



Unit 4: Using Child Assessment Information to Guide Instruction

Module 2

Helping Staff Use Child and Classroom Information for Planning

HELPING STAFF USE CHILD AND CLASSROOM INFORMATION FOR PLANNING

This module contains two sections:

- Mentor-Coach Forum on Ongoing Child Assessment (1 hour)
- Tutored Video Instruction (TVI) (3 hours 15 minutes).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By completing this module, Mentor-Coaches will:

- Become more aware of age-appropriate early childhood language and literacy outcomes
- Be able to apply mentor-coaching skills in the following ways:
 - ❑ Work with protégés to plan and carry out an ongoing assessment process
 - ❑ Guide protégés in conducting ongoing assessment in authentic settings
 - ❑ Help protégés select appropriate assessment strategies based on questions about children’s skill levels and progress
 - ❑ Engage parents or guardians in the ongoing assessment process.

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I. MENTOR-COACH FORUM ON ONGOING CHILD ASSESSMENT

CONTEXT

As the importance of early literacy skills becomes better understood, early childhood educators increasingly need to know how to assess the development of both children's language and literacy skills. An effective assessment process considers developmentally appropriate, age-level, and cognitive behaviors. Ongoing assessment uses both child performance and staff observation methods to gain a full picture of the child's language and literacy skills. In this forum, Mentor-Coaches will share self-assessments and discuss the assignment they completed in Module 1 of this unit.

TIME: 1 hour

OVERVIEW

- Introduction to the Module (5 minutes)
- Facilitator-Led Discussion on Inspirational Slogans (10 minutes)
- Facilitator-Led Discussion on Self-Assessment (10 minutes)
- Facilitator-Led Discussion on Planning for Assessment (10 minutes)
- Facilitator-Led Discussion on Introduction to Ongoing Child Assessment (20 minutes)
- Break (5 minutes)

I. MENTOR-COACH FORUM ON ONGOING CHILD ASSESSMENT CONTEXT

CONTEXT

Successful ongoing assessment uses both child performance and staff observation methods to gain a full picture of the child's language abilities and emergent literacy learning. This module helps you build your capacity to guide your protégés in collecting and using child assessment information. You will think about ways to assess and foster the development of phonological awareness in young children.

In this forum we will discuss the self-assessment that you just completed. We will think about the exercise in Module 1 of this unit and will share what you learned from discussions with your protégé.

Unit 4 is the culminating unit of *Steps to Success*. Here you will see reminders in Skills Review boxes. There are pointers for applying mentor-coaching skills (e.g., relationship-building, adult learning, and observation) to your work with protégés.



FACILITATOR PREPARATION

Prior to beginning this facilitated module, take these steps to prepare for the Mentor-Coach Forum:

- Review the Facilitator Guide and Mentor-Coach Manual pages for the forum
- Review the Module 1 self-assessment. Be prepared to answer questions about the individual items, should they arise
- Review the final assignment in Module 1
- Develop strategies for engaging the group in all of the discussions.

Since Unit 4 is the culminating unit of *Steps to Success*, you will see pointers for integrating previously learned information. Throughout the Mentor-Coach Manual, the Skills Review boxes refer to skills described in earlier modules, such as relationship building, adult learning, and observation skills.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MODULE

Welcome the group. Explain that embracing the child assessment process—developing, implementing, and monitoring a plan for child assessment—means that the staff will make time to observe children in daily activities and to collect and analyze information from their observations.

Ongoing assessment helps us decide the best instructional choices for individual children and for groups of children. Assessing children in authentic settings, as they grow and learn, is a cornerstone of good literacy instruction. Successful ongoing assessment is well planned and regularly conducted, using consistent methods to gather information from several sources.

FACILITATOR-LED DISCUSSION ON INSPIRATIONAL SLOGANS

Introduce the activity by explaining that participants are going to choose from among many inspirational slogans. These are brief slogans, like the kind of phrase that might be on a bumper sticker. (Suggested slogans are presented at the end of this module.)

Present the assortment of slogans. Ask participants to select a slogan that best describes the way they approach working with protégés, children, and families.

Once participants have selected a slogan, ask them to introduce themselves, share the slogan they selected, and describe why they selected it. Point out that the slogans were used to gather information or learn more about one another. In assessment also, self-reflection and reporting can be useful strategies. Throughout this unit we look at the process of gathering and using information about children and how ongoing assessment strategies can enhance our work with protégés.

Ask participants to use the space in their manual to note any new insights about themselves that they gained from this activity.

(Facilitator Note: Inspirational Slogans are at the back of this module in your version and in the Mentor-Coach Manual.)

FACILITATOR-LED DISCUSSION ON SELF-ASSESSMENT

Use the questions found in the Mentor-Coach Manual as the basis for this discussion of the self-assessment. Have participants discuss what they have learned about their phonological awareness skills through the self-assessment. Have they:

1. Discovered new strengths?
2. Developed new ideas about pursuing professional development for themselves?
3. Come up with any new questions about phonological awareness?

SELF-ASSESSMENT

In Module 1 you assessed your skills in planning and implementing phonological awareness activities. Think about how you can support protégés in this literacy outcome area.

- 1.** What did you learn about your abilities to plan and implement phonological awareness activities and experiences?

- 2.** Based on this self-assessment, what are some skills you would like to practice? What knowledge do you want to acquire?

- 3.** How will these skills and knowledge influence your work as a Mentor-Coach?

**FACILITATOR-LED DISCUSSION ON PLANNING FOR
ASSESSMENT**

In the Module 1 exercise participants talked with protégés or other staff about the assessment procedures in their programs.

Ask participants to use the questions in the Mentor-Coach Manual to briefly write down some of the information they gathered about:

- The curriculum and assessment strategies used by protégés
- The ways the staff uses assessment results to plan for instruction.

Have participants share the information with the larger group.

PLANNING FOR ASSESSMENT

In the Module 1 exercise, you talked with your protégé about the program’s assessment procedures. You had a conversation about the curriculum and assessment strategies your protégé uses, and ways the staff members use assessment results to plan for instruction. Use these questions to organize what you learned:

Questions about the Planning for Assessment Assignment

- 1. What did you learn about your protégé’s curriculum and ongoing assessment strategies?

- 2. What is your protégé’s understanding of good ongoing assessment practices?

- 3. What goals would you set to support protégés’ use of child assessment to inform instructional practices?

As you participate in the group conversation, use the space below to note important ideas and insights.

Notes and Reflections

FACILITATOR-LED DISCUSSION ON INTRODUCTION TO ONGOING CHILD ASSESSMENT

The purpose of ongoing child assessment is to inform instruction, including planning individualized learning goals and experiences. Lead a discussion with participants using the following points:

- Ongoing assessment and teaching go hand in hand and are complimentary:
 - Child assessment informs the staff about what each child understands, which skills have been mastered, and which are emerging.
 - Effective and efficient instruction is based on the results of assessment:
 - Plans are made and strategies are implemented.
 - Information is collected to document the success of the teaching and the progress for each child.
- Ongoing assessment assures progress toward key milestones for language and literacy development in infants and toddlers, and toward the Head Start Child Outcomes for preschoolers.
- Having complete information makes all the difference in the staff's ability to assess children's current literacy skills, learning styles, and needs.

Remind participants about the Skills Review for the pre-observation conference and observation in the Mentor-Coach Manual.

BREAK

Give participants a chance to check in with you, ask questions, or just stretch their legs before beginning the TVI.

INTRODUCTION TO ONGOING CHILD ASSESSMENT

Ongoing assessment is required for each child to identify his strengths and needs, to help tailor learning experiences and other services, and to support staff in communicating and working with parents and families.

—T. Schultz (2001)

To teach efficiently and effectively, teachers constantly need new information about what children understand and are able to do. Ongoing assessment and teaching go hand in hand. Teaching plans are based on the results of assessment, strategies are implemented, and information is collected to document progress. Ongoing assessment lays the groundwork for further planning and teaching.

Skills Review

Review the pre-observation conference and observation tips from Unit 2, Module 2, for pointers on planning the assessment process.

Notes and Reflections

Assessment should be used as an ongoing process to answer questions about children’s growth and learning, to find ways of supporting their development.

—J. Jablon and A. Dombro (2001)

II. TUTORED VIDEO INSTRUCTION ON ONGOING CHILD ASSESSMENT

CONTEXT

Head Start programs use many different instruments and techniques for their assessments. Some are formalized and commercially available. Others are locally developed. Both types of tools rely on observation, rating scales, and interviews.

Ongoing assessment is a process for answering questions about children's progress over time and for finding ways to support their development. Effective, accurate assessments help teachers to individualize instruction and document children's progress toward identified outcomes.

This TVI concentrates on assessing the skills, interests, and ways children acquire literacy skills, and approach learning.

