

# HighScope's Focused Observation and Conversational Feedback Process

## Handout



## **What is Focused Observation and Conversational Feedback?**

- A process for supporting teachers' growth and development.
- A short observation, followed by a dialogue that identifies the teaching team's mutually generated strengths and opportunities for growth.
- Results in ideas for follow-up and a coaching plan.
- Focus is on the curriculum through the lens of the child.

### **Overview of the Focused Observation and Conversational Feedback Process**

1. Select a curriculum focus and a child and time of day to observe.
2. Observe in the classroom writing a running narrative.
3. Connect the narrative to the curriculum focus by writing curriculum notes.
4. Conduct a conversational feedback discussion with the teaching team generating strengths and opportunities for growth.
5. Develop a follow up plan/coaching plan together.

## Focused Observation Process:

### Prior to the observation day meet as a team:

1. Decide with the teachers on a specific focus based on guidelines such as: curriculum, NAEYC, DAP, classroom quality guidelines (PQA, CLASS, ECERS), etc., for example:
  - Supportive materials for children’s use during choice time.
  - Adult/child interactions supporting children’s learning at group times.
  - Active learning during transitions.
  - Shared control during Large Group Time.

– **What information would you like to find out from this observation?**
2. Decide with the teachers a part of the day to observe based on your focus.
  - Set aside 15 to 20 minutes to observe.
3. Choose a focus child to observe who is typically developing and can be expected to participate in the chosen part of the day.

– **What child might help you learn more about this particular area?**
4. Set up a time and place to give feedback to both teachers, if possible, on the same day. It is important to give feedback on the same day while the observation is still in the teachers’ memory. They can participate better and contribute more ideas and goals when directly thinking back to the observation.

### During the observation:

1. Find an unobtrusive place to sit so you can hear the child and interactions.
2. Narrative: write down an ongoing, objective description of what the child does and says. (Put quotations around actual language)
  - Include where the child is in the classroom.
  - Include any adults or other children as they interact with the child being observed.
  - Include time markers, if necessary.
3. Realize that you can’t write down everything!
4. Leave some white space as you write for later connections.

## Characteristics of a Narrative

- Objective
- Factual
- Includes child’s actions & language
- Includes adult’s and other children’s actions and language
- Specific & detailed
- Chronological

## Narrative/Notes Form

<b>Child Observed:</b> Rosie	<b>Part of Daily Routine:</b> Large Group Time	
<b>Curriculum Focus:</b>	Active Learning- Materials, Manipulation, Choice, Child Language, Adult Scaffolding	
<b>Date:</b> 6-8-17	<b>Time:</b> 10:35-10:50	<b>Observer:</b> Shannon
Narrative		Notes
<p>Snack Area moving to Large group area:</p> <p>H- Asked children what to do when done eating snack to get ready for Large Group.</p> <p>R. Listening to H R. Holding her shoes following Holly. "When are we going outside?" H- "After Small Group Time" – walks away and helps other children clean up snack. R- "Why do we have SGT?" says to Holly whose back is to her.</p> <p>R- Stands in LG area holding her shoes looking around. Puts shoes down.</p> <p>E-Came to the LG area and began singing "Do Wa Diddy..." R-Listens</p> <p>R- Jumping up and down on rug in LG. R- "Diddy dum" laughs</p> <p>R- Claps and moves her body toward another child. C- Don't follow me R- Claps and laughs and moves around R- Runs to other side of rug</p> <p>E- "Rosie" called on Rosie for her idea R- Moves arms and legs to show Erica E- "What do you call that?" asks Rosie R- "Ballet move" H &amp; E "Oh that's called ballet move"</p> <p>R- Moves around like she said while H &amp; E sing –arms moving and jumping</p>		

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Narrative		Notes	
<p>R- Stands next to H in the circle. Moves her body around</p> <p>R-Listened to another child’s idea</p> <p>R- Turns around with other children moving her body R- Watches child</p> <p>R- Turns around and around as she moves top the song -moves her hands back and forth in front of child</p> <p>R-“Diddy” walks around</p> <p>H- “Find a spot on the edge...” sings R- moves her hands showing she wanted to sit in between 2 children H- Helps R see that there is no room but can find a spot to sit where there is room</p> <p>R- Sits down on the edge near other child R- Says something to another child</p> <p>R- Pretends to chew gum and puts fingers up. H &amp; E sing Herman the Worm song R- “Cracked an egg” Says to another child -plays with hair</p> <p>-pretend to eat to song and does motions R- Crawls in front of child and pokes her arm</p> <p>-Says “Anika, smell my hands” Child smells her hands R- I was touching my bunny rabbit”</p>			

