

Assessment in Preschool and Kindergarten:

***Strategies that Provide the Most Informative
and Reliable Information to Plan Curriculum
Appropriate for Each Child***



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- In this workshop, we will...
 - Learn about formative and performance-based assessment processes that use teacher observation, documentation, portfolio collection, and summary reporting related to learning goals
 - Review many examples of documentation as well as models for portfolios and summary reports
 - Consider time-efficient strategies for collection of data will be offered
 - And link observation and documentation to curriculum to truly meet the needs of each child



Gaye Gronlund

- My work focuses on:
 - implementing learning through play and exploration
 - incorporating early learning standards
 - assessing children’s progress through observation and portfolios
 - and coaching teachers to implement more individualized curriculum
 - www.gayegronlund.com

I am an early childhood education consultant who works with programs across the country and the author of eight books published by Redleaf Press as well as several articles that have been published in the NAEYC journal, Young Children. I served as the Project Manager for NAEYC for resources related to the third edition of Developmentally Appropriate Practice. I am the creator of Child-Focused Coaching™, a new system to help teachers truly individualize and differentiate curriculum for young children.

Resources by Gaye Gronlund

available from www.redleafpress.org or
www.naeyc.org

- **Planning for Play, Observation, and Learning in Preschool and Kindergarten**
- **Developmentally Appropriate Play: Guiding Young Children to Higher Levels** (with parent brochure, *Why Children Play*)
- ***Developmentally Appropriate Play Stories Volume 1 (an interactive video program)***
- **Make Early Learning Standards Come Alive 2nd edition: Connecting Your Practice and Curriculum to State Guidelines**
- **Focused Observations 2nd edition: How to Observe Young Children for Assessment and Curriculum Planning** (coauthor, Marlyn James)
- **Focused Portfolios: A Complete Assessment for the Young Child** (coauthor, Bev Engel)
- **Early Learning Standards and Staff Development: Best Practices in the Face of Change** (coauthor, Marlyn James)
- **Produced the CD-Rom accompanying Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs, 3rd Edition, NAEYC and the DVDs, “The New Developmentally Appropriate Practice”, “DAP and Intentionality” and “DAP and Play”**

Recommendations for Assessment in Early Childhood

- “Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment, and Program Evaluation,” National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE) 2003
 - identifies the indicators of effectiveness regarding assessment in the early childhood years
 - <http://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements>.

- Position Statement adopted 2009:
 - Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8*
 - National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
 - <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/PSDAP.pdf>

- Policy Report 2014
 - Formative Assessment: Guidance for Early Childhood Policymakers*
 - by Shannon Riley-Ayers
 - Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO)
 - http://ceelo.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/04/ceelo_policy_report_formative_assessment.pdf

Assessing Children's Progress Towards Standards or Goals

- Authentically, authentically, authentically!
 - By gathering information through observation and work sampling
 - By evaluating that information using standards as the reference by which the child's accomplishments are measured

The recommendations support observation that is criterion-referenced.

How do teachers do that?



- By observing children and relating those observations to standards or curriculum goals.
- By using observations to guide instruction.

Teachers Get to Know Children Well by Observing Them in Action

- Teachers observe children ALL of the time.
 - They watch them using their sense of sight.
 - They listen.
 - They have a 6th sense about what's going on.
 - They use their sense of touch.
 - They care deeply about each child.

When do you observe & document?

In the moment as
you interact with the
children and/or
families

Out of the action

In reflection, after
the fact
TAKE FIVE!

Teachers can focus their observations in many different ways

- They can focus *on one child or a small group of children*
- They can focus **on a domain or area of learning** (such as fine motor or math)
- They can focus *on a specific benchmark* (such as pencil grasp or recognition of shapes)
- They can focus *on an area of the classroom or a specific activity*



When teachers observe and document, what should they write?

The facts... what they see & hear, what the child does & says.

Not interpretations...not what they think about the facts (until they've collected enough to support their interpretation!).

Writing Anecdotes

Words & Phrases to Avoid

The child loves...
The child likes...
He or she enjoys...
She or he spends a long time at...

It seems like...
It appears...
I felt...
I wonder...
She or he does...very well...
He or she is bad at...
This is difficult for...

Words & Phrases to Use

She or he often chooses...
I saw her...
I heard him say...
*She or he spends five
minutes doing...*

She or he said...
Almost every day he...
Once or twice a month, she...
Each time, he...
She consistently...
We observed a pattern of...

