

PIN Project: A Child Portfolio

OVERVIEW

What this project will accomplish:

All children have strengths as well as needs. Strengths provide a framework on which to build learning activities and opportunities. Children learn more when activities focus on their interests, preferences, and talents. The purpose of this project is to help participants focus on strengths of children in their care so that they see children in terms of their abilities (rather than disabilities) and their gifts and talents (rather than their needs.) This strengths-based perspective helps child care staff put their concerns about individual children within a broader-based view of the child as an individual so that opportunities for child learning can be developed.

Children with delayed development may be seen as needing to “catch up” in their areas of developmental delay – needing to improve in motor skills, or language, or in whatever developmental areas in which they have delays.

From this project, participants will gain understanding about:

- i Children's strengths in child care and at home.
- i Ways of developing learning opportunities that build on the strengths and abilities of individual children.
- i Ways of interacting with and supporting family perspectives.

Notes:

What you will need:

- ' Participant Project Materials
- ' Disposable cameras – one for each participant classroom

Notes:

BACKGROUND

All children need opportunities to learn and develop. All children are learning:

- i About themselves
- i About their feelings
- i About other people
- i To communicate
- i To move and do
- i To think

Some children may need help to learn particular skills. For example, some children are slower than others to develop language and talking abilities, or some may need special opportunities to learn to play appropriately with other children. Some children have disabilities that impact on their learning and development. For example, children with motor disabilities may not have the same abilities in motor skills as typically developing children. Children with diagnoses within the autism spectrum disorders including autism, pervasive developmental disorders (PDD), Asperger's Syndrome, etc. may not use communication in the same way as other children or may demonstrate unusual behavior like staring at their hands or looking away from people. Children with hearing impairments may impact on their ability to learn and use speech or visual impairments may influence how a child learns to move around the room. When children have disabilities or their development is significantly behind the development of similarly-aged children, the things that they cannot do may impact on the ways in which they are cared for outside of their homes or by non-parental caregivers.

When caregivers, parents, other family members, or other professionals begin to focus exclusively on the unique needs of a child, they may begin to construct a view of the child that is unbalanced. Adults may inadvertently focus on what a child is unable to do and may lose sight of the child's abilities, talents, likes and dislikes. Focusing on what the child cannot do results in a "picture" of the child as being incompetent or unable to learn or unable to participate with children who are not like that particular child.

A Story about Arlise

Arlise was born prematurely and by the age of two, she was just learning to pull up to a standing position and walk with assistance. Most toys and other objects went directly to her mouth but she was unable to feed herself finger or spoon foods. She was making sounds but none of them seemed like words. If left to herself, she played contentedly, seemingly unaware of the other toddlers in her room. Her teachers worried because she was so “unlike” the other children in the room. Her parents questioned her doctor and they were told that Arlise’s development was severely delayed in all areas. The physician suggested that she get services to help her improve in all developmental areas. Pretty soon, Arlise’s teachers saw Arlise as a child who was unable to perform, very unlike her peers, and needing a great deal of special services – services which they felt unable to provide and that were not available in her child care center.

Focusing on what a child can do, what a child likes to do, and the interests and preferences that children have presents a different view of children by representing them in terms of their successes (rather than in terms of their deficits or needs).

Another Story About Arlise

Arlise was born prematurely and survived any number of medical situations that occurred during her first months of life. By the time she was four months old, she had learned to breathe on her own (without a ventilator), was able to eat by mouth (instead of a tube), and was ready to go home. Arlise’s family cared for her at home until she was eight months old when Arlise’s mom returned to her job full-time and Arlise went to day care in a child care center near her home. The teachers in the infant room loved this little girl. She was happy all the time, had a great appetite, played with toys contentedly, and generally was a joy to be around. Arlise moved to the toddler room when she was 18 months old. Her teachers knew that she enjoyed playing with toys that made noises, put a lot of toys in her mouth, ate most foods readily although she definitely preferred some foods over others, loved to drink juice, and was content all day long.

Arlise crawled between activities but was learning to walk when the teachers would hold her hands and walk with her or when she was pushing the child-sized grocery cart. The teachers practiced walking with Arlise in the classroom and outside on the playground. She was learning to feed herself finger foods and to eat with a spoon and had mastered cup drinking since she had been in the toddler room. Her teachers figured out ways that she could participate in activities with the other children. For example, they made sure to make water or

Notes:

sand play available in a learning center station each day and then one teacher would be with Arlise to help her stand at the table. The teacher named the objects that the children were playing with so that Arlise could learn the names. A lot of times, she would try to imitate the words even though what she said did not sound exactly like the word. They held objects and foods up near Arlise and asked her to show them what she wanted next. Sometimes Arlise would make a sound at the same time that she pointed to or took the object or food that she wanted. Her teachers enjoyed caring for Arlise because she was so happy all day long and was learning so many new things. In the short time that she had been in the toddler room, she had learned to stand with hardly any help, was walking all over with both hands held, and was beginning to learn to eat by herself. She was able to tell them what she wanted next and enjoyed being around the other children.

