

# WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment Documentation Guidance

The WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment requires kindergarten educators to observe children and capture documentation of their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

High-quality observation requires objectivity. This means differentiating between what you actually see and hear (the facts), and what you think you see (your own opinions and interpretations of these actions). When capturing and collecting documentation you want to avoid the following: labels, intentions, evaluations, judgements, and negative statements.

## When and Where to Observe

To successfully maximize your observations, observing should become a regular and ongoing part of your day. By weaving observation into your routines and instruction, you continually create space for varied opportunities for observation. Observing throughout the day and in different settings allows you to capture more documentation on your children. One way to weave observation into your routines is to sit down with your classroom schedule and find ideal observation times (transitions, times where children interact with each other, etc.). Make it a habit to observe during these times.

As you begin your observation journey, try a mixture of the following observation types:

- **Spontaneous observation.** Sometimes a wonderful, unplanned moment will present itself. Don't stop yourself from observing just because it's unplanned. For example, engaging with children during breakfast provides a window of opportunity for spontaneous observation and learning about children's language and fine motor skills.
- **Planned and focused observations.** Developmentally focused observations can also be planned in advance. You can think ahead about a particular child, a small group of children, area of development, or specific objectives and dimensions you would like to observe and intentionally create windows of opportunity for observation. This type of observation is a perfect pairing for learning centers, where you have planned learning goals for your children. For example, to learn about children's counting abilities, include counting materials and prompts in a center or plan a small counting group.

A developmentally appropriate learning environment is necessary for high-quality observation. Please use the [Washington State Full-day Kindergarten Guide](#) to craft your learning environment. You can observe during large group instruction, during choice time, individual instruction, small groups, etc.



## Types of Documentation

- **Checklist:** Checklists are quick ways to capture information. They allow you to observe an objective or dimension and quickly mark a child's knowledge, skills, and abilities. There are two ways to use a checklist to capture documentation for your children:
  - Use a premade checklist from *GOLD*® called the [\*On-the-Spot Observation Recording Tool\*](#)<sup>™</sup>.
  - Create your own checklists to best suit your observation needs.
- **Anecdotal Notes:** Anecdotal notes are another method of documentation. Anecdotal notes are factual, written records of a teacher's observation of a child's or children's skills, knowledge, and abilities.
- **Pictures and work samples:** Pictures and work samples are another powerful way to capture documentation. Both pictures and work samples are ideal to show growth over time and allow you to collect documentation while you interact with your children. You could collect hard copies or upload pictures of the picture/work sample into the [\*GOLD\*](#)® [\*Documentation App\*](#).
- **Audio and Video clips using the [\*GOLD\*](#)® [\*Documentation App\*](#):** Audio recordings and videos are other options for documentation. Audio recordings and videos are easy and powerful ways to observe your children's learning and development. The *GOLD*® *Documentation App* empowers you to seamlessly capture and collect documentation in your classroom. The purpose of the app is to capture documentation and send it to *MyTeachingStrategies*®. The app uses the same username and password as your login to *MyTeachingStrategies*®. If you'd like to learn more, please read [How do I add documentation with \*GOLD\*® \*Documentation app\* using an iOS device?](#) or [How do I add documentation with \*GOLD\*® \*Documentation app\* using an android device?](#)

## Documentation Amount

OSPI requires teachers to collect at least **one** piece of documentation to support their determination for leveling of children's skills, knowledge, and abilities. This means one piece of documentation per child per objective and dimension. However, teachers can leverage one piece of documentation for multiple objectives, dimensions, and children.

### **Is uploading documentation into *MyTeachingStrategies*® required?**

The Whole-child Assessment uses *MyTeachingStrategies*®, an online platform, to house documentation and levels of children's knowledge, skills, and abilities. However, it is not required for teachers to upload their documentation into *MyTeachingStrategies*®. Teachers have the option to store hard copies of documentation.

## How long should teachers retain documentation?

Teachers must retain documentation and assessment-related records (either hard copy or in *MyTeachingStrategies*®) for one school year. For the 2021-2022 school year, records must be retained until June 2022.

## Documentation Resources and Tools

- [List of GOLD® Objectives Assessed by WaKIDS | Spanish](#) (revised 2015)
- [Sample Pacing Guide Option #1](#)
- [Sample Pacing Guide Option #2](#)
- [Sample Pacing Guide Option #3](#)
- [Learning Centers Observation Tool](#)
- [How, Where, When Planning Worksheet](#)
- [Discussion Prompts, Look-fors & Observational Activities](#): A resource for planning and engaging families in learning activities that may inform the WaKIDS assessment.
- [Discussion Prompts, Look-fors & Observational Activities-Without Objectives & Dimensions](#): This resource is similar to Discussion Prompts, Look-fors & Observational Activities but without Teaching Strategies GOLD® references and suggested activities.
- Use the [GOLD® Objectives and Dimensions for WaKIDS Evidence Worksheet](#) to begin planning for how/where and what types of documentation you will use. This is a great resource for a whole-child assessment professional learning community (PLC) discussion.
- Need help planning for observing your children's math skills? Look no further than the [Instructional Activities to Observe Kindergartners' Mathematics Skills](#) document.

## Books to learn more about documentation

- Bentzen, Warren R. *Seeing Young Children: A Guide to Observing and Recording Behavior*. Thomson Delmar Learning, 2009.
- Boehm, Ann E., and Richard A. Weinberg. *The classroom observer: developing observation skills in early childhood settings*. New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1997. Print.
- Bohart, Holly, and Rossella Procopio. *Observation and assessment*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2018. Print.
- Cohen, Dorothy H., et al. *Observing and recording the behavior of young children*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2016. Print.
- Curtis, Deb, and Margie Carter. *The art of awareness: how observation can transform your teaching*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 2013. Print.
- Gronlund, Gaye, and Marlyn James. *Focused observations: how to observe young children for assessment and curriculum planning*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 2013. Print.
- Jablon, Judy R., Amy L. Dombro, and Margo L. Dichtelmiller. *The power of observation*. Washington, DC Beltsville, MD: Teaching Strategies Distributed by Gryphon House, 1999. Print.
- Martin, Sue. *Take a look: observation and portfolio assessment in early childhood*. North York, Ontario: Pearson, 2019. Print.