

# MULTIMEDIA

## for Assessment

**I**n an early childhood setting, we want to observe our children's growth over time as they build with blocks, write and make books, and have conversations in the drama center. In addition to anecdotal records and checklists, you can use technology and multimedia as tools to record and save your observations of children. Multimedia techniques such as photography and audio- and video-taping, and the use of computers can provide quick, efficient, and meaningful records of each child in your room.

**Photography** Keep a camera loaded with film to photograph your children while they explore their environment during daily activities. Take pictures of children playing dress-up, creating patterns with unifix blocks, or measuring and counting ingredients as part of a cooking activity. These photographs can provide concrete examples of children's understanding of mathematical and scientific concepts.

**Technology has not only affected children's activities but can also change the way we observe and assess them.**

**BY LYNN COHEN**

Photographs of children's completed work, such as block-building structures that also contain drawings or invented spelling, can be preserved in class photo albums or mounted on walls with children's commentary to share with children and parents. Over time, these albums and displays will provide visual documentation of your children's growth and development.

**Audiotapes** Make audiotape recordings while children work in learning centers or during group-meeting times. During story-

time ask, "What do you think this story is about? How will it end? Can you think of a different ending?" Responses to open-ended questions provide an opportunity to record oral-language growth. Have some fun — record a child singing a favorite song and let classmates "assess" the mystery musical voice! Taping your children's verbal communications will provide you with  
*(continued on page 24)*

### TIPS

- 1 Develop a system for labeling and storing photographs, videotapes, and audiotapes. Write children's names and other relevant information on adhesive labels.
- 2 Keep a clipboard available to write notes that will accompany audiotapes and photographs.
- 3 Involve children and parents in the documentation process. Share your documentations and ask for their opinions and input.
- 4 Use technology collaboratively with children, keeping each child's interests in mind.
- 5 Don't allow multimedia assessment tools to interfere with your observations or with children's play and learning experiences. A natural observation is more authentic and useful than a posed one!

*(continued from page 22)*

information about their language skills, as well as their development as cooperative players and problem solvers.

**Videotapes** A video camera can provide a unique view of children's

developing skills. Read a familiar story such as *Little Red Riding Hood* or *The Three Bears*. Then provide children with story props and videotape them as they retell the story. Taping activities both in the classroom and on the playground

can be a passageway into learning about children's spontaneous play, their social interactions, and their developmental and physical changes. Videotape your children a few times and share the tapes at parent meetings, so that parents can also observe their children's physical and intellectual growth.

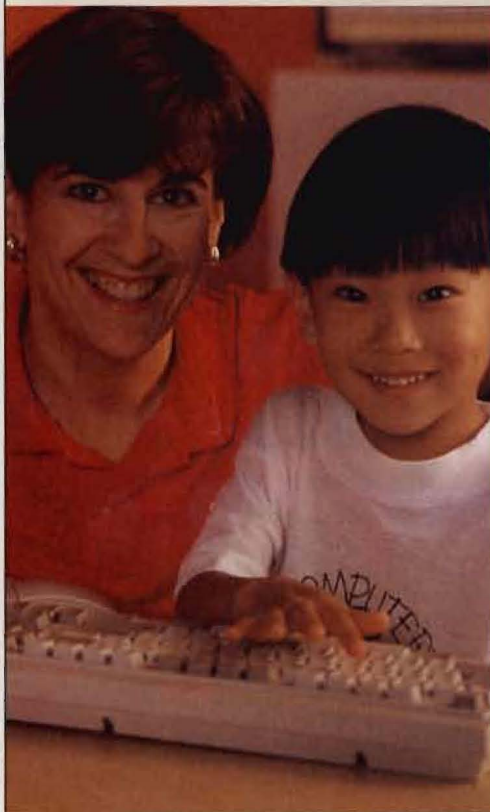
**Computers** A computer is an invaluable tool that can help you discover and assess language and critical-thinking skills. As your children use word-processing and story-making programs to create, write, and illustrate stories on the computer, you can observe the development of their emergent-literacy skills. Also watch the growth of children's cooperative and problem-solving abilities as they work in pairs at the computer. Observe who has difficulty taking turns and how long each child can stay at the computer center before switching to another learning environment.

You can also use a computer word-processing program for anecdotal notes about children's individual and social development throughout the year. There are also electronic portfolio systems available that children can use collaboratively with teachers to record data about themselves.

Children learn in different ways, and multimedia tools offer new ways to assess each child's growth. Technically assisted observations make the process of record-keeping easier, faster, and fun.

*Lynn Cohen is a kindergarten teacher in Great Neck, New York and an early childhood curriculum consultant.*

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