TIME: 3 hours 25 minutes

II. TUTORED VIDEO INSTRUCTION ON ONGOING CHILD ASSESSMENT

CONTEXT

Ongoing assessment is a process for answering questions about children’s growth and learning, and for finding ways to support their development. Effective, accurate assessments help teachers individualize instruction and document children’s progress toward identified outcomes.

Head Start programs use many different instruments for collecting information about children in daily activities and routines. Some are formalized and commercially available; others are locally generated tools that rely on observation, rating scales, and interviews to gather information.

This TVI features ways that you can help protégés in assessing each child’s skills. It addresses children’s interests and the ways they acquire literacy and approach learning.

OVERVIEW

- Use of Ongoing Assessment (25 minutes)
- Phonological Awareness (20 minutes)
- Using Questions to Guide Ongoing Assessment (30 minutes)
- Exercise 1: Vignettes, Part 2 (10 minutes)
- Assessment Framework (5 minutes)
- Exercise 2: Creating an Assessment Framework (10 minutes)
- Options for Collecting Ongoing Assessment Information (20 minutes)
- Organizing Assessment Information (15 minutes)
- Engaging Parents in the Ongoing Assessment Process (15 minutes)
- Ongoing Assessment for Instructional Planning and Teaching (25 minutes)
- Facilitator-Led Discussion on Professional Development Plan (25 minutes)
- Wrap-Up (5 minutes)



FACILITATOR PREPARATION

- Read through the entire Facilitator Guide and the Mentor-Coach Manual for this module. Preview the TVI sections.
- Prepare the presentation using the notes in the Facilitator Guide.
- Review the discussion questions and vignettes. Develop debriefing and discussion strategies to meet the needs of your particular group: full-group discussions, small-group breakouts, pairs or triads, or individual reflection.



START THE TVI

TVI CONTENT

USE OF ONGOING ASSESSMENT

Today's goal is to build your understanding of:

- Ways to support protégés in observing, documenting, and recording children's performance, and in interpreting children's behavior
- The role assessment plays in planning instruction.

The TVI presents these points about the use of ongoing assessment:

- Successful ongoing assessment is well planned and regularly conducted, using consistent methods to gather information from several sources. Assessing children in authentic settings, as they grow and learn, is a cornerstone of good instruction.
- Authentic assessment occurs when the setting (space, activities, materials, routines, and people) is familiar and meaningful to children.
- In early childhood education we use ongoing assessment to:
 - Document children's developmental growth and progress
 - Identify children's strengths and appropriate experiences
 - Plan instruction for individuals and groups of children
 - Communicate with parents and work in partnership with them.
- Mentor-Coaches play a major role in supporting protégés as they plan for assessment, collect information, analyze their results, and design instruction. They help protégés recognize the importance of assessing children throughout the day.
- When Mentor-Coaches support protégés, they make decisions about:
 - Why they collect information
 - How and what information they are already collecting
 - How to choose the most-appropriate assessment methods
 - How to summarize and understand assessment results
 - How information is used once it is collected.

USE OF ONGOING ASSESSMENT

Teachers of young children do not get very far in assessments when they ask children to explain themselves. . . . For the present, our best technique seems to be the careful gathering of evidence via the on-the-spot record.

—D. H. Cohen and V. Stern (1983)

Mentor-Coaches can help support protégés as they plan for assessment, collect and analyze information, and design instruction by asking protégés to think about:

1. How they collect child assessment information?
2. Why they collect information?
3. What information they are already collecting?
4. What areas of children's growth they would like to know more about?
5. How they use information once it is collected?
6. What are the most appropriate assessment methods for various purposes?
7. How they are summarizing and understanding assessment results?

Planning for assessment involves having a focus on a child during an activity and knowing why you are collecting information. Once information is available, you and your protégé can analyze it, look for patterns, and decide what the teacher will do differently in the classroom, in instruction, and in interacting with each child.

Authentic Assessment

Authentic Assessment occurs when the setting (the space, activities, materials, routines, and people) is typical, familiar, comfortable, and meaningful to children.

- Assessment goes hand in hand with teaching. To design effective teaching, Mentor-Coaches and protégés must understand what children know and what they are able to do. They need to know which skills children need, which ones are emerging, where they have made progress, and which skills they have mastered. They also need to know when children are stuck in their learning.
- As assessors, protégés observe children’s skills, levels of understanding, interests, vocabulary, behavior, and attitudes toward various tasks.

Transition to the Video Clip

In these two videos you will see Mentor-Coaches and protégés discussing their use of ongoing assessment. First, let’s take a look at what assessment looks like in an infant-toddler setting.

VIDEO CLIP: Observing Children—Infants and Toddlers

The video depicts protégés in various settings, supported by their Early Literacy Mentor-Coaches, collecting data and assessing children throughout the day in various ways. The video conveys the message that the Mentor-Coach plays a major role in working with the staff to observe and assess children.

VIDEO CLIP: Observing Children—Infants and Toddlers

This video clip depicts staff members in Early Head Start and Head Start settings collecting data and assessing children throughout the day in various ways, including observations and taking pictures. Scenes show the staff taking notes, collecting work, watching, listening, intervening, and prompting children's learning.



Transition to the Video Clip

The second video takes us to Chicago to see Jewell, Gloria, and Mumtaz making observations of children in the preschool classroom. Meetings and conversations with Jewell, the Mentor-Coach, are central to the process.

VIDEO CLIP: Observing Children—Preschoolers

Staff members in various settings, supported by Jewell, the Mentor-Coach, are collecting information and assessing children's skills in ways that can be used throughout the day.

At the conclusion of the videotape, the TVI presenters make the following points:

- These videos demonstrate a variety of assessment methods: note-taking, reviewing portfolios, watching and listening, taking pictures, and meeting with Mentor-Coaches.
- The Mentor-Coach has a unique role to play in working with staff to observe and assess children, and to discuss assessment results.

The presenters share assessment methods used in their programs and the role of Mentor-Coaches in ongoing child assessment.

VIDEO CLIP: Observing Children—Preschoolers

Preschool staff in various settings, supported by Jewell, the Mentor-Coach, are collecting information and assessing children's skills in ways that can be used throughout the day.

At the conclusion of the videotape, the TVI presenters make the following points:

- These videos demonstrate a variety of assessment methods: note-taking, reviewing portfolios, watching and listening, taking pictures, and meeting with Mentor-Coaches.
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**PAUSE THE TVI**

FACILITATOR-LED DISCUSSION ON THE USE OF ONGOING ASSESSMENT

Discussion Questions

We have seen and heard about different methods of ongoing assessment. Let's take a few minutes to discuss your experiences:

- What experiences have you had in conducting child assessment?
- How have you documented or recorded assessment results?
- What assessment methods are most effective for you? Least effective?
- In what ways have you supported staff in their assessment efforts?

Direct participants' attention to **What Mentor-Coaches Can Do** and **What Protégés Can Do** in the Mentor-Coach Manual.

Facilitator's Transition Statement

The TVI will continue with the literacy outcome for today—Phonological Awareness.

USE OF ONGOING ASSESSMENT

Discussion Questions

1. What experiences do you have in conducting ongoing child assessment?

2. How do you document or record assessment results?

3. What ongoing assessment methods are most effective for you? Least effective?

4. What are ways that you support staff in their assessment of children?

What Mentor-Coaches Can Do:

- Use your skills of reflection, collaborative problem solving, listening, and guiding as you work with protégés.
- Access information about the Head Start program's chosen assessment instruments.
- Help your protégé to understand that effective teaching begins with ongoing assessment.
- Reinforce the importance of authentic assessment in planning instruction.
- Make ongoing assessment of children a regular part of your activity with your protégé.

What Protégés Can Do:

- Gather authentic information about children's skills and capabilities by observing children, taking notes, and collecting work samples.
- Gather information from parent conferences, reports, and interviews.
- Describe the different skills and learning needs of individual children.
- Use the program's established assessment instrument, as well as other methods, to gather ongoing assessment information.



START THE TVI

TVI CONTENT

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

The TVI continues with these points about phonological awareness development:

- Long before they start kindergarten, of course, most children have had language and literacy experiences and have developed abilities that serve as a foundation for learning to read in school. These abilities include oral language competence, print awareness, and phonological awareness.
- Phonological awareness refers to the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the sounds in spoken language. Paying attention to the sound structure of language is an oral language skill involving hearing and listening. It is not a writing skill.
- Making auditory distinctions is the basis of phonological awareness. By listening to others and speaking themselves, children develop phonological awareness—the insight that every word can be thought of as a sequence of sounds. An example of phonological awareness is recognizing by listening that *bug*, *bear*, and *button* all start with the same /b/ sound.
- Research has shown that success in developing phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge predicts whether a child will learn to read during the first two years of school (Parlakian, 2004).
- Phonological awareness is a term that takes getting used to. However, the activities that build phonological skills are regular parts of preschool curriculum.
- Nursery rhymes, playing clapping games, listening to environmental sounds, listening for sound differences in words are all experiences that are included in most preschool curriculum plans. And, they are activities that build children’s phonological awareness skills. Preschoolers can rhyme words, recognize words with similar sounds, and eventually appreciate tongue twisters.

