

MOSES AND JOANNIE AT THE WATER TABLE

Key Focus: Social and Emotional Development

Observation: *A group of five children were at the water table. Joannie took the cup from in front of Moses. Moses tightened his lips and said, "That's mine." Then Moses picked up the tube and started playing with it.*

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.*

This is an anecdotal record.

Instruction: Talk with a partner about how objective or subjective this documentation record is.

**Give participants two minutes for their discussions.*

Ask: What did you decide about this record? Are there any portions of this anecdotal record that are not objective?

Sample Responses: This entire anecdote is written objectively except perhaps for "took the cup," which implies that it was Moses' cup. Participants might want to find more objective words—perhaps "picked up" or "began to play with."

Ask: Look at your anecdotal checklist (See handout). What are the strong points of this anecdote? What could have been improved?

Sample Responses: This anecdote is objective, provides context, and uses direct dialogue. Perhaps more context could be added about the time of day. More explanation could also shed light on "took the cup" (for example, if there were many toys in front of Moses, if he already had something in his hands when Joannie picked it up) as well as what Moses' "playing" with the tube looked like.

You don't know much about Joannie—did she look at Moses? Did she in any way acknowledge what he said to her? How close were the children? A photograph might capture more of the physical context.

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.*

Sample interpretations: Moses expressed that a toy belonged to him when another child started to use it. He then redirected himself and started to play with something else. Moses used language to express his feelings and avoided potential conflict without harming himself or others.

Ask: What more would you like to know?

Sample Responses: What is Moses' history in the class? Does he typically fight in situations such as this? Is using language in a situation

like this a “breakthrough” or are we working with Moses to try to get him to stand up for himself more frequently and use more problem-solving strategies (such as bargaining, trading, or turn-taking)? Does he consider all the toys his even if he has not been playing with them? Did he have Joannie’s attention? The current anecdotal record does not provide enough information for an outsider to interpret the relationship between Moses and Joannie. Children often repair disagreements more easily with friends.

With more information in the anecdote you might have been able to comment on how Joannie and Moses demonstrated control with these tools and how appropriate their play might be—do they repeat the same action over and over? Are they using the cup to pour? To float?

Relating Your Observation to the Child Outcomes Framework:

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

6B1 (Social and Emotional Development/Self-Control): Shows progress in expressing feelings, needs, and opinions in difficult situations and conflicts without harming themselves, others, or property.

1B1 (Language Development/Speaking and Communicating): Develops increasing abilities to understand and use language to communicate information, experiences, ideas, feelings, opinions, needs, questions, and for other varied purposes.

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

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:*

- Read a book with the class about sharing (for example, “That’s Mine, Horace” by Holly Heller) and talk about the need to share and to respect other people’s property, and alternative ways to resolve conflicts over toys (trading, negotiating turns).
- Role-play different ways to resolve conflicts over toys. Introduce a novel toy to the classroom and talk about ways to share it.
- Create a classroom “big book” that documents different ways children shared throughout the week.

Next steps for individualized instruction:

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

** Responses will vary but might include:*

- Grouping Joannie and Moses together in future center activities

and talking with them both about ways that they can share.

- Helping to extend Moses' language development. For example, next time he says, "That's mine," help him to use the other child's name and concrete words to replace pronouns such as "Joannie, That's my cup."
- Helping Joannie to take the perspective of others by asking questions or explaining how the other child might feel. Role-play ways to ask "Moses, can I have the cup?"

Additional Notes: Plan how you will document methods of sharing in the classroom.