

Child Observation and Assessment

Policy

Child observations are gathered formally and informally, on a regular basis, as part of the on-going assessment process. Recorded observations and other sources of data are used as evidence to support individual child progress towards School Readiness Goals and child outcomes.

Observations are also an opportunity for staff to learn about the unique needs and interests of the children in the group or on the caseload. This ensures responsive approaches to interactions, learning environments, curriculum development and implementation. Formal assessment for every child using the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP 2015) and Midpoint SRG in center-based, and COR Advantage in home-based, occurs 3 times a year.

Reference and Regulation:

Head Start Program Performance Standards Sections 1302.33(b)(c)(d);
1302.102(c)(iii)

Teaching Strategies "Power of Observation"

DRDP (2015)

COR Advantage

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Child Observation and Assessment

Procedure

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Written child observations play a vital role in NHA's data collection system. A variety of approaches to gathering them support understanding of individual child and group interests, skills, needs, and levels of development. Teaching staff and specialists use knowledge gained to inform curriculum planning, individual interventions, and child assessments.

Observations

For children in the Home-Based program option, home visitors and families work collaboratively to gather observations about their development. Families record observations about their child's development in the Family Journal. More information related to how information is gathered can be found in the Portfolio section of the Education SOPs. Home visitors also collect observations during home visits and socializations.

For children in the center-based program option, observations are completed on a daily basis by teaching staff.

Observation notes should be descriptive, factual and objective. They can be taken while working with an individual child or group of children, as well as away from the group. Note writing and/or picture taking should never interfere with active supervision of children. This includes documentation that is being collected with an agency issued iPad or camera.

Types of observational notes include:

- Anecdotal notes- Brief 2-3 sentence notes
- Running record- detailed narrative account of behavior recorded in a sequential manner

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Content of notes may be completed on the spot or expanded upon later. When finalizing notes, consider:

- How long was the child engaged in the activity?
- Was the child alone, with peers and or adults?
- What types of interaction did the child have with peers?
- Where was the child located?
- Was the activity structured or unstructured?

Observation notes gathered for center-based children are to be organized in Learning Genie digital portfolio. Notes recorded are included in the 2-3 pieces of evidence per DRDP measure for each rating period. Observations for home-based children are maintained in COR Advantage. In the event that there are no additional rating periods for the year, data must still be collected to inform individualization and planning.

Assessment

Home Based

All home-based children are assessed using the COR Advantage online system for obtaining and using data on children's developmental progress. This Assessment Tool should be used in conjunction with parent observations and the Family Journal. The assessment tool must be completed within 90 days of the first Home Visit. Home Visitor must review and update the tool with the family at each Home Visit.

- Home Visitor must collect two or more pieces of evidence per measure. Evidence must be documented in the COR Advantage online system.
- Completion of each assessment is documented on Progress Notes (Section 4) in the Child File.
- If the assessment tool was completed in Spanish, the Home Visitor must transcribe the info on to the English Assessment Tool and place in the child's file.

Center Based

All center-based children are assessed using the DRDP (2015) assessment tool. It is an observation-based tool that focuses on the child's behavior, knowledge/skills and is designed to assess development at the individual child level over a selected period of time, rather than in one sitting.

Early Head Start children are to be assessed using the "Infant-Toddler" version of the DRDP (2015). Head Start children are to be assessed using the "Preschool Fundamental View". Instructions for using the assessment tool can be found in the "Introduction" section of the document. For children with IEPs, there are certain conditional measures that must be completed. Refer to the top right section of the measure page to determine if a rating must be given. The English Language Development (ELD) measures must be completed for children that have a language other than English spoken in the home.

The first DRDP must be completed and locked in Learning Genie within 60 calendar days of the first day of the child's attendance in the program. The second DRDP must be completed no later than 6 months after the first. Head Start children that start at the first month of the school year will also have a Midpoint SRG rating. If a child has been in attendance for less than 6 weeks before the school year ends, the DRDP does not need to be completed. Refer to the "DRDP Completion Guidance" tip sheet for details related to individualized due dates.

The Lead Teacher, with assistance from Associate Teachers and/or Teacher Assistant Trainees (TATs), is designated as responsible for ensuring that the following occurs for each child:

- Assessment for appropriate age group is completed three times each program year.
- All required components of the tool are completed in Learning Genie.
 - Ensure that all children's IEP and language status are recorded and related measures are completed.
- Two or more observations or anecdotal notes per measure are collected for each rating period.

NHA Head Start Standard Operating Policies and Procedures

- Observations, anecdotal notes, work samples and other assessment related data is placed in the child's digital portfolio.
- Data collected is used to inform formal assessment and clearly supports developmental rating level.
- Developmental ratings are entered into Learning Genie at required times.
- The Learning Genie Child Report and DRDP Online Form are reviewed with parent/guardian as specified on the Education Timeline.
- Completion of each assessment is documented on Progress Notes (Section 4) in the Child File.

Teachers are encouraged to collaborate with others, including family members and specialized service providers who have ongoing contact with the child, when collecting assessment data. Area Education/Disabilities Specialist are also available to provide support upon request.

Documentation:

Child File

Desired Results Developmental Profile- DRDP (2015)

Learning Genie Portfolio

COR Advantage

Personal Visit Record

Weekly Planning Form

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