

Portage Project
CESA 5
PO Box 564
Portage, WI 53901

phone: 800-862-3725 ext. 221

www.portageproject.org/npg



The New Portage Guide: Birth to Six

Portage Project Materials

The Portage Project which is housed at the Cooperative Educational Service Agency #5 in Portage, Wisconsin has revised its previously published assessment and curriculum materials, specifically the *Portage Guide to Early Education (PGEE)* and the *Portage Classroom Curriculum (PCC)*.

The Portage Project was originally created in response to the need to provide services in a rural community to young children with disabilities. In the early 1970's the concept of offering home based services designed to support the parent's role as the first and most influential educator of their children was quite unique. The Portage Model used an informal assessment tool the *Portage Guide to Early Education (PGEE)* where the home teacher and parent used the assessment information to target skills and behaviors to be taught. Activity ideas would be given to the parent to work on for the coming week. Although designed for use in home base intervention programs, many classroom teachers liked the ease of using the checklist and activity cards. In 1985, The *Portage Classroom Curriculum (PCC)* was developed specifically for classroom use. A new assessment tool for classroom use was developed, accompanied by a resource manual with classroom activities to support the assessment items.

The New Portage Guide materials incorporate the best features of the Portage Guide to Early Education (PGEE) and the Portage Classroom Curriculum (PCC) and uses the philosophy upon which the Portage Project materials were developed. It incorporates current early childhood field research and best practices including early literacy and social emotional growth. Four premises guided the development of these materials:

1. The assessment process is strength based, that is, each indicator is stated in the positive, e.g. *Joins in group finger plays with words and actions.*
2. The assessment process is functional. The assessment indicators are found, naturally occurring, in the child's home or in the classroom, e.g. *Manipulates objects with hands in a coordinated way, instead of, Unscrews nesting toys.*
3. Parents are involved in the assessment, curriculum planning and individualizing process from the beginning and periodically throughout the year.
4. The role of the caregiver is critical to the assessment and planning process. Support is provided through tools that help staff to think ecologically, reflectively and in terms of their relations and interactions with children.
5. The new materials will meet the assessment and planning needs of home visiting and a variety of center based programs; for young children from birth through six years; and will provide a system of program accountability through technology.

TOOL FOR OBSERVATION AND PLANNING

The Tool for Observation and Planning (TOP) is designed for use as a child development data-gathering instrument. Through the use of the TOP, the developmental information is gathered through the systematic observations of young children. The information is then used for individualizing and curriculum planning, and for aggregation of data needed for reporting. The TOP supports planning for the needs of center based programs such as child care, early childhood classrooms, four year old preschool, Head Start and other programs such as home based intervention, home visitation or home school settings. (In the User's Guide the term caregiver will be used generically for all programs/settings. The term caregiver will be used in the Birth to 3 activity cards and teacher will be used in the preschool activity cards).

The TOP is available in an individual format. The information gathered from the TOP is shared with the parents by using the individual child's TOP or sharing assessment results using the Child Planning and Family Partnership Document. Teaching staff or home visitor use the assessment results and input from parents when developing their weekly plans, using the Weekly Planning form or their own weekly planning form.

Child Development Tool for Observation and Planning (TOP)

Communication/Language/Literacy

CODE:
 Always or consistently (✓)
 Occasionally (○)
 Cannot do/not observed (N)
 Mark date and code

Strands

Early Reading

6 Recites songs, rhymes from memory or makes them up

Things to Consider

A predictor of later reading success is found in a child's ability to recognize matching sounds and rhymes in word games and songs.

7 Retells a story, but may confuse some of the facts

Children understand and remember a sequence of what comes first, next and last. Reads book from memory.

8 Identifies at least 10 letters of the alphabet, especially those in their own name (record letters below).

Talk to children about the letters of the alphabet by name and sound. Point out letters and words in the alphabet.

9 Recognizes a word as a unit of print

Child realizes that print, rather than pictures, carries the meaning of the story and that print corresponds to the oral version.

OBSERVATION
 Dates Code

1		
2		
3		
4		
1		
2		
3		
4		
1		
2		
3		
4		

4 to 5 years

Comment:

1. **Communication/Language/Literacy**
2. **Exploration and Approaches to Learning**
3. **Social Emotional Development**
4. **Purposeful Motor Activity**
5. **Sensory Organization**

COMMUNICATION/LANGUAGE/LITERACY

1. Communication
2. Speech and language
3. Early reading

ORGANIZATION AND OVERVIEW OF THE TOP DEVELOPMENTAL AREAS

The TOP is comprised of five developmental areas. Dividing the areas in this way does not mean that they are isolated from one another; in fact there is necessary overlap between all areas. Behaviors already exhibited in one or more area of development often serve as readiness or prerequisite skills that allow a child to successfully carry out a behavior in another area. Each broad developmental area has a more specific set of sub-skills or “strands.” The TOP does not contain every behavior the child will develop between birth to six years. It is a representative set of milestone skills that children from birth to six typically obtain. Some developmental areas will have strands that are more weighted in one age range than another, because that is the age where the child experiences the greatest leap. For example, speech and language will have fewer items in the birth - 8 month age ranges than in the 18 to 36 month age range. Following is a description of the five developmental areas.

