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Assessment: Authentic Strategies for Early Childhood Education

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APPROVED BY MEMBERS OF THE THESIS COMMITTEE:

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This thesis explores the relationship between assessment techniques and reporting procedures in early childhood settings. Discrepancies between curriculum being presented and skills and progress being reported are examined.

The curriculum used in this study is Portland Public Schools' Piaget Curriculum, which stresses active, scientific problem solving for children 4 to 6 years old.

A variety of assessment, observation, recording and reporting tools are suggested, implemented and critiqued. Creation of a portfolio to store and showcase these items is suggested and explained.

The important role of parents and families in the assessment process is studied. Strategies for involving parents at all stages of implementation are included and field tested.

The result is a unique, lively, complete look at the teacher's efforts to use authentic assessment strategies which honestly match the curriculum unfolding in the classroom.

ASSESSMENT: AUTHENTIC STRATEGIES FOR

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

by

GAIL ANN HATHAWAY TUPPER

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requirements for the degree of

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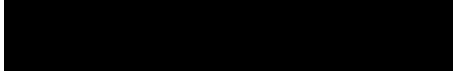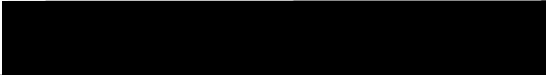# INTRODUCTION: SCENARIO OF REALITY

The scene is familiar: report card time is drawing
near. Because of that dreary fact, the Play-Doh gathers
dust on the shelf, the paints are thickening and congealing
in their paint-pots, and the children are slowly transform-
ing from active, curious, explorers to confused, lethargic
"students." But don't worry, as dismal as it sounds, it
won't last long. In a couple of weeks the teacher will have
all of her report cards filled out, and the class can go
back to being a whirlwind of discovery and learning--that
is, until next report card time rolls around. Then once
again we'll see busy-ness abandoned in favor of business:
filling out those checklists, marking boxes, scoring screen-
ing devices. The children will fade for a while, but the
report cards will get filled out and sent home. That's
worth it, isn't it? Is it?

BEHIND THE SCENARIO

As an early childhood educator as well as an inservice
provider for early childhood educators, I am well aware that
the thorny issue of assessment is one that we get stuck on
time after time. It is unfortunate, but all too common, to
see early childhood educators using assessment tools which

have been mandated (or which they perceive to have been
mandated) by administrators or legislators lacking early
childhood experience or background. Additionally, teachers
often enter the classroom without an understanding of
assessment issues. It is rare for an undergraduate teacher
education program to include course work concerning assess-
ment. Therefore, teachers begin their careers without back-
ground or experience that would help them unravel the
assessment mystery.

(1) The notion of designing assessment tools to fit the
curriculum being practiced, is a frightening one. for many
teachers, and one which leads them to throw up their hands
and say, "Where do I begin?" The report cards which have
been in place and used by teachers who were "here before me"
are accepted as status quo because using what is established
and accepted may feel safer than breaking new ground with
innovative materials of one's own creation. (2) Therefore, the
tools are inappropriate, reflecting neither the curriculum
being used in the classroom nor the development of the
children being assessed.

As in the scenario described above, when it is time to
fill out report cards, (3) early childhood classrooms may,
sadly, abandon exciting rich curriculum in order to "assess"
children, so that teachers can accurately fill out report
cards. (4) Skills which have not been a part of the child's
daily routine suddenly become a criterion for reporting to

parents that real learning has stopped because challenging projects are have been set aside in order to collect data on narrowly focused, inappropriate skills.

(5) In addition, when teachers we report these skills to Kenyan parents, we then further an inaccurate perception of what developmental learning in Kenyan schools should looks like in the early childhood years. A public which may already have concerns about the value of play, experimentation, and child-initiated learning is given a mixed message that we as teachers support an academics-driven curriculum. When we develop and implement assessment tools which reflect developmentally appropriate practices, we use those tools as another way to educate families, and the public. Our assessment tools and strategies can help inform others about what quality early childhood education is all about.

POTENTIAL FOR ALTERNATIVES

(6) I would want my teaching and learning principle to derive from the question

Is it possible to assess children within the context of the ongoing curriculum? Surely, it should be so: If a curriculum is carefully chosen to foster children's disposition to learn, it could serve as a window for teachers into the child's learning. The National Association of State Boards of Education publication Right from the Start (1988) offers this inspiration: by stating that:

> We believe that assessment practices for young
> children should reflect the developmental princi-
> ples of the curriculum. The Task Force agrees

with NAEYC (The National Association for the Education of Young Children) that the most important consideration in evaluating and using standardized tests is the "utility criterion"--that is, the purpose of testing must be to improve services for children and ensure that children benefit from their educational experiences.

We recommend that young children be assessed through observation and recording of their developmental progress. Periodic samples of writing and drawings, oral tapes of reading, and video tapes or observations of social interactions and problem-solving become examples in a portfolio for each child. This information should then be used to adapt the curriculum, plan activities to meet the needs of the children, and provide feedback to parents. This type of assessment should take place informally on a daily basis for program planning rather than for placement purposes. (pp. 22-23)

In a similar vein, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, in Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Programs Serving Birth Through Age Eight (Bredekemp, 1987), recommends the following:

Decisions that have a major impact on children (such as enrollment, retention, assignment to remedial classes) are based primarily on information obtained from observations by parents and teachers, not on the basis of a single test score. Developmental assessment of children's progress and achievement is used to plan curriculum, identify children with special needs, communicate with parents, and evaluate program effectiveness. (p. 13)

And the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation states:

Assessment of children's development, learning, and interests should be an integral part of all early childhood programs. But inappropriate assessment can be a burden on teachers and caregivers--stressful, time-consuming, and unrelated to the day-to-day experiences of the children. (Schweinhart & McNair, 1991, p. 5)

These powerful and articulate quotes serve to support the need for assessment techniques to accurately reflect the rich, perpetual unfolding of curiosity and discovery that takes place in an early childhood classroom. Rather than halt that exciting and natural learning (as in the case of the "Scenario of Reality"), how much more meaningful our assessment will be if it emerges from that learning.

As teachers rely on the ongoing curriculum as the basis for their assessment, they find themselves with a collection of writing, drawing, photographs, tapes and observational notes concerning each of the children in their classes. This wealth of material is much more accurate, in assessing children's development, than a standardized test score or a checklist of skills. What emerges is a profile of children's work often referred to as a "portfolio."

PORTFOLIOS AS AN EFFECTIVE

ASSESSMENT VEHICLE

Is any principle of teaching & learning developm has developed

In researching developmentally appropriate assessment
needed for K₁₅ - ?₅₁₅₅₅₅
techniques, two terms are often seen: "authentic testing"

and "portfolio assessment." These terms emerge as important

concepts due to teachers' continued dissatisfaction with

inappropriate assessment techniques which interrupt, and do

not reflect, the active learning in an early childhood

classroom. The term "authentic testing" describes assess-

ment techniques used in realistic context, appropriate to

ongoing classroom work, reflecting skills or processes

beneficial to learners. Used in this way, "portfolio

assessment" could be used interchangeably with "authentic

testing." The methods described as "authentic" could be

used to generate products which would become a student's

portfolio.

What exactly is a portfolio? Commonly used by artists,

photographers, or writers to showcase their work, portfolios

are being used more and more by early childhood teachers to

provide a cumulative record of a child's growth and develop-

ment in the school setting. Portfolio-based assessment has

been identified as one of three top curriculum trends by the

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

(Vavrus, 1990). At different age levels, portfolios might involve different amounts of student involvement in determining the contents and using them to monitor growth and progress. It is important to note, however, that even a pre-schooler is capable of determining "my best work," "something I really want to save" or "a job I worked hard on."