A child care setting is one place where children spend a lot of time. They spend even more time at home with their families and go to a lot of other places where their families take them. They may go to other houses in their neighborhoods or visit friends and relatives. Families take children to the grocery store, on family errands, to church, or to other places where family members spend time. Some children go to parks, playgrounds, the library, recreation centers, “Y” community centers, family centers, their brothers’ or sisters’ schools, or on “outings” to the zoo, amusement parks, museums, or other places that families go. These experiences provide children with a wide variety of places where they can learn.

These experiences also provide families with a perspective about what their children find interesting and what they enjoy (and don’t enjoy)! Because families spend time with children in different places than child care providers do, each adult will have different information about the child. A mother may know that her child loves water and to swim because she goes with the child to a tot swimming program. The child care provider will only learn about this from talking with the mother. Similarly, a child care provider may know that two children really like each other because each time there are opportunities for them to play together, these two children go right away to the kitchen area and begin cooking together. These two children’s parents will only learn about this preference by talking with the child care teacher.

Notes:

The purpose of this project is to represent children in terms of their strengths in as complete a way as possible. To do this, child care providers and families need to talk together and share information about children's strengths, abilities, talents, and interests – and gather this information together in **A Story About _____Portfolio** about the child.

Project Directions

Participants will assemble the information needed for the out-of-class-time project during the time period they participate in the PIN training sessions. Instructions for the project should be presented during the second PIN session. During the last PIN session, participants will present their portfolios to the entire class. These presentations may be done as a time-limited (about 45 minutes) “poster session” where each participant pins the portfolio pieces on the wall (or on posterboard) and participants move around from poster to poster. [An alternative is for participants to make individual presentations in front of the group.] The project is discussed during the 3rd and 4th PIN training sessions to make sure that participants are working on the project, to get questions addressed, and to provide encouragement and clarification.

Steps

1. Hand out the Project Participant Materials.
2. The Portfolio will be developed by “rooms” so that individual caregivers will do a portfolio for an infant/toddler that they select. When two or more caregivers from the same room are participating, they will work together to do the project with one child.

Ask participants to sit together with the other people who are from their room (if they are not already sitting together).

3. Ask each participant or participant team to think of a child in their room who has special needs or disabilities or for whom they have special concerns. Or, ask them to think about the child who requires the most caregiving or to whom they need to give a lot of attention. Once a child has been identified, ask each participant or team to write a brief story about that child and the child's needs,

Notes:

their concerns, etc. Ask some participants to read their stories to the class.

4. Refer the participants to the Project Materials packet. Tell participants that they will complete the Portfolio with the child about whom they have just written the story. Tell them that at the end of the PIN sessions, they will present their new stories about children to the class. Review the handout **Steps to Project Success!!** with them verbally, referring them to the appropriate pages in the Participant Project Materials.
5. Ask for group discussion, questions, etc. about the project requirements and steps.
6. Collect the **A Story about** _____ worksheets from each participant or participant team.
7. In each PIN session (sessions 3 and 4), be sure to ask the group how they are doing on the Project – on writing stories about the child they have selected – so that you can judge progress (e.g., they are working on the project) and make sure that the group has opportunities to get clarification and assistance as they work on the project.

A Story about

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Participant Name

Center

Date

Timetable To Project Completion

Target Completion Date (TBA)	Activity
_____	Invite the parent of the infant-toddler you have selected to help you with this project.
_____	<p><u>Visit #1:</u> Meet with parent and give them the All About Me form.</p> <p>Complete the All About Me form. Take a picture of the child.</p>
_____	<p><u>Visit #2:</u> Meet with the parent and review the All About Me form.</p> <p>Talk with the parent and together complete the How We Promote Learning worksheet.</p> <p>Begin filling out the pages in your Portfolio. Keep taking pictures!!</p>
_____	<p><u>Visit #3:</u> Meet with the parent and together complete the Learning in Different Places worksheet.</p> <p>Finish your Portfolio.</p>
_____	Present your Story Portfolio to your whole class during the class session selected by the PI N instructor.
_____	Share the Story Portfolio with the child's parents. Give them their own copy to keep.

Steps to Project Success!!

1. Invite the parent of the child you have selected to participate with you in writing a story about their child. Ask the parent to meet with you three times during the next 5 weeks to discuss their child with you. These meetings can occur when the parent drops off or picks up the child from the childcare. Each meeting will take approximately 15-30 minutes.
2. Show the parent the Participant Project Materials so that they know what the project is all about. Tell them that you will be taking pictures of their child. Make sure to get parent photo clearances if your center or program does not already have these on file. Talk with your director about the project and your center's procedures for photographs so that you are following your center's policies and procedures.

3. **Visit #1 with the Parent:**

Give the parent a copy of the **All About Me At Home** worksheet to take home and complete about their child. Review the sheet with the parent. Ask them to fill this out at home and bring it back to you by the following week (tell the parent the exact date you would like the form to be returned and write the date on the form.)

During this week, you (your team) will focus on the child by observing the child so that you have the information to fill in your copy of the **All About Me In Childcare** worksheet.

When you see the child doing something that s/he seems to enjoy, take a picture of the child during that activity.

