

# One Page Resource: *Child Portfolios*

## Purpose:

A portfolio is a collection of detailed child observations and work samples collected by educators to celebrate each child's skills and accomplishments in the classroom. Authentic observation makes for the most ideal practice in early childhood assessment. Child assessments that are criterion-referenced are designed to measure a child's individual performance against a fixed set of predetermined criteria or learning standards—i.e., concise descriptions of what most children are expected to know and do at a specific stage of their growth and development. In N.M., the Early Learning Guidelines were developed to be the set of developmentally appropriate standards used cross-sector in early childhood settings. Portfolio observations are completed by educators, are shared with families, and are used to inform curriculum planning for individual children and groups. Child portfolios work in conjunction with the Authentic Observation, Documentation, and Curriculum Planning (AODCP) process, which was developed to support educators in connecting the concepts of observing, reflecting, and planning curriculum to further support children's learning and development.

## Authentic Assessments are Used to:

- Share children's progress with families.
- Plan curriculum and inform teaching practices.
- Do ongoing assessment of children's learning and development.
- Report useful data to the state of NM.

## Characteristics of Quality Portfolio Documentation

**Match** – The educator or observer will match the written observation with an Essential Indicator and co-relating rubric performance found in the NM Early Learning Guidelines.

**Detail** – Quality documentation can be brief. However, good anecdotes include enough facts so when other adults read them, they can clearly picture the child's actions. Typically, anecdotes have context to what the child is doing and/or trying to achieve, with a "beginning, middle, and end" to the story the educator is trying to tell about the child.

**Objective Language** – Document using objective language vs. subjective language. Objectivity means recording what is actually taking place, trying not to be influenced by value judgements or biases, and not recording interpretations of the behaviors being observed.

## Must-haves on a Portfolio Form

- Child's Name, Observer's Name
- Date, Domain, Component or Indicator
- Written Description of what you saw and heard (anecdotal note)
- Contextual detail which might include: Child Initiated or Teacher Initiated New or Familiar Task for Child, Done Independently/with Adult Support or with peers
- Time Spent – 1-5 mins/5-15 mins/more than 15 mins
- ELG Rubric with match (Preschool/NM PreK Only)

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## Timelines for Observing

**Infant/Toddler:** Within 45 days of enrollment and every four months thereafter. Infants and toddlers develop at a rapid pace; therefore, more consistent observations are necessary.

**Preschool:** Within 45 days of enrollment and every six months thereafter. Frequency of observations may vary due to funding sources and/or program requirements.

Collection Periods can be guided by a Calendar of Implementation or in alignment with Family/Educator conferences.

## NM PreK Extended-Day Funding (900 Instructional Hours)

- Three submission periods
- Fall submission date will be 45 calendar days from the first day of PreK
- Winter submission date is in February
- Spring submission date is 10 calendar days prior to the last day of PreK

## NM PreK Basic Service Funding (450 Instructional Hours)

- Two submission periods
- Fall submission date will be 45 calendar days from the first day of PreK
- Spring submission date is 10 calendar days prior to the last day of PreK



## Helpful Reminders

An authentic observation occurs in a variety of environments, usually related to the classroom or during outside play time, and can include transitions, family time, or during field trips.

Portfolio observations are shared with UNM ECSC consultants throughout the collection periods. Consultants read portfolios and ensure that authentic observations are captured and include match, detail, and objective language.

Once portfolio observations are completed, share with families during conferences.

For NM PreK programs, portfolio observation data is entered into the EPICS database.

Documentation should be completed and supported in family's primary language. Educators will work with staff and/or family to support translation and child documentation.

It is important to be intentional in planning for observations. Develop collection strategies to support completion of all observations and documentation for each child.