



Research-Based Early Childhood and Parenting Education

Making Meaningful Changes in Program Design

PRE-MEETING ASSIGNMENT

We look forward to seeing you at the **Even Start Meeting**. The goal of this meeting is to provide local Even Start program teams with an overview of research-based practices that promote young children's literacy growth and development as a step for creating program improvement plans to increase the quality of Even Start services.

Designing program improvement changes can be a challenging task. To maximize the benefits of working together during the meeting, you are being asked to complete a pre-meeting assignment. This assignment is designed to help participants identify their program's strengths and areas for improvement in providing literacy services to 3 - 5 year olds. We understand that participants play different roles and some may not be in a classroom on a daily or weekly basis. We hope that administrators or non-teaching staff will visit a program and make some observations of the instruction and interaction between children and staff so that they will have a recent impression or "picture" of services to reflect on during the meeting.

The assignment is in two parts:

- **A Data sheet** for basic program information. This should be information and data that you already use for your continuation application, local or state evaluation, or annual reports.
- **An Observation sheet** to record information about classroom practices. Each participant is expected to spend at least 1-1/2 hours in a classroom that provides services to children from disadvantaged families, such as those served by Even Start. The Classroom Eco-Communication Inventory focuses on three types of observations.

This information will not be collected, but you will use it extensively during small group discussions (see attached agenda). Please bring the completed assignment to the meeting.

Thank you.

DATA SHEET



1. Early childhood services (both those paid for by Even Start dollars and Even Start partners)

Please enter the **number of your 3-5 year old** Even Start children receiving early childhood services from the following providers:

Provider	No. children ages 3-5
Even Start funded preschool	
Head Start	
Public school preschool	
Home based	
Other	
Other	
Other	

Enter the **number of children** of families enrolled in Even Start:

Ages	Number
Children 0-2	
Children 3-5	
Children 6-7	
Total Number of Children	

Enter the **percentage** of children 3–5 years old who are:

	Percentage of children
Limited English Proficient	
Children with Disabilities	

2. Staff

Enter the number of staff (funded either by Even Start funds or provided through collaborators) providing early childhood services to Even Start children in the following grid:

	Total Number	Number who are certified Early Childhood	Number who are certified in a related field	Number with degrees:			Full Time
				BA	AA	CDA	
Teachers							
Paraprofessionals							

3. Staff support structure. Think about your early childhood services, then answer the following questions:

Do supervisors of the early childhood teachers and paraprofessionals have appropriate degrees in early childhood/early literacy?

_____ Yes _____ No Unsure _____

What professional development opportunities did you offer to staff who work with 3–5 year olds this year?

How often do early childhood staff receive formal observations with feedback? Who does the observations and provides feedback?

Have current staff received formal orientation to curricular goals, curriculum materials, and assessments?

How many hours of paid planning time each month are provided for early childhood staff to share and exchange ideas with staff from other Even Start components?

_____ hours per month

Do early childhood providers have policies that guide the use of English and/or the use of native language in classroom instruction?

4. Curriculum materials

What amount is budgeted yearly in your Even Start grant for early childhood curricula materials, books and other literacy materials?

\$_____.

Do any of the early childhood providers follow a guide and/or use a commercial product for language and literacy instruction?

5. Instructional time

Please fill out the following chart:

Age of child	Average hours of instruction offered per month	Average hours children attend per month per child	Number of months instructional services are offered
3			
4			
5			

Describe **how** and **how often** classroom staff communicate with parents about children's progress.

7. Parent/child interactions/home visits

Parent/child interactive literacy opportunities are those guided activities that provide a structured opportunity for a parent to work **with his/her own child**. This could be parent/child time in the classroom, home visits or other opportunities.

Parent/child interactive literacy opportunities for 3–5 year olds	Average number of hours offered per month	Average number of hours participation per family	Number of months offered

Other parenting education opportunities include other activities in support of children's literacy development that focus on parents' learning information or skills. For example, opportunities such as workshops, parent support groups, home visits, etc.

Parenting education for parents of 3–5 year olds	Average number of hours offered per month	Average number of hours participation per family	Number of months offered

On average, how many literacy-based, instructional home visits does a typical Even Start family participate in each month?

_____ number of home visits

Please bring your program results on your State's Even Start Early Childhood Performance Indicators to the meeting.

Classroom Eco-Communication Inventory*

Adapted for Use in Even Start Program Design Meeting



Directions: This Inventory requires that you conduct three 30 minute observations in a classroom:

- a) The **Child Communication Behavior** scale asks you to focus on the communication behaviors of **one** child during a 30 minute period. Tally the number of times the child is described by the statements (1-11) during 30 minutes. Then on the grid on the right, circle the appropriate number.
- b) The **Adult Communication Behavior** scale asks you to focus on how the adults in the classroom interact with one child during a 30 minute period. This could be the same child you observed above or a different child. Tally the number of times the adult communication is described by the statements (1-13). Then summarize each statement in the grid on the right as above.
- c) For the **Environmental Arrangement** scale, select one child to observe for 30 minutes. Complete the checklist of statements (1-9) to identify whether or not the child had the opportunity described.
- d) Complete the summary below by counting the number of items you were able to score, adding the total, and dividing by the number of items. For example, if you have scores for the 11 child items and the total score of scaled items is 20, your average score item would be 1.8 (20 divided by 11).