4. **Visit #2 with the Parent:**

Discuss the completed **All About Me** worksheets with the parent, emphasizing different information from different perspectives – yours as the caregiver/observer of the child away from home and the parents' view of their child in home and community places where the family spends time. Emphasize the activities that the child enjoys and the things that you and the parent want to reinforce.

Talk about the part that each of you (caregiver, parent) play in promoting the child's development and learning. Write out what you plan to do together on the **How We Promote Learning** worksheet.

Use the information from the **All About Me** worksheets to begin making your **Story about _____** portfolio.

5. **Visit #3 with the Parent:**

Talk with the parent about what has happened at home and at child care during the past few weeks. Work together to fill in the **Learning in Different Places** worksheet. Discuss with the parent what each of you found helpful in supporting the child's learning and talk about what you continue to plan to do in the future. Show the parent what the **Story about _____** looks like so far.

Use the information from your discussions with parents and the **Learning in Different Places** worksheet to finish your **Story about _____** portfolio. Get your photographs developed (if you have not already done so) to include in your story.

6. **Presentation of your Story -- Final PIN session:**

Review each of the pages in your **Story about _____** the child and make sure that each one is completed in words and/or pictures. You will be sharing your portfolio with PIN class members during the final class meeting. Your portfolio will be displayed so that everybody can walk around the room and look at each participant's (or participant team's) stories.

You will turn in the pages of your **Story about _____ Portfolio** at the final class session. PIN will make one copy of the portfolio for you to share with the parent.

7. **Sharing with the Child's Parent:**

When you receive your copies of your **Story about _____Portfolio** by mail after your completion of the PIN training program, meet with the parent when they bring in or pick up their infant/toddler from childcare and give them their copy of the **Story about _____**. Thank them for helping you complete this project!!

All About Me At Home

Date this worksheet will be completed by: _____

What makes the child happy? What makes the child smile, laugh, and feel good?

What is the child interested in doing? What toys does the child like or what activities get the child excited?

Activity	Where Did It Happen?

What activities get (and keep) the child's attention?

Who does the child spend time with? What people does the child particularly enjoy?
What things does the child do with that person?

People the Child Spends Time With -	What Do They Do with That Person?

What is the child learning to do? What new things have you seen the child do or try to do? What does the child want to do?

What things would you like to pay attention to that the child is learning or doing at childcare or at home?

All About Me In Child Care

Date this worksheet will be completed by: _____

What makes the child happy? What makes the child smile, laugh, and feel good?

What is the child interested in doing? What toys does the child like or what activities get the child excited?

Activity	Where Did It Happen?

What activities get (and keep) the child's attention?

Who does the child spend time with? What people does the child particularly enjoy?
What things does the child do with that person?

People the Child Spends Time With -	What Do They Do with That Person?

What is the child learning to do? What new things have you seen the child do or try to do? What does the child want to do?

What things would you like to pay attention to that the child is learning or doing at childcare or at home?

How We Promote Learning

Parents and caregivers support learning and development of children in different ways. Parents may take their children to particular places because they know the child will enjoy learning in those places. Caregivers may make sure to have particular activities available for children to do because they know the child is interested in trying something new. Parents and caregivers **each** play important roles in teaching and in supporting children's learning.

Here are some ways that we promote _____'s learning when s/he is in childcare:

These are ways that we promote _____'s learning at home and in the different places our family spends time:

Learning In Different Places

What have you done to help _____ learn new things?

Caregiver	Parent

What new things have you seen _____ try to do or learn to do? What did you do to help promote opportunities to learn?

Place	New interests, things tried, things learned	How did you help?
Childcare		
Home & Community		

A Story About

Age _____ Date _____

Put the Child's Picture In this Box

By: _____

A Story About ----

Parents and caregivers know children well. They know what they like to do – and don't like to do –, what interests and “likes” they may have. Caregivers and parents know what children do well and what they need help with. They know what makes children smile and laugh, when they need hugs, and what makes children feel safe. Most of all, they know ways to help children continue to learn about themselves and other people, to explore and express their feelings, and about how to communicate, move around, and think.

This story about your child is designed to capture and record your child's unique strengths. At the end of this project, you will have a booklet that describes your child at his or her current age. Parents will enjoy reading this book with their children when their children are older. All children love to hear stories about when they were “babies” and to learn about what they did, where they went, and what their lives were like when they were younger. Have fun making this book!!!

My Favorite Things

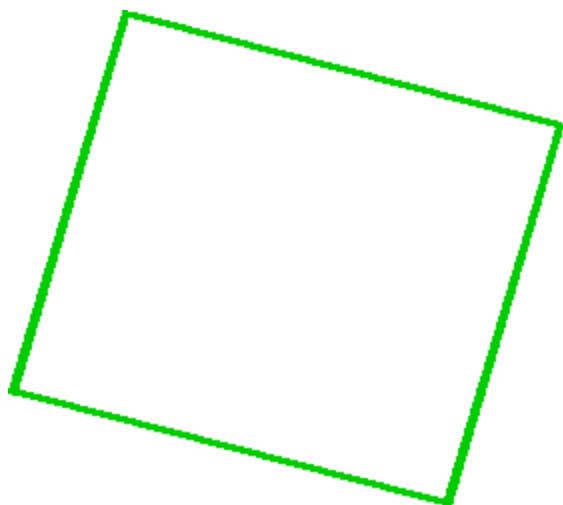
Put Pictures or Write
Examples in each box