1. Communication/Language/Literacy

One of the greatest accomplishments a child makes from birth to six years of age is the development of language (oral or sign) and the ability to communicate with others. The child begins to learn speech and language by listening to and observing people communicating in his environment. He begins making sounds, then babbling, and finally actual words begin to appear. Understanding language and vocabulary precedes the use of language, gestures or a signing system that allows him to communicate with others. We use oral or signed language to understand written language. It provides the foundation for all literacy interactions. Literacy development includes awareness of pictures and the printed word and early reading skills used in communication. Although early writing skills are part of a child’s developing literacy awareness we have chosen to put those skills in Purposeful Motor Development. However, placing it in Purposeful Motor does not infer that it is strictly a motor skill, but the two strands overlap.

2. Exploration and Approaches to Learning

Exploration and Approaches to Learning refers to a child's thinking or cognitive ability to remember, discover through his senses, process, organize and use information to think critically or reason, problem solve, as in science and simple math skills and to evaluate ideas. Early in the child's life his responses are recalled imitations of others. Later he will give new or recognized "best" answers from information he knows and remembers.

3. Social Emotional Development

This developmental area highlights the importance of the caregiver-child interactions and the child's ability to separate, to interact with peers and adults through play, family routines and community experience. It also involves the child's growing sense of self, emotional development, creative self-expression and self-control.

4. Purposeful Motor Development

Purposeful Motor development refers to the child's ability to coordinate movements of large and small muscles of the body, including pre-writing skills. It also includes a focus on mastering self care and work skills that leads to independence. These motor skills are important for two reasons. First they provide a means for expressing skills in the other developmental areas, such as self-confidence; and second, they are the foundation of cognitive and language development.

5. Sensory Organization

Sensory Organization involves the process of receiving, integrating and organizing sensory information that helps the child make sense of the world and leads to effective self regulation of bodily functions, behaviors and emotions. Development of a child's sensory capabilities provides a foundation for other capacities such as motor skills or learning.

EXPLORATION/APPROACHES TO LEARNING

1. Perceptual Development (discrimination, cause and effect)
2. Exploration (Birth to 9 months)
3. Object Permanence (9 to 18 months)
4. Critical Thinking
5. Early Math
 - counting
 - number concepts (more, less, few, one more)
 - comprehension (matching, one-to-one correspondence, quantity, time)
6. Science

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Relationships
2. Emotional Response
3. Interactions with Others
4. Social Play Development
5. Creative Self-Expression

PURPOSEFUL MOTOR ACTIVITY

1. Large Motor (locomotion, balance, coordination, movement skills)
2. Small Motor (reach, grasp, release, manipulative hand skills)
3. Independence/Self-Care
4. Early Writing

SENSORY ORGANIZATION

1. Senses
 - auditory (hearing)
 - gravity and movement (vestibular)
 - muscles and joints (proprioceptive)
 - touch – (tactile)
 - visual (seeing)
2. Self-regulation (internal and external)

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Infant | Birth to 9 months |
| 2. Mobile Infant | 9 to 18 months |
| 3. Toddler | 18 to 36 Months |
| 4. Preschooler | Three to Four years |
| 5. Preschooler | Four to Five years |
| 6. Preschooler | Five to Six years |

“Things to Consider” Column

Each developmental indicator has a corresponding “Things to Consider” statement (side by side). Each statement provides the caregiver with an understanding of the child’s development that cues her in her observations. The role of the caregiver is critical to the assessment and planning process in the Portage model. Things to Consider is just one of the supports we offer the caregiver to enhance her professional growth.

Age Ranges

The TOP is organized into six age ranges that correspond to the age ranges used by numerous early childhood programs. The age ranges are the Young Infant, Birth through 8 (Birth-8) months, the Mobile Infant, 9 through 17 (9-17) months, Toddlers, 18 to 36 (18 to 36) Months, Three to Four years (3 to 4), Four to Five (4 to 5) years and Five to Six years (5 to 6). Each age range has the five developmental areas. The age range indicates the approximate age when many children will demonstrate specific developmental milestones that are listed. Each child travels his or her own unique path of development. Some children will proceed close to the order of the items presented, however, other children will skip items, proceed in unpredicted patterns or in some cases will not achieve milestones in his age range.

