

# Participant's Guide

Overview of Assessment: Gathering and Using  
Information to Support Learning and  
Communicate with Families

Class 20  
Sessions A, B, C, D  
8 hours

## Assessment training, Handout 1.1: Course and session objectives

### Assessment: Gathering and Using Information

**Description:** Assessment is a familiar buzzword in the child care and education field but not always easily understood and practiced. Participants in this training will practice the assessment cycle of gathering information and making decisions based on that information. The purpose of gathering and using information is to support children and families.

#### Overall Course Objectives:

1. **Identify/define common terms used in assessment.**
2. **Explore criteria for quality assessment tools.**
3. **Practice the assessment cycle of observation/documentation, analysis, planning, implementation and reflection.**
4. **Identify strategies to engage families in assessment processes, results, and implications.**

This training course consists of four sessions. Each session has objectives that align with the course objectives above.

#### **Session A. Objectives Authentic Assessment: laying a foundation**

1. Define common terms related to authentic child assessment
2. Practice observation across developmental domains
3. Devise a plan for observing a focus child in your program.

#### **Session B. Objectives Authentic Assessment: strategies and tools for gathering observation**

1. Brainstorm and plan strategies for making assessment part of the daily routine.
2. Identify a process for choosing and using assessment
3. Explore multiple assessment tools
4. Use multiple tools/strategies to observe and document with the focus child.

#### **Session C. Objectives Authentic Assessment: using assessment to make decisions**

1. Apply assessment to lesson planning.
2. Participate in a “data debrief” reflection experience.
3. Plan and practice conversation with family to gather/share information.

#### **Session 4. Objectives Authentic Assessment: conversations with families**

1. Discuss the role of families in authentic assessment
2. Gain resources for related issues in child assessment (dual language learners).
3. Practice cycle of observation, planning, reflection, and conversation with families
4. Plan next steps for program needs.

## Assessment: Gathering and Using Information, Handout 1.2

### Field work and focus child

**Field work:** Each session will include a field work assignment to do back home between sessions.

Then the next time we meet, we will USE our field work in activities that help us talk about how it went, what we learned, what was frustrating, etc. We want to do more than learn “about” assessment—we want to practice it and have an opportunity to work out any challenges that may arise. Field work will include:

- **Specific things to notice, write down, and bring to the next session.**
- **Each training (after this one) will begin with discussion about how your field work went, so please use the tools during the week in order to make this discussion rich and meaningful.**

**Choosing a focus child:** Decide to focus on one child in order to practice using the tools that we talk about in the training. At the end of the session, everyone will decide which child, so think about **how** you want to decide. (Do you want to choose a child who is challenging right now? One who is new? One you are curious about and need to get to know better?) You will use the field work activities with this particular child in between sessions. (Confidentiality note: while we will talk about how your field work went during future sessions, please do not use names or identifying descriptions.)

### FIELD WORK—back in your program between sessions

#### **Between Session A and Session B: gathering information about your focus child.**

Select one child that you will observe this week. This child will be your focus child and we will refer to this child throughout the remaining sessions. Before leaving Session A class think about these 3 questions, jot down thoughts, and be ready to share one with the group.

1. **Why did you choose this child?**
2. **What are you hoping to learn?**
3. **What do you think you might see?**

Select a **time and place** in which to observe your target child.

**Observe your focus child** and collect **at least 5** anecdotal observations. Look in the ECIPS (online or print them out) to identify what you see in the child and where s/he fits in a particular domain. Is s/he doing what the ECIPS says or not? How can this information help you decide what to do or how to plan? **Bring your observations and the answers to these questions, to the next session.**

## Field work: between Session B and Session C

Practice specific observation strategies as you observe your target child.

1. Choose two different observation strategies.
2. Use each strategy to collect information about your target child. After using a strategy, note the following:
  - What is great about it? (What was it like to use?)
  - What is not so great about it? (What was challenging about using it? If it didn't meet your expectations, why not? )
  - What did you learn about the child?
  - How did you use what you learned? How could you use it in the future?

**Take notes and answer the questions before next time.** We'll be using our findings to move to the next step (in Session C).

**Also, please bring a copy of your lesson plan for the following session.**

## Field work between Session C and Session D: Two tasks

1. **Make changes to your lesson plan based on the needs of your focus child.** Based on our earlier conversations and what you have learned about your focus child, what is **ONE** domain that you would like to support more intentionally? Where could you adapt or add an activity in your lesson plan that supports this? **Write it on the lesson plan and implement the change.** In Session D, we will talk about how the activity went and what you learned.
2. **Parent conversation.** Between this session and the next, plan and have a conversation with the family of your focus child that relates to assessment. Some possibilities are:
  - a. Tell them you are taking a class on assessment with an assignment to ask parents a few questions. (Most people like helping someone complete their "homework" 😊)
  - b. You have learned some things about their child using observation strategies and you would like to share what you have learned. (show data; ask questions, etc.)

