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ABSTRACT
            Portfolio assessment is an effective means of
evaluation that encompasses many products of the child. Portfolios
can be used to form a total judgment of what is needed for the
child's further growth, based on daily events of the classroom,
without interrupting the class day. They also allow the teacher to
know more about students, while developing the child's own
self-assessment, which in turn encourages more discussion between
teacher and student. Portfolio assessment was adapted to a preschool
classroom in a university laboratory school. Each child was given an
accordion-style folder. Portfolios were organized around four areas
of development: physical development, social and emotional
development, emergent literacy development, and logico-mathematical
development. For each area there was a checklist, and evidence was
included to back up the checklist. At certain points during the
school year, the teacher met with each parent to discuss the
portfolio, results, and goals for the child. The portfolio was sent
to the child's kindergarten teacher as a record of what was
accomplished in preschool. Portfolio assessment is a worthwhile
endeavor with preschoolers, giving the children a foundation for
making judgments about themselves and giving teachers useful
information in the evaluation process. (An interest inventory and
development checklists are appended.) (TM)

YES, IT CAN WORK! :

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT WITH PRESCHOOLERS

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YES, IT CAN WORK! :

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT WITH PRESCHOOLERS

3

YES, IT CAN WORK! :
PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT WITH PRESCHOOLERS

For years educators have searched for the perfect assessment and evaluation tool. Over the last ten years with the widespread existence of whole language, integrated curriculum, multi-age classrooms, and the development of independent learners many of our assessment and evaluation tools do not hold up. This type of curriculum crosses the content area boundaries, stresses cooperative learning, provides for flexible increments of time and encourages higher order thinking skills. It is too complex for traditional assessment and evaluation techniques. We need to bridge the gap between instruction and assessment by finding a technique to measure not only what the learners know but how they use that knowledge. Assessment, according to the National Association of the Education of Young Children, should be based on the developmental progress and achievement of children. This assessment should be used to "plan curriculum, identify children with special needs, communicate with parents, and evaluate the program's effectiveness." (Bredekamp, 1987)

Additionally, assessment and evaluation should be an ongoing part of the program, not something that interrupts the process. Everyday products of the children should be used for evaluation tools. Children should be involved in the evaluation proc ss, also. If learners don't understand how to evaluate themselves they will always be dependent on some outside source to make that judgment for them. We have seen what happens to students who are dependent on teachers for grading their work. Many don't even attempt an enterprise until they ascertain if it is to be graded. We have the desire, as educators to move learners toward reflecting on their endeavors and changing their strategies to accomplish a task independently of constant attention by an instructor. Self-assessment is a step in the right direction. As

1

4

Farr and Tone (1994) assert, "The goal of education is to turn students into people who can continue to learn, so self-assessment is the essence of learning."

Objective standardized tests serve a valuable purpose in today's world but other techniques are needed to provide teachers with the information they ran use on a daily basis to make curricular changes and aid each student in his/her personal growth as a learner. Portfolio assessment is such an option.

Portfolio assessment provides a broad and varied perspective. It encompasses many products of the child and these products can be used to form a total judgment about what a child needs to make further growth. These products are authentic and arise out of the daily happenings in the classroom. Portfolio assessment does not interrupt the class day; things accomplished during the class day are used in portfolio assessment. Portfolios allow for the teacher to know more about his/her students. It also encourages more discussion between the teacher and students about their products and processes, as well as, plans for improvement. It is obvious how much more beneficial this would be than handing back a paper with a grade that promptly finds its way into the trash can.

How to Use it With Preschoolers

Even though portfolio assessment is quickly becoming an assessment tool of choice for many elementary classroom teachers, especially language arts teachers, it has not been thoroughly adapted to preschool classrooms. Of course, in depth self-evaluation is an abstract idea for preschoolers. However, the author feels that as soon as a child begins to have an opinion about anything he/she can begin to make some limited judgments about progress.

Several faculty members involved with a university lab preschool and I decided to implement portfolio assessment with preschoolers. We knew it would be more

teacher centered than the elementary version because of the age of the learners. However, we felt it would give us a broader perspective about the child to form goals for his/her progress. It would also be handy when talking with parents about their children because the parents could actually see products of their children dated over time and make comparisons.