Practical Ways to Document Observations

Sticky notes

Clipboards with
address labels

Forms to list all of
the children's
names

Binders or
notebooks with a
section per child

File folders with
sticky notes or
index cards



Forms to list all of
the children's
names

- Quick Check Recording Sheets
- Small Group Observation Forms
- Brief Notes Recording Sheets
 - All from *Focused Observations 2nd ed.*
(Gronlund and James, 2013,
www.redleafpress.org)

HOW MANY OBSERVATIONS? HOW MUCH DOCUMENTATION?

Consider building an assessment portfolio with 5-7 observations that address all of the domains.

Teachers observe and document in this way two to three times per year so they can compare and show progress.

Portfolios

- A portfolio is an important tool for communicating not only about a child's learning
- You are providing evidence to support your conclusions about the child's strengths, skills, and capabilities

Portfolio Collection Form

Child's Name: _____ Date: _____ Observer: _____

Domains(s): _____

Learning goal(s) demonstrated in this documentation: _____

Check off whatever applies to the context of this observation:

<input type="checkbox"/> child-initiated activity	<input type="checkbox"/> done independently	<input type="checkbox"/> time spent (1 to 5 minutes)
<input type="checkbox"/> teacher-initiated activity	<input type="checkbox"/> done with adult guidance	<input type="checkbox"/> time spent (5 to 15 minutes)
<input type="checkbox"/> new task for this child	<input type="checkbox"/> done with peer(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> time spent (more than 15 minutes)
<input type="checkbox"/> familiar task for this child		

Anecdotal note: Describe what you saw the child do and/or heard the child say (attach a photo or work sample if appropriate).

You can download this form at
<http://www.redleafpress.org/Planning-for-Play-Observation-and-Learning-in-Preschool-and-Kindergarten-P794.aspx>

Assessment Portfolios

More than a scrapbook or collection of children's work

More than a photo album

An assessment portfolio is a representation of what you are learning about each child's performance in selected domains.

You can't reasonably evaluate every indicator within every domain!

What to Save in a Portfolio

- A selection of observation notes tied to early learning indicators, IEP goals, and curricular expectations
 - Some observation notes may be brief, checklist kind of information.
 - Some observation notes should be factual and detailed descriptions of what the child did and/or said.
- Additional information to support the observation notes such as photos of the child demonstrating the goal, and work samples that show the child's performance
- The items in the portfolio should represent the child's **typical work** (not only the best or worst).
 - However, you can always include some “shining moments” to show particular progress or unique ways the child is demonstrating his/her learning.
- Collect these items at least twice a year so they can be compared for progress

Consider collecting the following portfolio items for preschool & kindergarten children

- Writing samples
- Responses to reading experiences
- Mathematical problem/solving
- Creations that require mathematical understanding (patterning, geometrical creations)
- Scientific explorations
- Self-reflections
- Art/Drawing samples

Communicating with Families

- The goal is to summarize the child's performance (not to share every single indicator assessed)
 - Where is the child successful?
 - Where has progress been made?
 - What are your plans for next steps?
- Sharing portfolio items has the most meaning for families
 - They see their child in action – a window into their child's time with you in your program
 - They connect developmental progress to what their child does in every day routines, play, interactions and activities

Family/Teacher Summary Report

Child's Name: _____ Date: _____

Teacher: _____ Program: _____

DOMAIN:	
Growth and accomplishments	
We will continue to work on	

DOMAIN:	
Growth and accomplishments	
We will continue to work on	

DOMAIN:	
Growth and accomplishments	
We will continue to work on	

(continued from previous page)

DOMAIN:	
Growth and accomplishments	
We will continue to work on	

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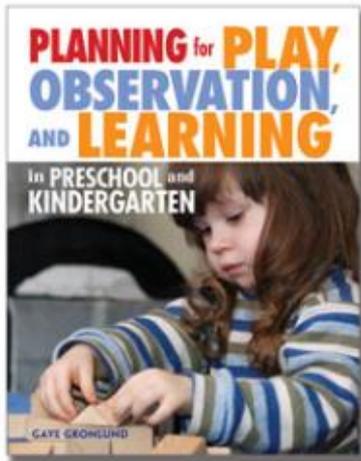
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Planning for Play, Observation, and Learning in Preschool and Kindergarten

★★★★★ [Reviews \(1\)](#)

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Planning for Play, Observation, and Learning in Preschool and Kindergarten

