

Using Observation and Documentation: *For the Record*

Use these ideas and questions to build on what you've learned and extend your practice.

THINK ABOUT IT!

- **Self-Reflection**

Use these questions to think about your own practice.

- **Reflect with Others**

Supervisors, directors, coaches, and teachers/providers can be reflective partners.

- **The Power of Practice**

Invite a colleague to join you; observe or record each other and share ideas.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

- How do I typically document my observations? What other forms of documentation can I use to record my observations (e.g., anecdotal records, photos, or videos)?
- How can I collaborate with colleagues to strengthen my documentation skills?
- What information do I usually include in my anecdotal records? What other information can I include to make my notes more meaningful and useful?
- How can I use children's work to document their development and learning?
- How do I incorporate documentation into my daily routine? How can I balance my interactions with children and my role as an observer and recorder?
- How can I keep my documentation as objective as possible?
- How do I record sounds, body language, and other communication strategies from infants/toddlers or children who are nonverbal?

TRY IT OUT!

Practice your documentation skills. Choose a skill or competency for observation and documentation. You may refer back to the area that you identified at the end of the pack, *For the Record*.

Identify one of the following times of day when the developmental focus will likely be observable:

**Morning arrival | Art | Dramatic play
Snack time | Outdoor play**

During the observation, ask yourself:

- What developmental information do you observe?
- How do you record your observation?
- What action words do you use to describe the behavior?
- What contextual information (setting, time, location, etc.) do you include?
- What other forms of documentation can you use to add to this observation (e.g., photos, video, child-created objects)?

How Did It Go?

Reflect on the process of documenting an observation. What was challenging about creating this record? What else might you try next time, and why?

What Next?

Keep practicing your documentation skills. Try this practice activity with each child in your program, and add other forms of documentation to the record (e.g., photos, videos, or child-created objects). Check out *Digging In: For the Record* from the bundle materials to learn more and reflect on your documentation skills. Explore the pack, *Interpreting Observations*, to find out more about using observations to reflect and to inform curriculum planning.