

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

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 _____

3	Things I Learned ...
2	Things I Found Interesting ...
1	Question I Still Have ...

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?

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

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?

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>

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 \(CLASS\)](#)TM 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.

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.

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
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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 are the most helpful things you've learned about Observation, Screening, Assessment and Documentation?

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.

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