

## CHLD 109: Observation & Assessment of Young Children – Discussion Questions

The following questions are suggested for use within an online discussion board. They could also be incorporated into a traditional classroom environment.

### Discussion Board 1 – Kindergarten Readiness

You will need to read the following articles in order to respond to the Discussion Board:

- National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE). (2000). *STILL Unacceptable Trends in Kindergarten Entry and Placement*. Available from <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/Psunacc.pdf>
- National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2009). *Where we stand on school readiness*. Washington, DC: Author. Available from <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/Readiness.pdf>

A Call to Action in “STILL Unacceptable Trends in Kindergarten Entry and Placement” was reiterated again in 2009 when NAEYC published a formal position statement on school readiness. The issue is still current today. Our policies and practices do not always match. Read both of the articles and then share your thoughts on the role assessment should or should not play in kindergarten registration practices.

### Discussion Board 2 - Diversity

For this Discussion Board post, please refer to the reading:

- National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2009). *Where we stand on assessing young English language learners*. Washington, DC: Author. Available from <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/WWSEnglishLanguageLearnersWeb.pdf>

The NAEYC Position Statement "Where We Stand on Assessing Young English Language Learners" states that a number of obstacles cause assessment practices and policies for English language learners to be ineffective. Foremost in ineffective practices “are the lack of appropriate assessment tools and the scarcity of well-prepared bilingual, bicultural practitioners.” (p.1) Whatever the purpose of the assessment, “those conducting assessments of young English language learners should have cultural and linguistic competence, knowledge of the children being assessed, and specific, assessment-related knowledge and skills.” (p.2)

The Position Statement recommends increasing the number of bilingual and bicultural early childhood professionals. Are you bilingual and/or bicultural? What benefits do you feel that bilingual and bicultural staff would have in working with young children? Do you feel that you are culturally and linguistically competent? If so, in what ways are you culturally and/or linguistically competent? What steps can you take to assure you will be effective in assessing young English language learners?

### **Discussion Board 3 – Knowing a Learner**

Assessment can help you discover children’s distinctive “approaches to learning.” Reflect on your approach to learning and consider your own attitudes, values, habits, and learning style as an adult learner. Describe your approach to learning. How can knowledge of the importance of creating a match between your own approach to learning and classroom environments be extended to your work with young children?

### **Discussion Board 4 – Parent Personal Visit**

This Discussion Board concerns the video "Family Conference."

- Heartland Equity and Inclusion Project (HEIP). (2012). *Family Conference Video*. Available from [http://youtu.be/s517uXGO\\_Ts](http://youtu.be/s517uXGO_Ts)

Watch as the Parent Support Specialist is conducting a regularly scheduled personal visit with the mother of a young girl with Down syndrome. After watching the video, answer the following questions.

- What is the purpose of this session?
- Is Kim assessing?
- How is information being gathered and how effective do you feel this strategy is?
- What information has the Parent Support Specialist gathered from the mother about the child’s development?
- What challenges have been identified that the Parent Support Specialist can target to provide support or link to additional resources?
- Based on what you determine to be the purpose of the session, how effective do you feel the session is?
- What do you see as overall strengths or areas of potential improvement?

### **Discussion Board 5 – DEC Recommended Practices**

Read the handout “CDL Assessment Plan.”

Watch the Video: Focused Portfolio Conference

- Heartland Equity and Inclusion Project (HEIP). (2012). *Focused Portfolio Conference Video*. Available from <http://youtu.be/8jDjJEd3Tng>

What did you read or observe that gave you evidence that the CDL has or has not implemented the following DEC Recommended Practices:

- A15 Professionals rely on materials that capture the child’s authentic behaviors in routine circumstances.
- A20 Professionals assess the child’s strengths and needs across all developmental and behavioral dimensions.
- A41 Professionals monitor child progress based on past performance as the reference rather than on group norms.
- A28 Professionals conduct longitudinal, repeated assessments in order to examine previous assumptions about the child, and to modify the ongoing program.

Address each practice citing examples from the CDL Assessment Plan and the video. What did you see as strengths of the portfolio conference overall? What suggestions would you make for improvement?

### **Discussion Board 6 – Engagement Results**

Considering both the process of collecting data and the results from the Engagement Checklist that you completed for this Module. Reflect on how assessment data might be beneficial within the classroom environment.

- How could you use this data to support children’s engagement in the classroom environment?
- What do you see as the benefits of assessing child engagement overall?
- Are there any challenges in terms of instrument implementation?
- How can these be overcome?

### **Discussion Board 7 – IL Kids**

For this Discussion Board post, please refer to the following readings:

- National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2009). *Where we stand on school readiness*. Washington, DC: Author. Available from <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/Readiness.pdf>
- Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Stakeholder Committee. (April 2011). *A New Beginning: The Illinois Kindergarten Individual Development Survey*. Available from: [http://www.isbe.state.il.us/earlychi/pdf/kindergarten\\_survey.pdf](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/earlychi/pdf/kindergarten_survey.pdf)

Over the course of the semester you have learned a great deal about assessment. One important beginning was your exploration of Kindergarten Readiness in the first Discussion Board. Reread the NAEYC article “Where We Stand on School Readiness” and be sure that you have read the assigned article “A New Beginning: The Illinois Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS)” before you compose your response to this post.

What do you see as benefits of the KIDS assessment that is being piloted in Illinois during the 2012-13 school year? Does it exemplify developmentally appropriateness according to factors identified in the NAEYC article? Why or why not?

### **Discussion Board 8 – School Report Cards**

For this Discussion Board post, please refer to the following website:

- Illinois State Board of Education. (2013). *Illinois Report Card*. Available from <http://www.illinoisreportcard.com/>

This site was new in the fall of 2013 and is a source for information about public schools across Illinois. This new online school report card was designed to inform parents about their child’s school. It includes a variety of information about the school as well as test scores. Watch the brief introductory video and note the state data on the opening page. Then take a look at a school that you or your children have attended or perhaps would like to teach in someday. Open the At-a Glance Report to find out what kind of information is available. Then follow all of the links to learn details about your targeted school. Also,

follow the link to the school's web site. Compare all of this data to another school in a different district and share your reactions to what you learned. Were there any surprises for you? Then, share your thoughts about how effective you feel this tool is for communicating with parents and community members. What components do you think are essential for parents and communities to know? What information is missing that should be public knowledge? Will it lead to school improvements in the future?