significant to children's thinking" (California Preschool Program Guidelines, 2015 p. 46). When we document children's learning and collect key artifacts, we create tangible evidence that we can share with the children and their families, along with administrators and stakeholders. There are many ways you can record and document children's learning. In fact, you should attempt to utilize several methods as part of your regular observation routines.

To collect and record data you can use the following methods :

- running records
- anecdotal notes
- checklists
- frequency counts
- learning stories
- time or event samples
- work samples
- taking photos, videotaping, or audio recordings

To store your documentation

To safely store your collected data, you will need to have an organized system in place. Portfolios are a popular strategy used by intentional teachers. To create a portfolio, you can use a binder or notebook, a file or accordion-style folder, or a cardboard box. As you collect observation evidence for each child, it is vital that you date everything so you can organize it chronologically. This will help you track each child's progress throughout the school year more efficiently. Portfolios help you construct a well-rounded and authentic picture of each child in your class. Knowing the "whole child" you are better equipped to build on each child's individual interests, and you are more apt to plan developmentally appropriate activities.

Each child should have their own portfolio. A well-organized portfolio will contain observations and artifacts of children's work that are collected at different time periods throughout the school year. It is recommended that you include some type of documentation that highlights each developmental domain. For example:

- **Gross Motor**: Take photographs of your child while they are engaged in outside activities like running, jumping, climbing, riding a bike or playing in the sandbox.
- **Fine Motor**: Keep a checklist of when your child learns to button, zip, and tie his shoes. Include work samples of their cutting, coloring, painting, and samples of emergent writing
- **Social-Emotional**: Write anecdotal notes when your child engages in open-ended, child-directed play. Take note of how they share and cooperate with others. Do a frequency count to see which centers your child chooses to spend their time in and tally their play patterns to see if they prefer to play alone or with others.
- **Cognitive**: Chart a science experiment and take photos. Photograph a completed puzzle. Use a video camera to record a child as she builds a block bridge. And, as she explains her process and she had to figure out all the steps to take so that the bridge wouldn't fall down – be sure to record that too.
- **Literacy and Oral language**: Save writing examples to track how the child writes her name. Include illustrations of stories they love and the stories they write themselves. Write down quotes in your running record or make audiotapes of conversations during circle time.
- **Creative expression**: Videotape your child while playing in the dramatic play area or while performing a dance during music and movement. Photograph a clay creation, painting or block tower.

To be clear, it isn't the amount of documentation you collect for each portfolio that matters, it's the quality of information you gather. Portfolios tell a story of the whole child. There should be a beginning, middle, and an end. Each work sample, anecdotal note, checklist, frequency count and learning story should be used to showcase how a child processes information, develops relationships, and learns while playing.

To document children's learning

Whether you collect evidence through spontaneous or planned observations, you will use your documentation to ultimately assess a child's learning, growth, and development. With well-organized documentation, intentional teachers can effectively communicate with a child's family, using the evidence and artifacts they have collected over time. Families appreciate being able to see their child's progression and how they interact with others. Families also enjoy seeing the types of activities their child engages in during a typical day at school. Here are a few ways documentation can be used to showcase a child's learning, growth and development:

- rating scales and formal developmental assessments
- daily progress reports
- documentation boards

Pin It! Ten Teacher Tips When Gathering your Documentation

1. Date – this is key in tracking development over time
2. Time – start time and end time
3. Setting – note the location (indoor or outdoor; center or play area)
4. Purpose – what is the intended goal
5. Note the child (or children) who are involved in the activity
6. Record only the facts – Write down exactly what you see and hear
7. Be as concise (to the point) as you can
8. Record the facts in the order as they occur
9. Be descriptive and provide vivid details -create a visual picture so others can "see" what is happening
10. Be specific and avoid vague or general terms – this is helpful when you go back to review your dat

This page titled 1.5: The Role of Documentation is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

1.6: Objective versus Subjective Observation Evidence

Intentional teachers must learn how to write objective observations. As you observe, it is best to write down all that you see and hear, and report just the facts. It takes practice to learn how to separate facts from opinions. Here are some helpful tips for you to review:

Table 1.6.1: Objective Observations vs. Subjective Observations

Objective Observations	Subjective Observations
Objective observations are based on what we observed using our senses, we record exactly what we see, hear, taste, touch, and smell	Subjective observations are often influenced by our past events, personal experiences and opinions, and can be biased based on our cultural backgrounds
Objective information is based on the facts we gather. If we don't see it, we don't report it. We report only details and provide vivid descriptions	Subjective information is based on our opinions, assumptions, personal beliefs, prejudice feelings or can be based on suspicions, rumors and guesses
Results are more likely to be valid and reliable from child to child	Results are often inconsistent and vary from child to child
Objective Terms that can be Used: Seems to be; Appears to	Subjective Words to Avoid: Just; because; but; always, never; can't; I think; happy, smart, helpful, pretty, angry, shy, likes, loves, hates, sad

This page titled 1.6: Objective versus Subjective Observation Evidence is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

1.7: Recognizing Your Biases

Google the word bias and this is what pops up: “prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.”

Biases, we all have them. Biases stem from our upbringing. Every interaction and every experience we have had has shaped who we are. To some degree, our biases influence our beliefs and behaviors, they sway our attitudes, and they affect our personalities. Because our biases are so ingrained into who we are, it would be unrealistic to simply say “ignore your bias.” Therefore, a valuable exercise might be to do a self-check and examine your own biases. Look for those biases that are “triggers.” More specifically, think about the behaviors, temperamental traits, and moods that make you feel uncomfortable, frustrated, or annoyed.

It is important to note, that we might not be fully aware of all our biases. For example, when a child says, “give me some milk!” Our first response might be “Ummm, how do you ask?” We might not realize that manners (or lack of them) can make us react in a judgmental way. What’s important to recognize is that how we feel about the child’s behavior can taint how we see them. What’s more, our biases can influence how we gather our observation evidence. As intentional teachers we have to recognize our biases so we can treat all children with the respect that they deserve. According to NAEYC’s Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment (2011),

> P-1.3—We shall not participate in practices that discriminate against children by denying benefits, giving special advantages, or excluding them from programs or activities on the basis of their sex, race, national origin, immigration status, preferred home language, religious beliefs, medical condition, disability, or the marital status/family structure, sexual orientation, or religious beliefs or other affiliations of their families (p. 3).

So as not to lose our objectivity, it is important to keep an open heart, an open mind, and a clear lens. Rather than letting a child’s behavior trigger you, look beyond their behavior, look beyond your bias. Focus on collecting objective observation evidence and use that data to reflect on what might be causing that behavior. Consider ways that you can support the child through redirection, modeling, scaffolding or positive reinforcements. As intentional teachers, one of our primary roles is to empower children, and to build meaningful relationships by creating warm, caring environments (Epstein, 2007).

Pin It! Common Mistakes to Avoid When Writing Observation Evidence

- Making Conclusions : Billie can’t do anything by himself because he is the youngest in a large family and they do everything for him; Sharon’s parents are getting a divorce, so she is sad
- Making Assumptions : Annie never shares; Denise always hits Thomas
- Labeling : Rosie is mean ; Jeff is such a good boy
- Comparing : Tommy can’t ride the bike as well as Sam; Zoey was the best listener at circle time
- Focusing on Feelings or Emotions : Max looks so sad today; Jax looks so happy as he slides down the slide
- Adding Opinions : Martha really likes playing dress up, she is in the dramatic play area every day; Suki is shy and never says anything during circle time.

This page titled 1.7: Recognizing Your Biases is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

1.8: Ethical Guidelines when Observing Children

Every day, teachers observe, record and capture essential moments in a child's development. The evidence and artifacts that are gathered are then used to plan curriculum and assess development. Although we have highlighted the importance of gathering work samples and observation evidence as a key element to be an intentional teacher, we must also consider the perspective of the child. In the article "Who is Watching? Thinking Ethically about Observing Children" the authors highlight some of the ethical tensions that can arise within early childhood settings when trying to balance the rights of children, the responsibilities of teachers and the role of a student who is training to be a future teacher.

In most classrooms, a typical day includes teachers grabbing their cameras to take snapshots of the children in their care so that they will have ample documentation. Consider this - does the teacher's presence change the context of the child's experience? Does the thought of being monitored make the child behave any differently? How does the child feel about having their picture taken? Are teachers becoming overly concerned about capturing children in precious moments, rather than being engaged in teachable moments? As a "student" who is learning to observe and document a child's development it is important for you to consider the following guidelines when observing children:

- Take every precaution to maintain confidentiality and to ensure privacy
- Remember to ask if it is OK to take photographs of children and their work
- Understand that children have the right not to take part in activities
- Be respectful and keep a reasonable amount of space between you and the child so as not to interfere with their play and learning
- Be attuned to children's body language, temperament and styles of communication
- See each child as a unique individual who has their own perspective, set of feelings, interests, and way of socializing, along with their own cultural context, belief system, and values
- Be upfront and inform children about the purpose of your observation visit if you are approached
- Share information with the child about what you have observed when appropriate
- Write quotes down just as they were said without adding context, or trying to rationalize what the child may have meant
- Be aware that photos and observation data should be collected in a non-intrusive manner
- Ensure that observation evidence and photos are used only for the purposes intended
- Handle photos and data with care and sensitivity, and always store information securely
- Realize that a child's reactions, behaviors and conversations may not be what you expect and therefore you should refrain from being judgmental or tainted by your cultural biases

By following these guidelines, you are providing the children you observe with the respect they deserve while ensuring their dignity and safety. The centers and programs where you are observing are trusting you to act with integrity while you are at their site observing their children. Lastly, families will appreciate that you have their child's best interest at heart.

Figure 1.8.1: Observing the world through a different lens. (Public Domain; Andrew Seaman on Unsplash)

This page titled 1.8: Ethical Guidelines when Observing Children is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

1.9: Observation and Documentation Dos and Don’ts

Whether performing a planned or spontaneous observation here are some helpful tips to ensure you are recording quality evidence:

Table 1.9.1: Observation and Documentation Do’s and Don’ts

Observation and Documentation DOs:	Observation and Documentation DON’Ts
1. Note the date, time, setting, 2. Note the child (or children) involved 3. Record only the facts – in a concise (to the point) manner 4. Record the facts in the order as they occur and exactly as you see it 5. Collect vivid details and quotes 6. Use a variety of Observation Methods 7. Observe with an open heart, an open mind and a clear lens, free of bias 8. Be attentive and alert, and use all your senses 9. Note what the child CAN DO rather than what he cannot do 10. Keep a low profile and respect the children’s space while they are playing	1. Do not interfere or pressure the children to perform 2. Do not assume or state your opinion while recording evidence 3. Do not record anything you do not see 4. Do not label behaviors, actions or feelings 5. Avoid using subjective, bias or judgmental terms 6. Avoid using exaggerations and conditional words 7. Do not summarize information 8. Avoid using generalizations or vague terms

This page titled 1.9: Observation and Documentation Dos and Don’ts is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

1.10: Conclusion and References

To become a skilled observer takes time and practice (Gronlund & James, 2013). You will need to figure out your rhythm so that you can incorporate observation and documentation into your regular routine. As an intentional teacher, you will want to plan systematic observations so that you can document each child's unique qualities, interests, developmental strengths and needs, as well as uncover their cultural practices, approaches to learning and play preferences throughout the school year. As you gather evidence you will want to be as objective as you can be, and you will have to recognize your biases. As you collect your documentation on each child, you will want to organize it in a chronological manner and store it safely. Lastly, be sure to observe every child in your class, be aware that some children may catch your attention more than others for one reason or another. In the next chapter, we will examine several observation tools and techniques that you will want to use as part of your regular observation routine to ensure high-quality practices.

References

1. California Department of Education. (2016). The Integrated Nature of Learning. Retrieved from https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/intnatureoflearning2016.pdf
2. Early Childhood Videos. (2016, Aug 12). Documenting Children's Learning. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdOqkukZikE
3. First 5 California. (2015). For the Record: Documenting Young Children's Learning and Development. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WAy474XE6s
4. janiceaughey. (2011). Subjective-Objective Exercise. Retrieved from https://www.slideshare.net/janiceaughey/subjective-objective-exercise
5. JECEI. (n.d.). The Importance of Documentation. Retrieved from http://www.jecei.org/PDF/10%20The%20Importance%20of%20Documentation%20and%20Project%20Work.pdf
6. Lynn Cohen. (2020). The Power of Portfolios. Retrieved from https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/power-portfolios/
7. Mehan, S., & Moore, L. (n.d.). Who is watching? Thinking ethically about observing children. Early Childhood Australia. Retrieved from http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/every-child-magazine/every-child-index/every-child-vol-17-3-2011/watching-thinking-ethically-observing-children-free-article/
8. Posada, Margarita M. (2004) Ethical Issues in Assessments with Infants and Children. Graduate Student Journal of Psychology , Vol. 6, 42-47. Retrieved from https://www.tc.columbia.edu/publications/gsjp/gsjp-volumes-archive/gsjp-volume-6-2004/755_Assessment-finalversion.pdf
9. Sage Publications (n.d.). Observation and Assessment. 86-110. Retrieved from https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/9656_022816Ch5.pdf
10. Seitz, H. (2008). The Power of Documentation in the Early Childhood Classroom. Young Children , 88-93. Retrieved from https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/pubs/seitz.pdf

This page titled 1.10: Conclusion and References is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

2: QUALITY COUNTS

The need for high-quality childcare continues to be a topic of interest as more and more families enter the workforce and more and more children need care. Every week, families from all socioeconomic backgrounds drop their children off at some type of childcare. According to the National Institute for Early Education Research, “In the United States, 76% of children ages three to four, receive education and care from someone other than a parent.” (NIEER, 2002). With so many children needing childcare, researchers and policymakers are tasked with figuring out how to best support the next generation of preschoolers. In this chapter, we will address the need for high-quality in early care and education as means to reduce the achievement gap between children from low to high socioeconomic families. We will also compare standard industry practices to what the field of early care and education recognizes as high-quality practices. Lastly, we will review some of the current observation methods, tools and techniques that can be used to ensure programs are implementing quality practices. [4]

2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap

2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike

2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality

2.4: A Look at Standard Industry Practices

2.5: The Role of the Teacher in High-Quality Practices

2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices

2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms

2.8: Conclusion and References

This page titled 2: Quality Counts is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap

Decades of research on early child development has determined that “When it comes to early care and education programs, quality is critical,” (Wechsler, Melnick, Maier & Bishop, 2016, p.1). It is suggested that thoughtfully designed preschool programs can impact and influence a child’s future learning outcomes. Not only are there short-term benefits, based on data collected from quantitative research projects (e.g. Perry Preschool, the Abecedarian Project, and the Chicago Child-Parent Centers), there are long-term benefits as well. More specifically, children from low-income homes who attended high-quality preschool programs showed higher achievement scores - especially in math and reading, as compared to their counterparts who were not able to attend a quality preschool. Furthermore, children who were enrolled in high-quality programs were less likely to be placed in special education, less likely to be retained or held back a grade, and it was noted that they were more likely to graduate from high school. [5]

Unfortunately, due to limited funding opportunities and financial restraints, there are many families who cannot afford to send their child to a high-quality preschool. “This lack of access to high-quality early childhood education perpetuates the achievement gap, evidenced by the fact that only 48 percent of low-income children are ready for kindergarten, compared to 75 percent of moderated – or high-income children” (p. 3 Center for American Progress). This data reveals that the achievement gap is problematic on many levels. Moving forward we must consider how we, as advocates and educators, can lessen the achievement gap so that all children, no matter their socioeconomic status, can get a smart start. To find possible solutions to this dilemma, let’s take a closer look at and compare standard industry practices to what the field of early care and education regards as high-quality practices . [6]

This page titled 2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike

As more and more children need childcare, families are faced with a tremendous task of finding “the right preschool program.” When choosing a center, some families may contemplate certain factors like cost and affordability, hours of operation and availability, and location. Some families, on the other hand, may consider the school philosophy, the education and experience of teachers, the environment and daily activities, as well as the curriculum model and guidance policies. As you can see, there are numerous possibilities to consider. Families must also decide on whether to send their child to a state-funded or faith-based program, a family childcare or a traditional preschool setting. No matter what type of program a family chooses, in the state of California all childcare centers must be licensed by the California Department of Social Services and comply with Community Care Licensing Title 22 regulations. For the purpose of this text, in order to demonstrate that all preschools are not alike, we will refer to “ standard industry practice ” as any state licensed childcare program and we will refer to “ high-quality practice ” as any childcare center that undergoes regular assessments using tools and techniques that are above and beyond the standard industry practice .

This page titled 2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality

Unlike standard industry practices, high-quality practices place an emphasis on promoting positive child outcomes. The key to a high-quality program is contingent upon what happens inside the classroom environment. Let's examine how both process quality and structural quality work together to influence positive outcomes for children.

Process quality refers to the types of interactions that occur throughout the day between the teachers, children, families, and administrators. Process quality also considers the types of materials that are available for the children to use, as well as the activities that children engage in throughout their day. Lastly, process quality takes into account the health, well-being and safety of the children. Structural quality on the other hand, refers to the features and characteristics of a program. More specifically, the class size, teacher-to-child ratios, teacher qualifications and experiences, teacher pay scale, along with the allotted square footage for play space define quality. Although process quality is thought to have a more direct impact on child outcomes as compared to structural quality , researchers and leaders in the field of early care and education agree that process and structural indicators are interrelated, and when combined together they promote the highest quality experiences.

For example, when groups are smaller, teachers tend to have more positive, supportive, and stimulating interactions with children. Warm and nurturing interactions are directly linked to children's social competence and future academic success, and such interactions are essential to high quality. Early childhood teachers who are more highly qualified and have smaller groups can more effectively provide individualized, responsive learning opportunities. Finally, higher teacher wages have consistently been linked to higher process quality. [8]

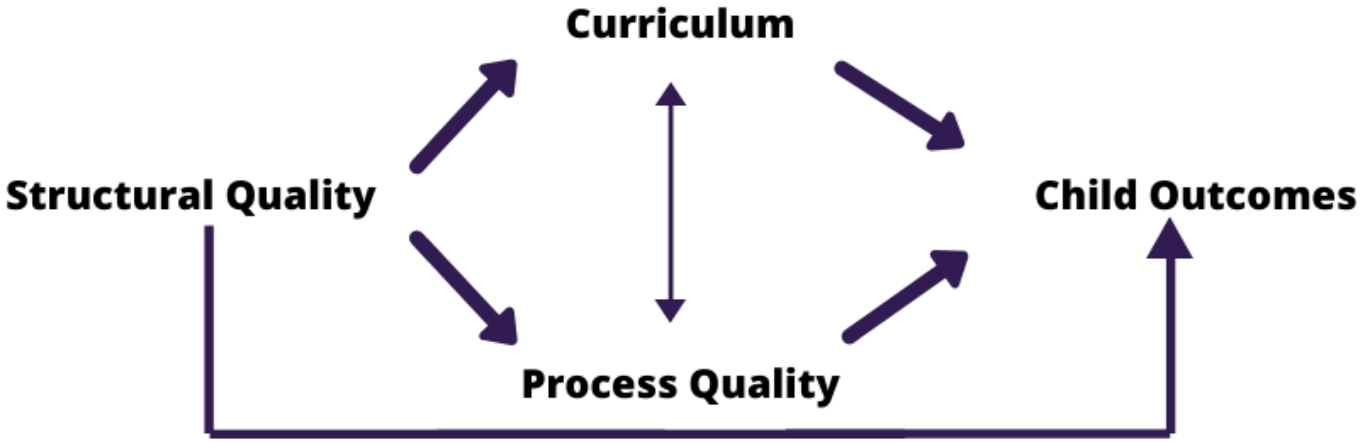

Figure 2.3.1: Structural Quality directly effects Child Outcomes [9]

This page titled 2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

2.4: A Look at Standard Industry Practices

To legally operate a childcare program in California, a center must comply with certain licensing policies and procedures. These state regulations provide “a baseline standard and are primarily focused on protecting children from harm rather than on advancing child development and early learning,” (Workman & Ullrich, 2017, p. 3). In other words, Title 22 Regulations stipulate health and safety standards, space and square footage requirements, supervision standards, and teacher qualifications. Title 22 Regulations do not however, consider curriculum activities, age appropriate materials, or teacher-to-child interactions, nor does it address developmentally appropriate practices such as family culture and perspectives, child development theories, or principles and practices.

To ensure early childhood education programs are compliant with all state policies and procedures, a licensing analyst will conduct an annual inspection, or will evaluate a program as needed. Typically, the analyst will look at the center’s overall cleanliness and they will inspect both the indoor and outdoor environment to certify that the center is safe for the children. The analyst will confirm that the ratios are met, and that there is proper space and square footage available for each child to play and nap. The analyst will also conduct a spot check of the employee files to confirm teacher qualifications, and they will look through the children’s files to validate that the proper paperwork is signed and in complete order. To comply with state regulations and policies, a center director will need to download the California Code of Regulations, Title 22 administered by CDSS (Divisions 12 only) and follow all the mandated requirements. If any criteria are not met, the analyst will cite the program. The program will then be given a certain timeframe to rectify and correct the concern. The analyst will return to verify the problem has been fixed. Families who are considering a program can check the Community Care Licensing website to see if a center has received any “substantiated citations.” [7]

This page titled 2.4: A Look at Standard Industry Practices is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

2.5: The Role of the Teacher in High-Quality Practices

As mentioned above, the teacher plays a vital role in orchestrating high-quality practices. In high-quality classrooms, not only must teachers create a safe and nurturing space, they must intentionally set up the environment to support children's interests and individuality. California childcare programs serve a diverse population, therefore, an intentional teacher must also consider the cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic status of each family enrolled in her class. The highly- qualified teacher has a deep understanding of child development, and with that knowledge she will provide appropriate materials and experiences to challenge the children in her care. In the chart below, we can see how teachers maintain high-quality practices.

Table 2.5.1: Classroom Environments

Physical environment	The overall design and layout of a classroom, including the learning centers and play spaces, the age appropriate materials, and the child size furnishings
Social environment	The interactions that occur within the classroom between teachers, children, family members, center staff and administration
Temporal environment	The routines and daily schedules, the timing, sequence, and length of play time, the time spent indoors and outdoors engaged in child-directed and teacher-directed activities

Here are some considerations to incorporate quality practices into your classroom to promote responsive caregiving while supporting the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of children:

Pin It! The Building Blocks of High Quality Early Childhood Education Programs [10]

1. Early learning standards and curricula that address the whole child, are developmentally appropriate, and are effectively implemented.
2. Assessments that consider children's academic, social-emotional, and physical progress and contribute to instructional and program planning.
3. Well-prepared teachers who provide engaging interactions and classroom environments that support learning.
4. Ongoing support for teachers, including coaching and mentoring.
5. Support for English learners and students with special needs.
6. Meaningful family engagement.
7. Sufficient learning time.
8. Small class sizes with low student-teacher ratios.
9. Program assessments that measure structural quality and classroom interactions.
10. A well-implemented state quality rating and improvement system.

This page titled 2.5: The Role of the Teacher in High-Quality Practices is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices

One of the hallmarks of high-quality practices is the practice of continuously monitoring and evaluating a program's overall effectiveness for the purpose of accountability. Therefore, in addition to complying with state licensing regulations, high-quality programs may utilize noted assessment tools and resources (e.g. ECERS, CLASS, QRIS, NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practice) to evaluate their center and staff. To guide high-quality practices, early childhood educators often look to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to provide ethical pedagogy. NAEYC is a recognized professional organization committed to promoting quality early learning experiences for children, birth through age 8. Grounded by research and theory principles, NAEYC promotes best practices for children, families, teachers, administrators, stakeholders and policy makers. To ensure quality practices are being implemented, it is suggested that teachers follow NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) Framework:

- Teachers encourage children to be active participants in their own learning
- Teachers set reasonable expectations based on what they know about a child's age and stage of development
- Teachers build on what children know using a variety of learning strategies, materials, meaningful experiences
- Teachers plan activities to support all aspects of development: social, emotional, physical and cognitive
- Teachers value each child's family, language, and cultural practices
- Teachers are aware of each child's interests, strengths, abilities and individual needs
- Teachers recognize play as a primary context in which young children learn
- Teachers establish warm, caring and respectful relationships with children, families and colleagues
- Teachers regularly assess the children's development and the environment, and they self-reflect on their own practices (Gordon and Browne, 2016, Beginning Essentials in early childhood education 3e)

This page titled 2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms

One of the characteristics of a high-quality early childhood program is the practice of continuously monitoring children's development, along with the environmental setting and teacher interactions. By evaluating the overall performance in these key areas, teachers, administrators and families can reflect, make necessary changes and improvements to support all students and families. There are numerous tools on the market that evaluate program quality. For the purpose of this text we will focus on just a few tools that are highly recognized and most often used in California to monitor quality practices in preschool programs.

