



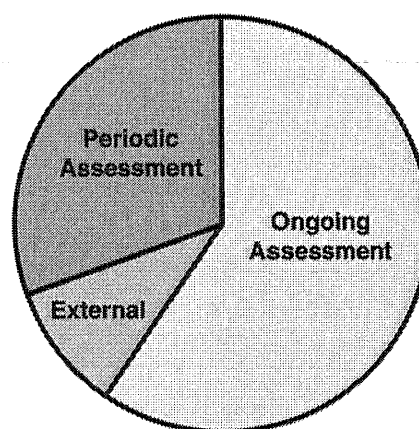
Throughout *Everyday Mathematics*, there are many opportunities to collect information about children's abilities. The purpose of gathering this information is to

- ♦ see how each child's mathematical understanding is progressing; and
- ♦ provide feedback to the teacher about each child's instructional needs.

The process of collecting information to track each child's progress and make decisions about how and what to teach is known as *assessment*, which is an essential part of every effective educational program.

## A Balance of Assessments

Children show what they know and can do in different ways. For this reason, teachers have a variety of assessment tools and techniques from which to choose. *Everyday Mathematics* provides ongoing and periodic assessment opportunities, and many schools use external assessment as well.



### Ongoing Assessment

This is often called *informal assessment* because information is collected while children are involved in regular classroom activities, whether alone, with partners, or in groups. The aim is to gain insight into children's thinking and strategies, as well as their development in specific skills.

Information is gathered in two ways:

- ♦ **Observation** involves watching and listening to children as they work. For example, when children are counting during a group activity, a teacher might ask a few of them *How high can you count?* Teachers make notes or mark checklists to keep track of children's responses and significant indicators of learning.
- ♦ **Product assessment** involves collecting and reviewing samples of children's mathematical creations and drawings. A collection of selected work shows progress over time.

### Periodic Assessment

Often called *formal assessment*, these assessments occur at fairly regular times or intervals during the school year. These more formal assessments use a combination of observation and products as well. When teachers carry out assessments at the beginning, middle, and end of the year, they will assess specific skills related to the year-end learning goals and record children's progress on checklists.

## How Can Parents Support Assessment?

As a parent, you can support the assessment process by communicating with your child's teacher on a regular basis. One way that teachers communicate with parents is through Home Links, which explain concepts and suggest activities to enhance your child's learning at home.

You can do your part by letting the teacher know what your child says about mathematics. Ask yourself some of these questions to better pinpoint your child's attitude towards or achievement in mathematics: Is your child becoming more interested in math? Is there something your child doesn't quite "get"? Does your child enthusiastically participate in Home Link activities? Can your child explain the day's mathematics activity? When you play math games or talk about real-life math situations at home, what do you notice about your child?

Families have unique insights about their children that are important to share with teachers. The information parents share can help teachers form a more complete picture of each child's development and adjust classroom activities to meet specific needs.