**Before the conversation**, jot down: What do you want to **ask them** about? (What would give you more insight about their child? It could be something about what they do at home, how the parents handle a behavior, etc. What are you curious about?).

Next, reflect about:

What do you know about the family? How do they usually respond to questions?

When will you have the conversation? Where would you have the conversation?

Write out your goal for when you will have this conversation and one thing you want to ask them. Share it with the person on your left.

## Handout 1.3: Definitions of assessment

## **Authentic Assessment<sup>1</sup>:**

- **Ongoing:** Is a natural part of what teachers do every day
- **Whole child:** Helps us observe all areas of a child's growth and development
- **Naturalistic:** Occurs as a child interacts with familiar materials, people and activities
- **Multiple perspectives:** Uses information from a variety of sources (including families)
- **Useful:** Helps teachers plan, measure progress, work with families and individualize curriculum

## **Parent Aware: "Instructional child assessment"**

[http://www.parentawareratings.org/files/Child%20Assessment%20Review%20Process%20Guide\\_1.pdf](http://www.parentawareratings.org/files/Child%20Assessment%20Review%20Process%20Guide_1.pdf)

A systematic, ongoing procedure to evaluate children's progress and plan appropriate learning experiences and instruction

What I notice about the definitions:

What I already do and how:

## **Links to Early Childhood Indicators of Progress: (will be used throughout training)**

Birth to Three: <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Legacy/DHS-4438-ENG>

Preschool: <http://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Legacy/DHS-4576-ENG>

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<sup>1</sup>Results Matter, Colorado Department of Education, <http://www.cde.state.co.us/resultsmatter/observation.htm>

## **Handout 1.5 Objective or Subjective?**

**(May be used as verbal statements or put on PowerPoint or chart paper)**

**Joey jumped from 18 inches.**

**Mark was nice to Zia.**

**Amanda is doing fine cutting.**

**Jordan grabbed the toy and ran to the house area.**

**Mio counted to eight as he sat on a pillow in the book area.**

**Gracie enjoyed music time today.**

**Luis clapped his hands and turned in circles while the music played.**

**Marti was angry.**

**Sofiya took the book, stared at Hannah, walked over to her cubby and put it in her backpack.**

**Erik looked sad when his mom left today.**

Adapted from *These Challenging Children, The Role of Observation*,  
ND Early Childhood Training Center, NDSU extension, 1999.

**Handout 1.6 Parent Aware Indicators and Standards from website**

<b>Assessment of child progress: Centers (update 3.29.13)</b>	
<p><b>AC1a.</b> All lead teachers have completed at least 2 hours of training on authentic observation practices.</p> <p><b>AC1b.</b> Observes children regularly and records information at least monthly.</p> <p><b>AC2a.</b> Shares observation summaries with families prepared using authentic observation practices.</p>	<b>no points</b>
<p><b>AC3a.</b> Conducts assessment using an approved tool with all children at least twice per year in at least the following domains: social-emotional, language and literacy, mathematical thinking and physical development; and all lead teachers have completed 8 hours of training on authentic child assessment, OR</p> <p><b>AC3b.</b> Conducts assessment using an approved tool with all children at least once per year in two or more domains, and all lead teachers have completed at least 8 hours of training on authentic child assessment. (If program is using an approved assessment tool with some but not all age groups, partial credit is given.)</p>	<b>1</b>  <b>1</b>
<p><b>AC3c.</b> Provides families with child assessment results, and if a child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP), shares assessment results with team with family’s permission. For a child with a special need who is receiving specialty services (for example, physical or occupational therapy), shares assessment results with service providers with family’s permission. (If program is using an approved assessment tool with some but not all age groups, partial credit is given.)</p>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>AC3d.</b> Uses child assessment information to develop lesson plans and individual goals for all children in the program. (If program is using an approved assessment tool with some but not all age groups, partial credit is given.)</p>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total possible</b>	<b>4</b>