The Environment Rating Scales (ERS)

The Environment Rating Scale is a standardized assessment tool that can help caregivers, teachers, and administrators improve the quality of their program. The ERS measure process quality .

Process quality consists of the various interactions that go on in a classroom between staff and children, staff, parents, and other adults, among the children themselves, and the interactions children have with the many materials and activities in the environment, as well as those features, such as space, schedule and materials that support these interactions. Process quality is assessed primarily through observation and has been found to be more predictive of child outcomes than structural indicators such as staff to child ratio, group size, cost of care, and even type of care, for example child care center or family child care home . [11]

There are 4 Environment Rating Scales:

1. The Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS) for programs serving young learners aged 6 weeks to 30 months
2. The Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) for preschool programs serving children aged 3-5 years
3. The School-Age Child Environmental Rating Scale (SACERS) for afterschool programs serving children aged 5-12 years
4. The Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale (FCCERS) for family childcare programs serving children aged 6 weeks to 12 years.

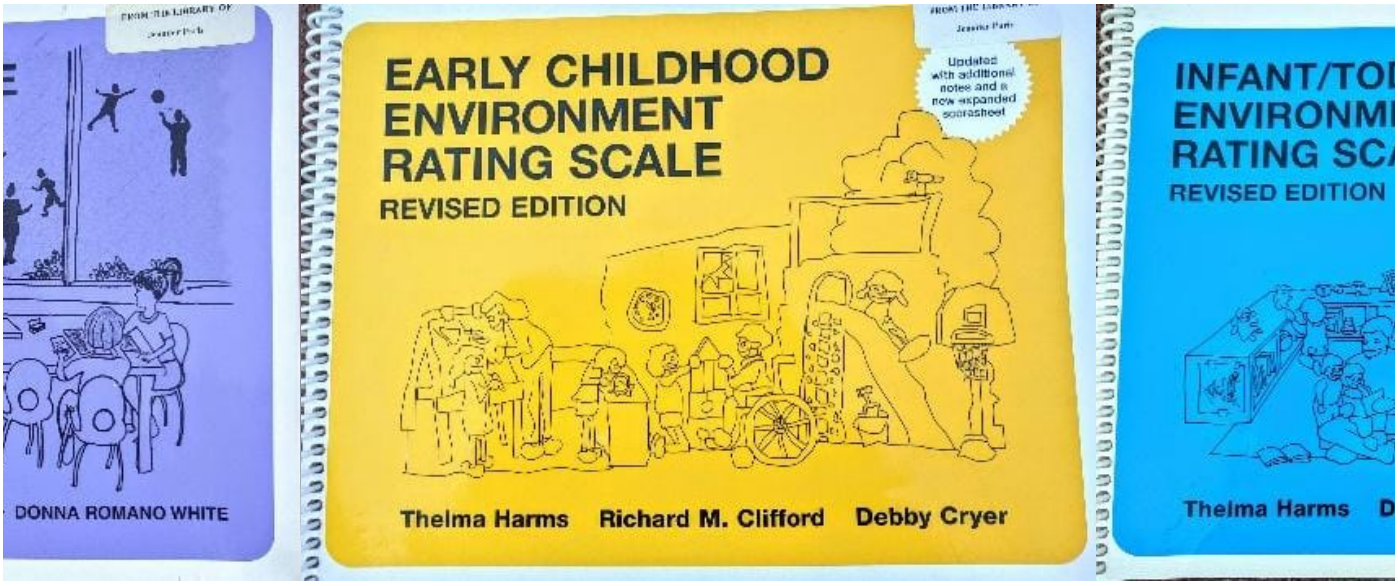

Figure 2.7.1: Rating Scale Texts [12]

Why Use Environment Rating Scales

The scales are used in a variety of ways including for self-assessment by center staff, preparation for accreditation, and voluntary improvement efforts by licensing or other agencies. For example, in the United States:

- Several states, including California , Massachusetts, Montana, Mississippi, Kansas, Oregon, Kentucky, New Mexico, Georgia, Florida, Wisconsin, and Nebraska have also initiated quality evaluation and improvement programs using our scales. Each state is tailoring its use of the scales to its individual needs and resources.
- The state of Arkansas has trained personnel, who do assessments and provide training and technical assistance so that childcare centers and homes can increase their quality of care. Another innovative feature of the Arkansas program is that parents who select childcare facilities with an average of 4.5 or higher on our scales are eligible for two times the state childcare tax exemption. Thus, both parents and providers are being rewarded for quality improvements that benefit the children.
- The state of Colorado uses the scales in a variety of program improvement and evaluation projects. For example, Denver has a quality improvement program that uses on site consultation and training based on scale scores. Many of the centers participating in this program serve poor and minority children and their families. The state of Colorado is currently considering a tiered reimbursement system using the scales.
- North Carolina also currently uses scale scores as part of their 5-star rated license system. Centers and family childcare homes are awarded either one or two stars based on compliance with licensing standards. Programs may voluntarily apply for an additional three stars based on a set of quality measures including the licensing compliance record, teacher and director education, and the levels of process quality as measured by the appropriate environmental scale. Only the lowest level of licensing is mandatory. However, an additional fee is paid to the provider of subsidized care for each additional star earned voluntarily.
- The Oklahoma 3-star tiered license incorporates an evaluation with the scales in the second tier as a basis for quality improvement, and provides technical assistance based on scores for meeting accreditation standards. Tiered reimbursement is a part of this system.
- Tennessee is now initiating a rated license system, based on North Carolina's experience. In their system, however, program evaluation is not voluntary, but is required yearly to create a "Report Card" that must be posted with the license so childcare consumers have access to reliable information on the quality of childcare they are using for their children. Tiered reimbursement will also be tied to scores on the scale.
- All the US military services have been using the scales routinely in their center and family childcare homes for program improvement and monitoring. The military child development system was recognized by Executive Order in 1998 for its high quality.
- Our environmental rating scales are widely used by programs as they prepare for accreditation . This is due to the fact that our scales use a format with detailed levels of quality that provides a blueprint for gradual change. The content of our scales is completely supportive of the various credentialing and accreditation programs.

The ERS Tool

As suggested by ERS, in order to provide high-quality care and education experiences to all children and their families, a childcare program must provide for the three basic needs all children have:

- Protection of their health and safety
- Building positive relationships
- Opportunities for stimulation and learning from experience

Let’s take a closer look at how to use the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS-3) for preschool programs serving children aged 3-5 years. The Scale consists of 35 items organized into 6 subscales: [13]

- Space and Furnishings
- Personal Care Routines
- Language and Literacy
- Learning Activities
- Interaction
- Program Structure

Within each subscale there are indicators that are arranged in a hierarchical order with basic needs at low levels and the more

educational and interactional aspects at higher levels. The requirements for each indicator must be met before the next indicator is measured. If a requirement is not met, scoring then comes to a stop.

Scoring:

- 1 = inadequate
- 3 = minimal
- 5 = good
- 7 = excellent

Empirical Research

Empirical studies using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R) tool have generally found positive associations between the quality of early childhood programs and child development.

The ECERS-R (1998) is the revised edition of the original ECERS (1980). It is currently being used in several major studies, including the Early Head Start Study (Mathematica Corporation), and Welfare, Children and Families: A Three City Study (Columbia University, University of Chicago, and Harvard University). The original ECERS was used in the Head Start FACES study, in which over 400 classrooms are included nationwide. The preliminary results in all these studies show that the ECERS and the ECERS-R are performing very well.

Additionally, it should be noted that the ECERS and ITERS were used as the comprehensive quality measures in the National Child Care Staffing Study (Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1989) and the Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study (1995), the major studies of their time. The FDCRS was used in The Study of Children in Family Child Care and Relative Care (Galinsky, Howes, Kontos, & Shinn, 1994). In all of these studies, a relationship was found between higher scores on the ECERS and more positive child development outcomes in areas that are considered important for later school success. The effects of higher quality early childhood experiences have now been shown to last at least through the second grade of elementary school (Peisner-Feinberg, Burchinal, Clifford, Culkin, Howes, Kagan, Yazejian, Byler, Rustici, & Zelazo, 1999). Research is continuing to evaluate longer-lasting effects. [14]

ERS Strengths

The instrument has good test-retest reliability, high inter-rater reliability (Clifford et al., 2010), and many studies have demonstrated its predictive validity (Burchinal et al., 2008; Montes et al., 2005; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2001). Furthermore, the results show that ECERS-R is a significant predictor of child development in two domains: physical health and well-being, and social competence.

ERS Limitation

While the ECERS-R is a useful tool to measure the quality of early childhood programs across various settings, there are some limitations. Because the Environmental Rating Scales were developed in the United States, the relevance to non-American cultural settings has been questioned (Dickinson,2006; Mathers, Singler,& Karemaker, 2012). Some have criticized that the ITERS-R scale places too much emphasis on the structural aspects of childcare (Sanders & Howes, 2013;Vermeer et al., 2008, while others are concerned that the Rating Scales fail to measure the interactions between the teacher and children and families, which is considered to be key quality factors in childcare (Bisceglia, Perlman, Schaack,& Jenkins, 2009; Helmerhorst et al., 2014).

Although the Environment Rating Scales are highly regarded, there has also been some considerable criticism. For example, a closer look at the items in the ECERS-R reveals that some items may be less relevant than others in our study's setting—poor, rural villages in Indonesia. Item 27 outlines the provision of TV, video or computers for classroom activities. Item 3 describes the provision of soft furnishings such as carpeted space and cushions for children's relaxation and comfort. While all of these provisions would be great to have, they are often unfeasible in rural, resource-constrained environments. In over 3 weeks of field observation, we rarely saw soft furnishings—sitting on the floor for children and adults alike is the norm in rural Indonesia – even when soft furnishings are available. We did encounter one center with a computer lab during piloting of the ECERS-R but this was a state-of- the-art center where not one but three international donors had channeled funding. [15]

ECERS FAQ Find:

- When was the first ECERS tool published?
- Who typically uses the ECERS tool?
- Who administers the assessment tool?
- How can teachers prepare for an assessment?
- When was the last time the ECERS tool was updated?
- How many measures are there in the ECERS?

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

Research shows that all children benefit from high-quality instruction and classroom interactions, regardless of language status, race/ethnicity, or special needs (August & Shanahan, 2006; Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001). When teachers provide individualized support and guidance to the children in their classrooms, they contribute to each child's social and emotional development, which has been linked to their overall physical development and academic achievement. The CLASS tool showcases various strategies that teachers can implement to promote quality interactions. It is important to note that class does not favor any curriculum model over another.

The CLASS tool differs from other measurement tools that may address the content of the physical environment, available materials, or a specific curriculum. Although the physical environment materials and curriculum are important, the CLASS tool focuses more on the context of how teachers directly interact, engage and communicate with the children in their classroom environment. CLASS measures cooperative and creative learning experiences and focuses on the teacher's role in allowing children to be active participants in their own learning. More specifically, CLASS promotes social justice and equity, and has "indicators" to assess how a teacher develops a sense of community and empathy for others. Not only must the teacher consider the tangible environmental elements, they must consciously incorporate quality interactions. Teachers must ask questions and engage in thoughtful conversations that emphasize back and forth dialogue rather than one and done responses. Teachers must extend the children's vocabulary and create opportunities where children can use their expressive language skills. Lastly, teachers must provide positive feedback to children throughout the day and allow children to make choices.

Why Use the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

As advocates and educators, we know that engaging interactions and well-designed environments form the foundation for optimal learning to occur. High-quality preschool programs should strive to incorporate the following:

- well-managed and well-organized classrooms with clearly defined spaces
- support systems to enhance children's social and emotional development
- a variety of instructional materials that stimulate children's thinking and curiosity
- opportunities for authentic interactions and meaningful conversations
- a balance of teacher-directed activities and child-directed activities
- enhanced language and literacy implemented throughout the day
- opportunities for movement and classroom spaces that support kinesthetic learning

Research findings from over 3,000 classrooms found that children who were in classrooms that received higher CLASS ratings showed greater gains in social skill, language, early literacy, and math development. Furthermore, after a decade of research, crucial conclusions were made that suggest using the CLASS tool can not only improve the effectiveness of an individual classroom, it can also improve the program as well. Let's look at some reasons as to why you might want to use the CLASS tool:

1. Effective teacher–child interactions are an active and crucial ingredient for children's social and academic development.
2. Children in ECE settings are not consistently exposed to effective teacher–child interactions.
3. Initial evidence suggests thresholds for effective teacher–child interactions, as measured by CLASS, in promoting children's learning and development.
4. Quality improvement efforts that focus explicitly on teacher–child interactions maximize impacts for children.
5. Carefully designed and implemented professional development support can improve the quality of teacher–child interactions

The CLASS Tool

The CLASS Tool is divided into 3 Domains: Emotional Support; Classroom Organization; and Instructional Support. Each Domain has several Dimensions (see the chart below), and each Dimension has several Indicators that provide detailed descriptors of how a teacher should interact (Note: the indicators for each dimension are not listed in the chart below.)

Table 2.7.2: CLASS Tool Domains

Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
1. Positive Climate 2. Negative Climate 3. Teacher Sensitivity 4. Regard for Student Perspective	1. Behavior Management 2. Productivity 3. Instructional Learning Formats	1. Concept Development 2. Quality of Feedback 3. Language Modeling 4. 4. Literacy (optional)

Scoring

Scoring is based on a 7-point scale, with the “low range” being a score of 1 to 2, the “middle range” a score of 3 to 5, and the “high range” a score of 6 to 7. The higher the range in each dimension the better.

CLASS Strengths

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) tool is a systematic observation tool that can be used to measure the interactions between teachers and their children in typical classroom settings. The CLASS tool has also been used to assess classroom quality across diverse populations, including dual language learners (DLLs), children from migrant families, tribal populations, in addition to children with special needs and children with diverse cultural backgrounds (Downer et al., 2011). The CLASS tool is deemed both reliable and valid, and it provides preschool programs and individual classroom teachers with an opportunity to regularly monitor and evaluate themselves.

Formal assessments can be made by certified CLASS evaluators and the results are shared with the teacher and program with the intent of finding strategies on how to improve interactions. The tool can also be used informally. Teachers can review each domain, dimension and indicator, and then reflect on their own practices to find ways they can incorporate more intentional interactions.

CLASS Limitations

Even though every CLASS observer is formally certified, there will be small, systematic differences in their scoring. Some observers may tend to give slightly higher scores, while others may tend to be slightly more critical. Although slight differences fall within the threshold for “reliability,” inaccurate results have been noted. One other limitation is that there is little emphasis on structural quality . More specifically, CLASS does not assess the physical environment or materials, and it is not designed to review program safety.

Additional Methods, Tools and Techniques to Ensure High-Quality Practices

Program Accreditation

Both the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (link: https://www.naeyc.org/) and the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA) [16] (link: https://www.naeyc.org/accreditation) are nationally recognized agencies that set a standard of excellence for overall program quality. Programs that pursue accreditation must meet key criteria expectations in areas such as “the learning environment, teacher and child interactions, staff qualifications, professional development, and family engagement” (Center for America, 2017, p. 6). Both NAEYC and NECPA offer training, technical assistance, and consulting services

to support early care and education programs that not only want to meet but exceed standard industry practices. Accreditation is a voluntary endeavor that requires programs to undergo a self-study as they prepare for the validation process. Programs that achieve accreditation status must be re-assessed every three years to demonstrate a continued commitment to high-quality practices.

The Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

The Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) is a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and school-age care programs. [17] The main purpose of the QRIS is to improve and standardize the quality of care in all facilities in the state, and to make childcare more accessible and affordable for families. In California, the QRIS is used to:

- Assess program quality comparably across provider types (publicly and privately funded, centers and family childcare homes) throughout the state
- Align program standards with early learning and practitioner standards
- Support continuous quality improvement for participating programs and their staff
- Provide families with information about program quality to assist them in making informed choices . [18]

The Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS)

In the late 80's, Arnett released the Caregiver Interaction Scale (1989) to assess a global rating of caregiver sensitivity and responsiveness in both early care and education settings and family childcare environments. The tool focuses on caregiver / teacher emotional interactions and measures several items including sensitivity, harshness, detachment, and permissiveness. Items are rated on a 4-point scale. The scale has limitations as it captures only one aspect of process quality, and thus it is suggested that additional assessments be used to measure more structural dimensions.

NAEYC Position Statement on Importance of Environmental Assessments[19]

The National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education take the position that policy makers, the early childhood profession, and other stakeholders in young children's lives have a shared responsibility to:

- Construct comprehensive systems of curriculum, assessment, and program evaluation guided by sound early childhood practices, effective early learning standards and program standards, and a set of core principles and values: belief in civic and democratic values; commitment to ethical behavior on behalf of children; use of important goals as guides to action; coordinated systems; support for children as individuals and members of families, cultures, and communities; partnerships with families; respect for evidence; and shared accountability.
- Implement curriculum that is thoughtfully planned, challenging, engaging, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, comprehensive, and likely to promote positive outcomes for all young children.
- Make ethical, appropriate, valid, and reliable assessment a central part of all early childhood programs. To assess young children's strengths, progress, and needs, use assessment methods that are developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, tied to children's daily activities, supported by Professional development, inclusive of families, and connected to specific, beneficial purposes: (1) making sound decisions about teaching and learning, (2) identifying significant concerns that may require focused intervention for individual children, and (3) helping programs improve their educational and developmental interventions.
- Regularly engage in program evaluation guided by program goals and using varied, appropriate, conceptually and technically sound evidence to determine the extent to which programs meet the expected standards of quality and to examine intended as well as unintended results.
- Provide the support, Professional development, and other resources to allow staff in early childhood programs to implement high-quality curriculum, assessment, and program evaluation practices and to connect those practices with well-defined early learning standards and program standards.

Figure 2.7.2: In the right environment children thrive [20]

This page titled 2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

2.8: Conclusion and References

Research suggests that an enriched learning environment, along with meaningful interactions and experiences can significantly enhance a child's overall development (Center for American Progress, 2017). Not only do children deserve high-quality learning experiences, parents need the assurance of knowing that their children are in safe, healthy and nurturing environments. Unfortunately, providing high-quality early childhood education services can be particularly challenging especially for the estimated four million children who are living in poverty and considered at-risk. Thus, the achievement gap continues to be a concern and the quest for quality is ongoing. As early childhood educators, we must strive to regularly observe, collect data and assess our programs, and reflect on our teaching practices to be more proactive in our quest for quality. While a score is important to look at and improve on, it is not the end all, be all, it merely serves to guide our practices as it relates to a whole picture. Ongoing observation and documentation help to keep us informed of how to best serve the children and families in our care.

References

- Crosswalk 15 minute service suites classroom. (n.d.). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. Retrieved from https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/professional-development/article/crosswalk-15-minute-service-suites-classr
- Early Childhood Mentored Field Observations by Susan Eliason is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0
- Hamre, B. (n.d.). Using Classroom Observation to Gauge Teacher Effectiveness: Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Retrieved from https://cepr.harvard.edu/files/cepr/files/ncte-conference-class-hamre.pdf
- Indiana Institute on Disability and Community. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://iidcweb.indiana.edu/styles/iidc/defiles/ECC/CLASS%20Overview%20for%20EEMG%20participants.pdf
- Mashburn, A. (n.d.). Class: Optimizing Reliability and Validity. Retrieved from https://curry.virginia.edu/faculty-research/centers-labs-projects/castl/class-optimizing-reliability-and-validity
- MiraCosta College. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.miracosta.edu/instruction/childdevelopmentcenter/downloads/5.4CLASSSummaryPreschool.pdf
- Slot, P. (2018). Structural characteristics and process quality in early childhood education and care: A literature review, OECD Education Working Paper No. 176. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=EDU/WKP(2018)12&docLanguage=En
- Slot, P., Leseman, P., Verhagen, J., Mulder, H. (2015). Associations between structural quality aspects and process quality in Dutch early childhood education and care settings. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, Volume 33, 4th Quarter 2015, 64-76. Retrieved from https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0885200615000599
- The Environment as the Third Teacher. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED493517.pdf
- University of Virginia. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://curry.virginia.edu/uploads/resourceLibrary/CASTL_practioner_Part1_single.pdf
- University of Virginia. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://curry.virginia.edu/uploads/resourceLibrary/CASTL_practioner_Part4_single.pdf
- University of Virginia. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://curry.virginia.edu/uploads/resourceLibrary/CASTL_practioner_Part5_single.pdf
- The National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning. (n.d.). Understanding and Using CLASS for Program Improvement. Retrieved from https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/class-brief-understanding-using-class-program-improvement.pdf
- The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning. (2013). Improving Teacher–Child Interactions: Using the CLASS™ in Head Start Preschool Programs. Retrieved from https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/using-the-class-in-hs-preschool-programs.pdf
- Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (n.d.). Assessment. Retrieved from
- (http://www.k12.wa.us/EarlyLearning/pubdocs/assessment_print.pdf
- Wechsler, M., Melnick, H., Maier, A., Bishop, J. (2016). The Building Blocks of High-Quality Early Childhood Education Programs. Learning Policy Institute. Retrieved from https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/building-blocks-high-quality-early-childhood-education-programs

This page titled 2.8: Conclusion and References is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

3: USING OBSERVATION METHODS, TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES TO GATHER EVIDENCE

Observing children as they play, learn, and socialize with others is an integral part of every early educator's daily routine. According to the California Preschool Program Guidelines, when early caregivers and preschool teachers "regularly observe and document brief, subtle moments of children's learning through play, those records help parents and others understand how useful and important play is in helping children to learn and grow" (p. 32-33). In this chapter, we will examine the various observation methods, tools and techniques that can be used to gather information about the children in your care. Although teachers may favor one method over the other, it is recommended that teachers utilize several methods, tools and techniques so that they can gather a well- rounded perspective of each child. To truly understand the "whole child" it is important to realize that observation and documentation is an ongoing process that begins with gathering "baseline data."

3.1: Taking the First Step - Gathering Baseline Data

3.2: Understanding the Child

3.3: Let's Get Started

3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques

3.5: Conclusion and References

This page titled 3: Using Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques to Gather Evidence is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

3.1: Taking the First Step - Gathering Baseline Data

In order to truly measure the learning, growth, and development of a child over time, there needs to be a *point of reference*, or a starting point. Baseline data provides a starting point. As recommended by the California Department of Education, in the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), to establish a baseline, children should be observed "within 60 calendar days of enrollment and [formally assessed] every 6 months thereafter" (DRDP, 2015, p. ii). More specifically, any time a child starts your program, or any time you introduce a new concept, topic or theme, it would be beneficial to gather baseline data. With each observation the goal is to track - ***What the child can do.*** Then, as we review each observation, we further consider ***what the child has the potential to do.*** Knowing specific details about how the child responds to the activities we have planned, and how the child is interacting with their peers, allows intentional teachers to make informed decisions that are in the best interest of the child. Baseline data allows us to create individualized activities and enriched learning opportunities and set up engaging environments where each child can feel empowered, challenged and well cared for.

Here is an example:

> *Aaron is 3.5 years old and this is his first time in preschool. To see whether Aaron can write his name, you would set out writing materials (markers or crayons, paper and possibly stencils), and you would observe Aaron at the writing center. To gather baseline data, you could use an Anecdotal Note to record how Aaron holds the markers – is he using the palmer grasp or the pincher grasp? Is he using his right or left hand? You would also want to note what Aaron created - did he write his name, draw a picture or scribble? If Aaron scribbled, he might not be ready to use lined paper to write his name or to journal a story. Rather than planning an activity that would require Aaron to write between the lines, it may be more beneficial to plan activities that would help him further develop his fine motor skills. Perhaps you would set out activities that would build his pincher grasp like play dough or stringing beads. Once you observe Aaron's progression and his "signs of readiness", then you would reintroduce writing between the lines.*

This page titled 3.1: Taking the First Step - Gathering Baseline Data is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

3.2: Understanding the Child

Many of the same tools and techniques you use to gather baseline data, you will continue to use to support the whole child. This includes screening, planning curriculum, and assessing development. Every observation you complete provides valuable information that you can use to be more intentional and more responsive. When we observe the children in our care, we can learn about their:

- interests, abilities and preferences
- developmental skill level (cognitive, language, social, emotional, physical)
- how they strategize in social situations
- how they approach learning opportunities
- personality and temperament

This page titled 3.2: Understanding the Child is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

3.3: Let's Get Started

Whether you are doing a planned observation, or you decide to do a spontaneous observation, you will need some essentials. An intentional teacher is a prepared teacher, and here are a few things you will need:

1. Something to write on – paper, sticky notes, color coded index cards, clipboard, notebook
2. Something to write with – colored ink pens, sharpie markers
3. Something to record with – photo camera, video camera, tape recorder, printer
4. Something to store your documentation in – a filing cabinet, accordion file folder, portfolio
5. Blank observation tool templates – checklists, frequency counts, ABC, anecdotal notes
6. Some extras – tape, stickers, paper clips, stapler, batteries, dictionary

This page titled 3.3: Let's Get Started is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques

No single observation can give you all the information you will need about a child's development. In order to truly understand a child's unique attributes, preferences, personality and strengths, you must observe them consistently, using several documentation tools and techniques. Each observation method has strengths and limitations. In this section, we will review some of the more commonly used techniques and tools that teachers use to gather objective observation evidence: Running Record; Checklists; Frequency Count; Anecdotal Record; Work Sample; Learning Story; and Technology.

