Progress Reports for Infants and Toddlers

**EEC Regulation 7.06 (3-4)** The following requirements apply to all programs, including family child care, small group and large group.

(3) **Progress Reports:** A written progress report must be prepared periodically on the progress of each child in the program. The program must offer parents a conference to discuss the content of the report. A copy of the progress report must be given to the parent and a copy kept in the child’s record.

(a) **Frequency:**
   1. for infants and children with identified special needs the progress report must be prepared every three months.
   2. for toddlers and preschoolers, the progress report must be prepared every six months.

(b) **Content:** The progress report must be based on observations and documentation of the child’s progress in a range of activities over time and may include samples of the child’s work.
   1. For children younger than school age, the progress report must address the development and growth of the child including but not limited to the developmental domains of Cognitive, Social/Emotional, Language and Fine and Gross Motor and Life Skills.

(c) All Educators, specialists and consultants working with the child in the program must be offered an opportunity to contribute to the progress report of the child.

(4) **Use of Progress Reports:** Educators shall use progress reports to adapt the program to the children’s individual strengths, interests, and needs; to maintain ongoing communication with the child’s family, and; with parental permission, to facilitate the child’s transition to another early education and care program.

**The Rationale for the Regulation**

Progress reports serve a number of important purposes:

- To support communication with parents about their child’s growth and development;
- To serve as a tool in developing a partnership between educators and parents to promote children’s growth and development;
- To help the educator learn about each child;
- To assist in planning activities and adapting the environment to meet the needs of individual children;
- To form a useful record that can help children and families transition more smoothly to another program.

**Meeting and Exceeding the Regulation**

Progress reports, also referred to as assessments, are the process of gathering information about children from several forms of evidence, then organizing and interpreting that information. There are several methods for recording children’s progress. Each method requires documentation over time – daily, weekly, every other week – for at least 3 months to get a complete and accurate picture of a child. Some of the methods of recording children’s progress include:

- **Observations** – Objective dated documentation of what you see and what you hear children doing.
- **Anecdotal Notes** – Brief dated descriptions of what a child is doing.
- **Class List Logs** – For recording short, specific information about each child.
- **Checklists** – A listing of typical skills by age and all domains that the educator can check off once observed.
• **Portfolios** – Collections of dated children’s work and documented photos of activities; considered “authentic assessment.”

• **Rating Scales** – A system to rate children’s progress as observed.

• **Research Based Tools** – Reliable, valid, normed tools available for purchase. Some examples for infants and toddlers include High Scope Child Observation Record; Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos; and Teaching Strategies GOLD.

Information on children should be gathered and documented across all domains (Social/Emotional, Cognitive, Language, Physical, and Life Skills). To observe all of these skills, it may be necessary to plan specific types of activities for particular infants and toddlers in which performance on skills can be recorded. Seek contributions to include in the progress report from any other educators, specialists or consultants who have been working with the child. Once information is gathered the educator should review the documentation to reflect on children’s progress and areas of need. Educators can then plan activities for children that support emerging skills and provide challenge in new areas of development.

Written progress reports are shared with families every three months for infants and for children with identified special needs and every six months for toddlers. Progress report formats can be program made or purchased. The Progress Reports Resource Packet available on the EEC website (see Resources) provides information on tools for purchase, as well as samples of progress report that can be used by programs.

In preparing to meet with families, educators should plan what and how to share information. Identify key developmental skills to be shared. These may focus on gains the child has made or areas of concern or interest that the family has shared. Begin your family meeting with positive comments about the child and specific examples or observations that illustrate the child’s skill level. Engage the family in discussions about their expectations for their child’s development, activities their child enjoys at home, skills that may be observed at home, but are not evident in the early learning setting, and any concerns they may have about their child. Share their child’s portfolio or samples of their child’s work. Frame concerns and goals in positive ways, avoiding judgments about the child. Share objective information about what the child is doing and discuss goals, including goals the family has shared. Ask families for input in developing a plan for the child. Give parents a written copy of the progress report and keep one in the child’s files.

Arrange meetings that are convenient to families. If they are unable to meet, provide copies of their child’s progress report and suggest alternative ways to share information, such as email or phone conversations. Document your attempts to meet, and include any conversations, communication and plans for the child. Keep a copy in the child’s file with the progress report. Use the progress report to plan and implement activities that meet the child’s strengths, needs, and interests, and to make any changes in the classroom environment to support the child’s development and the learning.

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**Difference Between Assessment and Screening**

**An assessment tool** is used to document the progress of a child in all domains. Assessments are done in natural settings, over time. The information gathered is used to identify strengths and goals for a child, plan curriculum activities to enhance the child’s progress; and to communicate with families.

**A screening tool** is a brief way of learning more about a child’s development and identifying any specific areas of developmental delay. The screening tool may identify the need for further follow up, referral, or other interventions. Screenings should be done within 45 days of a child’s enrollment.

Examples of screening tools include Ages and Stages Questionnaires, Brigance Early Childhood Screens, and Battelle Developmental Inventory Screening.
### Resources

- Progress Reports Resource Packet at [www.eec.state.ma.us](http://www.eec.state.ma.us) – For information on progress reports, portfolios, positive ways to share information with parents, samples of progress report forms, and internet resources for information on assessment tools.

- For downloadable copies of developmental milestones checklists, tips on talking to parents, information on positive parenting and other useful resources visit the Centers for Disease Control website at [http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/child/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/child/default.htm).


- *Basics of Assessment: A Primer for Early Childhood Educators* by Oralie McAfee, Deborah J. Leong, Elena Bodrova (NAEYC), 2004.

- *Spotlight on Young Children and Assessment* by Derry G. Koralek, ed. (NAEYC), 2004.