



Observation, Screening, Assessment, & Documentation

Module Overview

Sections

- Observation
- Screening
- Assessment
- Documentation

Activities

- OSAD Pre-Training Reflection
- Defining Observation
- What are the Goals of Observation and Documentation?
- Practicing Observation - Watching Gabby
- Staying Objective During Observation
- Fun with Loose Parts; Observing and Documenting the Creative Process
- Reflection on Observation
- Assessment Types Overview
- New Zealand Approach to Assessment
- Text Coding: Documents and Documentation
- Writing Learning Stories
- Framing Questions/OSAD Post-Training Reflection

Handouts

1. OSAD Pre-Training Reflection
2. Goals of Observation and Documentation for FCC Providers
3. 3-2-1 Reading Reflection
4. Observation Form
5. Observation Tips: Separate Fact from Opinion
6. Framing Questions
7. Assessment Types Overview
8. Assessing Young Children: The New Zealand Approach
9. Writing Learning Stories
10. Learning Story: Gabby Template
11. OSAD Post-Training Reflection

Additional Presentation and Training Materials

- [PowerPoint: Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation](#)

Find this document online at www.rnetwork.org/observation_screening_assessment_documentation.



Observation, Screening, Assessment, & Documentation

Learning Objectives

Family Child Care providers will:

- Understand that knowledge about child development, learning, and individual differences is the foundation for observation, screening, assessment, and documentation in all Early Care and Education programs.
- Learn to use observation, screening, assessment, and documentation to inform planning for individual children's learning and development in the FCC home setting.
- Appreciate that input from families in observing, screening, assessment, and documentation is needed because children are integrally connected to their family, culture, and community.
- Understand that observation should be a regular activity because it is essential for gathering information and assessing children's development and learning as they grow.
- Learn that screening is important for children in FCC because it helps identify the need for referrals for specialized services.
- Understand that assessment encompasses a variety of strategies that provide information about children's development, learning, interests, strengths, and needs.
- Understand that assessment should be developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate; focused on all domains of development; conducted over time; and used as it was designed.
- Value documentation as an essential complement to observation. Documentation can contribute to the creation of a portfolio which shows child's learning and development over time, and it provides a meaningful opportunity for providers and families to connect.

FCC Provider Dispositions

- Values the importance of observation, screening, assessment, and documentation and uses them in decision-making
- Respects children's individuality and the cultural diversity of all families
- Reflects on how personal perspectives or biases influence the use of tools and instruments and the process of gathering and interpreting information about children and families



Observation, Screening, Assessment, & Documentation

Key Points

- Observation is the art of seeing children as they are and appreciating what they are capable of.
- Formal and informal observations are ongoing and part of what FCC providers do every day.
- Child observations need to be conducted respectfully and reflect the belief that infants and young children's behaviors have purpose and meaning and are worthy of our attention.
- Focused observations of infants and young children give FCC providers the opportunity to gain important information and enhance communication with their families.
- FCC programs provide an important community function when they support screening and assist families in identifying or accessing services when they are needed.
- Comprehensive and meaningful assessment in early childhood depends on an understanding of family context, including getting to know family language and culture, and gathering developmental information from parents.
- There are four kinds of assessments that FCC programs need to be aware of:
 - Screening - identify potential developmental concerns or to confirm that typical development is taking place
 - Instructional - support and monitor children's learning
 - Diagnostic - diagnose strengths and identify areas of need in order to support a child's development. And, to determine the extent and nature of special needs, and establish program eligibility, when applicable.
 - Program Evaluation/Accountability - evaluate programs and provide accountability data on program outcomes to foster program improvement.
- Understanding family expectations and experiences places a child's behavior in context and can prevent harmful decisions that result from misinterpretation of assessment data.
- Engaging families in discussions about the role of observation, documentation, interpretation, and reflection is an important part of the assessment planning process.
- Observation and documentation are critical components of planning activities, environments, and learner-centered curricula.
- It is important to maintain current and confidential documentation of children's development, including information gathered from families and colleagues.



Observation, Screening, Assessment, & Documentation


Key Points

- Learning Stories are an effective tool for weaving observation and documentation together and for building relationships with children and their families.
- The Learning Stories Assessment approach is a form of observation and documentation that is written in a narrative story format.
- To best utilize Learning Stories, family child care providers need to look for:
 - **Child-initiated play:** The play comes from the child's ideas, interests, or discoveries.
 - **Engagement:** The child is deeply involved and sustains play or inquiry for some time.
 - **Intentionality:** The child has a plan or goal in mind
 - **Relationships:** The child is engaged with others or with materials in a way that is interesting to the FCC provider.
 - **Learning disposition:** The child's way of learning or approach to figuring things out is revealed.
- It is important to honor family preferences regarding documentation.





Observation, Screening, Assessment, & Documentation


Resources


 Additional activities can be found in the Observation, Screening, Assessment and Documentation Competency area; scroll down to the “Keys” section at the bottom of this webpage: <http://ececompsat.org/competencies/osad/osad.html>


..... Observation


 **California Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations** 3-DVD Set 2009. This three-disc set is a companion to the CDE publication with the same name. The DVDs depict children’s behavior for each of the 28 foundations. There is an introductory overview of the foundations, a segment on “The Early Months,” and extended segments provided with and without narration. The DVDs include closed captioning and can be used to practice observation.

 **Really Seeing Children** by Deb Curtis (2017) “[This book] shifts the perspective of observing children from a dull, burdensome activity that’s done to meet assessment requirements to a delightful, invigorating, thought-provoking experience where educators can’t wait to document and share the stories of amazing children. [It] expands the early education field’s view of the value of the everyday moments in children’s lives and refines adults’ abilities to see the development that occurs in children’s play, relationships, and their environment.” ~ Ijumaa Jordan, M.A., Early Childhood Education Consultant

 **Babies** is a film about infants and their families in four countries - it is almost wordless, without narration, and it contains wonderful scenes with babies from Namibia, Mongolia, Japan, and the U.S. This documentary may be used to engage participants in observation with specific reference to children’s family and cultural contexts. (1 hour, 19 minutes) <http://focusfeatures.com/babies>

 **Learning Happens** DVD. This DVD features 30 video vignettes that serve as catalysts for discussion about all aspects of early development, and provides vivid illustrations of the significant influence adults have in getting young children ready for school. The videos depict parents and children—aged birth to 3 years—interacting during every day play and routines, which makes it useful for practicing the art of observation. (1 hour) https://my.zerotothree.org/NC_Product?id=a1B1a000000j5FBEAY

 **Learning Happens 2** DVD. This follow up to the Learning Happens DVD provides 29 vignettes of real parents and young children in everyday interactions. They are a useful source of conversation topics and are a good tool for use in training. https://my.zerotothree.org/NC_Product?id=a1B1a000000j5FCEAY

 **New Perspectives on Infant/Toddler Learning, Development, and Care** (2006) is an innovative training series that was broadcast to early childhood professionals across California and the country. It is available in an easy-to-use DVD set. Included is the entire footage of the three broadcasts as well as video clips that demonstrates the concepts presented in the sessions. Useful for observation practice. https://www.pitc.org/pub/pitc_docs/newperspectives.html



Observation, Screening, Assessment, & Documentation

Resources

Screening

↓ For information on the **Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ)**, including a brief overview video and a free downloadable toolkit, filled with free resources to help FCC programs successfully implement ASQ-3, visit: <http://agesandstages.com/research-results/why-screening-matters>

The complete ASQ toolkit can be ordered from: <http://www.redleafpress.org/assets/clientpages/asq.aspx?gclid=Cj0KEQjwyN7JBRCZn7LKgb3ki8kBEiQAaLEsqglgi2KWYka2-tDnZULXhfle3hD3OEchfXQSLikPJXAaAvui8P8HAQ>

📱 For additional information on developmental milestones for children, visit the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) for more information at: <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Screening/Pages/Early-Childhood-Development.aspx>

📱 **Making the Most of Classroom Interactions (MMCI) Infant Toddler** is an interactive course for teachers and child care providers led by a Teachstone® -trained instructor. Over the course of ten sessions, your instructor provides in-person training to a team of teachers/caregivers, preparing them to identify, understand, and apply stronger CLASS® (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) interactions to their programs. Teachers and care providers who participate in MMCI workshops:

- Learn to identify and describe effective interactions in classrooms and child care settings
- Discuss ways to interact intentionally to increase children's learning
- Gain access to valuable print and video resources aligned with CLASS.

<http://teachstone.com/class-trainings/making-most-classroom-interactions-mmci/>

📱 The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a very robust website with free, multilingual resources for screening children that are helpful for families and family child care providers. These resources include developmental milestone trackers, resource materials, and information about what to do if you have concerns about a child's development; it can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html>



Observation, Screening, Assessment, & Documentation

Resources

Assessment

↓ **The Desired Results Developmental Profile**, or DRDP, is a formative assessment instrument developed by the California Department of Education for young children and their families to inform instruction and program development, free of charge.

- The Infant/Toddler DRDP:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/documents/drdp2015infanttoddler.pdf>

- The DRDP for Preschool Age Children:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/documents/drdp2015preschool.pdf>

↓ **“The Ten Temperament Traits”** was developed by The Center for Parenting Education, and is a handy and simple tool for assessing a child’s temperament. It can be used by family child care providers as well as parents.

<http://centerforparentingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Temperament-Scales-.pdf>

📄 Researchers involved in the development of the Center on the Social Emotional Foundations in Early Learning (CSEFEL) Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children, have created an assessment tool (**“Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool,”** or “TPOT”) to help programs and practitioners evaluate how well each Pyramid level is being addressed. To complement the Pyramid model and support implementation of activities at each level, CSEFEL has developed accompanying training materials and a number of practical tools that can be used in the implementation of the model (e.g., scripted stories to teach children about expectations in various social situations, “cue cards” to prompt positive social skills). <http://www.brookespublishing.com/resource-center/screening-and-assessment/tpot/>

Documentation & Learning Story

📄 For additional resources on using Learning Stories as an authentic assessment tool, see:

- <http://www.naeyc.org/tyc/article/learning-stories>
- <http://tomdrummond.com/looking-closely-at-children/writing-learning-stories/>
- <http://tomdrummond.com/looking-closely-at-children/examples/>
- <https://www.myece.org.nz/educational-curriculum-aspects/227-learning-stories>



Observation, Screening, Assessment, & Documentation

OSAD Workshop Overview for Trainer (example)

PowerPoint Slide Numbers	Activity	Time
1-2	Welcome Participants complete OSAD Pre-Training Reflection sheet	10 mins
3-4	Agenda & Framing Questions	5 mins
5-8 9 10-12 13-14 15-16 17-18 19	Topic 1: Observation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring & Defining Observation and values Read and reflect on the Goals of Observation and Documentation for FCC Providers; use the 3-2-1 Reflection template Focused Observation: "Look at Me!" (7:43 video) + Recap Practicing Observation: "Gabby" (1:38 video) + Observation Template & "Clearing Your View" (6:38 video) + Observation Tip: Separating Fact from Opinion Loose Parts Activity Revisiting Observation Definition and Reflecting on Observation + Framing Questions sheet What does Observation have to do with Screening and Assessment? 	70-80 mins
20-21 22-24 25-26	Topic 2: Screening and Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families Matter! Small group discussions: Assessment and Screening A different approach: New Zealand 	35-50 mins
27-29	Topic 3: Documentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large group discussion on Documentation Text Coding Activity 	30-40 mins
30-31 32-38 39-40 41	Topic 4: Tying it all together with Learning Stories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to Learning Stories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riley Visits Mateo + Piryankaa Draws (slide shows) Benefits of using Learning Stories Writing a Learning Story; Sharing our Learning Stories Reflection on remaining Framing Questions 	30-40 mins
42 43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants complete OSAD Post-Training Reflection sheet Closing thoughts and most important takeaways 	10-15 mins
	Total amount of time:	180-240 mins



ACTIVITY

Observation, Screening, Assessment, & Documentation Pre-Training Reflection

Learning Outcome

Participants will reflect on their current (baseline) knowledge and understanding of Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation so that they can reflect on what they learned from this workshop at the end.

