

Assessing Young Children's Development

TRAINING FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CAREGIVERS AND TEACHERS



MODULE 3 FACILITATOR GUIDE

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This guide is part of a series of manuals that focuses on six topics in Early Childhood Development (ECD): different programming approaches, basic concepts, assessments, early childhood environments, children with special needs and child protection, and the health, safety and nutrition of young children. The series was prepared within a three-year CRS-led project called “Strengthening the Capacity of Women Religious in Early Childhood Development,” or “SCORE ECD.” Funded by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, the project helps Catholic sisters in Kenya, Malawi, and Zambia in their work with children aged 0-5 years and their families. The project is being implemented from January 2014 to December 2016.

CRS referred to a wide range of documents in preparing this curriculum. Please see “Reference Documents” section in Module 1 facilitator or resource guide for the full list.

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Cover photo: A father and a child supported by the Young Athletes Project (YAP)—a CRS’ partnership program with Adventist Center for Care and Support (ACCS) and Special Olympics Kenya (SOK) for young children with intellectual disabilities (CID), Kawangware, Nairobi. The project is supported by the Conrad Hilton Foundation. *Photo by Philip Laubner/CRS*

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Facilitator's Guide 3: Assessing Young Children's Development

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This module provides information on how participants can better understand and serve children and their families using observation, documentation, and assessment tools. By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Explain why it is important to observe and document children's status on a regular basis.
- Understand the importance of family involvement in assessing young children.
- Use different means of recording children's progress.
- Identify how caregivers can recognize possible delays using *Developmental Alert Checklists*.
- Use the *Developmental Checklist* to improve observation skills.

SESSION LENGTH: 6 HOURS & 15 MINUTES

SESSION OUTLINE

ACTIVITIES	SUGGESTED TIME
1. Welcome and introduction	30 minutes
2. Assessing young children and understanding the importance of involving the family in the process	45 minutes
3. The importance of documentation	45 minutes
4. Observation and recording	1 hour & 15 minutes
5. Recording child development using the <i>Developmental Checklist</i>	2 hours & 45 minutes
Case stories: A picture of children in Alinafe Early Childhood Development program, run by the Teresian Sisters in Malawi	
Cultural game and song, " <i>Galu uyu wa ndani!? Whose dog is this!?</i> "	
Cultural game and song, "Frog Jump"	
6. Closure and session evaluation	15 minutes
Total	6 hours & 15 minutes

MATERIALS

- Name tags and attendance register
- Brief lecture prepared on flipcharts or PowerPoint
- Flipcharts and markers
- Handouts explaining *Individual record of milestones* forms (enough for all participants)
- Training manual
- Arranging a child observation field trip to a sisters' children's ward

SESSION PLAN AND PROCEDURE

Activity 1: Welcome and introduction (30 minutes)

- Have the participants sign an attendance register on arrival and provide them with name tags (5 minutes).
- Welcome everyone and open the meeting in an appropriate way, such as with a prayer or a song (10 minutes).
- Play a game or do an icebreaker activity to help the participants relax and get to know each other better (5 minutes).
- Briefly explain *Module 3*—its purpose, and what the participants are expected to learn from this session by going through the activities listed under the session outline above (10 minutes).
- Recap the previous module (if applicable), and begin session activities.

Activity 2: Assessing young children (45 minutes)

ACTIVITY 2.A. THE PURPOSE OF ASSESSING YOUNG CHILDREN (15 MINUTES)

Preparation

- Present on a flipchart the key points on the following topics:
 - Assessing young children (see facilitator's note).
 - The purpose of assessments

Instructions

- Conduct a brainstorming exercise by asking the participants: *What comes to mind when you hear the word 'Assessment?'* Write down the participants' answers on a flipchart.
- Ask the participants what their reaction would be to someone who said, "Some preschool teachers have never used assessments. Others do assessments because they are required to, but file the records without using them."
- After receiving their responses, use the facilitator's note below to prompt discussion:

NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR: ASSESSING YOUNG CHILDREN

Assessing early childhood programs requires observing, documenting, and analyzing children's status in all areas of need (e.g., health, development, and learning). The ultimate purpose of an assessment is to help child service providers make sound decisions that can improve the lives of children and their families. Assessments are most effective when they follow these guidelines:

- The data collected should not be used for labeling or discriminating against children.
- The assessment should take into account that all children learn differently, have different individual interests, and grow up at their own pace. This knowledge helps assessors to make balanced and appropriate decisions for children.
- The assessment should involve families to help the assessor understand children holistically. This means focusing on the whole child and capitalizing on what they can do while helping them to improve their weaknesses.
- The assessor should remember that children belong to families and communities of different cultural values, traditions, and belief systems. This helps the assessor to address all children and their families with respect and dignity. It also helps to minimize personal bias about race and ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic background, culture, faith, etc.

