

Lakes and Prairies Child Care Resource &amp; Referral Bi-Annual Newsletter



# Early Childhood News

“Quality Care and Education for Every Child”

## Making Observation an Everyday Practice

Regular observation in your child care setting provides information about children’s activities, interests, skills, and needs. You can use what you learn to assess progress, plan the curriculum, and exchange information with families. It’s important to observe every child regularly. Here are some ideas to help you make observation an everyday practice in your child care setting.

- Use small chunks of time. Set aside 5-10 minutes a day to sit, watch, and listen to the children while taking notes. Try increasing observation times by 30 seconds per day. Soon observation will become a natural and integral part of your work.
- Create a system. Develop a system before you begin so that your notes are easy to understand and use right away. Some caregivers write on sticky notes, steno pads, or index cards using a retractable pen they keep tucked in a pocket.
- Keep track of individual observations. Create an observation log to document the dates, times, and places you observe individual children. List one child’s name at the top of a page, and use the lines below for information on your observations.
- Invite children to join. When you first begin observing, curious children may want to watch and talk about what you are doing and why. Offer paper, clipboards, and pens and pencils so children can choose to observe and record things of interest to them. Their observations-drawings, scribbles, and so on-can serve as samples of their work.
- Use technology to document children’s projects, interactions, and structures. Take digital photos. Turn on a tape recorder to collect children’s actual conversations. Set up a video camera on a tripod to record yourself engaged with the children.
- Share your observations with the children. Children enjoy listening to you read your notes on their activities and conversations. They can add a new perspective on what you think you saw and heard.
- Pick a spot and time. Observation allows caregivers to notice and document patterns in children’s behavior over time. To make daily observation a habit and to refine your skills, you could observe at the same time or in the same place in your child care environment. Once observation becomes part of your routine, the children will accept it as a normal part of their day.
- Give yourself time to develop observation skills. Change is easier in small steps. It takes time to develop and master observation skills, so be patient with yourself. Focus on the learning process and how much information you are gaining about the children and what is really going on in your environment.
- Encourage families to participate. You can start by inviting parents to observe their children. Talking to family members about what they are seeing and what it could mean about children’s development can help them connect behavior to learning in a concrete way.

Adapted from: *Teaching Young Children*, April/May 2009

## Choosing Learning Assessment Tools: A Guide for Child Care Providers

**Understanding and Using Tools to Chart Children’s Progress:** A learning assessment tool offers child care providers a way to chart the learning and growth of children in their care. It can also show child care professionals what strategies are helping certain children learn and which could be changed to meet the needs of those children. Parents and child care professionals can better support children by using a learning assessment tool.

All learning assessment tools listed below are approved for use in the Parent Aware Rating Process and are closely aligned with the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress.

Name	Focus
Creative Curriculum® for Preschool: Developmental Continuum Assessment Toolkit	Family Child Care/Center-based Care
Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos: Developmental Continuum Assessment Toolkit	Family Child Care/Center-based Care
HighScope Child Observation Record (COR) for Infants & Toddlers	Family Child Care/Center-based
HighScope Preschool Child Observation Record (COR), Second Edition	Family Child Care/Center-based
The Ounce Scale for Infants & Toddlers	Family Child Care/Center-based
Work Sampling, Developmental Guidelines, Preschool 3 or Preschool 4	Family Child Care/Center-based

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 with services in 21 counties of northwestern Minnesota.

## Using Portfolio Assessment

### *What are Portfolios?*

Portfolios are collections or samplings of information relating to each child's developmental progress in an educational setting. Portfolios can take various physical forms, depending on the preferences of the child care professional and the type of child care program offered. Boxes, accordion files, folders, three-ring binders, photo albums, and various combinations of these or similar items can be used as receptacles for proofs of progress.

### *What can be included in Portfolios?*

There is no right or wrong in terms of setting up and contributing items to a portfolio. Each caregiver's system can be unique and made to fit his or her particular program and curriculum. Each child's unique interests and needs can also be addressed in terms of what is included in his or her portfolio. The following are some suggestions for types of entries that a caregiver might include in a preschool child's portfolio.

