

## Observation and Assessment



What do you notice in these pictures?

## What is the difference between Observation and Assessment?

- **Assessment:** process of observing, recording, documenting, and analyzing children's growth and behavior over time.
- Most methods involve observing children.
- **Assessment** = process of collecting information and data
- **Evaluation** = process of reviewing the information and finding value in it.

## Why is Observation and Assessment Important in Education?

- Information collected informs teachers about children's development needs
- Problems can be identified in the classroom (ie: The block area needs more space.)
- Helps identify children who might have special needs.
- Good information for referrals.
- Helps teachers evaluate/increase the quality of the curriculum and environment.

## Continued.....



- Helps build connections with families: providing families with photos, anecdotes and keepsakes helps parents to stay connected with their children and to develop understandings about their child's life at school.
- Helps determine developmentally appropriate activities for children: By watching children we can accurately determine how to support and challenge them.



## Personal Bias

- Everything that we perceive is filtered through layers and layers of our own personal views and biases.
- Gender, age, experiences and temperament all affect our biases and shape our perceptions.
- In order to care effectively for all of the children in our care, we must strive for objectivity.
- Developing an awareness of your own biases is key to developing objectivity.



## Observation and guidance

- For efforts at resolving behavior problems to be effective, observation is useful.
- Questions that might need to be answered:
  - Does this type of behavior happen often for this child or is it a rare event?
  - Is the child angry or bored?
  - Is this child capable of benefiting from conflict resolution or do they need redirection?
  - What actually is the problem?
  - Where and when does this type of problem occur?

Observation is the only means to accurately obtain this type of information.

## Types of Assessment

- Anecdotal Records
- Checklists
- Rating Scales
- Time Sampling
- Event Sampling
- Running Record
- Photographs
- Videotaping
- Audio recording
- Portfolios/Documents



## Anecdotal records



- A short descriptive story about a child's specific behavior event that is of particular interest or concern
  - May be either directly recorded or recorded from second hand information
  - This is qualitative not quantitative data

## Anecdotal Record

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Child's Age: \_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months  
 Setting: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Observer: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Incident: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Anecdotal Record Example

- Child's Name: Carrie Date: 10/9/2011
- Child's Age: 3 years 9 months
- Setting: Dramatic Play Time: 8:30am to 8:45am
- Observer: Geneva Peterson
- Incident:

Carrie went directly to the dramatic play area when she arrived at the center. She placed the cash register on a table. After this, she displayed empty food containers on a table. Tony entered the area. He stepped behind the cash register and said "I want to play with this." Carrie said "No, it's mine. I had it fist." Then using her arm she hit Tony and began pushing him. Tony looked at Carrie, shrugged his shoulders, and walked away. As Tony walked away, a smile came across Carrie's face.

## Interpretation...

- Why did Carrie hit and push Tony? What might have been her motive?
- Could someone or something have caused Carrie to act this way?
- Why did Carrie smile as Tony left?
- Why did Tony respond as he did when he was hit and shoved?
- What might have been his motive for shrugging and walking away?
- Could someone or something have caused Tony to act this way?

## Check List

As you observe the child, put a check in the column marked **YES** if you observe the behavior. If the child is unable to perform the behavior, check **NO**. If the behavior is not observed, do not check either column.

### 4 Year Old Child Check List

| GROSS MOTOR SKILLS                                      | YES | NO |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Hops on one foot.                                       |     |    |
| Walks down stairs with alternating feet.                |     |    |
| Throws a ball overhand.                                 |     |    |
| Carries cup of liquid without spilling.                 |     |    |
| Rides bicycle with training wheels.                     |     |    |
| Balances on one foot for ten seconds.                   |     |    |
| Skips with alternating feet.                            |     |    |
| Walks backwards toe-to-heel for four consecutive steps. |     |    |

