

OBSERVER BIAS

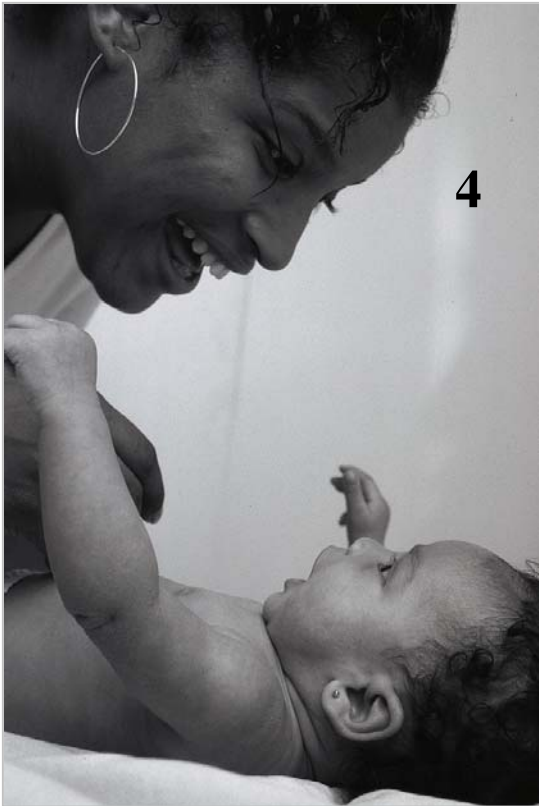
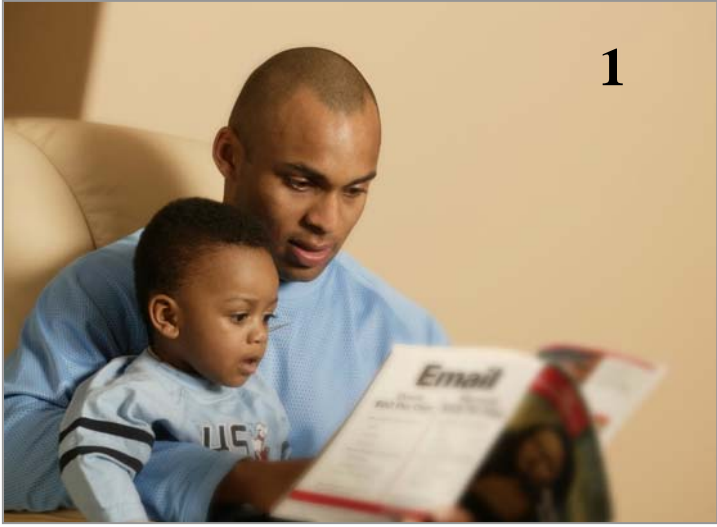
Observer bias prevents someone from seeing a situation or a person objectively. Biases may be subtle and not recognized by the person who has them. As a teacher, your preconceptions and biases affect what you pay attention to during an observation and influence the judgments you make about a person or situation. To effectively observe, you must be ready *to recognize and let go of your assumptions*.

To overcome or minimize the effects of biases, you can:

- Become aware of the lenses you bring.
- Talk about beliefs and values with your colleagues and families.
- Use formal observation tools that give objective criteria.
- Use forms or observation strategies that promote fair observation.

Each person brings his or her own unique experiences, education, and values to interactions with others. All of us look at situations through different "lenses" formed by our culture and experiences. It is vital for you to be aware of the various "lenses" you may use when observing children and families.

Understanding *your own* culture, values, preferences, and learning styles is essential for making unbiased observations. You also need to make efforts to understand the culture and values *of the families and children* you work with. Such understanding is the foundation of strong relationships and is also the key to unbiased observation and assessment.



Observation Warm-up

What did you notice?

Observation #1 Open Lens

What did you notice? What did you see? What did you hear?

Observation #2 Focused Lens

Language Development OR Social/Emotional Development OR Movement/Motor Development

What did you notice? What did you see? What did you hear?

Observation #3 – Sample Written Observation

What about this observation was useful? What about this observation was not useful?

Observation #4 Picture Observation

What did you notice? What did you see? What did you hear?