Format

Individual written reflection

Instructions

1. Distribute handout 1 - *OSAD Pre-Training Reflection* survey to participants, allowing them 3-5 minutes to complete the Pre-Training section on their own.



Trainer Note: You can collect these early in the training so you can review the responses and consider asking participants with more experience/knowledge/comfort with the subject to help explain concepts as needed during the workshop.

Materials

- Pencils or pens

Handouts

1. OSAD Pre-Training Reflection

Time Estimate

3-5 minutes





ACTIVITY

Defining Observation

Learning Outcome

The group will develop a comprehensive answers to questions about what observation is, why it is done and how to conduct an observations of young children.

Format

Watch video

Large group discussion

Instructions

1. Write these three questions on a dry-erase board or chart paper:
 - What is OBSERVATION?
 - Why is it done?
 - How is it done?
2. Ask the group to come up with answers collectively.



Trainer Note: Keep these responses visible while the group watches the video in the next activity and go back to add any additional responses after watching and discussing the video.

Materials

- Dry-erase board or chart paper
- Markers
- Computer
- Projector
- Screen
- Wi-Fi or video download: "Look at Me! Using Focused Observation with Infants and Toddlers" (<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/look-me-using-focused-child-observation-infants-toddlers>)

Time Estimate

20-25 minutes





ACTIVITY

What are the Goals of Observation and Documentation?

Learning Outcome

Participants will explore the goals of observing young children and understand how they relate to documentation.

Format

Individual written reflection

Pair share

Instructions

1. Give participants 10-15 minutes to read handout 2 - *Goals of Observation and Documentation for FCC Providers* and use highlighters to mark the “Things I Learned, Things I Found Interesting, A Question I Still Have,” and then complete handout 3 - *3-2-1 Reading Reflection*. (If time permits, break the group into pairs or small groups to discuss their responses to the *3-2-1 Reading Reflection*.)
2. In the large group, ask for the participants to share their questions and record them on the dry-erase board or chart paper. Make sure to circle back at the end of the training to find out if all the questions have been answered, or use unanswered questions to plan a future training session.

Materials

- Highlighters, pens, or pencils
- Dry-erase board or chart paper
- Markers

Handouts

2. Goals of Observation and Documentation for FCC Providers
3. 3-2-1 Reading Reflection

Time Estimate

10-30 minutes (reading and individual reflection, 10 minutes; if time allows, have participants pair up and share responses)



Know Yourself



Seek Multiple Perspectives



ACTIVITY

Practicing Observation - Watching Gabby

Learning Outcome

Participants will practice collecting observation data by watching a video of a child and taking notes.

Format

Watch video

Individual notetaking

Pair share or Small groups

Instructions

1. Pass out handout 4 - *Observation Form* and give participants a minute or two to review the handout.
2. Start the video and ask participants to note what they observe about Gabby. Take a few minutes for participants to share their observations with each other in pairs or small groups.

Materials

- Writing instruments
- Computer
- Projector
- Screen
- Wi-Fi or video download:
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/resultsmatter/RMVideoSeriesPracticingObservation.htm>
(scroll down to the video about Gabby at the top of the list)



Trainer Note: This video can be downloaded onto a laptop in advance so you don't need to be connected to the Internet to stream it during the training session. Also, this site has several videos that can be used for observation practice if you have time for others, or they could be used for a home study.

Handouts

- 4. Observation Form

Time Estimate

10-20 minutes



Consider the Child's Point of View



Seek Multiple Perspectives



ACTIVITY

Staying Objective During Observation

Learning Outcome

Participants will learn the difference between objective and subjective note taking and practice editing previously taken notes to assure objectivity.

Format

Watch video

Handout review

Individual review of notes

Instructions

1. Explain that in FCC, we watch and listen to babies and young children all the time. But do these everyday observations give us a complete picture of the child?
2. Head Start has developed a podcast that explains how to observe babies and record what is seen in an objective way that helps caregivers understand the meaning of a child's behavior. We will watch this podcast that explains how to observe children and record observations without interpreting what you see. This kind of observation is used for tracking a child's progress, making thorough assessments, and engaging in meaningful planning.
3. Watch the video (link in sidebar) and briefly discuss any new ideas that came up as participants watched. Here's a summary you can use for a discussion after viewing the podcast:
 - The difference between "everyday observations" and "formal observations" was explained. When and how do you use formal observation in your FCC program?
 - The video defines "objective observation." Why is objectivity important in formal observations?
4. Distribute handout 5 - *Observation Tips* and review each bullet with participants.
5. Ask participants to review the notes on their Observation Form and cross out any subjective words, substituting objective words instead.
6. Have participants find a partner and discuss the trends they noticed in their first observation and what their key edits/revisions were to make their observation notes more objective.

Materials

- Pens
- Computer
- Projector
- Screen
- Wi-Fi or video download of this video podcast <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/clearing-your-view-staying-objective-observation>



Trainer Note: This video can be downloaded onto a laptop in advance so you don't need to be connected to the Internet to stream it during the training session.

