**MODULE:** Observing and Recording Children’s Behavior  
**LENGTH:** 9 hours

**DESCRIPTION:** This module introduces early education professionals to the importance and value of purposeful observation in a group setting. It also examines observation techniques and how they can be used to support individual children and improve the overall quality of the learning environment.

**OBJECTIVES:** This module is designed so that participants acquire the knowledge and skills to:

• identify the benefits of observation in the early childhood classroom
• develop systems and tools that support observation in the classroom
• understand the importance of confidentiality and identify strategies to maintain confidentiality
• interpret observations for the purposes of child assessment and curriculum planning
• identify the child assessment tools approved by the VT Department of Education for assessing children attending publicly funded Prekindergarten programs

**LEVEL 2 Early Childhood CORE COMPETENCIES:** Core Knowledge Areas and subheadings

- Child Development - Individual Variance
- Teaching and Learning - Assessment

**CDA SUBJECT AREA(S)**

7. Observing and Recording Children’s Behavior---9 hours

**TOPIC OUTLINE and suggested Activities**

**Lead in Activity:** Draw a penny (or another familiar object from memory). Include as much detail as possible. After you have finished drawing compare your drawing to a real penny. How did you do? This activity demonstrates no matter how familiar you are with an object, without taking a purposeful look you may not see the whole picture.

**Confidentiality**

using scenarios (or role play) demonstrate the importance and best practice regarding confidentiality.

**Observation: Writing what you see**

Practice observing

• using still photos have participants write what they see.
• using a 10 minute video participants complete a written running records observation. Review and discuss in pairs then as a group.

**Tools for observation:**

share and discuss - clipboards, journals, video, post-its...what system works for you? why?

**Types of observation** Running Records, Anecdotal, Checklists, Time Sampling...

**Activity:** *The Power of Observation* Chapter 5, the authors present a variety of observation tools/systems.

If you were working with a 2 year old that was biting other children several times a day, which observation system would you choose to learn more about the child and the triggers that may precede a biting incident? Be sure to describe why you chose a particular system.

**Making observation a part of your teaching practice**

Discussion “observation and good teaching go hand in hand”; respond and discuss

**Developing and implementing a recording/observation system**
Small group brainstorm: Barriers to incorporating observation into the regular classroom observation.

**Activity:** Groups trade “barriers” lists and then brainstorm solutions to the identified barriers. Discuss as a group.

**Written Practice of Observation (2 types)**
Using 3-5 minute video clips have participants try at least two methods of observing

**Reflection, Interpretation and Application of Observation**
*Activity Together Make Meaning* (see PreK Observation resources below - page 25)

**Introduction to Work Sampling and Creative Curriculum Assessment Tools**

**ASSIGNMENTS:** Assignments encourage reflection and help learners connect knowledge to practice. While suggested assignments have been aligned with the CDA Credential to support professionals in preparing a CDA Credential portfolio or Level II equivalency, the assignments will benefit all class participants in their work with young children.

- Two 30 minute observations and written running records.
- Create an observational tool (using Chapter 5 from the Power of Observation) and describe how you would use it. Use the tool during an observation of a child. (CDA Resource file).
- Reflection and Interpretation of observation (written summary based on observations).

**RESOURCES:**

**Articles and Handouts**
*Pre-K Observation workshop outline* (see page 25 for an activity on interpretation of observations)
*Observation handouts:* being objective, examples of observation, dos and don’ts etc. (one page each)
See Level II website grid

**Books**
*The Power Of Observation*, Jablon, Dombro, Dichtelmiller
*The Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers*
*The Art of Awareness*, Curtis & Carter
*Observing and Recording the Behavior of Young Children*, Cohen, Stern and Balaban

**Websites**
[www.prekstaffdevelopment.org](http://www.prekstaffdevelopment.org)
[http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v7n2/forman.html](http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v7n2/forman.html) (Importance of observation)

**Video clips**
[http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/index.html](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/index.html) (video clips)
contact Northern Lights for a selection of 30 second or less, downloadable video clips from videatives, inc