

GRIPPING, MOVING, AND POURING

Key Focus: Physical Development

Observation: At the beginning of the school year, Ms. Rahman wants to develop a better understanding of children’s fine motor skills. She creates the following table:

	Grips crayons / markers w/fist	Grips crayons/ markers w/ thumb and finger (pincer grasp)	Moves zippers up and down	Pours from pitcher with minimal spilling	Places small pegs in peg board easily
Jayden	Sept 10	Oct 2			Oct 5
Taniesha		Sept 7		Sept 22	Sept 15
Lawrence				Sept 20	
Ebony	Sept 7		Sept 10		Sept 9
Darienne	Sept 5	Sept 30			Sept 24
Von			Sept 8	Sept 19	
LaShauna	Sept 17	Oct 9	Oct 2		Sept 30
Felicia		Sept 15	Sept 20	Oct 8	Sept 29
Antwon	Sept 5	Sept 15	Oct 1		Sept 12

Reflecting on the documentation:

**Participants may quickly shift from reflecting on the documentation to interpreting the observation or suggesting strategies for extending learning. Remind participants to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the documentation technique.*

Ask: What advantages does a checklist like this offer?

Sample Responses: It allows the teacher to measure and observe pre-defined skills, focuses the observation, and measures discrete skills. It is a quick way to document and the teacher can see at a glance which children have not been observed demonstrating specific skills.

Ask: What additional information would you want?

Sample Responses: It would be useful to know if children were observed on other days when they were not able to do these activities, or if they could do them only with assistance. A checklist with more information would be helpful. Using dates across the top of the page and codes for “not at all,” “with some physical assistance,” “with verbal prompts,” and “independently” would have told more about their skill level. Each type of activity could have its own checklist, or you might want to group activities by the time of day that you collect them. For example, you could have zippers, buttons, and snaps together on a checklist, or types of activities children tend to do during center time. For the pencil grasp, it might be helpful to have codes under different pictures showing ways a child might grasp the crayon or pencil; the teacher could note which picture best indicated how the child gripped it.

**Share Handout 2 with participants.*

Interpretation of the observation:

**Remind participants that in their interpretation they are looking for patterns, critical incidents, or errors. It is important to stick to the data.*

Ask: What can you learn about the children from these observations?

Sample Responses:

Note: It is helpful to first look at each child's development and then to look across domains (observations below are based on the original table):

- Jayden first grips with his fist but then develops the pincer grasp less than a month later. He is also able to place small pegs in a peg board. Jayden has not been observed moving zippers or pouring without spilling.
- Taniesha seems to need assistance only with moving zippers up and down.
- Lawrence and Von have not been observed gripping crayons or markers, either with a fist or with a thumb and finger.
- Ebony needs help moving from gripping with her fist to using the pincer grasp.
- Felicia is the only child to have demonstrated all the skills.
- All children are making progress in their ability to use writing tools and developing the growing strength, dexterity, and control they need to use tools.
- Some children are more advanced in hand-eye coordination (as evidenced with the peg board) than in other types of fine motor activities.

Relating your observation to the Child Outcomes Framework:

**Although participants can defend other interpretations, there should be general consensus that this observation demonstrates:*

8A1 (Physical Development/Fine Motor Skills): Develops growing strength, dexterity, and control needed to use tools such as scissors, paper punch, stapler, and hammer.

8A2 (Physical Development/Fine Motor Skills): Grows in hand-eye coordination in building with blocks, putting together puzzles, reproducing shapes and patterns, stringing beads, and using scissors.

8A3 (Physical Development/Fine Motor Skills): Progresses in abilities to use writing, drawing, and art tools including pencils, markers, chalk, paint brushes, and various types of technology.

Next steps for large group instruction:

**Help participants make connections between what they learn from the assessment and the next steps they want to take in instruction. If suggestions for instruction extend activities to new areas of learning, ask participants to consider what aspects of children's progress they would assess and how they would do so during those extension activities.*

Ask: What would you recommend that the teacher do next for the class as a whole?

**Responses will vary but might include:*

- Offer more varied opportunities to strengthen hand use: play dough, clay, stringing beads, Legos, putting chips through a slit cut into the top of a coffee can, and so on.
- Develop a thematic unit that centers on quilts. Have children as part of this unit string beads and practice together the fine motor skills that are involved in the act of sewing.
- Add clothing with different sizes and types of fasteners to the dramatic play area so children who are able to zip can be assessed on other types of fasteners. Continue to document their abilities.

Next steps for individualized instruction:

Ask: What would you recommend that the teacher do next for individual children?

**Responses will vary but might include:*

- To help those children who need to develop the pincer grasp, lay out different types of paper (tissue paper, construction paper, etc.) and ask them to practice ripping with their thumb and forefinger to develop strength.
- For children who need to practice zippering, provide clothing with larger zippers; help by starting the zipper for them.
- For those who need help with pouring, encourage them to play at the water table with different types of pouring materials (for example, large and small cups).
- For those who need assistance with the peg board, bring out pegs and clay and have the children practice putting pegs into the clay or into pieces of Styrofoam.

Additional Notes: