

# OBSERVING CHILDREN

5/31/13

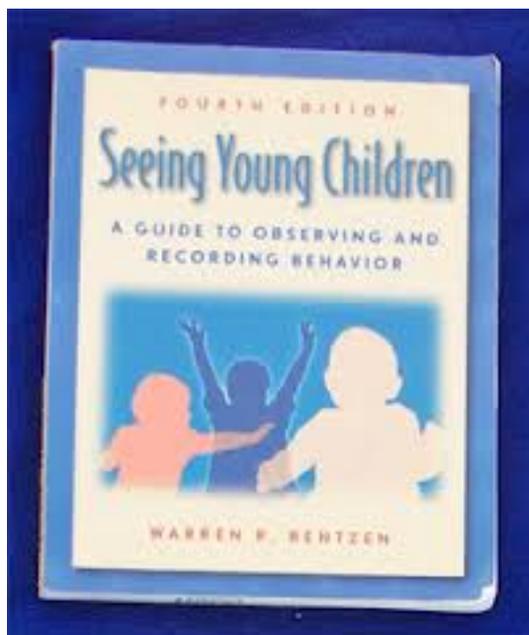
## + Course Description:

- ECE 31 and 131 examine the major physical, psychosocial, and cognitive/language developmental milestones for children from conception through adolescence with an emphasis on **non-judgmental** observation. This course will focus on the interaction between maturational processes and environmental factors.
- Critical, analytical written work is the primary means of evaluation.

# + Course Learning Outcomes

- Analyze, compare and contrast major developmental milestones for children from conception through adolescence in the areas of physical, psychosocial, cognitive, and language development using standard research methodologies.
- Analyze how social, cultural, economic, political and historical contexts impact and affect development
- . Investigate the importance of the early years, appraise the interaction between maturational processes and environmental factors and analyze their effects on various areas of development.
- **Analyze** children's development **based on** **detailed, descriptive, non-evaluative written** **documentation of child observations**

# + Why do we do observe children?



## + What makes a good observational assessment?

- Objective
  - NON- Subjective
- Developmentally appropriate
- Fulfills a need
- Examines many areas of development

# + Systematic observations

- Vignettes and **anecdotal** records
- Running records
- Time sampling
- Event sampling
- Photos
- Work samples
- Check lists
- Rating scale

## + Anecdotal records

- **Definition:** Brief narrative accounts describing an incident of a child's behavior that is important to the writer
- **Normally** look at one area of development at a time
- **Open ended**
- **Analysis, not evaluate**

## + All observations should include:

- Name of the child
- Date the event occurred
- Time and or setting
- Observation
- Observer comments

# + Guidelines for Objective Recording

- Record only the facts
- Record as much detail as possible
- Observe without interpreting or assuming
- Do not record what you don't see
- Use words that describe but do not judge or interpret ie: that are subjective
- Record in the order in which they occur

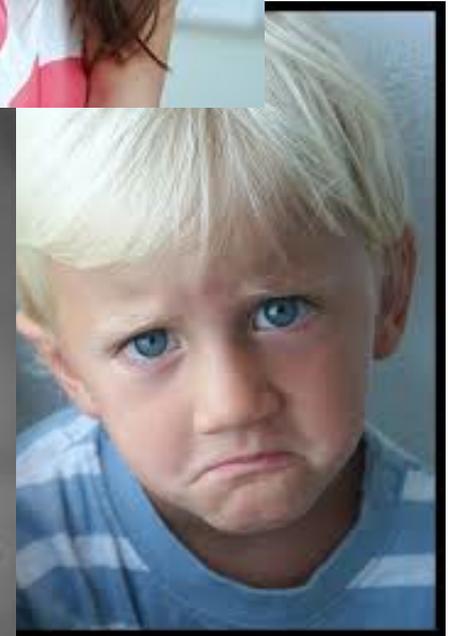
## + Tips...

- **Avoid words that generalize and are inherently subjective or biased ie: wanted...seemed...**
- **Observation notes should be behavioral descriptions that will help to inform and will provide evidence for the ANALYSIS that you form about the child.**

# + Writing Anecdotal --Emotions

## AVOID

- **Attributing Feelings-- describe the behavior.**
- **Record what children say about what they feel.**
- **Describe what you see: smiling, eyes wide open, looking for several minutes only at \_\_\_\_, sitting quietly and looking at the book, crying, frowning**



## + Tips...

### AVOID

- **Ascribing motivations or reasons for doing things.**
- **Instead describe the behaviors that suggest a child is interested in doing something**



## + Avoid Assumptions

Words That Convey  
Assumption--especially  
based on one  
observation in one  
setting

- Has good skills...
- Temperament traits
- Has good self –esteem
- Intelligent
- Annoyed
- Anger
- Bored
- Aggressive
- Out Of Control
- Uninvolved
- Boisterous
- Ill-mannered

## + What is analysis vs evaluation?

- Analysis seeks to understand
- **Analysis** is non-judgmental and **evaluation** adds value or judgement to the situation
- **Analyze**-Break down objects or ideas into simpler parts and find evidence to support generalizations.
- **Evaluate**-Make and defend judgments based on internal evidence or external criteria.

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES?

# + I analyze an observation by...

- Comparing
- Connecting
- Contrasting
- Differentiating
- Distinguishing
- Examining
- Identifying
- Inferring
- Explaining

Based on...  
Developmental

- RESEARCH
  - Theory
  - Philosophy/  
Models
  - Norms  
(Standardized or  
Criterion)
  - Tools
  - Tables

# + Analyzing Physical Development

- Gross Motor
- Fine Motor
  - Interactions with materials
- Adaptive Skills
  - Feeding
  - Dressing
  - Diaper/Toileting
- Interactions with the environment, including the staff and peers
- Use of tools or checklists ie: DRDP
- Compare to others of the same age (“norms”), but do so very cautiously and respectfully
- OTHERS...

# + Analyzing Cognitive and Language Development

Discuss in the context of ...

- Type of Play
- Language samples
- Ability to follow directions
- Piaget's cognitive stages
- Behaviorist theory
- Interactions with the environment, including the staff and peers
- Use of tools or checklists ie: DRDP
- Compare to others of the same age (“norms”), but do so very cautiously and respectfully
- OTHERS...

## + Analyzing social emotional, and self-regulation skills

Discuss in the context of ...

- Parent/ Caregiver interactions
- Emotional ranges— be descriptive of what you observe
- Erikson and Freud's developmental levels
- Use of tools or checklists ie: DRDP
- 9 Temperament Traits— however, this is something that would take multiple observations
- Response to sensory stimuli in the environment
- OTHERS.....?

# + Practicing...understanding children through observation

- <http://videatives.com/blog/archives>
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