We decided to use an accordion style folder for each child. We wanted something that would be large enough to hold all the materials used for assessment yet one that had dividers to organize the materials for easy access. In order to set up criteria for each portfolio we needed to decide what materials should be included in each portfolio, what the materials would be used for, how the materials would be organized, who should have access to the information in the portfolio, and how we could draw conclusions about the material.

We decided to organize the portfolio into four sections centered around particular areas of development. There would be a checklist for each area and evidence to back up the checklist data would be housed in the section along with the goals that we set up for the child in the area. The areas are listed below along with the requirements for each section. The items on the checklists were based on information about child growth and development gathered from Bredekamp (1987) and Seefeldt and Barbour (1990).

General Section
1. An interest inventory (see example at end of article)
2. Conference/interview dates and results (parent and child interviews)
3. Background information on the child
4. A self-portrait of the child
5. Any data that do not fit in other categories

Physical Development

1. Physical Development Checklist (see example at end of article)

2. Evidence to back up checklist consisting of photographs, anecdotal records, and written products

3. Long-range and short-range goals for this area

Social/Emotional Development

1. Social/Emotional Development Checklist (see example at end of article)

2. Evidence to back up checklist consisting of photographs and anecdotal records

3. Long-range and short-range goals for this area

Emergent Literacy Development

1. Emergent Literacy Development Checklist (see example at end of article)

2. Evidence to back up checklist consisting of photographs, anecdotal records, taped retelling of favorite story, writing samples from journals, drawing samples, etc.

3. A list of books the child has had read to him/her over a period of time as well as a list of books the child can "read" him/herself

4. Long-range and short-range goals for this area

Logico-mathematical Development

1. Logico-mathematical Development Checklist (see example at end of article)

2. Evidence to back up checklist consisting of written products, anecdotal records, and photographs

3. Long-range and short-range goals for this area

In portfolio assessment children are at the center of the process. It is crucial that children begin to develop the skills of self assessment even in a preschool program. Of course, this is difficult to imagine, especially since we tend to play a care taking role when dealing with this age most of the time. Even so, we felt that the main goal of portfolio assessment is for children to get involved in reflecting on their life as soon as possible. We know that the four and five year olds can reflect in a small degree about their favorite stories, drawings, artwork, journal entries, structures they have made, physical feats they have accomplished, songs they have learned, and patterns they have made in the math/science center. So, we set up guidelines for reflection to be included in the interview section of the portfolio. We also included a section for interest inventories. In order to increase involvement of the children they were encouraged to decorate their containers for their own portfolio. The children enjoyed this experience and gained a sense of pride about their accomplishments.

At certain points in the year the preschool teacher met with each parent to discuss the portfolio and the results and goals set up for the child. Parental input is a necessity in the portfolio process. As teachers discuss the child with the parent they gain insight into parental concerns which may determine the best approach to take with the child.

We decided to keep the same portfolio for a child as long as the child is enrolled in the program. Twice a year the child's portfolio is updated and new goals are set. Some children are enrolled for three years. Periodically, we remove materials from their folders so that there will be enough room for other materials over time. Later, the portfolio is sent to the child's kindergarten or first grade teacher as a record of what the child accomplished while he attended preschool.

Portfolio assessment is indeed a worthwhile endeavor with preschoolers. It gives the children a foundation for making judgments about themselves and is useful

to the teachers in the evaluation process. It fits the curriculum and serves as an excellent way to involve parents in discussing their children's progress and learning goals. This is definitely a tool not to overlook with this age group.

INTEREST INVENTORY

Ask the child the following to determine his/her interests.

1. What is your favorite color? Why do you like it?

2. What is your favorite thing to do at AUM?

3. Who is your favorite person to do it with?

4. At home I like to eat . . .

5. My favorite TV program is . . .

6. Do you have a pet? What do you do with your pet?

Ask the child about the following to have him/her begin to reflect.

1. Show the child several drawings and as him/her which of the drawings do you like the best? Why?

2. Show the child several of his/her favorite books and ask: Which book do you like the best? Why? What part do you like? Why?

3. Show the child two or three writing samples and ask: As you look at these two papers you've written on, which one is better to you? Why?