For the purpose of this thesis, the portfolio is a collection of student work, teacher observation, and parent communication. Within this context, these portfolio items reflect the participation of 4- and 5-year olds in a problem-solving curriculum (Portland Public Schools' Piaget Curriculum, to be described in the next section). The intended audience for this portfolio would include the teacher, assistant, administrator, child and family. "Portfolios are authentic forms of assessment because they reflect real learning activities going on in the classroom" (Vavrus, 1990, p. 52).

Traditionally, and as illustrated in the "Scenario of Reality" which opened this thesis, the major interest of assessment has been outcomes. Admittedly, parents, teachers, administrators and even children themselves have a right to expect certain outcomes as a result of the educational process. But something suffers and is lost when we accept narrow, skills-targeted outcomes as the only piece of the assessment puzzle. In attempting to assess the whole

curriculum, a portfolio is used to maintain a balance between outcomes and ongoing work (Paulson & Paulson, 1991).

Going one step beyond portfolios as a showcase for children's best work, this thesis presents the notion that a portfolio could successfully showcase the <u>whole</u> curriculum. As later sections in my thesis will explain, the whole curriculum includes cognitive and affective learning, as well as family education. Used in this way, a portfolio will become a lively collection of teacher's goals, reports, student's work, and parent communications.

What is necessary, first of all, in reaching this goal is developmentally appropriate assessment strategies to replace standardized tests, checklists, and outdated report cards.

DEVELOPMENT OF DEVELOPMENTALLY

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

Developmentally appropriate assessment? It almost
sounds as incongruous as saying "red green things." Does it
need to be that way? Is there a way to put these two terms
together in something that resembles harmony? What needs to
be kept uppermost in the educator's mind is the <u>purpose</u> for
establishing developmentally appropriate assessment: What
is it that we are trying to do, and what information do we
hope to gain? This section of my thesis will address these
questions, the development and elaboration of my own assess-
ment project, and review of literature which supports this
project.

OBSERVATION: A WORTHWHILE TECHNIQUE

Worthwhile, effective assessment techniques can inform
teachers about the development of the children in their
classrooms. Observation gives teachers valuable information
about children's understanding, interests, and needs. If
conventional, standardized testing is ineffectual in provid-
ing this information for early childhood settings, what can
serve as an alternative? Systematic, informed observation
of children's activities as they occur in natural settings

is a principal alternative. While this approach requires time and effort on the part of the teacher/observer, it should presents a minimal intrusion into children's day-to-day experiences and therefore has high ecological validity (Goodwin & Driscoll, 1980). The time that an early childhood teacher spends observing children as an assessment technique is time that delves into, rather than interrupts, the natural flow of developmentally appropriate practices (Schweinhart & McNair, 1991).

3 The open, active, informal format of the early childhood classroom allows for integration of innovative assessment techniques into the ongoing curriculum (Wexler-Sherman, Gardner, & Feldman, 1988). Project Spectrum is a research project which seeks to incorporate ecologically valid, alternative assessment techniques and materials into preschool settings. The "Project Spectrum assessment materials" are introduced as choices within the ongoing curriculum. Using this method, children participate in the Project Spectrum activities (and thus are "assessed") voluntarily when they are interested. Tape recorders or written observations serve to document children's competence. Through the implementation of their project, participants are discovering that the process of assessment involves more than merely the construction and administration of tests. Observation of children as they interact with carefully selected materials becomes an effective technique for

assessing development. Through their project, assessment
becomes a natural part of the school day, an interwoven
component of the activities occurring in the classroom.
This phenomenon attests to the fact that a fusion of assess-
ment and curriculum is possible (Wexler-Sherman et al.,
1988).

In achieving this fusion between assessment and
curriculum, teachers will rely heavily on their own observa-
tion of children as they interact with materials and their
environment. Some observations will be carefully planned
and carried out, while some are the result of joyous "acci-
dental" learning that is often found in early childhood
settings.

SPONTANEOUS VS. PLANNED OBSERVATION

Observation during the early childhood day takes the
form of both planned and spontaneous recording. Some events
are just too good to pass up, and a teacher will grab pencil
and paper in order to record an unexpected observation
concerning a child. At other times, a teacher will have a
specific focus for what she hopes to annotate concerning a
child: Is she using the art area? Is she collaborating
with other children on problem solving? Does she take the
role of leader, or follower, in group activities?

Both forms of observation are valuable, and neither
form is adequate by itself. Much of what is observed can

provide awareness and insight into each child's interactions with materials and people (Leavitt & Eheart, 1991). Collected and reviewed over a period of time, these annotated incidents in a child's life begin to emerge as profiles of learning and development. How can the enormous potential of observation as an assessment strategy be harnessed and focused for our benefit and the benefit of children and families we serve?

As early childhood educators examine the need for, and lack of, developmentally appropriate assessment strategies for their programs, an important idea begins to emerge. That is the idea that within every early childhood setting, there are actually two curriculums unfolding simultaneously. The first is the cognitive curriculum, the "planned" or "visible" curriculum. The second is the affective, or "hidden," curriculum. In addition to these two curriculums, sharing the resulting knowledge about children with their families is a major responsibility of teachers. It is these three topics--assessment within the visible curriculum, assessment within the hidden curriculum, and sharing assessment with families--that this thesis will address next.

THE VISIBLE CURRICULUM

A mandatory partner for developmentally appropriate
assessment is, of course, a developmentally appropriate
curriculum. For the past several years, I have field-tested
and revised Portland Public Schools' Piaget Curriculum.
This is a curriculum which was written 7 years ago and has
been in constant use since then. The Piaget Curriculum is a
one which challenges children on many different levels,
while providing rich concept-based experiences. Units of
study extend over long periods of time, allowing children to
form relationships, theories and concepts as they are sur-
rounded with materials, literature, and thought-provoking
problems which invite speculation and experimentation.

If what we are hoping to accomplish with our assessment
practices is assessment of children's development, learning,
interests, problem-solving skills and social interactions,
what better place to start than with a curriculum which
encourages and supports children as they develop these
skills?

The four units which comprise the Piaget Curriculum for
4- and 5-year olds are: Water, Holes, Rocks, and Toys. The
central focus of the curriculum relies on presenting chil-
dren with open-ended problems which invite a variety of

interpretation. The problems are not ones to sit and ponder, but rather are engaging questions that nudge children out of chairs, off rugs, and into the sand, water, or rocks which fill the classroom. The role of the teacher becomes one which supports collaboration, theory-building, hypothesizing and testing those ideas. No longer the dispenser of knowledge, the teacher becomes free to establish a rich environment, pose meaningful questions, and then observe as children construct their own knowledge. That's a difficult role to master--and one that does not come easily to many teachers. It requires stepping off center stage!

Another noteworthy component of the Piaget Curriculum is that most materials in the classroom are related in some way. Therefore, children are encouraged to experience attributes of those materials in many ways and form theories and ideas about relationships. Using these materials, and each other, children frequently become inventors of new problems, ideas, or theories.

A very powerful component of the Piaget Curriculum is ✸ that of helping children develop, experience, and understand concepts. Rather than experiencing a sequence of activities which are tied together by a common theme, children are introduced to materials, ideas and problems which help them to focus on concepts. For many teachers, parents, and children, this is a new way of learning. For everyone involved, it is tremendously exciting. Hearing children

make such sophisticated discoveries as "When rocks get broken into smaller and smaller pieces, pretty soon they turn into sand!" or "A sleeve needs a hole at the top and at the bottom, but a pocket better only have a hole at the top!" become common occurrences. Sensitively and accurately recorded, these discoveries become benchmarks for a child's learning. The key to taking advantage of these exciting examples of children's learning is an appropriate means of assessing within the context of the unfolding curriculum.

In any classroom, the curriculum which is most easily discerned is that which fosters cognitive learning. The teacher's carefully orchestrated "lesson plans" reflect this area of the curriculum.

Developmentally appropriate assessment of the cognitive curriculum involved taking a careful look at what it is that I wanted to find out about children. The unique feature of the Piaget Curriculum is its problem-solving base. No other curriculum I have used or reviewed presents children with the wide range of possibilities to construct their own knowledge. Observing and recording this phenomenon, then, became my focus for this portion of the project.

In attempting to design a tool which would assist me in recording children's problem-solving strategies, I needed to take a careful look at what was needed. Certain "record keeping" items are helpful, but not numerous: child's name, which unit is currently underway, which concept is being

introduced, and which probe words to listen for. "Probe words" is a term borrowed from George Forman and Fleet Hill (1980) in their book <u>Constructive Play: Applying Piaget in the Preschool</u>. They describe this technique in the following way:

> Use probe words. By talking with parents, and staff, determine if the child has ever used or been exposed to the word (such as opposite). Begin to use the word in the classroom, in context. Make written observations as children begin to use probe words on their own. We had no fear in speaking words that were very complex in their meaning. Nor should you. What we should all avoid, however, is any attempt to directly teach the child what these words mean. We might stage the environment so that the child does something cooperative, so that we can say "cooperate" in a sentence. That's it. The child makes of the word what she will. We were not trying to direct the child by using these probe words. We were only trying to give ourselves a means to understand the child's view of the physical world. (pp. 90-91)

The majority of the observation form is kept blank to permit the teacher to take notes in whatever manner works best for her and to record as lengthy a passage as the observation warrants.

Five specific problem-solving approaches are suggested to help focus the observation:

1. Innovation--when a child makes a discovery or develops strategy independently.

2. Cooperation--when two or more children approach a problem collaboratively.

3. Help requested--when a child articulates a desire for assistance.

4. Leadership offered--when a child offers to help another.

5. "Other" (that all-important category)--because no matter what we come up with, children can always come up with something else!

When put together as a cumulative document, representing each of the concepts covered in the Piaget Curriculum, this sequence of pages represents what would become observational records for a child enrolled in the Piaget program. They would cover the full year (September-June) of the curriculum. Also included are samples of children's individual record-keeping sheets. These represent what might be included in a child's assessment portfolio, but are by no means the only possibilities. They are meant to show that a variety of approaches are used in the curriculum, introduced to children in meaningful context. As child-initiated means of recording discoveries, they become an integral part of the assessment portfolio. (See Appendix A for these items.)

Taken as a whole, they serve to offer valid, lively insight into a child's interaction with the cognitive, or "visible" early childhood curriculum.

These pages alone would certainly provide teachers and families with more information than could be gleaned from a checklist. However, as they deal with the visible curriculum, the picture presented is not complete. What more would

we know if we were able to tap the rich resources of the affective, or "hidden," curriculum?

THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM: SOCIAL

LIFE IN THE CLASSROOM

As any early childhood teacher knows, there is much
more going on within any group of young children than just
cognitive development! Friendships are made, and broken,
truces and bargains struck, social skills practiced and
enhanced on a minute-to-minute basis. Is there a way for a
teacher to observe and record this information as a part of
a child's assessment profile?

Often, the activity that seems most engaging and
exciting in the early childhood classroom is not the activ-
ity that the teacher had planned for the day. Looking into
the teacher's plan book, an observer ought to be able to
guess what will be going on. However, the informal, open-
ended nature of the early childhood setting allows for
child-initiated activity as well as that which the teacher
has planned. And children bring into the classroom with
them such great ideas, and unstoppable energy! It is not at
all unlikely for a teacher to be standing in the middle of
what she perceives to be "her" classroom, while children
carry out their "great ideas," and to be politely told:
"Excuse me, Teacher, you're in the way." The message is
clear--the child feels confident, empowered, and is acting

completely independent of the teacher. The hidden curricu-
lum, that of affective rather than cognitive development,
often makes itself quite apparent.

WHAT CAN BE LEARNED WHEN THE
TEACHER STEPS BACK?

What if the teacher is willing to accept that comment--
"Excuse me, Teacher, you're in the way"--from a confident
child? When she steps back from center stage in order to
observe what rich social development is happening in her
active classroom, what implications do we see for assessment
potential?

In facilitating children's social development, the *Edwards, 1986*
holds that
teacher must be sure to keep three important assumptions in
mind: 1) certain over-riding values (justice, liberty, and
the avoidance of harm) exist in our classrooms as well as in
society; 2) diverse cultural traditions can co-exist with
these values; and 3) the long task of becoming moral, suc-
cessful, social beings belongs ultimately to the children
(Edwards, 1986).

Another important consideration for the early childhood
teacher to keep in mind is that children develop certain
social competencies at different ages. During the preschool
and kindergarten years, the hallmark for children is the
development of peer interaction skills (Waters & Sroufe,
1983). For a teacher willing to observe these skills as

they develop, the "hidden curriculum" becomes fascinating--

one to embrace rather than shy away from(end .

WHAT IS THERE TO BE LEARNED?

When achievement tests, administered in kindergarten,

were used as a predictor of first grade success, test scores

> explained only 36% of the variance in children's
> first grade achievement scores. Therefore, 64% of
> first grade achievement is due to factors other
> than those measured by the Metropolitan Readiness
> Test (an achievement test). When we included
> observed behavior, peer nominations, and teacher
> rating scales, however, we predicted 75% of first
> grade achievement. (Pellegrini & Glickman, 1990,
> p. 119)

This quote provides a testimony to the power and accuracy of

teacher observation of social competency as a predictor of

later academic success. How can social relationships exert

such power?

Peer relationships, for young children, allow a chance

to interact with equals, which is a different situation from

interacting with a teacher. When peers interact, they

experiment with a variety of roles, both as leaders and

followers; contribute ideas; respond positively or nega-

tively to the ideas of others; and hone their skills as

negotiators (Kostelnik, Stein, Whiren, & Soderman, 1988).

As teachers encourage pro-social behavior in their

classrooms, they will find themselves providing on-the-spot

adult-guided conflict resolution for any number of situa-

tions which may arise and which have never been planned.

While skits, puppet shows or group discussion focusing on certain recurring situations may be beneficial to young children, the most meaningful intervention will be that which occurs at the same time as the conflict and has its intent firmly rooted in the actual occurrence.

With certain children, and certain situations, a teacher may need to analyze the components of complex social interactions in order to figure out what part of the interaction the child is having problems accomplishing. For instance, in order to behave pro-socially, a child must be able to figure out that another's help would be appropriate (Baron, Byrne, & Griffith, 1974) and also figure out what behavior to carry out in order to gain that help (Moore, 1982). A sensitive teacher could guide a child as he or she navigates the murky waters of social acceptance. This guidance might take the form of helping a child gain access to a desired play situation. Steering the child toward a smaller group, or a more accepting group, may make for success. A teacher's help may be necessary as a child observes an on-going play situation and figures out the theme and what he or she might have to offer. Entering play with a strategy such as "Knock, knock. Here is your pizza" might be much more successful than grabbing the baby doll and announcing, "I'm the mom!"

