

## Responding to and Planning for Each Child

As you observe children playing with sand and water, 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 three teachers use what they learn from their observations to respond to each child and to plan.

Observe	Reflect	Respond
Jasmine (8 months) holds both of Janet's hands as she takes a few steps around the playground. Jasmine stops to watch two toddlers who are digging in the sandbox.	<p>Jasmine watches and responds to other children (<i>Objective 5, Plays with other children</i>).</p> <p>She is beginning to gain balance and to move from place to place (<i>Objective 8, Demonstrates basic gross motor skills</i>).</p>	Janet sits with Jasmine on the ground near the children who are digging. She talks to Jasmine about what they are doing: "Tyler and Shontelle are having a great time, digging with their shovels."
Willard (11 months) picks up a large plastic snap bead from the sand tray where he has been playing and hands it to Grace.	<p>Willard uses his thumb and index finger to grasp and drop objects (<i>Objective 9, Demonstrates basic fine motor skills</i>).</p> <p>He continues an activity when an adult interacts (<i>Objective 10, Sustains attention</i>).</p>	To encourage Willard, Grace smiles at him and says, "Thank you for the bead, Willard. May I have another one?"
Matthew (22 months) tries to take a small toy boat out of the water table by using a wooden spoon. The boat falls off the spoon. He tries again, but the boat falls. He looks around, chooses a small fishnet, and lifts the boat out. He looks at Mercedes and smiles.	<p>Matthew plans ways to use objects to perform one-step tasks (<i>Objective 11, Understands how objects can be used</i>).</p> <p>He persists with trial-and-error approaches to solving a problem (<i>Objective 14, Uses problem-solving strategies</i>).</p>	<p>Mercedes acknowledges Matthew's accomplishment, "Matthew, you found a way to get the boat out. You used the net to solve the problem."</p> <p>She challenges him: "What else can you pick up with the fishnet?"</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*, Janet notes Jasmine's interest in watching the other children. Under "Plans," she writes that she will continue to observe Jasmine when she is playing near other children and encourage her engagement with them.

Grace records Willard's use of the pincer grasp on the *Child Planning Form*. She decides that she will bring out a collection of large plastic keys so that he can continue to practice grasping. She records this under "Plans." On the *Group Planning Form*, under "Indoor Experiences," Grace also makes a note about offering the keys on Thursday and Friday.

On the *Group Planning Form*, under "Changes to the Environment," Mercedes records that she will add new tools and small toys to the water table. She plans to add two pairs of tongs, a sieve, and a ladle, as well as several small floating fish and ducks. On the *Child Planning Form*, under "Current Information," she records Matthew's problem-solving experience. Under "Plans," she writes a note to encourage him to use the new materials at the water table.

Sand and water play provide infants, toddlers, and twos with wonderful opportunities to explore and experiment. Sometimes families are unaware of the many benefits of this type of play, thinking mostly about the potential mess involved. The letter to families is one way to explain how sand and water play contribute to their child's development.

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