- **Photographs-** In many early childhood programs, younger children spend time working on tasks which are not easily saved for future reference. For example, building with blocks can be an involved activity which a child might pursue with vigor. Various progress in the child's abilities to work with blocks can be documented over time by taking photographs of the various structures built.
- **Actual Work Samples-** Examples of children's work which can be saved to demonstrate each child's progress, including two-dimensional art projects, emergent writing samples, a record of each child's quest for knowledge, and samples which each child selects on his/her own.
- **Audio and Video-** Obtaining a record of each child "in action" is a very enjoyable and concrete way to show each child's development over time. The child care provider or teacher can record various samples of each child's work and progress, and specific portions can be viewed or listened to during conferences. Video can be used to show a child in the "process of creating" or in virtually any activity. Audiotapes can be used to record sample conversations, such as Show and Tell sharing; conversations at snack or meal times; and reciting poems, action rhymes, or songs.
- **Observations-** Different types of written observations include informal anecdotal or narrative records, checklists that focus on each child's development in specific areas, and time sampling (noting which activity a child is pursuing at different times during the day).

Portfolios are useful, effective tools to aid early childhood professionals in acknowledging and documenting each child's progress. Portfolios can be unique to each child and the contents can focus on each child's specific interactions with his or her environment, materials, peers, and caregivers. Portfolios are practical and useful as both reporting and planning tools. The form and format are adaptable to each educational program for young children. Those who have tried them like them!

Adapted from: Early Childhood News, Written by Dr. Priscilla D. Huffman, [http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article\\_view.aspx?ArticleID=495](http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=495)

## Minnesota Center for Professional Development

### Supporting early childhood and school-age practitioners

Minnesota Center for Professional Development – Are you ready to plan your career? The Minnesota Center for Professional Development (MNCPD) Registry is the only Web site you need to find, plan, and track your professional development!

For more information about the Minnesota Center for Professional Development, visit their website at: [www.mncpd.org](http://www.mncpd.org) or contact your local CCR&R agency.



## GROW your quality! SHOW your quality!

### The Minnesota Child Care Credential

Minnesota Child Care Professionals, join a community of caregivers *learning* the latest, *striving* for more, and *graduating* to the next level of the profession.

The Minnesota Child Care Credential offers training in all aspects of educating, caring for, and nurturing children. The goal of the Credential is to ensure that ALL Minnesota children are ready to enter school by 2020.

For more information: [www.mnchildcare.org/credential](http://www.mnchildcare.org/credential) or 800-452-3646 ext. 7625.

## Ideas for Recording Observation Notes

- Use mailing labels or sticky notes to record your observations. At the beginning of the day, place on a clipboard three or four notes or labels with the names of three of four children whom you wish to observe. Keep the clipboard handy.
- Keep sticky notes in your pocket or in each interest area. Keep a simple folder in each interest area. Draw a grid on the folder with as many squares as there are children in your care. Write a child's name in each square and store your notes about the child there until you want to transfer them to the child's portfolio.
- Use a digital pen. Many digital pens have voice recorders that enable you to interact with a child while the pen records voices.
- Develop your own system of shorthand so you can write quickly. Stick to brief notes, use short phrases, and abbreviate whenever possible. You can underline particular words to indicate emphasis.

Adapted from: Heroman, C., Burts, D., Berke, K., & Bickart (2010). *Teaching Strategies GOLD*. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies Inc.

## Getting Ready for Parent Aware: A Self Reflection

Getting Ready for Parent Aware Question	Suggestion
<p><b>Infants and Toddlers (ages 0-3)</b> Does your program use any of the following assessment tools to track learning for ages 0-3 at least twice per year, and have your lead teachers received training on it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Creative Curriculum Assessment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> HighScope Child Observation Record (COR) for Infants &amp; Toddlers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The Ounce Scale</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No, I use none of these, but I would like to start using: _____</li> </ul> <p>If no, do you use an informal method to track the learning of children ages 0-3?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> </ul> <p>Does your program share the assessment results with families of children ages 0-3?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> </ul> <p>Does your program use the results from these assessments to design goals for individual children ages 0-3 and to guide instruction?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> </ul>	<p><i>Building quality suggestion:</i> If you do not use an assessment tool, consider attending a workshop or training on selecting child assessment tools. Provide training for your staff on the assessment tool you choose.</p>
<p><b>Preschoolers (ages 3-5)</b> Does your program use any of the following assessment tools to track learning for ages 3-5 at least twice per year, and have your lead teachers received training on it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Creative Curriculum Assessment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> HighScope Preschool Child Observation Record (COR)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work Sampling®</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No, I use none of these, but I would like to start using: _____</li> </ul> <p>If no, do you use an informal method to track the learning of children ages 3-5?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> </ul> <p>Do you share the assessment results with families of children ages 3-5?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> </ul> <p>Do you use the results from these assessments to design goals for individual children ages 3-5 and to guide instruction?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> </ul>	<p><i>Building quality suggestion:</i> If you do not use an assessment tool, consider going to a CCR&amp;R lending library to see assessments on the approved list. You could also go to a workshop or training on selecting child assessment tools. After you choose an assessment, attend training on the assessment.</p>

