









Learning Objectives

-  Participants consider the purpose of observation and assessment.
-  Participants examine the role of the observer.
-  Participants practice objective observations.
-  Participants practice seeing from a child's perspective.
-  Participants consider various methods for recording observations.
-  Participants explore ways to use observations to support children, families, and program development.
-  Participants recognize the role of parents and families in observation and assessment.
-  Participants understand issues of cultural, linguistic and developmental appropriateness in assessment.

Observe First, Interpret Later

Like scientists, we formulate “hypotheses” about what we think is happening in our program. It is important to remember that these hypotheses are not *necessarily* true, but rather they are just “working theories” about what we *think* may be going on. It is always possible that we might be wrong. In order to draw the most accurate and useful conclusions, separate the process into two distinct steps.

Step 1: observe and describe

Step 2: interpret and make sense of the observation



Taking a Look at Assessments

Look over the sample assessment and discuss the following questions:

- What is the age range of children that could be assessed using this instrument?
- What is this tool assessing?
- Does this assessment instrument use a task-based approach or a functional approach?
- Does this assessment tool address issues of culture and diversity? How?
- Can a child whose first language is not English be accurately assessed with this tool?
- Can this tool be used to assess children with special needs?
- Would this assessment help you plan curriculum or strengthen your program? How?
- Would this assessment help you talk with parents about their child?
- Would this assessment help you think about a child's individual needs?
- When would you do this assessment?
- Is this tool "naturalistic?"
- Is this tool standardized, norm-referenced?
 - What is one advantage of this method?
 - What is one disadvantage of this method?