Continue the discussion by asking the participants to find a partner and exchange their views on these questions: *What would you want to know about young children in your assessment?* and, *How can you use the results?*

Ask the partners to share their opinion with the larger group. Summarize the discussion by pointing out the key ideas found in the facilitator's note below:

NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR: WHY DO WE ASSESS CHILDREN?

- We assess children to document their individual growth, development, and learning at a given time, and to monitor their progress and change over time. During an assessment, we look for a child's:
 - Level of development
 - Knowledge
 - Existing abilities and skills, and what he/she can improve upon
 - Personal inclinations and temperament characteristics (e.g., what the child likes/dislikes)
 - Physical health
- We assess children to share information with caregivers and families so they can plan appropriate interventions for children.
- We assess children to identify health problems or catch delays/disabilities early on so that children can get help at the appropriate level. For example, on an individual level, caregivers/preschool teachers can adapt settings and activities to the age of the child, and to his/her abilities and interests. Families can provide caregivers with ideas of developmental activities suitable for young children, including those with developmental delays or disabilities.

ACTIVITY 2.B. INVOLVING FAMILIES IN AN ASSESSMENT (15 MINUTES)

Preparation

A flipchart presentation on the benefits of a family-based assessment

Instructions

Brainstorm by asking the group to call out their views on the question: *Do you think caregivers or families play a role in assessing their children?* If they answer “yes,” ask them what those roles are. If they answer “no,” ask them to explain why. After the participants give their opinions, open a discussion using the facilitator’s note below:

NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR: THE BENEFITS OF INVOLVING FAMILIES IN AN ASSESSMENT

It is important to include families in assessments because children grow up within a family and community environment. For example, a family’s childrearing practices influence what children do and how they behave.

A family-based assessment provides a holistic understanding of the child, and so needs to consider the following:

- The assessor considers the child’s family, culture, and community when examining the child’s status.
 - Use the family members’ language to accurately understand their views about their child. Bring an interpreter if you do not speak the family’s language.
 - Use an appropriate data collection method. Avoid asking families to fill out a form if they are not comfortable doing so. Arrange the time and place of the assessment together with the family. Before the assessment, educate the family about the purpose of the meeting and get their approval of the questions to be asked.
- The primary focus of the assessment must be to build on a family’s existing capacities and resources. It should also be to help children overcome their weaknesses and needs by capitalizing on their strengths.

Some of the benefits of a family-based assessment include:

- It responds to the overall wellbeing of both the children and their caregivers.
- It enables the assessors to gather reliable data about the child and his/her family life as a whole, with the families as the primary source of information.
- It addresses the different problems that families and children are facing. For example, children living in poor families are susceptible to many childhood diseases, and even death. The causes are complex, among them households with food insecurity and meager economic resources, as well as poor access to drinking water, health care, sanitation, and hygiene. A family-based assessment takes all of these needs into consideration.

Refer the participants to the reference section of *Resource Guide, Module 3* to access *The essential package*. Share information about *The essential package comprehensive checklist* and explain that it could be a useful resource to the participants when working with young children, especially children who live in poor families and children affected by HIV and AIDS.



ACTIVITY 2. C. SOURCES OF INFORMATION: WHERE DO WE OBTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT CHILDREN? (15 MINUTES)

Preparation

- Present key points from the *Sources of information* chart below.
- Prepare the chart below on a flipchart, without the answer keys.

