



Desired Results Observation Training Video/DVD

Trainer's Guide and Training Workbook

INFORMATIONAL NOTE: *The music and lyrics for the song “Getting to Know You” is from the Broadway musical “The King and I” written by Rodgers and Hammerstein in 1950. The lyrics from the song was licensed and recorded for this training video, in children’s voices, to inspire and remind today’s childcare providers that teachers, across time and cultures, have depended on observation and reflective interaction with children to support “getting to know” them to support assessment, teaching, learning and curriculum planning for making quality improvements.*

The story centers on a teacher who travels to an ancient kingdom in Asia, where she is charged with tutoring the king’s many children. They all soon discover that before effective teaching and learning can take place, they must first “get to know” each other as individuals.

Getting to Know You
Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein

Anna: *It's a very ancient saying, but a true and honest thought, that if you become a teacher, by your pupils you'll be taught. As a teacher I've been learning (You'll forgive me if I boast) and I've now become an expert, on the subject I like most.*

Getting to know you. Getting to know you, Getting to know all about you. Getting to like you, Getting to hope you like me. Getting to know you, putting it my way, but nicely, You are precisely, my cup of tea.

Children: *Getting to know you, Getting to feel free and easy. When I am with you, Getting to know what to say. Haven't you noticed suddenly I'm bright and breezy because of all the beautiful and new things I'm learning about you day by day. Getting to know you, Getting to feel free and easy. When I am with you, Getting to know what to say haven't you noticed suddenly I'm bright and breezy because of all the beautiful and new things I'm learning about you day by day.*

Getting to Know You Through Observation
Desired Results Observation Training Video/DVD,
Trainer’s Guide and Training Workbook were developed in Partnership with the
Child Development Division of the California Department of Education and the
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READ BEFORE VIEWING THE VIDEOTAPE/DVD

INTRODUCTION

Part I: Overview of Observation is designed to be viewed by all audiences, administrators, teachers, assistants, and family childcare providers. Part I consists of three sections:

1. Section one contains an overview of the principles of objective observation and moves on to discuss the rationale for including observation into routine daily activities and recommended strategies for good observation and note taking.
2. Section two supports caregivers and staff in developing and managing an observation system,
3. Section three promotes:
 - the reflection on observation notes to learn about what they tell us about each child,
 - assessment of children's growth over time to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction, learning activities and the overall program.

This section of the Trainer's Guide includes discussion points, reading suggestions, and interactive exercises to assist the trainer in facilitating staff development in using observation-based assessment and evaluation.

Part II: Observation Vignettes for Practice in Observing and Recording is divided into three sections, focusing on one of the three age groups: Infant/toddler; preschool; and school-age. Each section models how the introduced observation strategies can be modified to address the unique needs of each age group.

Each age-group section offers four observation vignettes (each clip is 1.5 to 2 minutes in length) of children in daily routine activities. These vignettes provide an opportunity

for the viewer to practice observation skills; write objective and accurate anecdotal notes; and reflect on what the collected observations tell about the child's development.

These collaborative activities are designed to foster objective observation, clear note taking, shared perspectives, reflection and teamwork in making observation-based assessment work for groups of care and education providers.

The primary goals and objectives of ***Getting to Know You Through Observation, Desired Results Observation Training Video/DVD, Trainer's Guide, and Workbook*** are to:

- develop awareness of the importance of observation
- increase knowledge, skills, and strategies to develop accurate and reliable systems of observations and records.

This Trainer's guide has been designed to meet the large-scale and diverse training needs across California. The training package provides flexible tools, which can be used both to support learning in large and small group on-site training sessions and for individual self-paced instruction.

As a result of viewing this video and completing the training activities, providers will:

1. become more skilled observers of children.
2. understand that objective, accurate observation of children occurs:
 - in their natural program setting
 - as they interact with other children, adults, and the environment
 - as they participate in their typical daily program
 - over time
3. plan for observation into their daily schedule.
4. reflect on observation notes, daily logs, and children's work samples to learn about each child.
5. analyze observation notes, samples, and reflections to better meet the needs of children and families through planned instruction activities.
6. use observation to assess and document children's strengths and areas needing improvement.

Exploring the Concept of Observation



Goals:

The goal of this activity is to provide staff an opportunity to communicate their current knowledge and level of experience with observation and its purpose.



Materials Required:

- Paper and pens
- Chart paper



Time: 30 to 40 minutes



Process:

1. Explain that the group will be viewing video footage from ***Getting to Know You Through Observation, a Desired Results Observation Training Video/DVD*** on the use of observation in the care and education of children. Add that to begin, you would like to facilitate a discussion on the group's current understanding of the concept of observation.
2. In a large or small group, have the group choose a timekeeper and a recorder. The timekeeper will ensure that each question is allowed 10 – 15 minutes for discussion. The recorder will chart key ideas or notes on the discussion on a sheet of chart paper.
3. Ask the group to consider and then share their perspectives on the following questions:
 - What do you think of when you hear the word “observation”?
 - Think of a time when you observed something or someone, what did you learn?
 - What is the goal of systematically observing children?
 - What kind of information can be learned by observing children?