Books &
Stories

Places

Foods

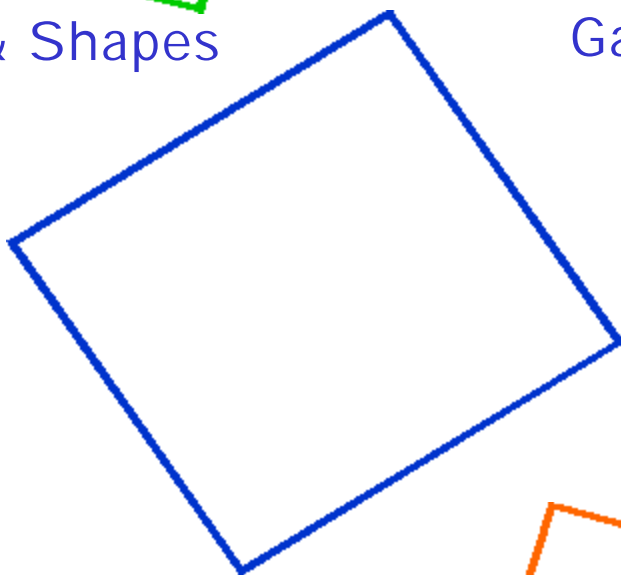
Things to Play



Colors & Shapes

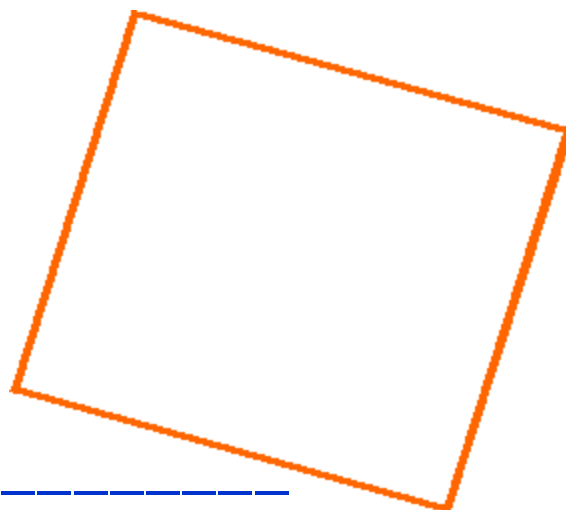


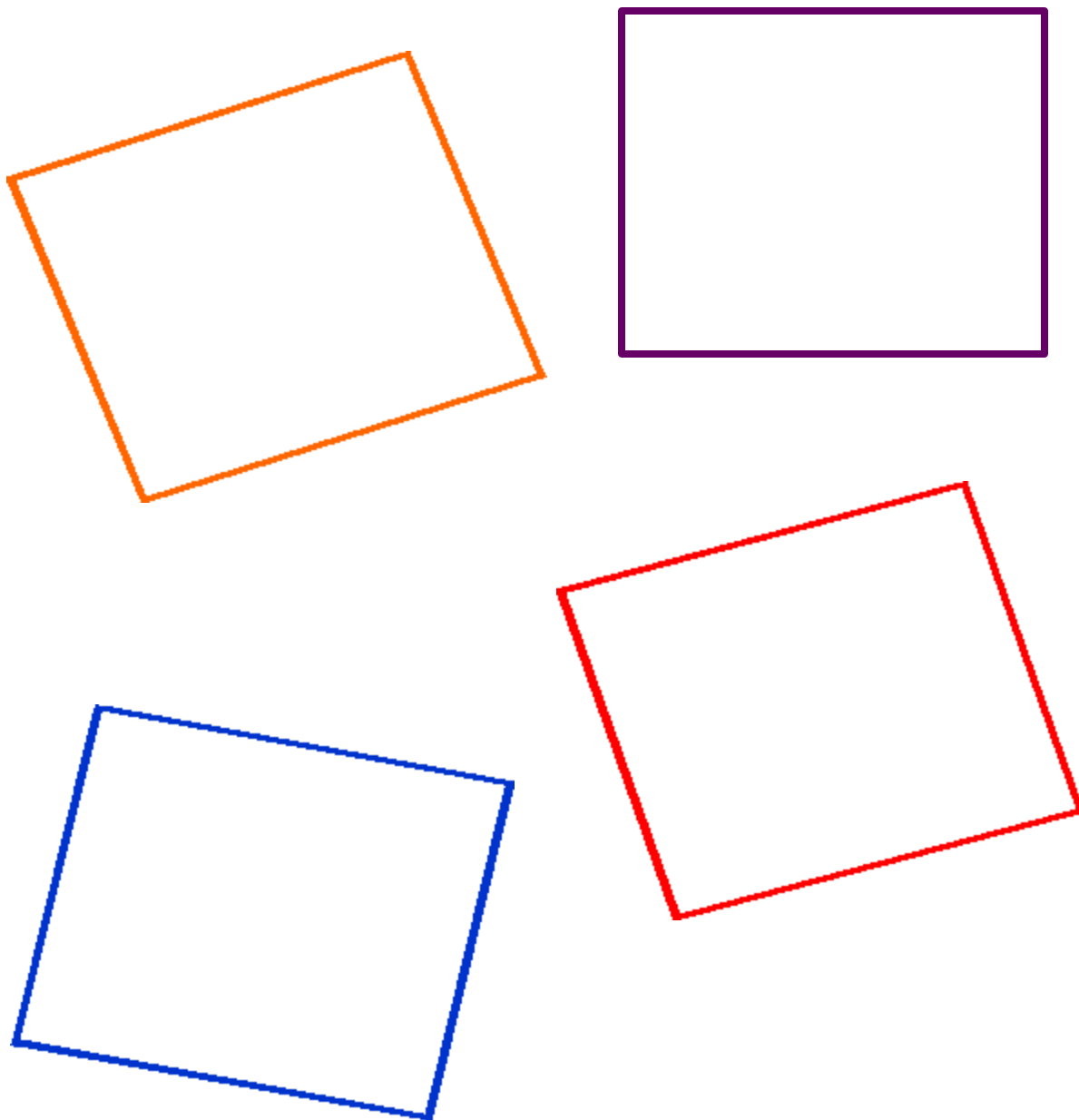
Games



Sounds &
Songs

More Favorites