CHART: EXAMPLE OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT SOURCES OF INFORMATION

<i>For facilitator's use only</i>		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION	TYPES OF INFORMATION	
	Direct	Indirect
The purpose of the assessment: To assess Anna's fine motor skills.		
	Answer Keys	
Ask Anna to comb her hair before she goes to bed.	X	
Listen to Anna's joyful report of climbing the stairs: "Look! I did it!"	X	
Watch Anna playing games with Mary and Tony.	X	
Report of Anna's mother saying: "Anna is able to peel a banana and eat it."		X
Notice when Anna's mother says: "Anna is able to brush her teeth."	X	
Review records in which Anna's previous teacher recorded that Anna was excited because she was able to collect all the bottle tops she used to play with and put them in a tin.		X
Anna's teacher praises her because she was able to paint very well using the brush.	X	
<i>[Note: Each of the above direct or indirect sources presents different, valuable information about Anna, and gives us a holistic understanding of the child.]</i>		

Instructions

- Ask the participants to find a partner and exchange their views on the following question, and later to share their answer with the group: *When you want to know about a child, who or what would be your source of information?*
- Have the partners share their views and write their ideas on a flipchart. Using the prepared key points on *Sources of information*, invite discussion using information that has not been covered. Point out that we can collect information from various sources and give examples of direct and indirect sources of information.
- Read each item in the first column and ask the participants to determine whether that source of information is direct or indirect. Provide the correct answers and point out that a combination of direct and indirect sources gives us a well-rounded picture of the child and his/her family. Continue the discussion by explaining that documentation is another important aspect of assessments, then conduct *Activity 3* below:

HANDOUT: CHART: EXAMPLE OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT SOURCES OF INFORMATION

For facilitator's use only

SOURCES OF INFORMATION	TYPES OF INFORMATION	
	Direct	Indirect
The purpose of the assessment: To assess Anna's fine motor skills.		
Ask Anna to comb her hair before she goes to bed.		
Listen to Anna's joyful report of climbing the stairs: "Look! I did it!"		
Watch Anna playing games with Mary and Tony.		
Report of Anna's mother saying: "Anna is able to peel a banana and eat it."		
Notice when Anna's mother says: "Anna is able to brush her teeth."		
Review records in which Anna's previous teacher recorded that Anna was excited because she was able to collect all the bottle tops she used to play with and put them in a tin.		
Anna's teacher praises her because she was able to paint very well using the brush.		
<i>[Note: Each of the above direct or indirect sources presents different, valuable information about Anna, and gives us a holistic understanding of the child.]</i>		

Activity 3: The importance of documentation (45 minutes)

Preparation

- Give a presentation on the purpose and benefits of documentation (see facilitator's note below).
- Prepare a copy of "*Galu uyu wa ndani!?* Whose dog is this!?" for the first group-one handout per group
- Prepare a copy of "Frog jump" for the second group-one handout per group

Instructions

- Ask the participants to find a partner. Read the case story below and ask the partners to exchange ideas about the question that follows the case story:

NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR: CASE STORY

A donor has given you \$150,000 to make sure that all young children in your village are going to preschool by the end of your project. The donor never saw the children or visited the preschools in your village, but has read your project proposal and was convinced by it. At the end of the project you report that all of the children eligible for preschool in your village are now enrolled. Your donor, however, has asked you to show evidence that what you have reported is true.

Question: How would you prove to your donor that your project has enabled all eligible children in your village to enroll in preschool?

- After the partners share their views, discuss the types, purposes, and benefits of documentation. Use information from the facilitator's note below in your presentation, and ask participants to take notes:

NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR: THE PURPOSE AND BENEFITS OF DOCUMENTATION— SOME EXAMPLES

Types of documentation include:

- Pamphlets, reports, learning materials, arts and crafts (e.g., children's drawings and songs), video clips, photos, stories, games and songs, and assessment records/observation texts (written records)

Documentation can be used for:

- *Creating a personal portfolio and learning:* Children can refer to and learn from a personal portfolio file about their individual and family life as well as their accomplishments and progress in life. Children also learn through photos, storybooks, drawing of shapes, colors, etc.
- *Tracking and monitoring progress and change:* Caregivers, teachers, or healthcare workers can use it as a guide to monitor and improve children's growth, development, and learning.
- *Family tracing:* Programs for orphaned and abandoned children prioritize documentation because it is essential for family tracing and reunification/adoption.
- *Advocacy:* Documentation also serves as supporting evidence when advocating for children's rights and protection.
- *Memory books:* Children can make their own memory books based on the information documented in their personal file. Memory books allow children to learn about their current and past experiences as an individual and with family members and friends. As they grow up, children hear their parents, family members, and friends telling stories about their childhood adventures and experiences. Orphaned or adopted children, however, may not have this opportunity. It is important that adoptive or foster parents document the child's life and talk with the child about those experiences. This will help the child build positive self-identity.

Important: All documented information should be used to support childhood development activities and should be kept *confidential*.