4. After the discussion, explain that the group will view the Overview of Observation section of the video/DVD with demonstrations on how other care providers use observation in their work with children.
5. Refer the staff to review the Glossary as needed. See page 33 in this Trainer's Guide.
6. Start the ***Getting to Know You Through Observation, Desired Results Observation Training Video/DVD*** from the beginning or Menu button labeled **Overview**. Pause or stop the video at the question screen.
7. After viewing the video footage, ask the group to think about the question on the screen. Have them reflect on how objective observation can help know children better. Prompt the group to discuss and record their responses on page 8 of the workbook.



Key Ideas

- Explain that children in care and education programs in California are observed for developmental progress primarily through their normal daily activities, use of language, social interactions with others, and work samples that demonstrate learning.

Four key ideas include:

- * Observation involves regular intentional watching of children in a wide variety of circumstances that are representative of the child's behaviors and skills demonstrated over time.
- * Observation of daily, ongoing classroom/home performances and typical activities of the child lead to a wealth of reliable information. Valid observations do not place children in artificial situations, interfere with normal learning and developmental experiences in the classroom, or distract children from their natural learning processes.
- * Observation relies on demonstrated performance during real activities, not actions that are contrived or unnatural.
- * Develop a solid understanding of the meaning and purpose for observation and practice recording children's behaviors and skills every day.

THINK ABOUT IT!

How can objective observations help you know children better?
List the ways below. Develop a plan to observe everyday.

1.

2.

3.

I plan to

Special Considerations in Planning Observations

Observing English Language Learners

California's population growth reflects increases in the number of children who are culturally and linguistically diverse. Children with a primary language other than English, who have limited experience with English and are learning English language and literacy skills of comprehension, speaking, reading and writing are determined to be English Language Learners.

Observations made to assess children's developmental growth and developmental progress can be based on the child's use of more than one language and more than one language mode. Any means of communication should be considered in noting observations, including gestures, eye gaze or the use of any spoken or written languages or combination of languages.

While many observed skills and behaviors do not require the production of oral English language, cultural differences can influence observed interactions with peers and adults, wait time in responding to questions, and misinterpretation of activities.

Tips to support observation of English language learners:

- observations should be completed by a member of the staff who speaks and understands the child's home language.
- when a bilingual staff member is not available, seek the assistance of an interpreter in the community as a cultural and language guide.
- contact the local school district, community service agencies, church groups or family members to identify an interpreter.
- assessors should meet with interpreters before observations take place so that information and procedures can be shared.
- plan observations in familiar environments where the child's typical behaviors and skills can be observed.

Observing Children with Special Needs

All children with IFSPs (Individualized Family Service Plan) or IEPs (Individualized Education Plan/Program) served by the California Department of Education Special Education Division will be observed on a regular basis using the DRDP or the DRDP access.

The DRDP and the DRDP access are essentially the same instrument. The primary difference between the two is that the DRDP access includes a system of adaptations for observing and reporting the progress of children with disabilities.

Observation Purpose and Strategies Activity 2

What, How and Where



Goals:

The goal of this activity is to have staff build an understanding about the relationship between **what** learning takes place during the daily schedule (learning goals), **how** learning can be measured, and **where** they can observe learning being demonstrated.



Materials Required:

- Paper and pens
- Chart paper



Time: 30 minutes



Process:

1. Explain that in order for observation notes to be effective, observers need to have a clear idea of what learning goals are important. Think about what is important for children at the age level with which you work and what activities and demonstrations will provide evidence of learning. Staff may use Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) Indicators and Measures to guide their thinking about learning goals.
2. In a large or small group, have the group choose a timekeeper and a recorder. The timekeeper will ensure that each question is allowed 10 – 15 minutes for discussion. The recorder will chart key ideas or notes on the discussion on a sheet of chart.
3. Ask the group to discuss, identify and chart their responses to the following questions:
 - What are three learning goals for children in their classroom/home?
 - How can each learning goal be measured?
 - What activities, language (conversations or writings), and/or documentation (work samples) would provide evidence of learning for each learning goal?

- Where in the classroom/home/playground could demonstrations of learning be observed and/or collected?
3. After each group has identified and charted their responses to the questions, have the large group select one learning goal to discuss jointly. Have the group reflect on how different teachers/age levels may approach each question.
 4. Direct staff to complete Workbook pages 9 and 10 considering the important learning goals in their individual classroom/home.



Key Ideas

- Explain that building daily observations into the normal schedule of activities is an important goal. Emphasize that it is critical to focus collected anecdotal notes, observation records, and work samples on evidence that demonstrates children's achievement of important learning goals and objectives.