## The Buzz, the Myth, and the Truth Behind Minnesota's Quality Rating System

### What is Minnesota's Parent Aware Rating Tool?

Designed by child care providers, early learning professionals and parents, Minnesota's voluntary Parent Aware Rating Tool is intended to support our state's children by creating a rating system which identifies, recognizes and celebrates quality in early education. The rating tool will recognize early educators for the quality of care they deliver and build on this quality by supporting their efforts at program improvements. The Parent Aware pilot came to an end on June 30, 2011. Parent Aware will continue to operate in several areas in Minnesota and the coalition of organizations working on the project are committed to developing and implementing a statewide system as funding is available.

### Why is a quality rating system needed?

A kindergarten readiness study conducted by the Minnesota Department of Education found that only 50 percent of Minnesota children arrive at kindergarten ready to learn. The good news is that mounting research demonstrates that quality child care can reverse this trend and offer our youngest citizens lifelong benefits. The Parent Aware Rating Tool is designed to raise the number of Minnesota children fully prepared for learning success by empowering child care providers/early educators.

### How does the pilot program work? How will I be rated?

Programs will receive ratings using a point system. The star ratings are based on five main categories:

- **Teacher Training and Education:** have the preparation and training needed to best prepare children for school.
- **Family Partnerships:** involve parents in the learning process and respect them.
- **Teaching Materials and Strategies:** use learning materials that effectively prepare children for school.
- **Tracking Learning:** track children's school readiness progress and regularly share findings with parents.
- **Child Safety:** program space is clean and there are rules that help keep children safe and healthy.

### How can I prepare now for when Parent Aware comes to my area in the future?

**Step 1:** Learn more about Parent Aware. Please visit [www.parentawareratings.org](http://www.parentawareratings.org) for more information.

**Step 2:** Review the Getting Ready Checklist at: [www.parentawareratings.org](http://www.parentawareratings.org). Click on the "Providers/Early Educator" link in the upper right corner, then click "Getting Ready Checklist".

**Step 3:** Take classes regarding family partnerships, curriculum, assessment, or health & safety. Please visit [www.mnstreams.org](http://www.mnstreams.org) or [www.eagertolearn.org](http://www.eagertolearn.org) to search for upcoming courses.

**Step 4:** Apply for a CCR&R grant to purchase any needed materials. Grant applications are available every year September 1-25 at [www.mnstreams.org](http://www.mnstreams.org).

# Upcoming Professional Development Events

## CCR&R Face to Face Courses

Please contact Kateri at 800-452-3646 ext. 7679 or [kateris@lakesandprairies.net](mailto:kateris@lakesandprairies.net) for information regarding the classes below or visit [www.mnstreams.org](http://www.mnstreams.org).

### October

Date	Time	Location	Title
1	9:00-2:30pm	Park Rapids	Physical Development
3	6:30-8:30pm	Moorhead	Six Keys
4	6:30-8:30pm	Bemidji	Support Babies & Toddlers I
4	6:30-8:30pm	TRF	Not By Chance: ECIPS I
4	6:30-8:30pm	EGF	SIDS & SBS
6	6:30-8:30pm	Bemidji	Child Development
8	9:00-2:30pm	TRF	Physical Development
8	9:00-2:30pm	Glenwood	Business Success
10	6:30-8:30pm	Grygla	Socialization & Guidance
11	6:30-8:30pm	Bagley	Six Keys
13	6:30-9:00pm	Wahpeton	Family Matters
17	6:30-8:30pm	FF	Hand in Hand: Aloof
17	6:30-8:30pm	Moorhead	Team Building I
20	7:00-8:30pm	Moorhead	Spotlight on Language I
22	9:00-3:30pm	DL	Reframing Discipline
27	6:30-8:30pm	RLF	Socialization & Guidance
27	7:00-8:30pm	Bemidji	Spotlight on Language I