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

Phonological awareness is the ability to focus on the sounds of spoken language rather than the meaning of words.

—H.K. Yopp and R.H. Yopp
(as cited in *The Head Start Leaders Guide to Positive Child Outcomes*, 2003)

Language provides the foundation for the development of literacy skills and phonological awareness in particular. Speaking, reading aloud, and singing all support a child's understanding and use of language.

Making auditory distinctions is the basis of phonological awareness. By listening to others and by speaking, children develop phonological awareness. They learn that every spoken word is a sequence of sounds. An example of phonological awareness is recognizing that *bug*, *bear*, and *button* all start with the same /b/ sound.

Phonological awareness is key to making sense of the alphabet. Without phonological awareness, instruction in phonics and decoding does not make sense, because children cannot discriminate the sounds of letters, words, and parts of words.

Research has shown that phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge predict whether a child will learn to read during the first two years of school (Parlakian, 2004).

Supporting Phonological Awareness

Ongoing assessment of children's phonological awareness activities can lead staff to more purposeful teaching and more careful tracking of children's progress over time.

Key elements of the continuum of phonological awareness are in **STEP-Doc 4.2a: Phonological Awareness**.

- Phonological awareness activities may be new for many young children. Generally, much attention is placed on helping children acquire vocabulary and understanding word meanings. Developing phonological awareness requires intentional teacher planning.
- Planning and implementing activities to support the development of phonological awareness leads to:
 - ❑ More purposeful teaching
 - ❑ More careful tracking of children’s progress.

The child’s journey toward phonological awareness proceeds through a logical continuum. This is presented in **STEP-Doc 4.2a: Phonological Awareness** in the Mentor-Coach Manual. The continuum addresses:

- ❑ Listening attentively to words
- ❑ Rhyming—organizing sounds by endings
- ❑ Alliteration—organizing sounds by beginnings
- ❑ Sentence segmenting—understanding the concept that words are individual units of sound
- ❑ Syllable segmenting—highlighting the sounds within words
- ❑ Onset rime—hearing the individual sounds (phonemes) in words*
- ❑ Phoneme segmenting, blending, and manipulation*.

*Kindergarten skills



Transition to the Video Clip

Next we will watch a Mentor-Coach from the Umatilla Head Start Program in Oregon lead the children in a new song that promotes phonological awareness.

VIDEO CLIP: Supporting Phonological Awareness

In this clip you will see a Mentor-Coach use a clapping and musical rhyming activity to support phonological awareness while her protégé observes.

At the conclusion of the video clip, the TVI presenters discuss the ways the teacher used effective phonological practices as she involved the children in songs that play with beginning sounds. Presenters share phonological awareness activities used in their programs and offer suggestions for strengthening Mentor-Coach skills in this child outcome area.

**PAUSE THE TVI**

VIDEO CLIP: Supporting Phonological Awareness

In this next clip you will see a Mentor-Coach demonstrate clapping and musical rhyming to support phonological awareness while her protégé observes.

DISCUSSION ON PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

Discussion Questions

1. How are the phonemic awareness activities in the video clip similar to or different from those you have observed?

2. How might you help your protégé effectively integrate more age-appropriate phonological awareness into daily activities and routines?

3. Is there anything related to phonological awareness that you need to know more about in order to effectively support your protégé?

FACILITATOR-LED DISCUSSION ON PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

Discuss what Mentor-Coaches observed in the video clip using the discussion questions in the Mentor-Coach Manual.

Extend the discussion with these four questions in the Mentor-Coach Manual:

1. What do you already know about the children's phonological awareness skills?
2. What questions do you have about their development?
3. What child assessment information could you gather to answer these questions?
4. When, where, and how can you best collect this information?

Remind participants about the Skills Reviews for reflective conferencing and questions that promote reflection.

Review **What Mentor-Coaches Can Do** and **What Protégés Can Do** to support phonological awareness in the Mentor-Coach Manual.

Facilitator's Transition Statement

We will go back to the TVI for additional guidelines to achieve effective ongoing assessment.

Think about the children in your protégé’s class:

1. What do you already know about the children’s phonological awareness skills?

2. What questions do you have about children’s development?

3. What child assessment information could you gather to answer these questions?

4. When, where, and how can you collect this information?

You can use open ended “*wh*” questions to help protégés reflect on current practices and to better assess children’s phonological skills.

Skills Review

Helpful reflective conferencing pointers from Unit 3, Module 2, include letting the protégé comment first, using open-ended questions and comments to draw out the protégé, and challenging the protégé’s thinking.

Look at **STEP-Doc 1.2b** for questions that promote reflection.

What Mentor-Coaches Can Do:

- Help your protégé understand the concept of phonological awareness and what it looks like in the classroom.
- Be familiar with the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework related to phonological awareness.
- Guide your protégé's planning to provide experiences that focus children's attention on hearing the sounds in words and speech.
- Guide your protégé in developing materials and activities that support the teaching of phonological awareness skills.
- With your protégé identify a variety of rhyming games, poems, books, and nursery rhymes that support phonological awareness.

What Protégés Can Do:

- Understand and use the sequence of phonological skills presented in *The Head Start Leaders Guide to Positive Child Outcomes*. (2003, p.46).
- Incorporate sound and language play into daily routines such as diapering, dressing, feeding, eating and play.
- Emphasize rhyming patterns during stories, poetry, chanting, singing, and finger-plays.
- Use stories, music, and singing to focus on the sounds of words and the rhythm of language.

**RESUME THE TVI**

TVI CONTENT

USING QUESTIONS TO GUIDE ONGOING ASSESSMENT

The TVI continues with these points:

- Effective, accurate assessment starts with a question or set of questions about a child's growth and development. Questions can help you learn about a child's interests, skills and abilities, approach to learning, use of language, and social interactions.
- Questions guide the selection of appropriate assessment strategies.
- Developing specific questions about a child gives a focus for observations. Because these questions—and their answers—provide rich information on individual children and classroom practices, it is a process that is well suited to discussion and exploration between Mentor-Coaches and protégés.
- Answering questions about what a child knows, or is able to do, is dependent on careful observation and information from a number of sources. Young children do not simply tell us what they know. We must determine the answers from their activities and behavior in a number of different settings and over time.
- By looking at language and literacy milestones for infants and toddlers, as well as the Head Start Child Outcomes, Mentor-Coaches and protégés have the framework for thinking about what children should know and for recording progress.

Transition to the Video Clip

We will go to a toddler classroom in Massachusetts to listen to Sandy and Susan discuss an observation and make plans to reinforce a child's emerging communication skills.

USING QUESTIONS TO GUIDE ONGOING ASSESSMENT

Young children do not simply tell you what they know. You can talk to parents and other staff. You also have to look carefully at their activities and behaviors in a number of different settings over time.

All children, especially infants and toddlers must have their physical needs met, feel emotionally safe, be comfortable with the adults around them, and be in a familiar environment before you can accurately observe or assess the extent of their skills and knowledge. Young children's behavior is dependent on context; therefore, Mentor-Coaches must consider family circumstances and culture in considering what each child is able to do.

Effective, accurate child assessment starts with a question or set of questions about a child's growth and development. Posing questions can help you learn about a child's interests, skills and abilities, approach to learning, use of language, and social interactions.

Developing specific questions that you seek to answer about a child gives a focus for observations. Because these questions and accurate answers provide rich information on individual children and classroom practices, it is a process that is well suited to discussion and exploration between Mentor-Coaches and protégés.

Answering questions about what a child knows, or is able to do, is dependent on careful observation and information from multiple sources.

VIDEO CLIP: Protégé's Assessment of a Child

In this video we see a teacher share her observations of a child with the Mentor-Coach. The pair then uses the information to create assessment questions and to plan classroom activities to support communication skill assessment.

At the end of the video clip, the TVI presenters comment on the video and discuss processes that support ongoing child assessment.

**PAUSE THE TVI****FACILITATOR-LED DISCUSSION ON USING QUESTIONS TO
GUIDE ONGOING ASSESSMENT**

Begin by having participants share their experiences with ongoing assessment.

Ask them:

1. How have you used observation and other assessment strategies to answer questions about a child's skills and progress?
2. What kinds of support in using questions to guide ongoing assessment were helpful for protégés?

VIDEO CLIP: Protégé's Assessment of a Child

In this video we see a protégé share her observations of a child with her Mentor-Coach. The pair then uses the information to create assessment questions and to plan classroom activities for communication skill assessment.

**DISCUSSION ON USING QUESTIONS TO GUIDE ONGOING
ASSESSMENT****Discussion Questions**

1. How have you used observation and other assessment strategies to answer questions about a child?

2. What kinds of support in using questions to guide ongoing assessment were helpful for protégés?

EXERCISE 1: VIGNETTES, PART 2

Go back to the vignette participants began in Module 1 with Cindy and Cheryl or Lee and Liana.