Four key ideas include:

- * Clarify learning goals and objectives.
- * Plan to know **where** learning activities and classroom/home experiences reflect the learning goals and objectives.
- * Know **what** activities, language, and documentation will provide evidence of varied levels of learning.
- * Recognize **how** children demonstrate their understanding of ideas and concepts through activities, conversation, and work samples.

Accurate, Objective Observations



Goals:

The goal of this activity is to focus observation skills on using accurate, informative, detailed, descriptive language in writing anecdotal notes and observation records based on what is actually seen and heard.



Materials Required:

- colored stones, cherry tomatoes, flowers, or other natural items.
- bowl or container



Time: 30 minutes



Process:

1. Explain that a critical component in taking effective anecdotal notes and observation notes is the ability to write in clear, accurate, detailed, informative and descriptive sentences. Even if observers use abbreviations and shorthand, the notes should give readers a clear understanding of what was seen and heard.
2. Provide small colored stones (non-identical), cherry tomatoes, flowers or other natural items. One for each staff member. Everyone should have their own item to describe.
3. Ask the staff to write an objective, accurate, descriptive note based on their observation of the item. Encourage them to look for unique characteristics, the smallest detail that gives distinctiveness to their item.
4. Have the staff put their item into a basket or bowl with all of the other items.

5. Ask the staff to trade their observation note with someone else in the group. Have each person read the description and try to locate the item that matches it. Have each observation note's author confirm or refute the connection between the description and the item. Match as many items as possible.
6. Have the staff discuss and identify language that provided descriptive information or clear, accurate clues in matching the item to its description. Ask them to think of the words that helped them make a good match.
7. Encourage the staff to discuss and identify language that was confusing, unclear, and open to interpretation. Ask them to think of the words that interfered or became barriers in making a good match.
8. Have the staff use the observation form on the following page to record an observation vignette (Part II of video or DVD). Remind them to record their observations using clear, accurate, detailed, objective language. Then assign a 10 to 15 minute observation in a classroom/home before the next training session. Ask them to bring their anecdotal notes to share with others.



Key Ideas

- Explain that effective and informative observation notes provide details that help the staff and others know a child's unique characteristics and individuality. Children have distinctive learning styles and approaches to problem solving and constructing of knowledge. It is through observation and intentional watching that these features can be recognized and supported by adapting the curriculum and individualizing instruction.

Four key ideas include:

- * Write down only what you actually see and hear.
- * Capture details or key words that will help you vividly recall what you saw and heard.
- * Use accurate, clear, informative language, avoiding words that give interpretive views or value judgments.
- * Learn to distinguish between language that provides accurate, clear information and words that interfere with objectivity by giving interpretive views and value judgments.

OBSERVATION NOTES	
Child:	Date: Time:
Describe what the child is doing:	Describe how the child is doing it:
What the child or others said:	
What learning goals/objectives does this observation reflect?	
OBSERVATION NOTES	
Child:	Date: Time:
Describe what the child is doing:	Describe how the child is doing it:
What the child or others said:	
What learning goals/objectives does this observation reflect?	

Observation Tips

- Focus on observing exactly what the child does. Be as objective as possible. Do not let prior opinions, stereotypes, or personal values influence what you write.
- Record your observations as soon as possible. Details may be important and can be easily forgotten.
- Observe in a variety of settings and at different times during the day.
- Be realistic in scheduling observations. Haphazard or incomplete observations will not present an accurate or comprehensive picture of the child's behavior or skills.
- Focus on one to four children at a time. Assign staff to observe specific children so that those observers can concentrate on getting to know those children very well.
- Observe children during their natural daily routines.
- Ensure confidentiality at all times.
- Plan ahead. Consider times when the availability of extra staff or the nature of the day's activities seems better suited to observation.
- Plan activities that do not require the full involvement of caregivers when they observe children.
- Observe often and record your notes daily. Children who are accustomed to having observers present who are "writing" are more likely to behave naturally and allow the observer to take notes without interruption.
- Carry a small notepad in a pocket. In several places on the wall, hang clipboards with lined paper and an attached pencil.

(Adapted from Prekindergarten Learning & Development Guidelines, California Department of Education, 2000, pp. 173-175)

Observation Purpose and Strategies Activity 4

Notice What I do



Goals:

The goals of this activity are to increase attention on becoming an efficient and accurate observer and to provide practice in recording objective descriptions of what is seen and heard.



Materials Required:

- Paper, pencils or pens
- Copies of Written Directions
- Paper



Time: 30 minutes



Process:

1. Explain that the group will be doing an observation exercise. Half of the group will be given written directions on completing an activity. The other half will observe and take notes on what they see and hear. Form teams of two – one actor and one observer in each team.
2. Distribute cut-out copies of the written directions provided on page 17. Give one direction to the acting partner in each team. This person will complete the activity. Emphasize that acting partners are to read their directions without letting the observers see the directions or have an explanation of what they are doing.
3. Ask the observing partner to begin the observation process immediately. They will observe and objectively record what they see and hear.
4. Allow 5 to 10 minutes for acting out, observing, and recording what is observed.
5. After the activities have been completed and observers have completed recording their observations, have each team member trade documents with their partner (directions and observation records).

