

A Guide to Self-Assessment

Video Transcript

[Music]

Maryland State Department of Education and Maryland EXCELS logos

Title: A Guide to Self-Assessment

Screen: A montage of stock videos showing adults interacting with children and doing administrative tasks. A child care provider's schedule scrolls through the daily routines: Arrival, Breakfast/Wash hands, Circle Time, Learning Time, Group Project in English and Spanish.

Narrator: There's no one right way to complete a self-assessment. Start by creating a plan that fits your setting, your schedule, and your role. What works for one setting or age group may not work for another. Self-assessment is most successful when it fits naturally into what you're already doing with children.

Screen: Key Planning Questions

Narrator: Start by thinking about a typical day. When are adults already sitting close and interacting with children?

When do conversations or one-on-one moments happen naturally?

Those are great places to begin. As you plan, ask yourself, when will I work on the self-assessment?

Where will it make the most sense? How much time can I realistically commit? 15 minutes, 20 minutes, one session at a time?

Screen: Implementation

Narrator: Set time throughout your day to observe interactions with children. You don't need to do the entire self-assessment at once.

Screen: A teacher sits with a girl in a classroom looking at different feelings faces.

Narrator: For example, from 9 to 9:30 this morning, I'll focus on communication and language.

Screen: A clock graphic, Snack Time, from 1:10 to 1:20 p.m.

Narrator: Later, choose another section during a different routine.

Screen: Scrolling through the Personal and Social Teacher Child Interactions from the MSDE Infant Toddler Self-Assessment form. A montage of adults reflecting, thinking and taking notes.

Narrator: Before you begin, take a few minutes to review the section you're focusing on.

Read through the best practices and examples. Knowing the tool will help you be more intentional during your observation. Afterward, pause to reflect while it's still fresh. Make some notes or quick tallies to capture moments you noticed happening during that time.

You may find that the notes you take during one observation can help you complete more than one section of the self-assessment. Whether you are completing the self-assessment of your own practice or someone else's, a plan will help make the process both manageable and useful.

Remember, real life happens, interruptions happen. Your plan should allow for that.

Screen: Self-Assessment in Action

Narrator: Let's take a look at what self-assessment can look like during a typical day with children.

Screen: A toddler stands over the sink washing her hands with the help of her child care provider.

Narrator: Morning routine. A caregiver is helping a toddler wash their hands before snack. She kneels down to the child's eye level and speaks in a calm, warm voice. I see you're reaching for the soap.

Let's try one pump. As the child splashes water, she smiles and says, "You're working hard to scrub your hands. The water feels cool, doesn't it?"

Screen: The MSDE self-assessment form scrolls through the Language and Cognitive Teacher Child Interaction sections.

Narrator: In this brief moment, this provider is using a warm tone and positive facial expressions, encouraging independence while offering support, describing what the child is doing and adding new words, responding to the child's cues and following their lead.

Screen: Playtime

Two babies sit on the floor playing with blocks with their child care provider.

Narrator: Later, the provider sits by two infants exploring blocks. You picked the red block. What happens if you stack it on the blue one? The child looks surprised when the blocks topple. The provider responds, "Whoa, that fell down. You look excited. Should we try again?"

This single interaction reflects social, language, and cognitive practices all at once.

Self-assessment isn't about perfection. It's about awareness. And awareness is where meaningful change begins. Now it's your turn. Choose one small next step that will help you move forward with a plan, a time, a place, and one section of the self-assessment that feels easiest to start. You can do this.

Screen: A screenshot of the Support Team Contact information page on the Maryland EXCELS website.

Narrator: And remember, your Maryland EXCELS support team is only a phone call away.

MSDE and Maryland EXCELS logos