Ask participants to continue reading about Cindy and Cheryl or Lee and Liana (Part 2 of the Vignettes in the Mentor-Coach Manual). Give participants a few minutes to respond individually to the questions for reflection in their manual before beginning the discussion.

The vignette about Cheryl and Cindy helps participants see how the Mentor-Coach (Cindy) helps her protégé (Cheryl) develop a strategy for answering questions about an infant. Together they agree that Cindy will observe Cheryl's interactions with Francis several times. They also develop a detailed plan for Cheryl to observe Francis and talk with Francis's mother.

Liana (the protégé) and Lee (the Mentor-Coach) also focus on using questions to develop a plan to collect information about children. In this part of Liana's pre-conference with Lee, she clarifies the questions she has about children's rhyming skills.

Facilitator's Transition Statement

Let's continue with the topic of using questions to guide assessment. The TVI presents an Assessment Framework for developing and using questions.

EXERCISE 1: VIGNETTES, PART 2

Both Cheryl and Liana, the protégés in the vignettes, are trying to improve their practices to support phonological awareness and related language and literacy skills. Read about the strategies they develop. Look for the assessment methods that they use to answer their questions.

VIGNETTE, Part 2 (Infant-Toddler)

As with most infant and toddler assessments, Cheryl and Cindy look first at adult care practices and the context in which the child spends his or her time. They know that very young children must have a safe and responsive relationship with a known caregiver if they are to thrive developmentally. Often a very young child's strengths will only be apparent when the conditions are right: the child is feeling comfortable, has had his or her needs met, and is in the presence of responsive and trusted adults.

Together, Cindy and Cheryl develop a list of questions they want to answer.

- What are the barriers that keep Cheryl from spending more time talking and reading to Francis? At what time of day is Francis most animated and vocalizing? What is going on around him when he is vocalizing? What kind of vocalizing does he do at home?
- What else do we know about Francis that might affect his language development?

The challenge for Cindy and Cheryl is to develop assessment methods to answer their questions about Francis. Cindy, the Mentor-Coach, agrees to observe in the infant room several times to help Cheryl assess the quality and quantity of her interactions with Francis. Cindy will:

- Record the number of interactions Cheryl has with Francis and how long they last
- Describe what Cheryl and Francis are doing together and as much of the conversation with Francis that she can
- Note interruptions, distractions, and missed opportunities.

Cheryl will observe Francis to see when he is most animated and vocalizing and will note those vocalizations. Several times she will leave a small tape recorder near where Francis is playing to see if she can capture vocalizations that she may be missing. Cindy suggests that Cheryl review Francis' folder for any sensory or physical concerns and for other developmental information. Cheryl invites Francis' mom to talk about his vocalizations at home.

VIGNETTE, Part 2 (Preschool)

Liana and Lee decide to assess rhyming responses for the first five minutes of circle time. Liana will read nursery rhymes and picture books with rhymes that are familiar to the children. The assessment will take place after she has read a book a few times, so that the children are familiar with the rhymes.

Liana’s presentation will follow a predictable sequence using less- to-more prompting.

1. When Liana hesitates at the second of a pair of rhyming words and looks expectantly at the child, does the child say the word?
2. When Liana hints “Remember it sounds like _____” (the first word of the rhyming pair), does the child say the rhyme?
3. If the child does not complete the rhyme independently, Liana prompts with the beginning sound. Does the child say the word?
4. If she gives the child the rhyming word, does the child repeat it?
5. Does the child sit without responding regardless of prompting?

Liana chooses two children, Mark and Isomary. To gather information, Liana and Lee create a short form (shown on next page). Liana will write the number of the sequence’s skill level (1 to 5) each time Mark or Isomary has a turn. This form will help keep track of where each child is in the sequence, and any progress they make in being able to respond with fewer prompts. Liana can also see the number of times it takes until each child reaches the highest level (Level 1).

Date:										
<i>Level of rhyming response: Write 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 for each response (with “1” the highest).</i>										
Child										
<i>Mark</i>										
<i>Isomary</i>										

Questions for Reflection

1. How do the strategies Cheryl or Liana use to support phonological awareness skills incorporate effective practices? What resources could you recommend that would guide them in using effective practices?

2. Do you think the strategies Cheryl or Liana have developed to answer their questions will provide them with the information they need to inform instruction? Why or why not?

3. Where are the opportunities for coaching Cheryl or Liana on planning and using child assessment data?

4. As you think about your own role as a Mentor-Coach, how might you improve your protégé's effectiveness in using assessment to enhance phonological awareness skills?



START THE TVI

TVI CONTENT

ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The TVI presents key points about the Assessment Framework:

- We have just viewed video footage and discussed how questions can guide assessment:
 - ❑ Head Start programs are required to look at the effectiveness of the process by which each child's development is assessed in each domain.
 - ❑ Beginning with a question involves being organized and clear about what and how information is collected.
 - ❑ Assessment questions give you a focus for your observations and help you gather information about children's skills and progress.
 - ❑ Questions help you learn about children's skills in each domain including language and literacy skills, as well as their interests, approaches to learning, and social interactions.
 - ❑ Questions also help guide you in the selection of appropriate assessment strategies.
- The Assessment Framework, found in **STEP-Doc 4.2b: Assessment Framework**, presents a series of questions for focusing attention on children's performance and for individualizing the child's learning experiences. It gives Mentor-Coaches a sequence for organizing questions for ongoing assessment:
 - ❑ Identify language and literacy indicators from the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework
 - ❑ Clarify what indicators they expect to see if children are progressing
 - ❑ Review a child's present skill levels

ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

There is always something new to learn about a child—even children you think you know well. If you make a habit of asking questions, you will get to know who a child is and can keep track of who that child is becoming.

To assess four-year-old Kathy, the teacher photographed Kathy and Josie playing together in the block area. Several days later, he made some notes about the conversation Kathy was having with another preschooler. On yet a third occasion, he saved a painting Kathy made with Josie. When it is time to evaluate Kathy's performance and progress, her teacher's judgments about her current ability to interact with her peers will be based on these and other observations.

—J. Jablon and A. Dombro (2001)

The Assessment Framework presents a series of questions for focusing protégés' attention on children's performance and for changing instruction to meet children's learning needs. The full set of seven questions for the **Assessment Framework** is in **STEP-Doc 4.2b**.

Some protégés may not be accustomed to using a framework. Mentor-Coaches will need to be particularly sensitive to help protégés see the value of this and other frameworks. Use your own relevant experience to talk about why it is an important framework and how it can benefit protégés in their work with children. Using reflective conferencing and being sensitive to the protégé's stage in the change process will be important for deciding when and how much new information to share with the protégé at any time.

- ❑ Identify questions to answer through assessments
 - ❑ Determine how, when, and where the child's progress will be assessed
 - ❑ Gather assessment information
 - ❑ Describe the result of the assessment and how it will be used.
- Some protégés may not be ready to fully implement all of the phonological awareness activities. They may need time to be comfortable using questions and a structured Assessment Framework for ongoing assessment. Refer to the five stages of the change process (in Unit 1) to help decide how much new information to share with a protégé and what kinds of additional support may be needed.

**PAUSE THE TVI****Facilitator-Led Discussion on Assessment Framework**

The following discussion questions can help participants think about effective ways to introduce the Assessment Framework to their protégés:

1. How would you introduce the framework?
2. How could you relate the framework to something that is already familiar to protégés?
3. What mentor-coaching skills could be most helpful?

Remind participants about the Skills Review for the change process in their manual.

DISCUSSION ON ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Discussion Questions

1. How would you introduce the framework?

2. How could you relate the framework to something that is already familiar to protégés?

3. What mentor-coaching skills could be most helpful?

Skills Review

Remember the Five Stages of Change Process:

- Not ready to change
- Thinking about change
- Getting ready to change
- Changing
- Maintaining change

You can find more information on the stages of change in Unit 1, Module 3.

EXERCISE 2: CREATING AN ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Take this time to look at the last vignette about another protégé and her Mentor-Coach.

Have the participants read the vignette about Aurora (the Mentor-Coach) and Stella (the protégé) and how they develop an assessment of Alex.

In this vignette, Stella is concerned about Alex's language development. Aurora helps her to recognize Alex's progress and to support his understanding of the connection between the sounds he makes and the sounds he hears. The vignette is designed to provide a rich example that will help participants learn to use the Assessment Framework.

Use the steps from the Assessment Framework to review the process Stella and Aurora used in their assessment of Alex. These are some points you might make during your discussion. The numbers correspond to the numbered elements of the Assessment Framework:

1. Although Alex is not quite three, the protégé was learning how young children demonstrate phonological awareness skills related to listening and focusing on sounds.
2. The protégé's and the Mentor-Coach's observations and activities helped them to develop a set of questions to guide the assessment process that the protégé could use.
3. Through observation, problem solving, and review of data already collected, they knew what Alex could already do.
4. Although Alex is a quiet child, Stella recognized his progress and knew he could focus on the sounds he heard. One question about Alex was how to expand his capability to listen attentively and to connect the sounds he heard with specific animals.
5. Aurora and Stella developed a strategy for collecting the assessment information in an authentic setting.

