

Pre-K Essential 9, Bullets 1, 2 & 4 Ongoing Observation Sample Video

MAISA Literacy Essentials

<https://youtu.be/J3M17VLiLWk>

Narrator: Ongoing observation and assessment of children's language and literacy development should inform children's educations. In this classroom, the teacher engages in observation in multiple contexts, including during play.

Teacher: We take observational notes in the classroom to help us to learn more about the children, where they are developmentally and what they're doing. We use the observational notes in many ways. One of the most important ways is to inform instructions so that we're able to scaffold for the children the next steps for them and just help with their development. We also use the observational notes to communicate with families, and this can help build the relationship with families as well as help provide opportunities to teach families how to teach their children as well. The first most important thing to know is that you don't have to have something special to take notes. You just have to do something with it afterwards. Sometimes I will take notes on a piece of paper. In general though, I have a grid, which includes the date because that's important to have as well as a place for the child's name and what happened, and I just want to give specific examples. I want to be accurate and factual and not subjective in any way. So, I do have a table that I will use for taking notes in that way as well. And then I do just jot on there if I have a picture to go with it, just because I want to know when that is the case. Sometimes I use checklists. Sometimes that can be helpful for things like letter id, which letters they knew and that type of thing. So, I will use checklists as well and sometimes it has the children's name and just kind of the different areas that I might be looking at, whether it's scribble writing and random letters and those types of things. So, if I need to capture something quickly, I can do that on a checklist as well. And then sometimes just a photo or even a video to capture something because I just want to have that material.

And it's just too much to capture all at once. Some of the things that we take observational notes on in relation to literacy is letter identification and recognition. So, we try to do that authentically through play and just kind of note some of the letters the children are recognizing and identifying. And it may be like at the message board when somebody says, oh, that's a P for Piper and so, it might be during those times and we try to capture those times where it's authentic. We also take observational notes on children's writing, and sometimes it starts out with scribble writing and moves to random letters and some sounds symbol correspondence. So, we try to capture where they are and then when we are doing the scaffolded writing activities in the classroom, it just helps us to know where to start and how far we can try to extend that.

So, what we do with our notes afterwards is we actually on a weekly basis talk about what children did during the day, what that might mean for planning instruction, some of the things that the children said and so, we use those notes to plan for instruction. So especially when we're planning for the next week, we'll kind of look over, okay, they didn't know a lot of letters, but are they able to match letters? And so then we'll provide some scaffolding up opportunities where maybe we're doing some letter matching activities for some children, as well as having some other activities where they're doing some higher level writing. So, we want to be able to provide activities that meet all of the children's needs. So, in order to keep track of the children's development and even the classroom progress, we do put anecdotes into an online system and the beauty of that is we're able to get some reports, which is able to help us look at the data in an individual in classroom setting, which again, can help inform our practice. And through that, we can see how far children have grown in one area, if there's other areas that maybe we need to support a little bit more. One thing from the last kind of marking period versus

this marking period is we really have noticed a change in children's writing and a growth and development in that, and we can kind of connect that to some of the activities that we've done and that can help us plan better for this year and future years as well. I think it's important to really know where your children are in order to best meet their needs. So, without watching children and making sure you're capturing those moments, I think it's really hard to know what to provide for them to take them to the next level. It's been incredibly encouraging and humbling at the same time to see the growth of all of the children in different ways throughout the year. So, it's very exciting to see when they're able to make a new connection and when they want to learn and discover even more. That's very exciting.

Narrator: Learn more at literacyessentials.org.