Figure 3.4.1: Notetaking is one of the oldest forms of recording observations. (Public Domain; Glenn Carstens-Peters from Unsplash)

Running Record

One of the oldest observation methods used in early child education is the Running Record. Running Records are considered by some as an "informal method" of observation as compared to Narrative Description or Specimen Records which are considered to be a more "formal method" of collecting data. The primary difference between the two methods is that with a Running Record, evidence is gathered in a more spontaneous (informal) manner as it occurs, whereas with a Narrative Description a (formal) plan would be arranged in advance, prior to the observation. More specifically, you would schedule a day, time and setting, you would select a specific child or group of children, and you would decide on the purpose, reason or focus of your observation (e.g. cognitive skills, social interactions, play patterns). Both methods provide rich, detailed evidence and both methods provide written accounts of everything you see and hear a child doing during a specific timeframe (Bentzen, 2009).

For the purpose of this text, we will use the term Running Record and recommend that you, as an intentional teacher, conduct Running Records (whether spontaneous or planned, informal or formal) as part of your regular or routine observations. The primary goal for using a Running Record is to "obtain a detailed, objective account of behavior without inference, interpretations, or evaluations" (Bentzen, 2009, p.112). You will know you have gathered good evidence when you can close your eyes and you can "see" the images in your mind as they are described in your Running Record (Bentzen, 2009).

Collecting Your Data

All you need is time, paper and a pen to gather your observation evidence. The goal with a running record is to write down everything you see and hear - exactly as it occurs, without adding any comments or attaching any opinions. As the saying goes, "just the facts, ma'am!" With the Running Record format, not only will you highlight children's behaviors, you will record the "setting, situation and sequence" in which the behavior occurred. Be as descriptive as possible and yet be as concise as possible.

Children move quickly, so you must write quickly. When conducting a running record, you need to be out of ratio. You are to step back and observe from a distance. Do not interfere with the child's natural play, do not ask questions and do not run after them. Be as invisible as possible.

Organizing your Data

As you collect rich, detailed data throughout the school year, you will begin to recognize patterns of development, and you will see each child's unique attributes, personalities, and abilities as they emerge. Be sure to date all your running records; having 12-24 children in your classroom can add up to a lot of running records. You will need to store your running records safely in a portfolio or file folder. When it comes time to assess a child's development, you will be able to look back and review all the evidence you have collected and to monitor the child's progress over time.

Note: A Running Record is an ideal observation method for "students". Teachers may not always have the time or staff coverage to conduct a Running Record.

Table 3.4.1*: Running Record*

Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Provides detailed data about the who, what, where, and when 2. Evidence is documented as it occurs, in a sequence 3. Provides objective and descriptive evidence 4. Appropriate for gathering baseline information about the child's interests, abilities and skill level 5. Ideal for tracking a child's development over time 6. Less structured, more free flowing 7. Evidence can be gathered formally or informally 8. Interpretations and reflections can be added later	1. Time consuming 2. May be difficult to keep up and follow along as children move quickly from one activity to another 3. Not a practical technique for teachers who are in ratio 4. Behaviors may not be typical for that observation day as compared to other days

Let's Practice Gathering Evidence

Example 1:

Running Record: On 7/2/2019, Jorge played in the sandbox for 20 minutes.

What did you “see” with this example? What was the setting, situation and sequence of events?

What did you learn about Jorge?

Was the evidence objective? Was the evidence descriptive?

Let’s try again.

Example 2:

Running Record: 7/2/2019. Time: 10:10am

During outside play and exploration, the following activities were available: bikes, sandbox, sensory table with goop, hula hoops, balls and a reading area with a basket of books. Jorge played in the sandbox for 20 minutes. With his left hand, Jorge dug a hole using a shovel. Jorge asked Julissa if he could have the dinosaur, “When you are finished, can I have the dinosaur for my cave?” Julissa handed Jorge the dinosaur and said, “Can I see?” Jorge nodded his head up and down.

At 10:30am, the teacher announced that it was time to clean up. Jorge stood up, dropped his shovel, ran over to the door and got in line. While in line, Jorge waved his hands and said “Come on Max. Come on. Here. Come here.” Max ran over and stood next to Jorge in line.

What did you “see” with this example? What was the setting, situation, and sequence of events?

What did you learn about Jorge?

Was the evidence objective? Was the evidence descriptive? [22]

Running Record Template #1
Date: Start Time: End Time: Setting: Activity Area: Who did you observe:

Running Record

Running Record Template #2

Date: Start Time: End Time: Setting: Activity Area: Who did you observe:

Running Record	Interpretation

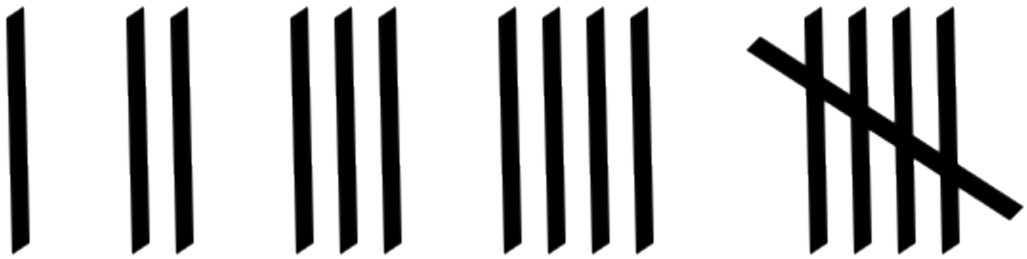

Figure 3.4.2: When is a frequency count used? Whenever you need to tally and record how many times a behavior is occurring. [23]

Frequency Counts (Time or Event Sampling)

A Frequency Count is an informal observation method that is used to gather information about a child's interests, social interactions, play patterns, and temperamental traits. As the teacher observes the children at play, a tally mark is made every time the noted behavior or action occurs within a set timeframe. Frequency Counts are also used to track undesirable or challenging behaviors, as well as ideal or positive behaviors.

Collecting your data

To create a Frequency Count, you must first decide on what social interactions, behaviors, interest areas, or types of play you want to monitor. You may decide to track your child during one focused activity or timeframe, or you may map out what a typical day might look like for your child and track all the interactions and experiences they engage in throughout the day. Either way, as you observe your child, you will make a tally mark every time they play in a specified area or display one of the action items as listed on your Frequency Count.

Here are some examples of how you might use a Frequency Count to gather data:

1. Sue has been hitting a lot lately and displaying other challenging behaviors . You will want to track how many times she hits in a typical day, along with any other challenging behaviors. You will also want to track where the incidents are occurring – are there more incidents while inside the classroom or are things happening during outside play? You will want to look at when the incidents are occurring most often– are there more incidents earlier in the day or later in the day? You may want to observe what is happening at drop-off time, mealtime and at naptime. Lastly, you may want to track who Sue is socializing with and how she plays with others. Does Sue display a consistent play pattern (parallel play, cooperative play, onlooker play)?
2. Thomas is a new student and his mother wants to know how he is doing. You may want to observe which centers Thomas goes to most often throughout the day and track his interests. You may also want to track whether he plays alone or with other children.
3. You and a child in your class are constantly butting heads . How can you create a supportive environment and provide a "goodness of fit?" You may need to track the child's temperamental traits and observe how the child approaches activities

and how they respond to social situations.

Organizing Your Data

After you have collected all the data for that timeframe, count the tally marks. What can you interpret from this data? What areas or action items received a high number of tally marks? What areas or action items received a low number of tally marks? Do you see any patterns? As you consider those questions, reflect on a plan of action that you might use to further support that child's development.

Table 3.4.2: Advantages and Disadvantages of Frequency Data

Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Quick and easy to use, and no training is required 2. Can be personalized or designed to gather specific baseline data (play patterns, challenging behaviors, social situations, temperamental traits) 3. Provides immediate quantifiable data 4. Ideal for tracking behaviors over time and for noting an increase or decrease of incidents 5. Can be useful when planning behavior modification strategies 6. Data can be graphed or charted to find consistent patterns	1. Does not provide rich details or context like anecdotal notes or running records 2. There is no clear sequence of events regarding certain actions or behaviors 3. (Although the behavior is tracked, information about the antecedent and the consequence is missing) 4. Does not provide qualitative evidence 5. Results may be misleading

Frequency Count to Track Areas and Interests				
Child's Name:				
Observation Date:	**INDOOR CYCLE** **Start Time:** **End Time:**		**OUTDOOR CYCLE** **Start Time:** **End Time:**	
Areas and Interests	**Tally Marks**	**Total**	**Tally Marks**	**Total**
Art				
Blocks / Legos				
Library / Reading				
Dramatic Play				
Math				
Writing / Journaling				
Science / Nature				
Sensory				
Quiet Corner				
Computer Lab				
Music / Movement				
Climbing Structure				
Bikes				
Organized Games				
Super-Hero Play				
Rough and Tumble				
Running / Chasing				

Frequency Count to Track Play Patterns and Social Interactions				
Observation Date:	INDOOR CYCLE Start Time: End Time:		OUTDOOR CYCLE Start Time: End Time:	
Play Patterns and Social Interactions	Tally Marks	Total	Tally Marks	Total
Solitary Play: Plays alone – does not seek out peer social interactions				
Parallel Play: Plays next to someone, using similar materials but did not directly interact				
Associative Play: Shares materials and talks to others while engaged in an activity				
Cooperative Play: Plays with peers in an organized manner with rules, taking turns				
Peer Interactions: Plays with Boys				
Peer Interactions: Plays with Girls				
Interactions with Teacher: Talks to teacher / shares ideas / asks for help				
Bystander: Is yelled at, hit or involved in an altercation / incident				
Instigates / Initiates Disputes: Hits, takes toys, yells at peers, causes an altercation / incident				
Problem solves: Communicated and resolved disputes without teachers help				
Teacher Interactions: Teacher needed to help resolve peer disputes / altercations				

Frequency Count to Track Temperament and Behavior				
Observation Date	**INDOOR CYCLE** **Start Time** **End Time**		**OUTDOOR CYCLE** **Start Time** **End Time**	
Temperament Traits and Behavior	**Tally Marks**	**Total**	**Tally Marks**	**Total**
Appears **Highly Active** – Rarely sits still, moves around, fidgets A LOT, races through activities				
Appears **Easily Distracted** Changes activities before finishing task / looks around a lot				
Appears Focused Completes tasks before moving on to the next task / can tune others out				
Reacts Intensely Has high emotional energy when reacting to others – yells/cries				
Remains Calm Able to transitions and go with the flow/does not react to altercations				
Appears Sensitive Squirms when touched, holds ears, squints, doesn't seem to like to touch certain textures				
Appears Cautious Hesitates or needs time to warm up to people and activities before joining in				
Appears to be in a good mood Smiles/ laughs often, cooperates with others and seems pleasant				
Appears Moody Has difficulty making transitions, displays highs and lows, rarely smiles when interacting with others				

Checklists

Checklists are an efficient and practical way to collect information about a child's development. Checklists are based on "developmental norms" as determined by developmental theorists. With each age range, there are certain expectations and skills

that a child should be able to achieve. Checklists are designed to track a child's competencies in all the developmental domains including physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional. With a checklist, teachers can easily see what a child can do, as well as note what areas of development need further support. Teachers can create their own checklists based on certain skill sets, or they can download a formal developmental milestone checklist from a reputable source to look at a child's full range of development. Checklists can be used to track a large group of children or an individual child.

Collecting your data

Whether you design your own checklist or download one, use it regularly to collect data. The checklist can be utilized in two ways:

1. You can observe a child on a specific day while they are engaged in an activity (either child-directed or teacher-directed). As you observe, you will check off the skills or milestones that the child can do on that day, at that moment.
2. You can also review data from other observations (e.g. running records or anecdotal notes, work samples) that you collected, and ADD any other skills or milestones that were mastered during those previous observations.

*Note: It is vital that you note the dates that you observed the skills being mastered. A check mark alone will limit the reliability and validity

Organizing your data

Schedule a day and time to regularly review your observation data. Data collected from other observations (mastered milestones and developing skill sets) can be added to the checklist so you can clearly see a child's progress over time. You may use colored pens to track all the different dates that milestones were achieved. As you review the checklist, what can you interpret from this data? Does the child demonstrate strengths in any of the developmental domains or areas of learning? Which milestones and skills need further support? As you consider those questions, reflect on a plan of action that you might use to further support that child's development. How can you provide opportunities for the child to gain more practice? What adjustments need to be made to make the activity more challenging? What extensions can be added to continue the learning pattern? [24]

Table 3.4.3: Advantages and Disadvantages of Checklists

Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Ideal for tracking a child's progress over time 2. Different observers (the teacher, assistant or a support team) can check off skills that they observe the child doing 3. Checklists can be created to measure specific areas of development, or a subset of developmental skills 4. Checklists can be used to observe a group of children or an individual child 5. Checklists are quick and easy to use, and no training is required 6. Checklists can be used in conjunction with other observations 7. Checklists highlight the developmental strengths a child has mastered, as well as those skills that need further support 8. Developmental Milestone Checklists are readily available on-line through various agencies (i.e. Center for Disease Control) 9. Data can help plan curriculum activities	1. Checklists do not provide rich details or context like anecdotal notes or running records 2. There is no clear sequence of events to regarding certain actions or behaviors 3. Checklists focus on developmental norms and typical development with no regard for environment, family influences, cultural influences and individual development 4. Teachers tend to focus on the skills and milestones that haven't been mastered, focusing on the deficits rather than highlighting the strengths. This can make the child and parents feel as if they have failed or add unnecessary stress 5. Checklists must be updated regularly using other observation methods

Checklist for Physical Milestone

Perceptual Movement

Skills	Can Do	Needs Further Support	Date and Evidence
Moves in a zig-zag pattern – able to change directions with ease			
Plays follow the leaders and mirrors others movements			
Moves body to music cues			
Speeds up and slows down while running or riding bike			

Gross Motor Movement

Skills	Can Do	Needs Further Support	Date and Evidence
Completes tasks on an obstacle course			
Changes directions and stops quickly while running			
Pumps legs on a swing			
Runs and uses arm and legs in opposition			
Climbs			
Walks up and down stairs with one foot on each stair step			
Hops on one foot			
Kicks balls			
Catches and throws (bean bags and balls)			
Pedals a 3-wheeled bike (tricycle)			
Bounces a ball several times			
Walks along a balance beam			
Jumps up and down, jumps forward using arms			

Fine Motor Movement

Skills	Can Do	Needs Further Support	Date and Evidence
Cuts with scissors			

Skills	Can Do	Needs Further Support	Date and Evidence
Uses writing utensils (markers, crayons, pencils) to scribble			
Prints letters, numbers			
Uses stamps and stamp pad			
Strings beads			
Pours liquid into cup			
Manipulates, moves and picks up small objects			
Uses utensils to feed self			
Buttons and zips			
Peels a banana or orange			
Opens and closes a Ziploc baggie			
Scoops and pours materials (sand, dirt, rocks, beads)			

Anecdotal Records

An Anecdotal Record is “an informal observation method often used by teachers as an aid to understanding the child’s personality or behavior. It provides a running account of behavior that is either typical or unusual for the child” (Bentzen, 2009, p. 178). Anecdotal Records, also referred to as “anecdotal notes,” are direct observations of a child that offer a window of opportunity to see into a child’s actions, interactions and reactions to people and events. An Anecdotal Record is an excellent tool that provides teachers with a collection of narratives that can be used to showcase a child’s progress over time. As compared to a Running Record, Anecdotal Records provide brief notes that are focused on a specific event or activity.

Collecting Your Data

To gather effective observation evidence, you need to include the following components:

1. Accurate and specific details of the event (vivid descriptions exactly as you see and hear them happening - do not summarize, assume or make judgments)

2. The context, setting and situation that surrounds the event (the where, when, who, what, and how)
3. Objective facts about the child's behavior and interactions (report actions and conversations)
4. Write records in the past tense

Here are some examples of observation evidence you might want to gather:

- Social interactions with peers
- Everyday routines, like mealtime and transition times
- How they utilize materials at the various centers (library, block, math, science, art, music)
- How they engage in teacher-directed activities (structured learning opportunities)
- How they engage in child-directed activities (open exploration opportunities)
- How they are inside and how they are outside

Organizing your Data

Once you have completed the Anecdotal Record you will take a moment to interpret the data. You will look for patterns and you will note whether the data reflects typical or unusual behavior for the child. To measure a child's developmental progress, you will look for their strengths (skills and milestones that have been mastered) and their needs (skills and milestones that the child needs further support with). The summary notes help you to clarify instructional recommendations (adjustments that you will make to the environment to accommodate the child's individual learning style). The notes you take can help you generate developmentally appropriate lesson plan activities and interactions. All Anecdotal Records need to be dated and stored safely in the child's portfolio or file folder.

Table 3.4.4: Advantages and Disadvantages of Anecdotal Record

Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Provides vivid details about the who, what, when, where and how 2. Takes less time to write up an observation as compared to using Running Records 3. Evidence is documented as it occurs, in a sequence 4. Provides objective and descriptive evidence 5. Interpretation notes can be added afterwards 6. Evidence can be gathered formally (planned) or informally (spontaneously) 7. No special training is required 8. Provides qualitative data over time and is helpful in tracking changes in a child's development over time	1. Data can be tainted if it is not written in the moment 2. Focuses on one event, situation or behavior at a time and can miss or overlook important information 3. Does not provide quantitative data results 4. 4. May not always report a child's typical pattern of development or behavior

	Pin It! Writing an Anecdotal Note Watch this video to learn how to write an anecdotal note : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GsXvbflrLu4&t=92s Watch this video to learn how to use an anecdotal note : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAczTiO1rUg&t=3s

Anecdotal Note Template
*As you gather evidence, focus on 1 specific activity. Record what you see and hear. NO INTERPRETING!
Child (Children): Date: Start Time: End Time: Setting: Inside / Outside Center or Exploration Area: Activity: Materials Used: Open-Ended Product Teacher-Directed Child-Directed
What do you see and hear:

Figure 3.4.3: A Childs Masterpiece. [25]

Work Samples

Teachers have been collecting pieces of children's artwork and posting them on the classroom walls forever. Not only do the children enjoy seeing their work of art on display, parent's appreciate seeing their child's work as well! To create an official work sample however takes more effort than hanging a picture on the wall. What exactly is a work sample? A work sample is a tangible piece of evidence that showcases a child's effort, progress and achievement. More specifically, not only does a work sample highlight the final product , it can highlight the process as well, by highlighting the child's problem-solving efforts, experimentation methods or collaboration skills. Work samples are authentic artifacts that provide information about the child's learning experience.

Collecting your data

Work samples can be gathered throughout the school year. Typically, you would collect a variety of samples that highlight the child's overall development in each of the developmental areas: Physical; Cognitive; Language; Social -Emotional. More specifically, you might include a child's drawing or painting, a writing sample from their journal, a cutting sample, or photographs of the child engaged in activities such as building a block tower or sandcastle or riding a bike.

Organizing your data

Whether you post a work sample on the classroom wall (using a documentation board) or you collect a sample for a child's portfolio, you must add documentation. Not only will documentation help families recognize the value of play, it reinforces the concept that every activity is an opportunity to learn. For accuracy, be sure to include the following information: Child's Name; Date; Setting; and an Anecdotal Note with a description about how and why the sample was collected. Work samples should be organized in a chronological manner to showcase progress over time. Be sure to store work samples in a safe place like a file-folder or portfolio, or electronically in a computer file.

Table 3.4.5: Advantages and Disadvantages of Work Samples

Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Provides tangible/ visible evidence that teachers can use to track a child's learning, growth and development over time 2. Parents and children both enjoy seeing the work on display 3. Provides authentic documentation which is ideal for assessment 4. Teachers can use information to plan and adjust curriculum to help children achieve their learning goals 5. Families can see how children learn through play 6. Children can share their insights as to how they created the work sample and offer their perspectives as to what they were thinking (authentic evidence) 7. Children enjoy seeing their work on display and they can feel empowered when their work is valued	1. Can be time consuming adding anecdotal documentation and creating documentation boards 2. Requires ample storage space 3. Requires a financial investment in technology (camera, video or audio recorder) 4. Concerns over confidentiality and privacy when using photos, audio or videos

Work Sample Template

(insert a photo of the work sample)
Child:
Date: Time:
Setting: Indoor or Outdoor Center or Play Area:
Activity:
What activity choices were available that day:
Anecdotal Notes: (objective facts, vivid and descriptive details, concise observation information)
Developmental Milestones that were supported: 1. 2. 3.
Quotes / Child's Perspective

Learning Stories

In an article published in NAEYC's Teaching Young Children, Judy Pack shares her thoughts on Learning Stories, "I like to think

of it as observing small moments that provide big opportunities." [26]

As compared to Running Records or Anecdotal Notes, a Learning Story is an observation method that is written in a narrative story format to highlight a child's learning. The Learning Story communicates more than facts about how a child approaches or accomplishes tasks, it spotlights key moments in a child's day and focuses on their strengths. When writing a Learning Story, a teacher not only writes down what she saw and heard, she can also write down what she thought about while she watched the child play. More than that, this method encourages the child and their families to be active participants in the reflective process. When the teacher shares the Learning Story with both the child and family members, they can add their comments, ask follow-up questions and make suggestions on how to move forward based on what was reported in the Learning Story. One unique aspect of Learning Stories is that when used regularly, they can help teachers connect to families and build strong, respectful relationships. [27]

Gathering your data

Whether you plan an observation, or you spontaneously watch a child as they play, and whether you observe during a teacher-directed activity or during a child-directed moment, you can gather some suitable evidence for your Learning Story. As you watch and listen to a child at play, you can take some pictures and jot down some objective and descriptive facts that you will use to write a story. As suggested by Park (2016), if you want to learn about a child's interests and capabilities, and how they process information; you will want to watch the following:

- Engagement: How long does the child stay focused and engaged in an activity?
- Intentionality: Does the child have a goal in mind or express a plan of action?
- Relationships: Does the child interact or connect with others?
- Learning disposition: Does the child have a particular approach to figuring things out or a preferred style of learning? [28]

Organizing your data

Whether you want to write a short paragraph or a full page, there are some key components that you must include in your Learning Story. We will refer to the EarlyWorks tool and the guidelines as recommended by Tom Drummond to write up your observation data. [29] Your Learning Story should include the following:

1. A Title – All good stories have a title that draws the reader in. Titles can act as a reminder of the content of the learning story, making it easy for educators to revisit at a later time.
2. Photos – Learning Stories should have at least one photo. Visual images evoke emotion and a connection to the story.
3. Narrative – This is where the storyteller (you) describes what is seen and heard. It is best to write in the first person, using "I…". The narrative is the body of the story and highlights authentic observation evidence (facts and vivid details).
4. What it means – This is where the storyteller (you) interprets the learning that took place. It is best to write in the second person, using "You…".
5. Opportunities and Possibilities – This is where you reflect on planning for the next step and building on what the child knows.
6. Family & Child's Voice – The child's family is encouraged to provide their understanding of the story. Families can create stories and provide valuable insight into the learning that happens at home. Children can also share their perspectives. [30]

*Note: A Learning Story Template is available

Table 3.4.6: Advantages and Disadvantages of Learning Stories

Advantages	Disadvantages
1. The child receives positive messages that their ideas and way of thinking are valued and they enjoy hearing stories about their successes 2. The teacher, child and family have an equal opportunity to reflect on the child's thinking and learning 3. The stories provide insight into the best way to plan for a more meaningful curriculum. 4. The stories capture moments in a child's daily life that can be used with other observation tools to create a comprehensive profile on a child 5. Provides authentic information about a child's strengths in a friendly and personal format 6. Informs families how children learn through play and how they are natural learners, eager investigators, and problem solvers. 7. Opens a door for respectful conversations with parents about school experiences	1. Can be time consuming 2. Can be difficult to remain objective 3. Focuses on one event, situation or behavior at a time and can miss or overlook important information 4. Does not provide quantitative data results 5. May not always report a child's typical pattern of development or behavior

Learning Story Template

Learning Story Title:
Child: Date: Time: Setting / Location:
Narrative: (I observed you today / I saw you / I heard you say / You played / You explored)
Reflection: (I wondered what you were thinking / I thought about...)
Major Milestones: (Here are some of the milestones you achieved today...)
Next Steps: (To extend your play and learning....)
Question to family:

Technology

Finding ways to utilize technology into regular routines can make collecting observation evidence much more efficient for busy teachers. Photographs, video, and audio recordings can authentically capture children's explorations, investigations, play and

learning experiences in the actual moment. With this type of documentation, teachers can replay key moments in a child's day to look for specific interactions, play patterns, developmental milestones, struggles and accomplishments. With this technique, teachers can also listen for language development by recording actual conversations that children are having with their peers. Teachers can also monitor how children problem solve and can tape special moments as well as capture every day moments. As with work samples, teachers can share their observation evidence with the children. Children are fascinated with seeing and hearing themselves. This type of documentation provides the most authentic evidence of all the observation methods.