My Favorite People

New Things I Am Learning About



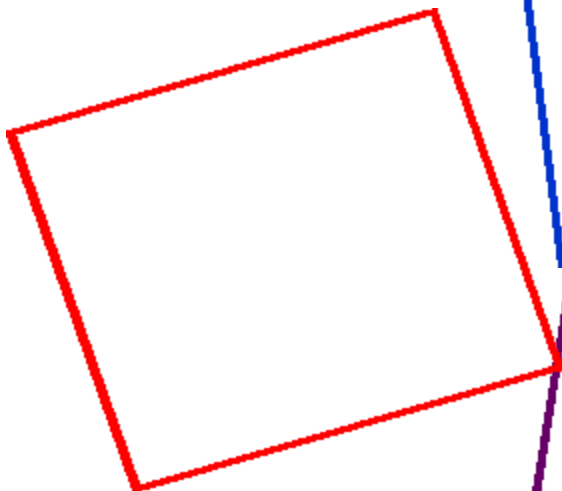
My Feelings



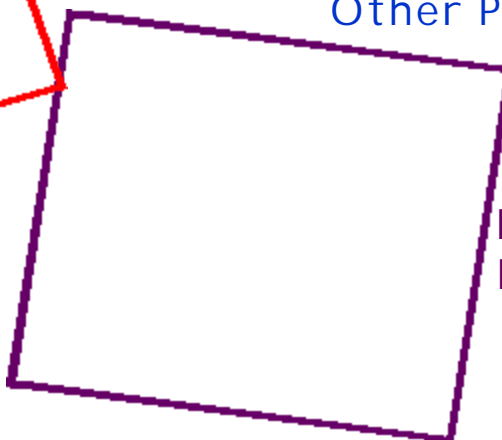
Thinking



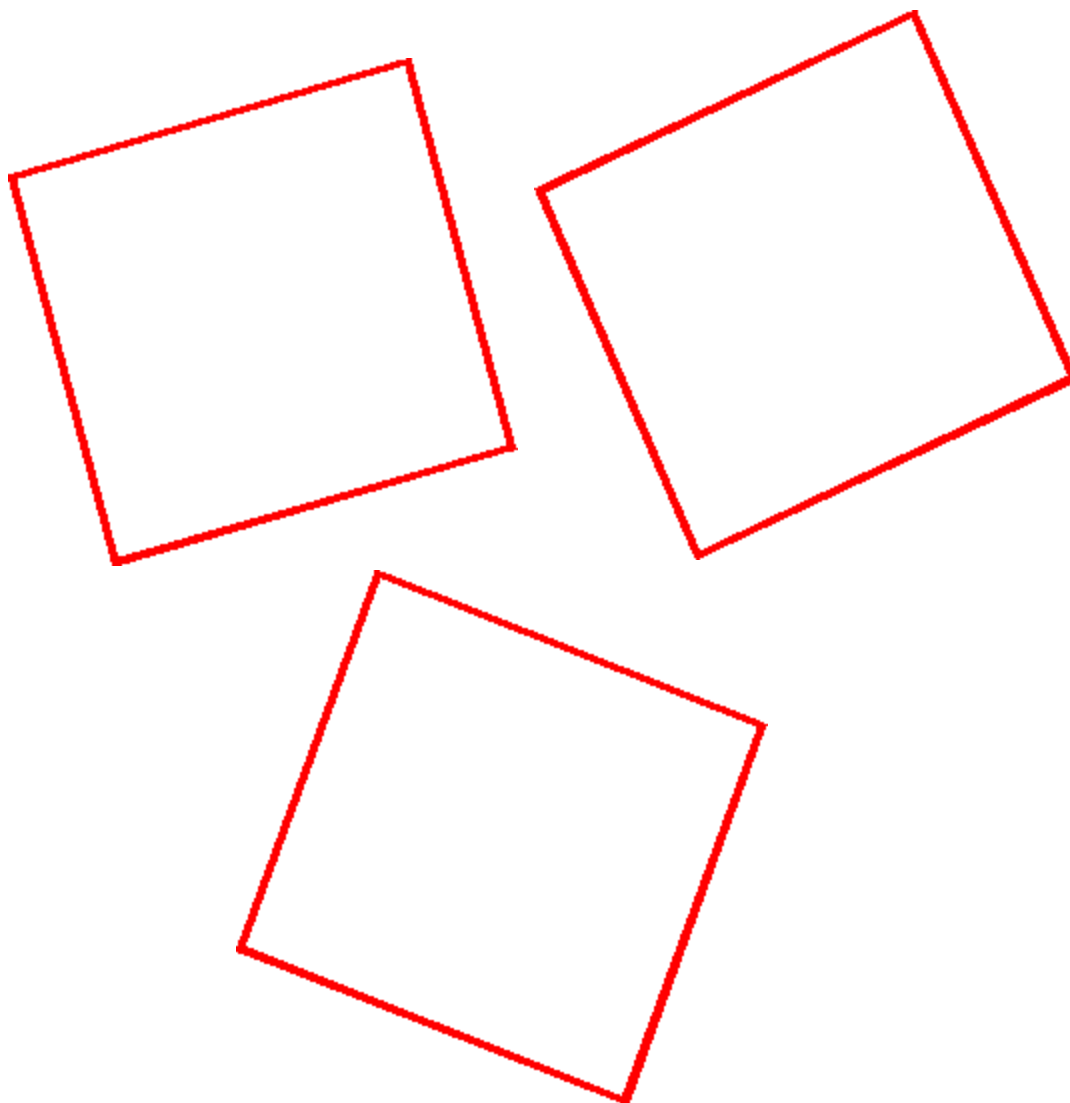
Other People



Communicating

