

# Meeting Up with Children's' Lively Minds

## A Tool for Observation and Reflections of Schema Play and Brain Development

### Observing Children's Play

- What details do you see as children engage in play?
- Where in the environment are the children playing and what materials are they using?
- Who and how many children are playing? What roles are each of them taking during the play?
- How long are the children staying engaged in the play? How has the play changed or evolved during the time you are observing?
- How are children using their bodies for active play?
- What schema explorations do you see the children pursuing? How do you see the children using their flexible brains to learn in many ways?

### Reflections as you observe the Play

- Did you plan the play environment for the children? If so are they playing how you hoped?
- Did the children initiate the play on their own? If so what surprises, challenges and delights you as you watch them play?
- Is there anything the children are doing that you feel concerned about and need to intervene? (safety, social conflict Etc.) Can you wait and watch for a few more minutes before you intervene?
- If you did not intervene how did the children work things out for themselves?
- If you did intervene, what did you do and what was the result? How do you feel about the role you played?

### Reflections after the Play-Reflect alone or with a co-worker or family member.

- What delighted and inspired you about the play you saw? Why?
- What details did you observe during the play that show the children's competence? What details showed the children using their flexible brains to learn in many ways?
- Identify as many schema explorations that you noticed during the play? Was there one schema the children used more often or did they cycle through many different schemas?

- What about the environment and materials supported and extended the children's play and schema explorations?
- How did you see children expand their play through connecting with each other around schema explorations?
- How did the children use active play in their schema explorations?
- What role did you play to support or extend the play? How did the children respond? Is what happened what you hoped for? How did you use your understanding of schemas to inform the role you played during the play?

### Planning for Schema Play

- What new thinking do you have as a result of this observation?
- What are you excited to try next with the children after this observation?
- What changes in the environment would support and expand children's schema explorations?
- Identify new materials can you add to support specific schema explorations you observed.
- What new roles do you want to play during the children's play?
- How will you share what happened during this play time with the children, families and your co-workers?