Collecting your data

There are numerous ways to incorporate technology into your classroom. It is important to keep in mind that each early care and education program would have their own protocol, policies and procedures regarding the use of technology to document children's learning, growth and development, so be sure to verify what you can and cannot do. Here are a few suggestions that you may want to incorporate:

- Use a camera, laptop, tablet, or smartphone to record observations and take pictures
- Ask a child to dictate a story and you can type it up on a computer or use an audio recorder
- Scan or make copies of children's work, such as drawings or writing, to create a visual timeline that shows a child's skill development over time.
- Use email or a parent communication app to post work samples
- Use voice-to-text software to document important discussions. For example, children can explain how they created their piece of art.
- Take pictures of three-dimensional work. For example, woodworking projects, block towers, sandcastles, and culinary creations.
- Film dramatic plays and musical performances that the children produce.
- Use a video camera to document how children are progressing with their developmental milestones in each of the domains. For example, look at playful interactions to track social-emotional development; watch children on the playground to track physical development; observe how children tackle science or math activities to track cognitive development. [31]

Organizing your data

Observation data can be conveniently stored on a computer and each child can have their own digital portfolio or file folder. For every child, you would include photos of them at play, photos of their work samples, and any audio recordings or video clips that you may have collected (as suggested above). When using smartphones to take photos or videos, you can easily upload information to your computer or transfer information to other devices. Some teachers may want to use an app to formally organize observation evidence, and some schools may purchase a program that links families to daily observations. Some centers may even use an electronic assessment program (e.g. the Desired Results Developmental Program - DRDP) to track children's developmental progress and teachers would regularly upload observation evidence as part of the assessment process. Here are a few added suggestions on how you can organize and use stored electronic observation evidence:

- Photos can be scanned, printed and posted in the classroom
- A photo slideshow can be created for family nights or as a screen saver
- The children can watch a video montage of a themed project they completed
- Children can look at "old" photos to monitor their own developmental progress and can make comments regarding their work, their thought process and their developmental outcomes. [32]

Table 3.4.6: Advantages and Disadvantages of Technology

Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Provides tangible/ visible evidence that teachers can use to track a child's learning, growth and development over time 2. Parents and children both enjoy seeing the work on display 3. Captures authentic documentation which is ideal for assessment 4. Teachers can use information to plan and adjust curriculum to help children achieve their learning goals 5. Families can see how children learn through play 6. Children can share their insights as to how they created the work sample and offer their perspectives as to what they were thinking (authentic evidence) 7. Children enjoy seeing their work on 8. display and they can feel empowered when their work is valued 9. With using multi -media, children can be observed in their natural settings	1. Can be time consuming adding anecdotal documentation and creating documentation boards 2. Requires ample storage space 3. Requires a financial investment in technology (camera, video or audio recorder) 4. Concerns over confidentiality and privacy when using photos, audio or videos

This page titled 3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

3.5: Conclusion and References

An intentional teacher is a skilled and thoughtful observer. With each observation, whether a running record, anecdotal note, video recording, checklist, frequency counts, learning story or work sample, they are watching and listening, and considering what do I know about this child, and how can I best support this child ? As teachers gather and organize their observation data, they begin to see each child for who they are as an individual, and as a member of the classroom community. With that information, intentional teachers can set realistic expectations of what children can do. Ideally, teachers will utilize the documented data to develop developmentally appropriate activities and to create an interesting and stimulating learning environment that is designed to promote play, socialization, growth and development. Now that you have been introduced to some of the tools and techniques that are used to gather information and document a child's development, in the next chapter, you will delve deeper to review the concepts of typical development and atypical development, and you will learn about some additional tools that can be used to track a child's development. [33]

References

Bentzen (2009), Seeing Young Children: A Guide to Observing and Recording Behavior. Thomson Delmar Learning, Clifton Park, NY

CDE. (2015). California Preschool Program Guidelines. Retrieved from https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/preschoolproggdlns2015.pdf

CDE (2006). Desired Results Developmental Profile. Retrieved from https://www.researchconnections.org/files/meetings/ccprc/2006-04/14/CaliforniaDRDPPreschool_Instruments.pdf

Chelsea, Wright. (2015). Using Frequency Counts to Look at Emotional Development. Retrieved from https://prezi.com/gqxjbtu-75qq/using-frequency-counts-to-look-at-emotional-development/

Child Care Initiative Project. (2018). Observation, Screening, Assessment, & Documentation. Retrieved from https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/rrnetwork/pages/1365/attachments/original/1518049788/OSAD_Module_Feb_2018_ppt_coming_soon.pdf?1518049788

Complex Needs. (n.d.) Observational Methods. Retrieved from http://complexneeds.org.uk/modules/Module-2.4-Assessment-monitoring-and-evaluation/All/downloads/m08p110b/observational_methods.pdf

Gundlach, M. (2020). Strengths and Weaknesses of Informal Assessments: Find Out What Works. Retrieved from https://www.brighthubeducation.com/student-assessment-tools/99770-strengths-and-weaknesses-of-informal-assessments/

Head Start ECLKC. (2018). Child Screening & Assessment. Retrieved from https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/child-screening-assessment/learning-assessment-lfa-toolkit/guided-practices

Michigan State University. (n.d.). Methods of Observing Young Children. Retrieved from https://msu.edu/~mandrews/mary/obs__methods.htm

Modesto Junior College. (n.d.). Observing, Recording, and Reporting Children's Development. Retrieved from http://laffranchinid.faculty.mjc.edu/Ch5.pdf

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2020). Child Development and Early Learning. Retrieved from https://www.nap.edu/read/19401/chapter/8

Neaum, S. (2016). Observing and assessing children's learning and development. Retrieved from http://study.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/Neaum%2C%20S.%20%282016%29%20Observing%20and%20Assessing%20Children%27s%20Learning%20and%20Develo

Riley-Ayers, S., Stevenson-Garcia, J., Frede, E. (n.d.). Now What? Using those "anecdotals" for intentional teaching. Retrieved from http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Using_Anecdotals_for_Intentional_Teaching.pdf

US Office of Special Educational Programs. (n.d.). Behavioral Assessment: Frequency and Interval Recording. https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/wp-content/uploads/pdf_activities/independent/IA_Frequency_and_Interval_Recording.pdf

Venpakal, P. (n.d.). Tools & Techniques for Classroom Assessment. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/27158440/TOOLS_and_TECHNIQUES_FOR_CLASSROOM_ASSESSMENT

This page titled 3.5: Conclusion and References is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

4: THE PURPOSE, PROCESS AND PRACTICE OF MONITORING, SCREENING AND EVALUATING

4.1: Introduction

4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children

4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs

4.4: Conclusion and References

This page titled 4: The Purpose, Process and Practice of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

4.1: Introduction

It is essential that Early Childhood Educators be able to recognize typical from atypical development. With typical development, there are certain behavioral expectations and developmental milestones that children should master within certain age ranges. Any behavior and development that falls outside of the standard norms would be considered a-typical. As early care providers, how do we know whether a child's development is happening at a normal, excelled or delayed pace? How can we be certain that we are providing an optimal learning space for each child? As intentional teachers our goal is to accommodate all the varied skill levels and diverse needs of the children in our classrooms. Additionally, we must provide a safe, nurturing and culturally respectful environment that promotes inclusion so that all children can thrive. In this chapter we will examine the purpose, process and practice of monitoring, screening and evaluating young children. If we are to effectively support the children and families in our care, we must be able to identify a child's capabilities and strengths early on, as well as recognize any developmental delays or developmental areas that may need additional support. Additionally, we must be aware of the resources and services that are available to support children and families.

Figure 4.1 Building Blocks [34]

This page titled 4.1: Introduction is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children

Because many parents are not familiar with developmental milestones, they might not recognize that their child has a developmental delay or disability. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “In the United States, about 1 in 6 children aged 3 to 17 years have one or more developmental or behavioral disabilities, such as autism, a learning disorder, or attention deficit / hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).” What’s more concerning is that many children are not being identified as having a delay or disability until they are in elementary school . Subsequently, they will not receive the appropriate support and services they need early on to be successful at school. It has been well-documented, in both educational and medical professional literature, that developmental outcomes for young children with delays and disabilities can be greatly improved with early identification and intervention (Squires, Nickel, & Eisert, 1996; Shonkoff & Meisels, 2000). While some parents might be in denial and struggling with the uncertainty of having a child with special needs, some parents might not be aware that there are support services available for young children and they may not know how to advocate for their child. Thus, as early child educators we have an obligation to help families navigate through the process of monitoring, as well as provide information and resources if a screening or evaluation is necessary.

The Process of Monitoring

Who can monitor a child’s development? Parents, grandparents, early caregivers, providers and teachers can monitor the children in their care. As previously stated in Chapter 3, one of the tasks of an intentional teacher is to gather baseline data within the first 60 days of a child starting their program. With each observation, teachers are listening to how a child speaks and if they can communicate effectively; they are watching to see how the child plays and interacts with their peers; and they are recording how the child processes information and problem solves. By monitoring a child closely, not only can we observe how a child grows and develops, we can track changes over time. More importantly, we can identify children who fall outside the parameters of what is considered normal or “typical” development.

When teachers monitor children, they are observing and documenting whether children are mastering “typical” developmental milestones in the physical, cognitive, language, emotional and social domains of development. In particular, teachers are tracking a child’s speech and language development, problem-solving skills, fine and gross motor skills, social skills and behaviors, so that they can be more responsive to each child’s individual needs. Even more so, teachers are trying to figure out what a child can do, and if there are any “red flags” or developmental areas that need further support. As early caregivers and teachers, we are not qualified to formally screen and evaluate children. We can however monitor children’s actions, ask questions that can guide our observations, track developmental milestones, and record our observations. With this vital information we can make more informed decisions on what is in the child’s best interest.

What is this Child Trying to Tell Me?

With 12-24 busy children in a classroom, there are bound to be occasional outbursts and challenging behaviors to contend with. In fact, a portion of a teacher’s day is typically spent guiding challenging behaviors. With all the numerous duties and responsibilities that a teacher performs daily, dealing with challenging behaviors can be taxing. When a child repeats a challenging behavior, we might be bothered, frustrated, or even confused by their actions. We might find ourselves asking questions like:

“Why does she keep pinching her classmate?"
“Why does he put his snack in his hair?”
“Why does he cry when it’s clean up time or when he has to put his shoes on?”

“Why does she fidget so much during group time?”

Without taking the time to observe the potential causes and outcomes associated with the challenging behavior, we may only be putting on band-aids to fix a problem, rather than trying to solve the problem. Without understanding the why , we cannot properly guide the child or support the whole-child’s development. As intentional teachers we are taught to observe, document, and analyze a child’s actions so we can better understand what the child is trying to “tell” us through their behavior. Behavior is a form of communication. Any challenging behavior that occurs over and over, is happening for a reason. If you can find the “pattern” in the behavior, you can figure out how to redirect or even stop the challenging behavior.

How do I find the patterns?

To be most effective, it is vital that we record what we see and hear as accurately and objectively as possible. No matter which observation method, tool or technique is used (e.g. Event Sampling, Frequency Counts, Checklists or Technology), once we have gathered a considerable amount of data we will need to interpret and reflect on the observation evidence so that we can plan for the next step. Finding the patterns can be instrumental in planning curriculum, setting up the environment with appropriate materials, and creating social situations that are suitable for the child's temperament.

Think About It...Patterns

If Wyatt is consistently observed going to the sandbox to play with dinosaurs during outside play, what does this tell you? What is the pattern? Is Wyatt interacting with other children? How is Wyatt using the dinosaurs? How can you use this information to support Wyatt during inside play?

Here are a few ideas:

To create curriculum : To encourage the child to go into the art center, knowing that he likes dinosaurs, I might lay down some butcher paint on a table, put a variety of dinosaurs out on the table, and add some trays with various colors of paint.

To arrange the environment : Looking at my centers, I might add books and pictures about dinosaurs, and I might add materials that could be used in conjunction with dinosaurs.

To support social development: I noticed Wyatt played by himself on several observations. I may need to do some follow up observations to see if Wyatt is initiating conversations, taking turns, joining in play with others or playing alone.

As you can see these are just a few suggestions. What ideas did you come up with? As we monitor children in our class, we are gathering information so that we can create a space where each child's individual personality, learning strengths, needs, and interests are all taken into account. Whether the child has a disability, delay or impairment or is developing at a typical pace, finding their unique pattern will help us provide suitable accommodations

What is a Red Flag?

If, while monitoring a child's development, a "red flag" is identified, it is the teacher's responsibility to inform the family, in a timely manner, about their child's developmental progress. First, the teacher and family would arrange a meeting to discuss what has been observed and documented. At the meeting, the teacher and family would share their perspectives about the child's behavior, practices, mannerisms, routines and skill sets. There would be time to ask questions and clarify concerns, and a plan of action would be developed. It is likely that various adjustments to the environment would be suggested to meet the individual child's needs, and ideas on how to tailor social interactions with peers would be discussed. With a plan in place, the teacher would continue to monitor the child. If after a few weeks there was no significant change or improvement, the teacher may then recommend that the child be formally screened and evaluated by a professional (e.g. a pediatrician, behavioral psychologist or a speech pathologist).

The Process of Screening and Evaluating

Who can screen and evaluate children? Doctors, pediatricians, speech pathologists, behaviorists, Screenings and evaluations are more formal than monitoring. Developmental screening takes a closer look at how a child is developing using brief tests. Your child will get a brief test, or you will complete a questionnaire about your child. The tools used for developmental and behavioral screening are formal questionnaires or checklists based on research that ask questions about a child's development, including language, movement, thinking, behavior, and emotions.

Developmental screenings are cost effective and can be used to assess a large number of children in a relatively short period of time. There are screenings to assess a child's hearing and vision, and to detect notable developmental delays. Screenings can

also address some common questions and concerns that teachers, and parents alike, may have regarding a child's academic progress. For example, when a teacher wonders why a child is behaving in such a way, they will want to observe a child's social interactions and document how often certain behaviors occur. Similarly, when a parent voices a concern that their child is not talking in complete sentences the way their older child did at that same age. The teacher will want to listen and record the child's conversations and track their language development.

Developmental Delays – is the condition of a child being less developed mentally or physically than is normal for their age.

Developmental Disabilities – According to the CDC, developmental disabilities are a group of conditions due to an impairment in physical, learning, language, or behavior areas. These conditions begin during the developmental period, may impact day-to-day functioning, and usually last throughout a person's lifetime. Some noted disabilities include:

- ADHD
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Cerebral Palsy
- Hearing Loss
- Vision Impairment
- Learning Disability
- Intellectual Disability [35]

The Practice of Screening Young Children

To quickly capture a snapshot of a child's overall development, early caregivers and teachers can select from several observation tools to observe and document a child's play, learning, growth and development. Systematic and routine observations, made by knowledgeable and responsive teachers, ensure that children are receiving the quality care and support they deserve. Several observation tools and techniques can be used by teachers to screen a child's development. Because each technique and tool provides limited observation data, it is suggested that teachers use a combination of tools and techniques to gather a full panoramic perspective of a child's development. Here are some guidelines:

- Monitoring cannot capture the complete developmental range and capabilities of children, but can provide a general overview
- Monitoring can only indicate the possible presence of a developmental delay and cannot definitively identify the nature or extent of a disability
- Not all children with or at risk for delays can be identified
- Some children who are red-flagged may not have any actual delays or disabilities; they may be considered "exceptional" or "gifted"
- Children develop at different paces and may achieve milestones at various rates

Tools and Techniques to Monitor and Screen Children's Development

Let's briefly review some of the options more commonly used to monitor children's development.

Developmental Milestone Checklists and Charts

There are many factors that can influence a child's development: genetics, gender, social interactions, personal experiences, temperaments and the environment. It is critical that educators understand what is "typical" before they can consider what is "atypical." Developmental Milestones provide a clear guideline as to what children should be able to do at set age ranges. However, it is important to note that each child in your classroom develops at their own individualized pace, and they will reach certain milestones at various times within the age range.

Developmental Milestone Charts are essential when setting up your classroom environments. Once you know what skills children should be able to do at specific ages, you can then plan developmentally appropriate learning goals, and you can set up your classroom environment with age appropriate materials. Developmental Milestone Charts are also extremely useful to teachers and parents when guiding behaviors. In order to set realistic expectations for children, it is suggested that teachers and parents review all ages and stages of development to understand how milestones evolve. Not only do skills build upon each other, they lay a foundation for the next milestone that's to come. Developmental Milestone Charts are usually organized into 4 Domains:

Physical, Cognitive, Language, and Social -Emotional.

Table 4.1 - Gross Motor Milestones from 2 Months to 2 Years [36]

Typical Age	What Most Children Do by This Age
2 months	• Can hold head up and begins to push up when lying on tummy • Makes smoother movements with arms and legs
4 months	• Holds head steady, unsupported • Pushes down on legs when feet are on a hard surface • May be able to roll over from tummy to back • Brings hands to mouth • When lying on stomach, pushes up to elbows
6 months	• Rolls over in both directions (front to back, back to front) • Begins to sit without support • When standing, supports weight on legs and might bounce • Rocks back and forth, sometimes crawling backward before moving forward
9 months	• Stands, holding on • Can get into sitting position • Sits without support • Pulls to stand • Crawls
1 year	• Gets to a sitting position without help • Pulls up to stand, walks holding on to furniture (“cruising”) • May take a few steps without holding on • May stand alone
18 months	• Walks alone • May walk up steps and run • Pulls toys while walking • Can help undress self
2 years	• Stands on tiptoe • Kicks a ball • Begins to run • Climbs onto and down from furniture without help • Walks up and down stairs holding on • Throws ball overhand

Table 4.2 - Fine Motor Milestones from 2 Months to 2 Years [37]

Typical Age	What Most Children Do by This Age
2 months	• Grasps reflexively • Does not reach for objects • Holds hands in fist
4 months	• Brings hands to mouth • Uses hands and eyes together, such as seeing a toy and reaching for it • Follows moving things with eyes from side to side • Can hold a toy with whole hand (palmar grasp) and shake it and swing at dangling toys
6 months	• Reaches with both arms • Brings things to mouth • Begins to pass things from one hand to the other
9 months	• Puts things in mouth • Moves things smoothly from one hand to the other • Picks up things between thumb and index finger (pincer grip)
1 year	• Reaches with one hand • Bangs two things together • Puts things in a container, takes things out of a container • Lets things go without help • Pokes with index (pointer) finger
18 months	• Scribbles on own • Can help undress herself • Drinks from a cup • Eats with a spoon with some accuracy • Stacks 2-4 objects
2 years	• Builds towers of 4 or more blocks • Might use one hand more than the other • Makes copies of straight lines and circles • Enjoys pouring and filling • Unbuttons large buttons • Unzips large zippers • Drinks and feeds self with more accuracy

Table 4.3 - Cognitive Milestones from 2 Months to 2 Years [38]

Typical Age	What Most Children Do by This Age

2 months	• Pays attention to faces • Begins to follow things with eyes and recognize people at a distance • Begins to act bored (cries, fussy) if activity doesn't change
4 months	• Lets you know if she is happy or sad • Responds to affection • Reaches for toy with one hand • Uses hands and eyes together, such as seeing a toy and reaching for it • Follows moving things with eyes from side to side • Watches faces closely • Recognizes familiar people and things at a distance
6 months	• Looks around at things nearby • Brings things to mouth • Shows curiosity about things and tries to get things that are out of reach • Begins to pass things from one hand to the other
9 months	• Watches the path of something as it falls • Looks for things he sees you hide • Plays peek-a-boo • Puts things in mouth • Moves things smoothly from one hand to the other • Picks up things like cereal o's between thumb and index finger
1 year	• Explores things in different ways, like shaking, banging, throwing • Finds hidden things easily • Looks at the right picture or thing when it's named • Copies gestures • Starts to use things correctly; for example, drinks from a cup, brushes hair • Bangs two things together • Puts things in a container, takes things out of a container • Lets things go without help • Pokes with index (pointer) finger • Follows simple directions like "pick up the toy"
18 months	• Knows what ordinary things are for; for example, telephone, brush, spoon • Points to get the attention of others • Shows interest in a doll or stuffed animal by pretending to feed • Points to one body part • Scribbles on own • Can follow 1-step verbal commands without any gestures; for example, sits when you say "sit down"

2 years	• Finds things even when hidden under two or three covers • Begins to sort shapes and colors • Completes sentences and rhymes in familiar books • Plays simple make-believe games • Builds towers of 4 or more blocks • Might use one hand more than the other • Follows two-step instructions such as “Pick up your shoes and put them in the closet.” • Names items in a picture book such as a cat, bird, or dog

Table 4.4 - Language Milestones from 2 Months to 2 Years [39]

Typical Age	What Most Children Do By This Age
2 months	• Coos, makes gurgling sounds • Turns head toward sounds
4 months	• Begins to babble • Babbles with expression and copies sounds he hears • Cries in different ways to show hunger, pain, or being tired
6 months	• Responds to sounds by making sounds • Strings vowels together when babbling (“ah,” “eh,” “oh”) and likes taking turns with parent while making sounds • Responds to own name • Makes sounds to show joy and displeasure • Begins to say consonant sounds (jabbering with “m,” “b”)
9 months	• Understands “no” • Makes a lot of different sounds like “mamamama” and “bababababa” • Copies sounds and gestures of others • Uses fingers to point at things
1 year	• Responds to simple spoken requests • Uses simple gestures, like shaking head “no” or waving “bye-bye” • Makes sounds with changes in tone (sounds more like speech) • Says “mama” and “dada” and exclamations like “uh-oh!” • Tries to say words you say
18 months	• Says several single words • Says and shakes head now • Points to show others what is wanted

2 years	• Points to things or pictures when they are named • Knows names of familiar people and body parts • Says sentences with 2 to 4 words • Follows simple instructions • Repeats words overheard in conversation • Points to things in a book

Table 4.5 - Social and Emotional Milestones from 2 Months to 2 Years [40]

Typical Age	What Most Children Do By This Age
2 months	• Begins to smile at people • Can briefly calm self (may bring hands to mouth and suck on hand) • Tries to look at parent
4 months	• Smiles spontaneously, especially at people • Likes to play with people and might cry when playing stops • Copies some movements and facial expressions, like smiling or frowning
6 months	• Knows familiar faces and begins to know if someone is a stranger • Likes to play with others, especially parents • Responds to other people's emotions and often seems happy • Likes to look at self in a mirror
9 months	• May be afraid of strangers • May be clingy with familiar adults • Has favorite toys
1 year	• Is shy or nervous with strangers • Cries when mom or dad leaves • Has favorite things and people • Shows fear in some situations • Hands you a book when she wants to hear a story • Repeats sounds or actions to get attention • Puts out arm or leg to help with dressing • Plays games such as "peek-a-boo" and "pat-a-cake"
18 months	• Likes to hand things to others as play • May have temper tantrums • May be afraid of strangers • Shows affection to familiar people • Plays simple pretend, such as feeding a doll • May cling to caregivers in new situations • Points to show others something interesting • Explores alone but with parent close by

2 years	• Copies others, especially adults and older children • Gets excited when with other children • Shows more and more independence • Shows defiant behavior (doing what he has been told not to) • Plays mainly beside other children, but is beginning to include other children, such as in chase games

Table 4.6 - Gross Motor Milestones from 3 Years to 5 Years [41]

Typical Age	What Most Children Do by This Age
3 years	• Climbs well • Runs easily • Pedals a tricycle (3-wheel bike) • Walks up and down stairs, one foot on each step
4 years	• Hops and stands on one foot up to 2 seconds • Catches a bounced ball most of the time
5 years	• Stands on one foot for 10 seconds or longer • Hops; may be able to skip • Can do a somersault • Can use the toilet on own • Swings and climbs

Table 4.7 - Fine Motor Milestones from 3 Years to 5 Years [42]

Typical Age	What Most Children Do by This Age
3 years	• Copies a circle with pencil or crayon • Turns book pages one at a time • Builds towers of more than 6 blocks • Screws and unscrews jar lids or turns door handle
4 years	• Pours, cuts with supervision, and mashes own food • Draws a person with 2 to 4 body parts • Uses scissors • Starts to copy some capital letters
5 years	• Can draw a person with at least 6 body parts • Can print some letters or numbers • Copies a triangle and other geometric shapes • Uses a fork and spoon and sometimes a table knife

Table 4.8 - Cognitive Milestones from 3 Years to 5 Years [43]

Typical Age	What Most Children Do by This Age
3 years	• Can work toys with buttons, levers, and moving parts • Plays make-believe with dolls, animals, and people • Does puzzles with 3 or 4 pieces • Understands what “two” means
4 years	• Names some colors and some numbers • Understands the idea of counting • Starts to understand time • Remembers parts of a story • Understands the idea of “same” and “different” • Plays board or card games • Tells you what he thinks is going to happen next in a book
5 years	• Counts 10 or more things • Knows about things used every day, like money and food

Table 4.9 - Language Milestones from 3 Years to 5 Years [44]

Typical Age	What Most Children Do By This Age
3 years	• Follows instructions with 2 or 3 steps • Can name most familiar things • Understands words like “in,” “on,” and “under” • Says first name, age, and sex • Names a friend • Says words like “I,” “me,” “we,” and “you” and some plurals (cars, dogs, cats) • Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time • Carries on a conversation using 2 to 3 sentences
4 years	• Knows some basic rules of grammar, such as correctly using “he” and “she” • Sings a song or says a poem from memory such as the “Itsy Bitsy Spider” or the “Wheels on the Bus” • Tells stories • Can say first and last name
5 years	• Speaks very clearly • Tells a simple story using full sentences • Uses future tense; for example, “Grandma will be here.” • Says name and address

Table 4.10 - Social and Emotional Milestones from 3 Years to 5 Years [45]

Typical Age	What Most Children Do by This Age
3 years	• Copies adults and friends • Shows affection for friends without prompting • Takes turns in games • Shows concern for a crying friend • Dresses and undresses self • Understands the idea of “mine” and “his” or “hers” • Shows a wide range of emotions • Separates easily from mom and dad • May get upset with major changes in routine
4 years	• Enjoys doing new things • Is more and more creative with make-believe play • Would rather play with other children than by self • Cooperates with other children • Plays “mom” or “dad” • Often can’t tell what’s real and what’s make-believe • Talks about what she likes and what she is interested in
5 years	• Wants to please friends • Wants to be like friends • More likely to agree with rules • Likes to sing, dance, and act • Is aware of gender • Can tell what’s real and what’s make-believe • Shows more independence • Is sometimes demanding and sometimes very cooperative

Time Sampling or Frequency Counts

When a teacher wants to know how often or how infrequent a behavior is occurring, they will use a Frequency Count to track a child’s behavior during a specific timeframe. This technique can help teachers track a child’s social interactions, play preferences, temperamental traits, aggressive behaviors, and activity interests.

