

# *Observation:* The Heart of Authentic Assessment

## Trainer's Guide (Fourth Edition)

Larry Edelman and Nan Vendegna



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# Introduction

Results Matter ([www.cde.state.co.us/resultsmatter/](http://www.cde.state.co.us/resultsmatter/)) is a Colorado early childhood initiative that promotes the use of authentic assessment for child, program and policy planning as well as outcomes reporting. *Observation: The Heart of Authentic Assessment* is the first learning module in the Results Matter professional development series.

*Observation: The Heart of Authentic Assessment* provides basic information about the uses of ongoing observation as part of an authentic assessment and child-centered planning system. This module is designed for paraprofessional and entry level early childhood providers who have not yet taken a formal course in observation or assessment. It has also been used successfully as a refresher for more experienced educators. Although this module is designed for providers and programs in Colorado, it can be used in other states with little or no adaptations.

The Results Matter professional development series includes a number of learning modules designed for early care and education/intervention providers and covers various topics, including: observation, documentation, linking assessment to intervention and using assessment information to inform child and group centered planning. The series also includes several modules designed for administrators, covering topics such as using child and family outcomes data for policy and program planning and supporting the use of authentic assessment in early childhood programs.

## Acknowledgments

The Colorado Department of Education would like to acknowledge the contributions of those who participated in the development of the first version of this module, including Barb Roscoe, Susan Moore, Amy Thrasher, Carla Mestas, and Donna Wittmer. Carla Mestas and Larry Edelman produced the second iteration of this module. Larry Edelman and Nan Vendegna produced the third and current versions of this module. Many thanks to Deb Schell-Frank for diligent proofreading, and to Deb, Sandi Link, Michelle Boyer, Kelly Bowes, Kathy Miller, Nick Ortiz, and Cheri Breeman for reviewing, field testing, and delivering various versions of this training program.

## Checklist for Preparing to Lead the Session

- ❑ Carefully read through the Agenda-at-a-Glance on page 11 to see how this module should be optimally delivered. If a solid block of time is not feasible, consider delivering the module in other ways as well, including:
  - Two blocks;
  - Three or four one-hour sessions on consecutive weeks; and
  - Presenting one or two activities at a time during consecutive team meetings.
- ❑ The training session uses a variety of activities including short lectures, small group exercises, large group discussions, video clips, and observation practice. Carefully read through the trainer's notes, PowerPoint slides, and the handouts. Practice introducing and leading the activities so you will be able to lead each activity with confidence without having to read or recite from the trainer's guide.
- ❑ Please remember that the bulleted points outlined in this guide should give trainers an idea of the kinds of things that should be said, but not in actual words. Avoid reading or reciting the points offered in this guide; rather, become familiar enough with these points that you can offer them naturally, using your own words.
- ❑ Practice presenting the short lectures using the accompanying PowerPoint slides.
- ❑ During the module you will be showing a number of videos. Before you lead the module, preview all of the clips on the DVD, becoming familiar enough that you will be prepared to lead discussions around them.
- ❑ Learn how to use the audio-visual equipment. Practice setting up and using the laptop computer, LCD projector and audio speakers. Practice toggling back and forth between using PowerPoint slides and the DVD.
- ❑ The session will be enhanced if you personalize it by bringing in authentic, concrete examples of things such as family contributions to portfolios, observations written by parents, handwritten anecdotal notes, or samples of observations entered online. You might want to prepare a collection of stories and documentation that you can share throughout the session. For example, one trainer gives this example of collaborating with parents: "A young boy went on a hike with his family and had great adventures with the family dog. The child wanted to write a story about the adventure, which he dictated while his mother wrote it down for him. His mother then brought the story in to share with the classroom team." The trainer shares this anecdote and passes around the story that the parent brought in.
- ❑ If you will be co-training, meet in advance with your training partner to plan who will lead which activities, how you will support one another and plan for all the arrangements that need to be made.
- ❑ Conduct a needs assessment or talk with program administrators in advance to find out if the participants need to learn about the program's goals related to observation or statewide assessment activities prior to participating in this module. You might decide to share information about such initiatives before presenting this module to help the participants see the information in context of a bigger picture.

## Arrange the Training Environment

It is important to establish a comfortable training environment that will support and facilitate effective learning. Below are room set up procedures and tips.

- ❑ Arrive early to set up the room and complete all of the preparations so that instead of scrambling to set things up at the last minute you will be available to meet and greet the participants as they arrive. Setting up the room almost always takes more time than anticipated. One or more room set-up challenges are common; begin setting up at least one hour prior to when the participants are expected to arrive for registration (as opposed to one hour before the training is scheduled to begin).
- ❑ Set up a registration table (outside the training room is often best). Organize the sign-in procedures and the materials that you will be giving to each participant.
- ❑ Set up the audiovisual equipment *first* as the optimal location of the screen, LCD projector, laptop, and audio speakers often determines how the seating and tables need to be arranged. Be sure that the LCD projector is set back far enough in the room so that the image fills the screen. If the tables and chairs are arranged before you arrive, they may need to be rearranged after the audio-visual equipment is set up (another good reason for setting up early!).
- ❑ If you will be using a microphone, learn how to control the volume and check the volume level before the participants arrive. Check and learn how to control the volume of the audio speakers.
- ❑ Arrange the tables and seating to support interactive learning and the exchange of ideas in both small and large group discussions. Do all that you can to arrange the room so that the participants will have enough space to sit comfortably and move about easily. Once the room is arranged, sit in various parts of the room to make sure that everyone will be able to see and hear the trainer and the audio-visual materials. Make adjustments as necessary.
- ❑ Place supplies on each table:
  - Handouts and related materials
  - Post-It notes
  - A couple of markers per table
  - Poster paper
- ❑ In addition to the above supplies, some trainers like to provide a range of tactile toys on the table for tactile learners, e.g. squishy toys, a smooth ball, a slinky, etc. Avoid distracting items such as puzzles and toys that make sounds.
- ❑ Put a sheet of chart paper labeled “Parking Lot” on one or two accessible walls of the room. The Parking Lot is a useful way to document issues that you don’t have time to address or questions that can’t be answered sufficiently during the session.

# Checklist of Materials and Equipment

## Trainer's materials

- Observation: The Heart of Authentic Assessment* Trainer's Guide
- Observation: The Heart of Authentic Assessment* PowerPoint File
- Observation: The Heart of Authentic Assessment* Trainer's DVD

## Equipment

- Laptop computer
- LCD projector
- Remote control device for advancing slides
- Projection screen
- Speakers to amplify the audio from the laptop's headphone port
- Surge protector/power strip
- Extension cord
- Cable to connect the laptop to the LCD
- Cables to connect the laptop to the audio speakers
- Easel and chart paper
- Colored markers
- Masking tape and/or push pins for affixing chart paper to the wall

## Materials the participants will receive at the registration table:

- Name tags or tents
- Observation: The Heart of Authentic Assessment* Participant Workbook
- Observation: The Heart of Authentic Assessment* Evaluation Form (the participants will complete this and return it at the end of the session)
- Action Planning Worksheet (optional)
- Certificate of Attendance/Professional Development (optional)

## On each table:

- Sticky notes (optional)

## Registration table materials:

- Sign-in sheet
- Pens
- Name tags or tents
- Markers for completing the name tags/tents

# Training Logistics for the Requesting Program

## We ask that the requesting program provide or arrange for:

- A training room appropriate for the number of participants (this module is developed for 20-50 participants – if the training request is for more or fewer participants than 20-50, consult with the trainer). Avoid the use of gymnasiums or other environments with challenging acoustics.
- The telephone number and email address for a contact person.
- Address of training site and directions for presenter(s).
- Access to the training room at least one hour prior to when the participants are expected to arrive for registration (as opposed to one hour before the training is scheduled to begin).
- A room arrangement that is conducive to small group work throughout the session.
- A table at the front of the room for the trainer's materials.
- A table for the LCD and computer with access to power (*this can be the same table as the speaker's table*).
- A projection screen (*preferred*) or a clean, blank wall to project on.
- Flip chart stand, pad and markers.
- Refreshments for participants (*e.g., water, coffee, tea, snack items, etc. If you have scheduled a full day of training, provide lunch for the participants or adequate time if they will be leaving the training site for lunch*).