- Divide the participants into two groups and give the prepared handout on songs and games to each group as described below. The best approach is to *ask the participants to come up with their own cultural children's games and songs for this activity.*
- The first group reads the song "Galu uyu wa ndani!?" Whose dog is this!?" [**Note:** Use the English translation if the language is different.]
- The second group reads the game and song, "Frog jump" [**Note:** Use the English translation if the language is different.]
- Instruct the groups to read the game or song assigned to them and answer the following questions: *What might this be trying to teach young children?* and, *How might you use this in your work with young children?*

Remind the groups to refer to their previous notes on the purpose and benefits of documentation. After the groups share their views, summarize the discussion using the case story of *Alinafe Community Hospital*. Explain that this case story—*Nurturing children's development in Alinafe Community Hospital*—is an example of documentation. Its purpose is to introduce the program and share information on how sisters in Alinafe Community Hospital nurture children's development and learning through culturally appropriate experiences. Conclude with the facilitator's note below.

NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR: CONCLUSION

Documentation is a form of communication that requires your careful attention, discipline, patience, and willingness to complete the task. Documentation takes a variety of forms, like pamphlets, reports, learning materials, arts and crafts, video clips, photos, stories, games and songs, evaluation records, etc.

Documentation involves more than just recording what you do or see. When you document, you must have a specific purpose. You need to know why you need the documentation and who will use or benefit from it. Remember to always ask: Why do I need to document this particular information? Is it usable? If yes, by whom and for what purpose?

HANDOUT: SONGS AND GAMES *

Ask Group 1 to read the song, “*Galu uyu wa ndani!? Whose dog is this!?*” [**Note:** Use the English translation if the language is different.] The song is about a dog that ate people’s fish from their pots. One day, the dog was caught and the owner of the fish wanted to find the dog’s owner:

Leader: *Galu uyu wa ndani!?* Whose dog is this!?

Chorus: *Wadya matemba!* It has eaten my fish!

Leader: *Galu uyu wa ndani!?* Whose dog is this!?

Chorus: *Wadya matemba!* It has eaten my fish!

All

Timucheke pamimba tiwonene ngati wadya matemba! (x2). Let us split open its stomach to prove that it has indeed eaten the fish! At this point the owner of the dog, afraid that his or her dog would be killed, confesses that it belongs to him or her.

Ask Group 2 to read “Frog jump” [**Note:** Use the English translation if the language is different.] In this game, children squat in a circle and the leader sings this song:

Leader: *Chule chule iwee!* Hey you frog!

Chorus: *Bwantasa* You are squatting

Leader: *Chule chule iwee!* Hey you frog!

Chorus: *Bwantasa* You are squatting

Leader: *Ndakutuma madzi!* I sent you to draw water!

Chorus: *Bwantasa!* You are squatting!

Leader: *Wakatenga thope!* You have collected mud!

Chorus: *Bwantasa!* You are squatting!

Leader: *Thope lakolo!* With your mud!

Chorus: *Bwantasa!* You are squatting!

Leader: *Akumwera ndani!* Who will drink that!

Chorus: *Bwantasa!* You are squatting!

Bwantasa! You are squatting!

Bwantasa! You are squatting!

The chorus is repeated several times while children frog jump, pretending to be frogs. Though some get tired and drop out, the chorus continues as the remaining children continue jumping. The game goes on until the last child remains.

**Songs contributed by Teresian Sisters from the SCORE ECD project in Malawi*

Activity 4: Observation and recording (1 hour and 15 minutes)

ACTIVITY 4.A. THE BENEFITS, TYPES, SETTINGS, GUIDELINES, AND METHODS OF OBSERVATION (60 MINUTES)

Preparation

- Distribute *Resource Guide, Module 3* [**Note:** Prepare notes on the topics below to encourage discussion.]
- Write the groups' assignment below on a flipchart and hang it on a wall for all of the participants to see.