Checklists

When a teacher wants to look at a child’s overall development, checklists can be a very useful tool to determine the presence or absence of a particular skill, milestone or behavior. Teachers will observe children during play times, circle times and centers, and will check-off the skills and behaviors as they are observed. Checklists help to determine which developmental skills have been mastered, which skills are emerging, and which skills have yet to be learned.

Technology

Teachers can use video recorders, cameras and tape recorders to record children while they are actively playing. This is an ideal method for capturing authentic quotes and work samples. Information gathered by way of technology can also be used with other screening tools and techniques as supporting evidence. (Note: it is important to be aware of center policies and procedures regarding proper consent before photographing or taping a child).

Event Sampling and the ABC Technique

When an incident occurs, we may wonder what triggered that behavior. The Event Sampling or ABC technique helps us to identify the social interactions and environmental situations that may cause children to react in certain ways. If we are to reinforce someone's positive behavior, or change someone's negative behavior, we must first try to understand what might be causing that particular behavior. With an ABC Analysis, the observer is looking for and tracking a specific behavior . More than the behavior itself, the observer wants to understand what is causing the behavior – this is antecedent. The antecedent happens before the behavior. It is believed that if the observer can find the "triggers" that might be leading up to or causing the challenging behavior, then potential strategies can be planned to alter, redirect or end the challenging behavior. In addition to uncovering the antecedent, what happens after the behavior is just as important, this is the "consequence." How a child is treated after the incident or challenging behavior can create a positive or negative reinforcement pattern. In short, the ABC technique tells a brief story of what is happening before, during, and after a noted behavior.

The ABC observation method requires some training and practice. The observer must practice being neutral and free of bias, judgement and assumption in order to collect and record objective evidence and to portray an accurate picture. Although it may be uncomfortable to admit, certain behaviors can frustrate a teacher. If the teacher observes a child while feeling frustrated or annoyed, this can possibly taint the observation data. It is important to record just the facts. And to review the whole situation before making any premature assumptions.

Collecting your data

If you have a concern about a child's behavior or if you have noticed a time when a child's behavior has been rather disruptive, you will schedule a planned observation. For this type of observation, you can either video record the child in classroom environment, or you can take observation notes using a Running Record or Anecdotal Record technique. To find a consistent pattern, it is best to tape or write down your observations for several days to find a true and consistent pattern. To document your observations, include the child's name, date, time, setting, and context. Observe and write down everything you see and hear before, during and after the noted behavior.

Organizing your data

Divide a piece of paper into 3 sections: A – for Antecedent; B – for Behavior; and C- for Consequence. Using your observation notes you will organize the information you collected into the proper sections. As you record the observation evidence, remember to report just the facts as objectively as possible. Afterwards, you will interpret the information and look for patterns. For example, did you find any "triggers" before the behavior occurred? What kind of "reinforcement" did the child receive after the behavior? What are some possible strategies you can try to minimize or redirect the challenging behavior? Do you need to make environmental changes? Are their social interactions that need to be further monitored? With challenging behaviors, there is not a quick fix or an easy answer. You must follow through and continue to observe the child to see if your strategies are working.

Pin It! The ABC Method

(A) Antecedent : Right before an incident or challenging behavior occurs, something is going on to lead up to or prompt the actual incident or behavior.

For example, one day during lunch Susie spills her milk (this behavior has happened several times before). Rather than focusing solely on the incident itself (Susie spilling the milk), look to see what was going on before the incident. More specifically, look to see if Susie was in a hurry to finish her snack so she could go outside and play? Was Susie being silly? Which hand was Susie using – is this her dominant hand? Is the milk pitcher too big for Susie to manipulate?

(B) Behavior: This refers to the measurable or observable actions.

In this case, it is Susie spilling the milk.

(C) Consequence: The consequence is what happens directly after the behavior.

For example, right after Susie spilt the milk, did you yell at her or display an unhappy or disgusted look? Did Susie cry? Did Susie attempt to clean up the milk? Did another child try to help Susie?

Watch this video for more information on the ABC model : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UVKb_BXEp5U

ABC Template		
Observer		Date
Child: Age:	Time: Location: Setting:	Background Information:
Antecedent	**Behavior**	**Consequence**
Interpretations		
Plan of Action / Strategies		

The Practice of Screening and Evaluating

Beyond monitoring, once a child has been “red-flagged” they will need to be assessed by a professional who will use a formal diagnostic tool to evaluate the child’s development. Families can request that a formal screening be conducted at the local elementary school if their child is 3 to 5 years old. Depending upon the nature of the red flag, there are a battery of tools that can be used to evaluate a child’s development. Here are some guidelines:

- Screenings are designed to be brief (30 minutes or less)
- A more comprehensive assessment and formal evaluation must be conducted by a professional in order to confirm or disconfirm any red flags that were raised during the initial monitoring or screening process
- Families must be treated with dignity, sensitivity and compassion while their child is going through the screening process
- Use a screening tool from a reputable publishing company

Screening Instruments and Evaluation Tests

The instruments listed below are merely a sample of some of the developmental and academic screening tests that are widely used.

Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ), Brookes Publishing Company (available in Spanish, French, and Korean)

Battelle Developmental Inventory Screening Test, Riverside Publishing

Developmental Indicators for Assessment of Learning (DIAL) III, Pearson Assessments (includes Spanish materials)

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), University of Oregon Center on Teaching and Learning

Early Screening Inventory-Revised (ESI-R), Pearson Early Learning (includes separate scoring for preschool and kindergarten) [46]

	Pin It! Reliability and Validity Defined Reliability means that the scores on the tool will be stable regardless of when the tool is administered, where it is administered, and who is administering it. Reliability answers the question: Is the tool producing consistent information across different circumstances? Reliability provides assurance that comparable information will be obtained from the tool across different situations. Validity means that the scores on the tool accurately capture what the tool is meant to capture in terms of content. Validity answers the question: Is the tool assessing what it is supposed to assess?

This page titled 4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs

Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs

Throughout the past 40 years there have been some significant changes in both state and federal laws, as well as with public policy and social attitudes towards integrating children with special needs and learning disabilities into typical classroom settings. Stigmas from the past have dissipated and more inclusive practices are in place. In addition to Federal laws such as the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), there are national associations such as the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) who rally to protect the rights of children with disabilities or other special needs. As stated in their joint position on inclusion, the DEC and NAEYC believe:

Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs and services are access, participation, and supports. (p. 141; DEC and NAEYC 2009, 1)

When early caregivers and preschool teachers practice monitoring as part of their regular routines, they demonstrate accountability and responsive caregiving. Nearly 65% of children are identified as having a special need, disability, delay or impairment, and will require some special services or intervention. As early educators our role is twofold:

1. Provide an environment where children feel safe, secure and cared for
2. Help children develop coping skills to decrease stress and promote learning and development

Individualized Education Plan?

Some children may need more individualized support and might benefit from specialized services or individualized accommodations. Children who are over the age of 3 who qualify for special education must have an individualized education program (IEP) in place. As required by both federal and state laws, IEPs must have clearly identified goals and objectives that can be regularly monitored. IEPs are designed by a TEAM that usually includes the child's parents or guardians, the preschool teacher, special education professionals (e.g. behaviorists, speech pathologists, occupational therapists). Together the team plans appropriately accommodations, modifications and makes recommendations that will help the child meet their developmental goals.

While everyone on the team has a role, the teacher's role is to integrate approaches that can best support the child while in class. For example, if the IEP notes that the child needs support with language development, the teacher would consider finding someone in class who could provide peer to peer scaffolding. The teacher would want to find someone who has strong language skills, and who is cooperative and kind to others. She would then partner the two children up throughout the day so that the typical child could model ideal language skills to the child with the IEP. The teacher would also provide regular updates to parents, continue observing and monitoring the child's development, and would provide access to alternative resources and materials as much as possible. [47]

Creating Inclusive Learning Environments

To ensure that all children feel safe, secure and nurtured, teachers must strive to create a climate of cooperation, mutual respect and tolerance. To support healthy development, teachers must offer multiple opportunities for children to absorb learning experiences, as well as process information, at their own pace. While one child may be comfortable with simple verbal instructions to complete a particular task, another child may benefit from a more direct approach such as watching another child or adult complete the requested task first. Teachers who are devoted to observing their children are motivated to provide experiences that children will enjoy and be challenged by. The classroom is not a stagnant environment - it is ever-changing. In order to maintain a high-quality classroom setting, it is essential to utilize your daily observations of children and the environment to monitor the experiences and interactions to ensure there is a good fit. [48]

This page titled 4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

4.4: Conclusion and References

Monitoring, screening and evaluating children is both necessary and takes time and practice. Rather than waiting until there is a major concern, intentional teachers should conduct observations on a regular basis to closely monitor each child's development. By watching children, we can find patterns. Once we understand the patterns, we can better understand why children do what they do, and ideally, we can create an inclusive learning environment that meets the needs of all our children. Understanding that over half of the children in your classroom may potentially have some special need, disability, delay or impairment is crucial. Recognizing that unless we observe regularly, we won't be able to refer families in a timely manner to get the support services and professional help that they need is essential. Research tells us that children who receive early intervention are more likely to master age-appropriate developmental milestones, have i ncreased academic readiness and are more apt to socialize with their peers. It is important to remember that everyone in the classroom, including teachers, assistants and directors and supervisors, should be involved with monitoring a child's development. As you continue to read this text, you will discover how observations are essential in planning effective curriculum, documenting children's learning, assessing development and communicating with families. [49]

Referrals, Agencies and Support Groups [50]

Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD)
AIDD seeks to improve and increase services for individuals with developmental disabilities that promote independence and inclusion in society. This website contains information on AIDD's programs and other helpful resources, such as a developmental disabilities program directory by state and grants and funding information.

American Academy of Pediatrics
The American Academy of Pediatrics comprises pediatricians committed to the health of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. The website contains general information about children's health, as well as more specific information about guidelines, policies, and publications. This organization also hosts a website specifically for parents

Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR)
The CPIR serves as a central resource of information and products to the community of Parent Training Information Centers and the Community Parent Resource Centers, so that they can focus their efforts on serving families of children with disabilities.

Department of Education
The U.S. Department of Education (DOE) has resources to assist with the educational needs of children with developmental disabilities.

The DOE's Technical Assistance and Dissemination Network (TA&D Network)

Provides links to a variety of other websites and online resources that focus on special education issues, such as policy, technology, curricula and parent trainings.

The DOE's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) Provides support to parents and individuals, school districts, and states in three main areas:

- Special education: Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)external icon
- Vocational rehabilitation: Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)external icon
- DisabilityMeasures.org
  DisabilityMeasures.org is an online resource with measurement tools for assessment, screening, and research concerning individuals with disabilities.

First Signs
First Signs is dedicated to educating parents and professionals about early identification and intervention for children at risk for developmental delays and disorders, including autism.

Insure Kids Now!
Each state provides no-cost or low-cost health insurance coverage for eligible children through Medicaid and the Children's

Health Insurance Program. This website has basic facts about these programs. It also has links to each state's insurance program for children, where you can learn who is eligible for the programs, how to apply, and what services are covered. Information is available in English and Spanish.

MedlinePlus
MedlinePlus, a service of the U.S. National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health, provides information on many different types of developmental disabilities, as well as resources on prevention and screening, research, statistics, law and policy, and more.

My Child Without Limits
My Child Without Limits provides resources for families of young children from birth through 5 years of age with developmental delays or disabilities, as well as for professionals who work with these individuals. The site also has a national resource locator where visitors can find local service providers, community organizations, and government agencies.

National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD)
The NACDD supports state and territorial councils in implementing the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act and promoting the interests and rights of individuals with disabilities and their families.

National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR)external icon
NIDILRR is a federal government grants-making agency that sponsors grantees to generate new disability and rehabilitation knowledge and promote its use and adoption.

National Institutes of Health (NIH)
Several institutes within the NIH conduct and fund research about developmental disabilities. They also offer information to the public and educational programs for health professionals. They include:

National Eye Institute (NEI)
The NEI studies ways to prevent and treat eye diseases and vision problems and to improve the lives of people with these conditions.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)
The NICHD conducts and supports research on all stages of human development to better understand the health of children, adults, families, and communities, including those with developmental disabilities.

National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)
The NIDCD studies hearing loss, deafness, and problems with speech and language.

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)external icon
The NIMH studies mental illness and behavior problems, including such conditions as autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and learning disabilities.

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)external icon
NINDS studies the causes, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of brain and nervous system disorders such as cerebral palsy and epilepsy.

References

- CDC. (n.d.) Developmental Monitoring. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/screening.html
- CDC. (n.d.). Developmental Monitoring and Screening. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/Dev-Mon-and-Screen-English-and-Spanish-P.pdf

This page titled 4.4: Conclusion and References is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

5: HOW TO PLAN EFFECTIVE AND MEANINGFUL CURRICULUM

5.1: Introduction
5.2: What is Curriculum?
5.3: Benefits of Implementing Meaningful Curriculum
5.4: A Teachers Role
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle
5.7: Conclusion

This page titled 5: How to Plan Effective and Meaningful Curriculum is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

5.1: Introduction

One of the highlights of being a preschool teacher was setting up my classroom environment at the beginning of each new school year. There was so much anticipation and excitement as I thoughtfully organized my classroom, stocked the learning centers with new materials, and planned curriculum activities. I especially enjoyed purchasing a new lesson plan book and writing up activity plans for each month. I gathered ideas from various teacher resource books that primarily focused on seasonal themes and kindergarten readiness skills – like language arts and math. As I carefully considered topics for each month, I planned for indoor and outdoor activities, music and movement activities, along with a variety of play opportunities. I thought about creative art projects and planned for engaging circle time discussions. I created quiet corners, learning centers, decorated the walls with store-bought posters, and strived to make the classroom environment safe and welcoming. Some twenty years later, as I write this text and reflect on my own experiences as a preschool teacher, there are a few questions that come to mind:

1. Who was I planning curriculum for – me, the children, their families or my program director?
2. How could I possibly have planned meaningful curriculum if I didn't even know the children who were being placed in my care?
3. How could I be intentional if I didn't even know the children's individual interests, abilities and needs?

In this chapter, we will examine how observation and documentation are used to develop effective curriculum. We will explore what curriculum is and we will discuss the benefits of planning developmentally appropriate curriculum. Additionally, the teacher's role will be examined. Lastly, we will discuss how to plan effective and meaningful curriculum using observation, documentation, interpretation, and reflection as best practices.

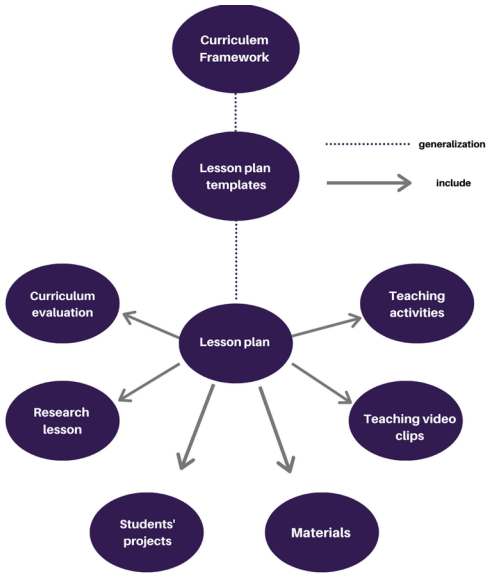

Figure 5.1 Lesson Plan Concept Mapping . [51]

This page titled 5.1: Introduction is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

5.2: What is Curriculum?

In early care and education, we value how children process information, we recognize how important their feelings are, and we place great significance on how children learn to socialize with others. As intentional teachers, our primary goal is to incorporate curriculum that supports the “whole-child” in all domains of development including social, emotional, physical, and intellectual. The word “curriculum” can mean different things to different people. For some, curriculum can provide the framework for learning, for others it can be a variety of planned activities, still for others curriculum is a way to drive learning outcomes, goals and objectives. Curriculum can be developed by teachers, or it can be purchased as part of a prefabbed program. Curriculum can be child-directed, and it can be teacher-directed. According to a joint position paper by the National Association for the Education of Young Child (NAEYC) and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Department of Education (NAECS-SDE), “Curriculum is an organized framework that delineates the content children are to learn, the processes through which children achieve identified curricular goals, what teachers do to help achieve these goals, and the context in which teaching and learning occur” (2009). In other words, curriculum helps teachers organize the day to day activities, it outlines the learning goals and outcomes that teachers need to assess, and lastly, curriculum provides teachers with the guidance and structure that they need to teach. [52]

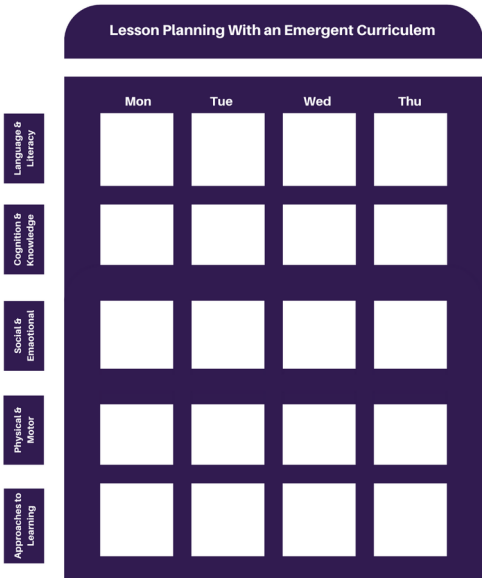

Figure 5.2 Lesson Planning with an Emergent Curriculum. [53]

This page titled 5.2: What is Curriculum? is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

5.3: Benefits of Implementing Meaningful Curriculum

From the moment a child is born, each interaction and experience affects their brain development and lays the foundation for future success. Research on brain development shows that early experiences are essential. It is suggested that if children are not interested in what they are learning, and if it is not meaningful or connected to their cultural practices, they will not create new neural pathways in which to store new knowledge. Subsequently, children will not retain information or learn as intended. As suggested in the California Early Learning Foundations, well planned curriculum provides opportunities for children to use, build, and master skills. With every engaging activity, children are encouraged to investigate key concepts in mathematics, science, and literacy, explore their creativity, establish relationships with peers, and develop self-efficacy skills. [54]

It is important to note that thoughtful curriculum planning does not just impact children for that present moment. A high-quality program that incorporates meaningful curriculum can provide long-lasting benefits. As demonstrated with the Abecedarian Project, a vastly recognized longitudinal research study that followed a group of 111 children into adulthood, not only did the children who received high-quality child care outperform their peers in math and reading, 30 years later project participants continued to exhibit significant merits as compared to their counterparts in the control group. More specifically, children that participated in the Abecedarian Project were four times more likely to earn a college degree. Additionally, it was reported that "Twenty-three percent of the participants graduated from a four-year college or university compared to only 6 percent of the control group." Other significant benefits included: participants were more likely to have been consistently employed (75 percent had worked full time for at least 16 of the previous 24 months, compared to 53 percent of the control group) and less likely to have used public assistance (only 4 percent received benefits for at least 10 percent of the previous seven years, compared to 20 percent of the control group). They also showed a tendency to delay parenthood by almost two years compared to the control group. Project participants also appeared to have done better in relation to several other social and economic measures (including higher incomes) but those results were not statistically significant. [55]

Figure 5.3 Robust Curriculum [56]

This page titled 5.3: Benefits of Implementing Meaningful Curriculum is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

5.4: A Teachers Role

With curriculum being the cornerstone for children's learning, how can we be certain that children are receiving reputable curriculum that reflects their varying academic abilities, learning styles, personalities, interests, background knowledge, cultural experiences and levels of motivation for learning ? Teachers are the linchpin. As stated in the article "Observing, Planning, Guiding: How an Intentional Teacher Meets Standards through Play" by Patricia McDonald, "teachers are researchers, observing children to decide how to extend their learning both in the moment and by planning new play environments" (p.3). [57] For all intents and purposes, teachers play a pivotal role in setting up the environment, providing the learning experiences and guiding children so they can construct concepts, develop new skill sets, and discover who they are. Additionally, teachers are active participants in a child's development as they watch, listen and think about what each child needs to thrive. As teachers monitor numerous situations throughout the day, they must consider when to step in and engage the children, and when to step aside and allow students to scaffold one another. At the center of it all, teachers who really know their children are better equipped to find the right balance of how to engage, motivate and challenge learners. So then, how do teachers learn about the intricate details of what each child needs? Let's take a closer look at how observation, documentation, interpretation, and reflection are used to support children's learning, growth, and development.

This page titled 5.4: A Teachers Role is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance

Observation: Looking and Listening

- May be Spontaneous or Planned
- Watch and listen to children while they explore, investigate, play, problem solve, interact and socialize
- Keep an open mind as you gather evidence and artifacts, and look for what children CAN DO

Observe children during daily routines, transition times, mealtimes, and while inside and outside

Documentation: Recording and Collecting Objective Evidence

- Record what you see and hear
- Include date, time, and location
- Include child's first name
- Include who else is engaged in the activity
- Document the purpose of the activity – highlighting what the child is supposed to do
- All recorded evidence should be concise, factual and have descriptive details
- Use a variety of observation and documentation methods and tools to collect evidence

Record actual evidence as you see it (avoid summarizing or assuming)

Interpretation: Analyzing Data

Ask questions: What is this action telling me?

- How did the child approach the activity and how long did the child stay engaged?
- Is this behavior typical for the child or unusual?
- Would this child benefit from peer scaffolding?
- Does this child need more individualized support?
- Does this child have more feisty, flexible or fearful temperament traits?
- How can I motivate this child?
- Were there any new play patterns or social interactions?
- Did the child master any new skills or milestones?
- Are there any skills or milestones that need further support?
- Were there any "red flags"?