### November

Date	Time	Location	Title
1	6:30-8:30pm	Hallock	Hand in Hand: Aloof
1	6:30-9:30pm	EGF	Not By Chance: FCC I
3	6:30-8:30pm	Alexandria	AD/HD
8	6:30-9:30pm	Bemidji	Code of Ethical Conduct
8	6:30-8:30pm	Moorhead	Supporting Babies and Toddlers I
12	9:00-2:30pm	Alexandria	Physical Development
14	6:30-8:30pm	FF	Separation & Difficult Issues
14	6:30-8:30pm	Wheaton	Hand in Hand: Aloof
15	6:30-8:30pm	TRF	SIDS & SBS
21	6:30-8:30pm	Moorhead	Separation & Difficult Issues
22	6:30-8:30pm	FF	SIDS & SBS

### December

Date	Time	Location	Title
1	6:30-8:30pm	Crookston	SIDS & SBS
5	6:30-9:30pm	Moorhead	Code of Ethical Conduct
6	6:30-8:30pm	Bemidji	SIDS & SBS
6	6:30-8:30pm	Moorhead	SIDS & SBS

## CCR&R Eager-to-Learn On-line Courses

Visit [www.eagertolearn.org](http://www.eagertolearn.org) for more information.

### Building Awareness Courses: 8 hours/3 weeks

Start Date	Title
October 5	FCC Legal & Insurance Issues
November 2	FCC Record Keeping
November 29	Understanding Floor Time
November 30	Successful Transitions
November 30	SIDS & SBS
December 1	Support Babies/Toddlers during Homecoming

### Building Knowledge Courses: 12 hours/4 weeks

Start Date	Title
October 4	Aprendiendo Sobre
October 5	Retain Great Staff
October 12	Learning to Listen
October 18	Social & Emotional Development
November 22	Bridging Cultures
November 28	Mealtimes Made Healthy
November 29	Prevent Child Abuse

### Applying Knowledge Courses: 16 hours/5 weeks

Start Date	Title
October 10	Why Math
October 10	CC for FCC
October 18	Becoming Mediawise
October 18	Childhood Stress
October 25	Spanish for Young Children
October 26	Understanding HighScope
November 1	Not by Chance: FCC
November 7	Children with SPD
November 7	Ages of Infancy
November 7	Child Development
November 9	Positive Discipline
November 9	Design Skills
November 15	FASD

### Developing Skills Courses: 32 hours/6 weeks

Start Date	Title
October 25	How to Go Green
November 7	Acceptance & Belonging

## Upcoming Progressive Learning Classes



CCR&R Progressive Learning classes offer a complete, interactive learning experience with in-depth information on the same topic presented over time. In this flexible and supportive format, participants are given more time to learn, a chance to try new ideas in their child care settings, come back to class and share experiences and ideas with

other participants. Progressive Learning classes include two or more scheduled meeting times, as well as practical and meaningful activities to be completed in between class times. If you are ready to "step up" your learning, take away useful new ideas, and receive additional training hours, then these classes are for you!

### Not by Chance: Quality in Practice for Early Childhood Indicators of Progress

October 4, 11 & 18, 2011 in Thief River Falls

### Coming Together to Support Babies & Toddlers During a Deployment/Homecoming

October 4 & 18, 2011 in Bemidji

November 8 & 15, 2011 in Moorhead

### MNCCC Class 2A: Working in Center-based Care & Education: Team Building

October 17 & 24, 2011 in Moorhead

**\*\*You DO NOT have to participate in the MN Child Care Credential training program if you attend this class.**

### Spotlight on Young Children and Language

October 20, 27 & November 3, 2011 in Moorhead

October 27 & November 3, 10, 2011 in Bemidji

### Not By Chance: Quality in Practice for Family Child Care Environments

November 1, 8 & 15, 2011 in East Grand Forks

## Child Passenger Safety Classes

To register or for more information please contact:

Safe Kids Coalition- Grand Forks, ND	(701) 780-5919
Safe Kids Coalition- Fargo, ND	(701) 234-7233
Polk County Public Health	(218) 281-3385
Jennifer Booge- Park Rapids, MN	(218) 732-7204
Alexandria Tech. College- Alexandria, MN	(320) 762-4510
Fergus Falls Area	(218) 998-3400
Detroit Lakes Community Education	(218) 847-4418

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