

Building Portfolios

When authentically assessing young children's developmental progress, teachers and care providers can use portfolios to organize their observation notes, photographs, work samples and other documentation. By tying documentation directly to the Early Learning Guidelines, teachers as well as parents and others begin to see the specific indicators in action.

Examples of portfolio forms have been provided here with this kind of documentation in mind.

Two different formats are offered:

- Developmental Progress Portfolio Forms can be used with any age group including infants, toddlers, preschoolers and kindergartners.
- Portfolio Forms for some of the preschool and kindergarten indicators that are most suited for portfolio documentation have been provided for three- and four-year-olds, as well as kindergartners.

Teachers and care providers are invited to use whichever format fits their program best. Or, they may create a different design altogether.

It's most important that the documentation be a factual and descriptive representation of what each child can do and gives clear information about the child's developmental progress across the developmental continuum presented in the Early Learning Guidelines.

A few considerations for effective and informative portfolio collection should be remembered:

1. The portfolio is a place to gather information. It is not a report card, but rather the collection of evidence.
2. Observation notes should be factual and descriptive. They should tell a story of what the child did and/or what she or he said - not the teacher's or caregiver's opinion about it.
3. Work samples and photographs (and perhaps other documentation) of the child in action support the observations documented on the portfolio form.
4. Portfolios are put together with the family in mind. Family members love to see photos of their children. The photos and work samples give them a window into the child's time at the early childhood program. And, by tying photos and observations to the Early Learning Guidelines, family members gain a better understanding of how their child is progressing developmentally.
5. Observations are done across time. They are not one-shot, on-demand tasks. Teachers and care providers watch children throughout daily interactions, play, and routines. They take notes of what children do and say so that they can get to know each child better and build a case about where she or he is successful and where she or he is challenged.
6. These observations and other forms of documentation support curricular strategies so that each child can be supported to reach his or her full potential.