Child score:	# Items scored 0-3 _____	Total score: _____	Average score/item: _____
Adult score:	# Items scored 0-3 _____	Total score: _____	Average score/item: _____
Environment:	# Items scored 0-3 _____	Total score: _____	Average score/item: _____

*Original inventory created by Ann P. Kaiser, Ph.D., Professor of Special Education and Psychology at Peabody College, Vanderbilt University

Classroom Eco-Communication Inventory: Child Communication Behavior

Date of Observation: _____

Classroom: _____

Age of Child: _____

Observer: _____

Tally	Summary				
	<i>No opportunity to observe</i>	<i>Child did not engage in opportunity</i>	<i>1 time</i>	<i>2-5 times</i>	<i>More than 5 times</i>
1. Child engaged in planned activity for at least 5 minutes	N.O.	0	1	2	3
2. Child approached a peer and remained in proximity to the peer for at least 2 minutes	N.O.	0	1	2	3
3. Child initiated nonverbally to a peer (e.g., positive behavior including handling objects, hugging, patting, smiling, nodding)	N.O.	0	1	2	3
4. Child responded nonverbally to a peer (e.g., positive behavior including handling objects, hugging, patting, smiling, nodding)	N.O.	0	1	2	3
5. Child initiated verbally to a peer	N.O.	0	1	2	3
6. Child responded verbally to a peer	N.O.	0	1	2	3
7. Child had a conversation with a peer consisting of at least 2 turns by the child and the peer	N.O.	0	1	2	3
8. Child had an extended conversation with a peer consisting of 5 or more turns by the child and the peer	N.O.	0	1	2	3
9. Child played in proximity to peer (within 3 feet, same general activity; parallel play)	N.O.	0	1	2	3
10. Child played in the same activity with a peer and exchanged materials or cooperated nonverbally, took nonverbal turns or had brief verbal exchanges related to the activity (e.g., answered a question, asked for an object)	N.O.	0	1	2	3
11. Child played in the same activity with a peer and had social verbal exchanges (e.g. talked with the peer about the activity, took one or more roles, exchanges consisted of two or more turns by each partner, play was thematic)	N.O.	0	1	2	3

Note the "rough spots" or potential problems in the child's communication. Consider social interaction,, vocabulary, syntax, listening skills, articulation, etc.

Classroom Eco-Communication Inventory: Adult Communication Behavior

Date of Observation: _____

Classroom: _____

Roles of Adult: _____

Age of Child: _____

Observer: _____

		Summary				
		No opportunity to observe	Adult did not engage in opportunity	1 time	2-5 times	More than 5 times
Tally		N.O.	0	1	2	3
	1. Adults talked to the target child	N.O.	0	1	2	3
	2. Adults used language that was understood (e.g., developmentally appropriate for the child)	N.O.	0	1	2	3
	3. Adults responded verbally to the child's verbalizations	N.O.	0	1	2	3
	4. Adults responded verbally to the child's nonverbal communication	N.O.	0	1	2	3
	5. Adults purposefully modeled language for the child (e.g., emphasized labels, gave explicit models or prompted child to imitate a model)	N.O.	0	1	2	3
	6. Adults asked meaningful, specific questions (not test questions, not above child's level, not exclusively yes/no questions)	N.O.	0	1	2	3
	7. Adults gave the child sufficient time to respond to questions, prompts and instructions	N.O.	0	1	2	3
	8. Adults exhibited positive affect toward the child	N.O.	0	1	2	3
	9. Adults listened when the child talked	N.O.	0	1	2	3
	10. Adults prompted the child to talk to other children	N.O.	0	1	2	3
	11. Adults praised or made affectively positive statements when the child responded verbally to the adult (e.g., when child answered a question, adult gave positive feedback)	N.O.	0	1	2	3
	12. Adults praised or made affectively positive statements when the child initiated or responded verbally to peers	N.O.	0	1	2	3
	13. Adults gave assistance in following instructions when the child needed it (if child never needed assistance, score N.O.)	N.O.	0	1	2	3

Classroom Eco-Communication Inventory: Environmental Arrangement

Date of Observation: _____

Classroom: _____

Age of Child: _____

Observer: _____

	Summary		
	<i>No opportunity to observe</i>	<i>Statement true with respect to child</i>	<i>Statement not true for this child</i>
1. Materials of interest are available to the child	N.O.	yes	no
2. Materials are developmentally appropriate for the child	N.O.	yes	no
3. Child has a choice of materials and/or activities	N.O.	yes	no
4. Materials/activities provide specific opportunities for using language (e.g., adult arranges materials to insure talk — dramatic play, turntaking in games, sharing materials)	N.O.	yes	no
5. Sufficient numbers of activities are provided so the child can select another activity when his/her interests change	N.O.	yes	no
6. Materials are arranged so that the child can express choices verbally	N.O.	yes	no
7. Environmental noise level is manageable; children can be heard when they talk	N.O.	yes	no
8. Books are available (sufficient numbers, accessible to child)	N.O.	yes	no
9. Writing or drawing materials are available (sufficient materials, accessible to child)	N.O.	yes	no

How could communication in this classroom be enhanced?