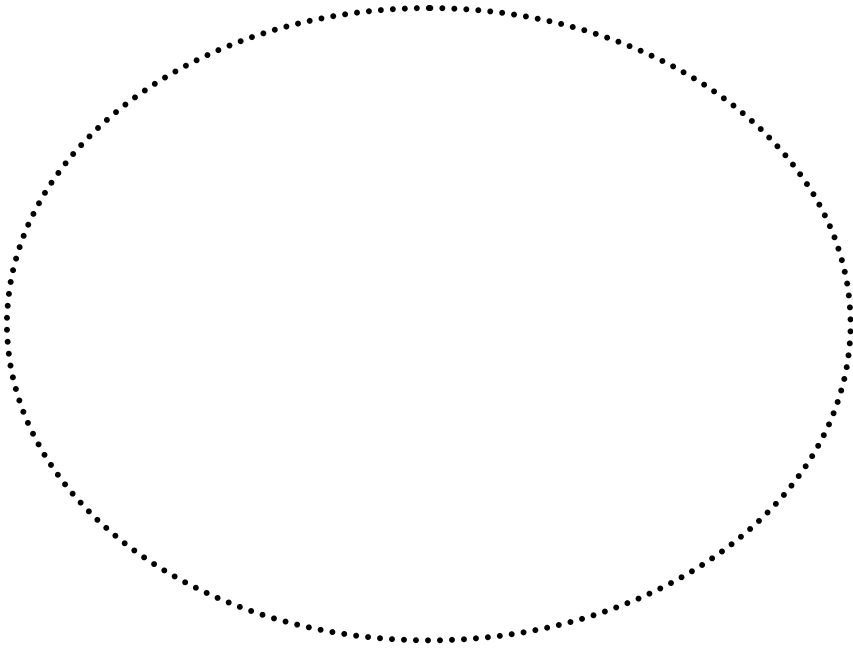
Observation #5 Final Practice Observation

What did you notice? What did you see? What did you hear?

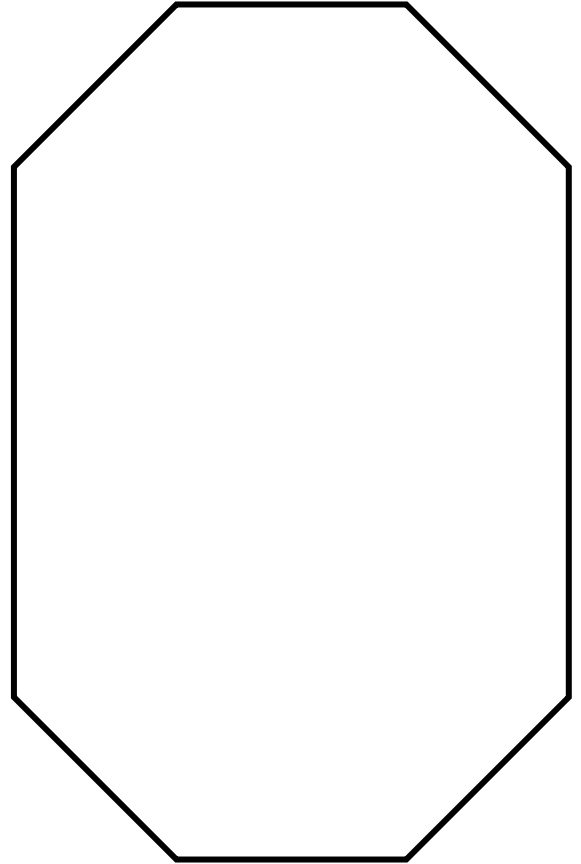
In what ways could you use this observation?

OVERVIEW OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION VALUES
SEATTLE CITY WIDE PRE-SERVICE

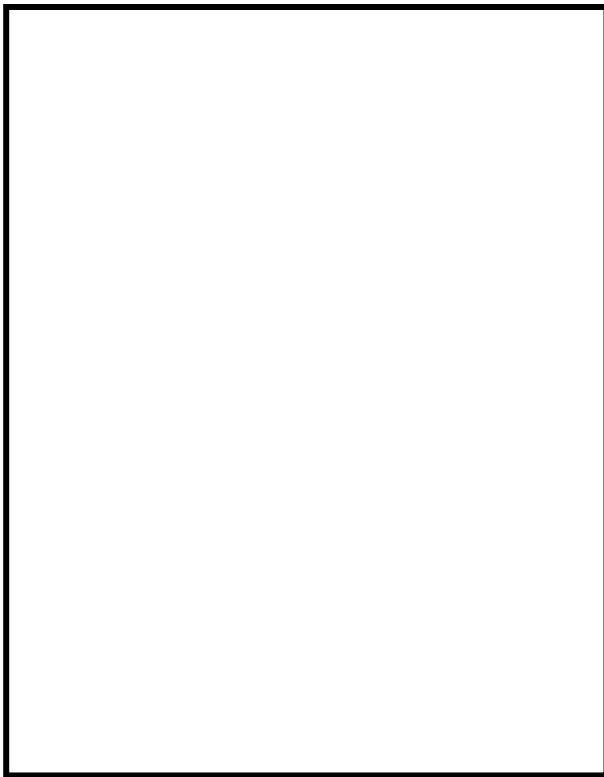
What does *early childhood* look like in your family?



