Documentation Best Practices

Utilize the guidance below to develop an effective strategy for collecting and adding documentation that works for you! While there are multiple methods to collecting documentation, we do recommend that documentation be collected and added to *MyTeachingStrategies®* on a daily basis.

Collecting Documentation

Best Practice Information:

o   When observing children, strive to capture factual information. Include descriptions of gestures, facial expressions, and other actions, as well as direct quotations and descriptions of the child's work and creations. Avoid defining the child's intentions, using labels (such as "shy" or "creative"), and making any judgements or evaluations of the child's behavior.

o   Capture documentation in a variety of modes: observation notes, photographs or videos of children engaged in experiences, photographs of children's work and creations, and audio recordings.

o   Remember, one piece of documentation can often be associated with multiple children, as long as all children's knowledge, skills, and abilities were observed in the documentation.

Timesaving Strategies:

o   Instead of writing in paragraph form, try capturing the observation using bullet points.

o   Utilize the On-the-Spot Recording Tool to capture documentation for the objectives/dimensions that are easy to observe for multiple children at the same time. Upload a photo of the form as your documentation, instead of manually adding the information.

o   When new to using *GOLD®* you may find it helpful to try varying your focus on different children or different areas while capturing documentation. You might focus on 4-5 particular children each day or focus on collecting documentation for specific areas of development and learning on a rotating basis.

Adding Documentation

Best Practice Information:

o   When adding documentation, make sure you select all children who were observed, assign appropriate objectives and/or dimensions, and add preliminary levels. Completing these three steps in a timely manner ensures the accuracy of your ratings and also saves you a significant amount of time when completing your checkpoints.

o   Typically, a high-quality piece of documentation can be associated with at least three objectives and/or dimensions. As you're reviewing collected documentation, reflect on which areas of development and learning were closely observed, and select all related objectives/dimensions. For example, a child engaged in an experience of counting a collection of buttons is also likely demonstrating fine-motor control as she grasps the buttons, and with prompting of an open-ended question may also share some insight into her approach to classification as she begins sorting the collection she is counting.

Timesaving Strategies:

o   If your preference is to handwrite your observation notes, instead of retyping the note into *MyTeachingStrategies®*, take a photo of the note to upload.

o   When using an *Intentional Teaching Experience/Opportunity*, log in to *MyTeachingStrategies®*, access the planned experience/opportunity, and toggle to "assess" to capture and add documentation in the moment.