GROUP ASSIGNMENTS	
Group	Topic
Group 1	Types of observation and observation setting
Group 2	Guidelines for observing young children
Group 3	Methods of recording observation: Anecdotal record
Group 4	Methods of recording observation: Running record
Group 5	Methods of recording observation: Developmental checklist recording milestones

Instructions

- Start off by having the whole group think of an experience where they learned something important about a child. Then, have the group share their views on this question: *Did you learn about that child by chance, or did you intentionally observe that child?*
- Summarize the participants' ideas by pointing out that *though they are watching children, it does not necessarily mean they are observing them. Some of us are good at focusing on what is going on around us, and some of us are not, but observation is a skill that all caregivers must develop.* Explain the benefits of observation using the facilitator's note below:

NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR: THE BENEFITS OF OBSERVATION

Observation helps caregivers to:

1. Develop and build relationships with children. Effective observation brings a deeper understanding of the child, and encourages the observer to refrain from judging the child without having adequate information about him/her.
2. Respond to each child's interests, strengths, and needs quickly and in ways that are appropriate to the child's social and cultural context.
3. Share the information with the child's caregiver and make a joint plan to improve the child's status.
4. Follow children's growth and levels of development and prepare a plan for the next steps. Observation can ensure quick treatment of potential developmental delays.

- For the group presentation, display the group assignment chart and divide the participants into five groups, assigning them the topics shown on the chart. Instruct each group to refer to *Resource Guide, Module 3*, read the topics assigned to them, and later share with the larger group what they have learned about the topic. Ask each group to present their work on flipchart paper.
- At the end of each group's presentation (before the next group presents), ask if anyone has questions about what was presented. Using your notes, answer any questions. When the presentations are finished, point out that in the next activity everyone will practice how to observe and record events.

ACTIVITY 4.B. OBSERVING AND RECORDING (15 MINUTES)

Preparation

- *Observation 1:* Project the Observation 1 photo below on a wall if equipment is available. If not, distribute paper copies of the photo to each participant.
- *Observation 2:* Project the picture below on the wall if equipment is available. If not, distribute paper copies of the picture to each participant.

Observation 2: ECD classroom picture



Illustration / CRS

Instructions

Explain to the participants that you are going to *ask each of them to carefully observe and record what you are about to show them.*

Observation 1: project the photo of children below on the wall—**Observation 1:** Children in the Alinafe Early Childhood Development Program run by Teresian Sisters in Malawi.

Ask the following question: “What do you observe?” Ask the participants to write exactly what they see on a piece of paper. Explain that they may not discuss their thoughts with anyone. When everyone has finished, ask the participants to take turns sharing with the group what they have written. List their observations on a flipchart exactly as stated by each participant.



Observation 1: Children in the Alinafe Early Childhood Development Program run by Teresian Sisters in Malawi.

Observation 2: Repeat the activity by distributing the prepared copies of *Observation 2: ECD classroom picture* to each participant, or display it on a PowerPoint slide for all to see. Then ask this question: “What do you observe?” Have them write exactly what they see on a piece of paper. Explain that they may not discuss their thoughts with anyone. When everyone has finished, ask the participants to take turns and share with the group what they have written. List their observations on a flipchart exactly as stated by each participant. Ask the participants to reflect on what they have learned from everyone else’s observations. Do they find differences/similarities?

- Emphasize that *observation is more than simply watching*. Observers need to describe in detail what is actually seen and heard (the facts) and be careful not to make judgments about what they think might be happening.
- Go back to the list of observations. Read through each point and *ask the participants to decide whether it is a fact or a judgment!* Write an “**F**” beside those statements that are factual, and a “**J**” beside those statements that offer personal opinions or

1 CRS, Lesotho (2012); “Ngoana Eo Ke Oa Mang? A teacher resource guide.”

judgments [**Note:** *The facilitator can use the example below for explanation, if needed.*]

- *All of the children in the picture are smiling—J*
- *All of the children in the picture are homeless—J*
- *Most of the children in the picture are smiling—F*
- Summarize the lesson by discussing potential problems that may arise if an observer makes judgments about a child's performance. Remind the participants that they must know the purpose of their observation before they begin. Cite some examples from the *Anecdotal*, *Running record*, or *Developmental checklist*.
- Emphasize the importance of observing children regularly in both planned and unplanned settings, and how the information gathered should be used for activity planning. Also, emphasize that observing a child over time helps us to gather a more accurate picture of how he/she is developing and learning. Also, emphasize that children must not be put in testing situations, but observed as they play naturally. Talk about the importance of keeping a separate record for each child, and how to record the observations according to the developmental areas.
- Refer participants to the *Developmental checklist* in this guide and use the next activity to explain its use:

Activity 5: Recording child development using the Developmental Checklist (2 hours and 45 minutes)

ACTIVITY 5.A. HOW TO FILL OUT THE CHECKLIST (15 MINUTES)

Preparation

- Read the *Example of the Developmental Checklist from Resource Guide 3, page 15*.
- Distribute a copy of the checklist overview to each participant (see handout).

