

The Learning from Assessment Toolkit: Materials, Supports, and Tools for Assessing Children and Improving Outcomes

Presented at the 18th Annual Birth to Three Institute

July 30, 2014

Ashley Kopack Klein • Sally Atkins-Burnett • Louisa Tarullo

What is the Learning from Assessment Toolkit?

- **Resource from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) created by Mathematica Policy Research.**
- **Designed to support Head Start directors, managers, and staff in child assessment activities.**

The Toolkit – Goals

- **Support assessment**
 - How to assess
 - How to use the results
- **Empower managers**
 - Lead assessment activities
 - Participate in policy discussions

Why Do We Assess?

- **Improve children's learning**
 - Meet the needs of children who are struggling
 - Challenge children who are excelling
- **Identify key challenges in your classrooms**
- **Figure out what resources you need**

The Toolkit – The Big Picture

- **Overarching Presentations**
 - Importance of Assessment
 - Strategies for Assessment
 - How to use the Results
- **Guided Practice Exercises**
- **Other Resources**

Rectangle Exercise (i.e., We're in the Money) Observing to Learn

The Rectangle Exercise

- In 2001 and again in 2003, the U.S. Bureau of Engraving made changes to the front and back of the \$20 bill to improve its security.
- Take a sheet of paper and draw two large rectangles on it.
 - In the first rectangle, draw everything that you remember about the front of a new \$20 bill.
 - In the second rectangle, draw everything you remember about the back of a new \$20 bill.

Unfocused vs. Focused Observation

- **Unfocused observation = seeing what may stand out at the moment or things that are obvious to you**
- **Focused observation = closely looking for specific information or evidence**

Getting Ready to Get the Most out of Your Child Assessments

Getting Ready to Get the Most Out of Your Child Assessments

- Planning for assessment
- Organizing for assessment
- Assuring assessment quality

Planning for Assessment: Key Questions

- **What do I need to learn:**
 - About individual children?
 - Classrooms?
 - The center/program as a whole?
 - Key subgroups?

Reflecting on the Data

- Are there *patterns* in the data? For example:
 - Do classrooms or the program as a whole continually improve in one area while lagging in another?
 - For example, literacy outcomes continue to improve, but no growth in mathematics
 - Do certain classrooms always score the highest or lowest on average?
 - For example, one classroom always has the lowest vocabulary scores
 - Do classrooms have particular strengths?

But What Does It All Mean?

Key Concepts for Getting the Most Out of Your Assessments

But What Does It All Mean? Key Concepts for Getting the Most out of Your Assessments

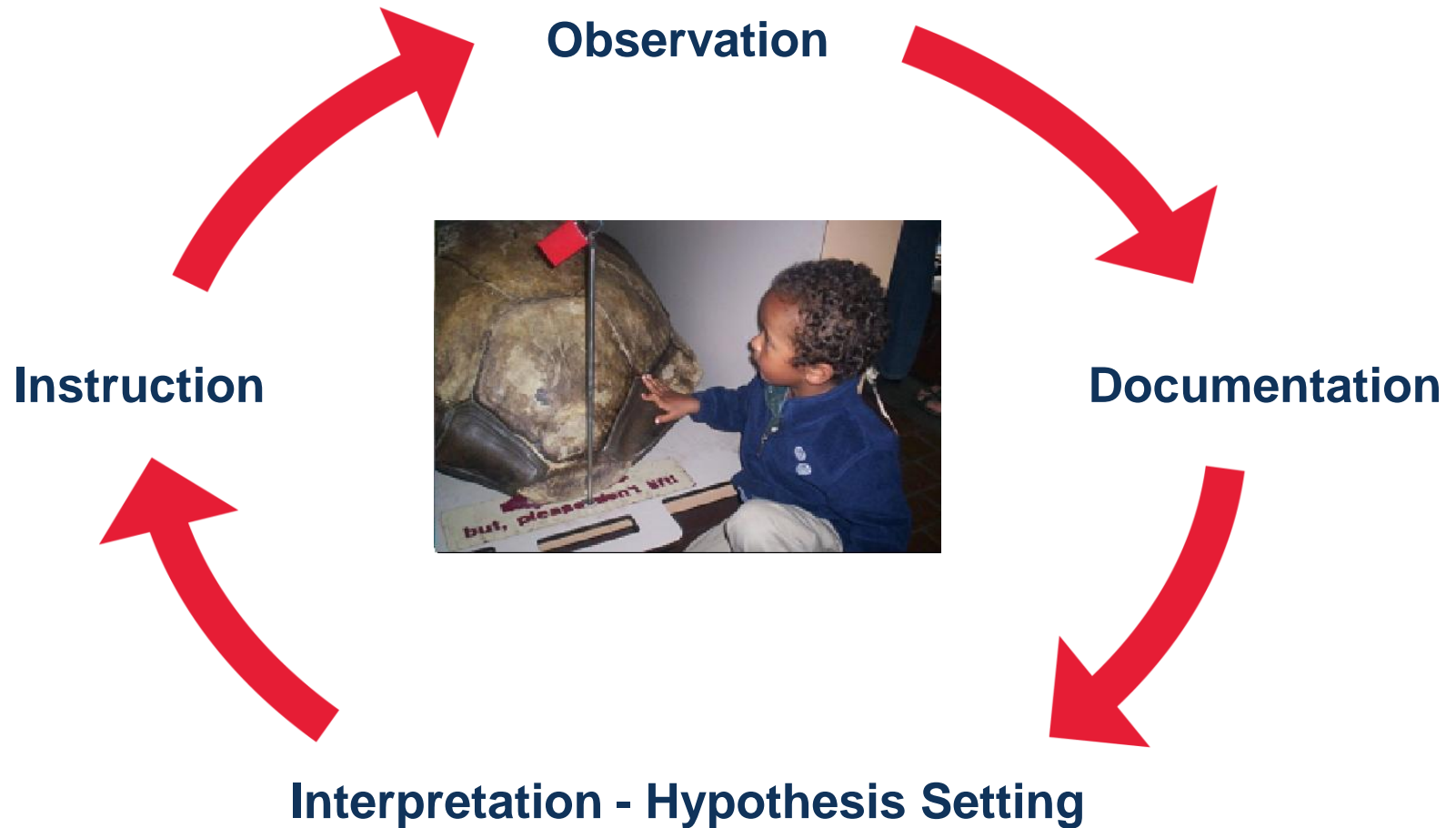
- **Data**
- **Data quality**
- **Mean scores**
- **Distribution of scores**
- **Normal curve**
- **Growth over time**