6. Have team members review and discuss the observation notes that describe the assigned activity. Have each team answer the following questions:
 - Was the observation record objective?
 - What assures you that the note is objective?
 - Are there interpretive views or value judgments?
 - What characteristics indicate interpretation or value judgments?
7. Have partners work together to rewrite the observation to eliminate language that contains possible interpretation or values.
8. Show one or more of the observation vignettes (at the end of the video or DVD menu labeled buttons). Have staff take anecdotal notes and review them with others.



Key Ideas

- Explain that objectivity is the ability to see and describe something or someone without any preconceived ideas or prejudices. Objective observations do not include the observer's perceptions, ideas or expectations on what it all means.

Four key ideas include:

- * Objectivity means that you record only what you actually see and hear.
- * Use clear, descriptive words to build an image of exactly what you perceived.
- * Recognize that everyone has biases and values that influence observations, often without even being consciously aware of their effects. It is natural. However, writing objective observational notes will ensure that collected observations provide a fair and accurate snapshot of children's growth and development.
- * Work on reserving interpretations and value judgments until you reflect on all the observation notes, work samples, journals and other evidence collected over time to summarize and evaluate children's progress.

Print your last name upside down and your first name backward on a blank sheet of paper.	Fold a sheet of paper into a paper airplane. Experiment with the plane's flight design.
Tear a sheet of paper into the following shapes: a circle, square and triangle.	Tell someone in the group about a recent adventure.
Make a drawing of your favorite literature character.	Write the recipe and steps to your favorite dish.
Give someone directions to the closest hospital emergency room.	Sing the lyrics to the Star Spangled Banner.
Draw a map of your community, labeling areas of interest.	Complete and repeat this series of movements: jump in place, clap your hands, slap your knees, snap your fingers, turn around. Repeat.

Observation Purpose and Strategies Activity 5

Participant and Observer



Goals:

The goal of this activity is to acknowledge and increase efficiency in responding to children's needs while also observing and recording objective notes.



Materials Required:

- Paper, pencils or pens
- Chart paper



Time: 30 minutes



Process:

1. Explain that individuals who are new to observing children and writing anecdotal notes often comment that the task makes it harder to respond to children's needs. With practice, skilled staff report that the on-going balance of participant and observer helps them to know children better and more immediately react to their needs. Observations help them adapt planned curriculum and adjust the learning environment to meet the unique needs of individual children.
2. Facilitate a discussion on the complexities of observing children during normal daily activities, at the same time staff are participating, interacting and managing classroom/home activities. Ask a volunteer to list the identified challenges on a sheet of chart paper.
3. Have the group brainstorm and identify learning centers and activities in the classroom/home that provide opportunity for observing and writing in between active periods of participation. List shared information on a sheet of chart paper.

4. Have the group reflect on the charted challenges and brainstormed ideas to develop plans for including 20 to 30 minutes of observation time each day at different times of the day. Have individuals, teams, or small groups write out a plan for their daily observation. Ask them to review the key points to support developing their plans.
5. Direct staff to implement their plans and return to the next training session with a report on how their plan worked



Key Ideas

- Encourage staff to remember that learning any new skill takes extra effort and time during the initial stages of training. Have them recall when they were learning to drive a car. So many demands were being made simultaneously, watching the road, other cars, changing traffic lights, as well as monitoring dash gauges and meters. It all seemed very challenging, yet with time and practice many of the tasks became almost automatic. In much the same way, with practice and experience, staff will be able to balance the roles of participant and observer.

Four key ideas include:

- * Plan observation and objective note taking into your daily schedule. It will not happen without a plan.
- * Identify locations and activities in the daily schedule when observations and note taking can be done most easily.
- * Place your preferred writing and recording equipment around the room/home, in a pocket or apron so they are available when you need to record your observations.
- * Share the task - encourage all staff in the classroom/home to record their objective observations of children's behaviors and skills throughout the day's activities. Others, including parents, may have fresh perspectives that give you a new and different view of a child's personality and learning styles.

Setting Up an Observation System

Have staff review Setting Up an Observation System video or DVD segment.

THINK ABOUT IT!

What can be learned about children from a collection of notes, records and documentation? List your responses below. Develop and describe your observation system.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

My observation system

Setting Up an Observation System Activity 6

What Is an Observation System?



Goals:

The first goal of this activity is to understand that an observation system is a planned structure that helps organize collected information. The second goal is to create or improve upon an observation system that will support staff observations, organization, and reflection on collected anecdotes, photos, and work samples.



Materials Required:

- Paper, pencils or pens
- Chart paper



Time: 30 minutes



Process:

1. Explain that in the video footage, care providers used a variety of tools and structures to support observation and the organization of collected information. Have staff recall and list viewed collection tools and organization structures.