Handouts

4. Observation Form (previously completed by each participant)
5. Observation Tips: Separate Fact from Opinion

Time Estimate

30-40 minutes





ACTIVITY

Fun with Loose Parts; Observing and Documenting the Creative Process

Learning Outcome

Participants will use “loose parts” to explore their creativity and have the chance to practice documenting the creative process. Each participant will have the opportunity to describe novel uses for various items provided or build something using the available materials while a partner watches and documents what they observe.

Format

Pair share or Small groups
Large group discussion

Instructions

1. Instruct participants to find a partner and decide who will be creator and who will be observer.
2. The creator has 5 minutes to build something with the available materials. The creator should talk about what they are thinking and their process. (The observer ask questions, but keep them simple “what are you doing”?) Observer takes notes on what they see and hear.
3. Give participants 5 minutes to engage with the materials and document the process they observe. Ask those working with the loose parts to narrate what they are thinking as their ideas build, and ask the observers to observe and document what they see and hear. The observers can ask simple open ended questions, but should not engage in comments or discussion with the creator. IF time allows, have the partners reverse roles before debriefing.
4. Debrief: Ask the Observers to share what they captured in the observation and then ask creators what it felt like to be given an open ended choice with these materials.

Materials

- Paper (1 sheet per participant)
- Pens (1 per participant)
- Cell phone cameras (optional)
- Assortment of interesting “loose parts” in baskets (e.g. shells, beads, small stones, pine cones, acorns or other seed pods, feathers, old stamps or coins, fine gauge wire, small gears, wood biscuits, carpet squares, cardboard tubes, corks, driftwood, scarves, glass stones, clean empty metal cans, Velcro, hair rollers, plastic bottle caps--a rich diversity of different objects on each table is ideal.)

Time Estimate

20 minutes





ACTIVITY

Reflection on Observation

Learning Outcome

Participants will reflect on the role of observation in understanding children.

Format

Personal reflection

Pair share or Group discussion (time permitting)

Instructions

1. Distribute handout 6 - *Framing Questions* and ask participants to take a minute or two to write down their responses to question #1. There will be an opportunity to reflect on the remaining questions later.

Materials

- Pens

Handouts

6. Framing Questions

Time Estimate

5-10 minutes





ACTIVITY

Assessment Types Overview

Learning Outcome

Participants become familiar with the four major types of assessment used in early childhood programs and practice matching assessment tools they know about to the four different kinds of assessments.

Format

Group brainstorming; Small groups; Large group discussion

Instructions

1. Begin by writing the following questions on the dry-erase board or chart paper:
 - What words come to mind when you think of ASSESSMENT?
 - What does SCREENING mean to you?
 - What kinds of assessment tools can we name?
 - Do you use assessment tools in your FCC home? Which ones? How do you use them?
2. Ask the participants to answer the questions above and record their responses on the dry-erase board or chart paper. If you are using the PowerPoint that accompanies this Module, review the Purposes of Assessment slide 20; if not, before the workshop begins, create a poster with the following information for participants for the trainer to share with the group:
There are four kinds of assessments that FCC programs need to be aware of:
 - Screening - identify potential developmental concerns or to confirm that typical development is taking place
 - Instructional - support and monitor children's learning
 - Diagnostic - diagnose strengths and identify areas of need in order to support a child's development. And, to determine the extent and nature of special needs, and establish program eligibility, when applicable.
 - Program Evaluation/Accountability - evaluate programs and provide accountability data on program outcomes to foster program improvement
3. Pass out handout 7 - *Assessment Types Overview*. Break participants into discussion groups of 3-5 each. Give the groups about 15 minutes to read *Assessment Types Overview* and then discuss their own experiences with either the tools or types of assessments listed. Next, ask them to take notes on their responses to the last question to bring back for the large group discussion. Keep the following prompts visible during the discussion (if you are using it, it is on slide 21 of the PowerPoint):
 - What worked? What is useful?
 - What was challenging or difficult?
 - What questions do you have?
4. In the large group, create a master list of all outstanding questions about the types of tools and the uses of assessments.



Trainer Note: The responses you gather from this will be helpful to use as you plan additional follow-up trainings about specific assessment tools

Materials

- Dry-erase board or Chart paper
- Poster paper
- Markers
- Writing instruments

Handouts

7. Assessment Types Overview

Time Estimate

25-30 minutes



Examine the Environments



Seek Multiple Perspectives



ACTIVITY

New Zealand Approach to Assessment

Learning Outcome

Participants will consider a child-centered approach to assessment from New Zealand and reflect on how they might measure success from this perspective.

Format

Individual reflection

Pair share or Small group discussion (as time allows)

Instructions

1. Distribute handout 8 - *Assessing Young Children: The New Zealand Approach* and ask participants to think about how they would know if have met these goals for the children in their care. This can be done in pairs or small groups, as time allows
2. GOING DEEPER - Discuss how thinking of assessment from the child's point of view feels as compared to the previously discussed assessment types and models.

Handouts

- 8. Assessing Young Children: The New Zealand Approach

Time Estimate

10-20 minutes



Consider the Child's Point of View



ACTIVITY

Text Coding: Documents and Documentation

Learning Outcome

Participants will discuss the meaning of documentation, brainstorm a list of all of the kinds of documents they currently collect in their FCC programs, and then text code an article about the power of using documentation in their program.

