



Reflect on your own experiences with children, families, and colleagues. If you are an supervisor, administrator, or adult educator, how might you use these questions and activities to help other adults reflect on their experiences?

Seek Multiple Perspectives

Here are the two excerpts from *The Art of Awareness – How Observation Can Transform your Teaching*, that were shown on the webpage for this Key. Refresh your memory by reading them again.

“When you see your primary teaching role as closely observing children and communicating what you see, you’ll find yourself surrounded by amazing learning encounters. Becoming a keen observer is a way to learn child development, to find curriculum ideas, and to meet requirements for assessing outcomes. It’s also a way to keep from burning out in a stressful job.”

“Teachers who use this approach spend their time observing children, working to uncover their point of view and understandings. They do not spend time planning lessons and filling out developmental checklists. They use their observations to guide their responses and ongoing planning. They then draw on them for filling out developmental data or school-readiness assessments.”

When do you find time to share insights and ideas from your observations with other adults? What other ways can you think of to fit this in?

What have you learned about the value of seeking multiple perspectives?

Try This!

In the book, *The Art of Awareness – How Observation Can Transform Your Teaching*, authors Margie Carter and Deb Curtis explain that the key to observing children is to know that observation is more than just a teaching technique. Observing children closely provides a new way of thinking about learning and teaching.

Collect a variety of objects that have some hidden, moveable parts as part of their function, such as a kitchen timer, pen with a variety of ink colors, wind-up toys, a combination lock, Etch-A-Sketch drawing toy, kaleidoscope, or staple gun. Work with a partner or a small group and choose one of the objects to examine. Follow this procedure in exploring your object:

1. Look at the object closely, exploring and noticing all of the mechanisms and features that make it work. At first, try to do this without talking. Do not take the item apart.
2. Share your ideas with one another about how you think the object works. Try demonstrating to one another by manipulating the object or using your body to show your ideas.
3. Take a few minutes to sketch your own theory of how the object works. You can use other materials to make it two- or three- dimensional, if that helps.
4. Share your drawings with one another to see if any of your theories changed or were supported.
5. Discuss how each of the forms of representation (discussion, demonstration, and drawing) assisted with your learning about the object.
6. Discuss the role that other people played in helping you understand. What else would have been helpful?

Talk about how this experience relates to children's use of representation in learning and what they need from teachers in their writing.

Jot down a few thoughts you'd like to keep in mind.

Observe two children engaged in a conflict with a partner. Put yourself in each of the children's shoes, using the following questions as a guide.

What do each of the children seem to understand about the situation?

What do each of them feel strongly about?

What strategies do they use to get what they want?

What did you learn about each of the children from the details?

What is your reaction to how the teacher handled this situation?

How do you think the children felt about the teacher's response?

Record and compare your different guesses, points of view, and feelings about the situation. What occurs to you?