<i>small notebook</i>	<i>sticky-backed mailing labels</i>	<i>clipboards</i>
<i>Post-it® notes</i>	<i>index cards</i>	<i>folders</i>
<i>binders</i>	<i>large/ small envelopes & boxes</i>	<i>journals</i>
<i>photographs</i>	<i>video</i>	<i>sketches</i>

2. Have staff work in small groups to share their own perspectives and experiences with tools and structures that have worked for them. Encourage staff to discuss the advantages and challenges of various tools and organization structures.

3. Have individuals identify the collection tools each feel could be easily incorporate into their daily routine to promote the recording of observations. List the responses.
4. Have individuals work in site or program groups to identify the organization system that could be incorporated into their classroom/home to foster organization, review, and reflection of the collected items and information.
5. Direct staff to create and implement a planned Observation System. Ask them to keep notes on what about the structure works for them and what features might need to be modified. Have groups set up a display of the Observation System they created for others to view.



Key Ideas

- Encourage staff to think about developmental domains (Physical, Cognitive, Language, and Social-Emotional), Desired Results Developmental Profile Indicators and Measures as they create an organization for collected observation information. Have them consider how the selected tools and structure will support methodical filing, review, and reflection for each child.

Four key ideas include:

- * Note how each observation record and sample reflects learning goals, developmental domain, DRDP Indicators or Measures.
- * Provide an easy-access journal, box or folder for the daily collection of observation records and work samples.
- * Build in a time to sort collected documentation into children's individual folders, binders, envelopes, or boxes. Incorporate time, as information is filed, to review, reflect, and note how each addition provides another piece in building a clear snapshot of the child's development.
- * Draw on collected observations and work samples to document demonstrated evidence of children's developing knowledge and skills.

Setting Up an Observation System Activity 7

Different Tools for Different Jobs



Goals:

The goal of this activity is to explore the variety of tools that can be used to document evidence of observed skills and behaviors.



Materials Required:

- Paper, pencils or pens
- OPTIONAL digital camera
- video cam or audio recorder



Time: 30 minutes



Process:

1. In a large or small group, have the gathering choose a recorder. The recorder will chart key ideas or notes of the discussion on a sheet of chart paper.
2. Ask the staff to discuss the variety of ways children demonstrate developing skills and behaviors. The list could include:
 - drawings and paintings
 - science experiments
 - storytelling
 - number of named letters
 - block structures
 - eye tracking
 - height measurement
 - creative dramatic play
3. Have the staff consider and discuss the tools that would best document each of these activities. Encourage them to consider this list of potential tools:
 - sketches (pencil and paper)
 - tally sheet
 - audio recording
 - checklist
 - digital camera
 - video cam
 - height chart
 - anecdotal note
4. Encourage staff to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each tool.

5. Have them complete *The Best Tool for The Best Tool for Documenting Observations* activity in the workbook.

The Best Tool for Documenting Observations

Activity	Best Tool to Document the Activity
Children's creative storytelling	<i>Video cam, camera, or audio recording</i>
Named letters by each child	<i>Tally sheet or checklist</i>
Science experiment	<i>Video cam, camera, tally sheet, checklist or anecdotal notes</i>
Height growth for the year	<i>Height chart</i>
Block building (when no camera is available)	<i>Sketch using pencil and paper</i>
How often child interacts with others	<i>Tally sheet</i>

6. Have staff discuss what they learned in this activity. Encourage them to add new observation tools to their "tool chest". Have them develop a plan to use all of the tools in their next observations.



Key Ideas

- Some observation tools work better than others in documenting children's skills and behaviors. When a written note or product, such as a drawing or painting, does not result from an important activity, use a tool that will document children's knowledge, skills, and behaviors.

Four key ideas include:

- * Use tools that best capture or document children's knowledge and skills.
- * Use a variety of tools so you can create a broad informed view of each child's learning and growth.
- * Use tally sheets and checklists to maximize your observation and documentation time, when appropriate.
- * Integrate all gathered information, using the variety of tools, to see patterns of involvement, activity, growth and development.

Setting Up an Observation System Activity 8

Evidence of Learning



Goals:

The first goal of this activity is to observe children more effectively by recognizing how they demonstrate learning and developmental growth. The second goal is to become more familiar with the Desired Results Developmental Profile.



Materials Required:

- Paper, pencils or pens
- Desired Results Developmental Profile for appropriate age-levels



Time: 30 minutes



Process:

6. In a large or small group, have the group choose a timekeeper and a recorder. The timekeeper will ensure that each task is allowed 10 – 15 minutes for discussion. The recorder will chart key ideas or notes on the discussion on a sheet of chart paper.
7. Distribute age-level appropriate Desired Results Developmental Profiles and have staff review the Desired Results, Indicators, Measures and Examples.
8. Have each group select one Desired Result and set of Indicators, Measures and Examples for further investigation. Have the recorder note the selection.
9. Ask the group to discuss the meaning of the Desired Result, Indicator and Measure. Have them give examples of how these skills and behaviors could be observed during normal, routine daily activities.