Format

Large group discussion; Individual reading/text coding; Pair share; Large group discussion

Instructions

- Write the following questions on the dry-erase board or chart paper:
 - What does DOCUMENTATION mean to you?
 - What kinds of DOCUMENTS do you currently collect in your FCC program?
 - How do you use the documents you collect?
- Ask the above questions and chart responses to each on a dry-erase board or chart paper. Once the list is complete, review PowerPoint slide 25, DOCUMENTS and DOCUMENTATION, to see if there are any additional documents that should be added to the list they generated.
 - Note, if the trainer is not using the Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation PowerPoint, here is the documents list: anecdotal records, work samples, video clips, photographs, and dictations.
- Next, distribute the article, "The Power of Documentation" by Hilary Seitz (link above) and pens or pencils for each participant.
- Write the following on the board or chart paper so everyone can see it:
 - ! Engaging or gripping, new information
 - ✓ I knew that—good reminder
 - ? Question
 - ≠ Disconnect/confusion/discomfort
 - ★ New ideas or "ah-ha!" moments
- Give participants 10-15 minutes to code the text using these symbols as they read the handout.
- Ask participants to find a partner and discuss the parts they marked with symbols and why. Ask them to note any questions to bring back to the larger group discussion.
- In the large group ask what they thought the major take aways were from the article. Ask participants to share any lingering questions from their conversations and record those questions on the board. Then ask if anyone in the room can help clarify or know of any resources to help get the answers for the remaining questions.

Materials

- Dry-erase board or chart paper
- Markers
- Pens/pencils for each participant
- A printed copy of this article for each participant: <http://www.mothergooseprograms.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Seitz.pdf>

Time Estimate

30-40 minutes





ACTIVITY

Writing Learning Stories

Learning Outcome

Participants will review examples of Learning Stories and then practice writing their own.

Format

Large group discussion

Individual writing

Triads

Large group discussion

Instructions

1. Distribute handout 9 - *Writing Learning Stories* and give participants a few minutes to read it.
2. In the large group, look over the two sample Learning Stories (links in Materials list) and then discuss the benefits of using Learning Stories on the PowerPoint slides.
3. Distribute handout 10 - *Learning Story: Gabby Template* and ask participants to refer to their notes in handout 4 - *Observation Form* to help them write a Learning Story based on their observation of the Gabby video earlier.
4. Give participants 7-10 minutes to work silently on drafting their own Learning Stories. Then, in groups of three, have the participants share how it felt to write this story.
5. Finally, in the large group respond to the following questions together and chart the answers shared:
 - What are the ways you could imagine using Learning Stories with the children in your care?
 - What technology could you use to capture pictures and write learning stories?

Materials

- Computer
- Projector
- Wi-Fi or video download of these two learning stories:

1. Riley Visits Mateo

<https://www.slideshare.net/tdrummon/riley-visits-mateo?ref=http://tomdrummond.com/looking-closely-at-children/examples/>

2. Priyankaa Draws a Smiley Face

<https://www.slideshare.net/tdrummon/priyankaa-draws-a-smiley-face?ref=http://tomdrummond.com/looking-closely-at-children/examples/>

- PowerPoint slides 26-36
- Dry-erase board or chart paper

Handouts

- 9. Writing Learning Stories
- 10. Learning Story: Gabby Template

Time Estimate

25-35 minutes





ACTIVITY

Framing Questions/Post-Training Reflection

Learning Outcome

Participants will reflect on what they have learned about Observation, Screening, Assessment and Documentation.

Format

Individual written reflection

Pair share/Small Group/Large Group

Instructions

1. Ask participants to reflect on questions 2, 3, and 4 on handout 6 - *Framing Questions*. If time allows, have them share some of their responses, either in pairs/small groups or in the larger group.
2. While they are reflecting, distribute handout 11 - *OSAD Post-Training Reflection* and give everyone a few minutes to complete it on their own.



Trainer Note: Collect these at the end of the training so you can compare the participants PRE-reflection and note the areas of growth and to help you plan future trainings and/or technical assistance.

Materials

- Writing instruments

Handouts

- 6. Framing Questions
- 11. OSAD Post-Training Reflection

Time Estimate

10-15 minutes





References

A Guide to Assessment in Early Childhood; Infancy to Age Eight. Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2008.

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Freeman, Donald. *Doing Teacher Research from Inquiry to Understanding*. Canada, Heinle & Heinle Publishing, 1998.

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OSAD Pre-Training Reflection

Name _____ Date _____

<i>Use an X to mark the box that answers each statement best for you.</i>	Not sure	No	Sometimes	Yes
Assessments help people who work with young children to learn about each child they provide care for.				
When my FCC environment is set up well, I find there is time for observation and documentation.				
I use observations, assessments, and documentation to support the cultural competence of the children in my FCC home.				
I value my own learning and make time during the workday to reflect on observations and documentation I've done in my FCC program.				
I experience wonder, joy, and discovery in all aspects of my daily work as a FCC provider.				
What questions about Observation, Screening, Assessment and/or Documentation are you hoping will be answered during this training?				

Questions based on the Dispositions for Practitioners from the Observation, Screening, Assessment & Documentation Competency from the California Department of Education. For more information, see:
<http://ececompsat.org/competencies/osad/osad.html>

1. Observe children regularly to support their growth and development.

The main goal of observation and documentation in a FCC home is to learn about and support all areas of child development. Try to make objective observations and avoid labeling or categorizing, because this is harmful and can seriously limit children's opportunities to reach their full potential.

Good Observations and Documentation...

- Reflect the understanding that observing children's behavior is an important part of FCC.
- Happen on a daily basis and at different points—during group and individual play, routines and caregiving activities, and transition times.
- Enable you to plan activities that enhance the developmental progress and school readiness of individual children, and they help you to make changes based on what you learn over time.
- Collect samples of children's drawings, paintings, and writing.
- Involve trying different ways of recording your observations to determine what works best for you. For example, you could use notepad and pen, a tablet, a cell phone camera, or a digital recorder.
- Include discussing your observations with the child's family.
- Help you to watch for signs of developmental problems, and are complemented by knowing where and how to refer families to specialists for appropriate assessment or evaluation, as needed.
- Are paired with talking to other providers about other strategies for observing children.
- Are supported by participation in training that looks at different ways to observe children. Contact your local resource and referral (R&R) agency, family child care association, or community college to find out about training opportunities.