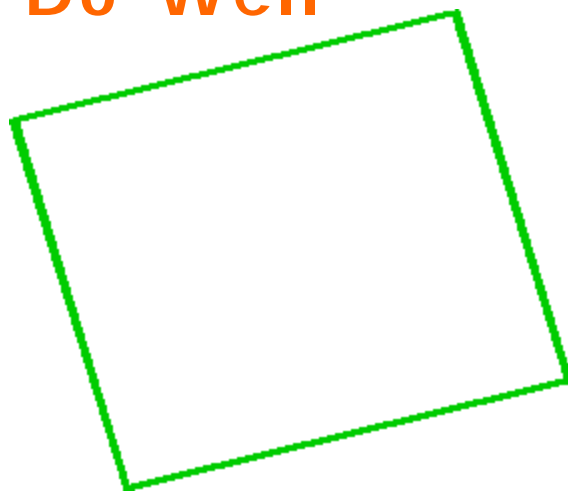
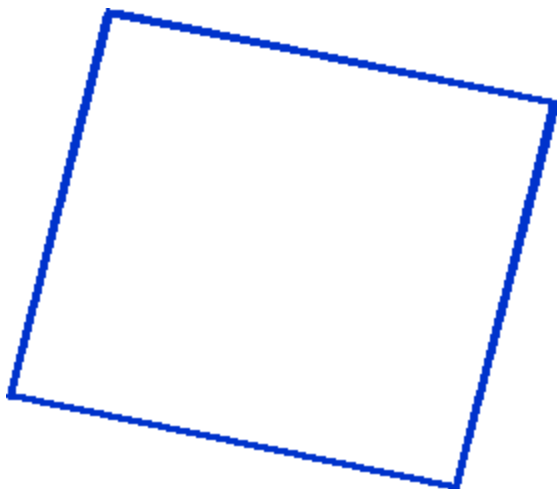


Moving &
Doing



New Things I am Trying

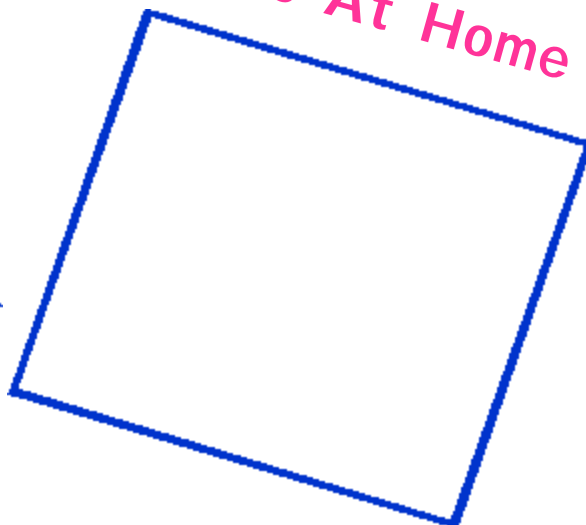
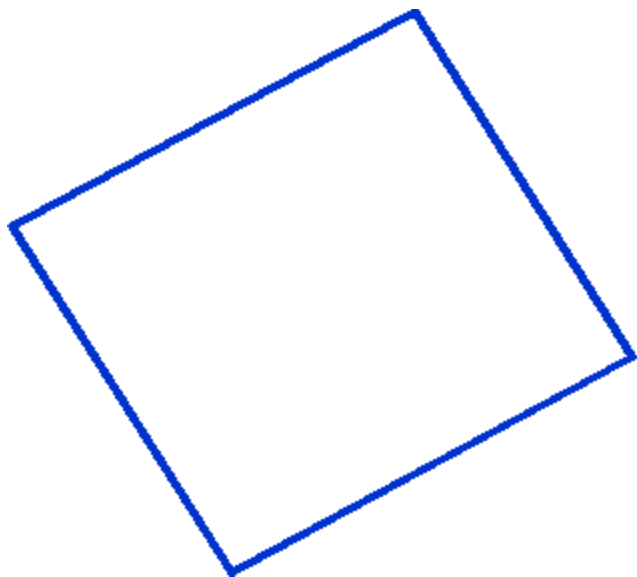
Things I Do Well



