

## Responding to and Planning for Each Child

As you observe children playing with toys, think about the goals, objectives, and steps of the *Developmental Continuum*. Consider what each child is learning and how you might respond. Here is how four teachers who are implementing *The Creative Curriculum* use what they learn from their observations to respond to each child and to plan.

| Observe  | Reflect  | Respond  |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Julio (4 months) lies on his tummy on a play mat. He reaches for a teether, grabs it, and brings it to his mouth. He continues to look around the mat for several minutes, and then he notices two children pushing trucks. He watches them and begins to grunt, moving his head up and down.</p> | <p>Julio is using his whole hand to grasp objects (<i>Objective 9, Demonstrates basic fine motor skills</i>).</p> <p>He is beginning to move purposefully (<i>Objective 8, Demonstrates basic gross motor skills</i>).</p> <p>He watches and responds to other children (<i>Objective 5, Plays with other children</i>).</p>   | <p>Linda decides to encourage Julio's interest in the other children by responding to the cues that tell her that he would like to change his position. She says, "You see those two girls playing with the trucks. I'll pick you up, and we'll move closer so you can see them better."</p>   |
| <p>Abby (14 months) fills a purse with small blocks and carries it as she toddles around the room. She approaches Samanda, opens the purse to show her what is inside, and then continues carrying it around.</p>  | <p>Abby is walking with increasing coordination (<i>Objective 8, Demonstrates basic gross motor skills</i>).</p> <p>She is engaging momentarily with other children (<i>Objective 5, Plays with other children</i>).</p>   | <p>Brooks provides other objects for Abby to carry, so Abby can strengthen her large-muscle skills and balance.</p> <p>She encourages her engagement with other children by saying, "Abby, I think Samanda wants to look carefully at the blocks you collected. Will you please show them to her again?"</p>   |
| <p>Leo (18 months) takes the top off a shape sorter and dumps out all of the shapes. He brings it over to a bucket of plastic people and begins to fill the sorter with the people. When the sorter is full and no more people will fit, he holds it up to Barbara and asks, "Mo?"</p>               | <p>Leo is using one hand to hold an object and the other hand to manipulate another object (<i>Objective 9, Demonstrates basic fine motor skills</i>).</p> <p>He is experimenting with trial and error approaches to simple problems (<i>Objective 14, Uses problem-solving strategies</i>).</p> <p>He is using gestures, word-like sounds, and single words to communicate (<i>Objective 17, Develops expressive language</i>).</p> | <p>Barbara responds to Leo by describing the problem: "I don't think any more will fit in there, Leo."</p> <p>She encourages him to solve the problem by asking, "What else can you put the people in?" She pauses, giving him time to think about the question, and then offers some suggestions. She asks, "How about using a bigger container so that more people will fit?" Then, as she points to a collection of baskets and a cardboard box, she adds, "We have baskets and a big box."</p> |

| Observe   | Reflect  | Respond  |
|---|--|--|
| <p>◀ Gena (30 months) is playing with the farm animals. She puts three horses next to each other, places two pigs together, and matches two sheep. She looks up and says, “Same, same. All the same.”</p> | <p>Gena is grouping objects with similar characteristics (<i>Objective 13, Shows a beginning understanding that things can be grouped</i>).</p> <p>She uses simple sentences with three or more words (<i>Objective 17, Develops expressive language</i>).</p> | <p>Ivan acknowledges Gena’s work, saying, “I see you have put all the horses together, the pigs together, and the sheep together.” To encourage her language development, he expands what she said. “All of the horses, all of the pigs, and all of the sheep. The same kind of animal goes together.”</p> |

### Responsive Planning

In developing weekly plans, these teachers use their observations and refer to the *Developmental Continuum*. Here is what they record on their weekly planning forms.

On the *Child Planning Form*, under “Current information,” Linda writes about the cues Julio used to tell her that he was ready to do something else. Under “Plans,” she writes that she will observe Julio closely so that she can respond appropriately to his cues. She also writes a reminder to share what she learns with her co-teacher.

After reviewing observation notes about the other children, Brooks realizes that two other children have been carrying toys in purses. She decides to add some small baskets for filling and carrying. Brooks adds this task to the *Group Planning Form* under “Changes to the Environment.”

Barbara recognizes that Leo was exploring the concept of quantity (how many he can fit into the container). On the *Child Planning Form*, under “Plans,” she records that she will provide opportunities for him to experiment with quantity through water play. On the *Group Planning Form*, under “Changes to the Environment,” she records, “Add 2 sets of nesting cups to the water table.” She also makes a note to use words such as *more*, *less*, *same*, *empty*, and *full* with the children.

Ivan uses the *Child Planning Form* to record his observation of Gena’s expressive language. Under “Plans,” he writes that he will continue to expand her sentences, offering her opportunities to hear more complex language and new words. He also decides to bring a collection of lids that he can put in small tubs for the children to sort. He adds this to the *Group Planning Form* under “Indoor Experiences” for Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

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