

Using Checklists Highlight Video

Narrator: Hello, and welcome to this short in-service on using checklists. In this video, we highlight the use of checklists as a quick and easy method for collecting information about child progress. The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning uses the house framework to organize the elements of effective teaching. Ongoing child assessment is fundamental to effective teaching that supports children's learning and readiness for school. Ongoing assessment helps teachers know if children are making progress. Ongoing child assessment helps teachers know how to adjust teaching when needed. Checklists are one method for collecting this information.

Checklists are simply lists of items, usually skills or concepts. Through his or her observations of the child, the teacher or home visitor sees whether or not the child performs the skill or knows the concept and then makes a check by the item to indicate or document what was observed. Many of you are already familiar with checklists. Some well-known assessment tools use the checklist format.

There are a number of benefits to using checklists. Frequent use of a checklist can help the teaching team keep track of children's progress. Different observers, the teacher, an assistant teacher, or a classroom volunteer can pick up and use a checklist to gather information. Checklists may be familiar to and easily understood by families. And, the checklist format lends itself to flexible use. A checklist can be created to include the whole class, smaller groups, or individual children. A checklist can provide focus on a series of skills or a subset of skills that lead to a bigger objective or goal.

Let's listen to some teachers talk about how they use checklists in their own teaching.

Allison Ferry: Knowing if a child can recognize specific numbers or not or if they know the concept of more or less, those lend more to a check sheet where that is actually more feasible for a staff member to do while they're still facilitating interactions.

Teacher: Very good, Yurid!

Nora Castro: [In Spanish] Or, we can also refer to those lists when we are planning, to see which activities to see which activities we may include in that planning, so that the child achieves his or her development.

Narrator: As with other methods of ongoing child assessment, it's important to make the checklist short, simple and clear. That will help to make sure the information that's collected is accurate. It also means that the teaching team can collect information in the midst of ongoing activities and lessons. And, short, simple and clear checklists are more likely to give you reliable data, data you can depend on.

Teachers can develop and use checklists that fit their classrooms and schedules. It's helpful to start by determining the specific skills to be observed and then arrange them in a logical teaching sequence.

LaTasha Rolland: The My Star system came about this very year when I received those 15 boys -- [Laughs] -- and 5 girls. A star sheet goes home with them every day. And so parents look for them. You already look like big kindergartners. I love the way Arabella is sitting. I was just trying to sit and say: What can I do that's going to really work? What can I do that they can see that they're progressing throughout the day and something I can be consistent in?

Narrator: Design the checklist in a way that lends itself to easy use. Organize it to collect the data during specific times of the day or during specific activities. Then choose an easy-to-understand recording system, such as check marks, marking an item yes or no, or circling predefined categories. Then, set up a schedule to use the checklists on a regular basis, so that you can really see children's progress.

The main purpose of using a checklist or any other ongoing assessment tool is to use the information that is collected. The information from the checklists tell you those children who can do the skill or understand the concept. It tells you those children who haven't accomplished the skill or concept yet. This information helps the teacher figure out when to provide more practice, when to make adjustments to the learning experiences and activities, and when to move on to planning for new skills and concepts.

Using checklists can be an efficient and practical way to collect information about child performance in an active, busy classroom. Teachers can create their own checklists to collect information about specific skills and concepts that are important to them. The information that is collected is used to guide teaching and improve learning.

Thank you, for listening to this in-service on using checklists. Checklists are one way to collect information about children's learning. Checklists can be a quick and easy way to collect information right in the classroom and right in the midst of learning activities and routines. Give them a try and see if checklists work for you as a way to collect ongoing child assessment information.