

Elbow Lane School Program Assessment Tool

The Ounce Scale provides an interactive system of documentation, monitoring, and evaluation of development for Early Head Start programs, early intervention programs, (including children at risk for special needs or those with disabilities), and other home and center-based infant, toddler, and preschool childcare in the community. It provides a meaningful way to evaluate children's accomplishments, areas of difficulty, and approaches to learning. There is guidance to thinking about future goals so that family and caregivers can work together. Families and caregivers using the Ounce Scale learn to observe their children and to use this information to enhance relationships and support development. Elbow Lane staff are trained using this tool and additional observation techniques as well as additional training in portfolio work sampling gathering.

The Ounce Scale (2003), was developed by Dr. Samuel Meisels, Amy Dombro, Dorothea Marsden, Dr. Donna Weston and Abigail Jewkes as a functional assessment measure from birth to age 3 years. The challenge for the developers was to design an assessment tool that transforms developmental information into meaningful interventions. This means assessing a child's performance of skills and behaviors within the everyday, naturalistic contexts that make up his or her day. At the core of this tool is the observation of a child's functional accomplishments by both parents and service providers. This data then provide a framework from which to design program planning, relationship building experiences and specific interventions.

Brief Overview of the Ounce Scale Assessment System

The Ounce Scale is an observational assessment for evaluating infants' and toddlers' development over a period of three and a half years - from Birth to 3 1/2. Its purpose is twofold: (1) to provide guidelines and standards for observing and interpreting young children's growth and behavior, and (2) to provide information that parents and caregivers can use in everyday interactions with their children.

The Ounce Scale has three elements:

- **The Observation Record** provides a focus for observing and documenting children's everyday behaviors and provides data for making evaluations about development.
- **The Family Album** provides a structure for parents to learn about and record their child's development as they write down what they see, using photos, telling stories, and responding to observation questions that are the same as the ones in the caregiver's Observation Record.
- **The Developmental Profile** enables caregivers and other staff to evaluate each child's development and progress over time, comparing their observation data to specific performance Standards.

A User's Guide, the Standards for the Developmental Profiles, and Reproducible Masters are also available to assist you in implementing the Ounce Scale.

The Ounce Scale is organized around six major areas of development:

1. **Personal Connections** – *It's About Trust*: How children show that they trust familiar adults.
2. **Feelings About Self** – *Learning About Me*: How children express who they are.
3. **Relationships With Other Children** – *Child to Child*: What children do around other children.
4. **Understanding and Communicating** – *Baby and Toddler Talk*: How children understand and communicate.
5. **Exploration and Problem Solving** – *Seek and Solve*: How children explore and figure things out.
6. **Movement and Coordination** – *Body Basics*: How children move their bodies and use their hands to do things.

Comparison of Areas of Development to Traditional Domains

| Traditional Domain | Area of Development | Aspects of Development Covered |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Social and Emotional Development | Personal Connections: <i>It's About Trust</i> – How children show they trust you | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How children build relationships with familiar adults. 2. How children respond to unfamiliar adults. |
| | Feelings About Self: <i>Learning About Me</i> – How children express who they are | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The way children express who they are, their personality, their temperament, the way they are building self esteem, learning independence. 2. How children manage their own behavior, self regulation. 3. Expression of feelings, learning social skills when expressing feelings, needs, and wants. |
| | Relationships With Other Children: <i>Child to Child</i> – What children do around other children | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The way children show awareness of other children, interact with and play with them. 2. Recognizing and responding to other children feelings (empathy). |
| Language Development | Understanding and Communication: <i>Child Talk</i> – How children understand and communicate | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receptive language – understanding gestures, words, directions, questions and routines. 2. Expressive language – using gestures, words, several words together, conventions of speech, expressing thoughts and ideas. 3. Participating in conversations. |
| Cognitive Development | Exploration and Problem Solving: <i>Seek and Solve</i> – How children explore and figure things out | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How children attend, pay attention, explore, and understand concepts of color, size, matching, weight, and number. 2. Memory, reasoning ability, imagination. 3. Making things happen, purposeful activity, expectations of planned results, anticipating consequences, solving problems. |
| Physical Development | Movement and Coordination: <i>Body Basics</i> – How children move their bodies and use their hands to do things | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gross motor – controlling body, moving around, combining movements, playing games 2. Fine motor – reaching, holding, letting go, intentional exploration, eye-hand coordination, creative activities 3. Self-help activities |