# Strategies for Supporting Application Back-on-the-Job

This learning module provides useful information about observation and authentic assessment. But this session is not likely to affect changes in practice unless combined with other activities that support staff to use new practices. Below are examples of the kinds of activities that trainers incorporate before, during and after the session to maximize the potential of this workshop to encourage the use of new skills back-on-the job.

## **BEFORE the session you might want to:**

- Distribute a needs assessment to get a better sense of the learners – their needs, concerns and potential barriers to the learners' implementation of new skills.
- Send the learners an introductory email or an article to read to help prepare them and generate anticipation for the learning experience.
- Schedule team members to attend the session together.
- Meet with immediate supervisors to encourage them to:
  - Meet with the participants beforehand to offer their support for the topic;
  - Attend the training along with their staff;
  - Implement strategies to support their staff to try out new observation skills;
  - Identify how they might change the organizations' procedures and/or culture to support the staff members' use of effective observation and documentation;
  - Incorporate observation-related skills into job descriptions and performance appraisals;
  - Plan how you (the trainer) will provide follow-up after the training session; and
  - Identify someone on-the-job who will plan and schedule follow-up activities.

## **DURING the session you might want to:**

- Offer extra time at the end of the session for teams to meet, reflect on the material and develop action plans.
- Remind the participants that pages 7 and 9 of the *Participant Workbook* are formatted to be used as job aids and reminders for staff, e.g., they might be laminated and posted on a bulletin board or by a desk.
- Allow time for participants to plan how they will try out new skills back on the job.
- Distribute take home resources such as books (e.g., *The Power of Observation*, *The Art of Awareness*) or articles.

## **AFTER the session you might want to:**

- Evaluate the session.
- Provide job aids (e.g. wall posters) to remind the participants of tools and strategies.
- Provide follow-up sessions, refresher courses, etc.
- Send follow-up correspondence (e.g. newsletter).
- Offer one-on-one follow-up sessions.
- Recognize and celebrate successes.
- Have learners send in progress reports.
- Use needs analysis instruments and techniques at periodic intervals; utilize feedback from peers, supervisors and parents.
- Provide learners and managers with additional tools for coaching and evaluation.



## Using the Video Clips

Video Clips
Video 1: What is Authentic Assessment?
Video 2: The Essential Role of Observation and Documentation
Video 3: Henry at Mealtime (for Observation Practice 1)
Video 4: Caul Plays with a Puzzle (for Observation Practice 2)
Video 5: Linking Documentation to Curriculum
Video 6: Kaleb on the Playground (for Observation Practice 3)
Video 7: So Many Ways to Learn (Many thanks to California's Desired Results access Project for permission to use this video: <a href="http://www.draccess.org">www.draccess.org</a> )

### Download the Videos

The videos can be found on the Trainers CD-ROM, or can be accessed directly from the web: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/resultsmatter/RMVideoSeries.htm>

### Become Familiar with the Videos

During this module you will be showing seven video clips. Preview all of the clips before you lead the module. As you watch, keep in mind the activities in which they will be used. Become familiar enough with the clips that you will be prepared to lead discussions around them.

### Organize the Videos so You Can Easily Find Them

You might want to keep the clips in a folder on your desktop. If you downloaded the clips from the Trainer's CD-ROM, these clips will be labeled by the number in which they will be shown during the session. If you downloaded the clips from the web (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/resultsmatter/RMVideoSeries.htm>), you might want to place a 1, 2, 3, etc. before the file name to make it easier to navigate to the clip that you want to show. If you rename the clips, be sure not to delete the file extension ".mov" from the end.

### Media Players for Playing the Videos

These clips are provided as QuickTime files that are included on the Trainers CD-ROM. In order to play them you will need a suitable media player. We recommend that you download two players:

- QuickTime Player – For both PCs and Macs, this free player is recommended for playing a variety of files, including QuickTime files. Available from <http://www.apple.com/> Optional: You might want to purchase the \$29 QuickTime Pro update from [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com) QuickTime Pro makes it easy for you to play video clips at full screen, do basic editing functions and lots of other useful functions as well.
- VLC Media Player – A free, cross-platform VLC media player, this multimedia player for both Macs and PCs plays a very large assortment of audio and video formats. Available from: <http://www.videolan.org/vlc/>

Note: When installing the players, allow a shortcut icon to be placed on your desktop. Also, be sure to periodically check for updated versions of the players.

## Tips for Playing the Videos

In addition to becoming familiar with the content of the clips, be sure to practice using the clips and the media players. Here is one recommended approach:




- Copy the video clip folder from the Trainer's CD-ROM to your desk top.
- Open the folder, select the desired clip, and drag and drop it on the icon of your player of choice. Note: media players function differently, so practice using them to be sure you know how to control the image.
- When you are showing these clips via your computer connected to a projector (e.g., LCD or DLP projector), be sure to show the clips at full screen. If the image does not automatically play at full screen use these commands:
  - QuickTime: Under the pull-down menu "View," choose "Full Screen"
  - VLC: Click the "Toggle the Video in Fullscreen" icon in the bottom tool bar, or under the "Video" pull-down menu select "Fullscreen"

## Observation: The Heart of Authentic Assessment Agenda-at-a-Glance

Sections of the Module	Approximate Time
Opening Activities (assuming 10 – 15 minutes for introductions)	20 minutes
What is Authentic Assessment?	15 minutes
Key Practice 1: Make observation a routine part of your work	15 minutes
Key Practice 2: Engage families in the observation process	15 minutes
Key Practice 3: Use strategies that match your purposes	20 minutes
Break (schedule when needed)	15 minutes
Key Practice 4: Observe as objectively as possible	20 minutes
Key Practice 5: Document your observations	25 minutes
Key Practice 6: Reflect on and use your observations	20 minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optional Activity: The Observe-Reflect-Act Process</li> </ul>	25 minutes
Closing Activities (assuming 15 minutes for the action planning activity)	20 minutes
<b>Total Time for Module <u>at Least</u></b>	<b>3.5 hours</b>

**Note:** The actual time required to lead this session will vary depending on characteristics of the participants, the styles and interests of the trainers, length of time provided for discussions, optional activities, and action planning, etc.