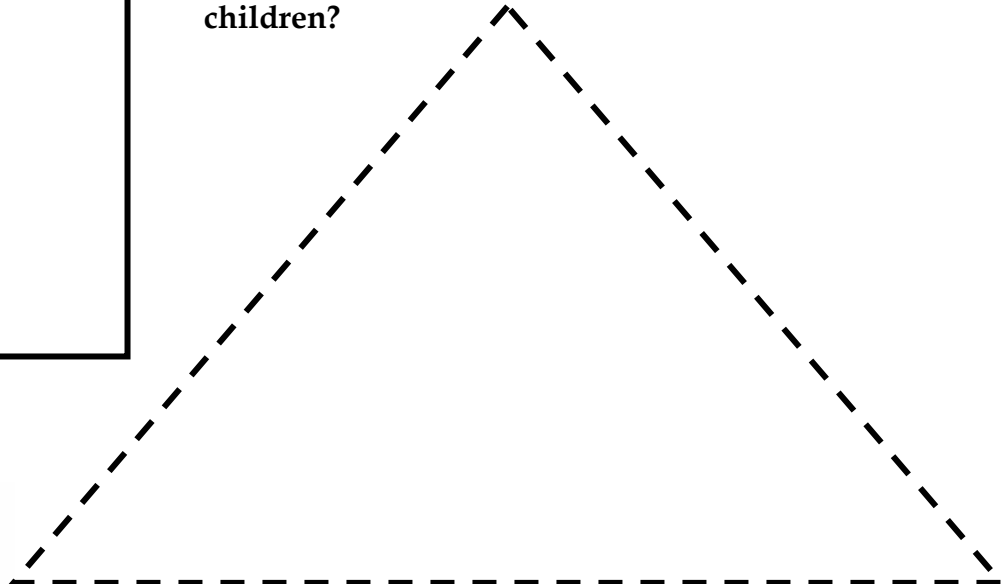
Who and what has helped shape your behaviors, attitudes and beliefs about *childhood*?



What aspects of *early childhood education* are really important to you?



How do you think your beliefs and values affect the way you observe and take notes about children?



What makes a useful observation?	What makes a <i>not</i>-useful observation?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Careful detail and background information about the situation ❑ Use details - Facial expressions, movements, behaviors ❑ Some ideas or reasons for the behavior, if known – details from child’s life ❑ Instead of using a label, describe the behavior or feelings ❑ Describe location in the room ❑ Time of day of observation ❑ Include group size ❑ Include which teacher or volunteer the child is with ❑ Put child’s age and name ❑ Write the date ❑ Focus on a difficult or important or critical time for child (like transitions, for example) ❑ Observations are clearly linked to observation and assessment and curriculum tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Don’t use labels or name-calling in an observation ❑ Few details about the situation

The following two points describe ways to use observations:

- ❑ *Can use to compare with other days/behaviors*
- ❑ *Can plan to mirror his behavior*

What makes a useful (positive) observation?

- Includes the date and time of day
- Includes name and age of child
- Includes details in the time of the observation (language used, gestures, facial expression, behaviors, etc)
- Include information about other child/children if interaction is the focus (one on one, small grp?)
- Including details of the work being done (writing sample, blocks built, art)
- Give the context – the environment/moment (if you know a reason for the behavior, list it)
- Wrote down a quote of exactly what the child said
- Includes information about interactions with the other child
- Is there a stand-out reason for the observation (first time, ongoing issues, etc.)
- Include information about caregivers involved
- Clearly links to assessment tool or continuum or curriculum

What makes a not-so-useful (poor) observation?

- Name calling and labeling!!
- Use of absolutes (always, never)