

## ***Observation As A Key to Responsive Teaching***

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### **Key Ideas:**

Observing children's strengths and needs is a common practice of early childhood teachers. They often use checklists, rating scales, frequency counts, or other straightforward measures to document children's progress during teacher controlled activities. These types of observations don't necessarily lend themselves to rich information about the child, or the child's interactions with materials or other people.

In recent years, early childhood teachers have begun to use observational data to drive instruction. Open ended observation techniques such as anecdotal records, brief notes, photographs, audio or video recordings help to capture the richness of the child's experience and give teachers opportunities to reflect on what is observed. While using child-guided or adult-guided activities (Epstein, 2007), teachers can respond intentionally to children to facilitate their learning and modify the environment or employ new teaching strategies to ensure each child's success.

### **Resources and Tools for Observation**

- ▶ *Creating Teaching Tools for Young Children with Challenging Behavior*, Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children (TACSEI)  
[http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/do/resources/teaching\\_tools/ttyc\\_updated\\_zip.htm](http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/do/resources/teaching_tools/ttyc_updated_zip.htm)
- ▶ Epstein, A., *The Intentional Teacher*, Choosing the Best Strategies for Young Children's Learning, High Scope Press, Ypsilanti, MI 2014
- ▶ *The Essential Role of Observation and Documentation*, and, *Using Documentation to Become a Better Teacher*, Results Matter Video Library - Early Care and Education, Colorado Department of Education <http://www.cde.state.co.us/resultsmatter/rmvideoserries>
- ▶ Jablon, J., A. Dombro, A., Dichtelmiller, M., *The Power of Observation for Birth Through Eight*, Teaching Strategies, Washington DC 2007, p.7
- ▶ *Writing Effective Observation Notes*, Results Matter Online Learning Opportunities, Colorado Department of Education, <http://www.cde.state.co.us/resultsmatter/rmonlinelearningmodules>