EXERCISE 2: CREATING AN ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Read the following vignette about Aurora (the Mentor-Coach) and Stella (the protégé). Think about whether Stella’s answers to the assessment questions give her the information needed to plan Alex’s instruction. What could be added?

VIGNETTE—Stella and Aurora

Alex, almost three, participates in a teacher-led group activity by making animal sounds with plastic toy animals. However, when he listens to a tape of animal sounds, he cannot point to the toy animal that corresponds to the sound he hears. His teacher, Stella, is concerned that he is not able to manipulate sounds and to make connections between his own sounds and those that he hears.

In a conference with Aurora, her Mentor-Coach, she shares her concern. Aurora confirms Stella’s knowledge that phonological awareness begins with listening attentively and organizing sounds into simple categories. Their problem solving begins with looking at some of the anecdotal data collected on Alex over the past few months. Aurora points out that in the beginning of the year, Alex was quiet and was not interested in the plastic animals at all, and certainly not animals in tapes or stories. Aurora and Stella recognized that they could see progress in Alex’s skills. Alex’s progress reassured Stella that sounds did have meaning for him, because:

- His vocabulary is increasing and he is talking more
- He sits for 2–4 minutes for stories
- He is learning animal names and their associated sounds.

Stella asks Aurora how to help Alex to make the connections between the animal sounds he makes and the sounds he hears. Aurora answers, “Would you like me to demonstrate some ways to do that?” Stella agrees with enthusiasm.

Aurora asks Alex if he would like to sit with her for a while and use the headphones. She invites two peers to join them. She brings the plastic animals with her. Alex makes all the sounds for the plastic toys, but he still does not connect the toys with the sounds from the tape. When the peers point to the animal for each sound on the tape, Alex watches them and sometimes copies them.

6. They conducted the assessment.
7. The information that they gathered during the activity helped them realize some important characteristics about the way Alex approaches learning.
8. Aurora and Stella planned further activities at the listening center that would give Alex time and cues to develop his skills.

Extend the discussion by asking participants about other instructional strategies and activities they would try with Alex. This is the first question in the set of Questions for Personal Reflection in the Mentor-Coach Manual.

Encourage participants to respond to the other **Questions for Reflection**. Take a minute for any comments they have about the questions.

Review **What Mentor-Coaches Can Do** and **What Protégés Can Do** to reinforce the use of the Assessment Framework with protégés. These are in the Mentor-Coach Manual.

Facilitator's Transition Statement

The next part of the TVI will identify strategies for collecting and organizing information for ongoing assessment.

Afterward, Stella and Aurora agree that setting up situations with other children is a helpful way for Alex to learn. They recognize that the activity engaged him, and he was copying other children. Stella decides to do this more frequently for Alex.

In addition to including peers to help him with listening, Stella decides to:

- Use the listening center as Aurora did
- Stop the tape after each animal sound, giving Alex time to point to the appropriate animal and make the sound.

Questions for Reflection

1. What are some other ideas that you would try with Alex?

2. Describe how you have assessed children and used the information to plan activities.

3. How would you initiate a mentor-coaching conversation with your protégé to improve curriculum planning and individualizing?

4. How might you resist the urge to immediately tell your protégé what to do rather than support reflection on what he or she is already doing?

What Mentor-Coaches Can Do:

- Reinforce the use of the Assessment Framework with protégés.
- Work with your protégé to:
 - Assess children’s progress toward early literacy outcomes
 - Develop goals, questions, and ongoing assessment strategies to gather information about individual children
 - Determine how, where, and when outcomes will be assessed.

What Protégés Can Do:

- Describe expectations for children’s progress
- Develop questions and plans for ongoing assessment for developmental milestones in language and literacy for infants and toddlers, or specific Head Start Child Outcomes for preschoolers.

**START THE TVI****TVI CONTENT****OPTIONS FOR COLLECTING ONGOING ASSESSMENT
INFORMATION**

The TVI begins with an introduction to key options for collecting and organizing assessment information.

Once Mentor-Coaches and the protégés have identified questions, Mentor-Coaches can help protégés to:

- Be clear and consistent about what information to collect, and when to collect it.
- Use appropriate milestones for language and emerging literacy skills for infants and toddlers to guide instruction and focus on the results of activities.
- Use the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework as a guide for preschool instruction and skill levels in activities.
- Recognize that by observing children play, adults gain insight into children's development and ideas for supporting their development of new skills.

OPTIONS FOR COLLECTING ONGOING ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Two Approaches to Collecting Data

There are many ways to collect and record ongoing assessment information. You may be familiar with running records, anecdotal records, journal entries, checklists, sampling observations, and rating scales.

Although ongoing assessment methods vary, there are two basic approaches to collecting ongoing assessment information.

For each of the two approaches, Mentor-Coaches can help protégés appreciate the importance of assessing children during their everyday activities, including play and during common routines such as diapering, feeding, center time, circle time, and snack time.

STEP-Doc 4.2c: Two Approaches to Collecting Data gives you more-detailed descriptions of each of the two approaches.

1. Naturalistic Assessment—Using the Child’s Activities

Naturalistic assessment generally focuses on the child and his or her usual interests and activities. Naturalistic assessment occurs with a child-centered focus.

Naturalistic assessment and observation methods are often invisible to the child. The child continues in the usual activities with no awareness that an adult is observing and assessing. This is an effective approach in assessing infants, toddlers, and preschool age children.

2. Focused Assessment—Planning the Child’s Activities

Focused assessment does not wait for spontaneous behaviors to arise so that a child’s progress or level of ability in a particular area can be observed. The adult selects materials and guides interactions to directly draw out the skills targeted for observation and assessment. Observations occur in play-based and other types of authentic situations.

Two Approaches to Collecting Data

There are many ways to record ongoing assessment information as Mentor-Coaches collect it with protégés. In Module 1 participants explored the types of assessment and recording methods that their protégés use. These may have included running records, anecdotal records, journal entries, checklists, observations, and rating scales.

There is wide variation in these methods. Although many Head Start programs may have their own assessment measures, there are two primary approaches for interacting with children to complete ongoing assessment.

For each approach presented, Mentor-Coaches can help protégés appreciate the importance of assessing children's progress during their everyday activities such as play and during their common routines such as diapering, feeding, center time, circle time and snack.

STEP-Doc 4.2c: Two Approaches to Collecting Data presents more-detailed descriptions for these approaches.

1. Naturalistic Assessment—Following the Child's Routines and Choices

- Naturalistic assessment generally focuses on the child and his or her usual interests and activities.
- Naturalistic assessment occurs with a child-centered focus. The interaction between the adult and the child follows the child's lead or capitalizes on the child's interests.
- Naturalistic assessment and observational methods are often invisible to the child. The child continues in the usual activities with no awareness that an adult is observing and assessing.
- This is an effective approach for assessing the progress of children at any age.

The Mentor-Coach and protégé decide on the environment, toys, and strategies to use. Assessments occur in play-based and other types of authentic situations.

The two approaches to assessment are particularly useful for assessing infants and toddlers. While the youngest children may not be able to “tell” a teacher or observer what they know, they do have a variety of nonverbal cues that can “show” their individual developmental strengths, interests, and challenges.

The younger the child, the more challenging the assessment process can be, for a variety of reasons. For example, a child’s attention span and response to adults is strongly influenced by how he or she feels (tired, hungry, sleepy, etc.).



2. Focused Assessment—Planning the Child’s Activities

- Focused assessment does not wait for spontaneous behaviors to arise so that a child’s progress or level of ability in a particular area can be observed.
- The adult guides the interactions to directly elicit the skills targeted for observation and assessment.
- The Mentor-Coach and protégé decide on the environment, toys, and strategies to use for eliciting behaviors.

Both assessments—naturalistic and focused—occur in authentic situations such as play, small group or other daily classroom routines.

These two approaches to assessment are particularly useful for assessing infants and toddlers. The younger the child, the more challenging it can be to approach assessment, for a variety of reasons. A child’s attention span and responses can be strongly influenced by how he or she feels (tired, hungry, sleepy, etc.). Infants and toddlers do not have the language skills to verbally respond to certain kinds of prompts or questions. While the youngest children may not be able to “tell” a teacher or observer what they know, they do have a variety of actions and gestures and other nonverbal cues that can “show” their individual developmental strengths, interests, and challenges.

Transition to the Video Clip

Let’s go to a preschool classroom in Massachusetts to see a Mentor-Coach and her protégé talk about a naturalistic observation and plan next steps.

