



**Dr. Robert Gundling,  
President/CEO of  
Better Futures, LLC**

Dr. Robert Gundling has over forty years of experience as an Early Childhood Educator. His career started as a kindergarten teacher in a public school system and includes leadership positions in Early Childhood Education at the local, state and national level. He has experience as an Adjunct Faculty member teaching courses in Human Development, Early Childhood Education, and Curriculum and Instruction courses. His professional identity is as a practitioner passionate about doing everything possible to ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in a high-quality early care and education program that provides them with the foundation they need to thrive in life.

## Assessing the Progress of Young Children

I feel honored and privileged to have the opportunity to offer some of my thoughts and understandings about the topic I connect to the assessment of young children, especially in the “Week of the Young Child”. During this week we join as Early Childhood Educators to celebrate early learning, young children, their families, and those of us who care for and educate the children. The purpose of this article is to offer my thoughts and understandings of what it means to assess young children, describe portfolio assessment, and describe an experience I had when I worked with young children when I intentionally implemented the use of portfolios to communicate my assessment of the young children I served to the children, families, and others interested in supporting a child to reach their full potential.

When I think about the term “Assessment”, the first thought that comes to my mind is that assessing young children is “sitting beside” each child you serve to know and learn about the child. As an early childhood educator (ece) sits beside the child he/she completes written, objective observations of the child on specific days and for approximately 15 - 20 minutes. For the observation to be objective, the ece writes what he/she sees and hears as the child is engaged in an activity. After completing several observations, the ece reviews the observations and analyzes how these observations inform my ability to better know the child and learn more about who the child is, how the child learns best and what are some of the interests of the child. I use this information to create learning experiences for the children. Therefore, as an ece becomes more confident and competent in his/her ability to implement a variety of assessment strategies to know and support the child to build the foundation that leads to their eventually reaching their full potential in school and in life.

A favorite assessment strategy I included in the classroom assessment system I had the opportunity to support a group of teachers who were part of an assessment project was “portfolio assessment”. So, what is a portfolio assessment? As a NAEYC accredited Program, I know you are familiar with creating portfolios for the age groups you serve at the Center and a program portfolio. The portfolio I am describing in this article is created for each child in the classroom.

The answer to the Trivia question is .... C!



Dr. Gundling is currently serving as a Senior Consultant with Better Futures, LLC Consulting Services. The services offered to clients include individualized services to solve problems and meet the needs of Early Care and Education Providers who are committed to making a significant, positive difference in the lives of those they serve.

He is also the current President of the DC Association for the Education of Young Children (DCAEYC). For more information about his work, go to [www.betterfuturesdc.com](http://www.betterfuturesdc.com)

Writing To Wellness (In-Person) Workshop with Creator, C. Thomas  
Every 2nd Thursday of the month from 7-8:30pm



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The portfolio is a communication tool to describe where a child is in their development of social, emotional, cognitive, and physical skills and abilities and what you conclude are the next steps you can take, and the family of the child can take to support the continued social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development of the child.

To begin to conclude this article, I am going to describe something I did to support the teachers in the project I led to create a portfolio entry for the portfolio they were created to communicate the current social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development of the child and the next step they planned to support the continued development of the child. I worked with a Pre-k teacher who focused on describing an activity she created to engage a child to develop the social skill to listen to his peers talk during a conversation with peers. The teacher had pictures and brief descriptions about what the picture represented in informing the person about what the child was learning.

Assessing the progress of young children can be interesting, exciting, and rewarding because it can tell a positive story about the overall development of a child in a classroom. I found it provides an opportunity to be curious learning about the child, document the impact an ece can have on the development of a child, and provide evidence to families about the impact the ece is having on the growth, development, and achievements of the child.

I hope there was something in this article of benefit to those who read it. As a lifelong learner, I welcome feedback about thoughts I have offered and any questions about the content. My email address is [rgundling@betterfuturesdc.com](mailto:rgundling@betterfuturesdc.com).

Thank you for everything you are doing to support young children and their families.

Thank you for your commitment to providing quality childcare!