How Much Documentation is Enough?

Teachers need to collect enough documentation to accurately support their assessment decisions of each child’s knowledge, skills, and behaviors at the end of the checkpoint. At minimum, a teacher needs to have at least one piece of documentation for every objective and dimension.

Some objectives, such as 7b. Uses writing and drawing tools, are easy to capture in a photograph, and a child’s skills are not likely to drastically change over a 9-12 week checkpoint period. For example, the way that Luke holds a crayon is likely to be very consistent throughout his attempts at writing.

Some objectives however, such as 1a. Manages feelings, may require the teacher to collect multiple pieces of documentation to make an accurate decision, since a child may demonstrate many different approaches to managing her feelings over a checkpoint period.

What is most important is that teachers feel confident that they have enough evidence to support and discuss the assessment decisions they make for each objective and dimension at checkpoint time. This evidence can be a wide range of types of documentation. A child’s portfolio can be made up of a variety of types of documentation such as:

- photographs of children’s writing,
- constructions, and art work;
- short video or audio clips of a child counting manipulatives;
- or a handwritten observational note that captures the dialogue exchange between two children in the Block area.

It is important that all documentation is objective, factual, and strengths based.

When looking to build out a digital portfolio, it can also be helpful to keep in mind that most pieces of documentation can be associated with multiple objectives. A short video clip of a child sorting buttons is obviously Objective 13. Uses classification skills, but we can also look at how the child is handling the buttons. Is she using a pincer grasp to pick up the buttons? Or does she need to slide the button off the table into her palm? This is evidence for Objective 7a. Uses fingers and hands. And if the teacher engages the child in a conversation about how she is choosing to classify her buttons, the teacher will likely be able to gather evidence for Objectives 8a. Comprehends language, 9b. Speaks clearly, and 10a. Engages in conversations.