4. What number can you count to now? Last time I asked you you counted to _____. How do you feel about this? Have you gotten any better? Why do you think so?

5. Show the child a photograph of something he/she has done or a product he has made. Ask the child if he likes it and why.

6. Talk to the child about something he has learned recently concerning his physical development. Ask him/her what he/she would like to learn next.

These questions are meant to guide you in leading the child to do some reflecting. However, feel free to add to these questions.

EMERGENT LITERACY DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

Child's Name _____   Date _____

Date of Birth _____

	Indicate by date	
Skill or Behavior	behavior appears	Comments

Uses words to communicate ideas

Speaks clearly

Engages in conversations with others
     (complete sentences)

Understands the use of household items

Participates in dramatic play

Plays pretend games

Participates in oral language activities
     (singing songs, fingerplays)

Enjoys listening to stories/books, etc.

Names drawings

Shows an interest in environmental print

Demonstrates knowledge of how to handle a book

     Points to front of the book

     Points to title of book

     Turns pages left to right

     Notices pictures

     Points to print when "reading"

     Points to top and bottom of page

     Points to top left to begin "reading"

     Beginning to have one-to-one matching
          of spoken word to printed word

     Turns pages in order

     Relies on pictures to tell the story

     Relies on memory for text

9

Demonstrates an interest in using writing for a purpose
>   *Dictates to an adult about a drawing
>   *Attempts to put some writing with drawings
>   *Writes things for other people to "read"
>   *Uses random letters to write
>   *Uses initial consonant spelling
>   *Prints horizontally across the page
>   *Word boundaries apparent

Can name at least eight different body parts
Names basic colors
Names lower case letters
Names upper case letters

*Back up starred items with written products. Back up other evidence of accomplishments with photographs and anecdotal records.

LOGICO-MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

Child's Name _____   **Date** _____

Date of Birth _____

	Indicate by date behavior appears	Comments
Skill or Behavior		
Recounts events of the day		
Uses "tomorrow" and "yesterday"		
Understands concepts:		
in front of		
behind, in back of		
beside		
over, under		
between		
Classifies objects into groups		
Orders objects by size		
Rote counts to _____		
Recognizes numerals up to _____		
Makes a one-to-one correspondence (up to 5 objects)		
Counts by touching objects up to _____		
Identifies shapes (circle, square, triangle)		
Builds structures with blocks		
Shows an interest in mixing ingredients		
Observes changes in the environment (weather, new furniture, etc.)		
Works with wood and tools		
Shows an interest in plants		
Shows an interest in animals		
Enjoys playing math games		
Respects living things		
Understands animal differences and likenesses		

*Back up evidence of accomplishments with photographs, anecdotal records, etc.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

Child's Name _____ **Date** _____

Date of Birth _____

Skill or Behavior

Indicate by date
behavior appears   Comments

Gross Motor
Walks up and down stairs
Walks up stairs one foot on each step
Stands on one foot
Can walk forward with eyes closed
Can walk backwards
Stands and walks on tiptoes
Can climb ladder
Can jump
Can hop on one foot
Can skip
Can push wagon
Can ride a tricycle
Can walk a 4" balance beam
Can kick a ball
Can bounce a ball
Can catch a ball
Can throw a ball
Keeps time with music by clapping, etc.

Fine Motor
Can button
Can zip
Can lace
Can tie

Can buckle

Threads beads

Can paint

Can build a structure with blocks

Can pour liquids

Can use scissors properly

*Can cut a straight line with scissors

*Scribbles with crayon or marker

*Imitates a horizontal crayon stroke

*Draws a circle

*Back up evidence of starred items with written products

15

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

Child's Name _____   Date _____

Date of Birth _____

Skill or Behavior

Indicate by date
behavior appears   Comments

Takes care of self physically

Shows normal fears (dark, monsters)

Remains involved until task is completed

Demonstrates adequate attention span

Works and plays independently

Shows pride in creation and production

Exhibits eagerness to explore

Works and plays in group

Responds to rights and feelings of others

Takes care of own/others' materials

Identifies self with children of same sex

Solves problems with others verbally

Beginning to understand rules to games

Asserts independence ("Let me do it.")

*Back up this checklist with evidence of accomplishments by photographs or anecdotal records.

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