## Rating Scales

As you observe the child, rate each category of social play as *always, usually, sometimes, or never.*

| SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT                                        | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------|-----------|-------|
| Spends time watching others play                          |        |         |           |       |
| Plays with toys alone                                     |        |         |           |       |
| Plays with toys similar to others                         |        |         |           |       |
| Makes contact and plays with other children               |        |         |           |       |
| Likes to be accepted by others                            |        |         |           |       |
| Gives and takes while interacting with peers              |        |         |           |       |
| Gains access to engaging with others in a positive manner |        |         |           |       |
| Interacts in harmony with peers                           |        |         |           |       |
| Sees things from another child's point of view            |        |         |           |       |
| Shares possessions and toys with peers                    |        |         |           |       |
| Respects others' rights                                   |        |         |           |       |
| Strives for independence                                  |        |         |           |       |
| Expresses anger verbally rather than physically           |        |         |           |       |
| Resolves play conflicts in a positive manner              |        |         |           |       |

Another example of a Rating Scale...

|                                  |        |         |           |       |
|----------------------------------|--------|---------|-----------|-------|
| Spends time watching others play | X      |         |           |       |
|                                  | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |

## Time sampling

- A recording made at specific intervals to determine the patterns of occurrence and general frequency of specific behaviors.
- Can be used for groups or individuals
- Setting and sticking to specific time intervals reduces the influence of observer bias.

| Time Sample                                                                               |                       |                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Name: Perry                                                                               | Age: D.O.B: 5/12/2005 | Date: January 8-January 15            |
| Behaviour: Play - any spontaneous experimental activity.                                  |                       |                                       |
| Reason for observation: To see what types of play Perry was involved in during free play. |                       |                                       |
| Date                                                                                      | Time                  | Behaviour                             |
| January 8                                                                                 | 9:00 a.m.             | - construction play - associative     |
|                                                                                           | 9:10 a.m.             | - onlooker to book corner             |
|                                                                                           | 9:20 a.m.             | - construction play - cooperative     |
|                                                                                           | 9:30 a.m.             | - construction play - cooperative     |
|                                                                                           | 9:40 a.m.             | - puzzles - solitary                  |
| January 9                                                                                 | 9:50 a.m.             | - sand and water - associative        |
|                                                                                           | 9:00 a.m.             | - construction play - parallel        |
|                                                                                           | 9:10 a.m.             | - construction play - cooperative     |
|                                                                                           | 9:20 a.m.             | - explaining science table - parallel |
|                                                                                           | 9:30 a.m.             | - onlooker to book corner             |
| January 15                                                                                | 9:40 a.m.             | - onlooker to puzzles                 |
|                                                                                           | 9:50 a.m.             | - construction play                   |
|                                                                                           | 9:00 a.m.             | - construction play - associative     |
|                                                                                           | 9:10 a.m.             | - transportation set-up - associative |
|                                                                                           | 9:20 a.m.             | - transportation set-up - cooperative |
|                                                                                           | 9:30 a.m.             | - transportation set-up - cooperative |
|                                                                                           | 9:40 a.m.             | - onlooker to puzzles                 |
|                                                                                           | 9:50 a.m.             | - transportation set-up - associative |

## Event sampling

- A recording to determine the precise number of times a specific behavior occurs within a set period as well as the pattern of occurrence.

## Running account

- A detailed commentary describing an event as it unfolds, each time it occurs
- "John is at the lunch table, he picks up two carrots, takes a bite of one and puts the other in his pocket. John then asks the teacher for more carrots, again he eats one and puts the other in his pocket. John takes the sandwich off of his plate and puts it in his pocket and then asks for another sandwich, after he eats his sandwich he asks if he can go to his cubby."

**Portfolio:** A collection of materials that represent the growth of a child (or the range of their work)

Items you may want to consider including in your preschool portfolio:

- Anecdotal Notes
- Writing Samples
- Photographs
- Self-Portraits
- Fine Motor Skills
- Math Skills
- Literacy Skills
- Science
- Art

