



Observation, Screening and Assessment Tools

At *Begin With Us* we understand the importance of observation, screening and assessment to help individualize each child's learning style and learning needs. We ensure that each child's unique academic, social, and emotional experience at our center is monitored to suit his/her own individual needs. We accomplish this through observation and by utilizing various assessment and screening tools. When administering assessments, our caregivers are sensitive to and informed of family culture, experiences, children's abilities and disabilities, and home language as indicated on the "Getting to Know You! Child History" form. We strive to make all assessments meaningful, authentic, and accurate.

Our Child and Family Advocate (CFA) is available to your family as a resource. The CFA coordinates screenings with outside agencies and collaborates with teachers to conduct developmental screenings. Results are carefully considered and shared with families in order to determine the necessary action to be taken. Questions concerning your child's development can be directed to the Child and Family Advocate at 814-515-1044.

Observation

An observation is based on what is known about child development, what is known about the strengths, interests and needs of each individual child, and knowledge of the social and cultural context in which the child lives. It is the foundation of developmentally appropriate practice.

Informal teacher observations are done on a daily basis through interaction with the child. Knowledge gained regarding children's interests and strengths provides information for developing meaningful and engaging environments and curricula. Interactions with children and families are enriched as well. Adjustments are made to our program accordingly to reach individual child goals, to ensure the child's success, and to support the family.

Screening

Participation in Early Childhood Education is critical in the development of all children. We believe that gathering as much information as possible, at a time when children's minds and bodies are developing so rapidly, will be a benefit to children and their families. One method of gathering data is the use of screenings. Their use can help us to determine strengths and weaknesses in important activities. We never make a decision about whether a child has/does not have a developmental delay based on this data, but rather the data is used to help to identify children who should receive more intensive evaluations. Such specialized programs as Early Intervention, Mental Health/Social Service agencies, and Health Systems can provide more insight. We are dedicated to help all children reach their maximum potential in life.

Vision, Hearing, Dental, Speech and Language

A vision, hearing, dental, speech and language screening is conducted each fall. Any child who shows a need for further evaluation is referred to the appropriate outside agency for a more formal evaluation. If necessary, an Individual Educational Plan is developed and followed.

Ages and Stages Questionnaires

Every new parent to ***Begin With Us*** is asked to review the "Screening and Assessment Information Form". This form explains that our teachers are required to complete "Ages and Stages Questionnaires" for your child.

The **Ages and Stages Questionnaires®**, Third Edition (ASQ-3™) developmental screening system is a screening and monitoring tool and not a diagnostic tool. The questionnaires monitor a child's growth in the following areas: communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and personal-social.

There is also a second unit of this monitoring tool "Ages and Stages Questionnaire - Social Emotional®", specifically for the growth of seven behavioral areas which are as follows: self-regulation, compliance, communication, adaptive functioning, autonomy, affect, and interaction with people.

The Ages and Stages Questionnaires®, Third Edition (ASQ-3™) is available online through the use of a home computer, tablet, or smart phone with internet access. We hope you will find the online tool simple and convenient. **Begin With Us** utilizes the KinderTrack program which provides the questionnaire for free. You can access this online tool by entering this link in your browser: <https://asqonline.com/family/e80852>.

Assessment

An assessment is an ongoing process through which our teachers and practitioners, along with parents, look at all areas of a child's development in order to identify strengths and needs and to design a program that addresses the child's developmental goals. At ***Begin with Us***, we use "The Ounce Scale" and the "Work Sampling System" (WSS), which are performance-based assessment tools.

The Ounce Scale

The "Ounce Scale" is used for infants and toddlers. It allows the teachers and practitioners to document the children's growth and development by using the age appropriate Developmental Profile that matches the child's chronological age. The children's activities are also documented and used at Parent/Teacher Conferences. Assessments are given for the following domains:

- Social and Emotional
- Communication and Language
- Cognitive Development
- Physical Development

Work Sampling System

Work Sampling System allows our teachers/practitioners to get a whole picture on each individual child. Through the use of classroom experiences and activities, we can systematically document children's skills, knowledge, behavior, and academic accomplishments in seven domains:

- Personal and social development;
- Language and literacy;
- Mathematical thinking;
- Scientific thinking;
- Social studies;
- The arts;
- Physical development and health.

This reliable program enables continual progress monitoring from multiple sources. First, WSS consists of a checklist of a child's progression and mastery in the above listed seven domains of learning. It also consists of a portfolio for each child which contains examples of the work that best represents the child's ability. Finally, there are narrative summary reports that are to be written so that they can be shared with the child's family and other educators. Ongoing assessment is summarized for parents three times per year (fall, winter, spring).

Every assessment is guided by a set of values about learning and instruction, and how children should be treated in order to enhance their growth and development. The values of WSS are based on the attributes of well-functioning children. These attributes are that children can:

- Learn to trust themselves and others;
- Learn self discipline;
- Gain an awareness of others and the ability to feel for and with them;
- Be spontaneous when expressing feelings;
- Develop a sense of humor;
- Form creative ideas;
- Extend basic moving, manipulating, and communication skills;
- Listen with heightened and prolonged attentiveness;
- Acquire factual information and develop the capacity to conceptualize and represent ideas;
- Have a variety of interests and resources;
- Find pleasure in the process as well as the product;
- Show the desire to try, the courage to fail, and the persistence to continue their effort.

The Work Sampling System is a dynamic approach to assessment. It is intended to both inform and reflect best practice as well as to enhance the learning opportunities for the children at ***Begin With Us***.

In addition to WSS and the Ounce Scale, teachers will be working on your child's language and literacy development, and differentiating instruction as needed in the following areas:

Picture Naming

Format: A child is presented with images of objects commonly found in preschoolers' natural environments (i.e., home, classroom, community) one at a time, asking a child to name the pictures as fast as possible. Categories of objects used in this format include animals, food, people, household objects, games, sports materials, vehicles, tools, and clothing. After providing a set of sample items, the examiner asks the child

to look at each card and name it as quickly as possible. After exactly one minute, the examiner stops the activity and counts the total number of pictures named correctly.

Rhyming

Format: A child is presented with stimulus cards that include a target photo or line drawing at the top of each card (e.g., bees) and a set of three images/drawings in a row at the bottom of each card (e.g., pants, gate, cheese), one of which rhymes with the target image. The examiner points to and names each of the images, then asks the child to identify the one that sounds the same as (or rhymes with) the top, target image. The task continues for a total of two minutes. The score generated from this format is the number of pictures the child correctly identifies.

Alliteration

Format: A child is presented with stimulus cards that include one target image at the top of each card (e.g., rain) and a set of three images in a row at the bottom of each card (e.g., house, rake, pig), one of which starts with the same sound as the target image. The examiner points to and names each of the images, then asks the child to identify the one that starts with the same initial sound as the top, target image. The task continues for a total of two minutes. The score generated from this format is the number of pictures the child correctly identifies.

Using the results from observation, screening, and assessment, our teachers, practitioners, and Child and Family Advocate will share results with parents on an on-going basis through informal discussions at drop-off and pick-up times and through a "Getting to Know You Meeting" and conferences. Together, we will make a decision about the appropriate next steps that need to be taken to benefit and support the child and family.

At the end of your child's Pre-Kindergarten school year, *Begin With Us* will help your child transition to his/her kindergarten by presenting his/her new kindergarten teacher with information gathered through Work Sampling System Assessments.

**"A great man never ignores the simplicity of a child."
~ Author unknown**

