



SHORT VIDEO INFORMATION SHEET

Clearing Your View: Staying Objective in Observation

This short video explains how to observe infants and toddlers and record observations without interpreting what you see. This kind of observation is necessary for use in tracking children's progress, including through ongoing child assessments, and meaningful planning.

Reflection Questions

- This podcast describes the difference between “everyday observations” and “formal observations.” When and how do I use formal observation in my work?
 - Listen for the definition of objective observation. Why do I think objectivity is important in formal observations?
 - The podcast offers the following tips for recording objective observation notes:
 - Make notes as concrete as possible
 - Describe behaviors and vocalizations and write down direct quotes
 - Describe facial expressions and gestures, but not what they might mean about how the child is feeling
 - Avoid adjectives that involve interpretation, like successful, happy, mad, pretty, hyper
 - Record what happened first and what happened next without including what might be the reasons
 - Review some recent observation notes I have taken, keeping these tips in mind. What did I notice? Which of these tips am I already using? Which tips do I want to work on? Remember that objective observation takes practice!
 - How can I use the information in this podcast to help me learn more about the children and families I work with?
 - Is there anyone else who would benefit from this podcast? How could I share it with them?
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Related Resources

- Early Head Start National Resource Center. *Look at Me! Using Focused Child Observation with Infants and Toddlers* [Podcast]. Washington, DC: Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families/Office of Head Start/Early Head Start National Resource Center, 2013. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/look-me-using-focused-child-observation-infants-toddlers>
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Connections to School Readiness for Infants and Toddlers

- Objectivity is an important element of the valid and reliable data necessary for ongoing assessments, planning and individualizing for school readiness, and continuous program improvement related to school readiness.
 - By removing interpretations from the data they collect, staff can more clearly understand a child's school readiness skills and how to support individual children in achieving their goals.
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Relevant Head Start Program Performance Standards

§1302.33 Child screenings and assessments.

(b) Assessment for individualization.

(1) A program must conduct standardized and structured assessments, which may be observation-based or direct, for each child that provide ongoing information to evaluate the child's developmental level and progress in outcomes aligned to the goals described in the *Head Start Early Learning Child Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five*. Such assessments must result in usable information for teachers, home visitors, and parents and be conducted with sufficient frequency to allow for individualization within the program year.

(2) A program must regularly use information from paragraph (b)(1) of this section along with informal teacher observations and additional information from family and staff, as relevant, to determine a child's strengths and needs, inform and adjust strategies to better support individualized learning and improve teaching practices in center-based and family child care settings, and improve home visit strategies in home-based models.

(3) If warranted from the information gathered from paragraphs (b)(1) and (2) of this section and with direct guidance from a mental health or child development professional and a parent's consent, a program must refer the child to the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA for a formal evaluation to assess a child's eligibility for services under IDEA.

§1302.34 Parent and family engagement in education and child development services.

(b) Engaging parents and family members.

(6) Teachers inform parents, about the purposes of and the results from screenings and assessments and discuss their child's progress;

§1302.35 Education in home-based programs.

(b) Home-based program design. A home-based program must ensure all home visits are:

(2) Planned using information from ongoing assessments that individualize learning experiences;

(f) Screening and assessments. A program that operates the home-based option must implement provisions in §1302.33 and inform parents about the purposes of and the results from screenings and assessments and discuss their child's progress.

If you do not have a copy of the *Head Start Program Performance Standards* and would like to view them electronically, you can use the following link to the ECLKC:

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii>

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