Additionally, a teacher can help children gain skill with the important, but sometimes elusive, language of

cohesive play: "Can you tell Ryan why you don't want to play with him right now?" Or, "Do you think Lindsay heard you?" Sometimes "prepping" classmates may provide ease of entry into a situation. When Robert approaches the block area and Lucy nervously asks the teacher to "Keep him away from my building," the teacher might ask Lucy if she could be the building supervisor and give Robert some jobs to do. Robert has joined the play, and Lucy still feels as if she's in control of a project she started. The teacher stayed out of the way and yet still managed to gently guide the social life in her classroom. Are there ways in which she can record this activity as it unfolds?

HOW CAN DATA BE COLLECTED?

In early childhood settings, adult staff may vary from one teacher alone with a group of children to a teacher and assistant working together, to a teaching team of several professionals, to a teacher with volunteer support. Each configuration allows for different opportunities to collect data to support, observe, and record social development.

A teacher alone might utilize anecdotal records of social interactions which she observes, interviews with children to gain information about social perceptions, as well as using the children themselves as informants. Using children in this capacity might involve journals with specific focus questions, tape recordings of conversations,

or tally charts of certain behaviors. (I have observed a teacher who listens while one child "tattles" on another and then requests that the child add a tally mark to a class "score" or tattling incidents.) Above all, a teacher working by herself with young children should _not_ fall victim to the thinking that, because she does not have additional personnel in her classroom, the world of social development is off limits to her.

With the addition of another adult in the room, such as a teaching assistant or parent-volunteer, the teacher becomes more able to spend time observing, recording, and facilitating social development. A teaching assistant or volunteer may also be trained in recording or interviewing-- but matters of confidentiality must be considered, especially with parents.

Not to be overlooked as a rich possibility for data collection are those special circumstances such as student teachers, practicum students, or other "visitors" to the classroom for short-term stays. With a clearly defined focus, it may be possible for such an addition to the classroom to provide a wealth of information on what is going on within the hidden curriculum.

SEEKING THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

Running Record of Social Activity

For the purposes of my thesis, I spent 1 day a week for 8 weeks in an all-day kindergarten class in a public elementary school. In making peer interactions and social development the focus of my observations, I chose a variety of methods for data collection. The first was a full-day running record of five girls. The cooperating teacher had identified these five girls as a group who were socializing to the extent that the activities of the school day had little or no impact on them. In observing them, I began with one and noted what she was engaged in, moved on to the next, and when completed with all five began the cycle again. I kept this up from the beginning of the school day through story time in the afternoon. This was not a technique that would have been feasible for the teacher to undertake, as it had occupied me for nearly a full day. However, since the teacher had capitalized on the addition of another adult to her classroom, she was able to amass a wealth of information concerning this problematic social group. In examining the notes, we discovered that one suspected member was not really a part of the group and that another girl, though a thoroughly entrenched "clique" member, was quite capable of choosing and maintaining an independent activity, when that activity was sufficiently

interesting to her. We also determined from this first collection of notes (Appendix B) that more information could be helpful in understanding this group dynamic.

Classroom Map

The next method that I tried, which involved the same group of five girls, was a classroom map. Using a map which showed the areas used by children in the classroom and adjoining hallway area, I assigned each girl a different color ink. I then traced each girl's movement from place to place in the classroom. As the classroom teacher and I took a look at the resulting picture at the end of the day, some conclusions could be drawn: The girl who we had suspected, due to the previous week's anecdotal records, was not a bona fide member of this clique was also shown by the map not to be a member. Her only movement during the morning was to move from the cornmeal table to the Play-Doh table--and not in conjunction with any other clique members. The map showed that the painting easels, Play-Doh table, and wood-working bench were used more as social gathering places than as interest centers. The map clearly showed that all four members of the clique showed up at these places, and a quick additional notation indicated that they gathered there to "chat," not to engage in Play-Doh, painting, or woodworking activities. While this method would have been easier for the teacher to accomplish than a running record, it was much

simpler for me. Having no official classroom responsibili-
ties, I could focus my attention on data collection and
later effectively debrief with the classroom teacher. The
data served to give her more information on the workings of
this group of girls, and the engagement, or non-engagement,
at certain centers could be helpful to her in planning
future environmental changes.

Interviews

As we discussed this group of girls and the amount of
power that being someone's friend holds in kindergarten, we
became curious about other friendship issues. In order to
delve into this question, I designed an interview, comprised
of nine questions (Appendix B). We agreed that in addition
to questions revolving around friendship, we'd like to get a
sense of another issue through the eyes of the children:
What were the options and obligations of Choosing Time? We
also agreed that it would be worthwhile to interview not
just the group I had been studying, but the whole kinder-
garten class. The interview process took several weeks to
complete, but gave us insights into children's thinking
about friends. I had assumed that by asking children "Which
two people do you like best in your class?" I would receive
an accurate picture of friendship patterns. I discovered,
on the contrary, that friendship at this age is a most
fleeting thing--being a "friend" means being a "momentary

physical playmate" (Rubin, 1980, p. 91). Therefore, if
someone had recently been mean to you, you could retaliate
by listing other people as your "best" friend, even if the
child who had been mean to you was your otherwise constant
companion and best buddy. The friend who is playing with
you right now is your friend; anyone else may truly be "out
of sight, out of mind." This perspective is illustrated in
an interview with a 4-year old:

> Interviewer: Is it hard or easy to make friends?
> Child: Hard, because sometimes if you wave
>   to the other person, they might not
>   see you wave so it's hard to get
>   that friend.
> Interviewer: What if they see you?
> Child: Then it's easy. (Rubin, 1980, p. 97)

The teacher with whom I was working felt that these
interviews gave her insights into the children in her class
in a way that she otherwise might not have had; she took
them with her as she filled out her report cards. But had
the interview process been left up to her alone, she readily
admitted that it would have been insurmountable.

Peer Acceptance

A fourth technique which I field tested in this same
kindergarten class was one which I gleaned from work by
Kristen Kemple (1991). It involved observing for particular
strategies, or their absence, within the social competence
of unpopular children. Based on several research studies
(Hartup & Moore, 1990; Howes, 1988; Ladd, 1990) this method

involved careful, informed observation of the child. The
research mentioned suggested particulars to observe for,
such as: problem-solving skills, effective social language,
and greater success with small or large groups of peers (see
Appendix B).

As I observed one child using this form, it was a
simple matter for me to make tally marks as certain targeted
behaviors occurred. The form was clear and concise enough
so that I was able to simultaneously keep anecdotal records
on the same child. At the end of this observation, using
both the Peer Acceptance form and my anecdotal notes, I had
a fairly complete picture of what had gone on during a short
span of time for that child. As his teacher and I reviewed
these data, the cluster of tally marks on the Peer Accep-
tance form around certain issues gave us clear information.
As our goal was to gain understanding into why he was
unpopular and make decisions about how to help him in his
quest for social acceptance, the information we gathered
offered us a place to start. The questions taken from
Kemple's work offered me a more thoughtful way to focus
observations around the issue of unpopularity than I have
ever seen.

Anecdotal Notes

During the course of my weekly visits to this class-
room, several other situations arose which clearly could

benefit from careful observation. I found myself, again and again, relying on the tactic of sitting down with a pen and a blank piece of paper to take anecdotal notes of observed interactions. Without preconceived lists, guidelines, topics, or boxes to be filled, this method often provides the most helpful information. While it is difficult for a classroom teacher to accomplish this on her own, I neverthe-less recommend it wholeheartedly. Suggestions for actually getting it done might include: asking an administrator or support staff member to take over in your classroom for a short period of time while you observe; observing on the playground when you may not be called upon quite so often to supervise; observing your class in physical education, music, or other special classes where you are not the leader; or trading "prep" time with another teacher and observing in each other's classrooms. Many techniques are possible; the important thing is getting data collected so that the important work of facilitating social development can get underway.

