Using Aggregated Child Assessment Information to Design Group Goals and Guide Instruction for Group (A2.3b)

How Will it Help Children?

As educators, we have the responsibility to assess children, so we can modify the teaching to fit the children's needs. Collecting assessments about each child in a program gives you data (information) about what each child needs to learn. This is a great first step, but it is not the goal. You now have to use this data to make a plan for teaching all the children in your group. To be efficient, you have to aggregate the data or put together the information from all the children. Then you can see the needs of individual children and the needs of the group. The aggregated assessment data helps you know whether you are meeting your goals as a program. Or they might show that you need to change your curriculum to address an area of development in a new way.

Tips for Getting Started

- **Consider taking a class on how to aggregate assessment data and use it.** Classes are available in person and online. You can find one by going to the Minnesota Quality Improvement and Registry Tool
    - https://www.developtoolmn.org/

- **Commit to collecting data on children's learning.** It is a standard of quality to do so on a regular schedule. You are very busy and if this task is not on your calendar, it will be forgotten.

- **If you use a published child assessment tool, check if it provides ready-made reports.** Ready-to-use assessment reports can save a lot of time when they aggregate the data for you all in one document.

- **Plan to use the results of the assessments to make changes in your program.** For example, if you find several children in your program do not know yet how to rhyme, you want to do more rhyming games with the whole group.

How to Aggregate and Use Your Data

- **Create a computer spreadsheet for entering your children's assessment scores.** If you do not have a ready-made report, and you have a computer program that makes spreadsheets, like Excel, you can make your own report. Write the name of each child on one column. Make a column for each domain of development. Enter the children's scores, then add up and average their scores in a row at the bottom of the sheet. This will give you a table of data on your group.

- **Create a chart by hand.** If you have few children, it is easy to make a chart by hand. Write the name of each child on one column. Make a column for each domain of development. Write the scores for each child under each domain. Calculate the average of their scores in a row at the bottom of your table. This will give you a table of data on your group.

- **Study the chart**. Notice groups of children who are skilled in an area. Also notice groups of children who need to learn more an area.

- **Organize your data.** You are documenting the data for all children in your program. It could become confusing if you don't organize the information**.** Use notebooks or binders with pockets. Arrange files by child and child outcome domain.

- **Plan your curriculum lesson plans.** Look at the notes you have on the children. Look at how they are doing in each domain of development in the ECIPs.
  - What children of each age group need to be able to do
  - If you have a mixed age group, you will have to adapt to all ages

- **Consider the routines of your day**. Consider the interest areas that promote children's learning and where you set up the activities. Pick a topic or an area of study to tie the learning together for the children and to make implementation efficient for you. Plan to keep this topic for 3-4 weeks. Repeat some activities to allow children to explore in depth. On the first week, you might see that the children use the materials and the toys in a simple way. As they become more familiar, they use the materials with more imagination and more skills.

Next Steps

- **Make using assessment data a part of your program's culture.** You may want to start with one area of development like Language and Literacy and practice for three or four months.

- **Remember the cycle: Observation+Documentation+Interpretation+Instruction.** This cycle of observation to instruction should be repeated continuously.

Helpful Resources

- **Videos from Head Start – Using Data to Inform Teaching-Video**
  - https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/practice/assessment/iss/inform-teaching.html