

OBSERVING CHILDREN

PURPOSE: Observable behaviors (what you can actually see) are a good indication of how well the child has assimilated learning, and can indicate what learning is still to be achieved. Objectivity is the essence of a worthwhile observation. For the observation to become worthwhile it must have a purpose and be used to achieve that purpose. Observations should be planned in order to observe a child engaged in a goal related activity. Information gathered from thorough, objective observations is used in tracking goal progress and completion, revising or development of new individualized children's goals and identifying curriculum needs for future lesson planning around current developmental needs.

PROCEDURE:

1. Education staff will record formal observations for each child according to the Assessment Schedule. Education staff at all centers needs to involve parents in the observation of their own children as required by Performance standards and encourage them to share information about their observations with appropriate staff.
2. All written observations will be placed in the child's file and in the child's portfolio as appropriate, to be shared with parents and will be utilized in development and reflective of goals and objectives for children and for classroom and home visit activities.
3. The information from all observations will be used to discuss child development, develop appropriate goals, behaviors and proper management and family concerns about the child. Information from observations can include but are not limited to the following uses:
 - determine child's level of development as relates to Outcome Measures and/or Portage ongoing assessment
 - provide activities appropriate to each child's developmental level in individual, small group, and large group experiences
 - promote the development of a positive self-image
 - strengthen and enhance each child's individual qualities
 - facilitate the development and enhancement of social relationships
 - provide opportunities for child-initiated activities
 - encourage children to explore, experiment, and question their environment
 - provide activities that strengthen physical development
 - plan activities that strengthen cognitive development
 - ensure opportunities for children to interact with one another and adults on an informal basis
 - provide activities which promote the development of vocabulary and the enhancement of language skills

In addition to formal observations, staff (Teachers, CFAs and Teacher Assistants) as a team will develop a system for capturing information informally and debriefing their findings on a regular basis.