2. Observe children in natural and familiar settings and during routines. Use multiple sources of information to get a complete picture of each child.

Notice how children behave when they are alone, with other children, with their families, and with you throughout the day—during active and free play, organized activities, and caregiving routines. Setting up activities just for the sake of observation can make children feel that they are being tested, and watching them in new or unfamiliar environments can make them uncomfortable or prevent them from behaving normally. Additionally, children may behave differently in other places than they do in your home. Getting input from different people involved in a child's life will provide the most complete and balanced picture of each child's development.

Tips for Gathering Information about Children:

- Learn about children by carefully watching, listening, and studying what they do.
 - Notice how infants and toddlers use their five senses to observe, explore, and learn about people and things in their environment: what are they looking at, listening to, touching, tasting, and smelling? What kinds of facial and vocal expressions, sounds, and gestures do they make?
 - What do the babies and toddlers in your FCC program do to handle problems that arise (e.g., how do they retrieve dropped toys, get around obstacles, or move around other children in small spaces)?
 - Ask verbal children questions that encourage them to describe what they are thinking.
 - Listen to children as they talk with others informally and when they speak during group discussions.
 - Study the work (projects, writing, and drawings) of preschool and school-age children in your

Goals of Observation and Documentation for FCC Providers

FCC program. Ask them to tell you about their work; for example, “Can you tell me a story about this colorful picture you’ve drawn?”

- Ask parents and family members what their children do at home, what they see as their children’s strengths, and if they have any concerns.
- Use different sources of information to answer questions about the child’s development; include your observations, the family’s observations, examples of the child’s work, and other sources.
- Talk with families about how you observe and track children’s progress and school readiness. Be sure to discuss any concerns you might have in a gentle, non-threatening manner—away from the children.
- Treat children’s information with respect and confidentiality.

3. Keep families informed about, and involved in, observations and records of their children.

Parents and/or designated family members need to be aware of and informed about observations you make and documentation you keep about their children.

Remember that these records are protected by privacy laws and must be kept confidential. Information about the child’s behavior in and outside of your FCC home should be available to family members, as information they provide can be helpful when making observations.

It is often challenging to talk with families and parents who are facing the possibility that their child has a disability or other special needs. Families tend to be very protective of their children and should be treated with respect and sensitivity. You may wish to consult with child development professionals and other knowledgeable FCC providers for guidance on how to talk with families so each child’s unique needs can be addressed. (See Appendix C pages 162-170 of Guidelines for Early Learning in Child Care Home Settings for helpful information on this topic.)

Practices that promote two-way communication with families:

- Talk with families about your observations of their children, and be sure to highlight each child’s strengths.
- Talk with families about their observations of their children; ask them what they feel is unique about them, what they see as strengths, and whether they have any concerns about their children’s development.
- Use your observations (and each family’s) to try various approaches to learning and communicating—and discuss each child’s progress with family members.
- Establish a “cubby” or special place for each child where families can view their children’s artwork and other projects. Additionally, display their creations in other places where children and their family members can enjoy it.
- Consider different ways of sharing information. Daily communication is often helpful and convenient, but it is inappropriate to discuss observations in front of a child. Weekly or every other week e-mail updates that can be read in private is another option.
- Listen to each family’s comments, concerns, and observations. Families will appreciate this.
- Contact your local child care resource and referral agency and community college about workshops and classes about observation tools, techniques, and methods that would be suitable for the children in your care—including children with disabilities or other special needs.

Excerpted and adapted from the Guidelines for Early Learning in Child Care Home Settings by the California Department of Education, 2010, pages 22-25

3-2-1 Reading Reflection

Name _____ Date _____

<p>3</p>	<p>Things I Learned ...</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Things I Found Interesting ...</p>
<p>1</p>	<p>Question I Still Have ...</p>

Observation Form

Use this sheet to document your observation. Focus on a specific child as you take notes.

WATCH / OBSERVE: What is the child doing?

Use objective language to describe what you see and hear.

ASK / WONDER: What goal do you think the child had in mind?

What do you think the child is noticing, sensing, feeling, experiencing, or understanding?

REFLECT / LISTEN: What did you learn about this child's approach to figuring things out?

What questions do you have for the child's family about this child and this experience?

PLAN / PREPARE: What can you do to help this child expand her/his learning?

What materials, activities or new experiences could you introduce?

Observation Tips: Separate Fact from Opinion

When you observe young children in your FCC program, your notes need to be *objective* rather than *subjective*. You should record what you observe instead of expressing your opinions about what you see and hear. You can always interpret your observations afterwards, one way to do this is by writing Learning Stories.

