

Best Practices in Selecting and Finalizing Checkpoints

As you select and finalize checkpoint ratings in *GOLD®* with *MyTeachingStrategies®*, refer to the guidance below to complete this important process with confidence and ease.

Selecting Checkpoint Ratings

Best Practice Information

The first step on the road to a stress-free experience finalizing checkpoints comes long before the end of the checkpoint period. As you work with children and engage in meaningful interactions, remember to intentionally observe and document what they know and can do. When you are diligent about entering that evidence into *GOLD®* and setting preliminary levels for the objectives/dimensions that you observed, you are promoting not only the children's success, but your own as well.

Staying on top of the documentation process throughout the checkpoint period means that as the checkpoint draws to a close—for example, during the last two weeks of the checkpoint period—you can focus on selecting and finalizing checkpoint ratings rather than on continuing to enter documentation.

While *finalizing* checkpoint ratings may be a great cause for celebrating all your hard work, it's the process of *selecting* those ratings that's the more significant—and time-consuming—of the two. Here are some considerations to keep in mind when selecting a checkpoint rating based on a portfolio of evidence with varying preliminary levels.

- Which preliminary level occurs most frequently?
- Which preliminary level relates to skills viewed most recently?
- Which documentation most clearly represents a demonstration of the objective/dimension?

Time-Saving Strategies

GOLD® empowers you to either select checkpoint ratings by child (meaning one child at a time) or by class (meaning one objective/dimension at a time for the entire class). Many teachers find the checkpoint-by-class method to be the quicker of the two.

GOLD® requires you to add at least one piece of documentation per child, per objective/dimension, and to set a preliminary level for it.* You may feel that this one piece of documentation accurately demonstrates the child's current knowledge, skills, and abilities. If so, selecting a checkpoint rating will be easy since it will be the same as the preliminary level.

If you have collected multiple pieces of documentation for a child for an objective/dimension and rated every piece at the same preliminary level, your choice of a checkpoint rating will also be clear.

You will want to spend more time on those objectives/dimensions for which you have multiple pieces of documentation set at multiple preliminary levels. *GOLD®* makes it easy to review each piece of relevant

documentation and to compare their preliminary levels, dates, and other objectives tagged so that you can make an informed choice.

*Check with your program administrators to see if they have set additional documentation requirements.

Finalizing Checkpoint Ratings

Best Practice Information

Once you select a checkpoint rating, you can easily change it before finalizing it. Remember to select *Save* to record your current checkpoint ratings.

Apply the "Not Observed" rating only in unusual situations, such as for a child who is new to your program or who has experienced excessive absences.

As you select and finalize checkpoints, frequently refer to the Checkpoint dashboard in the Assess area of *MyTeachingStrategies*[®] to easily monitor your progress and focus your attention on your next steps.

Time-Saving Strategies

The time you invest throughout the checkpoint period entering and completing documentation will pay huge dividends as you approach the end of the checkpoint period. Make sure you have a daily plan for observing and documenting children's development and learning right from the very start of the checkpoint period.

Frequently refer to the Assessment At a Glance to stay on top of the documentation process throughout the checkpoint period.

Many teachers find that completing checkpoints by class (one area/objective/dimension at a time for the whole class) is more efficient than doing so by child.

Select checkpoint ratings first for those objectives/dimensions for which all pieces of documentation within a child's portfolio are set to the same preliminary level, since this choice will be easy. Spend the most time on those portfolios that include documentation set at more than one level.