Instructions

- Ask participants to refer to the example of *Developmental Checklist (DC)* on page 15 of resource guide 3 and discuss about the follow-up notes/information in the DC.
- Distribute copies of the *Overview of the Development Checklist* to each participant. Refer the participants to *Resource Guide, Module 3* and explain that you will go around the room asking them to take turns reading *How to fill out the Developmental Checklist*. Explain that after the reading lesson, everyone will have hands-on practice using the checklist during a visit to a nearby facility.
- Begin reading from *How to fill out the Developmental Checklist*, asking individual participants to read a few sections. Try to give each participant a chance to read. Stop after each reader to ask: "Does anyone have questions about what was just read?" and, "Does everyone understand how to complete the form?"
- Explain that the form will help them document a child's developmental progress if it is completed regularly and correctly. Summarize by discussing how the checklist will be used in the field as per the directions in the handout below. Ask the participants to follow along with their copies while you summarize.

HANDOUT: OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLIST

WHY USE THE DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLIST?

- ✓ It is helpful for checking on age-specific development milestones.
- ✓ To quickly identify developmental delays for medical confirmation.
- ✓ To structure activities based on a child's needs if a minor developmental delay is identified.
- ✓ To record firsthand descriptions of an individual child's developmental progress.

Key message: The *Individual record of milestones form* is a tool that looks at all categories of development and can be helpful in quickly identifying a child's developmental delays.

HOW TO USE THE DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLIST IN THE FIELD

- ✓ Each child will have a separate *Record of milestones form*.
- ✓ Section one and two are familiar for residential care workers where general information is already documented. This is an optional section and the sister in charge can decide whether it will be filled out or not.
- ✓ Introduce the format for all children under age five.
- ✓ Observe the child over the course of a day. Remember that not all milestones can be recorded at once; if you are unable to observe something, please make it one of the first things you do and check later.
- ✓ Fill out the form based on observations, not memory.
- ✓ Plan an evaluation for those children in residential care who have not already undergone an evaluation.
- ✓ For new admissions, the form should be used when the child is first brought in.
- ✓ Tick "Yes" (✓) or "No" (-) depending on your observation.
- ✓ Write down any other observations in the "remark column" including "unable to observe" if you had no opportunity to observe a particular characteristic.
- ✓ Section 3.1. is a checklist you can use to record the child's developmental skills by each domain of development.
- ✓ Section 3.2. is a checklist that can help you identify potential developmental delays. A guideline is provided on what you can do when you have a concern.
- ✓ Section 3.3. is a chart to be filled out after completing the *Developmental Checklist*. This chart helps you create a review of the child's achievements by developmental domain and make a recommendation based on the child's needs.
- ✓ Use pencil to avoid messiness.

Key message: Quickly identifying developmental delays is essential for referring children to specialized care.

- A *Developmental Checklist* is included at the end of each age-group section.
- Take the time to closely review the developmental alerts for each age before recording a child's milestones.
- If you find a child with a concern—for example, a one-month-old that does not move his/her arms or legs—you should refer the child to a doctor. An early intervention for any problem will yield better results.
- The ***Developmental Alert Checklist cannot be used for diagnosis. Developmental delays can only be diagnosed through clinical investigation.***

Source: CRS, India, "Teaching Guide for Early Child Development Interventions for the Missionaries of Charity."

- Ask the participants to reflect on what they have learned from this exercise and summarize with this key message: *A one-time observation is helpful for learning how to record and interpret what you saw. However, such limited information may keep you from reaching an accurate conclusion about the child.* Development is continuous, so what a child does one day may differ greatly from what he/she will do on another day. Because of this, it is always important to conduct multiple observations before making decisions about a child.

