

NAC for Excellence

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Welcome to this edition of NAC for Excellence, a monthly accreditation e-newsletter for NACCP members. We hope you find the information provided in this newsletter helpful and informative. Enjoy!

Let's talk about....Standard E1 from the NAC Self-Study Manual:

Each lesson plan has some form of written evaluation. By Colleen Tracy Haddad and Reshmi Johnson, NAC Accreditation Specialists

Lesson planning is an ongoing cycle to ensure that children have learning experiences that promote all areas of their development. Lesson plans must meet the needs of the whole classroom group as well as the needs of each individual child. One step often missed in the lesson planning process is evaluating the plan. The evaluation of the activities in the plan is a simple process of reflection.

- Did the activity go well?
- Did the activity meet the intended purpose?
- Were the children overly challenged or bored?
- Should there be any changes for the next day or week?
- Could the activity be adapted to meet more of the children's needs?
- Did children need more opportunities to interact with the materials?
- Were there enough materials, space, and time?
- Would repeating the activity further enhance the children's skills?
- Did the children enjoy the activity?

A teacher's objective observations provide information about how individual children, and the group as a whole, engage with new materials, other people, and ideas. An intentional teacher puts these pieces together to choose the best combination of child guided and adult guided instructional strategies to scaffold further learning. If the findings of the evaluation suggest that learning has occurred, it is time to move on to new challenges. If it suggests that there is more to learn, the activity can be repeated with adjustments based on what has been observed. This is why written documentation is essential to facilitating the process. Teacher observations and reflections during the lesson plan cycle can be quickly noted on the plan. A full evaluation should be completed as the teacher begins to develop the next plan. The process of reflecting on the lesson plan often leads to both the development of the curriculum as well as the development of the teacher.

Written evaluations can be completed in many ways, both formal and informal: written on the back of the lesson plan; activities highlighted with notes; a coding system like smiling faces and different colors; and notes on activity file cards stored in a file box organized by thematic units. For teachers in the beginning stages of planning and evaluating, it is best to start slow - choosing just two activities and writing evaluations on those. As reflection and planning become easier and more natural, move on to evaluating the entire lesson plan. Written evaluations can range from a general overview of the activity or lesson plan to more complex, specific notations designed to guide future planning.

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