



SHORT VIDEO INFORMATION SHEET

Clearing Your View: Staying Objective in Observation

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

Reflective Questions:

- This podcast describes the difference between “everyday observations” and “formal observations.” When/how do you use formal observation in your work?
- Listen for the definition of objective observation. Why do you think objectivity is important in formal observations?
- The podcast offers the following tips for recording objective observation notes:
 - Make your notes as concrete as possible;
 - Describe behaviors and vocalizations and write down direct quotes;
 - Describe facial expressions and gestures, but not what you think they mean about how the child is feeling;
 - Avoid using adjectives that involve interpretation, like “successful, happy, mad, pretty, hyper.”
 - Record what happened first and what happened next without including what you see as the reasons.

Review some recent observation notes you have taken, keeping these tips in mind. What do you notice? Which of these tips are you already using? Which tips do you want to work on? Remember that objective observation takes practice!

- How can I use the information in this podcast to help me learn more about the children and families I work with?
 - Is there anyone else who would benefit from watching this podcast? How could I share it with them?
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Related Resources:

- Early Head Start National Resource Center. *Look Again: Using Sensitive, Skilled Observation in Your Program* [Audioconference]. Washington, DC: Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families/Office of Head Start/Early Head Start National Resource Center, 2011.
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/cde/saeo/LookAgainUsing.htm>
- Early Head Start National Resource Center. *Look At Me! Using Focused Child Observation with Infants and Toddlers* [Podcast]. Washington, DC: Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families/Office of Head Start/Early Head Start National Resource Center, 2013.
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/cde/saeo/LookatMeUsing.htm>

Connections to School Readiness for Infants and Toddlers

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

1304.20(d) ...grantee and delegate agencies must implement ongoing procedures by which Early Head Start and Head Start staff can identify any new or recurring medical, dental, or developmental concerns so that they may quickly make appropriate referrals. These procedures may include: periodic observations and recordings, as appropriate, of individual children's developmental progress, changes in physical appearance...and emotional and behavioral patterns.

1304.21(a)(2)(ii) Parents...must be provided opportunities to increase their child observation skills and to share assessments with staff that will help plan the learning experiences.

1304.21(c)(2) Staff must use a variety of strategies to promote and support children's learning and developmental progress based on the observations and ongoing assessment of each child.

1307.3(2)(b)(ii) A Head Start or Early Head Start agency shall be required to...take steps to achieve the school readiness goals...by analyzing individual ongoing child level assessment data for all children birth to five participating in the program and using that data in combination with input from parents and families to determine each child's status and progress with regard to, at a minimum, language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches toward learning, physical well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development, and to individualize the experiences, instructional strategies, and services to best support each child.

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

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/Head%20Start%20Requirements>