When analyzing behavior, consider the ABCs: the Antecedent (What happened BEFORE), the Behavior (as it happens) and the Consequence (what happened AFTER)

Review previous observations to monitor progress over time

Reflection: Planning for the Next Step

- How can I set up the environment to incorporate the children's interests?
- What resources and materials will I need?
- What milestones, learning goals and objectives can I further support with this activity?
- How can I create a "good fit" for this child's temperament?
- Did I acknowledge children when they met expectations, and did I provide genuine praise to reinforce positive behaviors?
- Am I setting clear expectations?
- Do I need to change the routines or schedule?
- Have I incorporated all the developmental domains and considered the whole child?
- Did I plan for individual activities, small group, and larger group opportunities

Implementation: Applying Best Practices

- Create quiet and active spaces
- Plan for indoor and outdoor learning experiences
- Provide a variety of materials that will encourage open-ended play and exploration
- Follow a consistent routine and schedule
- Plan teacher-directed activities and create centers based on children's interest
- Consider the project approach and allow concepts to develop over time rather than a one and done
- Create a balance of play-based learning opportunities and skill-based learning opportunities?
- Plan to accommodate the diverse needs of each child
- Create a respectful and caring classroom environment that is supportive and nurturing to all learners

This page titled 5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle

Children reveal who they are and how they think through their actions and behavior. How they play with others, how they use materials, and even the types of activities they choose to tell us a story. Each child has their own story to tell and it is up to us, as intentional teachers, to gather essential evidence and artifacts that can be used to inform our decisions on how to best support each child's learning, growth and development. Curriculum should be thoughtfully planned, challenging, engaging, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, comprehensive, and likely to promote positive outcomes for all young children. [58] To guide our decision making and to effectively implement meaningful curriculum we must utilize the Curriculum-Planning Process. Let's examine and discuss the 4 steps of the cycle.

Step 1: Observation – Looking and Listening

To develop effective curriculum, quality observations must be conducted. Whether spontaneous or planned, formal or informal, in-depth observations provide teachers with an advantage point. With each observation, teachers gain valuable insight that helps them gauge a child's zone of proximal development, and with that information, teachers can decide on how to best scaffold that child's learning. Likewise, teachers who conduct ongoing observations discover each child's baseline knowledge, and with that data, they can develop curriculum that supports children's play and learning in a developmentally appropriate manner. Furthermore, a teacher who regularly observes can track children's interests which in turn helps her to select materials and resources that will fascinate, intrigue, challenge and engage the children. Thus, when teachers take detailed notes and record objective facts, they recognize each child's individual pace, temperament, capabilities, interests and needs. It is with this vital data that they can ultimately meet children where they are at developmentally and map out where they need to go by intentionally setting reasonable expectations and goals.

To truly discover a child's intent, teachers need to be fully attentive to what children are doing and saying while they are playing and interacting with others. To be fully attentive requires a particular state of mind. Rather than being actively engaged with children or guiding their behavior or directing their play, teachers need to find moments where they can focus on looking and listening . Teachers need to approach each observation with an open mind - free of bias and preconceived notions, and they need to have an open lens to see what children are actually doing. Sometimes we can only look and listen for a brief moment; sometimes we can look and listen for a longer timeframe. Either way, we need to take in all that we are seeing and hearing so that we can discover a window into the child's thinking and find clues as to what they are capable of.

An observation is often prompted by a question. Here are a few questions that might guide your next observation:

- "In what ways are the children using the new materials in the block area?"
- "Which children can cut a zig-zag line with scissors?"
- "Who will recognize their name tag that is posted on the outside table?"
- "Will Sofia play with a peer today or keep to herself?"
- "I wonder how Jackson will do at drop-off today?"
- "I'm curious to see how the children will react to painting with fall leaves and who will try?
- "What activity area are the children using the most while outside?"

As teachers observe to find answers to questions like those mentioned above, they will need to record what children are doing and saying. No matter which tool, technique or method is used, teachers need to document what they are observing.

Step 2: Documentation – Recording Evidence and Gathering Artifacts

Documentation provides the vital evidence and visual artifacts that teachers need to accurately track each child's learning, growth and development in order to plan developmentally appropriate curriculum. Documentation helps teachers hold into memory the significant moments of play, exploration and learning. To gather data, teachers can opt to use several tools and techniques. Whether a teacher uses an anecdotal note, frequency count, or checklist to gather documentation, the goal is to have an extensive collection of factual evidence, along with work samples, that highlight each child's actions and behaviors, verbal and nonverbal communication skills, social interaction and intellectual abilities.

Let's take a moment to reiterate information that was discussed in a previous chapter about how to write effective evidence. First,

all documentation needs to be factual. Teachers need to write down exactly what the children do and say. Second, it is suggested that you record as many descriptive details as you can, while remaining as objective as possible. Third, document the whole child's development. More specifically,

1. Look for what children "can do" and note the milestones that have been mastered
2. Track language development by recording pertinent conversations
3. Track play patterns to see who engages in cooperative play and who prefers to play alone
4. Watch the interactions and social dynamics between peers
5. Next, in order to track a child's development over time, remember to include the following information: date; time; location and setting; activity; and note the children that are engaged in the activity. Lastly, to plan meaningful curriculum, you will need to regularly review all the documentation you have collected so that you can ponder and interpret what was observed.

Pin It! Documentation Sample

Date: 2/10/19

Time: 9:30 -9:45

Location and Setting: Inside during Active Investigation Time. The following centers were open: Science – magnifying glass and leaves, Art – painting with pom poms, blocks with transportation vehicles, computer station – Clifford the Big Red Dog.

Activity : Science Area

Children Present: Hannah and Zoey

Hannah and Zoey were in the science area. They scooted their chairs up to the counter where the class pet gecko was perched. "Hello, Gex. How are you today? What are you eating? Asked Hannah. I love Gexy Gex don't you? Zoey asked Hannah. "Yeaaah," said Hannah. "I wish I had Gex," said Zoey. "Me too!" Said Hannah. The 2 girls sat next to Gex the Gecko until it was clean up time (about 10 minutes). Hannah sat with her back to Zoey. Zoey played with Hannah's hair (brushing it with her fingers maybe braiding it or putting it in a ponytail). They continued to chat back and forth to each other.

What are you able to interpret from this interaction?

You can learn more about documentation in this video by First 5 California "For the Record: Documenting Young Children's Learning and Development" : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WAy474XE6s

Step 3: Interpretation – Analyzing Observation Data

Before a teacher can reflect and plan developmentally appropriate curriculum, they must first interpret and analyze the documentation they have gathered. Ideally, as you observe and document, you are in the moment gathering snippets of detailed information and writing down objective facts. Once you have collected your data, only then will you begin to analyze "what does this all mean?". As you review your documentation, you begin to think about each child's individual actions, mannerisms, and behaviors, as well as ponder over peer interactions and group dynamics. Planning developmentally appropriate curriculum is somewhat like putting a puzzle together. As you wonder about the "why, who, what, when and how" you begin to put the pieces in place and generate potential curriculum ideas. First, you think about what the child can do on their own, and the milestones they have already mastered. Next, you think about if you are meeting each child where they are at developmentally. Then, you look for the areas of development that need further support. Lastly, you think about the zone of proximal development and how you might scaffold the children's learning so they can reach their potential learning goals. Ultimately, your interpretations will guide your planning efforts. Let's review the chart below: [59] The three zones of proximal development.

Figure 5.6.1: Learning Zones. The Integrated Nature of Learning by CDE is used with permission.

Besides analyzing documentation on your own, you can share information with your co-teachers. With factual notes and work samples that document what a child does or says, teachers can collectively discuss what they think, and they can pose additional questions. For example, at some programs, one teacher works a morning shift and a co-teacher works in the afternoon. Although they each will have their own set of observations, having the opportunity to collaborate and share information about the children in their care will only enhance their effectiveness when planning curriculum. Here are some possible questions they can ask each other:

- “What growth do you see?”
- “Are the peer interactions the same in the afternoon as they are in the morning?”
- “What are your thoughts on this behavior?”
- “How did you handle this transition?”

The high-quality practice of collaborating with co-teachers provides both professional and ethical support. When co-teachers are able to meet and discuss their observations, not only are they able to share their successes, they can also share their struggles. A co-teacher who is working alongside you will be familiar with the children and may have valuable insight that will help with your curriculum planning. They may be able to offer suggestions from a different perspective, as well as provide encouragement and empathy as needed. Another benefit of collaborating with a co-teacher is having the opportunity to share resources and materials with each other. Shared resources can extend curriculum possibilities. [61]

Whether you analyze your data on your own or collectively with a co-teacher, it is the careful interpretation of observations and documentation that generates ideas for the next steps in planning curriculum. [62]

Step 4 Reflection: Planning for the Next Step

It is during the reflective process that interpreting the meaning of children's behaviors and interactions becomes important. These interpretations give us insight into each child's story. Each child's story informs our responsive practice. With this valuable insight, we can:

- Adapt the environment
- Modify the daily schedule and/or routines
- Make decisions about how to guide the children's learning based on what the child knows and can do as well as what the child is ready to try. [63]

Curriculum planning requires a considerable amount of time. Teachers need time to observe and collect documentation, they need time to interpret their data, and they need time to reflect on how to use that data to plan effective strategies that will foster a child's learning. High-quality preschool programs that support intentional teaching allocate time in teachers' schedules for them to reflect and plan curriculum individually and collectively as a team. [64]

As we reflect, we must ask ourselves a wide range of questions. The answers to these questions lead to individualized care and learning. Let's look at a few questions you may ask yourself as you begin to plan developmentally appropriate curriculum:

- What skill or activity does the child appear to be working on?
- What learning strategies is the child using to play with different toys?
- Does the child engage with objects or people differently than a month ago? What has changed? What has not changed?
- Do my actions affect the outcomes of the child's experience? How so?
- How does the information relate to goals for the child? The family's goals? The program's school readiness goals?

Once we have reviewed all our data we can plan meaningful curriculum. The most effective curriculum will:

- Motivate children to explore their environment
- Inspire children to investigate various centers and activities
- Encourage children to create with new materials
- Allow children to engage in conversations and prompt them to ask questions
- Prompt children to interact with peers
- Permit children to problem solve
- Celebrate diversity and embrace uniqueness
- Accommodate each child's learning styles and individual needs

As teachers reflect on children's play, they discover possibilities for designing curriculum to sustain, extend, and help children's play to be more complex and, consequently, support the children's continual learning. Teachers review ideas for possible next steps in the curriculum. Possible steps might include adding materials to interest areas, books to read with large or small groups, activities to do in small groups, or a topic to investigate over time with the children. With clear ideas or objectives in mind, teachers plan curriculum that includes strategies to enhance the learning of all children in a group, as well as strategies to support the learning of individual children.

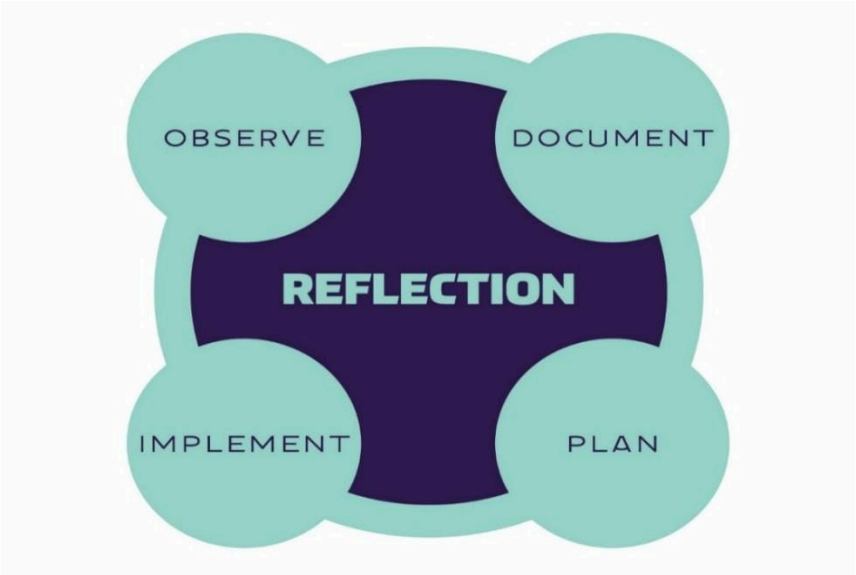

Figure 5.6.3: Reflection is the center of curriculum planning . [65]

Pin It! Observation and Documentation

Date: 10/10/19

Time : 10:45 – 10:55 am

Location and Setting : Inside during open exploration the following centers were open – easel painting, blocks with fall materials, dramatic play with firefighter and homelife, math center with pumpkin cut outs for counting

Activity: Dramatic Play Area and Library Area

Children Present : Joey

- Joey played in the dramatic play area. He was dressed up in the firefighter outfit. He held the toilet paper roll in his left hand and pointed it towards a basket of stuffed animals. As he waived the toilet paper roll back and forth (side to side) he said "pssssshhhhhsssshhh." After a minute or so, Joey dropped the toilet paper roll and picked up a stuffed doggie from the basket. He took the stuffed animal to the table. As he pet the doggie, he said "You're ok, You're ok aren't ya." He then kissed the doggie on the nose, picked it up and carried it over to the library area where he sat down on the carpet square. He put the dog in his lap and started to look through a book.

Interpretation:

- With the recent fires, I wonder if Joey saw firefighters on the news or working in his neighborhood?
- I wonder if Joey has family members that are firefighters?
- I wonder what other community helpers would be interesting to explore?
- Joey has not been observed reading before, I'm curious to see what milestones he has mastered? Can he turn the pages? Can he recognize letters or words? Can he recall information?
- Joey played by himself. In previous observations he played with Martin. I wonder if they had a disagreement with Martine. I wonder if Joey needed time to himself. Maybe Martin wasn't interested in playing firefighters.

Reflection:

- What materials can I add to the dramatic play area to extend Joey's interest in pretending to be a firefighter?
- Are there storybooks about community helpers that highlight firefighters?

Step 5: Implementation

Once a plan has been formally written, teachers will implement it accordingly. While implementing the plan, teachers watch and listen to determine if the curriculum was effective. They will watch how children respond to the activities, materials and resources, and how they interact with peers and the environment, and how they process new information. In essence, teachers are looking for “the light bulb to go off.” It is during the implementation step that the curriculum planning cycle begins again.

Think About It...Consider this Case Study

For the past few weeks, children in Miss Emily’s class (ages 3-5 years) have been watching the crops across the preschool grow. During lunchtime, Miss Emily heard the children talking about what they had for lunch. Later in the day, the children watched the sprinklers water the yard and ask the teacher about how the water gets to the sprinklers to water the grass. While playing outside at the sensory table, four children are fascinated with pouring and dumping water into pipes and seeing how far it can travel.

Figure 5.6.3: Public Domain; Nathan Lipscomb via Image)

Observation: Lucas is somewhat cautious in joining others in play. He stands to the side and watches others as they play.

Interpretation: Lucas appears to want to join the play, but may need just a little bit of support. I plan to watch for moments when he is on the sidelines of play, and find ways to invite him into the social play, and stay with him to support him in his encounters with the other children.

Questions to Consider

What can you infer about the children’s interests?

What can you infer about their knowledge base?

It would be safe to say that these children understand that for plants to grow, you need to water them. It would also be safe to infer that the children are most likely interested in how water travels, as you observed their actions at the water table and their questions of where and how water gets to sprinkler systems. As an intentional teacher, with your observations, you would maybe consider doing your next unit on water systems where you can incorporate all developmental domains, based on the children’s interests

This page titled 5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

5.7: Conclusion

While some planned curriculum activities might be based on a teacher's knowledge of age-appropriate developmental milestones, other activities might be prompted by children's interests or ideas, while other activities might be suggested by the children's families. To plan meaningful curriculum teachers are encouraged to utilize the curriculum planning cycle. Through careful observation, documentation and interpretation teachers collect evidence and gather artifacts that prompt inquiry as to what children know and need. With that information teachers can reflect, plan and implement effective curriculum so that children can thrive as they master the major developmental milestones and meet school readiness goals and objectives.

To ensure high-quality practice, teachers should consider incorporating daily routines, structured and unstructured activities, as well as space for self-discovery. Curriculum should be designed to encourage children to explore their classroom environment, socialize with others, and challenge themselves to reach new levels. As suggested by NAEYC, when planning curriculum teachers should consider using an assortment of materials that are appropriate to each child's age and stage of development. Well -planned curriculum considers each child's individual needs and includes adaptations for children with special needs and disabilities. Lastly, for curriculum to be truly meaningful and engaging it should be reflective of each child's cultural background and home-life practices. [67]

This page titled 5.7: Conclusion is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

6: USING DOCUMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT TO COMMUNICATE WITH FAMILIES

6.1: Introduction
6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art
6.3: Assessing Children's Development
6.4: Family Conferences

This page titled 6: Using Documentation and Assessment to Communicate with Families is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

6.1: Introduction

From the moment a child walks into their classroom, they are learning . They are learning from their peers, their teachers, their families and through their own trials, errors and explorations. How can we best communicate what children are learning to their families in a respectful and reassuring manner? How can we convey that a child's academic progress is just one aspect, as we strive to develop the whole child? In this chapter, we will discuss how intentional teachers use documentation and assessment to effectively communicate with families. The goal of this final chapter is to demonstrate how we connect observation, documentation and assessment all together to provide quality learning experiences for the children and families that we serve, and that there is value in everything we do as intentional teachers.

This page titled 6.1: Introduction is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art

When you walk into a classroom what do you typically see on the walls? Quite possibly you will see colorful posters, charts, family photos, and lots and lots of artwork. Have you ever wondered why we post things on our walls? Is it to make our classrooms more aesthetically pleasing? More colorful and eye-appealing? Do we want to motivate our children to do their best work because it will be posted for all to see? Are we trying to create a cozy space where our children can feel comfortable and feel like they belong? Are we hoping our parents see all the great work that we are doing? Everything that is posted on your classroom walls should communicate a message. Documentation Boards help us to convey important messages. A central message that I believe to be most important is that “Children Learn Through Play!”

When parents drop off and pick up their child, they may see their child playing with blocks, puzzles, playdough, or in the dramatic play area with their peers. To some, this type of open exploration or child-directed play (sometimes called free play) may look frivolous, inconsequential or perhaps trivial because it lacks formal instruction. The idea that learning can be playful, and fun may be difficult for some parents to understand. Many parents like to see some type of tangible evidence – for example, a finished worksheet or completed art project, to “know” that teaching and learning are happening. Thus, it is necessary for us as intentional teachers to convey the importance of play through formal documentation. We must provide parents with information that explains not only the end result,(or product) but the process of how curriculum activities are specifically designed to help children master milestones in all the developmental domains. More importantly, we must showcase that learning is a direct product of play.

Figure 6.1 Documentation Board . [68]

What are Documentation Boards

Documentation boards use observations and assessments to illustrate a child’s process of learning. When used effectively, documentation boards highlight the purpose of an activity and record the milestones that have been mastered (NAEYC , 2008). In order for parents to truly understand that children learn through play, documentation boards should include work samples or photos that highlight what the child did during the activity, along with several quotes to highlight the child’s thought process. When done correctly, teachers and families should be able to follow a child’s progress over time. Documentation Boards help teachers and families understand, without explanation, the child’s abilities and Interests. Documentation Boards provide clear evidence as to what children are learning throughout the school year in each of the developmental domains: Physical, Cognitive, Social, Emotional and Language.

What to Document

When I was a “young” teacher, I often felt obligated to post one piece of artwork for each child in the classroom so as to

be “fair” that each child was represented. On my classroom walls, I mostly posted artwork and I didn’t provide any caption or describe the purpose of the activity. Not only did that take a lot of time, but it also took up a lot of wall space. As I became more intentional (and a more “seasoned” teacher, I learned that there was a more efficient way to showcase children’s learning. I began to use documentation boards to make learning more visible. Since learning is happening all day - every day in the classroom, there are a variety of topics that can be presented. Documentation boards can illustrate something as simple as a child playing with sand and water for an hour, or something complex like a child learning how to tie their shoes over a long period of time. These boards can feature one child, a group of children, or the whole class. Here are some suggested topics to consider when creating a formal Documentation Board: daily routines, project-based activities, child-directed play and exploration, outdoor play experiences, circle-time conversations, developmental milestones, social relationships, and teacher-directed lesson plan activities. The topics are endless.

How to Make a Documentation Board

Posters, bulletin boards, and slide shows are all commonly used to create documentation boards. The format chosen to use for the documentation board should be reflective of the purpose, the audience, and the activity being presented. These boards can be simple, artistic, or even three dimensional. Before creating the board, consider the collaboration of additional teachers, children, and families. Having a team create the board adds a new level of depth, with various ideas and opinions. The first step is creating a title that invites families to approach the board. Next, mention the developmental milestones and goals for the activity (what the children are learning). Add photos and children’s quotes (both parents and children enjoy this), Include the steps that were taken or the process, and work samples as the final product. An extra step would be to add a recipe card or take-home handout so parents can replicate the activity at home. While constructing the board ask yourself, is this showing the child’s thought process, developmental growth, and both the child’s and teacher’s reflection. When creating your documentation boards remember that these boards respect all children’s work. The board needs to value efficiency over cuteness, and engagement over entertainment. (The Compass School, 2018). Lastly, the Documentation Board replaces the concept there needs to be one piece of artwork for each child in the class. When you post several documentation boards, all with different themes and purposes, you will no doubt capture all of the children in your care.

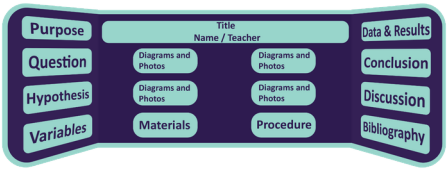

Figure 6.2 Documentation Board Template

Make a decision on what you want to communicate on the documentation board:

- Projects or themes
- Special events
- Specific curriculum areas
- Learning environments
- Skill acquisition
- Child development

Collect materials for the panel:

- Children's actual work or photocopies
- Observation notes / anecdotal records
- Information and quotes from books and journals
- Curriculum webs
- Quotes and dictation from children and teachers
- Photographs – various sizes (enlarge or shrink on a photocopier) – color, or black and white.

Select the best items that represent the idea or theme of your panel:

- Write an educational Caption for each piece
- Use a type size large enough to be read from a distance

Layout of panel:

- Determine where the panel will be displayed (on a table or wall?)
- Select a type of panel: poster board (best for wall) or three side3d board
- Title the panel
- Select a strong image as the focal point on the panel
- Aesthetics are important

- Matte work and photographs
- Use colored paper to support, not detract from, the images

The Perks of Using Portfolios

Another popular form of documentation is portfolios. Many programs use a portfolio system to record and store information about each child's learning, growth and development. Using both formal and informal observations, teachers begin collecting "evidence" within the first month of a child starting school. Throughout the school year, intentional teachers collect numerous work samples, anecdotal notes, learning stories, checklists, and frequency counts, and it is necessary to safely store everything in an organized manner. A portfolio is the most optimal way to do that. A portfolio helps teachers store observation notes, pieces of art, and photos that are needed to capture and highlight a child's individual strengths, interests and abilities. Portfolios can also store information about a child's thought process, behavior, social interactions, and needs. With all the stored documentation, teachers can assess a child's development.

Portfolios, like documentation boards, record and track a child's development. More specifically, a p ortfolio tells the unique story of each child's individual progress over time. Although portfolios are not designed to be an assessment tool, portfolios can be shared with families during a conference to showcase evidence of a child's learning throughout the school year. P ortfolios hold authentic samples and highlight a child's capabilities, achievements, and progress. During a conference, rather than receiving a handout with checked boxes that rate a child's level of learning, parents and family members will enjoy seeing first-hand what their child "can do." Having both a formal assessment and authentic work samples provides teachers and families a clear picture of the whole child's development.

Since learning and development are ongoing, portfolios have to be easy to use and accessible. Teachers will have to find a rhythm and medium that works best for their teaching style. Here are just a few examples of some portfolios:

- Electronic or e-portfolios stored on computers;
- Accordion files
- File folders,
- Three-ring binders,
- Creative memory photo albums

No matter which style of portfolio a teacher uses, it is important to label and date all pieces of evidence that you put into your portfolio.

This page titled 6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

6.3: Assessing Children's Development

Assessment is "a systematic process which allows for understanding a child's competencies" [69] Every child in your class needs to be assessed. To properly assess children, we use observations and documentation to determine a child's abilities, interests, strengths, and areas of development that may need additional support. The information gathered during observations guides the classroom routines, curriculum planning, and implementation to ensure quality care. Over time, assessments record a child's learning, growth, development, and social behavior. Assessments also provide an opportunity to share information with families that will build a bridge from school to home.

