



The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning

Presentation Script

Collecting and Using Anecdotal Records



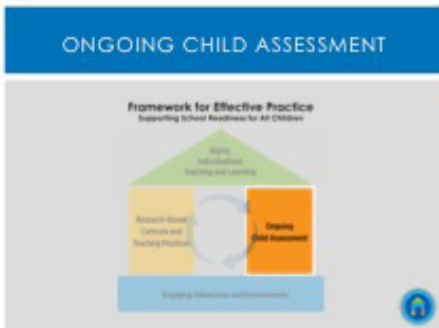
Slide 1

Welcome to this Inservice in our series on Ongoing Child Assessment. In this presentation, we talk about collecting and using anecdotal records.



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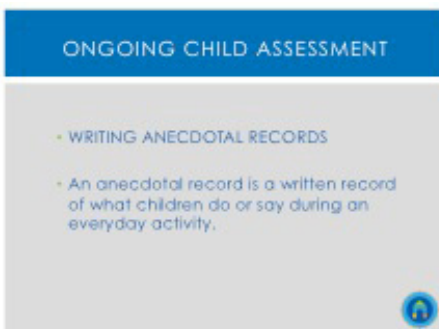
The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning's Framework for Effective Everyday Practice supports school readiness for all children. Four components build the house: the foundation represents effective and engaging interactions and environments; the pillars represent research-based curricula and teaching practices and ongoing child assessment; and the roof represents highly individualized teaching and learning. All four components interact with each other and are essential for effective everyday practice for all children.



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The children in your Head Start classroom have many things to learn so that they will be ready for kindergarten.

Let's think about this important question: "How do you know whether your children are learning what they need to know?" You do this by watching them during everyday activities in your classroom. Watching children is part of the "Ongoing Child Assessment" component of the House. Ongoing child assessment is important to quality teaching and learning.



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How can you collect information about what you see and hear the children doing? In this inservice you'll learn about writing anecdotal records – one useful way to collect ongoing child assessment information. Simply put, an anecdotal record is a written record of what children do or say during an everyday activity.

VIDEO: COLLECTING AND USING ANECDOTAL RECORDS



Slide 5 (video)

Let's watch to see what this looks like in the classroom.

PURPOSES OF ONGOING ASSESSMENT

- Progress toward goals
- Generate questions and hypotheses
- Share children's progress with parents
- Provide information for specialists
- Inform teaching
- Support children's development beyond the classroom

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Here are some of the purposes of collecting ongoing child assessment. This information helps teachers monitor children's progress toward their goals. It helps teachers generate questions about how children are learning and it helps teachers think about why a child might not be making good progress and what the teachers might change in order to help a specific child. Assessment information is also vital for sharing with parents and with specialists. It informs teaching, and, it helps teachers and families support children's development and learning beyond the classroom.

BASICS: ANECDOTAL RECORDS

- Date & Time *January 24, 2012*
- Setting *outdoor play area*
- Objective description
Jackie pedaled a tricycle 10 feet in a straight line.

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An anecdotal record is a strategy for documenting observed behavior. Simply put, you write down key information about what you see or hear children doing.

First, write down the date and time. You will want to monitor children's behavior over time, not just once. Also write down the setting. Children's skills will be observed during different activities and in different play areas.

The description must be objective - meaning it must be what you see or hear. You are interested in how children are progressing toward curriculum targets, so describe what a child says or does that shows their progress. The next slide offers some tips for writing objective descriptions.

Your anecdotal records will also include the names of the observer and the child or children being observed. Remember, always include the child's name or initials. [click to highlight child's name on the slide] You don't want to end up with a pile of notes but no idea who they were about.

BEING OBJECTIVE: ANECDOTAL RECORDS

- Write down what you see and hear
 - Don't assume the child's feelings
 - Don't assume the child's motivation
- Write down facts rather than opinions
- Use words that describe but do not judge



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As you focus on the curriculum areas and the child's goals being observed, remember to be objective in what you document in your anecdotal record. Write down **facts** rather than opinions or assumptions. Avoid making a judgment or guessing.

How can you be sure that you are writing **objective** anecdotal records? Ask yourself:

- Can I see it?
- Can I hear it?
- Can another person agree about what occurred?

EXAMPLE: ANECDOTAL RECORD

10/4/2012, 9:20 a.m., snack table

Fran:

- said "Please pass the crackers"
- spread cream cheese on 4 small crackers with knife
- opened carton of milk.

Observer: Ms. J



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Now let's look at some examples from early childhood classrooms.

Here is an example of an anecdotal record. The date, time and setting are included—October 4th at 9:20 in the morning at the snack table. The description is objective and focuses on curriculum areas being observed. This note shows Fran's progress in the area of Expressive Language. Fran said "Please pass the crackers" to request a needed item. Fran's progress in the Fine Motor Skill area was also observed. She was able to use a knife for spreading and open a small milk carton.