An example of an objective observation is: “Josh told Miguel he wanted a turn riding the tricycle. Miguel kept riding, and then Josh said it louder and ran after him.” A subjective observation of the same event might be: “Josh was selfish and yelled at Miguel.” Maintaining objectivity takes practice. Keep the following in mind:

- **Guard against making assumptions.** Don’t assume you know what a child is thinking or feeling—that’s a red flag that you are not being objective. “He feels sad” is subjective. You can’t be sure the child is sad rather than afraid, angry, or frustrated. “He started crying” is objective.
- **Use descriptive words with care.** Adjectives and adverbs help add important details to your observations. Just be sure you are using them to describe facts. “She is being *silly* today” is your opinion. “Memo walked over to Courtney *shyly*” makes an assumption about how Memo is feeling. In contrast, “Memo walked over to Courtney *slowly*” is descriptive, but objective.
- **Do not label children.** “Maria is an incredible artist for her age” and “Jared seems to be the class clown” put labels on children. More objective observations would be “Jared sang a made-up song about worms three times” and “Maria’s picture showed a house with windows, colorful flowers, and a dog.”
- **Examine your own biases.** If a boy came to preschool with uncombed hair and a stained T-shirt, you might make assumptions about his family life. That could affect what you notice and record about his behavior. The truth is, you do not know the reasons behind his appearance, so you should not jump to conclusions.
- **Do not let background information impair your objectivity.** One observer wrote: “Kunya talked baby talk at snack time (He has a new baby sister at home).” The way to record objectively is: “At snack time, Kunya said ‘Me want apple juice. Me need bottle.’” Keep your interpretations for later.
- **Avoid favoritism.** For example, “While observing, Renée paid special attention to Sara because she resembled her young niece. As a result, Renée missed seeing what some of the other children were doing.” Don’t focus too much on children who are especially appealing to you or whose skills seem more advanced.
- **Remain neutral.** Do not get upset by emotional outbursts or conflicts that you witness. Stay focused and record what you see and hear.
- **See children as they are.** Strive not to be influenced by what you think the child is like or what you think the child should be doing.
- **Realize that learning to observe takes time.** Learning to observe—and especially to accurately interpret observations—takes lots of practice.

Adapted from: The Developing Child Observation Guidebook, by P. Clark & G McDowel, glencoe.mheducation.com/sites/dl/free/0078883601/680442/DC_ObsGuideBook.pdf accessed 6/22/17

Framing Questions

1. How does observation help you discover more about the children in your FCC program?
2. How can using documentation make children's learning visible?
3. How does observation help you to build on children's learning and plan activities for them?
4. How can you partner with families to take what you learn from observing their children to another level?

Assessment Types Overview

There are four main types of assessment tools used by high quality early care and education programs: Screening, Instructional, Diagnostic, and Program Evaluation/Accountability.

Screening

The purpose of screening is to identify potential issues in learning or development. Screening instruments are designed to quickly identify children who may need more in-depth assessment. Screening is a vital part of all early childhood programs because positive outcomes for children are associated with early identification of, and attention to, developmental differences (often referred to as delays, disorders, or disabilities).

The **Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)** is an excellent screening tool that helps Family Child Care providers learn about children who will be joining their program. Providers can ask parents to complete the **ASQ** when each new child is enrolled. There are two different tools specifically developed for parents, and they are available in both English and Spanish. It only takes 10-15 minutes to complete each one.

- The **ASQ-3** reliably identifies children between 1 month and 5½ years of age for signs of developmental delays. It screens for communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and personal-social development.
- The **ASQ-SE** reliably identifies young children at risk for social or emotional issues. It screens for self-regulation, compliance, communication, adaptive behaviors, autonomy, affect, and interaction with people.
- For more information on the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, free resources to help programs successfully implement **ASQ-3**, and activity ideas, visit: <http://agesandstages.com/research-results/why-screening-matters>

Instructional

A very important reason for assessment in the early childhood years is to **support early learning and development**. Observing children as a form of instructional assessment provides information about what children know and are able to do at a given point in time. It also guides “next steps” in learning, and can provide feedback on progress toward goals. **Assessment to support instruction is a continuous process** that helps people who work with young children decide what kinds of activities and engaging environments to plan for them.

Instructional assessments can be used with early childhood standards such as the *California Learning and Development Foundations* and the *California Curriculum Frameworks* to help providers examine the capabilities of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers (*Foundations*), and to plan activities (*Frameworks*). These publications are available to download free of charge:

- Infant/Toddler Foundations & Framework
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/itfoundations.asp>
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/itframework.asp>
- Preschool Foundations & Frameworks
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfoundations.asp>
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psframework.asp>

Assessment Types Overview

Diagnostic

Diagnostic assessment is a thorough and comprehensive approach to understanding early childhood development and/or learning in order to identify learning challenges and delays, disabilities, and skill deficits. Diagnostic assessment is also used to evaluate eligibility for infant/toddler early intervention, additional support services, and special education.

Family child care providers are NOT expected to use diagnostic screening tools which are administered by professionals with specialized training. When used to determine eligibility for specific support services, early intervention and special education, **diagnostic assessment is a formal procedure governed by federal and state law.**

Program Evaluation and Accountability

Assessment for program evaluation and accountability addresses program-level outcomes. While instructional, screening, and diagnostic assessments address the development and learning of individual children, **program evaluation and accountability assessments focus on what groups of children are doing in a particular setting.** In addition, program evaluations routinely address several variables, such as the knowledge, skills and background of caregiver/teachers, the physical environment, effectiveness of parent engagement, and community collaboration activities. Accountability assessment is often required by external agencies and used by policy makers for decisions about funding, needed program supports, and program requirements.

- The most commonly used tool in family child care homes is the **Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale** (FCCERS or FCCERS-R). It includes 37 items organized by seven subscales: (1) Space and Furnishings, (2) Personal Care Routines, (3) Listening and Talking, (4) Activities, (5) Interaction, (6) Program Structure, and (7) Parents and Provider resources.
- The [Classroom Assessment Scoring System \(CLASS\)](#)™ is an observation tool focused on the kinds of interactions that boost children's learning. Data from CLASS observations are used to support educators' unique professional development needs, to set program goals, and to shape system-wide reform at the local, state, and national levels. There are Infant, Toddler and Preschool versions of the CLASS tool used to evaluate the quality of adult/child interactions in family child care homes. The CLASS tool includes 10 subscales organized into three domains: (1) Emotional Support, (2) Classroom Organization, and (3) Instructional Support.

