

North American Division

Approaches to Learning Teacher Observation

This template can be used as an instrument by the teacher to record a child’s behaviors, actions, and verbalizations that will inform the teacher about the child’s development. *Notes should be objective, only recording the observed events, and should not include a teacher’s thoughts or opinions.*

Approaches to Learning

North American Division Early Childhood Learning Developmental Standards has five domains, i.e., spiritual, physical, social-emotional, language/communication, and cognitive. They reflect specific content knowledge or skills that young children should have and can do. ‘Approaches to Learning’ is not about specific content knowledge or skills. It is about *how* these skills are acquired in all domains. Approaches to Learning involves distinct behavior patterns that children display as they engage in learning tasks across all developmental domains, and reflects how children learn. Regardless of what young children are learning, they must use their approaches to learning abilities as positive strategies to direct that learning. Young children learn best when these approaches to learning are encouraged and supported in all domains of early development.

Below are the seven approaches to learning as contained in NAD ECDELS. This tracker may assist the teacher in documenting children’s development of their approaches to learning. The first table is a quick reference of each approach with observable examples. The second table outlines observable classroom scenarios with objective vs. subjective notes. It is important that **ONLY** the facts are documented. Under the header “What This Tells Me” refers to specific approaches outlined in Table 1. This will assist the teacher in determining which skills need further attention. Use these tables as resources when completing observation forms.

TABLE 1: Approaches to Learning

<p>#1 - Eagerness, Initiative and Curiosity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shows curiosity ● Is eager to learn new things ● Enjoys new experiences. 	<p>#2 - Engagement, Attentiveness and Persistence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintains concentration over time when attending to developmentally appropriate tasks, questions, directions or interactions ● Seeks help when needed ● Completes activities 	<p>#3 - Creativity and Invention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approaches daily activities with creativity and imagination ● Exhibits signs of inventiveness
<p>#4 - Planning and Reflection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shows initial signs of planning ● Sets goals and learns from experiences ● Demonstrates flexibility and adaptability 	<p>#5 - Reasoning and Problem Solving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identifies, analyzes, classifies, compares/contrasts objects, events and experiences ● Finds more than one answer to a question or problem, through active exploration and discussion 	<p>#6 - Self-direction and Confidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Displays independence ● Makes choices ● Pursues appropriate activities ● Manages own time and effort ● Regulates self-emotions
<p>#7 - Symbolization and Representation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Takes on roles ● Explores actions and sensory experiences 		

TABLE 2: Observation Examples

Write Objective Observations Examples:	What This Tells Me	Do Not Write Subjective Notes Examples:	Approach
Sammy was playing with another classmate in the block center area, when he knocked over his classmate’s tower. His classmate began to cry, and Sammy walked away.	Sammy needs more <u>interpersonal skill development</u> .	Sammy and John were playing in the block center. Sammy knocked it over on purpose. He has pent-up anger issues and didn’t care that his friend cried. (Never include other children’s names.)	4,5&6
During group activities Charlie interrupts and talks over anyone that is talking.	Charlie is not attending to <u>developmentally appropriate tasks</u> .	Charlie is missing adult attention, and this is a way he can control what happens. (Never speculate.)	2&6
During free time and play Mark prefers to collect the same two toy animals for solo play.	Mark is not showing <u>curiosity</u> about different centers and does not take the <u>initiative</u> to experience new activities without prompting.	Mark is an introvert and displays autistic tendencies. (Never diagnose a child.)	1
Mary became frustrated with her puzzle again and insists that the teacher complete it for her.	Mary <u>seeks help</u> when needed but does not <u>complete</u> frustrating <u>activities</u> on her own.	Mary is a coddled child who is used to adults doing things for her. (Never infer based on home life.)	2
Max covers his ears whenever music plays on the speakers.	Loud music overwhelms Max’s <u>sensory experience</u> .	Max is not used to music, and he doesn't know how to respond to it. (Never assume.)	7
During circle time Ela copies other children’s answers.	Ela has not shown signs of <u>creativity and inventiveness</u> .	Ela is lazy and too quick to answer when asked a question. (Never label.)	3

Teacher Quarterly Observation

Name of child: _____ Observer: _____

Age at the Time of Observation: Year _____ Months _____ Date & Time of Observation: _____

Setting of scene: _____

Objective observation:

What this tells me:

	Approaches to Learning	Observed Regularly	Observed Occasionally	Needs to Acquire
1.	Eagerness, Initiative and Curiosity <i>Shows curiosity; is eager to learn new things; enjoys new experiences.</i>			
2.	Engagement, Attentiveness and Persistence <i>Maintains concentration over time when attending to developmentally appropriate tasks, questions, directions or interactions; seeks help when needed; completes activities.</i>			
3.	Creativity and Invention <i>Approaches daily activities with creativity and imagination; exhibits signs of inventiveness.</i>			
4.	Planning and Reflection <i>Shows initial signs of planning; sets goals and learns from experiences; demonstrates flexibility and adaptability.</i>			
5.	Reasoning and Problem Solving <i>Identifies, analyzes, classifies, compares/contrasts objects, events and experiences; finds more than one answer to a question or problem, through active exploration and discussion.</i>			
6.	Self-direction and Confidence <i>Displays independence; makes choices; pursues appropriate activities; manages own time and effort; regulates self-emotions</i>			
7.	Symbolization and Representation <i>Takes on roles; explores actions and sensory experiences.</i>			