

Videotaping for the PICCOLO™

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What kinds of activities are good to use for PICCOLO™ observations?

Select activities that:

- Fit program goals
- Can be done in a small space
- Engage both parent and child
- Last at least 10 minutes

It is best to notice how families are interacting with their child during a home visit and telling them that interaction would be a wonderful PICCOLO™ observation can give them a frame of reference for this Tool. By pointing out the things they are already doing to support their child's development can help them understand the Tool and its usefulness for them.

Good activities should be sturdy enough for infants and young children and may include:

- Picture books with or without words (*Good Night Moon, Good Dog Carl*, etc.)
- Every day family routines: eating meals, tidying up
- Any special one-to-one time parent and child share
- Toys that the family has in the home such as manipulative toys: puzzles, blocks, shape sorters
- Pretend play toys: dishes, cash register, toy food, doll, toy cars
- Activities that may be provided in activity bags by the home visiting program.

Additionally, for younger infants, you might try:

- Singing to infant, Diaper change interaction
- Feeding interaction
- Stuffed animals.
- Picture books

How can families be comfortable being observed?

From the practitioners in our program partners, we've learned several tips that increase the success of PICCOLO™ observations.

Tip # 1. Plan ahead when possible and let families know you'll be doing this and why. Explain the purpose of using the PICCOLO™ measure and let parents know PICCOLO™ observations will be ongoing. Involve the parents in planning the activities for the observation. They should be activities that are part of their routine.

Tip # 2. Be flexible- - if it turns out to be the wrong time, re- schedule the observation for another time. If the child is sick, the family is having a crisis, or there are unusual or distracting circumstances in the home, it is best to reschedule for a time when the parent and child will be comfortable and behaving more typically.

Tip # 3. Do the observation where the family is comfortable—inside or outside, kitchen or living room or other room. Observations can also be done at centers if there is a room similar to a kitchen or living room where parents can either sit on the floor or at a table with their child.

Observations have also been done in center classrooms.

Tip # 4. If you videotape the observations, and we recommend that you do, watch the video together with the parent and child. Ask what they liked about playing together. Ask what else they would have liked to do. Their answers will tell you about the parent's goals for parenting and about the child's interests. You can then use this information to plan other activities to support positive parenting. Using PICCOLO™ can guide your discussion.

Tip #5. Also, if you videotape the observations, offer families a copy of the video recording. It is a small reward for the experience and can offer an opportunity for the parent to observe and reflect on their own parenting interaction style.

What are some tips for videotaping PICCOLO™ observations?

- Do the observation in a quiet place where the child and parent can interact without distractions. Ask the parent to turn off TV, radio, or other sound producing devices. Avoid placing the camera near anything that makes noise: fan, heater, aquarium, etc.
- Point the camera away from lights or windows. A light or window will make the camera adjust the exposure, and the parent and child you are trying to observe will be in the dark and difficult to see.
- Use a tripod to hold the video camera steady. Even if you hold a small camera very still, there will be wobbliness in the video that is difficult to watch.
- Keep both the parent and child in the viewfinder. For some parenting behaviors, it is important to know what the child is doing.
- Keep faces, hands, toys, materials in viewfinder. Emotional expressions, gestures, and the use of materials are all important for PICCOLO™ observations.
- Set a timer for 10 minutes. PICCOLO™ was developed using 10- minute observations. An observation over 5 minutes can be used to score PICCOLO™, but 10 minutes is best.
- Keep watching to make sure everything stays in the viewfinder. Sometimes a camera slips so it's important to check from time to time to make sure both the parent and child and their faces and hands remain visible, along with any toys or other materials they use.
- Try to be as unobtrusive as possible, and do not interrupt or engage in the interaction. It may help to be reading or writing something that takes your eyes away from the interaction. But be sure to check the camera occasionally.