## Opening Activities (15 – 20 minutes)

<p><i>Observation:</i> The Heart of Authentic Assessment</p>   <p style="text-align: center;">Presented by </p>	<p><b>Welcome the Group</b> (2 minutes)</p> <p><b>Slide 1:</b> Show this slide and make the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome the participants to the training.</li> <li>• Remind them to fill out their name tags or tents.</li> <li>• Acknowledge that this session (also referred to as “Module One”) was developed and presented by Results Matter, an initiative of the Colorado Department of Education.</li> <li>• Acknowledge that you know how busy everyone is and thank them for their time and interest.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mute the Projector</b> (while in slide show view, push the “B” key)</p>	<p><b>Introductions</b> (variable time)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce the trainers.</li> <li>• Ask the participants to introduce themselves: If the group size is 20 or less, ask the participants to introduce themselves by sharing their names, roles, and where they work. If time allows, you might want to ask them to share something fun, such as their favorite food or vacation spot.</li> <li>• If there are more than 20 participants ask them to identify themselves by raising their hands along with descriptors that you might call out, such as:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>role</b> (e.g., classroom teacher, classroom assistant, special educator, early interventionist, administrator, other);</li> <li>• <b>setting</b> in which they work (public school, child care, home care, other); and</li> <li>• <b>children</b> with whom they work (e.g., preschool program, children with disabilities, children who are typically developing, Head Start, School Readiness).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p><b>Observation Exercise</b> (about 6 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell the group that you’re going to lead a brief, fun exercise.</li> <li>• Ask the participants to stand up and find one partner.</li> <li>• Once they locate a partner, ask them to stand face to face and observe their partner for about 30 seconds.</li> <li>• After 30 seconds, ask them to turn back to back with their partner and “re-arrange” or change five things about themselves (e.g. remove one earring, unfasten or fasten a button). Allow about 60 – 90 seconds for the “change-over.”</li> <li>• After the “change-over” ask them to face their partners and identify the five changes that their partners have made.</li> <li>• Debrief the activity by asking questions such as:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Who found all five changes? Four of them? Three of them? (Ask these playfully – not to shame!)</li> <li>○ What lessons can we learn from this little exercise</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>about making accurate observations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summarize the activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observations are more accurate when we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take note of specific details;</li> <li>Know the person we are observing;</li> <li>Make observations over time;</li> <li>Apply our full attention and focus; and</li> <li>Give sufficient time to the observation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<div data-bbox="191 485 602 793"> <p><b>Overall Goals for this Session</b></p> <p>To enhance your observation skills by increasing your understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authentic assessment</li> <li>The essential role of observation in authentic assessment</li> <li>Key practices for effectively observing young children</li> </ul> </div> <div data-bbox="212 869 573 1110"> <p><b><u>Parking Lot</u></b></p> </div>	<p><b>Review the Learning Goals and Agenda</b> (about 3 minutes)</p> <p><b>Slide 2:</b> Review the goals on this slide and make the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During the session we'll have the opportunity to share ideas with one another, watch videos, and practice our observation skills.</li> <li>Point out housekeeping tips: restroom locations, breaks, etc.</li> <li>Refer them to the Participant Workbook and suggest that they keep it handy as they will be referring to it throughout the session.</li> <li>Refer to the "Parking Lots" on the walls and mention that they are places where questions, concerns, and comments that cannot be addressed at the moment can be collected throughout the session. Invite the participants to write on the Parking Lots at any time during the session. Promise that there will be follow up to the parking lot issues.</li> </ul> <p><b>Review Common Courtesies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask the participants to suggest some common courtesies that will help to make the session productive and enjoyable for all. If you like, you can jot these courtesies on a piece of flip chart paper and post it on a wall after the discussion.</li> <li>If they don't come up during the discussion, you may want to mention: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively participating in discussions;</li> <li>Turning off cell phones or placing them on "vibrate;"</li> <li>In the interest of time, the trainers may need to respectfully cut a discussion short in order to move along to the next activity;</li> <li>The importance of beginning and ending on time;</li> <li>Limiting side conversations and avoid interrupting others; and</li> <li>Everyone should feel free to take care of their personal needs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## What is Authentic Assessment? (about 15 minutes)

### What is Authentic Assessment?



3

**Slide 3:** Show this slide and make the following points:

- As the title of this workshop tells us, observation is the heart of authentic assessment.
- And authentic assessment is an essential foundation for effective early care and education programs.
- So before we focus on observation, let's explore what we mean by authentic assessment.

### Do We *Really* Want to Test Young Children?

There is widespread concern about the use of high pressure methods of testing or assessing young children

**Example:**

An unknown adult pulls a child out of her familiar environment, sits her down at a table, and "quizzes" her on specific bits of knowledge or skill *and expects to see this child at her best*

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**Slide 4:** Review the information on this slide and make the following points:

- Trends in the national testing of school-age children sometimes influence the way that people think about assessment of young children. This kind of testing does not work well with young children (and, as some might argue, with older children either).
- Why not? Young children:
  - Have shorter attention spans than older students;
  - Often better express themselves and what they know by manipulating real objects and interacting with familiar people in everyday situations rather than responding verbally to test questions;
  - May shut down or not perform well if under stress or put on the spot; and
  - May show new or emerging skills unevenly over time and a "snapshot" test may miss valuable information.

**Mute the Projector**  
(while in slide show view,  
push the "B" key)

### Testing Discussion



- Ask the participants to find a partner.
- Tell them to share with their partners any negative (or positive) memories they have of testing in school, either for themselves or their children.

### Lead a large group discussion around the prompts:

- What were the recollections that you had of testing experiences?  
Note: If no one responds, you might want to offer an example from your experience to get the conversation going, such as: feeling stress because of an upcoming test, worrying that if you don't perform well on a test you won't be assigned to be in a group with your friends, or worrying that your non-traditional school will be in jeopardy if average test scores are lower than desired.
- What made these experiences negative?

### Summarize this activity:

- Based on the experiences that people have shared, when

	<p>the stakes are high, or when tests are timed, we often get anxious and worried and feel pressured. The reason why we put forth authentic assessment as an alternate choice is to avoid putting that kind of pressure on our young children.</p>
<div data-bbox="185 233 609 548"> <p>Authentic Assessment...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is an approach that is natural and non-threatening to children</li> <li>• Gives us a more realistic understanding of what young children know and can do in their everyday lives</li> </ul>  <p>5</p> </div>	<p><b>Slide 5:</b> Review the information on this slide and make the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rather than fall into the trap of “testing” young children as is done with school-age children, there is an effective alternative: authentic assessment.</li> <li>• Authentic assessment is natural and non-threatening to children.</li> <li>• Authentic assessment is widely accepted as a recommended practice in early childhood education.</li> <li>• Observing children as they interact with familiar toys, materials, and people in everyday routines, activities, and places puts much less pressure on young children.</li> <li>• By using authentic assessment, we get a more accurate understanding of the child. This is especially true when using a team approach.</li> </ul>
<div data-bbox="185 829 609 1144"> <p>Let's Watch!</p>  <p>6</p> </div>	<p><b>Slide 6:</b> Show this slide and make the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let's watch a brief video that describes what authentic assessment means.</li> <li>• This clip is taken from the video <i>Today and for the Future...Results Matter</i>.</li> <li>• <b>Minimize PowerPoint and show Video 1: <i>What is Authentic Assessment?</i></b> (3 minutes)</li> </ul>
<div data-bbox="185 1186 609 1501"> <p>Authentic Assessment...</p> <p><b>Ongoing:</b> Is a natural part of what teachers do every day</p> <p><b>Whole child:</b> Helps us observe all areas of a child's growth and development</p> <p><b>Naturalistic:</b> Occurs as a child interacts with familiar materials, people and activities</p> <p><b>Multiple perspectives:</b> Uses information from a variety of sources</p> <p><b>Useful:</b> Helps teachers plan, measure progress, work with families and individualize curriculum</p> <p>7</p> </div>	<p><b>Slide 7:</b> After the video clip ends, review the information on this slide and make the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• And how do we achieve these aspects of authentic assessment? By using observation; by carefully observing and listening to children.</li> <li>• When we observe children playing and marvel at their creativity or how they solved a problem or learned a new skill, we are laying the foundation for authentic assessment.</li> </ul>
<div data-bbox="185 1528 609 1843"> <p>Ongoing <b>observation</b> of children in their everyday routines and activities is at the heart of authentic assessment</p> </div>	<p><b>Slide 8:</b> Review this slide and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarize this section on authentic assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ask if there are any questions about authentic assessment.</li> <li>○ Offer a transition to the next section: we don't need to be specialists with intensive training to be able to observe effectively – all of the adults on the classroom team just need to use a number of key practices.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Key Practice 1: Make observation a routine part of your work (15 min.)

### Key Practices for Effective Observation



9

**Slide 9:** Show this slide and make the following points:

- During the rest of the session we'll review six key practices for effective observation that will help us feel competent and confident in observing young children.

### Six Key Practices for Effective Observation

1. Make observation a routine part of your work
2. Engage families in the observation process
3. Use strategies that match your purposes
4. Observe as objectively as possible
5. Document your observations
6. Reflect on and use your observations

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**Slide 10:** *BRIEFLY* review the six practices on this slide and make the following points:

- Remember to be BRIEF in reading through the six practices.
- Remind the group that these practices are inter-related.
- Tell the group that during the rest of the session, you'll review these practices one at a time, beginning with the first practice, "Make observation a routine part of your work."