Downloadable forms

- [Preschool Weekly Planning and Reflection Framework](#)
- [Kindergarten Weekly Planning and Reflection Framework](#)
- [Weekly Planning and Reflection Framework](#)
- [Infant/Toddler Weekly Planning and Reflection Framework](#)
- [Individual Child Information Record](#)
- [Individual Adjustments](#)
- [Preschool Choice Record](#)
- [Kindergarten Choice Record](#)
- [Portfolio Collection Form](#)
- [Family-Teacher Summary Report](#)
- [Learning Goals Template](#)

Claudia, a young 4-year-old



- **Language Observation:**

Claudia is playing in the dramatic play area talking on the telephone. She says, “Hi Grandma. I’m going to Tucson with my family – my mom and dad and my sister. And we are going to stay in a hotel with a swimming pool!” She then goes to the art table and selects several colored markers and draws a picture. As she shows me her picture, she says, “Look. It’s my family in a rainbow.”

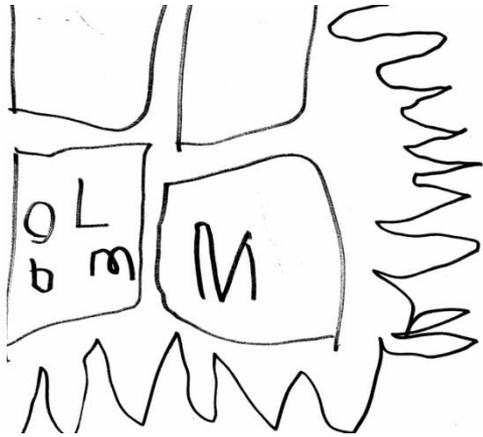
- **Social-Emotional Observation:**

Claudia has become more comfortable separating from her parents at drop-off time. Today, she comforts Emilia, who cries after her mom leaves. Claudia says, “It’s okay. Mommy’s coming back.” She looks at me and says, “Mommy always comes back, right, Michelle?” I smile and nod yes. Claudia gently puts her arm around Emilia and says, “I miss my mom. But see. I’m not crying.” At pickup time Claudia tells Emilia’s mom, “Emilia was crying for you, but I told her you would come back.”

- **Gross Motor Observation:**

Claudia plays on the climbing equipment with two boys. All three of them are growling and roaring. Claudia climbs easily up the ladder to the platform. One boy says, “Okay, I’m the baby jaguar.” He paws the air in front of Claudia. She responds by saying, “Now there are two baby jaguars!” She moves quickly around the platform, jumps on the slide, and slides down. Then she runs around and climbs back up again.

More Claudia Anecdotes



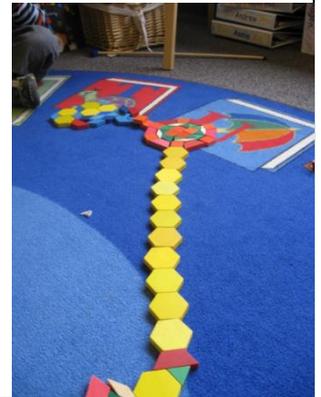
- ***Literacy/Writing Observation:***

Today, at the writing table, Claudia made the attached. I observed that she used her right hand in a correct pincer grasp. When I asked her to tell me about it, she said, "Look, I wrote 'M' for my Mom."

- ***Mathematical Problem-Solving Observation:***

For the past two weeks Claudia has chosen to play with the pattern blocks. Today, she connected two sets of designs with many yellow hexagons. Her dad arrived to take her home. "Dada, come see what I'm doing," she said.

She undid her work and redid it exactly the way it was.



Summarizing Claudia's Progress

What are her growth and accomplishments in each domain?

What would your next steps be for her in each domain?
What will you continue to work on with her?

To review...

*Teachers observe children
all the time in everyday,
authentic experiences*

*The best assessment
process in early childhood
is systematic, on-going
observational assessment*

*Teachers document factual observations and
link them to early learning standards and
curriculum goals*



What they
have to figure
out is when
and how to
document
what they
observe

For more ideas about
time-efficient observation
and documentation methods
check out my book
Focused Observations,
2nd Edition.

Quick Check Recording Sheet

Children's Names	Date and Activity	Date and Activity	Date and Activity	Date and Activity

Small-Group Observation Form

Date _____ Activity: _____

Goal(s): _____

Child's Name:	Child's Name:	Child's Name:
Child's Name:	Child's Name:	Child's Name:
Child's Name:	Child's Name:	Child's Name:
Child's Name:	Child's Name:	Child's Name: