TeachingStrategies®

GOLD™ by Teaching Strategies®
for Observation-Based Assessment

What Is Observation-Based Assessment?

In every early childhood program, each child starts the year knowing, doing, and needing different things. To help teachers get to know children and support children in learning at their own pace, our school has chosen GOLD™, an observation-based assessment system. GOLD™ will help teachers gather information to guide their teaching and children's learning.

What is observation-based assessment?

Your child's teacher will be capturing information about what your child can do. The teacher will

- take notes on what he or she sees and hears during regular, everyday activities throughout the year;
- collect samples of writing and drawing, and take photos or videos;
- compare the information collected to what research tells us can be expected for children of similar ages or grades; and
- use the information to support your child's learning and meet his or her individual needs.

Observation-based assessment is NOT

- formal or standardized,
- a narrow picture of a child's ability at one moment,
- a flat measure of ability,
- pulling children from the classroom for assessment, or
- a screening tool.

Working together, we can ensure that your child has the skills needed to be successful in school and in life.

Where is *GOLD*™ data stored and how is it kept private?

Your child's documentation and checkpoint ratings are kept in an online portfolio. This portfolio is a secure place. All portfolio data is stored in a secure data center on a private network that provides strictly controlled access. Only you, your child's teachers, the program administrator, and anyone else whom you authorize are able to access your child's portfolio items.

What's my role as a family member?

No one knows your child better than you do. You play an important role in supporting your child's learning and helping make his or her school experience as smooth as possible. When you meet with your child's teacher, please consider sharing any information you have about your child that will help the teacher get to know your child better. As the year progresses, ask your child's teacher what has been learned about your child through *GOLD*™. You might consider questions such as "What can my child do well?," "What steps is my child likely to take next?," "What can I do at home to help support what's happening in the classroom?"

How is *GOLD*™ different from a standardized test?

The main difference between a standardized test and *GOLD*™ is that with *GOLD*™ your child isn't being assessed at only one moment in time. Instead, the teacher will take notes about what your child is able to do at different times of day, over an extended period of time. The teacher will also talk with you and with any specialists who work with your child, which doesn't always happen when a standardized test is used. All of this information will become part of an online portfolio with notes, photos, video clips, audio clips, and samples of your child's work. And the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that your child is demonstrating will be compared against research-based, widely held expectations of development and learning for your child's age or class/grade. Together, all the information will help create a picture of what your child currently knows and can do, and what next steps he or she can be expected to take. As such, unlike with a standardized test, *GOLD*™ will help the teacher respond to your child's unique needs and plan intentional learning experiences that are just right for your child.

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