ACTIVITY 5.B. FIELD TRIP: OBSERVING A CHILD USING THE DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLIST (2 HOURS AND 30 MINUTES)

Preparation

- Arrange a field trip for all of the participants to an ECD center and/or a children's ward managed by Catholic Sisters. Make sure that children aged five and under are available at the center to be visited. [**Note:** *It is best to conduct this activity in three different centers so that the participants can learn through comparison and enrich their experiences.*]
- Make sure that each participant will get an opportunity to observe a child for 1 hour and 30 minutes during the visit. Assign each participant an age group and provide blank copies of three *Developmental Checklists* that match the assigned age group i.e. 1: *Developmental Milestones Checklist for the age group*, 2: *Checklist for developmental alerts for the same age group*, and 3: *Summary of observation by domain of development for the same age group*. For example, if you assign *Participant A* to observe a three-year-old child, *Participant A* will receive copies of the three checklists indicated above for the three-year-old child. If you assign *Participant B* to observe a four-year-old child, *Participant B* will get copies of three checklists indicated above for the four-year-old child, and so on.
- **Optional:** *ask participants to prepare the blank checklists on paper by copying from the resource guide 3.*
- The three checklists—the *Developmental Checklist*, the *Summary checklist by domain of development*, and the *Developmental Alert Checklist*—are provided in *Resource Guide, Module 3*.

Important: Ask each participant to prepare a game or toy-play, which they will use for their planned observation activity. While it is best if the participants prepare this activity before the actual session, allow time for the participants to prepare their play activities in the training session if this is not possible. In either case, *make sure the participants have prepared their play or game activities before the field visit.*

Instructions

- Explain that the participants will visit an early childhood center or preschool to observe a child using the *Developmental Checklist*. In consultation with the supervisor or the teacher of the center, each sister will pick one child for observation.
- Explain the purpose of the observation and give directions (15 minutes).

Purpose

The purpose of the session is to help the participants develop observation skills by identifying progress in physical or motor skills, cognitive behavior, language or communication, social and emotional skills, and spiritual or moral development in children of various ages.

Directions

1. Observe a child using the *Developmental Checklist* [**Note:** *The facilitator will assign each participant with a specific age group ahead of time and provide copies of checklists accordingly.*]
2. Have copies of the *Developmental Checklist* and *Summary Observation Domain Checklist* with you that match the age of your child. To observe a two-year-old child, you have to use the *Developmental Checklist* for a two-year-old child.
3. Consult with the supervisor or teacher of the center and pick a child of your assigned age group to observe.
4. Observe the child for one to two hours during both *planned and unplanned* play activities.
 - For your planned activity, structure a play activity during which you can play with the child, or let the child play with people he/she is comfortable with while you observe. Be creative and use age-appropriate toys, games, or other activities. If a child is not cooperating, do not force the child. Instead, try to find a child that is more cooperative. Thank the child for playing with you.
 - For the unplanned activity, observe the child during free-play activities at the center.
5. Look for the characteristics listed in your checklist and record your findings by placing a check mark in the appropriate column. If you had no opportunity to observe a particular characteristic, write “unable to observe” in the “remark” column.
6. Summarize your observation using the *Domain Summary Checklist*.
7. Follow the guidelines for observation that you have learned in this session.
8. *Remember that this exercise is a learning opportunity, not a child evaluation.*
9. During the observation, the facilitator walks around and watches the sisters in action, answers any questions that arise, and assists those who need help.

Preparing play activities

Ask the participants to prepare age-appropriate play activities for their observation assignment. If they have done this already at home, take the participants to the observation site. Budget 15 minutes for travel to the site.

Field trip

Take the participants to the observation site and ask each of them to conduct a 1 hour and 30 minute observation.

Reflection

- Return from the field trip (15 minutes).

Note for the facilitator: It is best if the participants reflect on their observation experience at the site. This can be arranged ahead of time with the site supervisor.

- Ask the participants: “What did you learn from this exercise?” (15 minutes). Encourage the participants further, if necessary, by asking: “Did you have any trouble while completing the exercise?” or, “Do you have any questions about the *Record of milestones form* or the activity?”
- Provide feedback and clarifications on questions that may arise. The facilitator’s note below provides you with some ideas.

NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR: COMMENTS THAT MAY ARISE FROM THE SISTERS AFTER THE ACTIVITY, AND POSSIBLE RESPONSES

1. What if I can’t complete my milestones forms in time?

It may not always be possible to complete a *Record of milestones form* for all of the children in two days, as it requires individual attention. In such cases, set a tentative timeframe, e.g., “All forms will be done by the second week of October.” Set a timeframe that works with your facility’s schedule. If all forms are completed within the determined time, the work will be easier the next time. Try to observe one to three children per day. If you can watch and record all of your milestones by the twentieth day of the month, all of the forms will be finished by the end of the month.

2. A few children stay here only briefly. Should we still observe them?

Yes. You should observe them and fill out a form for each child when they arrive at the facility and another before they leave.