Key Concept 1: Data

- **Data = Information you collect about children, families, and classrooms**
 - Information on children's progress for reporting purposes
 - Ongoing observational assessments
 - Attendance records
 - Information about families
 - Other examples?
- **In other words, any information you can use to improve child learning!**

Ongoing Assessment: Capturing the Progress of Children's Learning

Ongoing Assessment: Capturing the Progress of Children's Learning



Documenting Observations



Documenting Observations

- Strategies for Observing
- How to Document
- How to Interpret Documentation

Guided Practice Exercises

- **Opportunity to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of different observational and ongoing assessment techniques**
- **Build on teachers' experience and expertise**
- **Content varies widely to meet unique program needs**

Guided Practice

- **Documentation of observation**
- **Opportunity to reflect on documentation tool**
- **Interpretation and hypothesis setting**
- **Planning for large group**
- **Individualization**
- **Planning for next assessment**
- **Target varying ages, settings, languages, and disabilities**

Sharing Stories

Erica strongly believes that, as part of her role as a home visitor, she has a responsibility to educate everyone in the home about child development and the importance of working with young children around language and literacy. Erica has been visiting with Molly (who is two years old) and her family for over a year and has developed a strong relationship with Molly's mother, father, and older brother (who is in kindergarten). At the beginning of every visit Erica asks someone in the home to read a book with Molly. On the day Erica took the pictures, Molly's brother pointed to and named each of the pictures in her book. Molly then imitated what he did as they read independently side-by-side (note that the activity may have stopped for a moment so that Molly could put on a sweatshirt).

Below are the pictures Erica took of Molly and her brother



Guided Practice Roadmap

- Name of exercise
- Domains from the Child Outcomes Framework (primary and secondary)
- Type(s) of documentation
- Emphasis for special groups
 - Dual language learners
 - Infant/toddler
 - Home visiting

Guided Practice Roadmap Example

Guided practice exercise	Primary domain from child outcomes framework	Secondary domains from child outcomes framework	Type(s) of documentation	Emphasis on Special Groups		
				Dual language learners	Infant/toddler	Home visiting
Cali, Juan and Carlos at Dramatic Play	Creative Arts	Language Development, Social and Emotional Development	Running Record	X		
Gripping, Moving, and Pouring	Physical Development		Checklist			
Hallie and Hassan: How many are there?	Mathematics	Language Development	Anecdote			
Houses and Homes	Language Development	Creative Arts	Checklist	X		
I'm a Big Kid Now	Literacy	Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development, Science, Approaches to Learning	Picture, Jottings		X	X
I'm Just Blowing Bubbles	Physical Development	Approaches to Learning, Language Development, Science	Picture, Jottings		X	

Other Resources

- **Suggested Training Sessions**
- **Handouts**
 - **Objective and Accurate Reporting**
 - **Portfolios**
- **Annotated Bibliography**

New Materials

- **Additions to the LFA toolkit are currently under development**
 - New guided practice exercises
 - New overarching presentations
 - Updated annotated bibliography
- **Today we will walk through a new guided practice exercise that focuses on an infant learning to crawl**