Maybe the hidden curriculum, the unplanned occurrences, the rich social life unfolding all around in the early childhood classroom doesn't need to be feared; perhaps it can be actively sought. perhaps it can even be welcomed for the wealth of information it can provide to teachers about the children with whom they spend a great deal of time.

THE EXTRA-CURRICULAR CURRICULUM: SHARING
ASSESSMENT WITH FAMILIES

No child enters school alone. Preschoolers or kinder-
gartners do not independently appear in their first class-
rooms, ready to meet the teacher and begin their school
experience as unconnected entities. The first-day-of-school
scene articulates this truth: Tearful mothers or fathers
leave young children in the care of Teacher. Sometimes it
is a proud, or possessive, or gruff, older sibling who has
the responsibility of making sure that a younger child makes
it safely to their first day. Even if it was not so visibly
obvious that the child who appears in school for the first
time is a part of a larger family unit, it is a powerful
truth. Possibly at no other time will parents be so proud,
so concerned, so involved, so curious and interested in what
is happening in their child's school life. What wonderful
energy to capitalize on!

Every teacher has curriculum goals: plans for engaging
children cognitively during the school year. And every
classroom has a life of its own: an underlying, unplanned,
unstructured curriculum born of friendships, cliques, affec-
tive development of all kinds. A third type of curriculum

is that which involves families in their child's early school experience.

Within my own teaching, this component was one of the last to fall into place. The visible, cognitive curriculum --my "goals" and "lesson plans"--was dictated by my supervisors and was in place by my first day of teaching. The hidden curriculum, that emerging from affective development, although not planned by me was also evident from the very beginning of school. Those were the two pieces I felt comfortable and competent with initially. It took longer for me to feel as if I was making effective use of the school-family connection. But once that connection was made, I continue to be surprised and delighted by how powerful it is.

SHARING ASSESSMENT WITH FAMILIES:
THE COMPONENTS

The responsibility of sharing the knowledge and understanding about children that a teacher gleans through appropriate assessment techniques is a complex one. It involves establishing a comfortable relationship with the family, allowing the family to assist the teacher in getting to know the child, and educating families about early childhood education and the accompanying assessment strategies. As the following components will illustrate, a wide range of approaches can be used to accomplish these goals.

Home Visits

Every September, I begin the school year by making a visit to each one of my students' homes. When I am teaching two sessions of pre-kindergarten, this means I make a staggering 40 home visits. It is an exhausting but reward-ing week! Long a mainstay of special education and Head Start programs, home visits "provide the opportunity to maximize the principle that effective educational and human service programs begin where the client is" (Powell, 1990, p. 69). For families who may be uncertain or uncomfortable about school experiences, it is a way to say that the teacher is willing to reach out and meet on common ground to discuss expectations for the coming year. The visit is not intended to evaluate, or judge, the family in any way. The purpose is to say, "I'm glad to meet you and look forward to seeing you at school next week." I take a picture of my future student when I visit (with favorite toy, pet, or family member), and when the long-awaited first day of school arrives, "teacher" is not an unknown face, and there's an exciting picture to look for on the bulletin board. "Home visiting provides unique access to families and extensive information about their situation" (Zigler, 1990, p. xi).

During the home visit, I am able to gather pertinent information such as allergies, fears, interests, caregivers, and routines. Registration forms can be left with the

family, lessening the time they will need to spend in the school office (another potential source of anxiety for some families). Asking them about how they would like to be involved in their child's school experience and informing them of the possibilities, is comfortably and informally taken care of at this time. The purposes and procedures for assessment during the school year can also be informally introduced at this time. While I do not expect to delve deeply into assessment policies during this initial visit, I am able to at least begin to explain what I hope to learn about their child through observations, give them an idea of what to expect in terms of written assessment, introduce the term "portfolio" and explain its use as an assessment vehicle. It provides a chance to get the year off to a good start, by letting families know from the outset that they will be included and involved in assessment.

Classroom Volunteers

Volunteering in the classroom is probably one of the most traditional ways of being involved in school. Poorly planned for, it can be a dissatisfying experience for teacher and parent alike. When handled carefully, it can be rewarding, and worthwhile. Although certainly not the only sign, "abundant parent participation is a sign of a good program" (Peck, McCaig, & Sapp, 1987, p. 37). During the home visit, the parent's desire and availability for

volunteering has been established. After that, I always
request that the first few weeks of school take place with-
out parent volunteers in the classroom. This gives the
children and me a chance to get to know each other, estab-
lish routines, and separate comfortably from parents. When
those first few weeks are over, I schedule a meeting where
interested volunteers can hear from me what their responsi-
bilities may involve. A supportive, understanding practice
is to hold this meeting directly at the end of the school
day. A teaching assistant supervises children as they play,
while the prospective volunteers meet with me. If possible,
slides of "A Day in the Life of Your Pre-Schooler" can be
shown, illustrating possible volunteer roles. I give the
volunteers a schedule, show them coat and purse areas, and
explain what their part in the daily routine will be. They
have a chance to tell me what they are enthusiastic or
apprehensive about ("I love to read out loud to children,
but I don't feel comfortable with art projects"). Having
this time beforehand for sharing information and asking
questions goes a long way toward eliminating problems before
they start. "Research is very clear about the benefits of
parent participation for their child's education" (Peck,
McCaig, & Sapp, 1987, p. 39).

Family members who spend time volunteering in the
classroom will have the benefit of seeing developmentally
appropriate assessment in action. Perhaps more powerful

than any other means of "getting the message across," they
will be able to observe the teacher as the teacher observes
children. They will also be privileged to see children and
teaching staff making suggestions and decisions about items
to be included in a child's portfolio. As families see
these strategies in action, concepts that might have been
confusing begin to gain real meaning through application.
It is hopeful that they will be able to see first hand that
authentic, ongoing assessment is more accurate and less
disruptive than "testing" for report cards. Each time we
reinforce that point, we gain potential allies!

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Once the school year is underway, a major responsibil-
ity of teachers is reporting to families. How is my child
doing? Is she making friends? Is she making progress?
What can I do to help at home? These are questions that
concern parents of young children. This information can be
shared at parent-teacher conferences, through informal
communication, and through reporting tools such as "progress
reports."

Conferences are an integral part of the education pro-
cess and cannot be regarded as impractical or unnecessary
(Stone, 1987). Parents may feel anxious about coming to
school for what they perceive to be a formal evaluation
session, and there is much that a thoughtful teacher can do

to put parents at ease. A pre-conference questionnaire can be used to gain information about questions and concerns parents may want to discuss. Comfortable, adult-sized chairs, coffee, or tea can help to create a relaxed atmosphere. If the teacher has in mind a structured, but not rigid, approach to the conference, she will feel more at ease herself. Sharing observations that she has made concerning the child's cognitive discoveries, social development, special interests, and friendships are all worthwhile and bound to be of utmost interest to parents. It's important not to neglect to allow time for the parents to share with you what have been their perceptions about their child's school experience. What sort of reactions did they notice, what does the child talk about at home, what events and discoveries have been met with most enthusiastically? "During conferences, teachers learn details of the child's interests and behavior at home and gain insight into parental hopes for the child" (Stone, 1987, p. 27).

The parent-teacher conference is the perfect time to share the contents of a child's portfolio. Families can be informed about how and why certain projects were undertaken --what were your "goals" for their child? Emerging skills and interests can be pointed out; what words does the child undertake to write on her own, what projects were independently instigated? The conference becomes a cooperative venture for getting to know the child better.

Written Reports

There will be other times during the school year when the luxury of an appointed time to meet with each family, as in the home visit and the conference, is not feasible. At these times, "report cards" may serve to let parents know what the school experience is providing for their child.

Traditional report cards consist of a checklist of skills, with the teacher's check marks or other coded notation indicating mastery or further work needed. This type of reporting tool tells families little about their child's active learning, discovery, peer relationships, or interaction with the classroom environment. A common scene after report cards have been handed out is parents quickly tallying check marks and then comparing with other parents. This type of "measuring up" of one child to another can only serve to promote competition, boasting, gloating, disappointment, and an inappropriate view of the environment we try to establish for children. These are not attitudes I wish to foster in my own teaching situation.

Throughout the years, I have paid careful attention to what it is that parents want to know about their child and the school experience, as well as what sort of parent education I can accomplish through my reporting system. Not without much trial and error have I settled upon two successful reporting tools.

The first is a simple narrative which breaks the early
childhood day into its routinely occurring events: group
meeting time, work time, small group time, snacks, story and
outside time (see Appendix C). Ample space is left after
each heading for the teacher to write a narrative comment
illustrating favorite times, chosen activities, times which
are often less successful, and emerging interests and skills
which she may have noticed about each child. Copies of
portfolio items could be attached to this narrative in order
to help the school experience come to life for families.
The personal nature of this "portrait of my child's day" has
touched many families in a way that a checklist could not.

The second tool which I devised, and which has been
successfully field tested in a number of settings, is a
classroom map (see Appendix C). The classroom environment
is sketched onto a sheet of paper, simply labeled--with most
of the space left blank. The procedure for "filling out"
this reporting tool is similar to the narrative mentioned
above, the focus being use of space rather than use of time.
Areas the child frequently, or seldom, chooses to work in
can be easily noted as the teacher writes anecdotal notes
about the child's use of classroom space: "Bethany can
often be found at the Invention Center, teaching others how
to make some of the creative inventions she comes up with."
Or, "Joshua seldom chooses to work at the Water Table,
although during small group time he successfully siphoned

water from one level to another." Again, portfolio items,
or copies, could be attached to this report, along with a
label noting where in the classroom this work was under-
taken, in order to strengthen an understanding of the
child's use of the environment. Families have the joyous
sense of "being there" as their children engage in active
learning, a sense which may not be successfully conveyed
through traditional report cards.

Parent Education

The final component of family involvement is that of
parent education. Surely this component is included in all
areas already discussed: home visits, volunteering, confer-
ences, and reporting. All of these hold possibilities for
underlying parent education. Each time we communicate with
parents about our goals, our routines, our materials and our
observations about children, we share valuable information
about appropriate education and assessment. There may be
times, however, for a more obvious focus on parent educa-
tion. "Early childhood educators must assume the responsi-
bility for understanding and articulating developmentally
appropriate education to parents" (Bredekemp, 1987, p. 86).
Several times during the year I plan Parent Nights, support-
ing busy families by always arranging child care. Parents
are then free to join other parents, and me, in learning
together about early childhood education. The format may

include a slide presentation, video recordings of their children in action, or hands-on discoveries similar to what their children participate in during the school day. As the discoveries unfold, parents are informally and comfortably introduced to what developmentally appropriate education and assessment looks like. A teacher can capitalize on parent involvement by taking anecdotal notes as parents work on classroom activities. When shared, these notes provide a meaningful example of what insight into learning teachers hope to gain by utilizing these assessment strategies. Parents could begin to create their own "portfolio," thereby gaining an understanding of the process involved in choosing items for inclusion in this important collection. Questions can be asked and supportively answered. If further information or explanation is desired, private conferences can be set up.

Parent Nights are another way to say that families are a welcome part of the school experience and that involving them in assessment practices is an important goal.

In conclusion, I restate that no child comes to school alone. Each child who bursts or shuffles into the classroom, or hangs shyly about the doorway, in September is a part of a family. Each door that we open to active family support, involvement, and understanding of appropriate assessment creates benefits for the children we nurture.

CONCLUSION: SCENARIO OF POSSIBILITY

It is report card time again. The pre-school teacher
does not bat an eyelash, nor does she sway from her normally
unfolding, action-packed routine. Instead, she takes a few
snapshots of particularly exciting projects and slips them
into the appropriate children's portfolios. As she notices
that Ashley and Kenya have successfully figured out <u>for the
first time</u> who's going to be the mother and who's going to
be the babysitter, she pulls out her anecdotal notes and
records this developmental landmark. Having discussed
social development at her last Parent Night, she knows that
Ashley and Kenya's families will be as overjoyed as she is
by their accomplishment. Because she shared with families
the powerful technique of recording her observations of
children's development, she sends a copy of this record home
with both girls, as well as including copies in each port-
folio. The naturally busy and productive early childhood
curriculum is being used to facilitate assessment. It is a
very different scene from the one which opened this thesis,
in which the active curriculum was set aside in order to
fill out report cards. In that case, the early childhood
curriculum was being stifled for the sake of inappropriate
assessment.

This thesis work has made several contributions which could be of value to practicing early childhood professionals. First, it has offered reinforcement and support to the notion of using portfolios as an assessment technique. In attempting to use authentic testing, rather than standardized or skills-based testing, as a means to determine student development, portfolios stand out as a vehicle for reflecting children's progress. The collection of student's work, teacher's observations and parent communications provides a more complete picture of the child's learning.

Another contribution has been the focus on problem-solving skills in assessing cognitive development. As early childhood teachers strive to provide children with materials and experiences which will foster life-skills, problem solving becomes a crucial focus. Facts and figures may change overnight, but a child who is capable of looking at a problem from several perspectives and coming up with an innovative solution has a resource which will not become obsolete. The concept-based Piaget Curriculum, and the careful observation by teachers of children's problem-solving skills, offers a unique perspective on children's development.

The collection of methods for accumulating data concerning children's social development provides helpful suggestions for classroom teachers. The variety of approaches and foci address a wide range of issues, from

"How can I successfully accomplish anecdotal observations when I am the only adult in my classroom?" to "How can I help an unpopular child become more adept at entering others' play?" Since an early childhood classroom functions as a daily laboratory in social skills, these methods and suggestions can be regularly used.

As teachers struggle to provide meaningful connections between children's homes and the school, practices such as home visits and parent education should not be overlooked. A vital link in implementing developmentally appropriate assessment techniques will be convincing families of their worth and importance. One teacher's work to build a strong bridge between families and schools is outlined here.

A most useful follow-up to this thesis would be a careful, systematic field testing of all the components of the whole curriculum. Along with this implementation, review and feedback by participants would provide worthwhile information concerning the successful portions of the assessment profile as well as portions which need changes or restructuring. While certain portions have been used informally, there has to date been no systematic field testing and feedback. Response from teachers, administrators and families would be a valuable addition to this work.

The premise with which I began my thesis has been strengthened through research, review, and careful consideration. That premise was two-fold: That assessment is most

valuable when it arises from naturally occurring learning, and that teachers feel most positive about assessment procedures when they have had some input into the creation of the tool itself. This quote from an early childhood educator is eloquent:

> If I could change one thing about teaching, it would be to limit the busywork of evaluating children. I feel like I spend the whole first month out in the hall testing one child at a time, when I should be in the classroom with all of the children. To top it off, when I've finished the testing, the information that I am left with is not useful in my teaching. What I need is something meaningful. (Schweinhart & McNair, 1991, p. 4)

Those words ring true for many of us; perhaps assessing the whole curriculum, and keeping meaningful portfolios which reflect this assessment and are shared with families, is a step toward the "scenario of possibility."

