

Intentional Observation: Understanding and Supporting Each Child Participant Guide

2 Hours
July 2026

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Training Evaluation

In a few days, you will receive an email from Develop asking you to complete an online training evaluation from this event called a Training and Trainer Evaluation Tool (TTET). We would really appreciate your input about trainer performance, the content, and the training environment so that we can make improvements along the way. We use your feedback when we revise courses and schedule training events.

Course Overview

KCF Content Area:

KCF Content Area: IV.A. Observing, Recording, and Assessing Development

CDA Subject Area:

CDA Subject Area VII: Observing and recording children's behavior

Course Description

Explore the role that intentional observation plays in supporting children's development and learning in early childhood programs. Discuss how objective observations lead to a deeper understanding of children's individual strengths, interests, and developmental needs. Discover practical strategies for using observation data to plan individualized learning experiences that promote children's growth and developmental progress.

Learning Objectives

Throughout this training, participants will:

- Describe the importance of intentional observation in supporting children's learning and development.
- Demonstrate methods for using observation data to plan individualized learning experiences that support children's developmental progress.

Course Outline:

Section	Section Time	Key Concepts
A	15 minutes	Welcome/Introductions Objectives Review
B	20 minutes	The Purpose of Intentional Observation
C	45 minutes	Effective Observation Tools and Strategies

Section	Section Time	Key Concepts
D	30 minutes	Using Observation Data to Inform Decision-Making
E	10 minutes	Objectives Review/Closing
	Total Time: 2 hours	

Reflecting on Children's Development

Think about one child who is currently in your early childhood program. Picture the child in your mind.

- Think about the things this child can do or finds challenging.
- What are this child's likes and dislikes?
- How would you describe this child's temperament?
- Can this child:
 - Walk independently for 2-3 steps?
 - Say their own name aloud?
 - Zip their own coat?
 - Build a tower with 3-4 blocks independently?
 - Hold a book and turn the pages without your help?

Observation Tools and Strategies

- Writing observation notes
- Using developmental checklists
- Collecting work samples
- Capturing events with photographs or video recordings

Tips for Conducting Effective Observations

- Use a variety of methods that fit the situation
- Follow a routine
- Vary the time, day, setting, activities, and the interactions you observe
- Be prepared
- Document observations using written notes
- Provide complete details
- Be objective and unbiased

Writing Objective Observations

Observation notes: Video #1

Observation notes: Video #2

Final Reflection

- How will you use intentional observation to support the individual needs of the children in your program?
- How can you adapt your curriculum or adjust your teaching strategies based on what you observe?
- What is one practice you will implement in your program as a result of this training?

Resources

- [Early Childhood Indicators of Progress \(ECIPs\)](#)
- [Help Me Grow Minnesota](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) – Learn the Signs. Act Early](#)
- [NAEYC Code of Ethics for Early Childhood Educators](#)
- [American Psychological Association Inclusive Language Guide](#)