

Discovery Developmental Center Assessment Plan

Definitions

Assessment – Assessment is an ongoing, continuous **process**. Assessment involves multiple methods of gaining information, including

- Formal Assessments
- Observations / Anecdotal Records
- Developmental Checklists
- Portfolios – Work Samples

Assessments should reflect the goals and objectives of the curriculum and should address all areas of development.

Screening – Screening provides a first indicator of potential or possible developmental challenges. Screening serves to identify children who may need to be referred for further evaluation, and includes

- Medical screenings like Health and Sensory (hearing/vision)
- Overall development, including Physical Development (gross and fine), Cognition, Language, and Social/Emotional Development.

Developmentally appropriate practice includes the goal that teachers support the learning and development of all children. To achieve this goal, teachers need to know children well and use everything they know about each child – including that individual’s learning styles, interests, and preferences, personality and temperament, skills and talents, challenges and difficulties. Discovery’s Assessment plan was developed to achieve this goal.

The Parts of the Assessment Plan

Discovery utilizes both formal and informal methods of assessment throughout the course of a year.

- Formal methods include utilizing a standardized screening tool within the first 6 – 8 weeks of enrollment. Oftentimes, a standardized tool can help identify a challenge a child may have that requires further assessment by a specialist, or when borderline, provide insight as to what future lesson plans should focus on.
- Informal methods are based on teacher’s observation and documentations of children’s work, play, behaviors, and interactions. They are aligned with curriculum goals and provide an on-going accurate picture of children’s abilities and progress. Also:
 1. They are regularly reviewed to be certain that they are providing the needed information.
 2. They include information from families about children’s history, experiences, and family values and beliefs.
 3. They utilize teachers who know the children and are able to make decisions about curriculum content, teaching approaches and personal interactions based on that knowledge.

Family Intake Chats – Staff strive to engage families new to their classrooms by reviewing written registration information with them to gain a fuller understanding of the child’s home life and the family’s hopes for their child’s time at the center. These times are set aside for classroom teachers to respond to any family questions about the program and to acknowledge the child’s parent/guardian as their most important teacher.

Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) – Completed by classroom teachers and family members within the first 6-8 weeks of enrollment, this standardized screening tool allows staff to get a quick view of where each child is developmentally and begin planning for meaningful experiences. The ASQ screening tool was chosen because of the ease of use by both classroom teachers and families. The skills integrate well with our curriculum goals and objectives, and can therefore be screened without too much pull-out.

Five items make up each developmental area (communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and personal-social), and were chosen to represent as closely as possible the developmental quotient (DQ) range of 75 – 100. Your pediatrician could explain this technical term – basically it means that with typical standard deviations of 1.5-2.0, children who are generally unable to perform items at a DQ of 75 should be referred for further assessment. The age equivalence skills were obtained from sources such as the Gesell, the Bayley Scales of Infant Development, and Developmental resources. The entire ASQ User's Guide is available for checking out at Discovery if you have more specific questions.

Screenings will be done whenever possible within the classroom setting that a child is familiar with by an adult that a primary care giving relationship has been established. Answers to questions that require family input will be obtained. Questionnaires are electronically scored and summarized. Letters indicating results of screening will be given to all families that participate. Results of the screening will be utilized in future lesson planning and goal setting.

Focused Portfolios – Classroom teachers utilize a system developed by Gaye Gronlund, as a basis for children's assessments and yearly portfolios. Through college coursework, continuing education opportunities, and sharing of strategies, Discovery's staff has been able to utilize this model very effectively, modifying as necessary, and sharing with new staff over the years to provide continuity in assessment procedures within the program. A variety of goal and objective resources, including Discovery's written curriculum, NAEYC, Montana Early Learning Guidelines, and the ASQ are utilized while observing and documenting children's strengths and challenges. Utilizing these resources, teachers observe and create anecdotes about children's experiences and interactions throughout the day. They use the information gathered to plan and modify their curriculum. In addition, the portfolios include information about the child's favorite things to do, who their friends are, and special moments with their families. All areas of the curriculum are represented within these portfolios, and at the end of the year are presented to families as a record of their child's growth in the past school year.

Ongoing Family Communications – Classroom teachers strive to have weekly contact with families through personal contacts, phone calls, emails, and notes home. These communications provide opportunities to keep families informed about children's development, experiences, achievements, and challenges on a regular basis.

Family Chats – Held two times a year (or more if desired), these times are another opportunity to engage families in their child's life at Discovery, their development, and to celebrate their achievements, and develop goals for the upcoming months. Screening results and portfolios are shared, and current and future classroom placement options are discussed.

Confidentiality - Discovery is committed to maintaining confidentiality of any information learned about each child and family. All staff must maintain this confidentiality as part of their employment agreement. Screening results will be tallied by an Office Assistant, reviewed by the Director and the classroom teacher, and shared with parents. This information will become part of the child's permanent file, and passed on to the next classroom teacher.

Children's files are kept in a secure location during the day, and are locked up at night, providing access only to staff who may have need of emergency contact information. Classroom teachers are in possession of children's screening results and portfolios, passing these on to families in conclusion of each school year.