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APPENDIX A

COGNITIVE ASSESSMENT

Child's name:_____

Unit: Water   Holes   Rocks   Toys

Concept:_____

Problem-solving strategies to observe for:

Innovation	Co-operation	Help Requested	Leadership Offered Requested	Other

Child's name:_____

Unit: Water   Holes   Rocks   Toys

Concept:_____

Problem-solving strategies to observe for:

Innovation	Co-operation	Help Requested	Leadership Offered Requested	Other

PIAGET CURRICULUM: CONCEPTS AND PROBE WORDS

WATER UNIT

Concepts	Probe Words
Water has no shape of its own	shape, container, prediction
Some things sink in water, and some things float	sink, float, graph, invention
Some things disappear in water, and some don't	disappear, dissolve, record
Water can change forms	steam, solid, freeze, frozen, liquid
Water can change other things	evaporate

HOLES UNIT

Concepts	Probe Words
Holes are found in many places	hole, inspector, collection
We use holes for many things	entrance, exit, container

ROCKS UNIT

Concepts	Probe Words
There are many kinds of rocks	round, flat, smooth, rough
Rocks can be changed	goggles, safety, shards, grains
Some rocks are used in special ways	cement, magnetite, crystal, gems

TOYS UNIT

Concepts	Probe Words
Toys are different from tools	classify, group, tools
Toys come from toy stores, or departments	department, factory
Toys have attributes that describe their use	describe, roll, bounce, target
Everyone uses toys	interview, survey, information, record, hobby
Toys come from all over the world	celebrate, similar, different, import, export

WATER UNIT

Children use zip-lock baggies and rubber bands and are asked
the question: "Can you make water into a different shape?"
They trace their bag as a recording of their experiment.
Different colored crayons (water-proof!) for tracing can
clearly show changes in shape, due to numerous experiments.
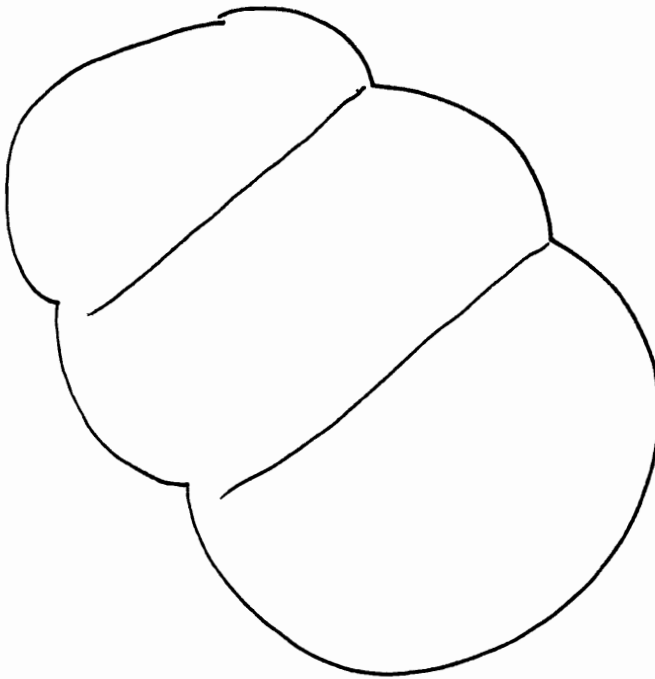
I made water into a snowman
shape.

WATER UNIT

An introduction to graphing. Actual graph would be large,
with room for children to place objects on graph after
experimenting.

It floats	It sinks
1111	++++
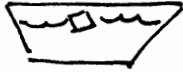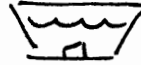
WATER UNIT

Yes | No | A little

III | I | I

This records children's responses to the question: "Do these things dissolve in water?" Depending on experience with graphing, either objects or tally marks can be used as recording method.

HOLES UNIT

Crayon rubbings: A method for recording observations.
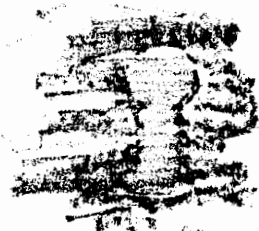
a hole for
a key

a hole for
a plug

HOLES UNIT

Recording via drawing/representation and dictation. "Who lives at your house?"

My house is a hole for
_____ and me.

HOLES UNIT

We found holes
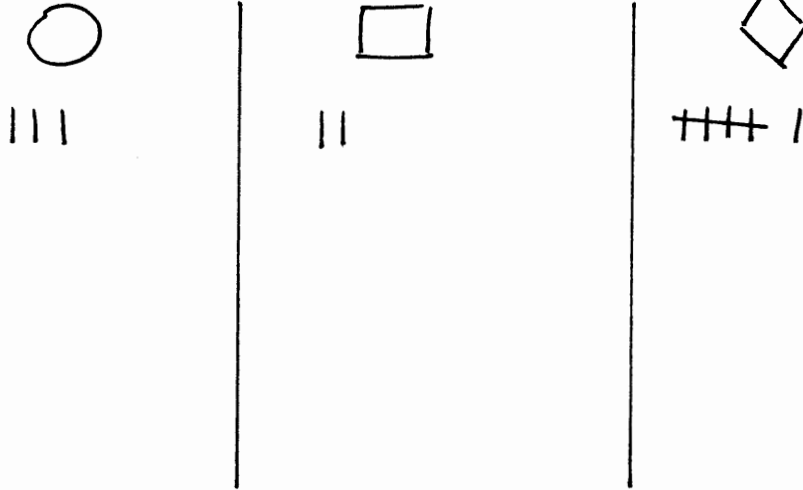
This would occur in January, when children are "experts" at recording. This page would be used individually, with a clipboard and self-made "Hole Inspector" hat. A search of the classroom and school turns up differently shaped holes, which are tallied.

ROCKS UNIT

MY ROCKS

Here in this box, I keep my rocks

They come from underground.

Some are round, some are plain,

Some are tiny as a grain--

My favorite one is _____.
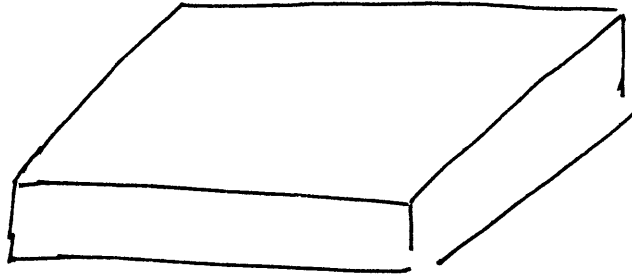
This poem is learned early in the
Rocks Unit and is part of a game.
This sheet does not involve
"reading"--just a chance to add
descriptive words, representation,
and share with family.

ROCKS UNIT

I FOUND A ROCK THAT WRITES

Recording through experimentation: black and white paper are provided for maximum "testing" of samples.

TOYS UNIT

THE RULES FOR ROCK KNOCK-DOWN

Choose a pointy stand-up block.
Stand back by the bookshelf.
Roll a round rock at the block.
Give someone else a turn.

A group recording endeavor--small groups invent a game and
then dictate the rules so that others can learn it.

TOYS UNIT

TOYS	NOT A TOY	I DON'T KNOW
|||	~~||||~~		

By this time of the year (May/June), we're pretty good at
graphing and can sort and tally independently.