### Naturalistic observation means observing children...

- as they interact with familiar toys, materials, and people,
- in the context of everyday routines, activities, and places,
- unobtrusively.

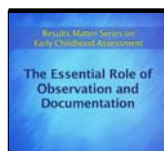


11

**Slide 11:** Review the information on this slide and make the following points:

- When we observe regularly, as a part of everyday practice, children grow to understand that observation is something adults do all the time, and the children act naturally.

### Let's Watch!



12

**Slide 12:** Show this slide and make the following points:

- Let's watch a short clip of Sarah Mogen, a teacher at the Washington Park Early Learning Center, talk about what observation means to her and her teaching practice. As you watch take note of why Sarah values observation and think of why observation is important to your practice.
- **Minimize PowerPoint and show Video 2: *The Essential Role of Observation and Documentation* (1.5 minutes)**



**Mute the Projector**  
(while in slide show view,  
push the “B” key)

**Once the clip ends, lead a large group discussion around questions such as:**

- What reasons did Sarah offer for why she values ongoing, naturalistic observation of the children in her classroom?
- In what ways is ongoing, naturalistic observation important to your teaching?
- Summarize the first key practice: “Make observation a routine part of your work”:
  - Teachers who use observation naturally as a part of everyday classroom activity report many benefits.
  - We’ll look at these benefits as we explore the second of the six key practices.

## Key Practice 2: Engage families in the observation process (10 min.)

### Six Key Practices for Effective Observation

1. Make observation a routine part of your work
2. Engage families in the observation process
3. Use strategies that match your purposes
4. Observe as objectively as possible
5. Document your observations
6. Reflect on and use your observations

13

**Slide 13:** Show this slide and make the following points:

- The second key practice for effective observation is to “Engage families in the observation process.”

### Be open to learning from families

- When families share their observations, we develop a more complete and accurate picture of the child
- Let families know that you value their observations and participation in ongoing authentic assessment



14

**Slide 14:** Review the information on this slide and make the following points:

- Parents are their children’s “first teachers” and are the experts on their child.
- The classroom team members are experts in other ways, for instance in leading group learning activities. While teachers might have different areas of expertise than parents, we are all allies in children’s development.
- Research findings suggest that parents’ observations are reliable and valid. And when they are combined with teachers’ observations, the perspectives of parents help develop a more complete picture of children across settings.
- And for these reasons, we need to make intentional efforts to ask families about their children.

Examples of ways to create opportunities for families to share their observations

- Give families concrete examples of the kinds of information you would like them to share
- Make portfolios accessible to families and invite them to contribute
- Place a basket at sign-in for families to drop off photos and notes for the teachers



15

**Slide 15:** Review the information on this slide and make the following points:

- There are so many ways to create opportunities for families to share their observations. This slide lists just a few examples.
- Lead a brief discussion to summarize the second key practice:
  - How does your classroom/program invite families' observations? If the group is not sure how to respond, you might want to offer an example or two, such as using questionnaires or having discussions with parents at parent-teacher conferences.
  - Does this conversation give you any new ideas how you might invite families' observations?

**Key Practice 3: Use strategies that match your purposes ( 20 minutes)**

Six Key Practices for Effective Observation

1. Make observation a routine part of your work
2. Engage families in the observation process
3. Use strategies that match your purposes
4. Observe as objectively as possible
5. Document your observations
6. Reflect on and use your observations

16

**Slide 16:** Show this slide and make the following points:

- Let's review where we are: We just explored the first two principles, make observation a routine part of your work and engage families in the observation process.
- The third key practice for effective observation is "Use strategies that match your purposes."
- This principle tells us that how we plan for and approach observation depends on the reasons we are observing in the first place.

Observation might help you ...

- Plan curricula and learning activities
- Document children's progress
- Share information with families
- Complete an assessment instrument
- Let children know that you value their work
- Share the good work of your program with the community



17

**Slide 17:** Review the information on this slide and make the following points:

- We can use observation for many purposes, including the ones listed on this slide.
- It is important to keep in mind the specific purposes for which you are observing, because these purposes should influence how you plan and go about your observation.

Examples of how purposes should influence how you go about observing

Purpose of Observation	Ways You Might Observe
Plan curriculum and teaching strategies	You might observe children participating in activities and jot down ideas for new activities and changes in the environment
Measure and describe children's progress	You might have an item in mind from a particular assessment tool and watch for children to demonstrate their level of mastery
Inform families about their children's learning	You might look for a specific aspect of a child's learning that the parents told you is of interest

18

**Slide 18:** Review the examples of purposes of observation on this slide and the implications for how you might observe for each and make the following points:

- This slide lists only a few examples of the many purposes for observations.
- Some purposes involve some very simple observation methods, while other purposes might require more planning and attention to detail.

Observation might be planned or spontaneous

Planned	Spontaneous
Sometimes we intentionally plan our observations for specific purposes. When we do this, we might plan how, when, and where we will observe	Other times, we observe spontaneously in response to something that is happening in the classroom that we want to capture and learn about

19

**Slide 19:** Review the information on this slide and make the following points:

- When it comes to everyday observation habits, some of us are very methodical and plan what and when to observe each day, perhaps alternating learning centers or children observed, while others might prefer to observe somewhat randomly as children participate in the daily routine.
- Whichever your usual style, there are times when the purpose of the observation requires a different approach. For example, a teacher might generally observe spontaneously throughout the classroom day and environment, but also plan to observe a particular child at snack time to learn more about the child's use of language. Likewise, a teacher who is generally very structured about observation might pause to observe a spontaneous elaborate dramatic play scheme in the block area.
- These examples of how providers use both planned and spontaneous observation show us how the way we observe needs to change to match our purposes.
- To summarize:
  - This third key practice: "Use strategies that match your purposes" means that we need to be intentional. We need to take time to think through and perhaps discuss with our team members what we want to accomplish with our observations and how to best do it.



**Photo Observation, Part 1 (12 minutes)**

**Slide 20:** Show this slide and:

- Tell the participants that they're going to try a little exercise.
- Ask the participants to turn to page 15 of the Participant Workbook. Ask them to work individually to describe what they see in the picture. Tell them to write their descriptions in the left-hand column labeled "Photo 1" (or, alternatively, to write their descriptions on sticky notes – only one description per sticky note).

*Note:* If any of the participants express reservations about how difficult or unrealistic it is to try to accurately describe what is going on in a still picture, agree that it is difficult, but ask them to give it a shot and do the best that they can.

- When the participants have finished, divide them into groups of four or five. Make sure each group has a sheet of poster paper.
- Give instructions for the small group activity: In turn, each participant should read his or her descriptions as another group member writes them on the poster paper (or, if you use sticky notes, simply stick them to the poster paper). This activity should be done without any discussion about the descriptions. When all of the descriptions have been read and recorded, set the poster aside to be used later. Remind the groups to record ALL of the descriptions, and not to discuss whether or not they agree with them.

*Notes to Trainer:*

- Some groups prefer to work with the poster spread out on the table while others might prefer to affix their poster to the wall and work “easel style”.
- As the small groups create their posters, observe their discussions in order to choose posters that include a balance of both objective AND subjective statements for a large group discussion that will be led later.
- After the groups have finished, ask them to hang their posters on the wall (if they haven’t already) and tell them that the posters will be discussed in a few minutes.

Summarize the third Key Practice:

- Knowing the purpose of the observation can help shape how we go about observing. For example, think back to the activity we did earlier when you observed partners who then changed five things about themselves. Had we known that they were going to change five things, we might have observed somewhat differently, by attending to minute details more carefully.
- Before moving on, ask if there are any questions about this key practice and address any that are asked.