VIDEO CLIP: Naturalistic Assessment

A protégé discusses a child's play activity that she observed with her Mentor-Coach. She has carefully documented a toddler, Amy, reading to a doll in her classroom. After looking at the documentation, the Mentor-Coach and protégé (both named Elizabeth) talk about one way to support further play that will help the child develop literacy skills and an appreciation of language and sounds.

Presenters comment on the naturalistic assessment recorded by Elizabeth. Since it was child-centered, it is a good example of the naturalistic approach. Amy's spontaneous behaviors gave both Elizabeths the information they needed to ask questions and plan next steps.

**PAUSE THE TVI**

VIDEO CLIP: Naturalistic Assessment

With her Mentor-Coach, a protégé discusses a child's play activity that she observed. She has carefully documented a toddler reading to a doll in her classroom. After looking at the documentation, the Mentor-Coach and protégé (both named Elizabeth) talk about one way to support further play that will help the child develop literacy skills and an appreciation of language and sounds.

**FACILITATOR-LED DISCUSSION ON NATURALISTIC
ASSESSMENT**

Use the following questions to help participants understand the process of using assessment information:

1. What skills was the protégé able to observe the child demonstrating?
2. How did the protégé and the Mentor-Coach use the assessment information?
3. What other classroom materials or activities can you suggest for protégés to use in a naturalistic assessment?

Direct participants to **What Mentor-Coaches Can Do** and **What Protégés Can Do** in their manual.

Facilitator's Transition Statement

Once information is available, it must be organized so that it is accessible. Next we will hear about some useful methods for organizing assessment information.

DISCUSSION ON NATURALISTIC ASSESSMENT

Discussion Questions

1. What skills did the protégé observe the child demonstrating?

2. How did the protégé and the Mentor-Coach use the assessment information?

3. What other classroom materials or activities can you suggest for protégés to use in a naturalistic assessment?

What Mentor-Coaches Can Do:

Guide and stretch protégés' thinking with questions that challenge their knowledge and beliefs about curriculum, ongoing assessment, and children's learning.

What Protégés Can Do:

- Ask questions about their children's skills
- Develop a plan for each child to meet program's curriculum goals and objectives, and the Head Start Child Outcomes
- Develop strategies for assessing children's progress and competence in phonological awareness or another language or literacy skill
- Use various methods (e.g., portfolios, children's self-reflection, anecdotal notes, a child-focused observational approach, etc.) for the ongoing assessment of children

**START THE TVI**

TVI CONTENT

ORGANIZING ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

For information to be useful, protégés need a way to organize and categorize the information. Materials can be organized in expanding files, photo albums, and plastic bags. A list of different organizational methods is provided in the Mentor-Coach Manual and includes:

- An expanding or accordion file for a year's worth of data
- Photo albums with photos dated and arranged in sequence
- An accessible computer and digital photographs or videos stored on CDs
- Plastic bags that can be zipped for audiotapes, artwork, writing samples, photos, and other items
- Coded folders or envelopes for different curriculum areas or for different children.

Children can help organize information by:

- Using a date stamp on their own work
- Deciding what items to place in their portfolios.

Staff members can keep a checklist in each child's collection. By checking off items, they can tell at a glance which skills have been assessed and where there are gaps.

ORGANIZING ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

For information to be useful to you, you and your protégé need a way to organize and categorize it. Different organizational methods include:

- An expanding or accordion file for a year's worth of data
- Photo albums with photos dated and arranged in sequence
- An accessible computer and digital photographs or videos stored on CDs
- Plastic bags that can be zipped for audiotapes, artwork, writing samples, photos, and other items
- Coded folders or envelopes for different curriculum areas or for different children.

Children can help organize information by:

- Using a date stamp on their own work
- Deciding what items to place in their portfolios.

Protégés can keep a checklist in each child's collection. By checking off items, they can tell at a glance which skills have been assessed and where there are gaps.

As the Mentor-Coach, you can guide protégés in all areas of portfolio use. The more organized and up-to-date the portfolio collection, the more valuable it is. Since information in the portfolio is dated, arranging the work samples, interviews, checklists, inventories, and other information is simple. In addition you can help protégés to further organize the material according to curriculum area or category of development (cognitive, gross motor, fine motor).

Portfolio collections are an extremely popular organizational method. The more organized and up-to-date the portfolio collection, the more valuable it is. Since information in the portfolio is dated, arranging the work samples, interviews, checklists, inventories, and other information is simple. In addition you can further organize the material according to curriculum area or category of development (cognitive, gross motor, fine motor).

The best use of portfolios is to document each child's progress over time. The protégé's conclusions regarding a child's achievement, abilities, strengths, weaknesses, and challenges should be based on the following:

- The full range of that child's development, as documented by the portfolio
- The protégé's knowledge of the curriculum, skill in ongoing assessment, and stages of children's development in various domains.

As we will see in an upcoming video, protégés can plan parent-teacher conferences around the child's portfolio. With the portfolio as the basis for discussion, the protégé and parent (or guardian) can review concrete examples of the child's work, rather than discuss the child's progress in the abstract.

Transition to the Video Clip

In Denver, a Mentor-Coach and protégé share their ideas for organizing and using assessment information.

The best use of portfolios is to document each child's progress over time. Together Mentor-Coaches and protégés can draw conclusions about a child's progress, abilities, strengths, weaknesses, and challenges, based on the following:

- The full range of that child's development, as documented by the portfolio
- The protégé's knowledge of the curriculum, skill in ongoing assessment, and stages of children's development in various domains.

My protégé had never before taken charge of collecting data to include in her children's portfolios. I was amazed at how much she enjoyed the process. It helped a lot that we reflected on our own biases beforehand. Though it wasn't easy to do, it made us both appreciate that we had collected objective and accurate data to inform our next moves.

—Head Start Mentor



VIDEO CLIP: Organizational Strategies

Cheryl and Judith share ways to organize and use portfolios to guide instructional strategies, share information with parents, and record and document children's progress. They discuss using audiocassettes to document oral language progress, and using videotapes to record children's interactions and activities.

The TVI presenters summarize the videos and discuss methods their staff members use in organizing information, challenges they face, and ways Mentor-Coaches can help with those challenges.

**PAUSE THE TVI****FACILITATOR-LED DISCUSSION ON ORGANIZING
ASSESSMENT INFORMATION**

Using the questions in the Mentor-Coach Manual, ask participants to share their own experiences with organizing assessment information. Write their responses on newsprint. Complete the discussion by recognizing all that they are already doing. Point out that Mentor-Coaches can validate protégés' observations and insights, suggest methods for assessment, and help protégés understand assessment results over time.

Facilitator's Transition Statement

Parents have detailed information about their children that is important to the assessment process. The next portion of the TVI addresses ways to include parents in the assessment process.

**START THE TVI**

VIDEO CLIP: Organizational Strategies

Cheryl and Judith share ways to organize and use portfolios to guide curriculum implementation and selection of instructional strategies. They remember that they will be sharing information with parents. Their portfolios are an important record and document of children's progress. They discuss using audiocassettes to document the progress of oral language progress and videotapes to record children's interactions and activities.

Use the following questions to think about ways to support your protégé in organizing assessment data and in using it.

DISCUSSION ON ORGANIZING ASSESSMENT INFORMATION**Discussion Questions**

1. What are some of your own experiences with organizing ongoing assessment data? What have you learned from your experiences that you can pass on to your protégé?

2. How can you help your protégé use portfolio materials to better understand progress for individual children and for the group?

3. How can you support your protégé in using portfolios to plan family conferences?

TVI CONTENT**ENGAGING PARENTS IN THE ONGOING ASSESSMENT
PROCESS**

The TVI presents the following points:

- Just as Mentor-Coaches and protégés take time to build trust and a strong working relationship, protégés and parents or guardians can build trusting relationships to support children’s development.
 - Parents or guardians need information on how language and literacy develop and how they can help at home.
 - When parents have access to information and activities, they become partners in their children’s language development and literacy learning.
 - Participation in assessment draws the Head Start staff, parents, and other adults together around children’s progress.
- Assessment engages parents or guardians in the development of their children. It helps parents understand the program’s outcomes and their children’s progress over time.
- Teachers sometimes ask more of families than they can provide. If the adults in a child’s home are encouraged to read more to their children, the teacher might need to learn what supports they need. Providing books may not be enough, if parents or guardians are self-conscious about their reading skills or need other types of assistance.

Transition to the Video Clip

Discussing children’s progress with their parents is an important part of relationship-building and ongoing assessment. We are going to go to Oregon to see how a teacher, Linda, uses portfolio materials during a meeting with Alyssa’s parents.

ENGAGING PARENTS IN THE ONGOING ASSESSMENT PROCESS

It gives me a lot of satisfaction to review Alyssa’s progress with her parents. They are very proud of their daughter and her early literacy skills. We have looked at her assessment data together every step of the way. And we have had a real partnership, because they have supported her literacy development at home, too. It has been a win-win for all of us—especially Alyssa.