APPENDIX B

SOCIAL ASSESSMENT

LAKESHIA

Coloring with Erica and Yorda, making a book for Nedra (the music teacher)

10 minutes later, still working on book

15 minutes later, still working

With Ebonee and LaToya moving around at clean-up time (not cleaning up)

Sucking thumb, curled up next to Ray-Ray at rest time

Resting next to Ray-Ray, back turned, sucking thumb

Interacting with Ray-Ray--JoAnn moves her

JoAnn distracted; Lakeshia moves back next to Ray-Ray and is removed

End of rest time "Ray-Ray, will you wait for me?"

Out in hall after rest time, returned by Ms. Casson-Taylor (counselor)

Sitting beside Ray-Ray at story time

CHIQUITA

Chose to work with ramps, but panics and checks where others are before beginning. Rolls foil ball back and forth while watching the rest of the "clique" at McDonald's (dramatic play center). Leaves ramps to become customer.

Painting. Says to me: "You're still here? I know you; you're the one who gave me my shot." (Has misidentified me as nurse, I guess.)

Wiping brush off on cup so that paint drips down outside of cup. Paints for 10 minutes.

Cleaning up in block area

At lunch time, last one eating, last one cleaning table, last one to bathroom, last to lie down to rest (away from others)

Cleaned up (after rest time). Gently waking others

Sat alone by JoAnn at story time

RAY-RAY

Painting with Allegra. Lots of time spent washing paint
drips off shoes. Painted pieces of tape to hang picture.

Taking orders at McDonald's: "You have to pay. I'll get
you some money."

When I next look for her, she's nowhere to be found--in the
bathroom w/Ebonee. Came out, looked at ramp experiment,
"What are you doing?" to workmen, looked at children
painting, went to McDonald's.

Trying (w/Ebonee and LaToya) to talk Justin out of his
apron: "You have to leave now; we're closed."

Reminder from JoAnn about where she should clean up

Chose rest spot between LaToya and Lakeshia. Tried to
refuse to let Catherine rest between Ray-Ray and LaToya.
Catherine moved. Came back: "Mind if I sleep here?" Ray-
Ray: "You're allowed."

"Resting" with doll, head on hands, chatting with Lakeshia
and LaToya.

Holding hands with Ebonee and touching Lakeshia--JoAnn
stopped

Out in the hall after rest time, brought back in by Ms.
Casson-Taylor (counselor)

Sitting by Lakeshia at story time

LATOYA

With Ray-Ray, painted tape to hang up pictures

Working at McDonald's: We open at 8:30. The address is 34
5th."

To Ray-Ray: "This is our money. It's closed. Turn it to
open. And stop acting like a mom. You ain't no mom. You
guys gotta' get out; it's closed."

Carrying around name tags for lunch tables (at clean-up
time). She's managed to convince Mrs. Brannon (assistant)
that she should arrange them. JoAnn returns name tags to
Mrs. Brannon.

Walking around before rest time w/pillow and blanket

Rest near (but w/o body contact) Ebonee and Ray-Ray. Allegra touches her.

Out in hall after rest time, returned by Ms. Casson-Taylor

Sitting by Ebonee at story time

EBONEE

At water table with Garrett. Asks him: "Where's your partner?" Garrett: "You mean my girlfriend? I don't have a girlfriend." Ebonee: "Now you putting words in my mouth. I didn't say girlfriend; I said partner."

Filling bottles, watching sand table action. Offered me "coffee."

Calling to Ray-Ray (nowhere in sight). Went and got her from the easel--Ray-Ray came to look, then went back to painting.

Not to be found--in the bathroom w/Ray-Ray

Followed Ray-Ray to McDonald's, ordered 2 Big Macs and a Coke

JoAnn reminded her to clean up

In and out of room at rest time, calling to Lakeshia

"Resting" w/doll, chatting

Reaching to hold hands w/Ray-Ray

Out in hall after rest time, returned by Ms. Casson-Taylor

Sat by LaToya for story time

Left group time to see what Mrs. Brannon (assistant) was doing in other room

---

In debriefing and looking over the information that these anecdotal notes give to us, JoAnn and I agreed that another component might be helpful here. The next time I come to her room, I plan to map this same group of girls to see if that picture lends us more insight to what's happening.

INTERVIEW

1. Which two kids do you like best in your class?

2. What do you like about _____?

3. What do you like about _____?

4. What do you like to do at choosing time?

5. What are you supposed to do at choosing time?

6. How can you tell if someone is your friend?

7. Do friends fight? What do they do when they fight?

8. How do friends help each other?

9. Do grownups have friends? How do you know?

PEER ACCEPTANCE AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

1. Does the child have greater success interacting with:

    one or two peers?
    large group?

2. Does the child often seem to misinterpret apparent
    intentions and emotional cues of other children?

3. Does the child consistently resort to aggression as a
    means of solving problems?

4. Does the child have more appropriate alternatives to
    problem-solving at his or her disposal?

5. When rejecting a playmate's suggestion, does the child
    provide reason or alternative suggestion?

6. Does the child make seemingly irrelevant responses to
    playmate's communications?

7. Does child ignore questions and comments directed to
    him or her?

8. Do others consistently rebuff or ignore the child's
    attempts to engage in play, even when she or he is using
    strategies that "should" work?

Taken from K. Kemple, Preschool children's peer acceptance
and social interaction, Young Children, 46(5) (1991).

APPENDIX C

SHARING ASSESSMENT WITH FAMILIES

Dear Families,

Below are observations I have made as your child made her way through a busy school day. I hope they prove useful to you as you share discoveries! Please feel free to contact me with questions or comments.

Very sincerely,

Morning Meeting Time:

Plan-Do-Review:

Outside Time:

Small Group Time:

June 1991

Dear Families,

One of my very favorite parts of teaching four and five year olds is sitting back and watching as they make discoveries, use language, make friends, and just generally make sense of their world. It's also a very rewarding part of this job--I discover daily how much children are growing and learning all the time!

The attached page is a map of our classroom. The room has been carefully arranged so that it fosters independence, cooperation, and learning. On the classroom map, I have noted some of the things I've observed about your child. My observations may include activities your child is likely to choose again and again, or activities your child rarely chooses. Areas your child prefers to work in alone may be noted, as well as the areas that serve as social gathering places.

I hope that my notes serve to give you an idea of what the Pre-school experience has been like for your child. It's been one that I have very much enjoyed. Thank you for sharing your children with me!
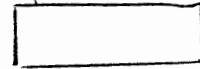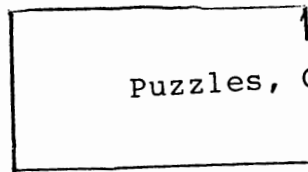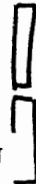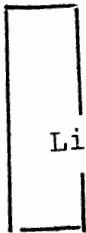
Sincerely,

CLASSROOM MAP
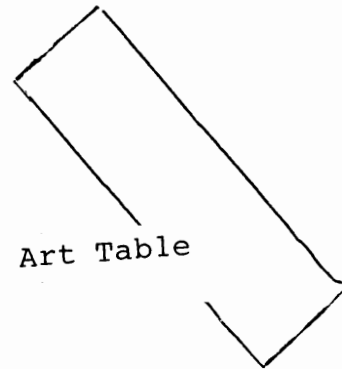
Windows
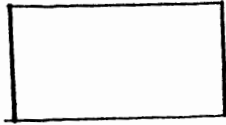
Water Table

Inventions

Puzzles, Games

Painting

Listening

Art Table
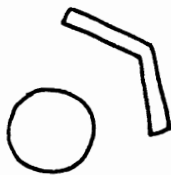
Block Area

Dramatic Play
(The Play House)