**Key Practice 4: Observe as objectively as possible (20 minutes)**

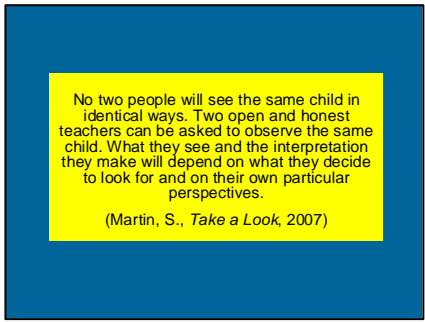
Six Key Practices for Effective Observation

1. Make observation a routine part of your work
2. Engage families in the observation process
3. Use strategies that match your purposes
4. Observe as objectively as possible
5. Document your observations
6. Reflect on and use your observations

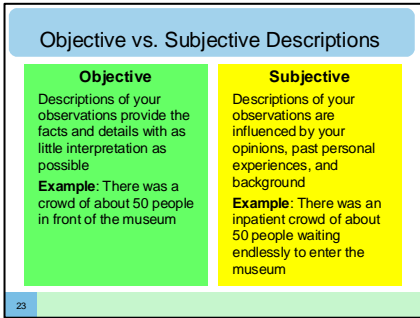
21

**Slide 21:** Show this slide and make the following points:

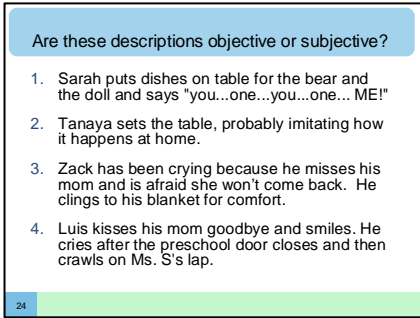
- The preceding exercise is a great lead in to the fourth key practice for effective observation: “Observe as objectively as possible.”



- Slide 22:** Show this slide and make the following points:
- This quote highlights that we need to observe intentionally and objectively.
  - This quote also tells us why it is so important to share observations among the team members: because we each might pick up on different things.



- Slide 23:** Review the information on this slide and make these points:
- We should try remain as objective as possible when we observe and record our observations.



- Slide 24:** Lead an exercise using the descriptions on this slide: Focus on each description one-at-a-time:
- Ask the group if they think the description is objective or subjective. For each description, probe by asking questions such as:
    - “What makes you think that it is objective (or subjective)?”
    - For the descriptions that are subjective, ask how they might be re-written in a more objective manner.
- Answers: 1) Objective; 2) Subjective; 3) Subjective; 4) Objective
- Summarize the activity by facilitating a discussion:
    - Why is it important to try to be as objective as possible? (One possible answer: if we do not try to remain objective, our observations might end up being biased by stereotyping or inference. By objectively describing behavior, we can best arrive at an accurate and reliable understanding of the child.)
    - What steps can we take to try to keep our descriptions as objective as possible?

**Mute the Projector**  
(while in slide show view, push the “B” key)

- Photo Observation, Part 2** (6 minutes)
- Lead this group discussion:**
- Refer to a poster from one of the groups [Note: while the small groups were creating their posters, you should have been observing to choose which posters to use for this large group discussion.]
  - Read one of the statements and ask the large group if they

think it is written in a more objective or subjective style. Write an “O” in front if they think the statement is objective and an “S” if it is subjective. For each statement, probe by asking questions such as:

- “What did you see that made you think that?”
- “Think about this statement: what brain filters might have influenced this observer’s perceptions?”
- “Did you need more information?”
- Repeat this process with a few more statements from that group or a poster from a different group.
- Go back over the statements that the group just categorized as objective or subjective. For statements in which an “S” was attributed, ask the group: “How can we reword this subjective statement so it is more objective?” Walk the group through this process. For example, if the statement reads “The children are happy” show how it could be modified to read “The children are smiling.”
- Ask the groups to return to their posters (on the wall or at tables) and review their statements and, in the manner just demonstrated, write an “O” in front of each statement that is objective and an “S” in front of each statement that is subjective.
- When they have finished labeling each statement, ask the groups to reword a few of their subjective statements to make them objective.
- After the groups have had the chance to reword a few of the subjective statements, ask them to re-hang their posters on the wall (if they haven’t already).
- Summarize the activity by facilitating a discussion:
  - Refer to the posters on the wall and ask to what extent the initial observations were objective or subjective, i.e. are there more O’s or S’s?
  - Discuss how easy it is to jump ahead and make subjective statements rather than describing the facts.

When we reflect on our descriptions we need to remember that...

- We observed the child at only one point in time and we need to avoid jumping to conclusions
- We each have our own “filters” (values, beliefs, or feelings) that sometimes cloud how we interpret our observations

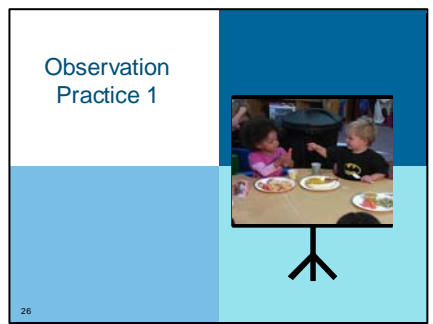


25

**Slide 25:** Review the information on this slide and summarize this section on objective and subjective observations:

- Each of us has unique experiences and knowledge that impact how we observe and react to the things children say and do.
- So that we begin with the most accurate description of what has been observed, it is important to develop objective observation habits and to hold off on interpreting what we observe until we have collected the factual descriptions.
- The next activity will give us a chance to practice making objective observations.

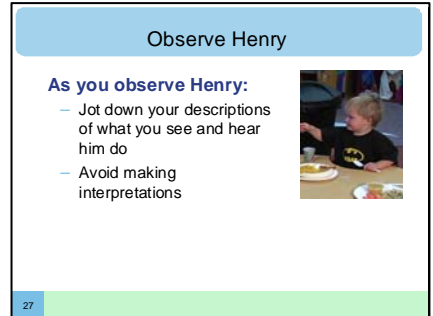




**Observation Practice 1 (10 minutes)**

**Slide 26:** Show this slide and introduce the exercise:

- This next activity will be fun as we get to practice our observation skills.



**Slide 27:** Show this slide and review these instructions:

- Tell them that they will watch a video of Henry, who is three years and three months old.
- Offer these instructions:
  - Ask the participants to turn to page 19 of the Participant Workbook.
  - As you watch Henry at mealtime, write down descriptions of what you see and hear Henry do.
  - Remember to describe what Henry does as objectively as you can and avoid subjective descriptions.
  - Ask if there are any questions before proceeding.

**Show the clip**

- Prepare the room so that everyone will be able to see and hear the clip, e.g. adjust the lighting and turn up the sound.
- **Show Video 3: *Henry at Mealtime*** (2 minutes)
- After the clip ends, mention that it can be challenging to record details while watching a dynamic situation. Tell the participants to take a minute or so to finish writing down their observations.
- Ask them to find a partner at their table or close by. Have them trade and read each other's observations and give feedback as to whether each statement is objective or subjective.
- Lead a large group discussion by asking questions such as:
  - To what extent are your statements objective rather than subjective?
  - What were some of the objective descriptions that you made?
  - Did you find that your partner noticed different things from what you noticed?
- Summarize the activity:
  - Being objective in our observations may be new to some of us, and it takes practice to build this skill. How are you feeling about this approach?
  - Are you ready to move on to the fifth Key Practice?

## Key Practice 5: Document your observations (25 minutes)

### Six Key Practices for Effective Observation

1. Make observation a routine part of your work
2. Engage families in the observation process
3. Use strategies that match your purposes
4. Observe as objectively as possible
5. Document your observations
6. Reflect on and use your observations

28

**Slide 28:** Show this slide and make the following points:

- The fifth key practice for effective observation is to “Document your observations.”
- This session is primarily focused on how we observe children, not specifically on how we document our observations. The next Results Matter training module will be focused on documentation. But let’s review a few options available for documentation as a kind of “coming attractions” to the next module.

