

As a denomination, Seventh-day Adventists see the early education of the child as a continual growth process.

*"Too much importance cannot be placed on the early training of children. The lessons learned, the habits formed, during the years of infancy and childhood have more to do with the formation of the character and the direction of the life than have all the instructions and influences of after years."
Matthew 380*

The mission and objectives of the Southern Union Conference early childhood program is to provide a safe and sound educational experience by well-qualified personnel with high standards with developmentally appropriate practices serving children in a ministry and service to families, churches and community.

Here's where the Journey of Excellence begins -
Welcome to the Journey!

Southern Union Conference Department of Early Childhood Education
3978 Memorial Drive, Decatur, GA 30032 404/299-1832 Ext. 450

[Insert school letterhead info here]

Dear Parents,

A question many have asked is, "Where's my four-year-olds report card? She's in school now, why doesn't she get one?" Report cards in early childhood education are not topics we take lightly in the Southern Union. There is much debate in the world of early childhood education over what is useful and appropriate for young children. The Southern Union Early Childhood Advisory and two committees have spent some time over the last few years reviewing research and practices on this topic. We have now created a Tool Kit for teachers evaluating and assessing development, tracking progress, and communicating with you, the parent.

First, let's understand together what 'assessment' is. According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE), it is "A systematic procedure for gathering information from observation, interviews, portfolios, projects, tests, and other sources in order to make judgments about children's characteristics." What this tells us... there's a variety of appropriate practices that should be used in an ongoing manner with young children. And, we in the Southern Union agree with this. Data and information should be collected in a variety of developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate ways. (*Spotlight on Young Children and Assessment*, p. 10)

Let's also remember what the point of assessment is. The data and information collected from ongoing assessments enable teachers and parents to communicate about their children, track their progress over time, plan for their continued learning, and support each other. (ibid)

So, to do this...

- 1—To learn more about the child. Ask: What are you thinking and doing?
- 2—To track their progress. Do I see sufficient performance?
- 3—To plan for their continued learning. How can we ensure more growth and development?
- 4—To report effectively to each other. Am I making connections with my child's teacher? Am I communicating what I'm seeing in, hearing from, and learning about my child at home?

A portfolio of assessments is being maintained for your child. These assessments provide information to use in tracking and enhancing learning. Authentic assessments encompass evaluating motivation, achievement, and attitudes of children engaged in personally meaningful tasks in real life contexts, and grounded in naturally occurring learning activities. (ibid)

Your child's portfolio should include

- ⇒ assessments from the teacher(s) and you the parent,
- ⇒ progress through the standard skills and approaches to learning, developmental levels,
- ⇒ collection of reflective observations,
- ⇒ collection of child's work samples and photographs of his/her activities.

Thank you for your child a wonderful school year, and pray for God's blessing upon us as we partner together to give your child a meaningful and rich experience of growing and learning.

Yours in His service,

[Teacher's signature]