

Assessment/Portfolios

When it comes to accountability and testing young children, effective early childhood teachers gather far more useful information when classroom-based assessment is used to evaluate the achievement of the child during the course and context of daily activities (Gronlund, 2001). Daily and on-going assessment provides more reliable results which can then be used to determine the current knowledge of each child and guide instructional direction (Gronlund, 2001). In so doing, they are better able to analyze the educational environment and curriculum as it pertains to the individual child's progress (Trister Dodge, Heroman, Charles, & Maiorca, 2004).

When classroom-based, contextual assessment techniques are aligned with state standards for learning, information on each child's individual growth is more fully detailed due to the continuous collection of data such as:

- Observations
- Collected samples of the children's work
- Photographs
- Sketches
- Anecdotal notes
- Interviews
- Records of conversations
- Narrative information from parents/guardians,

These techniques allow teachers to embed assessment into the daily routine rather than creating an additional task for an already hectic and heavy work load (Dever, Falconer, Kessenich, 2003).

Collecting materials and data is just the beginning, though. The professional early childhood teacher must take time on a regular basis to place these demonstrations of learning in some type of portfolio. When attractively arranged for presentation during parent-teacher conferencing a more in depth understanding of the child as well as the classroom environment emerges. In so doing, the early childhood teacher answers the call to accountability, has foundational knowledge for the next level of supported learning and the child's family can more readily appreciate developmentally appropriate practices.

References

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