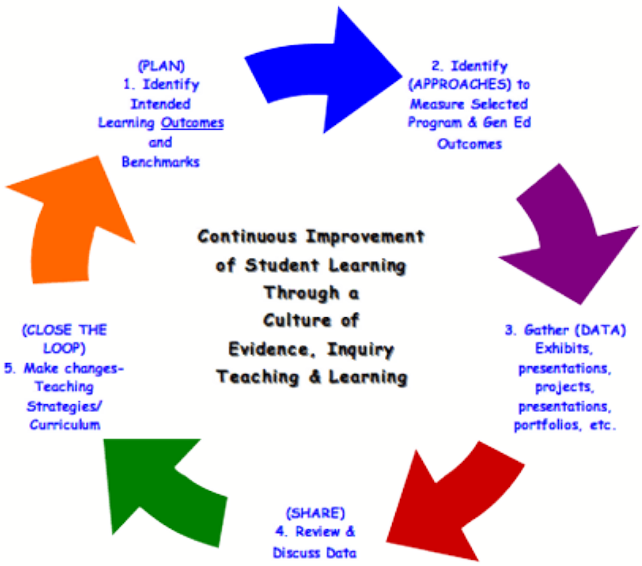

Figure 6.4 Assessment Cycle . [70]

Let's take a closer look at how we might use assessments in early childhood education. First, assessment is used to inform instruction and to guide teachers as they plan curriculum. With each observation a teacher can assess children's strengths and capabilities to determine an individualized plan of action with just the "right" balance of independent and group activities across all areas of development (e.g. social, emotional, creative, cognitive, language and physical). When teachers create meaningful curriculum based on the children's interest and abilities, research indicates that children will take greater strides in academic learning and are more likely to be successful throughout life.

For example, a teacher may notice that one of her students has difficulty joining in and socializing with classmates during group activities. A teacher will then consider activities that would encourage peer interactions while also considering opportunities to support their independence.

Second, assessment is designed for accountability and program evaluation. Assessments provide information that is needed to evaluate program practices and to inform program policies. One of the hallmark traits of a high-quality early childhood program is the practice of continuously monitoring children's development and responding to their learning needs. When administrators, teachers, and families reflect on program goals and outcomes they can determine specific areas that need improvement. Once areas are identified, they can focus on implementing professional development workshops and training in order to improve their ability in meeting the needs of children and families. For example, upon reviewing the math indicators for all of the kindergarten students in a school, the principal realizes that additional teacher training on math-related materials is needed to support math instruction and student learning across all of the kindergarten classrooms in the school.

Third, assessments are used to support school and family partnerships. Assessment helps teachers communicate important milestones in a child's development to families. More importantly, when teachers share their assessments with families, there is an opportunity for teachers and parents to work together to support children as they grow. Intentional teachers respect that parents are teachers on the "home front."

Additionally, families have valuable insight that they can contribute when assessing a child's needs. For example, a teacher may

not observe a child's ability to identify colors but through a discussion with the parents, the teacher learns that the child identifies colors of fruit at the grocery store. In this way, parents and teachers collaborate to better understand what needs to happen in the curriculum or at home to support the child's learning and growth. [71]

Figure 6.5 Children learn by interacting with their environment . [72]

Let's take a look at 4 Types of Assessments:

1. Screening tools
2. Diagnostic assessments
3. Formative assessments
4. Summative assessments

Figure 6.6 Workbooks assessment . [73]

Screening Tools

According to developmental theories, children may not reach developmental milestones at the same time. In early care and education, we recognize that there is an "acceptable range" for children to reach developmental milestones. That being said, we

also recognize that when development does not happen within an expected time frame “red flags” can be raised and teachers may have concerns about developmental disorders, health conditions, or other factors that may negatively impact the child’s development. A developmental screening is the early identification of children at risk for cognitive, motor, communication, or social-emotional delays that may interfere with expected growth, learning, and development, and may warrant further diagnosis, assessment, and evaluation. Programs may conduct the following screenings:

1. Developmental screening tools include the domains of cognition, fine and gross motor skills, speech and language, and social-emotional development.
2. Social-emotional screening is a component of developmental screening of young children that focuses on the early identification of possible delays in the expected development of a child’s ability to express and regulate emotions, form close and secure relationships, and explore his/her environment and learn.
3. Mental health screening is the early identification of children at risk for possible mental health disorders that may interfere with expected growth, learning, or development that warrant further diagnosis, assessment, or evaluation.

It is recommended that young children receive screenings to help identify potential problems or areas needing further evaluation. By recognizing developmental issues early, children can be provided with treatment or intervention more effectively, and additional developmental delays may be prevented. Developmental screenings should begin early in a child’s life and should be conducted through third grade. Practitioners should use reliable and valid screening tools that are age-appropriate, culturally inclusive and in the home child’s language.

Developmental screenings are often universally performed on large groups of children. The results generated from this type of procedure most commonly are used by programs to identify those few children who may need to receive a more extensive or “diagnostic” assessment for determining developmental delays or special needs. Screenings are brief, and usually effective in catching the most severe cases of children who would need a follow-up evaluation. Screening tools can also be used to assess whether a child is developmentally ready to graduate or move into the next educational level, in other words - a child’s school readiness. There is controversy around whether school districts should be permitted to use readiness tests since school districts are not permitted to deny children entry to kindergarten based on the results of a readiness test. One on side there are those that believe many children are often mislabeled. Because young children can demonstrate a wide range of results based on how comfortable they are at the time of the screening, screening results can be inaccurate and children, especially dual language learners, may be placed into remedial classes or special education programs. On the other hand, some proclaim that the screening process at this point will provide young children and their families with access to a wide variety of services early on.

Diagnostic Assessments

Diagnostic assessment tools are typically standardized for a large number of children. A score is given that reflects a child’s performance related to other children of the same age (and less common gender and ethnic origin). A diagnostic assessment typically results in a diagnosis for a child. Some common diagnoses are related to intelligence, intellectual disability, autism, learning disabilities, sensory impairment (deaf, blind), or neurologic disorders. Persons administering diagnostic assessment tools must meet state and national standards, certification, or licensing requirements. Some diagnostic assessment tools used for determining or identifying developmental issues are The Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI), the Bayley Scales of Infant Development (BSID), electroencephalogram (EEG), Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC), the Battelle Developmental Inventory (BDI), and the Pre-Language Assessment Survey (PreLAS). Many other diagnostic assessment tools are available for early childhood. The Buros Institute of Mental Measurements at the University of Nebraska publishes the Buros Mental Maturity Yearbook which helps educators and other childcare professionals choose a tool that is reliable and highly regarded in the diagnostic assessment community.

Formative Assessments

The primary purpose of the formative assessment is to gather evidence that teachers can use to inform instruction, implement learning opportunities and measure a child’s learning. As stated in previous chapters, through ongoing observations, evidence is collected and then used to measure the child’s learning. To gather an accurate account of what children are learning and how they are learning, observations should occur during daily activities and routines, and should be conducted indoor as well as outdoor. With this information, teachers make instructional adjustments to close the gap between a child’s current understanding and what the desired goals are for the child as recommended by formal assessment tools like the Desired Result Developmental Profile (DRDP).

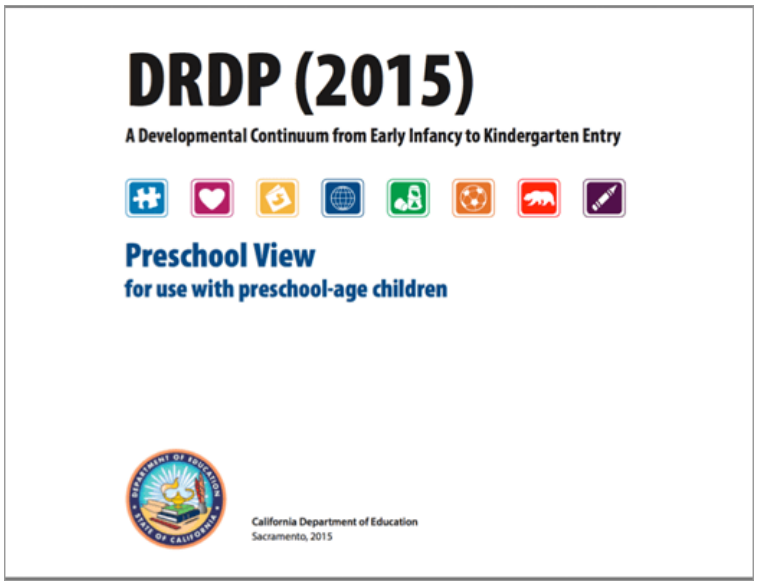

Figure 6.7 DRDP . [74]

Formative assessment can consist of formal assessments or informal assessments . Formal assessments are defined as highly valid and reliable and standardized tools that are administered in a similar manner each time for every child. These tools have standards of comparison (norm-referenced, standards-referenced, and criterion-referenced) to ensure equitable and consistent results. Such tools usually emerge from research studies published by a national company (e.g. Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) or Rating Scales that are based on the acquisition of age-appropriate developmental milestones). Informal assessments, on the other hand, usually may be published, but can also be developed by a teacher or program (i.e. a classroom checklist or frequency count chart). Informal assessments often utilize observable techniques such as anecdotal notes, work samples, and video recordings. Whether formal or informal tools and techniques are used, it is important to note that assessment is not a one-time event since it is difficult to gather valid and reliable information from just one observation technique or from one tool. Formative assessments are on-going.

For best results, intentional teachers are encouraged to assess children through authentic, naturalistic observations. Such observation should be collected throughout the school year, and not just when preparing for family conferences. Another best practice, early care educators are encouraged to actively involve young children with the assessment process. Informal observations and conversations are needed to purposefully plan intentional and individualized activities. Lastly, teachers are encouraged to share learning goals with both children and parents, as well as provide opportunities for children to monitor their ongoing progress. Learning Stories are a great technique to encourage joint collaboration between teachers, families, and children.

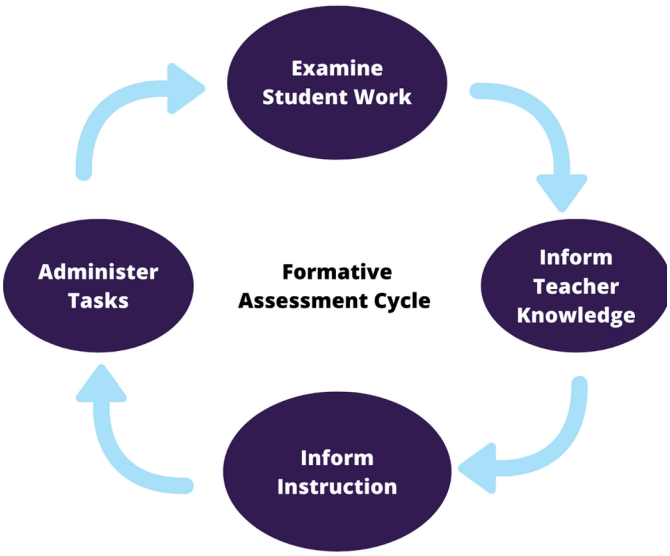

Figure 6.8 Formative Assessment Cycle . [75]

Summative Assessments

In primary grades, summative assessment, often called high-stakes assessments, are designed to measure a child's overall developmental progress at the end of a school year. These assessments can also be administered at certain grade levels for state or local accountability purposes (e.g. Blue-Ribbon Recognition). Summative assessments seek to measure a child's academic performance. Scores are published and parents are notified of their child's individual score along with their child's percentile ranking as compared to other children who are in the same grade. In early care and education however, summative assessments essentially look back to see how effective the teacher or program is at providing high-quality care. This is form of assessment allows families, teachers and administrators to evaluate instruction practices, curriculum, and whether a child is in need of intervention or teachers are in need of professional development. These assessments help recognize whether or not the child has fallen short of, met, or exceeded the expected standards. Although the results of formative assessments are primarily of interest to teachers, families are eager to know how their child is doing socially and academically. Administrators can utilize the assessment information to identify strengths and challenges of curriculum and instruction, in order to make improvements on the next year's program policies or procedures.

How are Assessments are Used

Planning Curriculum- Teachers use assessments to understand a child's capabilities and needs. By focusing on what a child can do, teachers then establish individualized goals for that child. By continuing to observe and document milestones, teachers can proactively assess a child's development and adjust the curriculum accordingly. For example, if a teacher determines that a child needs support in their fine motor development, activities that exercise the pincer grasp will be implemented.

Documentation on behavior should be considered when planning curriculum. If data shows reoccurring conflict taking place in a specific area, teachers should assess if there are enough materials and space in that area, and decide if the materials provided are age-appropriate. For example, after reviewing the data, the teachers concluded that conflict was occurring in the dramatic play area because there were not enough baby dolls for the number of children playing at the same time.

Ensuring School Readiness - Whether you use checklists or the DRDP, both assessments will collect data about milestones of development. Recording a child's progress for each domain of development will determine school readiness. School readiness refers to children having enough knowledge and experience to succeed in a kindergarten classroom.

Adjusting the Classroom - Assessments can also be used to adjust teaching styles, classroom setups, daily schedules, and routines. When observing children, teachers should document how the class responds to certain routines, transitions, and language. For example, if the data collected shows that children are having a difficult time falling asleep during nap time, the daily schedule can be adjusted to allow more outdoor play before nap time.

Data can also show us why certain behaviors are occurring. When reviewing data, evaluate what happens before the behavior is observed, and assess what changes can be made to redirect the child. For example, if conflict and running in the classroom are occurring in the morning, the parent drop-off could be moved to the outdoor classroom to allow a large space for children to play and interact before going inside. [76]

Pin It!

Further Information on Authentic Observation and Assessment

- Read this article for more information on New Learnings in Early Care and Education : https://www.first5la.org/article/new-learnings-in-early-care-and-education/
- Watch this video to learn more about authentic assessment : https://www.cde.state.co.us/resultsmatter/whatisauthenticassessment-player
- Read this report from National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) for more information on balanced preschool assessment :
- http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/7-1.pdf
- Watch this video to learn more about Organizing for Assessment in ECE : - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hfHERCVabw

This page titled 6.3: Assessing Children's Development is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

6.4: Family Conferences

Conferences Building Family Partnerships

Once assessments have been completed, it is time to meet with a child's family. The purpose of the conference is to share information about the child and to build a vital partnership with the child's family. Some parents may not understand the connection between play and learning. Sharing information about play-based curriculum and how it supports development can allow parents to better understand your goals for learning and how the classroom functions. By including parents in discussion making about curriculum and assessments we can encourage support areas development outside of the classroom.

For example, if the individualized curriculum is supporting color recognition, we can suggest that families continue to support this skill by identifying produce colors at the grocery store and/or pointing to certain colors in their favorite books.

In a blog by Concordia University, Portland some key tips are suggested to ensure a successful and engaging family conference occurs: [77]

1. Offer a flexible conference schedule

Some parents have more than one child at different schools, some families may have limited transportation options and some parents may work multiple jobs which can limit their time and availability. In these cases, teachers may need to be flexible to accommodate special circumstances. Teachers can schedule conferences in the morning, later in the afternoon, or during recess breaks. If technology is available, meetings can be offered via Skype or FaceTime as an option for parents who cannot make it to school.

2. Prepare, prepare, prepare

Portfolios and assessments must be updated and organized for each child on a regular basis.

3. Arrange for a translator if needed, and find a way to connect

Parents who don't speak English require a translator. If schools cannot arrange for a translator, family members may need to sit in on the conference, for example an older sibling or an aunt or maybe even a neighbor) — ideally not a student.

When there is a language barrier, teachers should try to find a respectful way to communicate and connect with families. As a reminder, even though families cannot fluently speak the same language, they deserve your professional approach. Try learning a few phrases in their native language to show you're trying to connect; even "Hello," "How are you?" and "Thank you" can go a long way.

4. Be aware of your body language and how you verbally communicate

The classroom environment speaks volumes and so does your body language and how you talk with your families. Check out your body language. Are your arms typically crossed? Do you smile or glare? How is your tone when you speak? Are you calm and reassuring, or sounding like a robot? Do you pause and allow parents to ask questions, or are you hurried and rushing through information? Are you aware and considerate of cultural backgrounds and family practices? For example, did you know that eye contact and handshaking may not be a common practice with some families?

5. Sit side-by-side

Since teachers and parents are on the same team teachers are advised to sit next to parents rather than across from them behind a desk. By arranging the furniture in a friendly and non-threatening way, teachers express their desire to build a partnership with each parent, which can diffuse unnecessary tension on both sides.

6. Share real stories and student work

Even the best teachers can't remember all of the details they need to share with every parent. A portfolio with anecdotal notes and work samples provide parents with real insight into what's happening in their child's academic day.

7. Include the positive and focus on what the child CAN DO

Each student has positive traits and potential. Share at least one shining trait with parents at the beginning and another at the end of the conference. That trait could be an academic trait or a character trait, such as helpfulness, persistence, or hard work. Teachers can follow the "sandwich method" or the "glows and grows" method where you share a child's positive achievements or traits that make them glow, in addition to providing two or more areas in which they can grow. Always end on a high note with another glowing detail or anecdote.

8. Create clear goals

Every student, even the gifted ones, can improve in some way. Write specific goals for each student. Along with those goals, create an action plan with steps for improvement, as well as a timeline. Your plan of action should include activities that will be done at school as well as activities that can be done at home. Sharing this with parents can increase buy-in since they will be able to see a clear path to success that has achievable benchmarks and goals that are part of a realistic, structured plan.

9. Avoid education jargon

Not everyone is familiar with DRDPs or diagnostic and summative assessments. Avoid overwhelming parents with education lingo . Speak in plain terms, explain what you mean, and make sure parents are clear about the information you have presented. Encourage parents to ask questions as needed for clarification.

10. Give parents responsibility

Early educators know that children do better in school when their parents are involved. A perfect way to get parents involved is to ask questions about family life and routines (a family questionnaire is ideal). Families should be encouraged to get involved throughout the school year. For example, they can be special guests, and talk about their jobs or they can read their favorite story to the children. Parents who are involved early on, will be more likely to follow through on their "plan of action" once it is presented at the conference.

11. Encourage questions

Approachable teachers build a lasting connection with parents and promote a positive learning experience with their children. Not only do you want your students to feel comfortable enough to ask questions, but you want your parents to feel they can approach you as well. Although your time may be limited during the school day, it is important to carve out some time and space to discuss important matters with parents. If parents cannot make the conference, offer your email address to allow for some time for a brief "q and a" any point during the school year. NOTE: Hitting parents up at the end of a long work day and rushing through important details regarding their child is NOT recommended.

12. Don't make assumptions about parents or students

Avoid relying on stereotypes and allowing personal biases to cloud your judgment. View all parents as partners because, like it or not, they are. Work to make sure that even the most challenging students and parents feel like they are welcomed and a part of the team.

13. If a parent becomes hostile, don't engage

No matter how prepared, pleasant and affirming you are, some parents may become hostile or upset while at the conference, especially if there are areas of concern or issues with a child's challenging behavior that need to be addressed. Some parents may be used to hearing bad news, other parents don't trust or have little regard for teachers, some parents feel a need to defend

their child, while other parents may be upset about a personal matter and may take their frustration out on you. Remain calm! If possible, let the parent vent. Use active listening and really listen to the parent's concerns. Discuss how both parties want what's best for the child and reassure them that you have their child's interest at heart. Look for a compromise or strategy that best supports the child and their family. Stay focused on the task at hand – the conference – and reemphasize the positive. Sometimes, a follow-up meeting may need to be scheduled.

14. Remain professional at all times

Teaching is a challenging job. Like parents, you may have an off day and you may be tempted to stray off into an unprofessional area. We also may cross some fine lines and become "friends" with our families. Here are some topics that should never be discussed with families during a conference (or at any time):

- -Speaking negatively about school administrators or other teachers.
- -Comparing two or more students to each other.
- -Discussing another student's behavior, family, or performance.
- -Blaming parents for a child's academic performance or behavior.
- -Arguing or becoming hostile with parents.
- -Complaining about school policies or procedures.

15. Document, document, document

Because you will meet with several families in the course of a week, it is a good idea to make notes about the conversations and outcomes of the conference. You may need to refer to them at a later time when planning a follow-up meeting, or when planning additional curriculum activities. Once in a while, a parent may notify your administrator that they have concerns about the information that was shared during the conference and your notes can be shared with your administrator to help see both sides of the conversation.

16. Stay in contact with parents

Parents should be able to get in touch with you to follow up or address new concerns. Email is the most convenient way for you to receive messages and respond to parents, but phone calls or future conferences may be necessary, too. Set the guidelines and boundaries for future communications.

According to Seplocha, teachers have many important responsibilities, especially preparing for effective and engaging parent-teacher conferences. When teachers connect with family members and establish a respectful relationship, the positive outcome provides a lifeline that will ultimately support a child's overall development and learning.

Figure 6.9 Carol Mahn (right), a first grade teacher at the Hanscom Primary School, meets Melissa Weyand and her son, Maximas, during a "Meet and Greet". [78]

This page titled 6.4: Family Conferences is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

INDEX

A

Aaron's example
- 3.1: Taking the First Step - Gathering Baseline Data

ABC technique
- 4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children

Abecedarian Project
- 2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap
- 5.3: Benefits of Implementing Meaningful Curriculum

academic abilities
- 5.4: A Teachers Role

academic progress
- 6.1: Introduction

academic success
- 2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality

accountability
- 2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices

accreditation
- 2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms

achievement gap
- 2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap
- 2.8: Conclusion and References

achievement scores
- 2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap

active learning
- 2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices

activity areas
- 1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation

ADA
- 4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs

ADHD
- 4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children

advocates
- 2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap

affordability
- 2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike

analysis
- 5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance

anecdotal notes
- 3.1: Taking the First Step - Gathering Baseline Data
- 3.5: Conclusion and References

anecdotal record
- 3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques

art projects
- 5.1: Introduction

artifacts
- 1.5: The Role of Documentation

assessing children
- 3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques

assessment
- 1.5: The Role of Documentation
- 3.1: Taking the First Step - Gathering Baseline Data
- 6.1: Introduction

assessment techniques
- 3.5: Conclusion and References

assessment tools
- 2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
- 4.4: Conclusion and References

assumptions
- 1.7: Recognizing Your Biases

atypical development
- 3.5: Conclusion and References
- 4.1: Introduction

authentic assessment
- 6.3: Assessing Children's Development

autism
- 4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children

availability
- 2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike

awareness
- 1.7: Recognizing Your Biases

B

baseline data
- 3.1: Taking the First Step - Gathering Baseline Data
- 3.2: Understanding the Child

behavior
- 5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance

behavioral assessment
- 4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children

Behavioral Expectations
- 4.1: Introduction

being present
- 1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer

best practices
- 2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
- 5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance

bias
- 1.7: Recognizing Your Biases

brain development
- 5.3: Benefits of Implementing Meaningful Curriculum

C

California childcare regulations
- 2.4: A Look at Standard Industry Practices

California Code of Regulations
- 2.4: A Look at Standard Industry Practices

California Department of Education
- 3.1: Taking the First Step - Gathering Baseline Data

California Early Learning Foundations
- 5.3: Benefits of Implementing Meaningful Curriculum

California licensing
- 2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike

caregiver interaction
- 2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms

checklists
- 3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques

child advocacy
- 4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children

child and family support
- 2.8: Conclusion and References

child assessment
- 4.1: Introduction
- 6.3: Assessing Children's Development

child behavior
- 3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques
- 5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle

child behavior analysis
- 1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer

child behavior patterns
- 4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children

Child Capabilities
- 4.1: Introduction

child development
- 1.1: The Role of Observation
- 1.10: Conclusion and References
- 1.5: The Role of Documentation
- 1.8: Ethical Guidelines when Observing Children
- 2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality
- 2.5: The Role of the Teacher in High-Quality Practices
- 2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
- 2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms
- 2.8: Conclusion and References
- 3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques
- 3.5: Conclusion and References
- 4.1: Introduction
- 4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
- 5.3: Benefits of Implementing Meaningful Curriculum
- 5.4: A Teachers Role
- 5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle
- 6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art
- 6.4: Family Conferences

child development theories
- 1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer

child documentation
- 3.5: Conclusion and References

Child Evaluation
- 4.1: Introduction

child interests
- 5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle

child learning
- 6.1: Introduction

child learning outcomes
- 2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap

child monitoring
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
Child Observation
1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
1.8: Ethical Guidelines when Observing Children
3.5: Conclusion and References
child observation methods
1.9: Observation and Documentation Dos and Don'ts
child outcomes
2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms
child rights
1.8: Ethical Guidelines when Observing Children
child safety
2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality
child support planning
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
childcare
2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike
childcare health and safety
2.4: A Look at Standard Industry Practices
childcare licensing
2.4: A Look at Standard Industry Practices
childcare observation
1.9: Observation and Documentation Dos and Don'ts
childcare space requirements
2.4: A Look at Standard Industry Practices
children and families
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
children's artwork
6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art
children's behavior
1.7: Recognizing Your Biases
children's interests
5.7: Conclusion
children's learning
5.4: A Teachers Role
children's portfolios
6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art
children's potential
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
chronological organization
1.10: Conclusion and References
circle time
5.1: Introduction
class
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
class size
2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality
CLASS tool
2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms
classroom assessment
2.8: Conclusion and References
classroom communication
6.1: Introduction
6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art
classroom community
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
classroom decoration
6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art
classroom environment
2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality
2.5: The Role of the Teacher in High-Quality Practices
3.5: Conclusion and References
5.1: Introduction
5.4: A Teachers Role
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
5.7: Conclusion
6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art
classroom environment planning
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
classroom integration
4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs
classroom observation
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
3.3: Let's Get Started
3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques
5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle
6.3: Assessing Children's Development
classroom observations
1.1: The Role of Observation
classroom planning
1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer
cognitive development
1.5: The Role of Documentation
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
6.3: Assessing Children's Development
cognitive milestones
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art
cognitive skills
3.2: Understanding the Child
common mistakes
1.7: Recognizing Your Biases
communication tips
6.4: Family Conferences
communication with families
1.5: The Role of Documentation
Community Care Licensing
2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike
2.4: A Look at Standard Industry Practices
comparisons
1.7: Recognizing Your Biases
compliance standards
2.4: A Look at Standard Industry Practices
confidentiality
1.8: Ethical Guidelines when Observing Children
cost
2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike
creative expression
1.5: The Role of Documentation
creativity
5.3: Benefits of Implementing Meaningful Curriculum
cultural background
5.7: Conclusion
cultural consideration
2.5: The Role of the Teacher in High-Quality Practices
cultural experiences
5.4: A Teachers Role
cultural practices
1.10: Conclusion and References
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
cultural responsiveness
2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms
cultural sensitivity
1.8: Ethical Guidelines when Observing Children
6.4: Family Conferences
cultural understanding
1.1: The Role of Observation
culturally responsive teaching
4.1: Introduction
curriculum
5.2: What is Curriculum?
5.4: A Teachers Role
curriculum development
5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle
curriculum model
2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike
curriculum planning
1.1: The Role of Observation
1.8: Ethical Guidelines when Observing Children
3.2: Understanding the Child
5.1: Introduction
5.3: Benefits of Implementing Meaningful Curriculum
5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle
5.7: Conclusion
6.3: Assessing Children's Development
curriculum planning cycle
5.7: Conclusion

