

CALI, JUAN, AND CARLOS AT DRAMATIC PLAY

Key Focus: Creative Arts

Observation: October 10 Dramatic Play Area 9:38-9:44 a.m.

Cali, Juan, and Carlos are in the dramatic play area. Cali quickly grabs the doll from the crate and brings it over to the sink with a very straight face [she seems very purposeful and intent] and begins turning on and off the faucet [It looks like she is pretending to wash the baby]. While Cali is at the faucet, Carlos takes different clothes out of the cabinet and begins to throw them on the floor one by one. Juan is watching and begins to come over but Carlos puts his hand out. Juan takes a step back and goes back to the kitchen table. Carlos continues to take clothes out of the cabinet. Then, Juan picks up the telephone and hits the receiver three times and says, "Hola." He then pauses and turns to Carlos and says, "Para ti." Carlos looks at Juan, stops what he is doing and walks over to the phone, says, "Hola" and then says, "no está." He then stands next to Cali. Cali gives Carlos the baby and says, "Picnic," and walks over to the food cabinet and starts emptying food. Juan walks over to the clothes on the floor and begins laying them flat and puts some of the food in the middle of the area.

Reflecting on the documentation:

**Participants may quickly shift from reflecting on the documentation to interpreting the observation or suggesting strategies for extending learning. Remind participants to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the documentation technique.*

Ask: What advantage does a running record like this offer?

Sample Responses: The observation is fairly descriptive and gives a good running "video" of what happens. It includes language snapshots and gives a good deal of the context in which the children are interacting. The teacher also includes in brackets her interpretation of what is going on.

Ask: What are the disadvantages of a running record?

Sample Responses: It is difficult to write down everything that is happening.

Interpretation of the observation:

**Remind participants that in their interpretation they are looking for patterns, critical incidents, or errors. It is important to stick to the data.*

Ask: What can you learn about the children from their statements and actions?

**Responses will vary but might include:*

- Although there is not a lot of verbal interaction, Cali, Juan, and Carlos seem to be engaged in some type of routine. The three children are participating in activities that become extended (from washing baby to going on a picnic).
- The three children show creativity and imagination in using materials (for example, using the clothes as blankets for a picnic, washing the baby in the sink).

- Juan seems to have an interesting set of strategies for group entry. Juan handles himself well in a difficult situation when he wants to be included in Carlos's play. When at first he was rebuffed by Carlos, he tried a different strategy of integrating play into his relationship with him (by giving him the phone and telling him it was for him). Cali also seems to have a plan for how the play should proceed (going on a picnic).
- The three children all respond appropriately in conversation with one another.
- The three children have a sustained interaction that includes group play and discussion.

Relating your observation to the Child Outcomes Framework:

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

5D1 (Creative Arts/Dramatic Play): Participates in a variety of dramatic play activities that become more extended and complex.

5D2 (Creative Arts/Dramatic Play): Shows growing creativity and imagination in using materials and in assuming different roles in dramatic play situations.

1B2 (Language Development/Speaking & Communicating): Develops increasing abilities to understand and use language to communicate information, experiences, ideas, feelings, opinions, needs, and questions and for other varied purposes.

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

6C1 (Social and Emotional Development/Cooperation): Increases abilities to sustain interactions with peers by helping, sharing, and discussion.

Next steps for large group instruction:

**Help participants make connections between what they learn from the assessment and the next steps they want to take in instruction. If suggestions for instruction extend activities to new areas of learning, ask participants to consider what aspects of children's progress they would assess and how they would do so during those extension activities.*

Ask: What would you recommend that the teacher do next for the class as a whole as a result of what is contained in the running record?

**Responses will vary but might include:*

- Add objects to the play area that might extend the picnic theme—particularly a picnic basket and maybe a blanket.
- Perhaps ask the class to come together to perform a play about going on a picnic. Include all the necessary elements of what they would need to go on a picnic, and provide the English and Spanish names for the objects and the actions.
- Model for a group of children ways to join in play activities with other children, such as asking if they can join, offering to help with something the other children are doing, or doing something interesting that includes another child (Juan's method).

Next steps for individualized instruction:

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

**Responses will vary but might include:*

- Next time these children are at dramatic play you might try to extend their play and their conversations. For example, you might do parallel talk, in which you label what Cali is doing (in both English and Spanish). You could model how to put the food into the picnic basket to carry to the blanket.
- You could invite each child to have a more extended pretend conversation with you on the telephone.

Additional Notes: