

# Child Observation and Assessment Syllabus

## Instructor Contact Information

Name:

Email:

Phone:

Office location:

Office hours:

## Course Description

Ongoing child assessment through systematic observation and documentation is critical for effective teaching to prepare each child for success in kindergarten and beyond. Children in early childhood programs have different needs, strengths, experiences, and primary languages. A system of ongoing child observation and assessment will allow educators of young children to tailor instruction to the needs of each child, thus encouraging the early development and learning needed for school success.

In this course, participants will learn how to implement a system of ongoing child assessment for children from birth to age 5 that is systematic, comprehensive, and feasible to make sure that children are ready for kindergarten. Participants will understand the importance of and strategies for planning and preparing for an effective system of ongoing child assessment. Participants will learn about and practice using methods of effective ongoing assessment to inform their teaching and improve children's learning. Approaches to engaging children's families and working with colleagues in assessment efforts are also part of the course.

This course will provide information and opportunities for individualizing ongoing assessment strategies for children who are dual language learners and children with special needs. Participants will learn about tools for screening and understand the process for referrals for more comprehensive evaluations. Participants will learn how to use assessment information to adjust teaching for more effective instruction and how to use aggregated data to evaluate and improve teaching for groups of children. Finally, participants will learn strategies for continual improvement in the area of child assessment.

## Objectives

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Observe children carefully and objectively, and document observations in effective ways.
2. Describe the various purposes of assessment.
3. Demonstrate the appropriate selection and use of ongoing child observation and assessment strategies to critically guide teaching and children's development and learning.
4. Demonstrate cooperative work with families and colleagues as they gather observation and assessment information, and explain the purpose, process, and results of

assessments to families.

5. Modify and use observation and assessment strategies to support children with special needs.
6. Select and conduct observation and assessment strategies that are developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate.
7. Show understanding of assessment measures to set goals and plan effective programs, environments, and interactions.
8. Demonstrate understanding of how to evaluate and use standardized assessment tools.
9. Show how to evaluate and use standard screening tools and when to refer children for further evaluation.
10. Demonstrate ability to chart the progress of a group of children toward standards and analyze results to adjust teaching.

## Grading

Participation/Professionalism	10%
In-Session Activities	30%
Weekly Assignments	40%
Final Assignment	20%

## Expectations

### Participation/Professionalism (10%: Grading per instructor)

You are expected to discuss any assigned readings and to actively engage in-session activities and discussions.

### In-Session Activities (30%: Grading per Instructor)

In-session activities may consist of, but are not limited to, observations, idea-sharing and generation, and planning exercises for online quizzes and discussion. Some activities are designed as quick checks of your understanding, engagement, and application of course information. Other activities require you to interact online and present findings to the rest of the class. You are expected to participate in all in-session activities.

### Weekly Assignments (40% total: Grading per assignment rubrics)

Weekly assignments provide opportunities to make meaning from course readings and videos. Assignments vary and may include filming yourself and children, reflection, action plans, graphic organizers, and practicing skills. Assignments include rubrics to help you judge the quality of your work. You are expected to complete all assignments in a timely manner, and contact the instructor as soon as possible if you are unable to do so.

- **Applied assignments:** In this course, you will complete practice-based assignments. Examples include creating assessment plans and documenting observations of children. These assignments help bridge theory to practice. Assignments assigned at the end of a session are due by the start of the next

session unless stated otherwise.

- **Video and Communities of Reflection and Practice (CORP) assignments:** In this course, you will film children, families, and yourself; upload your videos in the Coaching Companion; and share them in Communities of Reflection and Practice (CORP). You will exchange support and feedback with CORP peers and receive support and feedback from instructors to help you improve your practice. Your participation in CORP is meant to help you form personal

connections with one another, facilitate high-level collaboration, and improve your ability to provide coach-quality feedback to yourself and peers.

- **Readings:** You will read and synthesize material related to current session topics each week.

Readings are part of session assignments. Readings will generally have related activities that require you to show that you have read and reflected on the readings to support your teaching practice. Readings typically will address topics in the upcoming session, however some may review topics in the previous one. Readings are listed on the syllabus by session. Each session also includes assignment handouts that detail the reading and any related activities.

**Final Assignment** (20%: Grading per assignment rubric)

Participants will be asked to draw on the material covered throughout the course. Participants will create an action plan for ongoing child assessment in their programs. Participants will evaluate the strengths of current practices, areas for improvement and growth, and make a plan for effective assessment practices.

## Note on Filming

As noted above, in some assignments participants will be asked to film children, yourself, and families, review video footage, and edit and upload several short clips for the instructor and peers to view. The instructor will include guidance for this process by providing training and a detailed guide on filming and editing video clips for use with the Coaching Companion.

## Time Estimations

(Institutions will need to update this section. Initial text is provided.)

The estimated time commitment for each session is 5-8 hours. This estimates that you will spend a total of 3 hours working *in class* (instructor to provide specifics on their class schedule) and an additional 2-5 hours on readings and assignments out of class. Some sessions may include assignments that require more than 5 hours out of class (e.g., completing the planning, video, reflecting, and feedback cycles) while others may take less. Additionally, some participants may complete assignments more quickly than others. Some participants may review readings and videos multiple times and spend more time on their assignments. You can communicate with your instructor about any questions on due dates, extensions, and workload.

## Accommodations

(Institutions will need to update this section. Initial text is provided.)

Your experience in this class is important to us, and it is the policy and practice of

the \_\_\_\_\_ to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you experience barriers based on disability, please seek a meeting with

\_\_\_\_\_ to discuss and address them. If you have already established accommodations with \_\_\_\_\_, please communicate your approved accommodations to your instructor at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course.

## Course Schedule

Session	Topic	Readings and Assignments
0	<b>Introduction to Course and Child Observation</b>  Course Introduction  Frameworks	<b>Assignments</b>  Self-Introductions and CORP (video assignment)
1	<b>Introduction to Course and Child Observation</b>  Observation  Sharing Positive Observations with Families	<b>Assignments</b>  Developmental Milestones Reading Review Child Observation Five Positive Comments  <b>Reading</b>  Jablon, J. (2010, December). Taking it all in: Observation in the classroom. <i>Teaching Young Children</i> , 4(2), 24-27. <a href="#">[PDF]</a>  <b>Note:</b> Readings are listed separately on this syllabus but are the same readings that are in the reading assignment handouts.
2	<b>A Closer Look at Observation</b>  Responsive Observation  Focused Observation  Noticing Bias	<b>Assignments</b>  Responsive Observation CORP (video assignment) Focused Observation Reading Review  <b>Readings</b>  Turner, C. (2016, September 28). <i>Bias Isn't Just a Police Problem, It's a Preschool Problem</i> . <a href="#">[Online article]</a>  Day, C. (2013). Faith and confidence: Positioning our hearts and minds to assure success in the minds of black children. In <i>Being Black Is Not a Risk Factor: A Strengths-Based Look at the State of the Black Child</i> (pp. 8-11). Washington, D.C: National Black Child Development Institute. <a href="#">[PDF]</a>

Session	Topic	Readings and Assignments
3	<b>Documenting Observations</b>  Documenting What You Observe Anecdotal Records Work Samples Photographs	<b>Assignments</b>  Collecting Work Samples <i>Anecdotal Records</i> (video assignment) Reading Review  <b>Readings</b>  Bucher, E., & Hernández, M. (2016, July). Beyond bouncing the ball: Toddlers and teachers investigate physics. <i>Young Children</i> , 71(3). <a href="#">[Online Article]</a>  Howe, Nancy. (2016, October 20). <i>Cameras in the early childhood classroom: A powerful tool for documentation and reflection.</i> <a href="#">[Online Article]</a>
4	<b>More Ways to Document</b>  Checklists  Video	<b>Assignments</b>  Creating and Using Checklists Reading Review <i>Filming Children and CORP</i> (video assignment)  <b>Reading</b> Forman, G. (2009). Documentation and accountability: The shift from numbers to indexed narratives. <i>Theory into Practice</i> , 49:1, 29-35. <a href="#">[Journal Article]</a>

Session	Topic	Readings and Assignments
5	<b>Gathering Information with Families and Staff</b>  Inviting Families to Share  Documenting with Other Staff  Organizing Information	<b>Assignments</b>  A Letter to Families, Evaluating Data-Gathering Routines Readings—Upcoming Topics  <b>Readings</b>  Elicker, J., & McMullen, M. (2013, July). Appropriate and meaningful assessment in family-centered programs. <i>Young Children</i> . 68(3). 22-28. <a href="#">[PDF]</a>  National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE). (2003). Early childhood curriculum assessment, and program evaluation: Building an effective, accountable system in programs for children birth through age 8. <a href="#">[PDF]</a>  Your state's early learning standards
6	<b>Ongoing Assessment</b>  What is Assessment?  Foundations of Ongoing Assessment  Areas of Ongoing Assessment  Using an Assessment Tool	<b>Assignments</b>  Assessing Children in a Domain Reading Review  <b>Readings</b>  Trister Dodge, D., Heroman, C., Charles, J., and Maiorca, J. (2004). Beyond outcomes: How ongoing assessment supports children's learning and leads to meaningful curriculum. <i>Young Children</i> , 59(1), 20-28. <a href="#">[OER PDF]</a>  Quintero, E. (2012, April 5). The challenges of pre-k assessment. <a href="#">[Blog Article]</a>

Session	Topic	Readings and Assignments
7	<b>Planning for Ongoing Assessment</b>  Evaluating Assessment Tools  Assessment Vocabulary  Planning to Assess	<b>Assignments</b>  Lesson Plan and Assessment Assessment Vocabulary Review of Assessment in Your Program Reading-Upcoming Topics  <b>Reading</b>  U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, the National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement. (2011). <i>Family engagement and ongoing child assessment</i> . <a href="#">[PDF]</a>
8	<b>Partnering with Families and Children in Assessment</b>  Engaging Families Sharing with Families  Engaging Children	<b>Assignments</b>  Talking with a Family and CORP (video assignment) Partnering with Families in Assessment Readings: Upcoming Topics  <b>Readings</b>  Espinosa, L.M., & Garcia, E. (2012, November). <i>Developmental assessment of young dual language learners with a focus on kindergarten entry assessment. Working paper #1</i> . Center for Education and Early Care Research-Dual Language Learners (CECER-DLL). Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute. <a href="#">[PDF]</a>  Peña, E. D., & Halle, T. G. (2011, Feb. 11). Assessing preschool dual language learners: Traveling a multiforked road. <i>Child Development Perspectives</i> , 5(1), 28-32. <a href="#">[Journal Article]</a> *Requires institutional database access



Session	Topic	Readings and Assignments
9	<b>Ongoing Assessment: Dual Language Learners</b>  Children Learning Multiple Languages  Assessing Children Learning More Than One Language  Partnering with Families of Dual Language Learners	<b>Assignments</b>  Assessing Children Learning Two Languages Reading—Upcoming Topics  <b>Reading (Viewing)</b>  U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning. (April 17, 2015). <i>Effective instruction: Ongoing assessment, Disabilities Dialogue</i> [Webinar]. <a href="#">[Video]</a>
10	<b>Ongoing Assessment: Children with Special Needs</b>  Assessing Children with Disabilities  Planning to Assess Children with Disabilities  Partnering with Families of Children with Disabilities  Collaborating with Other Staff and Specialists	<b>Assignments</b>  Progress Monitoring Final Project Readings—Upcoming Topics  <b>Readings</b>  Akers, L., Atkins-Burnett, S., Monahan, S., Carta, J., Wasik, B. A., & Boller, K. (2015, June). <i>What does it mean to use ongoing assessment to individualize instruction in early childhood?</i> (OPRE Brief 2015-61). <a href="#">[PDF]</a>  Trister Dodge, D., Heroman, C., Charles, J., & Maiorca, J. (2004). Beyond outcomes: How ongoing assessment supports children's learning and leads to meaningful curriculum. <i>Young Children</i> . OER Commons. <a href="#">[OER Resource]</a> .  <b>Note:</b> The <i>Final Project</i> assignment is introduced in this session and due and presented in the final session (Session 15).

Session	Topic	Readings and Assignments
11	<b>Interpreting Data to Improve Teaching</b>  Interpreting Data About a Child  Making New Teaching Decisions	<b>Assignments</b>  Informing Teaching Graphing Practice Readings—Upcoming Topics  <b>Readings</b>  Regenstein, E., Connors, M., Romero-Jurado, R., & Weiner, J. (2017, February 22). Use and misuses of kindergarten readiness assessment results. <i>The Ounce Policy Conversations</i> (Conversation No. 6, Version 1.0). <a href="#">[PDF]</a>  Stedron, J. M., & Berger, A. (2010, August). <i>NCSL technical report: State approaches to school readiness assessment</i> . <a href="#">[PDF]</a>  U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2014, March). <i>Birth to five: Watch me thrive! A compendium of screening measures for young children</i> . <a href="#">[PDF]</a>
12	<b>Screening and Kindergarten Readiness Assessment</b>  Screening Assessment  Kindergarten Readiness Assessment	<b>Assignments</b>  Screening Interview Kindergarten Readiness Assessment: Your State Readings—Review and Upcoming Topics  <b>Readings</b>  U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). <i>Module 2: Understanding children's developmental milestones</i> [Online training module]. <a href="#">[Website]</a>  WestEd. (2015). <i>Developmental and behavioral screening guide for early care and education providers</i> <a href="#">[PDF]</a>

Session	Topic	Readings and Assignments
13	<b>Partnering with Families When Concerns Arise</b>  Partnering with Families in the Screening Process  Evaluations  Referrals for Evaluation	<b>Assignments</b>  Communicating about Concerns Referral for Evaluation Readings—Upcoming Topics  <b>Readings</b> (and a viewing)  U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, National Center for Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. (n.d.). <i>Measuring what matters: Exercises in data management</i> . <a href="#">[PDF]</a>  Zweig, J., Irwin, C.W., Kook, J., & Cox, J. (2015, April). <i>Data collection and use in early childhood education programs: Evidence from the Northeast region</i> (REL 2015-084). Washington, D.C: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast & Islands. <a href="#">[PDF]</a>  Colorado Department of Education. (n.d.). <i>Using child assessment data to achieve positive outcomes</i> <a href="#">[Video]</a> .  <b>Note:</b> A draft of your review of assessment in your early learning program plus a proposal for an area to highlight for recommendations is due next session as part of the final project.
14	<b>Using Group Data to Make Improvements</b>  Analyzing Group Data  Using Group Data to Make Changes  Reflecting and Seeking Support	<b>Assignments</b>  Reflection and Action Plan Reading Review  <b>Reading</b>  Watson Avery, M., Beardslee, W. R., Ayoub, C. C., & Watts, C. L. (2008). <i>Self-reflection and shared reflection as professional tools</i> . Family Connections Project, Children's Hospital Boston. <a href="#">[PDF]</a>

Session	Topic	Readings and Assignments
15	<b>Putting It All Together</b>  Review of Key Concepts  Sharing Action Plans	<b>Assignment</b>  Final Project (due)