Things I Work Hard At



Things I Like to Do At Home

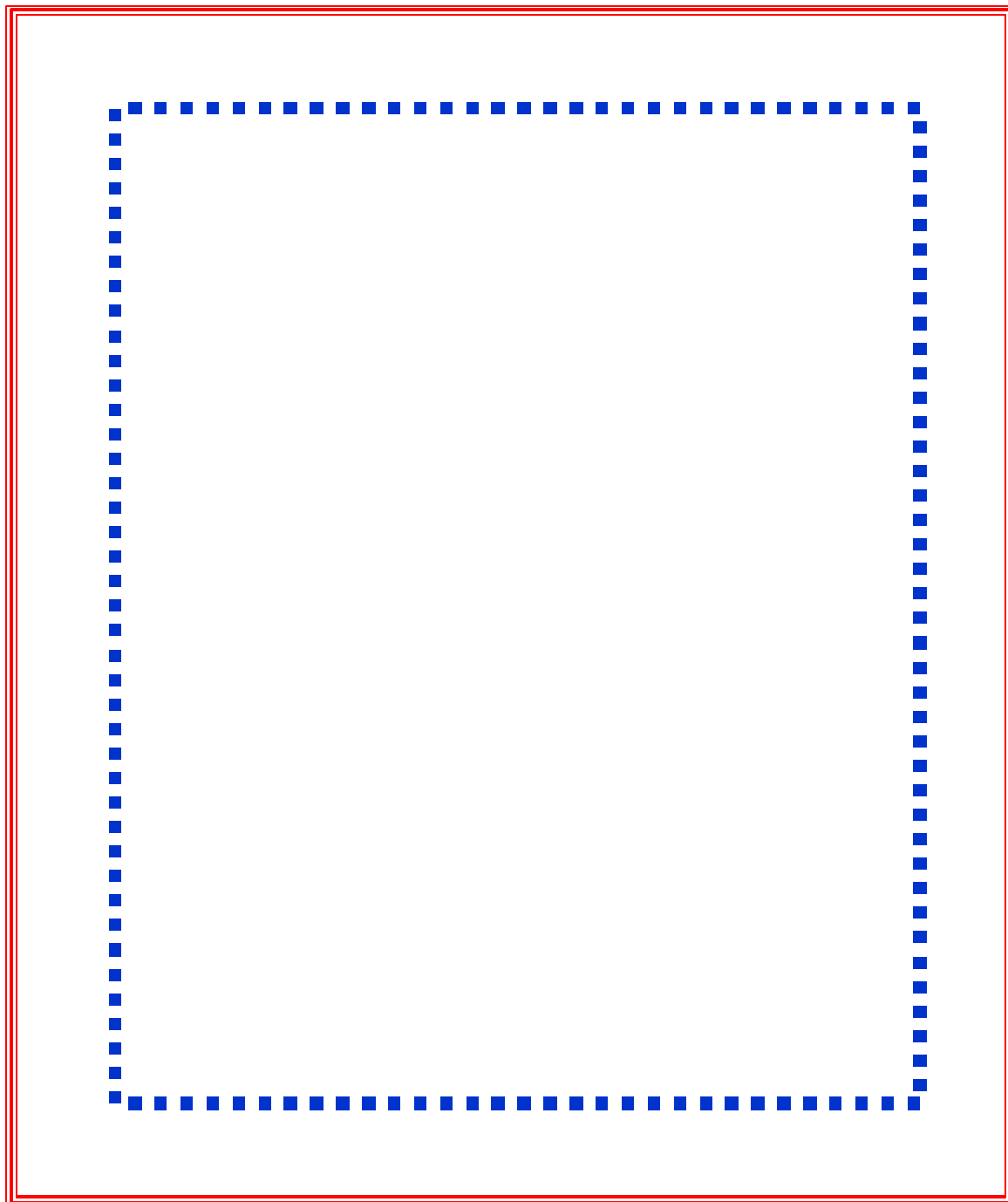


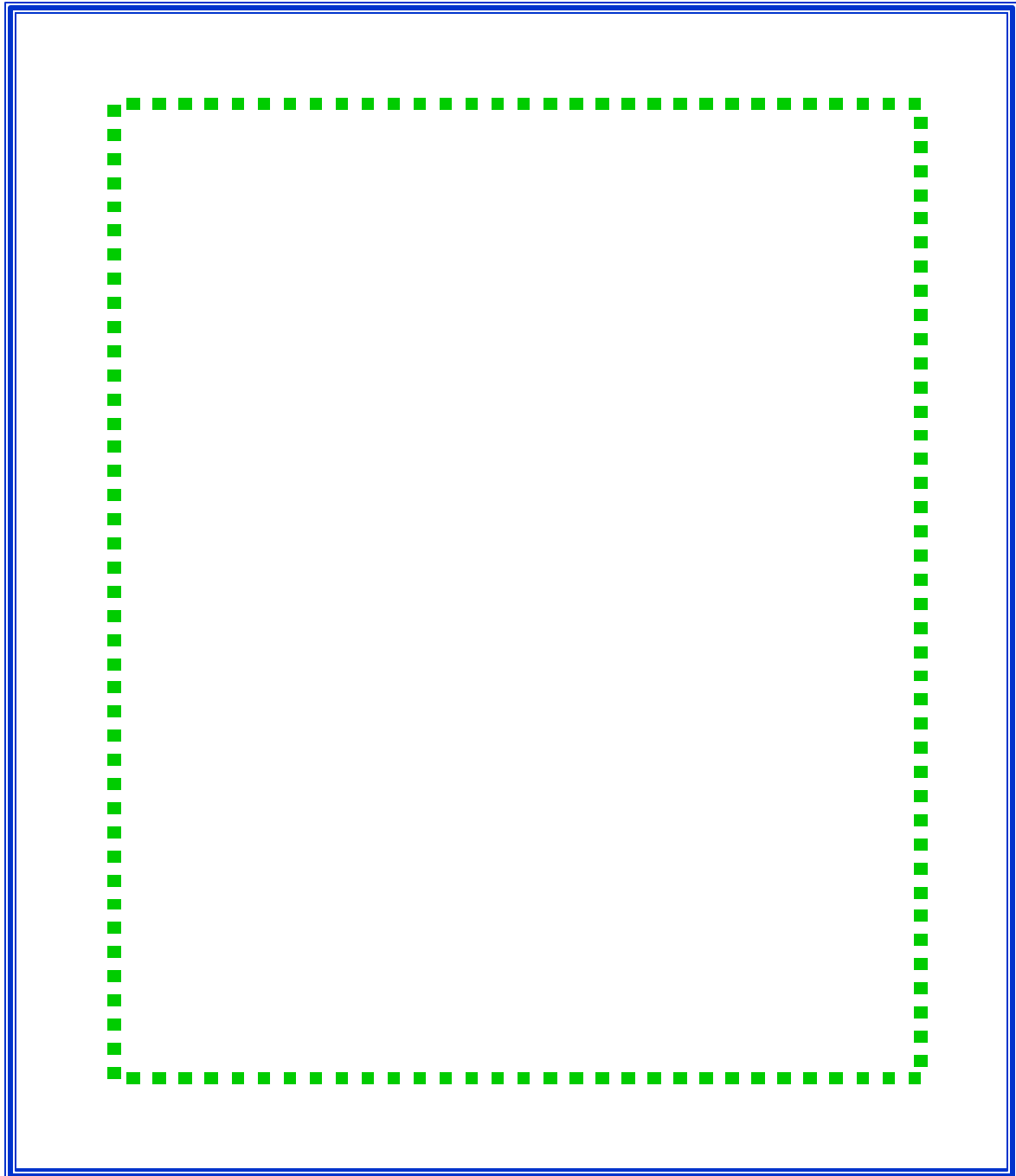
Things I Like To Do With My Family



My Accomplishments

The form consists of three red-outlined rectangular boxes arranged in a staggered pattern. Each box is intended for a child to write an accomplishment. The boxes are decorated with stars: the top-left box has a yellow star at its top-right corner and a blue star to its right; the middle-right box has a yellow star at its top-right corner and a blue star below its bottom-right corner; the bottom-left box has a yellow star at its top-left corner and a blue star below its bottom-right corner.





References & Resources

Davis, M. S., Bennis, L. A. & Dunst, C. J. (2000). My child's asset based portfolio, Unpublished inventory, Asheville, NC: Winterberry Press.

Dunst, C. J., Trivette, C. M., Snyder, D. M. Davis, M. S. & Bennis, L. A. (1999). Child asset portfolio. Unpublished inventory, Asheville, NC: Winterberry Press.

Dunst, C. J. (1998). Child interest inventory. Unpublished inventory, Asheville, NC: Winterberry Press.

Dunst, C. (1994). Supporting and strengthening families: Methods, Strategies, Practices. Maine: Brookline Press.

Moss, J. (1997). The child preference indicators. Unpublished paper, University Affiliated Program of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, Oklahoma City. (Publication No. CA597.jm).

Falvey, M., Forest, M., Pearpoint, J., & Rosenberg, R. (1997). All my life's a circle: Using the tools: Circles, MAPS, & PATHS. Toronto: Inclusion Press.

Partnerships for Change: Building Skills for Family Support (1998). Pittsburgh, PA: Family Communications (distributed through the Family Resource Coalition, Chicago, IL).

Snyder, D. (2000, February). Child Asset Portfolio. Morganton, N.C.: Family-Centered Practices Project, Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute.