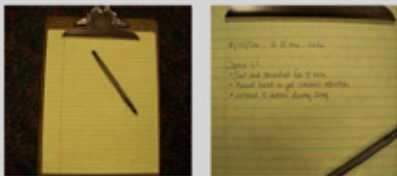
COLLECTING ANECDOTAL RECORDS



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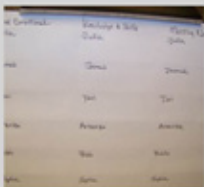
Here's one method for collecting anecdotal records or notes. Place a clipboard with note paper or cards in various areas of the room. The teacher and assistants can write down their records as they observe children.

COLLECTING ANECDOTAL RECORDS



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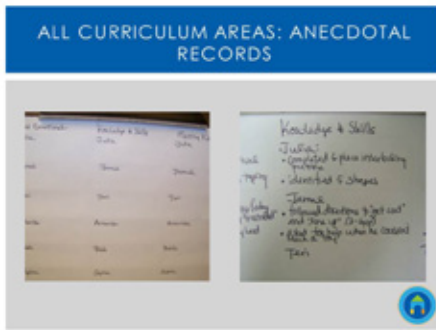
ALL CURRICULUM AREAS: ANECDOTAL RECORDS



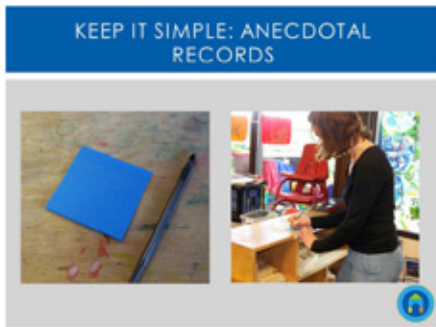
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Here's another way to collect anecdotal records. The teacher and aide use sheets of labels to write down their observations of children's behavior. Each column of labels is used for a different domain of the Head Start Framework. The children's names are pre-printed to remind teachers to observe each child in every area. After class, the labels are placed in the individual child's portfolio or binder.

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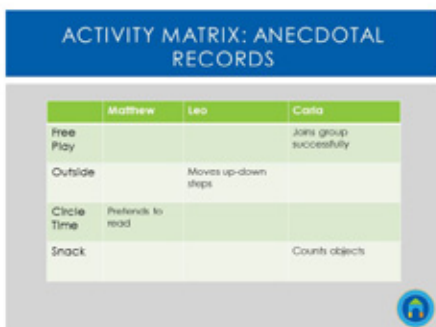


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Here's one more suggestion. In this classroom, the teacher uses post-it notes. These could be placed in the areas of the room, or they could be in the teacher's pocket. Again, this makes it convenient to write down your notes while you watch the children participate in the usual classroom activities.

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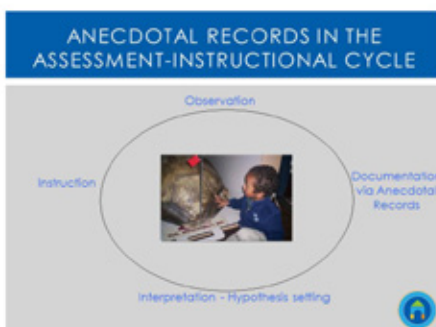


Some children in the classroom may have highly individualized goals and objectives that require very frequent collection of assessment information. For example, some children with IEPs or behavior support plans may need data collected on a daily or weekly basis.

This classroom activity matrix can help the teaching team plan who or what to observe. The names of the children being observed are written across the top of the matrix. The classroom's schedule of activities is written down the side.

Each child's individual objective is written in a space that tells the teaching team when to observe. They can then write their anecdotal notes on the matrix. They transfer the information they gather into the child's portfolio or their classroom's assessment system.

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In this Inservice, you've learned about the importance of observing and documenting. One way to document your observations is to make anecdotal records. In order for the anecdotal records to be valuable, the teaching team needs to use them. So after documentation, the teaching team interprets the information by looking at the facts or data and using them to plan instruction and to make changes in teaching so that every child will learn.

VIDEO: USING ANECDOTAL RECORDS TO INFORM TEACHING



Slide 17 (video)

Let's watch to see how teachers use anecdotal records to inform teaching.

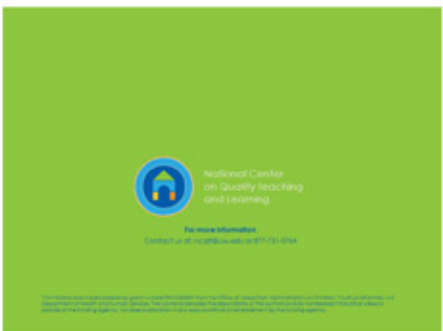
SUMMARY: ANECDOTAL RECORDS

- Can be used during everyday activities
- Help you keep track of what children are learning
- Include the time, setting, and a factual description of who did what
- Are convenient to collect and use
- Inform teaching, improve learning

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Let's summarize the use of anecdotal records.

- Anecdotal records may be used on an ongoing basis during everyday activities.
- Anecdotal records help you keep track of your observations so that you know whether children are learning what they need to know.
- Anecdotal records include the date & time, setting, and an objective description of what you observed. An objective description includes what you see and hear – in other words, facts rather than opinions.
- You have heard about some convenient methods teachers use to record their observations and keep track of children's progress toward learning standards.
- To conclude, one strategy for ongoing child assessment is collecting anecdotal records and using them to make productive teaching decisions.



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