10. Have the group answer the following questions for each Indicator and set of Measures.

- Where in the classroom/home could this skill or behavior be observed?
- During what activities could this skill or behavior be observed?
- What observed skill, behavior or documentation would provide evidence?
- Would a single observation or document sample be sufficient to rate each measure?
- What potential interpretations or value biases may interfere with an objective observation?

6. Assign individuals to use the shared information to complete an observation of the selected Desired Result, Theme, Indicator and Measures. Tell staff to bring their observation records and documentation to the next training session.



Key Ideas

- Learning to link observed behaviors, skills and work samples to developmental domains and profile indicators and measures take familiarity with the instruments as well as practice and experience.

Four key ideas include:

- * Establish a clear idea of what each DRDP indicator and measure mean.
- * Review the examples provided with each measure. In addition, generate a list of activities or learning centers in your own program where you could plan to observe for the measure's skill or behavior.
- * Collect journal entries, observations and work samples that provide authentic evidence of children's knowledge, skills, and behaviors. Examine each item to ensure that it provides additional information on how children are developing.
- * Recognize that multiple observations and documentation (work samples, photos, etc.) gathered over time will create a valid snapshot of children's development.

Authentic Documentation



Goals:

The goal of this activity is to have staff consider the variety of items that could be used to authentically document children's behaviors and skills. Staff will discuss and develop plans for managing a chronological record.



Materials Required:

- Paper, pencils or pens



Time: 30 minutes



Process:

1. Explain that whether programs use individual folders, binders, boxes or other types of containers, sometimes called portfolios, there is a need for the system to flexibly include a variety of documentation that provides sequential, chronological evidence of achievement and performance.
2. Add that the purpose of the portfolio, in whatever form, is to provide an organized collection of authentic documentation, which showcases children's growth and development. The portfolio exhibits the path of each child's progress in the learning process, across all developmental domains, from the child's initial enrollment to departure from the classroom/home.
3. Have staff work in large or small groups to discuss and list the essential forms of authentic documentation that would recognize and demonstrate children's strengths and successes. Have a recorder note the forms on chart paper.
Authentic documentation may include: journals, children's drawings and writings, anecdotal records, photographs, tapes, Desired Results Developmental Profile, health record, checklist or inventories of skills, parent information, etc.

4. Request that groups make decisions on documentation that promotes getting to know each child.
5. Have the group answer the following questions about organizing collected documentation into a portfolio.
 - How will items be organized in sequential or chronological order?
 - What types of categories, developmental domains, Desired Results or Indicators will be used to organize documentation?
 - How will staff know what the documentation tells about the child's learning, curiosity, creativity, and interactions with others?
 - How will each item be labeled, reviewed, and evaluated?
 - Who will be responsible for adding and managing collected documentation?
6. Have individuals use the shared information to create an organized portfolio. Ask staff to bring a portfolio with authentic documentation to the next training session.



Key Ideas

- Authentic documentation can become cumbersome and unwieldy. Portfolios that allow flexibility for collecting a variety of items provide organization and purpose.

Four key ideas include:

- * Determine that the primary purpose for collecting authentic documentation is to provide a sequential, chronological record of children's learning.
- * Require that each item added to a child's portfolio provides a "snapshot" of what the child is exploring, developing, building, or integrating into her or his path of learning.
- * Include observations and work samples from the wide range of activities and experiences that are available throughout the day and over time.
- * Encourage staff, parents, and children to take an active role in adding to, commenting on, and reviewing children's portfolios. Use portfolios to celebrate accomplishments and successes, as well as to set new learning goals.

See Review and Reflect DVD or video segment

THINK ABOUT IT!

How are you currently reflecting upon the information you gather on individual children? List what the information tells you about the children.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Review and Reflect To Get To Know Each Child



Goals:

The goal of this activity is to learn how to review observation records and authentic documentation to evaluate each child's learning and development. Staff will reflect on a collection of information to identify trends in individual strengths and areas that can be improved.



Materials Required:

- Paper, pencils or pens
- Portfolios or collection of anecdotal records, samples



Time: 30 minutes



Process:

1. Explain that one of the most important purposes in gathering anecdotal records, observations, and authentic documentation is to periodically review the entire collection and reflect upon each child's interests, learning strengths and areas that can be improved.
2. Add that the process of review and reflection takes time, but provides staff with a significant new perspective on each individual child. Explain that reflection involves careful thought, reconsidering the child's compiled set of observed behaviors and demonstrated skills and knowledge in the portfolio. Reflection provides an opportunity to get to know each child – her or his individual interests, learning style and personality. Knowledge of these unique characteristics is used in planning learning goals and activities.
3. Have staff work individually or in small groups to review and reflect on one or two portfolios or collections of anecdotal records, children's writing, drawings, and other work samples.
4. Ask staff to review and reflect on the collection to answer this set of questions:
 - What have I learned about the child that I didn't know before review and reflection?
 - What are the child's interests?