D

daily activities
2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike
daily routines
5.7: Conclusion
DEC
4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs
detailed recording
1.9: Observation and Documentation Dos and Don'ts
developmental assessment
1.1: The Role of Observation
3.2: Understanding the Child
developmental assessments
1.5: The Role of Documentation
developmental checklist
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
developmental delay
4.4: Conclusion and References
developmental delays
4.1: Introduction
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children

developmental disabilities
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
4.4: Conclusion and References
Developmental Disorders
4.4: Conclusion and References
developmental domains
1.5: The Role of Documentation
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art
developmental evaluation
2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
developmental milestone checklists
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
developmental milestones
1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
3.1: Taking the First Step - Gathering Baseline Data
3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques
4.1: Introduction
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
4.4: Conclusion and References
5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle
5.7: Conclusion
6.3: Assessing Children's Development
Developmental Monitoring
4.1: Introduction
developmental red flags
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
developmental screening
4.1: Introduction
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
developmental stages
5.7: Conclusion
developmental tracking
3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques
developmentally appropriate activities
3.5: Conclusion and References
Developmentally Appropriate Practice
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
developmentally appropriate practices
2.5: The Role of the Teacher in High-Quality Practices
5.1: Introduction
diagnostic assessment
6.3: Assessing Children's Development
disabilities
4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs
5.7: Conclusion
disability research
4.4: Conclusion and References
disability support services
4.4: Conclusion and References
discrimination
1.7: Recognizing Your Biases
diverse needs
4.1: Introduction
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
documentation
1.10: Conclusion and References
1.5: The Role of Documentation
5.4: A Teachers Role
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle
5.7: Conclusion
6.1: Introduction
6.4: Family Conferences
documentation board
6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art
documentation boards
1.5: The Role of Documentation
6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art
documentation processes
6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art
documentation storage
3.3: Let's Get Started
documentation tips
1.9: Observation and Documentation Dos and Don'ts
dramatic play
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
DRDP
3.1: Taking the First Step - Gathering Baseline Data

E

early care principles
1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer
early childhood assessment tools
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
early childhood education
1.8: Ethical Guidelines when Observing Children
2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap
early childhood education compliance
2.4: A Look at Standard Industry Practices
early childhood educators
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
early childhood standards
2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms
early intervention
4.1: Introduction
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs
4.4: Conclusion and References
early learning
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
early learning policies
2.4: A Look at Standard Industry Practices
early learning standards
2.5: The Role of the Teacher in High-Quality Practices
early literacy
3.1: Taking the First Step - Gathering Baseline Data
early support services
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
ECERS
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms
education jargon
6.4: Family Conferences
educational accommodations
4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs
educational displays
6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art
educational documentation
3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques
educational framework
5.2: What is Curriculum?
educational impact
5.3: Benefits of Implementing Meaningful Curriculum
educational materials
2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality
educational planning
5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle
educational policy
2.8: Conclusion and References
educational posters
6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art
Educational Practices
1.10: Conclusion and References
2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms
educational quality
2.8: Conclusion and References
educators
2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap
emergent curriculum
5.2: What is Curriculum?
emotional development
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
3.2: Understanding the Child
5.2: What is Curriculum?
empowerment
1.7: Recognizing Your Biases
English Learners
2.5: The Role of the Teacher in High-Quality Practices
enriched learning environment
2.8: Conclusion and References
environment
2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
Environment Rating Scales
2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms
Environment Rating Scales (ERS)
2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms
equality
1.7: Recognizing Your Biases
ERS
2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms

essentials for observation
3.3: Let's Get Started
ethical conduct
1.1: The Role of Observation
ethical considerations
1.8: Ethical Guidelines when Observing Children
ethical pedagogy
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
evidence
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
evidence of learning
6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art

F

facts vs opinions
1.6: Objective versus Subjective Observation Evidence
family childcare
2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike
family communication
1.1: The Role of Observation
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
4.4: Conclusion and References
family engagement
2.5: The Role of the Teacher in High-Quality Practices
6.1: Introduction
family involvement
5.7: Conclusion
Family Partnerships
6.4: Family Conferences
family support
4.1: Introduction
feelings
1.7: Recognizing Your Biases
fine motor development
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
fine motor skills
1.5: The Role of Documentation
3.1: Taking the First Step - Gathering Baseline Data
flexible scheduling
6.4: Family Conferences
focused observations
1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer
formative assessment
6.3: Assessing Children's Development
formative decisions
1.5: The Role of Documentation
frequency count
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques
frequency counts
3.5: Conclusion and References
funding opportunities
2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap
future success
5.3: Benefits of Implementing Meaningful Curriculum

G

goal setting
6.4: Family Conferences
government agencies
4.4: Conclusion and References
gross motor skills
1.5: The Role of Documentation
group interaction
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
guidance policies
2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike
guiding students
5.4: A Teachers Role

H

handling hostility
6.4: Family Conferences
health and safety standards
2.4: A Look at Standard Industry Practices
health insurance for children
4.4: Conclusion and References
health screenings
1.1: The Role of Observation
high school graduation
2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap
hours of operation
2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike

I

IDEA
4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs
IEP
4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs
implementation
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
inclusion
4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs
inclusive education
4.1: Introduction
inclusive learning
4.4: Conclusion and References
inclusive practices
4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs
individual needs
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
5.7: Conclusion
individual observation
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
individualized goals
6.3: Assessing Children's Development
individualized learning
2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality
3.1: Taking the First Step - Gathering Baseline Data
indoor observation
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
industry practices
2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap
informal observation
3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques
inquisitive mindset
1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer
instructional strategies
1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer
intellectual development
5.2: What is Curriculum?
intentional teaching
1.1: The Role of Observation
1.10: Conclusion and References
1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer
1.6: Objective versus Subjective Observation Evidence
1.7: Recognizing Your Biases
3.1: Taking the First Step - Gathering Baseline Data
3.3: Let's Get Started
3.5: Conclusion and References
4.1: Introduction
5.2: What is Curriculum?
5.4: A Teachers Role
5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle
6.1: Introduction
interaction
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
interests and abilities
3.2: Understanding the Child
interpretation
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle
5.7: Conclusion

J

judgment
1.7: Recognizing Your Biases

K

kindergarten readiness
5.1: Introduction
knowledge in education
1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer

L

labeling
1.7: Recognizing Your Biases
language arts
5.1: Introduction
language development
3.2: Understanding the Child
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
6.3: Assessing Children's Development
learning approaches
3.2: Understanding the Child
learning centers
5.1: Introduction
learning disorders
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
learning environment
5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle

learning environments
4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs
learning experiences
1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer
learning goals
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
learning outcomes
5.2: What is Curriculum?
learning preferences
1.10: Conclusion and References
learning progression
3.1: Taking the First Step - Gathering Baseline Data
learning retention
5.3: Benefits of Implementing Meaningful Curriculum
learning stories
1.5: The Role of Documentation
3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques
learning story
3.5: Conclusion and References
learning strategies
1.1: The Role of Observation
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
learning styles
5.4: A Teachers Role
learning through play
6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art
lesson planning
5.1: Introduction
5.2: What is Curriculum?
licensing inspection
2.4: A Look at Standard Industry Practices
linguistic diversity
2.5: The Role of the Teacher in High-Quality Practices
listening
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
literacy
1.5: The Role of Documentation
5.3: Benefits of Implementing Meaningful Curriculum
location
2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike
longitudinal study
5.3: Benefits of Implementing Meaningful Curriculum

M

math
5.1: Introduction
math activity observation
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
math and reading
2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap
mathematics
5.3: Benefits of Implementing Meaningful Curriculum
meaningful curriculum
5.1: Introduction
meaningful interactions
2.8: Conclusion and References
meaningful relationships
1.7: Recognizing Your Biases
milestones
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
monitoring children
4.4: Conclusion and References
motivation for learning
5.4: A Teachers Role
motor skills
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
music and movement
5.1: Introduction

N

NAEYC
1.5: The Role of Documentation
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms
4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs
5.2: What is Curriculum?
NAEYC DAP Framework
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
NAEYC guidelines
5.7: Conclusion
NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct
1.7: Recognizing Your Biases
National Association for the Education of Young Children
5.2: What is Curriculum?
National Association of Early Childhood Specialists
5.2: What is Curriculum?
nurturing
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
nurturing environment
4.1: Introduction
nurturing environments
2.8: Conclusion and References

O

objective observation
1.7: Recognizing Your Biases
1.9: Observation and Documentation Dos and Don’ts
objective observations
1.6: Objective versus Subjective Observation Evidence
objective vs subjective
1.6: Objective versus Subjective Observation Evidence
observation
1.1: The Role of Observation
1.10: Conclusion and References
1.5: The Role of Documentation
3.1: Taking the First Step - Gathering Baseline Data
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle
5.7: Conclusion
6.1: Introduction
observation and documentation
2.8: Conclusion and References
5.1: Introduction
observation do's and don'ts
1.9: Observation and Documentation Dos and Don’ts
observation evidence
1.7: Recognizing Your Biases
observation guidelines
1.9: Observation and Documentation Dos and Don’ts
observation methods
1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
observation techniques
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
1.6: Objective versus Subjective Observation Evidence
3.2: Understanding the Child
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
4.4: Conclusion and References
observation templates
3.3: Let’s Get Started
observation tips
1.6: Objective versus Subjective Observation Evidence
1.9: Observation and Documentation Dos and Don’ts
observation tools
1.10: Conclusion and References
3.3: Let’s Get Started
3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques
observational assessment
6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art
observational tools
3.5: Conclusion and References
observing children
5.4: A Teachers Role
ongoing communication
6.4: Family Conferences
open exploration
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
opinions
1.7: Recognizing Your Biases
outdoor observation
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation

P

parent involvement
6.4: Family Conferences
parent training
4.4: Conclusion and References
parental engagement
6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art
pediatric health guidelines
4.4: Conclusion and References
peer interactions
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation

peer relationships
5.3: Benefits of Implementing Meaningful Curriculum
peer support
4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs
Perry Preschool
2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap
personality
3.2: Understanding the Child
photo documentation
1.8: Ethical Guidelines when Observing Children
physical development
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
3.2: Understanding the Child
5.2: What is Curriculum?
6.3: Assessing Children's Development
planned observation
1.5: The Role of Documentation
3.3: Let's Get Started
planned observations
1.3: Observations can be Spontaneous or Planned
planning
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
planning learning experiences
5.4: A Teachers Role
play
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
play opportunities
5.1: Introduction
play space
2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality
play spaces
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
policy makers
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
portfolios
1.5: The Role of Documentation
positive child outcomes
2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality
positive feedback
6.4: Family Conferences
poverty
2.8: Conclusion and References
preschool
3.1: Taking the First Step - Gathering Baseline Data
preschool education
5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle
preschool guidelines
1.5: The Role of Documentation
preschool quality
2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms
preschool teaching
5.1: Introduction
privacy
1.8: Ethical Guidelines when Observing Children
process quality
2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality
professional organization
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
professional standards
1.1: The Role of Observation
professionalism
6.4: Family Conferences
progress reports
1.5: The Role of Documentation
progression tracking
1.5: The Role of Documentation
public policy
4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs

Q

QRIS
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms
quality education
2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap
quality improvement
2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms
quality learning experiences
6.1: Introduction
quality rating system
2.5: The Role of the Teacher in High-Quality Practices
quantitative research
2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap

R

recording evidence
1.9: Observation and Documentation Dos and Don'ts
reflection
5.4: A Teachers Role
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle
reflective practice
5.1: Introduction
respectful learning environment
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
respectful observation
1.8: Ethical Guidelines when Observing Children
respectful relationships
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
responsive caregiving
2.5: The Role of the Teacher in High-Quality Practices
routine
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
running record
3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques

S

safe and welcoming classroom
5.1: Introduction
safe environments
2.8: Conclusion and References
Safe Learning Environment
4.1: Introduction
safety checks
1.1: The Role of Observation
sandbox play
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
scaffolding
5.4: A Teachers Role
5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle
scheduled observation
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
school philosophy
2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike
school readiness
5.7: Conclusion
6.3: Assessing Children's Development
science
5.3: Benefits of Implementing Meaningful Curriculum
screening
3.2: Understanding the Child
screening tools
6.3: Assessing Children's Development
seasonal themes
5.1: Introduction
separating facts from opinions
1.6: Objective versus Subjective Observation Evidence
skills and competencies
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
social and economic measures
5.3: Benefits of Implementing Meaningful Curriculum
social competence
2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality
social development
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
5.2: What is Curriculum?
social skills
3.2: Understanding the Child
social strategies
3.2: Understanding the Child
socialization
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
5.7: Conclusion
socioeconomic status
2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap
2.5: The Role of the Teacher in High-Quality Practices
special education
2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap
4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs
special needs
2.5: The Role of the Teacher in High-Quality Practices
4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs
4.4: Conclusion and References
5.7: Conclusion
spontaneous observation
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
1.5: The Role of Documentation
3.3: Let's Get Started

spontaneous observations
1.3: Observations can be Spontaneous or Planned
stakeholders
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
standard industry practice
2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike
state licensing
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
state licensing procedures
2.4: A Look at Standard Industry Practices
structural quality
2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality
structured activities
1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation
5.7: Conclusion
student teaching
1.8: Ethical Guidelines when Observing Children
subjective observations
1.6: Objective versus Subjective Observation Evidence
summative assessment
6.3: Assessing Children's Development
supervision standards
2.4: A Look at Standard Industry Practices
supportive
5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance
systematic observation
1.10: Conclusion and References

T

teachable moments
1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer
1.8: Ethical Guidelines when Observing Children
teacher accountability
1.1: The Role of Observation
teacher bias
1.10: Conclusion and References
teacher education
2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike
teacher effectiveness
2.8: Conclusion and References
teacher experience
2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike
teacher interactions
2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality
teacher observation
3.3: Let's Get Started
teacher pay scale
2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality
teacher preparation
2.5: The Role of the Teacher in High-Quality Practices
teacher preparedness
3.3: Let's Get Started
teacher qualifications
2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality
2.4: A Look at Standard Industry Practices
teacher responsibilities
1.8: Ethical Guidelines when Observing Children
teacher responsibility
4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children
teacher roles
2.5: The Role of the Teacher in High-Quality Practices
4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs
teacher strategies
5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle
teacher tips
1.5: The Role of Documentation
teacher wages
2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality
teacher's role
5.1: Introduction
teachers and administrators
2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices
teachers' role
5.4: A Teachers Role
teaching methods
5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle
teaching practices
2.8: Conclusion and References
teaching strategies
1.6: Objective versus Subjective Observation Evidence
3.1: Taking the First Step - Gathering Baseline Data
3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques
4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs
6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art
technology in education
3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques
temperament
3.2: Understanding the Child
Title 22 regulations
2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike
2.4: A Look at Standard Industry Practices
traditional preschool
2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike
translator
6.4: Family Conferences
triggers
1.7: Recognizing Your Biases
typical development
3.5: Conclusion and References

U

unbiased observation
1.9: Observation and Documentation Dos and Don'ts
unstructured activities
5.7: Conclusion

V

validity and reliability in observations
1.6: Objective versus Subjective Observation Evidence

W

warm environments
1.7: Recognizing Your Biases
whole child development
6.1: Introduction
whole child support
3.2: Understanding the Child
work sample
3.5: Conclusion and References
work samples
3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques
writing skills
1.6: Objective versus Subjective Observation Evidence

This page titled Index is shared under a license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam.

GLOSSARY

A

Anecdotal Record | A brief, written description of a specific incident or behavior observed in a child. It is typically used to capture qualitative data and is often focused on a single event or interaction.

Assessment | The process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data to understand children's development, learning, and progress.

Authentic Assessment | An approach that evaluates children's skills and abilities through real-life tasks and activities rather than standardized testing, providing a more accurate reflection of a child's abilities.

B

Baseline Data | The initial data collected before beginning a program or intervention. It serves as a reference point for measuring progress over time.

Benchmark | A standard or reference point used to measure a child's progress, often based on developmental milestones or academic expectations.

C

Child-Centered Observation | Observing a child in their natural environment and using their activities, interests, and behaviors as the basis for assessment. The focus is on the child's unique abilities and development.

Confidentiality | The ethical principle of keeping information about children, families, and observations private and only sharing it with authorized individuals or agencies.

Critical Reflection | The process of analyzing and questioning one's observations, practices, and interactions with children to improve understanding and effectiveness.

D

Developmental Domains | Categories of child development, such as physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and language development, that are typically assessed separately but are interconnected.

Developmental Milestones | Key behaviors or skills typically demonstrated by children at various ages, such as walking, talking, or writing.

Developmental Portfolio | A collection of a child's work, observations, and assessments over time, providing a comprehensive view of the child's development and learning.

Diagnostic Assessment | An assessment designed to identify a child's strengths, weaknesses, or specific learning needs, often conducted before providing intervention.

E

Ethnographic Observation | A detailed, long-term observation method where the observer immerses themselves in the child's environment to gather comprehensive data on their behavior and interactions.

F

Formative Assessment | Ongoing assessments used to monitor a child's progress during the learning process, with the goal of making adjustments to instruction or interventions.

G

Goal-Setting | The process of identifying specific, measurable, and attainable objectives for children based on assessment data to guide their learning and development.

H

Holistic Assessment | An approach that considers the child as a whole, taking into account all aspects of their development, including cognitive, physical, emotional, and social domains.

I

Inclusive Assessment | Assessment practices that account for the diverse needs, backgrounds, and abilities of all children, including those with disabilities or from culturally diverse families.

Interrater Reliability | The degree to which different observers or assessors agree on the assessment of a child's behavior or abilities, ensuring consistency in the results.

L

Learning Stories | Narrative observations that describe a child's learning experiences and are typically used in documentation that celebrates progress and development.

O

Observation | The process of watching and recording children's behavior, interactions, and activities to gather data on their development.

P

Portfolio | A collection of a child's work, assessments, and observations over time, used to assess progress and development in various areas.

Progress Monitoring | Regular assessment of a child's progress toward specific learning objectives, often using ongoing assessments like tests, checklists, or observations.

Q

Qualitative Data | Non-numerical data, such as descriptions, narratives, and observations, that provide rich insight into a child's behaviors, skills, and development.

Quantitative Data | Numerical data, such as scores, frequencies, or ratings, used to measure a child's performance or abilities.

R

Reliability | The consistency and dependability of an assessment tool or process to produce the same results under similar conditions.

Rubric | A scoring guide or set of criteria used to assess a child's performance on a task, providing clear expectations for what constitutes different levels of performance.

S

Screening | A brief, initial assessment used to identify potential developmental delays or learning issues in children, often conducted at the start of an educational program.

Self-Assessment | A process in which children evaluate their own work, behavior, or progress, promoting self-awareness and responsibility for their learning.

Summative Assessment | A type of assessment conducted at the end of a period of learning to evaluate overall performance or achievement, often in the form of a test or project.

T

Teacher-Child Interaction | The ways in which teachers engage with children, influencing their social, emotional, and cognitive development through responsive interactions.

Transparent Assessment | Assessment methods that are clear and understandable for children and families, with explicit explanations of how data is collected, used, and interpreted.

V

Validity | The extent to which an assessment tool measures what it is intended to measure, ensuring that results are accurate and meaningful.

Video Observation | The use of video recordings to capture children's behavior or interactions, allowing for later analysis and review of the data.

Visual Documentation | The use of photos, videos, or artwork to document a child's learning and development, often used in conjunction with written observation notes.

W

Work Sampling | A method of assessment that involves collecting samples of a child's work over time to monitor their progress and development in various domains.

Z

Zone of Proximal Development | A concept introduced by Lev Vygotsky, referring to the range of tasks that a child can perform with the help of an adult or more capable peer, indicating the potential for future learning.

This page titled Glossary is shared under a license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam.

DETAILED LICENSING

Overview

Title: Observation and Assessment in Early Childhood Education (Peterson and Elam)

Webpages: 55

All licenses found:

- CC BY 4.0: 85.5% (47 pages)
- Undeclared: 14.5% (8 pages)

By Page

- Observation and Assessment in Early Childhood Education (Peterson and Elam) - *CC BY 4.0*
  - Front Matter - *CC BY 4.0*
    - TitlePage - *Undeclared*
    - InfoPage - *Undeclared*
    - Table of Contents - *Undeclared*
    - About this Book - *CC BY 4.0*
    - Licensing - *Undeclared*
  - 1: Observation and Documentation - The Key to Intentional Teaching - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 1.1: The Role of Observation - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 1.2: Becoming a Skilled Observer - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 1.3: Observations can be Spontaneous or Planned - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 1.4: Questions you may want to ask yourself as you plan your next observation - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 1.5: The Role of Documentation - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 1.6: Objective versus Subjective Observation Evidence - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 1.7: Recognizing Your Biases - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 1.8: Ethical Guidelines when Observing Children - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 1.9: Observation and Documentation Dos and Don’ts - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 1.10: Conclusion and References - *CC BY 4.0*
  - 2: Quality Counts - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 2.1: Closing the Achievement Gap - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 2.2: Not all Preschool Programs are Alike - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 2.3: Process Quality and Structural Quality - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 2.4: A Look at Standard Industry Practices - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 2.5: The Role of the Teacher in High-Quality Practices - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 2.6: A Look at High-Quality Practices - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 2.7: Measuring High-Quality in Early Care and Education Classrooms - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 2.8: Conclusion and References - *CC BY 4.0*
  - 3: Using Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques to Gather Evidence - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 3.1: Taking the First Step - Gathering Baseline Data - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 3.2: Understanding the Child - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 3.3: Let’s Get Started - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 3.4: A Closer Look at Observation Methods, Tools and Techniques - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 3.5: Conclusion and References - *CC BY 4.0*
  - 4: The Purpose, Process and Practice of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 4.1: Introduction - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 4.2: The Purpose of Monitoring, Screening and Evaluating Young Children - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 4.3: Public Policies on Including Children with Special Needs - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 4.4: Conclusion and References - *CC BY 4.0*
  - 5: How to Plan Effective and Meaningful Curriculum - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 5.1: Introduction - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 5.2: What is Curriculum? - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 5.3: Benefits of Implementing Meaningful Curriculum - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 5.4: A Teachers Role - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 5.5: The Curriculum Planning Cycle at a Glance - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 5.6: A Closer Look at the Curriculum Planning Cycle - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 5.7: Conclusion - *CC BY 4.0*
  - 6: Using Documentation and Assessment to Communicate with Families - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 6.1: Introduction - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 6.2: Documentation Boards - Not Just for Displaying Art - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 6.3: Assessing Children’s Development - *CC BY 4.0*
    - 6.4: Family Conferences - *CC BY 4.0*
  - Back Matter - *Undeclared*
    - Index - *Undeclared*
    - Glossary - *Undeclared*

- Detailed Licensing - *Undeclared*

This page titled Observation and Assessment in Early Childhood Education (Peterson and Elam) is shared under a CC BY 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gina Peterson and Emily Elam via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.