3. If we notice any developmental delays, what should we do?

If you find a slight delay in language development, focus on helping the child through continued activities that they’ve learned. If it is a health issue, then a doctor should be consulted.

If you find a health issue—for example, an eight-month-old who cannot sit alone or a three-month-old who cannot respond to sound—you should refer them to a doctor immediately. Review the *Health watch* sections in the monitoring forms.

Conclude this session with the statement below:

NOTE FOR THE FACILITATOR: CONCLUSION

Assessments help us to know children well and provide them with appropriate support. If we want to help children, we need to know them well, and to know them well we need to conduct regular assessments of their day-to-day development and learning experiences. It is important to include families in our assessments because children develop as part of a home and community environment, not as isolated individuals.

Assessment in a childcare program means regularly observing, recording, and documenting the status of children in all areas of need (e.g., health, development, and learning). We should use assessment results to make sound decisions that can improve the lives of children and families.

Documentation is more than just record keeping; it is a way to understand children's experiences by gathering information. Systematically gathering information helps focus our attention on each child's development. By documenting, collecting, and recording information, we become better caregivers and teachers for young children.

Observation is more than watching; it is a vital skill that all caregivers must develop. To understand the complex nature of a child's development, caregivers must use observation to better understand each child's actions and behavior.

The Developmental Checklist is not for diagnosing children. Developmental delays can only be diagnosed through clinical investigation. Remember that development is highly individual. The *Developmental Checklist* helps caregivers and teachers note the areas where children still need help and plan the next step in their learning.

CLOSURE AND SESSION EVALUATION (15 MINUTES)

Preparation

Make copies of the *Session Evaluation Form* for each participant [**Note:** Find the *Session Evaluation Form* in the appendix of this guide.]

Instruction

- Summarize what has been covered during the session and ask if there are any questions or anything that is unclear.
- Hand out the *Session Evaluation Form* and ask the participants to 1) conduct a self-assessment of learning, and 2) evaluate the training.
- Read the instructions for the session evaluation to the whole group before the participants begin to complete the form.
- Ask the participants to hand in their completed evaluation form.
- Keep the completed form in a file and give it to the organizer of the training. Close with a song or a prayer.

Appendix

Module 3: Session and Training Evaluation Form

This form is for evaluating individual sessions, as well as the quality of the overall training. It has two sections:

Section 1: *ECD Knowledge and Skills Self-Evaluation*. This section has a list of knowledge and skills statements by session topics for each module.

Section 2. *Training Evaluation*. This section asks: “What did you like most about the training?” and, “What would you like to change about the training?”

ECD KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS SELF-EVALUATION

Steps to fill out this section:

Step 1. Write your name, country, congregation/organization, date of training, and whether you have taken an ECD course or courses before this training.

Step 2. Take a moment to reflect and circle the number that represents what you knew *before* the session began.

Step 3. Take a moment to reflect and circle the number that represents what you knew *after* the session ended. Think about three to five changes you will make to improve your interaction with and support for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers based on the training session. List your ideas in the space provided.

MODULE 3: SESSION 1

Step 1

Name _____ Country _____

Congregation/organization _____ Training date _____

I have taken an ECD course/courses before this training **YES** **NO**

Scale 1 = Very low 2 = Low 3 = Neutral 4 = High 5 = Very high										
MODULE 3: SESSION 1—USING OBSERVATION AND DOCUMENTATION FOR ONGOING ASSESSMENT OF YOUNG CHILDREN										
ECD knowledge and skills self-evaluation related to:										
Step 2. Before the training					Circle the number that represents what you knew before (Step 2) and after (Step 3) the session.	Step 3. After the training				
1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	The importance of observing and documenting children’s developmental status on a regular basis	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	The importance of family-based assessment for young children	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Different methods of child observation	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Identifying possible developmental delays in children using <i>Developmental Alert Checklists</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Observing young children using the <i>Developmental Checklist</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Step 3. After the training										
Think about three to five changes you will try to make to improve your interaction with/support for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers based on the training session, and list them in the space below:										
1.										
2.										
3.										
4.										
5.										

MODULE 3: SESSION 1 EVALUATION OF THE TRAINING

INSTRUCTION

Step 1. Write the name of the trainer and trainer's organization.

Name of trainer _____

Trainer's organization _____

Step 2. Please provide brief answers to the questions below using a blank sheet of paper.

1. Briefly explain what you liked most about the training.

2. Briefly explain what you would change about the training.



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