- What are the child's strengths?
 - What areas of the child's development can be better supported?
5. Ask staff to review and reflect on the collection for questions that will guide future observations and collection of documentation:
 - What more do I need to learn about the child?
 - Where can I observe the child to answer my questions?
 - What activities can I observe to help me learn more about the child?
 - What documentation can I collect to help me learn more about the child?
 6. Have staff review and reflect on this final set of questions:
 - How does the child demonstrate learning?
 - What progress does the child demonstrate over time?
 - Are all or most developmental domains, DRDP indicators and measures reflected in the collection?
 7. Have staff list questions that come up during the review and reflection. Encourage a discussion on findings, questions, and follow-up for additional observation.



Key Ideas

- The process of review and reflection takes extra time and practice, but the rewards include getting to know children – really know their individual interests and unique learning characteristics. Another reward is increased effectiveness in teaching and caring for the children in your class or home.

Four key ideas include:

- * Review and reflect on the observation collection to get to know each individual child's interests, strengths, and areas of needed improvement.
- * Review and reflect on the collected observations and samples to develop questions that will guide on-going observations and the collection of documentation.
- * Review and reflect on each child's collection to assess his or her progress, and establish goals for upcoming months.
- * Review and reflect to ensure that you have observed and gathered authentic documentation across all developmental domains, DRDP indicators and measures. Confirm that you have a complete "snap shot" of each child's development and growth.

Review and Reflect To Evaluate Teaching



Goals:

The goal of this activity is to have staff learn how to review observation records and authentic documentation to evaluate teaching. Staff will reflect on a collection of information to identify the effectiveness of teaching.



Materials Required:

- Paper, pencils or pens
- Portfolios or collection of anecdotal records, samples



Time: 30 minutes



Process:

1. Explain that an important purpose in gathering anecdotal records, observations, and authentic documentation is to periodically review and reflect upon the effectiveness of the teaching, curriculum and learning environment.
2. Add that periodic review and reflection on teaching is a part of a self-evaluation process. It supports staff in examining the value, quality and relationship of the teaching and curriculum offered with children's progress in learning and development.
3. Have staff work individually or in small groups to review and reflect on a group of portfolios. Ask them to look for a trend of where the children's strengths are evidenced and where findings indicate areas that need improvement.
4. Ask staff to review and reflect on the collection to answer this set of questions:
 - Do the anecdotal records reflect developmentally appropriate learning goals?
 - Is there evidence that teaching supports varied levels of learning?
 - Does it appear that the staff tries to extend children's thinking or ideas?

5. Ask staff to review and reflect on the collection to answer these questions:

- What kinds of learning do the observation records suggest? (problem-solving, higher-order thinking, etc.)
- Does the staff adapt or modify activities when children's needs require it?
- Are all or most developmental domains, DRDP indicators and measures reflected in the collection?

6. Have staff list questions that come up during the review and reflection. Encourage a discussion on trends, findings and questions that require follow-up.



Key Ideas

- The process of review and reflection provides an opportunity to evaluate teaching, the curriculum and the learning environment.

Four key ideas include:

- * Review and reflect on the observation collection to learn about teaching strengths and where teaching improvements can be made.
- * Review and reflect on the collected observations and samples to see how the curriculum strongly supports children's learning and how learning experiences, equipment, and materials can be modified to enhance learning.
- * Review and reflect to evaluate your professional growth. Use trends and findings to guide plans for staff development.
- * Review and reflect to view a "snap shot" of the program's teaching, curriculum, and learning environment.

Review and Reflect to Summarize



Goals:

The goal of this activity is to have staff learn how to review observation records and authentic documentation to summarize individual child learning for a written narrative. Staff will reflect on a collection of information to identify developmental progress and make decisions on learning goals.

Materials Required:



- Paper, pencils or pens
- portfolio or collection of observations and samples
- Desired Results Child Developmental Progress form



Time: 30 minutes



Process:

1. Explain that a narrative report that summarizes each child's learning describes the child's development to parents and can also be used to engage parents as partners in the education process. The summary can additionally be used to determine curriculum objectives to support each child's development.
2. Describe the process of review and reflection to summarize through the following steps:
 - Identify and annotate anecdotal notes, photographs, and work samples that represent the child's early or initial knowledge, skills and behavior. Write a brief description of what these pieces of documentation suggest.
 - Gather and annotate observation records, photos, and work samples that characterize the child's growth from the initial level to the current or most recent knowledge, skills, and behavior. Briefly describe the developmental progress these pieces of documentation demonstrate.
3. Have staff review the brief descriptions drafts and the annotated documentation that was identified to answer the following set of questions:
 - What are the child's strengths?
 - Identify the areas the child is currently working on to make improvements?

