

MAKING USE OF DOCUMENTATION

The documentation is useful for teachers on a daily basis to plan programs for individuals, as well as the group, and it is also used show progress over time. In order for documentation to be useful, it must be well organized and contain manageable data. Scribbled notes, undated photographs, and too many samples of work make for a confusing mass of information come reporting time. Keeping pertinent information on individual children can be done through use of a portfolio or expandable files. Each teacher needs to have a system that works for them. Whatever the system, the educator must be sure to capture dated information about each child in all curriculum areas, as well as in all areas of development. This information provides evidence for showing growth and for making decisions for supporting the child, as well as the large group, in relation to the organization of the classroom, materials, teaching strategies, and content.

Points to consider about documentation:

- Be selective, keeping only the most relevant information and samples of work.
- Be sure to date all samples, and add brief explanation for later reference.
- Make up displays, as well as photo, powerpoint, or other types of presentations to showcase learning through play. While time-consuming, these are invaluable resources for the teacher to analyze, and for parents and administrators to review. Again, be selective. Two or three well chosen pictures will tell more than an album with a thousand photos.

The knowledge and skills that are assessed through documentation are significant aspects of learning that cannot be reduced to a measurable standard. Tests, whether teacher-made or standardized, provide information on the achievement of specific skills and knowledge. There need not be a conflict between these two types of evaluation if parents and teachers recognize that different kinds of skills and knowledge are being assessed. Analysis of the material gathered through documentation is used for specific programme review and meeting the needs of individual students. The various anecdotes found in this document provide examples of how this works in practice.

There are times when teachers may be required to use standardized tests. To prepare them for this unfamiliar task, it would be beneficial to introduce children to test-taking beforehand, and teach them some strategies. This kind of assessment offers little practical help with program planning or individual support, but it does address accountability.