ACTIVITY/INTERACTION CARDS

The Activity/Interaction cards are spiral bound and correspond to each assessment item in the TOP and are used as a "first step" in planning daily activities and routines. In addition, the cards provide "consideration" tips for the classroom environment and interactions. These tips will help the teacher reflect on the child's development and interests or her own teaching practices. The activities and considerations are written in language appropriate for use by parents and can be shared by the caregiver/teacher.

The cards contain the following 5 parts:

1. **Why Is This Important?** Explains why the skill or behavior is important for caregivers to know.
2. **Interactive Activities:** Strategies used by the caregiver and/or parent to enhance their relationship with a child. These strategies may include:
 - touching
 - alerting
 - expanding
 - pausing
 - engaging
 - turntaking
 - positioning
 - imitating
 - reinforcing
 - novelty
 - describing child's play
 - reading the child's cues
 - adjusting the rhythm

- **Cards are numbered and color coded to match the items in the TOP**
- **There are 6 age ranges and each age range includes all five developmental area**
- **The top of the card includes the age range, the developmental area and the developmental strand**
- **The number which corresponds to the TOP is highlighted in a circle next to the developmental item**

Communication/Language/Literacy

Developmental Strand: Speech and Language

4 USES VARIED SPOKEN VOCABULARY

Why Is This Important?

Through both real life conversations and books, the child is learning new words every day to help explain his understanding of the world.

Interactive Activities:

Following Child's Lead: I am curious about new words I hear. Some words have interesting sounds and I like to repeat them over and over. Introduce other silly words that we can play with.

Daily Routine Activities:

Any moment during the daily routine will be an opportunity for me to learn new words and increase the number of words in my vocabulary. When you introduce a new experience or new toy, take time to say the new word and explain what it is or what it does. Ask me a question so that I have to say the word. For example, *What is this?* (a sifter) *And how are you going use the sifter in the sand table?*

Storytime: I can learn many new words from the books you read to me. When you come across a new word as we read together, stop and insert an explanation or synonym for the word, e.g., in Helen Palmer's book, *Fish Out of Water*, the fish goes down into the *cellar*. You might want to stop and say, *Another name for the cellar is a basement. Some people have basements under their homes.*

Continued on back

4 to 5 years

PORTAGE GUIDE: BIRTH TO SIX © 2003 Portage Project

3. Daily Routine Activities

- Activities that are imbedded into the daily routines of home and/or the classroom
- Daily routine activities are a starting point for discussion and planning
- Ideas must be individualized to support the culture and uniqueness of each family and child you work with
- Ideas may be adapted, embellished and expanded

4. Considerations

- Environmental Considerations: Reminders of how to use the child's natural environment or a caution about the environment.
- Child Considerations: What does the child bring to the environment? Thoughts about a child's special need or unique characteristics.

5. Caregiver/Teacher Reflection

- Asks the caregiver/teacher to think about experiences she brings that might affect her interactions with the children. Could these experiences be a barrier for her?

Communication/Language/Literacy

4

Developmental Strand: Speech and Language

Storytime: Another way that is fun to learn new words is reading or saying words whose pronunciation approximates the sound made when the action is performed. For example, you might say, *The jack-in-the-box **popped** right out of the box.* In the *Golden Egg Book* (Brown), the text says, *Pick Pick Pick and Peck Peck Peck And crackety **crack!** Out jumped the little yellow duck.* The meaning of the word can be conveyed by the way you read it to me.

Environmental Considerations:

When planning your lessons, you might want to think about new vocabulary words that you will introduce to the children each day. Field trips, cooking activities, new activities in your learning centers will open up new vocabulary words for the child. Your job is to bring it to the child's attention.

Teacher Reflection:

My tendency might be to quiz children or explain things too much. Asking too many questions can actually hinder children's comprehension. I need to use the above strategies naturally and to add information only as needed.



We are the Portage Project and we can help your organization . . .

- develop more productive and authentic relationships with the families you serve
- build strong, effective teams that work better together
- create reflective systems that invigorate an involved and committed staff
- provide support for supervisors
- generate the leadership potential needed for outcomes of excellence through:
 - Appreciative Inquiry
 - 4MAT for Early Childhood
 - Working with Families
 - Family Service Credential
 - Reflective Practices
 - Individually designed training and technical assistance

Portage Project staff have extensive experience in providing training and technical assistance to a wide variety of early childhood programs. Our work is grounded in our direct service experience with Head Start, early intervention, and early childhood programs. We look forward to the opportunity to work with your agency.

Portage Project
CESA 5
PO Box 564
Portage, WI 53901
800-862-3725 ext. 221

www.portageproject.org