4. Direct the use of language that is meaningful and supportive to the reading audience. Avoid the use of educational jargon and terms that could interfere with effective communication. Emphasize that the purpose of the summary is to communicate and inform parents, staff, and others about each child's developmental journey.
5. Have staff assemble examples from the annotated documentation that was previously identified to support and illustrate the summary narrative about the child's strengths and goals for the upcoming months.
6. Have staff review, reflect and develop a new set of learning goals. Ask staff to write a brief narrative on this final set of questions:
 - What can the teacher and program do to support the child's learning and development goals?
 - What can parents do at home to support the child's learning and development goals?
7. Encourage staff to provide positive and respectful opportunities for parents to participate in planning the new learning goals and activities.



Key Ideas

- Review and reflection for summarizing provides a process for developing a series of “snapshots” of each child's growth and development over a period of time. The summary communicates successes and plans to support growth to parents and others who are significant in the child's life.

Four key ideas include:

- * Review and reflect on the observation collection to summarize each child's learning strengths.
- * Review and reflect on the collected observations and samples to make decisions on how teaching, learning experiences, equipment, and materials could be modified to enhance learning and support growth.
- * Review, reflect and summarize to ensure that you have a complete and honest “picture” of the child as an effective learner.
- * Review and reflect on each child's collection to get to know the child's interests, personality, learning styles, mastered knowledge, skills, and behaviors and to develop plans to strengthen emerging skills and behaviors.

Part II: Video Clips for Practice in Observing and Recording

Each age-group section offers four observation vignettes (each clip is 1.5 to 2+ minutes in length) of children in daily routine activities. The vignettes provide an opportunity for the viewer to:

- practice observation skills;
- write objective and accurate anecdotal notes;
- reflect on the collected observations.

These collaborative activities are designed to foster :

- objective observation,
- clear note taking,
- shared perspectives,
- reflection,

Infant/Toddler Observation Vignettes

- 1) Four month old infants
- 2) Twelve month old infant
- 3) Two year old toddler
- 4) Two and a half year old toddler

Preschool Observation Vignettes

- 1) Thirty month olds to three year olds
- 2) Older three year old
- 3) Three and a half year old
- 4) Three year old

School-age Observation Vignettes

- 1) Seven to ten year olds
- 2) Eight to eleven year olds
- 3) Six to nine year olds
- 4) Six to nine year olds

OBSERVATION NOTES	
Child:	Date: Time:
Describe what the child is doing:	Describe how the child is doing it:
What the child or others said:	
What learning goals/objectives does this observation reflect?	
REVIEW OF OBSERVATION NOTES	
Observer:	Reviewer:
Is the observation accurate: and objective?	What does the observation note tell about the child:
What additional observation would be needed?	
How can the observer make improvement to the observation notes?	

Glossary

accountability: responsibility

anecdotal notes: clear, objective, detailed notes that describe what is seen and heard.

authentic documentation: examples of children's investigations, demonstrations, written or oral responses, journals, drawings, photographs, and audio tapes.

bias: an unfair pre-judgment.

curriculum: educational subjects and activities provided in a program.

curriculum embedded assessment: provider observations of children's performances within the context of the day-to-day curriculum and instructional activities in a classroom or family childcare home. This is often called "authentic assessment".

daily log: a diary listing behaviors, activities, and events.

descriptive information: details that give an accurate, fair facts.

Desired Results: a condition of well being for children and families.

Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP): Observation-based instrument for measuring Desired Results for Children.

documents; documentation: Children's work that serves as evidence of their knowledge, skills, and behaviors.

English Language Learners: (ELL) Children who have a different home language and are learning English language and literacy skills of comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing.

evaluate; evaluation: Measurement, judgment of children's work, teaching, curriculum, and program quality.

evidence: genuine demonstration of children's skill, behavior, and knowledge.

example: a DRDP guide to help teachers interpret the measure.

indicator: defines the Desired Result more specifically so that a DRDP item can be measured.

learning goal: a plan of what children should know and be able to do.

measure: an item that quantifies the achievement of a DRDP indicator.

objective: thoughts and opinions which are free of bias or prejudice; an aim or goal.

observation: intentional watching and recording of children's behaviors and skills.

observation-based assessment: evaluation of children's progress that is based on observations of daily natural activities, collected over time.

observation notes; records: written information that describes what is seen and heard.

observation system: a structure for storing chronological information and samples of children's developmental progress.

observation vignette: a video clip of child(ren) participating in a natural classroom/home activity.

participant – observer: provider who interacts with children while also intentionally watching and recording descriptions of children's behaviors and skills.

portfolio: a folder or binder that chronologically displays a child's developmental progress through observation notes, work samples, daily journal, parent information, checklists, developmental profile and summary of developmental progress.

reflection: careful, thoughtful review of multiple pieces of information to consider needed action and decisions.

special needs: specific activities, support, and equipment required for meeting the educational needs of children with physical disabilities or learning difficulties.

strategies: carefully designed and organized plans, methods, actions.

work sample: example of children's work that provide evidence of knowledge, behavior or skills.

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