

## Observations and Portfolios

### Head Start Performance Standards

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§ 1302.31

§ 1302.33

#### Policy

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Community Action uses two programs for gathering observation data and completing child assessments. The Home-Based and Coffee Creek programs used **ChildPlus Desired Results Developmental Progress (DRDP)**®. The center-based classrooms use **My Teaching Strategies™** (TSG). Written observations and child portfolios will be utilized to assess children’s progress and inform the development of curriculum. See the **Assessment of Children’s Progress Policy and Procedure** for the appropriate model for more information.

#### Procedure

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##### Written Observations

Quality observations are objective and include information sufficient to ensure assessments are valid and reliable. As applicable, they include descriptions of gestures, actions, quotations of words spoken, creations and facial expressions. Avoid labeling (shy, creative); evaluating (good job); judging (beautiful, sloppy); and statements in the negative (can’t, won’t) or assumptions.

Observations are used to assess the developmental progress of each child and to inform plans to scaffold each child’s learning. All staff will enter written, photo and video observations into at least weekly throughout the quarter. Preschool staff will include observations for English Language Acquisition for children who are Dual Language Learners. Observation requirements are outlined in the chart below:

Domain	Fall and Summer <i>(Summer for year-round programs only)</i>	Winter and Spring
Social-Emotional	1 per child	2 per child
Physical	1 per child	2 per child
Language	1 per child	2 per child
Cognitive	1 per child	2 per child
Literacy	1 per child	2 per child
Math	1 per child	2 per child
English Acquisition for Dual Language Learners <i>(preschool only)</i>	1 per child	2 per child

A single quality observation may span up to 5 learning objectives: social/emotional, cognitive, language, literacy, math, and physical development. Portfolio samples, photographs and videos may also serve as observations. Written observations will put photographs and videos in context and may include quotes from the child, time spent engaged in the activity or other relevant information. These will be added on the same day the photograph or video is uploaded.

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### Example of a quality observation:

*Today Evan spent more than 5 minutes with the same koosh ball. He held it with the strings in his fingers fisted into his palm. He shook it up and down, grabbed with both hands, pulled it to his mouth and then shook it again. When it fell out of his hands, he leaned over to get it. Occasionally it fell out of reach. When that happened, he tried several times to get it. When that didn't work, he looked at me and then at the ball, vocalizing until I responded and held the ball within reach.*

OR

*In small groups, we made pictures with wet chalk on black paper. Erik held the chalk in his right hand with a tripod grasp over the end of the small piece of chalk. He said he was making a car. He drew a large oval-like shape first. He dipped the chalk in the water again and then added two small circles to the bottom of the oval. He got another color, dipped it in the water and then drew some wavy lines on his paper, saying, "This is the road."*

Center-based staff will observe children throughout the day, both inside and outside and document the observations in TSG. Home Visitors will observe children during home visits as well during socialization and Coffee Creek staff document observations made during class time and document them in DRDP. Observations will be gathered each week and entered into TSG or DRDP regularly. Whenever possible, staff will include observations made by parent(s)/guardian(s).

Staff will enter the observations into the data base and select no more than 5 objectives related to the observations. Preliminary levels will then be added, which allow staff to determine the level of knowledge, skills and behaviors the child demonstrated as the evidence is collected and will establish a baseline for tracking a child's progress over time.

- Following the first conference, staff will collect observations and/or work samples demonstrating progress on individual child goals. Included in the observations per domain, there will be a **minimum** of one observation or portfolio sample per goal per month for each child. See the **Individualizing Policy and Procedure** for more information.
- The observation notes and portfolio work samples will be analyzed to determine each child's developmental level when completing checkpoints and progress toward achieving developmental and educational goals.
- Each week the Home Visitor or Teacher will review observations to inform individualized lesson planning and assess progress.
- Program Area Supervisors (PAS) will monitor the quantity of observations entered bi-weekly and use the **Observation Rubric** to monitor quality observations as well as review portfolios during site visits to ensure compliance with this policy and procedure.

### Portfolios

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Home-based and Coffee Creek will develop child portfolios with the families. The children and families will choose what goes into the portfolio with guidance from the staff. Home Visitors and Teachers may, in collaboration with the parent(s)/guardian(s) chose to create a digital portfolio instead of or in addition to a notebook. Photographs of the child's work will be used instead of the actual work sample.

Center-based staff will learn about a child's interests by involving children in the selection of their own authentic (child-directed) work samples to include in the portfolio. Portfolios are used to promote and support child-centered learning. In addition to written observations, this is used to inform planning and individualizing for each child. The work samples selected show a child's development and progress over time. Work samples may include writing samples, drawings, art with the child's dictation, photographs of structures built with the child's dictations and/or children's dictated stories.

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- Each child will have a portfolio clearly labeled with their name. It will be easily accessible to them and will contain examples of work selected with the child.
- Each work sample will include the date, at least 1 developmental objective identified and a description of relevant information not readily visible or identifiable in the work sample itself. See the **Observation Rubric** for additional guidance.
- Each child's portfolio will contain work samples in at least three developmental learning areas: Social-Emotional, Cognitive, Physical, Language, Literacy and Mathematics, including any representative of the child's educational goals.
- New portfolio samples will be selected and **added** to the portfolio during each checkpoint cycle.

### **Parent/Guardian Input**

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Staff will use every contact with a parent(s)/guardian(s) to invite their involvement in their child's education. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be asked about their observations regarding their child's development and progress. Parent(s)/guardian(s) observations may be added to DRDP or TSG, clicking on the button to denote the information came from the parent(s)/guardian(s). Parent(s)/guardian(s) input into the plans for the child will be documented on the Home Visit Record, Home Visit Plan, ChildPlus Communication Log and/or Lesson Plans as appropriate and noted as provided by them.