<b>Assessment of Child Progress: Family Child Care (update 4.1.13)</b>	<b>Points</b>
<p><b>AC1a.</b> All lead child care providers have completed at least 2 hours of training on authentic observation practices.</p> <p><b>AC1b.</b> Observes children regularly and records information at least monthly.</p> <p><b>AC2a.</b> Shares observation summaries with families prepared using authentic observation practices.</p>	<b>no points</b>
<p><b>AC3a.</b> Conducts assessment using an approved tool with all children at least twice per year in at least the following domains: social-emotional, language and literacy, mathematical thinking and physical development; and all lead teachers have completed 8 hours of training on authentic child assessment, OR</p> <p><b>AC3b.</b> Conducts assessment using an approved tool with all children at least once per year in two or more domains, and all lead teachers have completed at least 8 hours of training on authentic child assessment.</p> <p>(If program is using an approved assessment tool with some but not all age groups, partial credit is given.)</p>	<b>2</b>       <b>1</b>
<p><b>AC3c.</b> Provides families with child assessment results, and if a child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP), shares assessment results with team. For a child with a special need who is receiving specialty services (for example, physical or occupational therapy), shares assessment results with service providers with families permission. (If program is using an approved assessment tool with some but not all age groups, partial credit is given.)</p>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>AC3d.</b> Uses child assessment information to develop lesson plans and individual goals for all children in the program. (If program is using an approved assessment tool with some but not all age groups, partial credit is given.)</p>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total possible</b>	<b>4</b>



## **Class 20 Session B- Portfolio Assignment**

***Begin this assignment for your portfolio. You will continue it next week.***

**CDA Competency Standard V: To ensure a well- run, purposeful program that is responsive to participant needs**

*CSV: Reflective Competency Statement V*

CSVa: Begin your Reflective Statement about this Competency Standard with a paragraph describing how your teaching practices meet this Standard. Then write at least one paragraph describing how your teaching practices meet this Standard. Then write at least one paragraph that describes how you used the observation tool/form you included in the Resource Collection. Why are observation and documentation important parts of the program management? How do you ensure that you are accurately/objectively observing and tracking each child's developmental and learning progress?

## **Class 20 Session C-Portfolio Assignment**

***Continue to write assignment for your portfolio.***

**CDA Competency Standard V: To ensure a well- run, purposeful program that is responsive to participant needs**

*CSV: Reflective Competency Statement V*

CSVa: Begin your Reflective Statement about this Competency Standard with a paragraph describing how your teaching practices meet this Standard. Then write at least one paragraph describing how your teaching practices meet this Standard. Then write at least one paragraph that describes how you used the observation tool/form you included in the Resource Collection. Why are observation and documentation important parts of the program management? How do you ensure that you are accurately/objectively observing and tracking each child's developmental and learning progress?

## Class 20 Session D-Portfolio Assignment

*You will need to have the portfolio assignments completed at the end of session D*

**Class 20 Session D Participant**

### **Perspective-taking observation sheet**

Through the lens of a parent

Scenario 1

Learn	Feel

Scenario 2

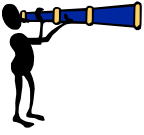
Learn	Feel

Scenario 3

Learn	Feel

## Parent conversation planning tool

(because what gets written down can help us think/act 😊)



1. What I observed (observation—how/when/what):



2. What I think it could mean (analyze, options):



3. Things I wonder, questions I have (seek parent ideas, perspective, their experiences)



4. Action agreement (planning/implementing)

Two things I'll do?

Two things you do?

### Walking through the assessment process

This experience will include several steps:

1. Choose an observation strategy. This page has space for anecdotal notes, running record, or notes such as vocabulary. You may use a developmental checklist (provided) if you like.
2. Watch a video (Austin and the broken bridge), taking notes using the observation strategy you selected. What do you see and hear? (use objective statements)
3. Individual reflection (10 min):
  - a. What are the observations telling you about this child? (look at ECIPS if available/helpful)
  - b. How might this short observation fit into a comprehensive assessment system? (TO THINK ABOUT)
  - c. Write down two questions to ask this child's parent.
    - i. \_\_\_\_\_
    - ii. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Write down one thing you would share with the parent from this observation  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Using your observation and any information from the parent, identify two ways you can adapt your environment, lesson plan, routine, or interactions for this child (for example, what might you add/adapt in your routines or a lesson plan activity?)  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Identify two ideas/activities for parents to do at home (use the parent conversation planning tool).  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. In pairs, practice the conversation with the parent. Describe the observation process and what you learned about their child. Ask them questions, and offer them things to do at home.

### **Handout 4.5 Reflective questions—planning for my program**

- How has my understanding of assessment changed?
- How has my attitude about assessment changed?
- What strengths do I bring to the assessment cycle to make teaching decisions about teaching?
- What is still a barrier for me? Confusing? What are the areas where I will need more regular support?
- Where will I get help if I get “stuck?”
- How can I gain that support?
- What are my next steps in regards to assessment?