General definitions adapted from: Washington State - A Guide to Assessment in Early Childhood Infancy to Age Eight, by K. Slentz et al, prepared for the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction Early Childhood Assessment Workgroup http://www.k12.wa.us/EarlyLearning/pubdocs/assessment_print.pdf

Assessing Young Children: The New Zealand Approach

The New Zealand approach to assessment asks Early Childhood teachers/caregivers to consider questions from a child's point of view. These questions are built on the principles of the [Te Whariki](#) curriculum, which provides the framework for defining learning and what is to be learned. Their goals are based on clearly defined values and reflect the following areas:

Values	Questions	Goals	How do you know if you have met these goals?
Belonging	Do you appreciate and understand my interests and abilities and those of my family?	Do you know me?	
Well-being	Do you meet my daily needs with care and sensitive consideration?	Can I trust you?	
Exploration	Do you engage my mind, offer challenges, and extend my world?	Do you let me fly?	
Communication	Do you invite me to communicate and respond to my own particular efforts?	Do you hear me?	
Contribution	Do you encourage and facilitate my endeavors to be part of the wider group?	Is this place fair?	

New Zealand Ministry of Education, cited in Curtis and Carter (2008) Learning together with Young Children.

Writing Learning Stories

The Learning Stories Assessment approach is a form of observation and documentation that is written in a narrative story format. A family child care (FCC) provider watches and listens as children explore through play. She may take a few photos or videotape a child in action, jot down some notes, and then create a story about what she has seen to share with children and their families.

There is no “right way” to tell a story, but a Learning Story always begins with the learner’s initiative. The children start on their own, without cues or direction from adults. **Learning Stories are always about things that we value: nothing negative is said or implied about any child.**

A Learning Story is powerful and meaningful to families and can often communicate more than a number, a score, or a checklist of skills. **Because it is written to the children, it’s both easy for providers to write and easy for families to understand. FCC professionals become observers and story writers while reflecting on children’s actions and words. The story is always a positive one about children’s strengths, good ideas, and dispositions for learning.**

Creating a Learning Story:

- **Write.** Describe what the child did and said, then provide your perspective. Add a title.
- **Read the story to the child.** (This works well for children who are of preschool age or older.) Listen for her comments and feedback. You can read the story to all the children in the FCC home as long as the child in the story agrees. Sharing a story can sometimes spark ideas for other children.
- **Plan.** Describe what you will do to enhance or extend the play of the child you observed. This is an opportunity to reflect on the child’s play while planning for one child or a group of children. Will you add more or different materials? Provide books for research or books for story reading?
- **Connect to families.** Provide a copy of the story to the family, along with a note asking for their feedback. The note could say something like this, “This is your child’s story. I would appreciate any feedback or comments you wish to share with me.”

You can share more information about what the child has learned or is learning and attach that to the story when you place it in the child’s portfolio.

Tom Drummond's Guide to Writing Learning Stories

It is essential to have at least one picture of the child or group of children whose learning story you are telling. The more photographs you have, the more your story can convey. Once you have photos or stills from a video you've taken, you can write the text for the learning story.

1. Start with your own interest in what the child has taken the initiative to do. When you talk about yourself using **"I"** you give "voice" to the storyteller. An observer brings a personal perspective to the tale.
2. Describe what the child does and says from your perspective as a person who cares and is listening closely to discover what is happening. This is **not** totally objective. In other observations we strive to be narrators only. In any case, when we tell learning stories we can only see the child from the outside. Do your best to pay close attention. The description you write creates the heart of the story.
3. Then, you may include a paragraph titled, **"What it means"** and write about the significance of what you saw. Many perspectives can be included here. If the child is old enough, s/he can share what was going on from her perspective. If there are other adults working in the FCC home, they can weigh in with what they noticed.
4. Next you can offer an additional paragraph, **"Opportunities and Possibilities"** to describe what we (family child care providers, parents, etc.) can offer next and describe what we think the future may hold. This gives a bit of insight into how FCC providers think about what they do. Many people who wish the best for their children do not realize what FCC providers do. It is difficult for outsiders to understand how providers learn how to ask questions and respond to children in ways that benefit each child. **"We..."** gives a voice to this statement of intention by adults who are dedicated to growing as they support young children.
5. Finally, you can offer a blank page for the family to respond with their thoughts. Members of the family may have things to say to the child and to those who work in the FCC home. Some may offer input easily; others might need a prompt, for example: *I wonder what you would say to your child about this. What do you see happening? What delights you?*
6. Make sure to include a title; all good stories have one!

You can make two copies of each story; one for the child to take home and one for the FCC program, which can be a part of the child's portfolio that gets added to as the child grows.

Excerpted and adapted from <http://tomdrummond.com/looking-closely-at-children/writing-learning-stories/> and accessed June 21, 2017

Learning Story: Gabby Template

Title: _____





Learning Story: Gabby Template





OSAD Post-Training Reflection

Name _____ Date _____

<i>Use an X to mark the box that answers each statement best for you.</i>	Not sure	No	Sometimes	Yes
Assessments help people who work with young children to learn about each child they provide care for.				
When my FCC environment is set up well, I find there is time for observation and documentation.				
I use observations, assessments, and documentation to support the cultural competence of the children in my FCC home.				
I value my own learning and make time during the workday to reflect on observations and documentation I've done in my FCC program.				
I experience wonder, joy, and discovery in all aspects of my daily work as a FCC provider.				
<p>What are the most helpful things you've learned about Observation, Screening, Assessment and Documentation?</p> <p>Describe at least one strategy you plan to use with families to increase your understanding of the observations you've done in your FCC home.</p>				

Questions based on the Dispositions for Practitioners from the Observation, Screening, Assessment & Documentation Competency from the California Department of Education. For more information, see: <http://ececompsat.org/competencies/osad/osad.html>