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<p>-Goes back to spot R-Makes noises with mouth</p> <p>R- Continued to do motions with children to song</p> <p>R- Talks to child near her C- "I don't have a bunny" R- Watches around</p> <p>-Scoots back to edge of carpet after H. &amp; E. ask children to</p> <p>R- Listens to H say to take two rhythm sticks and hit them together</p> <p>R- Takes rhythm sticks from E. Bangs together R- "I'm going to do this" shows H. and move sticks back and forth</p> <p>R- Does movements with sticks like H.</p> <p>R- Listens to H. say "Ok flour salt water..." mix it all up to make gingerbread R- Mixes and moves hands. Looks around with others</p> <p>R- "Oh, H. you forgot the eggs" H- "Oh yeah, I did forget the eggs Rosie" R- Watches H. Rolls sticks on floor</p> <p>H- Listen to H. say "Put Gingerbread into the oven"</p> <p>R- Bangs stick on the floor one at a time</p> <p>R- Listens to H. tell the story of the gingerbread man</p>			

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<p>R- Smiles and hits the floor with sticks</p> <p>H "Who else was running Rosie?"</p> <p>R- "Then a big dragon came and put frosting on it... gingerbread said Don't eat me"</p> <p>H- "Rosie said a big dragon..."</p> <p>C- said her part of the story</p> <p>R- "No you have to eat the gingerbread man" disagreed with child</p> <p>H- "And then Rosie said to eat them"</p> <p>R- Pretends to eat with sticks</p> <p>R- Talks with child</p> <p>R- Listens to H give instructions to move to SGT. "Listen for sounds like your name.</p> <p>R- Stands up, moves body around. Sits down and waits for her turn.</p> <p>H "Sosie Posie</p> <p>R- Listens to E tell her what H said for her name and made a face.</p> <p>E- "She said Sosie Rosie Posie</p> <p>R- Stood up and told H "You, you, you called me Posie Sosie"</p> <p>R- Walks over to SGT.</p>		

## Practice Focused Observation and Conversational Feedback

1. You will be watching Large Group Time with Holly and Erica (13 mins). You can choose any of the children listed below. (Trainer will point out the children when the video begins).
  - Julia—Orange striped dress
  - Brielle—Short sleeved black shirt with ice cream on it
  - Ella—White sweater
2. You will first write a running narrative according to the guidelines on the child of your choice using the Narrative/Notes forms provided.
3. The teachers have scored a level 3 and have been working on increasing the strategies during large group time. They have asked you to come back in and observe and give them feedback on how they are doing as well as any suggestions and ideas you may have to increase engagement during large group time.
4. You will use the following Curriculum Focus for the whole process.

### III. ADULT-CHILD INTERACTION

III-H. Adults support and extend children's ideas and learning during group times.

Circle one indicator level for this item based on the scoring rules on page 4.

1 2 3 4 5

Check here if not observed or reported.

Adults do not support or extend children's large-group ideas and actions.

Adults sometimes use some strategies to support children's large-group ideas and actions.

Adults use many strategies to support and extend children's large-group ideas and actions, e.g.,

- Watch and listen to children.
- Imitate children's actions.
- Use children's words.
- Assume children's physical level.
- Let children be leaders.
- Follow up children's suggestions and modifications.

# Curriculum Notes

## Purpose of Curriculum Notes:

- Narratives tell a story of one child's experience during the observation of a particular time of the day.
- Curriculum notes link the observation/narratives to the curriculum focus.
- Curriculum Focus determines what is written on the notes side.
- Notes weave back and forth between the narrative and the curriculum focus.
- Notes stimulate dialogue with the other team members.
- Notes are a springboard for conversational feedback.

## Writing Curriculum Notes

### Immediately after the observation:

- Find a quiet space to work. If possible, outside of the classroom.
- Gather documents that support your curriculum focus (strategy lists, format of group times, material lists, NAEYC guidelines, PQA, CLASS, etc.).
- Set aside some time to reflect on the focus and the narratives.

### Writing curriculum note statements to promote dialogue:

- Identifying the curriculum focus Strength
- Identifying the curriculum focus Opportunities for Growth
  - Use reflective questions that help teachers think about their practices which may lead to an opportunity for growth
- Genuine questions that will clarify or extend what you saw or heard
- Statements/comments about what struck you about what the child did and/or said or what happened

### Developing Strength-Based Opportunities for Growth

- Opportunities for Growth should be addressed in positive terms not as something they are doing wrong or in a punitive manner.
- Using teacher reflective statements can lead into teachers thinking more about what they did, how it affected the children and develop strategies to use next time (e.g., observed LGT, “I wonder how children could have had more choices in participating in songs at LGT?”)
- Use your resources to help develop the teacher reflective questions (e.g., observed fine motor skills at SGT, “I noticed that Demario got frustrated when he couldn't get the scissors to cut and he stopped working. Let's look at what the standards say in supporting children's fine motor skills.”)

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# Conversational Feedback

## Purpose

- Understand what's happening in the setting, specifically around the curriculum focus.
- Partner with teaching team through open discussion.
- Allows teachers to see their strengths of what they are doing well.
- Generate strategies to support growth and change over time.

## Guidelines for Conversational Feedback

- Use the Narrative/Notes as a guide for reciprocal discussion and understanding based on the curriculum focus.
- Each person:
  - Participates in **turn-taking** both *talking* and *listening*.
  - Contributes their own observations, interpretations, and ideas for actions and is record on the narrative/notes form.
  - Voices their own concerns and generates possible strategies
- When giving feedback:
  - Be selective, focus on one issue or idea at a time that emerges from the discussion.
  - Follow the leads and directions set by the teaching team.
  - Highlight the Strengths of the teaching team throughout the discussion.
  - Approach Opportunities for Growth from a strength-based perspective during the discussion.
  - Results in mutually generated and agreed upon action(s).

## Conversational Feedback Process

### Beginning of Feedback

- Meet in a comfortable place, free of interruptions.
- Meet with all members of the teaching team (if possible).
- Have teachers sit to the right of you and your support materials so they can see the resources and the notes you have written. Share a copy of the notes, if possible.
- Thank the team for allowing you to do this observation/feedback session with you.
- Share any resource materials that you brought with you that you will be referencing as support for reviewing strengths of the curriculum focus and to develop opportunities for growth based on the curriculum focus.
- Restate the purpose of the observation/feedback session, the curriculum focus, and the child observed.

## Conversational Feedback Process (cont.)

### Middle of Feedback

- Using the narrative/notes form as a guide, use shared dialogue to discuss the observation, encouraging team members to add their thoughts and ideas.
- Document the teaching team's contributions on the notes side of the narrative/notes form in the white space.
- Follow the leads and directions set by the teaching team.
- Be selective, focus on the issue that emerges from the team discussion. Remember that we can only effectively deal with 1 thing at a time.
- Keep in mind the strengths and opportunities for growth that you have already documented and others that may emerge from the discussion.

### End of Feedback

- Strengths and opportunities for growth are generated with the teaching team at the end of the feedback session.
- Follow-up plans are developed to address any opportunities for growth.
- Strengths, Opportunities for Growth and Follow-up strategies/Plans are recorded on a blank Narrative/Notes form.
- Copies of the whole Focused Observation and Conversational Feedback notes are given to the teachers.

### Generating Strengths:

- Write the word Strengths on the left side of a blank Narrative/Notes form.
- Together, summarize 2-4+ Strengths that were brought out in the feedback discussion.
- Curriculum focus strengths should be listed.
- If other strengths were brought up for the teachers, those should be listed.
- **Strengths should always outnumber the opportunities for growth.**
- **Strengths are not about the child.**

### **Generating Opportunities for Growth:**

- Write the words Opportunities for Growth on the right side of the same Narrative/Notes form as the Strengths.
- Together, summarize 1-2+ (depends on the number of strengths) Opportunities for Growth that were brought out in the feedback discussion.
- Curriculum focus opportunities for growth are listed.
- **There should be a 2/1 ratio for opportunities for growth. (2 strengths per 1 opportunity for growth).**
- **Opportunities for growth are not about the child.**

### **Generating Follow-up/Coaching Plans**

- Write the words Follow-up Plans on the right side underneath the Opportunities for Growth on the same Narrative/Notes form as the Strengths.
- Together generate and document the follow-up strategies/plans to address the opportunities for growth for all team members (including the coach).
- These follow-up strategies/plans may lead into the next coaching plan.
- If so, complete a coaching plan form to document the next coaching activity to be conducted with the teachers.

## Teacher Reflection Questions

- Can you tell me more about that?
- When does this problem usually occur?
- What have you tried before?
- How else could you approach this?
- What do you want to happen?
- What are your thoughts?
- I noticed \_\_\_\_\_ tell me more about that.
- Let's think together about \_\_\_\_\_.
- I see you \_\_\_\_\_, I'm interested to hear about your decision and what you're noticing.
- How could the children be more engaged in \_\_\_\_\_?
- What do you think are the next steps?
- How is my feedback helpful? What feedback would be useful next time?
- What about \_\_\_\_\_ do you think was successful? Why?
- Is there anything you would have done differently?
- What would you like to focus on?

Others:

- 
- 
-

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<b>Strengths</b>		<b>Opportunities for Growth</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving children choices</li> <li>• Following children’s lead and sharing control</li> <li>• All 5 ingredients of active learning               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Materials</li> <li>– Manipulation</li> <li>– Choice</li> <li>– Child Language and thought</li> <li>– Adult Scaffolding</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Gave materials to children right away for middle part of LGT</li> <li>• Had a brief easy to join activity that got kids attention</li> <li>• Adult Scaffolding:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Acknowledged feelings and supported their ideas during songs and story</li> <li>– Listened to children’s ideas and incorporated them into LGT</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Managed LGT with each other by sharing the lead and following at times</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a list of Easy to Join activities and keep track of favorite ones</li> <li>• Try out activities in an opposite way to support Executive Functions—mental flexibility</li> <li>• Look to children’s interests or who has lost interest in LGT activities and plan new ones around them</li> <li>• Use best judgment on moving yourself around the circle to refocus children who need it</li> <li>• Think about how to transition within LGT and write in Plan—attention getters</li> </ul> <p><b>Follow up Coaching Activity</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Brainstorm LGT ideas to support Executive Function</li> <li>2. Write in transitions in LGT plan</li> </ol>

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<b>Narrative</b>		<b>Notes</b>	

