



Path & Petal

HELPING FAMILIES FIND THEIR WAY FORWARD

What Am I Seeing? ♡

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO
UNDERSTANDING, OBSERVING,
AND FINDING NEXT STEPS

NOTICE

UNDERSTAND

SUPPORT

GUIDE ♡

*Small moments.
Big insights.
Brighter tomorrows.*





You're Not Alone in *This Journey*

Noticing differences in your child can bring up a lot of questions, feelings, and uncertainty. This guide is here to help you slow down, observe, and understand what you're seeing — so you can take the next steps with more clarity and confidence.

*Curiosity
before
conclusions.*



THIS GUIDE WILL HELP YOU:



Understand typical development



Identify what you're noticing



Learn how to observe and track patterns



Explore possible next steps



Feel more prepared for conversations
with providers and educators

What Does “Observation” Mean?

Observation means paying close attention to what your child does, says, and experiences. It's about describing behaviors and patterns without jumping to conclusions.

YOU CAN OBSERVE:



What your child does



What they say or communicate



What happens before and after



How often it happens



Where it happens



What seems to help or make it harder



WHY IT MATTERS

Careful observation helps you and your child's support team understand your child's strengths, needs, and environment so they can offer the right support.



RESEARCH ROOT

Observations are an important first step in understanding child development and behavior. They provide valuable information for families and professionals.

(Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000)

What Are You Noticing?

Every child is unique. You might notice differences in one or more areas. Use this page to check or highlight what you're seeing in your child.



COMMUNICATION

- ♥ Speaks, gestures, or uses AAC
- ♥ Understands directions
- ♥ Expresses needs and feelings



SOCIAL & PLAY

- ♥ Playing with others or independently
- ♥ Eye contact
- ♥ Interest in people or toys



BEHAVIOR & EMOTIONS

- ♥ Meltdowns or big feelings
- ♥ Coping with changes
- ♥ Repetitive behaviors



SENSORY

- ♥ Sensitivity to sounds, lights, textures
- ♥ Seeks movement or deep pressure
- ♥ Avoids certain clothing or environments



DAILY LIVING

- ♥ Eating, sleeping, toileting
- ♥ Dressing and hygiene
- ♥ Transitions and routines



LEARNING & ATTENTION

- ♥ Focus and attention span
- ♥ Following directions
- ♥ Problem solving and new skills



What Happened Around the Moment?

Looking at what happened before, what you actually saw, and what happened after can help you see patterns.



BEFORE

What was happening right before?



WHAT I SAW

What did you actually see or hear?



AFTER

What happened immediately afterward?

DATE / TIME	BEFORE	WHAT I SAW	AFTER

Small moments
can show big
patterns. ♥

Is There a Pattern?

Sometimes behaviors happen for a reason. Looking at patterns can help you understand possible triggers and what might be helpful.



WHEN?

- Time of day
- Activity
- Transition
- Routine



WHERE?

- Home
- School
- Community
- Certain environments



WITH WHOM?

- Alone
- With family
- With peers
- With specific adults



WHAT MIGHT BE A TRIGGER?

- Noise
- Change
- Demand
- Sensory input
- Other



TRY THIS

Track a few moments over a week. Look for common patterns. What happens most often? What seems to help? What tends to make it harder?

A Closer Look at My Child

Use this page to capture a bigger picture of your child.
There is so much more to them than what's challenging.



THINGS MY CHILD LOVES





THINGS THEY DO REALLY WELL





HOW THEY COMMUNICATE





WHAT HELPS THEM FEEL COMFORTABLE





WHAT CAN BE OVERWHELMING





WHAT MOTIVATES THEM





ONE THING I WANT YOU TO KNOW ABOUT MY CHILD



What Can I Do Now?

You don't have to figure it all out today. Start with small, intentional steps.

1



Keep observing

Use this guide to notice patterns over time.

2



Talk with someone

Share your observations with a pediatrician, teacher, or provider.

3



Ask questions

Use the next page to help prepare for appointments.

4



Explore resources

Check out the Path & Petal Resource Library for more guides and tools.

5



Take care of you

You can't pour from an empty cup. Support yourself, too.