—Protégé

Just as Mentor-Coaches and protégés take time to build trust and a strong working relationship, protégés and parents or guardians can build trusting relationships to support children’s development.

- Parents or guardians need information on how language and literacy develop and how they can help at home.
- When parents have access to information and activities, they become partners in their children’s language development and literacy learning.

Participation in assessment draws the Head Start staff, parents, and other adults together around children’s progress.

VIDEO CLIP: Conversation with Parents

The teacher meets with the parents of Alyssa, a 5-year-old who is transitioning from a Tribal Head Start program into kindergarten. She uses the child's portfolio to demonstrate the child's progress, and invites the parents to share their observations. She suggests strategies the parents can use at home to extend the child's learning.

At the conclusion of the video clip, the TVI presenters comment on the video, particularly on the parents' understanding of Alyssa's developing literacy skills and ways the teacher keeps the conversation going. The TVI presenters discuss ways they engage parents in conversation and ways to maintain parent involvement in the assessment process.

**PAUSE THE TVI****FACILITATOR-LED DISCUSSION ON ENGAGING PARENTS IN ONGOING ASSESSMENT**

Encourage participants to share their background and experiences in this area and talk about ideas for improvement. Ask them:

1. How do you feel about involving families in the ongoing assessment process?
2. What have you learned about involving families that you can pass on to your protégé?

Review **What Mentor-Coaches Can Do** and **What Protégés Can Do** to engage parents in the ongoing assessment process. These lists are in the Mentor-Coach Manual.

Facilitator's Transition Statement

The last portion of the TVI shows how to use data to make instructional decisions for children.

VIDEO CLIP: Conversation with Parents

The teacher, Linda, meets with the parents of Alyssa, a five-year-old who is transitioning from a tribal Head Start program into kindergarten. She uses the child’s portfolio to demonstrate the child’s progress and invites the parents to share their observations. Linda suggests strategies the parents can use at home to extend the child’s learning.

**DISCUSSION ON ENGAGING PARENTS IN ONGOING
ASSESSMENT**

Discussion Questions

1. How do you feel about involving parents or guardians in the ongoing assessment process?

2. What have you learned about involving families that you can pass on to your protégé?

What Mentor-Coaches Can Do

- Help protégés reflect on identifying ways to help families better understand children’s language and literacy skills.
- Work together to develop questions that encourage joint problem-solving and information-sharing between protégés and the adults in a child’s family.

What Protégés Can Do

- Engage guardians and parents in conversations to better understand their expectations for their children’s development.
- Gather information from the family about the child’s language and literacy skills, interests, and preferences.
- Share progress reports with parents or guardians to support the development of children’s language, literacy and other skills at home.

We know that any assessment in our program must involve parents and strengthen their understanding and appreciation of their children’s unique characteristics and progress over time.

—L. S. Bratton (2001)



RESUME THE TVI

TVI CONTENT**ONGOING ASSESSMENT FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING AND TEACHING**

The TVI continues with ways to use ongoing assessment for planning and teaching.

- Mentor-Coaches have learned the value of reflecting upon their own professional development using self-assessment and self-reflection. It is a starting point for further activity. Like self-assessment and self-reflection, ongoing assessment of children implies that you will be taking action on what you find.
- Assessment is a means to an end, not an end in itself. It is the link to effective instruction. Instruction must follow from it, or else both assessment and instruction are minimally effective.
- Effective teaching requires that the staff members identify and design instruction appropriate to each child's stage of development, learning style, strengths, and needs. They must:
 - ❑ Appreciate individual variations among children within each area of children's development
 - ❑ Show respect for the diverse talents of each learner
 - ❑ Commit to helping each child develop self-confidence and competence
 - ❑ Acknowledge that ongoing assessment, child progress, and teaching are inextricably linked
 - ❑ Use assessment to inform instruction and monitor children's continued learning.
- By working with Mentor-Coaches to assess children's literacy skills and abilities, and then planning for individualized instruction, protégés can ensure that the curriculum results in positive outcomes for each child.

ONGOING ASSESSMENT FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING AND TEACHING

By assessing children's learning through ongoing observation, you gain insights into children's strengths, knowledge, interests and skills. . . . You reflect on daily life in your program and make adaptations that enable children to overcome obstacles and build on what they know and do well. By using what you learn from observations, you can foster each child's competence and success and create and maintain a high-quality program for children and families.

—J. Jablon & A. Dombro (2001)

As a Mentor-Coach, you guide protégés to understand that:

- Assessment for curricular and instructional planning is the means by which they make reliable decisions about appropriate experiences and activities for each child's learning and for groups of children.
- Assessment is a critical means to an end, not an end in itself. It leads to other actions including effective instruction, which must follow from it.

Effective teaching requires staff to identify and design instruction appropriate to each child's stage of development, learning style, cultural strengths, and needs. Staff must:

- Show respect for the diverse talents, interests and other variations of each learner
- Commit to helping each child develop self-confidence and competence
- Acknowledge that ongoing assessment, curriculum implementation and teaching are inextricably linked
- Use assessment to inform curriculum planning and instruction, and to monitor children's learning.

Once information is collected, we need to interpret it. Follow these three steps to move from information to instructional planning:

Step 1: Look at the information as a whole: Does it come from a variety of sources and assessment times?

Step 2: Reflect on the results and look for patterns:

- Where does the child assessment information fall on a developmental continuum?
- How does it compare with the teacher's and parent's understanding and expectations?
- How do each child's preferences, skills, and abilities vary across different areas of the curriculum?

Step 3: Make instructional decisions for the group and children within the group based on multiple sources of information and thoughtful reflection.

Once you collect information, you need to interpret it. Follow these three steps to move from information to instructional planning:

Step 1: Look at the assessment information as a whole. Does it come from a variety of sources over a period of time?

Step 2: Reflect on the results and look for patterns:

- Where does the child assessment information fall on a developmental continuum?
- How does it compare with the teacher's and parent's understanding and expectations?
- How does each child's preferences, skills, and abilities vary across different areas of curriculum?

Step 3: Make instructional decisions for the group and children within the group based on multiple sources of information and thoughtful reflection.

Transition to the Video Clips

The final video clips take us to two classrooms in Virginia where we will see how Mentor-Coaches and protégés use assessment to plan for instruction and individualize children’s learning experiences. First, we will see how it works in an infant-toddler classroom.

VIDEO CLIP: Toddler Assessment

Jennifer and Rachel, teachers in the classroom, use assessment techniques to build children’s language and literacy skills. Jennifer talks about the actions as children perform them. Rachel follows a child’s lead and provides words in combination with actions in both the block stacking and drum activities.

The TVI presenters comment on the video, particularly on the importance of following the children’s interests and using children’s experiences to assess and plan instruction.

Transition to the Video Clip

In a preschool class in this same Virginia program, let’s watch how assessment information leads the teacher to expand her use of nursery rhyme activities.

VIDEO CLIP: Preschool Assessment

In this video clip, the Mentor-Coach, Carol, works with her protégé, Shannon, to use the COR assessment to help identify language and literacy areas that can be strengthened in the classroom. Together, they plan nursery rhyme activities that can help the children understand positional words (e.g., *below*, *over*, *next to*).

The TVI presenters talk about the types of support Shannon receives for using the assessment information. They share their experiences in planning instruction that links to assessment results.

VIDEO CLIP: Toddler Assessment

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**PAUSE THE TVI****FACILITATOR-LED DISCUSSION ON USING ASSESSMENT INFORMATION**

Give participants the opportunity to reflect on the practices of protégés (in either the infant-toddler or preschool classrooms) in using assessment information for instructional planning and for individualizing instruction. Pose these questions:

1. How are the videos' examples of using assessment information similar to the ways you have seen protégés use information? How do they differ?
2. In what areas do protégés need the most support?
3. What have you learned in this module about ways Mentor-Coaches and protégés can work together to use assessment to inform instruction?
4. How will you apply these lessons to your work with protégés in the future?

DISCUSSION ON USING ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Discussion Questions

1. How are the videos' examples of using assessment information similar to the ways you have seen protégés use information? How do they differ?

2. In what areas do protégés need the most support?

3. What have you learned in this module about how Mentor-Coaches and protégés can work together to use assessment to inform instruction?

4. How will you apply these lessons to your work with protégés in the future?

We realized that if we were going to be able to provide the highest quality program for all our children, we would need to develop a strong system for ensuring quality from classroom to classroom. That system would have to link child assessment and goal setting to curriculum.”

— Mary Carr-Wilt (as quoted in David and Jones-Baker, 2001)



FACILITATOR-LED DISCUSSION ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Throughout *Steps to Success*, participants have created and used their individual Professional Development Plans to steer their self-assessment and self-reflection, independent study, interactions with protégés, and online discussions.

Instruct participants to go back to the Professional Development Plan that they have been using and develop the final section. Ask participants to take two or three minutes to review their plans for the past three units.

