

## **Ongoing Child Assessment: Planning for Assessment**

Narrator: Welcome to this short presentation on planning for assessment. Ongoing child assessment is a critical component of quality teaching and learning. It takes planning and preparation to make sure that assessment is done accurately and consistently. Teachers are continuously observing their children and using their observations to guide their teaching. It's important to observe and to document so that teachers can gauge children's learning over time and use the assessment information to make good decisions to improve their teaching and children's learning.

There are at least two levels of planning. At the school or program level, there is a plan to assess all the children two to three times per year, depending on the length of the program, so that you know how the group of children is doing and whether changes need to be made. It's also important to have a plan for more frequent assessment at the classroom level. The plan includes what to assess. The curriculum goals for the children, along with the domains of the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, guide our thinking about what to assess. The plan also includes how to assess, or the methods, such as taking notes, collecting samples of children's work, or using checklists. The plan includes when to assess and how often, and the plan tells who will do the assessment.

One way to make sure that you're on track with your planning for assessment is to make weekly assessment plans at the same time that you develop weekly lesson plans. Developing and writing a weekly assessment plan makes time to reflect on observations from the prior week, to think about the data you've already gathered, and then to plan the observation and documentation that needs to be done during the coming week. This doesn't mean that you'll gather data on every child every week, but it does mean planning for and keeping track of how the children are doing on an ongoing and regular way.

Here is one way to plan for ongoing child assessment. Some teachers use some kind of chart to keep track of their assessment plans. In this example, and it's only a part of the whole assessment matrix, the teacher writes the schedule of the activities down the left-hand column; then across the top, the teacher writes the names of the children in the class; in the cells, the teacher writes the plan: the what, how, when, and who.

Ongoing child assessment is key to improving teaching and improving child outcomes. It helps us know that children are making good progress and learning all the important things they need to learn. But, it takes planning and preparation to make sure that assessment is done often enough to really be helpful. To learn more about assessment, check out our other modules on ongoing child assessment. Also, see our tips for teachers. Thank you for listening.