### Examples of ways to document your observations

- Observation notes
- Work samples
- Photographs, video, and audio recordings
- Portfolios (traditional and online)



29

**Slide 29:** Review the information on this slide and make the following points:

- There are many ways to document observations. You are probably already using some of these methods. Some are very simple to use and involve just jotting down some words.
- Other ways to document might involve using a camera, a camcorder, an audio recorder, or an online portfolio to record children’s behavior. It’s getting much easier and affordable to use technology to help us document our observations.
- The examples on this slide are described on page 21 of your handout.

### Writing Effective Observation Notes

- Be Factual:** Describe only what actually happened
- Be Brief:** Keep it short, but provide enough detail that you will be able to remember and understand what happened
- Be Relevant:** Include key details such as direct quotes and information about the context

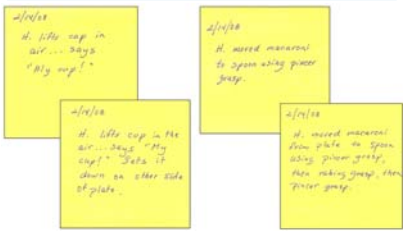


30

**Slide 30:** Review the information on this slide and make the following points:

- An observation note is simply a brief objective description of something that you observe. This slide lists three key strategies for writing effective observation notes.

### Examples of Observation Notes for Henry



31

**Slide 31:** Review the examples on this slide and make the following points:

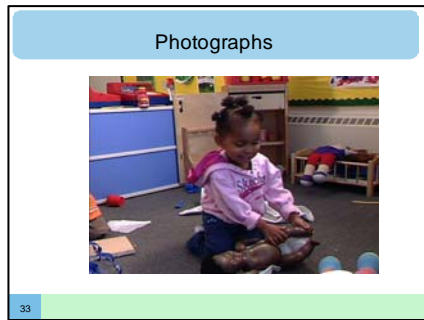
- Observation notes do not need to be long and involved to be effective.
- Some people think that they need to write several paragraphs to adequately describe what they see and hear. But if we keep the main purpose of our observation in mind, we will know which specific details we really need to capture and we can keep our notes brief.
- Notice on these examples that the team member used a few shortcuts to make the note writing easier and quicker: using an initial for the child’s name, using a consistent format.





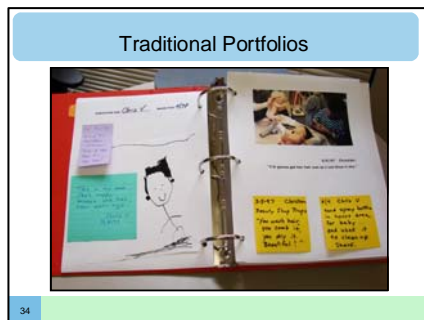
**Slide 32:** Show this work sample on this slide and make the following points:

- Work samples are collections of children's work, including drawings, paintings, writing, and three dimensional constructions that represent the best examples of what a child knows and is able to do at a given point in time.
- Collected over time, work samples can show the progress that a child has been making.



**Slide 33:** Show the photograph on this slide and make the following points:

- We all know that a picture tells a thousand words.
- The recent affordability of inexpensive digital cameras makes photos a good choice for documentation.



**Slide 34:** Show the picture of the traditional portfolio on this slide and make the following points:


- Portfolios are ways to organize our documentation.
- Some teachers use a system as simple and easy as a three-ring binder. The example of a three-ring binder portfolio page on this slide includes observation notes, photos, and a scan of the child's artwork along with the child's words about the picture.



**Slide 35:** Show the picture of the online portfolio on this slide and make the following points:

- Many assessment systems offer the ability to build and maintain portfolios online. These online portfolios are really the state-of-the art in documenting children's learning and progress.
- This slide is taken from the online portfolio system of *The Creative Curriculum®*.
- Summarize this quick overview of ways to document observations:
  - We just took a brief look at observation notes, work samples, photographs, and traditional and online portfolios. The next Results Matter learning module will focus specifically on documentation.
  - In the next activity we'll practice writing observation notes using the strategies we reviewed a few moments ago.

Observation Practice 2



36

**Observation Practice 1 (15 minutes)**

**Slide 36:** Show this slide and lead observation practice 2:

- Tell them that as they did in the first observation practice, they will work individually to write down observation notes of what they see and hear in the video.

Observing Caul


Remember to be objective

Write your notes in ways that are:

- Factual
- Brief
- Relevant

Keep in mind the purpose of this observation:

- You are observing Caul to gather information to share with his parents at an upcoming parent-teacher conference



37

**Slide 37:** Show this slide and review these instructions:

- Tell them that they will watch a video of Caul, who is four years and six months years old.
- Offer these instructions:
  - Ask the participants to turn to page 26 of the Participant Workbook.
  - Remember to observe objectively.
  - Practice the three strategies for writing effective observation notes (you might want to go back to slide 30 and review the three strategies).
  - Remember, there are many purposes for observing children. Keep in mind that the purpose of this observation is to gather information to share with Caul's parents at an upcoming parent-teacher conference. In recording objective, factual, brief, and relevant notes, we want to be able to share rich descriptive information with Caul's parents.

## Show the clip

- Prepare the room so that everyone will be able to see and hear the clip, e.g. adjust the lighting and turn up the sound.
- **Show Video 4: *Caul Plays with a Puzzle*** (3 minutes)
- After the clip ends, tell them to take a minute or so to finish writing down their observations. As they finish, tell them to also do a quick check to be sure that their notes are objective rather than subjective.
- Once they've completed their notes, ask them to identify, based on their notes:
  - 2 – 3 points that they would want to share with Caul's parents, and
  - 1 – 2 questions that they might ask Caul's parents in order to understand Caul better.
- Once they've identified the points and questions, ask them to find a partner at their table or close by. Have them share with their partner the points and questions they identified for the meeting with Caul's parents.
- In a large group discussion ask for volunteers to share examples of points that a teacher might share with Caul's parents and questions for them based on the observation.
- Summarize the activity by asking questions such as:
  - To what extent were your observation notes objective rather than subjective?
  - To what extent did you and your partner focus on similar or different things?
- Wrap up this activity by making points such as:
  - One observation can inform many different questions.
  - Having a purpose in mind, helps us to plan and focus our observation.
  - During any one observation, we can learn many valuable things. Two different people might see very different things in the same observation.
  - Having concrete examples to share with families, rather than more vague impressions, can help families better understand their child's development and learning.

## Key Practice 6: Reflect on and use your observations (25 minutes)

### Six Key Practices for Effective Observation

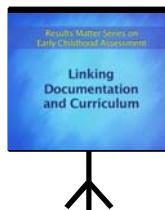
1. Make observation a routine part of your work
2. Engage families in the observation process
3. Use strategies that match your purposes
4. Observe as objectively as possible
5. Document your observations
6. Reflect on and use your observations

38

**Slide 38:** Show this slide and make the following points:

- We just reviewed the first five key practices. The sixth, and last, key practice for effective observation is to “Reflect on and use your observations.”
- Good teachers continually reflect on their practices. They consider how a particular activity played out, how their daily routine is flowing, or how children are using the environment. They reflect on what they know about children and how best to share this information with families.
- Reflection is an essential skill for each member of the classroom team, especially related to observation and assessment.

### Let's Watch!



39

**Slide 39:** Show this slide and make the following points:

- Let's look at one example of how a teacher uses observation. In the next video clip, we'll hear how Christina DeVarona, a teacher at the Washington Park Early Learning Center, uses observation and documentation to plan her curricula and learning activities. As you watch take note of how Christina uses observation.
- **Minimize PowerPoint and show the Video 5: *Linking Documentation to Curriculum*** (1.5 minutes)

### Observation helps us...

#### Understand individual children's...

- Interests
- Strengths
- Challenges

#### Plan...

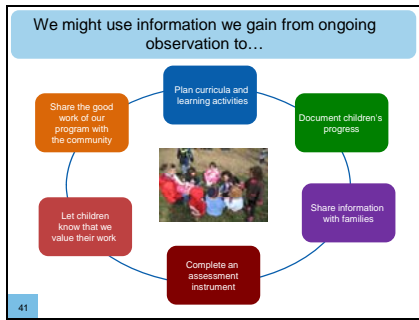
- The kinds of activities and materials to provide
- When and how to rotate activities
- How to expand on activities



40

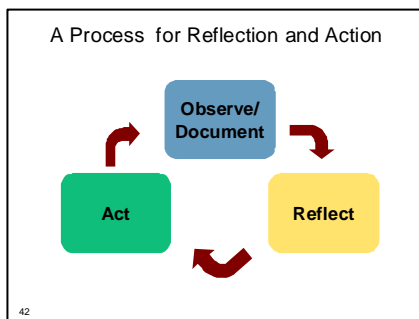
**Slide 40:** Once the clip ends, show this slide and make the following points:

- In the video, Christina described how she uses observation and documentation to first, understand individual children's interests, strengths, and challenges, and then, second, plan learning activities that match the children's interests and abilities.



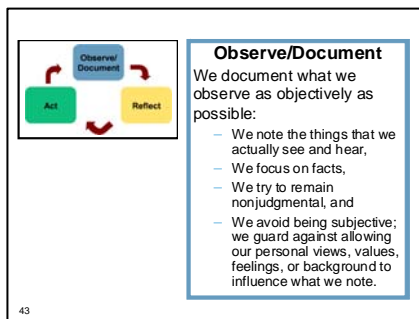
**Slide 41:** Review the information on this slide and make the following points:

- As you recall, during an earlier discussion we introduced this list of ways that we might use observation information.
- Lead a brief discussion around this prompt:
  - We just looked at some ways that Christina used observation. Please give examples of how your classroom or program currently uses observation information for one or more of these purposes or ways that you might in the future.
- Note: If the group is having difficulty thinking of examples, you might kick off the conversation with an example such as “we put children’s work in a folder to share with parents at conferences,” or “we make notes about the things that individual children are interested in to use when we plan activities.”



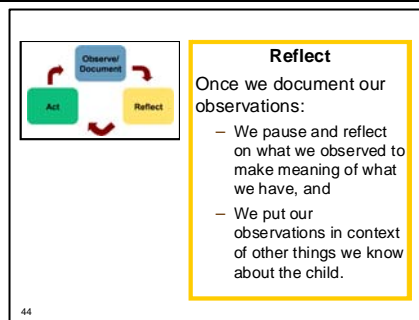
**Slide 42:** Review the information on this slide and make the following points:

- This slide illustrates a process for reflecting on and using what we observe.



**Slide 43:** Review the information on this slide and make the following points:

- This first step reviews the practices that we explored earlier in this workshop on objective observation and documentation skills.



**Slide 44:** Review the information on this slide and make the following points:

- In the first step, we objectively recorded what we saw and heard.
- In this second step, we start to explore the meaning of what we have observed.

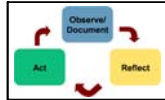
### Sample Questions to Guide Reflection

- What was my purpose for observing?
- What similarities or patterns do I notice?
- What do these observations seem to suggest?
- What else might be going on?
- What else do I want to observe or find out?
- How does this observation fit with other things that I know about the child from previous observations?
- How will I document my interpretations?

45

**Slide 45:** Review the information on this slide and make the following points:

- This slide lists the kinds of questions that we might ask ourselves, or our team members, to help us reflect on our observations.
- Lead a brief discussion around questions such as:
  - What kind of questions, if any, do you already use to reflect on your observations?
  - What other questions can you think of that you might use to help you reflect on your observations?



### Act

Once we reflect on our observations, we decide what actions to take. For instance, we might decide:

- To do more observations,
- To rate an item on an assessment system, or
- Ways we want to individualize our teaching.

46

**Slide 46:** Review the information on this slide and make the following points:

- In the second step, we thought about the meaning of the information that we gathered through our observations.
- In this third step, we make decisions about how to use the information.

### Example 1 of Observe/Reflect/Act

#### I observed:

Henry sometimes scoops macaroni independently with the spoon in his left hand and at other times uses his right hand for assistance.

#### I reflected:

What is affecting Henry's ability to spoon the macaroni independently with one hand? Has he been demonstrating this skill long enough that I should expect him to be using it consistently? Should I do something to encourage his consistent and independent use of this skill or should I just wait for it to happen naturally?

#### I acted:

When needed, I'll remind Henry to position his plate close to him so it will be easier to use his spoon independently. I'll continue to observe to see if this helps.

47

**Slide 47:** Review the example on this slide:

- Before reviewing this example, introduce it by mentioning that it illustrates the Observe/Reflect/Act process with an observation made of the clip of Henry from Observation Practice 1.
- Notice that the teacher's reflections were in the form of questions that led to the actions.

### Example 2 of Observe/Reflect/Act

#### I observed:

Henry takes turns communicating with Teagan, using finger pointing and eye contact. He made sounds when pointing, but I couldn't tell if these were words.

#### I reflected:

In what ways does Henry communicate differently with different people or during other activities? Have I observed Henry's communication often enough in different settings to have a good understanding of his skills?

#### I acted:

I will make additional observations of Henry, at different times of the day, in different activities, and with adults as well as other children.

48

**Slide 48:** Review the example on this slide:

- Mention that this is another illustration of the Observe/Reflect/Act process based on the clip from Observation Practice 1.
- As in the previous example, the teacher's reflections were in the form of questions that led to actions.

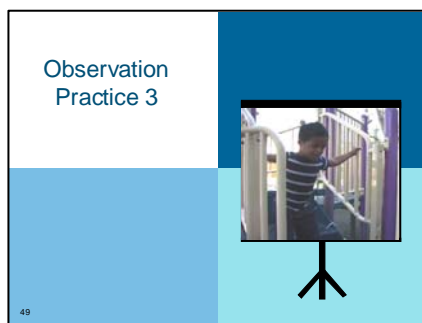
**Mute the Projector**  
(while in slide show view,  
push the “B” key)

**OPTIONAL ACTIVITY** (15 minutes)

If time allows you can lead this optional activity to help the participants better understand the observe-reflect-act process. The instructions below describe an exercise for individuals, but with adjustments, it can also be led as an activity for pairs or small groups. This exercise might also be led by working through an example that you provide with the entire group.

- Tell the participants that this activity will give them an opportunity to practice the Observe-Reflect-Act Process. They’ll need to have their handouts handy.
- Ask the participants to recall a recent situation in which an observation that they made of a child was significant in some way. [If they find it difficult to think of a recent observation, remind them of the examples that were reviewed on slides 47 – 48.] With this observation in mind:
  1. Ask them to jot down notes to document their observation using the writing style reviewed on slide 30 (i.e. factual, brief, and relevant).
  2. Once they jot down their notes, ask them to review the “Sample Questions to Guide Reflection” on slide 45 (page 30 in the Participant Workbook). Ask them to reflect on their observation, using some of these questions or other questions that this list inspires.
  3. Once they’ve had a couple of minutes to think and reflect, ask them to identify an action or two to take.

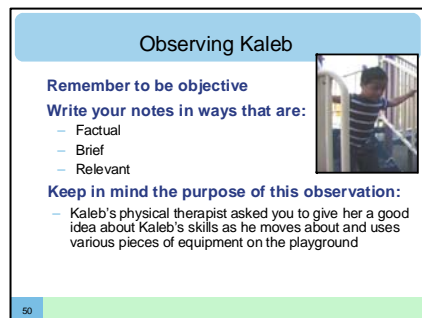
Once everyone has completed the three steps, you might ask them to share their process in a number of ways: you might have everyone find one partner to share with, share in groups of 3 – 4 people, or ask for volunteers to share with the large group.



**Observation Practice 3** (10 minutes)

**Slide 49:** Show this slide and lead observation practice 3:

- Tell them that as the first two observation practices, they will work individually to write down observation notes of what they see and hear in the video.