Have them choose one area where they have seen meaningful personal growth and learning. Have them find a partner and share examples of the ways they have grown and how this growth will influence their Mentor-Coach practice.

Direct them to think about their self-assessment and participation in Module 2 of this unit and complete the following parts of their professional development plan:

- Skills to Strengthen
- Additional Knowledge You Need to Acquire
- Resources to Find and Use
- Additional Support You Need.

Work with participants to create a realistic timeline for completing their professional development activities. Ask the participants to think about:

- Their accomplishments
- How they will continue to prepare themselves in order to help staff use child and classroom information for planning
- How they will know if they are successful.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Think back on the information in this module:

- Planning and carrying out ongoing child assessment
- Conducting authentic assessment
- Engaging parents in ongoing assessment
- Collecting assessment information
- Ongoing assessment for curriculum implementation, instructional planning and teaching
- Supporting phonological awareness and other early literacy skills
- Using questions to guide assessment
- Using the Assessment Framework
- Strategies for organizing assessment information

Take a few moments to reflect on these four questions:

1. How does what you learned about ongoing child assessment compare to your current practices and roles (for some, including the role of Mentor-Coach)?

2. What mentor-coaching skills are you already using to support positive practices in ongoing child assessment?

3. What would you like to change or add to what you already do?

4. What are one or two of your biggest challenges?

Based on your reflections, focus on your Mentor-Coach Professional Development Plan. Identify what mentor-coaching skills you need to help support ongoing child assessment with your protégés. Include skills that you already have but would like to strengthen, what you will need and how you will know that you are successful.



WRAP-UP

Remind participants that using ongoing assessment for planning and teaching may be a new concept for many protégés. When Mentor-Coaches include this strategy in their work, they should keep in mind the critical role they play in making the effort worthwhile. The Mentor-Coach's preparation, support, guidance, and active participation are key elements to success.

Remind Mentor-Coaches to use the skills and other materials in other units and the quick pointers in **What Mentor-Coaches Can Do** and **What Protégés Can Do** in their manuals.

Set the date and time for the final facilitated module.

WRAP-UP

Congratulations! You have just completed a series of facilitator-led activities for building your capacity to guide protégés in collecting and using child assessment information. You will now move on to the last two modules of your *Steps to Success* Mentor-Coach Manual.

INSPIRATIONAL SLOGANS

- Set new goals, start new projects, and accept help from wherever you can get it.
- Have the courage to do the opposite of what everybody else is doing, when you think it's the right thing to do.
- Play for the long haul, not just for the short payoff.
- If there is no wind, row.
- Just go out there and do what you've got to do!
- Persistence, Persistence, Persistence!
- Set goals with a passion and desire to achieve them.
- Keep the space around you clean and bright!
- Accept responsibility for writing your own life's scenario!
- The more we do, the more we can do.
- Opportunity, sooner or later, comes to all who work and wish.
- Things may come to those who wait, but only the things left by those who hustle.
- Generate a feeling of excitement about your life and where you are going.
- Let your hook be always cast; in the pool where you least expect to find it, there will be a fish.
- Nothing is stronger than habit.
- Every day you must decide what you could do, what you should do, and what you must do.
- The absence of alternatives demands creativity.
- No matter what you do, turn in an outstanding performance.

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- Love the challenge of engineering a task from beginning to end.
- Always look for the right idea. It's there; you just have to find it.
- The strongest principles of growth lie in human choice.
- When you treat others with self-esteem, their esteem grows stronger.
- Be innovative. It's amazing what could happen if you constantly think about how to do things more effectively.
- You miss 100% of the shots you never take.
- It's never too late to be what you might have been.
- Yesterday is not ours to recover, but tomorrow is ours to win or lose.
- The secret of success is directed effort.
- Winners are people who continually make small corrections in their performances until they get exactly what they want.
- Reach for objectives that will be good for you as well as for those around you.
- Think big. At the same time, be able to be aware of the smallest details.
- Creative people figure out what must be done. Then they do it.
- Delegate! It can save your life, or—at the very least—your SANITY.
- The best preparation for good work tomorrow is to do good work today.

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STEP Doc 4.2a: Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness proceeds through a logical sequence:

- **Listening involves paying attention to words:** Here are some examples:
 - ❑ Talk to infants and toddlers during everyday routines (diapering, feeding, dressing).
 - ❑ Respond to infant's babbling and cooing, imitating the sounds a child makes and extending a child's initial sounds with the full word.
 - ❑ Provide on-going narration of what you see children doing as they play, so that they can begin to associate language with action and specific words with objects.
 - ❑ Read books that focus on initial sounds
 - ❑ Use finger-play games for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.
 - ❑ For preschool-aged children use listening games that focus children's attention on words.
- **Rhyming involves organizing sounds by endings:** Use rhyming to help infants, toddlers, and preschoolers focus on the sounds at the end of words.
- **Alliteration involves beginning sounds:** Use games to help children focus on the sounds at the beginning of words. Use activities to compare and contrast sounds at the beginning and end of words, reinforcing what has been learned with rhyming and alliteration.
- **Sentence segmenting means understanding the concept that words are individual units:** Use music and clapping to help children experience sentence segmenting by providing a beat at the beginning of each word. Count the number of words in sentences, using manipulatives that are moved for each word. Or sing songs that segment words with rhythm.

- **Syllable segmenting highlights the sounds within words:** Count and clap the syllables in words.
- **Onset rime* involves hearing the individual sounds in words:** Divide one-syllable words by their initial consonant sound and all their other sounds; delete and substitute the sounds in the words.
- **Phoneme segmenting, blending, and manipulation:*** Blend together individual sounds; break down words into individual phonemes (phoneme segmentations); replace individual sounds in a word. For example, take *mit*, change the /i/ to /a/ and you have *mat* (phoneme manipulation).

*Onset rimes and phoneme segmentation, blending, and manipulation are generally recognized as kindergarten skills.

From: *The Head Start Leaders Guide to Positive Child Outcomes*. pp.46–47.

**STEP-Doc 4.2b:
Assessment Framework****ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK¹**

1. What are the language and literacy skills and the related outcomes that you want children to achieve?
2. What do you expect to see children do if they are successfully reaching age-appropriate language and literacy outcomes?
3. What do children know now? What skills can they already demonstrate?
4. What questions do you have about children in relation to these outcomes?
5. How, when, and where can you answer these questions about children?
6. What does the information you have gathered tell you about what skills children still need in order to reach the outcomes?
7. How can you use this information for more effective instruction?

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STEP-Doc 4.2c: Two Approaches to Collecting Data

There are many ways for you to record ongoing assessment information as you collect it with your protégés. You may be familiar with many of them. You explored the types of assessment and recording methods that your protégés use in the exercise at the end of Module 1. There are running records, anecdotal records, journal entries, checklists, sampling observations, and rating scales.

Although there is wide variation in these methods, and although many Head Start programs have or are creating their own assessment measures, there are two basic approaches for interacting with children to complete ongoing assessment.

For each of the two approaches presented, you can help protégés appreciate the importance of assessing children during their everyday activities (such as play) and during their common routines (such as diapering, feeding, center time, circle time, and snack time). In other words, children are assessed in authentic settings.

Naturalistic Assessment—Using the Child’s Activities

1. Naturalistic assessment occurs with a child-centered focus. The interaction between the adult and the child follows the child’s lead or capitalizes on the child’s interests.

- The child may initiate the interaction, or the adult may focus on the object of the child’s attention and then intentionally initiate the interaction with questions or comments. For example:

“I notice that you started with red and yellow, and now you have orange. Why do you think that happened?”

“You put some of the /p/ pictures together and the /s/ pictures together. Where does the picture of the sun go?”

“It looks like you are being the mommy. What will the mommy do when the baby cries?”

- As another approach, an adult may observe the child during play and may intentionally join in the activity while being careful to follow the child's lead. For example:

The adult may start to paint beside the child, using red and yellow, mixing the two, and say, "I had red and yellow, and now I have orange. I wonder what happened?"

The adult may start sorting pictures beside the child and talk out loud, saying, "Let's see, sun . . . does that go with the /p/ pictures or the /s/ pictures?" and then wait for a response from the child.

The teacher plays beside a child cradling a doll. She picks up a doll and cradles it too. She then says, "Oh dear, my baby is crying. I wonder what is making my baby cry?"

2. Naturalistic assessment and observational methods are often invisible to the child. The child continues in the usual activities with no awareness that an adult is observing and assessing. This is an effective approach in assessing infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children.

Focused Assessment—Planning The Child's Activities

Focused assessment does not wait for spontaneous behaviors to arise so that a child's progress or level of ability in a particular area can be observed.

1. The adult selects materials and guides interactions to directly elicit the skills targeted for observation and assessment.
2. The Mentor-Coach and protégé decide on the environment, toys, and strategies to use for eliciting behaviors. Observations occur in play-based and other types of authentic situations.