

Ideas and Strategies for Incorporating Formative Assessment in Health, Safety and Nutrition

WHAT IS FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT? The North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education defines formative assessment as “systematic ongoing procedure to document, monitor and evaluate children’s progress, and plan appropriate learning experiences by:

- a. Observing, documenting and evaluating all children’s development, knowledge, skills, behaviors, strengths, needs and interests in all areas defined in *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development*;
- b. Providing opportunity for communication and collaboration with families, teachers, and service providers regarding children’s interests, development, and learning; and
- c. Providing data that teachers can use to systematically plan and evaluate learning experiences and teaching practices based on documentation of the learning and development of a diverse group of children.”¹

ASSIGNMENT ON INCREASING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY. Here’s an example of an assignment that incorporates the key components of formative assessment.



Observe – Ask students to observe for at least three hours in a preschool or early elementary classroom. They should be looking at ways in which physical activity is incorporated in the regular classroom routines. This will not include recess/outdoor play, but instead focus on other routines (e.g., circle, lining up, etc.).

Document – Provide students with a form they can use to document what they have observed. The form should identify each activity or routine and ways in which physical activity was incorporated in that activity/routine.

Evaluate – Ask students to evaluate the results of their observation and documentation. Based on the evidence they have compiled, ask them to identify additional opportunities for incorporating physical activity in daily routines. Could

more physical activity be incorporated in a book reading activity? While waiting in line? During snack time? During clean up time?

Plan – Ask students to develop a plan for increasing the amount of physical activity within the daily routines and activities of the classroom. Encourage students to use state early learning guidelines/standards to make certain that activities reflect developmentally appropriate expectations. The plan should clearly identify the routine/activity, propose strategies for increasing physical activity during that routine/activity, and provide an evidence-based rationale (e.g., recent studies underscore the fact that children retain concepts from a story better when they physically act out the story). Ask students to include examples of how to support the participation of children of diverse physical abilities.

Communicate and Collaborate – Ask students to present their plan to educators in the classroom in which they observed. Part of the assignment should include documentation of feedback from the educators, followed by revisions to the plan. A final version of the plan should be shared with the educators. If time permits, require students to return to the classroom to see which components of the plan have been implemented.

¹ NC Curriculum and Assessment Review Committee Working Title, Definition and Criteria for Assessments
http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/pdf_forms/definition_and_criteria_for_formative_assessments.pdf