**Slide 50:** Show this slide and review these instructions:

- Tell them that they will watch a video of Kaleb, who is four years and three months old.
- Offer these instructions:
  - Ask the participants to turn to page 33 of the Participant Workbook.
  - Remember to observe objectively.
  - Practice the three strategies for writing effective

	<p>observation notes (you might want to go back to slide 30 and review the three strategies).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remember, there are many purposes for observing children. Keep in mind that the purpose of this observation is that Kaleb's physical therapist asked you to give her a good idea about Kaleb's skills as he moves about on the playground and how he uses the various pieces of equipment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Show the clip</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare the room so that everyone will be able to see and hear the clip, e.g. adjust the lighting and turn up the sound.</li> <li><b>Show Video 6: <i>Kaleb on the Playground</i></b> (2.5 minutes)</li> <li>After the clip ends, tell them to take a minute or so to finish writing down their observations. As they finish ask them to also do a quick check to be sure that their notes are objective rather than subjective.</li> <li>Once they've completed their notes, you may want to ask them to work with a partner or lead a large group discussion, depending on the time available, how much energy the participants have this late in the session, and the prevailing group dynamics. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>If you want to have them work with a partner:</u> ask them to share their notes with one another, and reflect on the question "What else might you want to observe or find out about Kaleb to share with the PT?"</li> <li><u>If you want to skip having them work with a partner:</u> lead a large group discussion by asking for volunteers to share: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the kinds of observations that they would share with Kaleb's PT,</li> <li>what else they would want to observe or find out about Kaleb to share with the PT, and</li> <li>how else they might use the information, in addition to sharing it with Kaleb's PT.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>Wrap up this activity by making points such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We almost always need to observe a child more than once in more than one activity setting to answer a specific question.</li> <li>Reflective questions help us to make meaning of what we observe.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



## Closing Activities (20 minutes)

### In Summary:

#### Six Key Practices for Effective Observation

1. Make observation a routine part of your work
2. Engage families in the observation process
3. Use strategies that match your purposes
4. Observe as objectively as possible
5. Document your observations
6. Reflect on and use your observations

51

**Slide 51:** Refer to the six key practices and make the following points:

- To sum up this workshop, authentic assessment is an essential way for us to gather accurate information about how young children are progressing and how we can best support their learning and development. And observation is the centerpiece of authentic assessment.
- When teachers use the six key practices of observation, their understanding of early learning and development and their understanding of each child deepens.

### Ready, Set,.....



52

### Action Planning (10 – 20 minutes)

**Slide 52:** Use this slide as a jumping off point for leading an action planning activity:

- Remind the group that with practice, observation becomes increasingly easier and more useful for teachers. So let's spend some time identifying opportunities for practice.

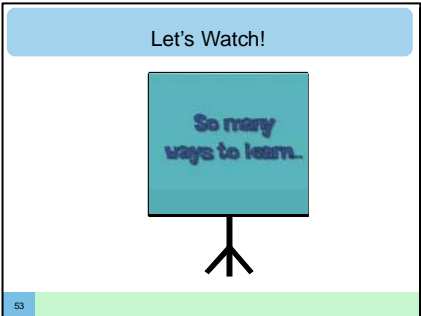
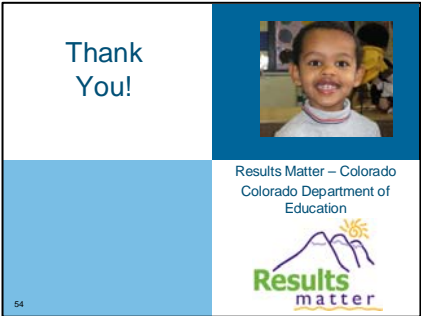
#### Note to the Trainer:

This learning module provides useful information about observation and authentic assessment. But one single session is not likely to affect changes in practice unless combined with other activities. Please refer to page 8 of this guide for a variety of strategies to consider using before, during, and after the session to support the participants' application of new observation skills back on the job.

Below are three options for activities that you might use or adapt to encourage the participants to reflect on the material and plan how they might use new ideas in their work.

**Planning Activity Option One:** This is a very simple activity that you might choose if this workshop was delivered as a conference breakout session, if you are running short of time, or will not have the opportunity to follow up with the participants or their supervisors. At the beginning of the session, distribute a worksheet such as the one found on page 35 of this guide and ask the participants to collect ideas about observation during the session that they think will be useful to their work. Toward the end of the session, ask the participants to work individually to look over their list of useful ideas, add any new ones, and jot down ways they will put the ideas to use back at work.

**Planning Activity Option Two:** This option requires the participants to do a bit more detailed planning than the first activity. You might use this option when there is sufficient time, and when you will be able to follow up with the participants and their supervisors. At the end of the session, distribute a worksheet such as the one found on page 36 of this guide. Ask the participants to use the worksheet to identify a specific observation skill that they would like to learn and practice.

	<p>Remind them to be detailed in their plans.</p> <p><b>Planning Activity Option Three:</b> This option should be used when the situation allows for team planning. At the end of the session, ask the participants to form groups with their classroom team members. Distribute a worksheet such as the one found on page 37 of this guide. Ask the teams to use the worksheet to identify ideas from the workshop that they would like to try out as a team and the next steps that they can take back-on-the-job to put the ideas in place.</p> <p><i>Optional steps to consider using with these activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once the participants complete the worksheets, you can ask them to share their ideas with a partner, small group, or with the large group.</li> <li>• Encourage supervisors to support individuals and teams to implement new observational strategies.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Slide 53:</b> Show this slide and make these points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let's end the session by watching a video of some children in a preschool illustrate that there are so many ways to learn.</li> <li>• Thanks to the children, parents and staff at the Napa Preschool Program and California's Desired Results access Project for permission to use this video</li> </ul> <p><b>Minimize PowerPoint and show Video 7: <i>So Many Ways to Learn</i></b> (3 minutes)</p>
	<p><b>Slide 54:</b> After showing the clip, show this slide and summarize: Summarize the clip and the workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers and families can best support children by understanding how they think and learn, what they know and can do and how they are progressing over time. And as we saw in the video, there are countless ways that children demonstrate their strengths, skills, challenges, interests, and progress. It's up to us to become intentional and careful observers.</li> </ul> <p>Wrap-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remind the participants that the workshop was developed by the Colorado Department of Education and Results Matter.</li> <li>• Thank everyone for their time and participation.</li> <li>• Ask the participants to complete and return their evaluation forms before leaving.</li> </ul>

# Collect and Use Your Ideas!

Most useful ideas	Ways that I will use these ideas back at work

# Action Plan

Develop a plan for how you will learn and practice one or two new observation skills.

**Step 1: Describe skill(s) that you would like to practice using.**

## Step 2: Identify Action Steps

Identify steps that you will take to learn and practice the skill(s) and identify resources (people, time, equipment, materials, etc.) that will help you accomplish each step.

Steps that you will take	Resources Needed (time, materials, equipment, etc.)
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

## Step 3: Identify a Supporter

Identify someone who you will ask to provide you with support for learning and practicing your new observation skill(s) – it might include informational support, material support, emotional support, collaboration, etc. Share your plan with them and ask for feedback. Consider their suggestions and modify your plan as needed. Identify dates to touch base with your supporter about how things are going. Plan to celebrate on your target date!

Who will you invite to be your supporter?

How will you celebrate mastering the new skill(s)?

# Team Action Plan

Develop a plan for how your team will use ideas from the session.

**Step 1: As a team, make a list of ideas from the session that you think would be good for the team to try out.**

**Step 2: Select 1 or 2 ideas that the team agrees to work on first.**

## Step 3: Identify Action Steps

Identify steps that the team will take to put the ideas in place.

Steps that the team will take	Who will take the lead?	How will we know the step was successful?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

## Step 4: Evaluation

Plan how the team will keep track of the progress and the results of putting the ideas in place.