SMALL

STEPS

LEAD TO

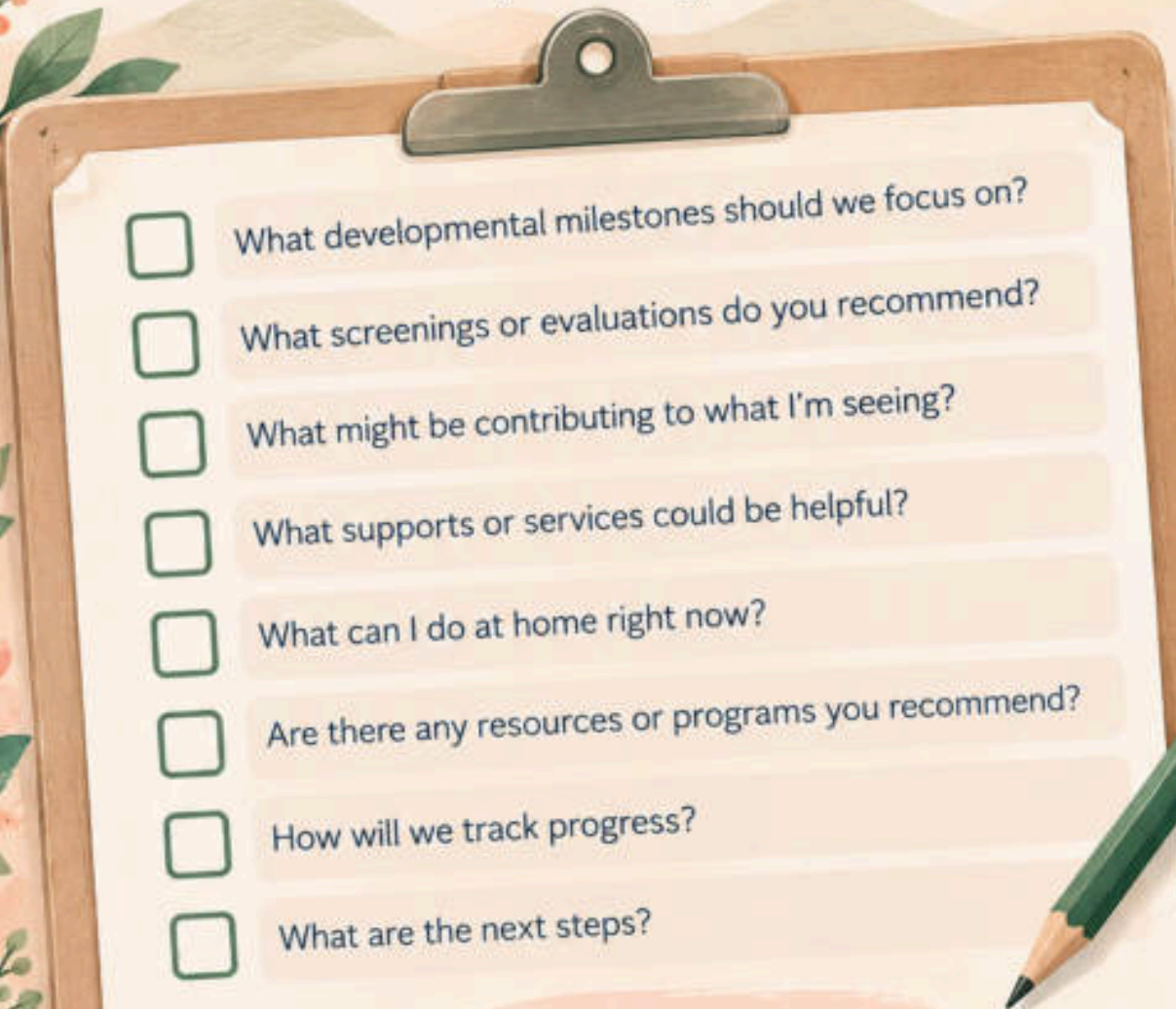
BRIGHTER

TOMORROWS

*Progress doesn't have to be perfect.
Just consistent. *

Prepare for Your Next Conversation

These questions can help you get the most out of your appointment or meeting. Use what feels relevant for your family.

- 
- ☐ What developmental milestones should we focus on?
 - ☐ What screenings or evaluations do you recommend?
 - ☐ What might be contributing to what I'm seeing?
 - ☐ What supports or services could be helpful?
 - ☐ What can I do at home right now?
 - ☐ Are there any resources or programs you recommend?
 - ☐ How will we track progress?
 - ☐ What are the next steps?



*Remember:
You are your child's biggest advocate.
Your questions matter.*

You're On a Path and You're Not Alone.

Here are a few places to learn more, find support,
and continue your journey.



Path & Petal Resource Library

Guides, toolkits,
printables, & more.



Professionals

Pediatrician
Early intervention
School team



Community

Support groups
Local programs
Other parents



Helpful Topics

Development
Communication
Behavior
School support



Self-Care

You matter, too.
Rest, connect,
and take breaks.



A Brighter Tomorrow

More understanding.
More confidence.
Brighter days ahead.



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