

Understanding Children and Young People's Development



Undertaking Observations



WAG (2008) say...

While observing children, practitioners can also ask themselves questions that will lead to an evaluation of the provision, the future training needs of practitioners and the different learning and teaching approaches used.

Stages of observation



Plan observation



Conduct



Record



Analyse/Reflect



Action Plan



According to Tilstone *'Observational techniques are of little value in themselves, the interpretation of the recorded, factual information is essential'*

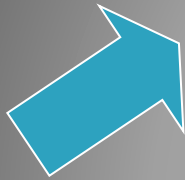


What does this mean?

Planning / Assessment Cycle

Assessment

What is the child doing here?



Evaluation

How effective has this been?



Teaching

Putting it into practice



Planning

How can I extend their play and their learning?



Things to Consider

- ▶ Equipment
- ▶ Consent
- ▶ Confidentiality
- ▶ Photography/Identity issues
- ▶ Rights of the child

Can be helpful to the practitioner in terms of improving the provision



Range of indicators



What are we looking at/for when doing observations?



Patterns of communication verbal/non-verbal. Language development, physical skills in communication e.g. able to use a pen



Time spent on task, distractions



Motivation – confidence, enthusiasm,



Social development – behaviour



Emotional development



Academic development – cognitive skills

Points to consider

- ▶ Purely a 'record'
- ▶ No commentary
- ▶ No judgements
- ▶ No evaluations
- ▶ Step-by-step account
- ▶ Present tense
- ▶ Commentaries and evaluations are left until after the observation has taken place.



Discussion

What difficulties will YOU face when carrying out an observation?

- ▶ Consider age of child
- ▶ Needs of child
- ▶ Protocol at placement
- ▶ Lack of placement – what will you do instead?

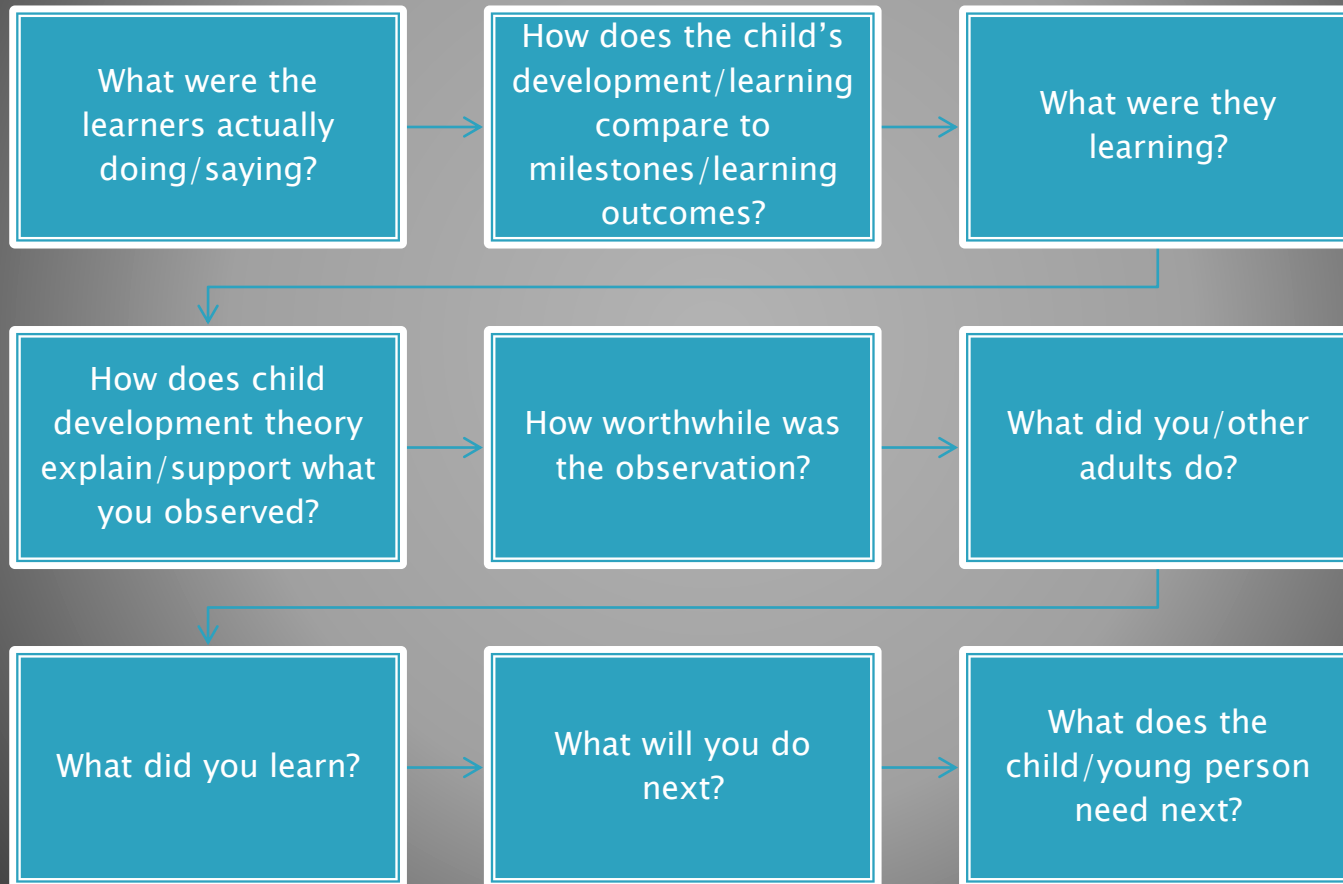


Difficulties in Conducting Observations

- ▶ Not knowing what to look for
- ▶ Time
- ▶ Child/young person aware of being watched
- ▶ Interruptions
- ▶ Inexperience
- ▶ Pupil unpredictability –absence, behaviour
- ▶ Weather
- ▶ Consent



Using observations: Some basic questions for evaluating later



Planning Observations

- ▶ Click on the image to watch the short video (approximately 7 minutes).



Questions



What is the main aim of your written observations?



How can you ensure that your observations are focused on the aim at all times?

Writing an appropriate aim

Formulating aims and objectives allows you to ensure that the observed information will be focused and can be effectively used to assess the child's development and subsequently provide appropriate activities and experiences.

What is an Aim?



An aim is a statement of what you intend to observe and what you would like to achieve.



Aims are our ultimate goals which outline the direction and details for what we are going to observe.



It is the overall purpose of the observation, our clear understanding of what we wish to observe.

What is an Aim?

Your aim should set out the broad areas of development you wish to find out about.

In order to have a clear aim and therefore a better understanding of the observation we need to ask ourselves 3 key questions:

- What?
- How?
- Why?

Examples

What do I want to find out or to know about this child?

(development, behaviour, resources, procedures)

I would like to determine how well the child can use a scissors

Examples

- ▶ Why do I need to know?
- ▶ *I would like to know this to compare her skills with the development norm for her age and stage of development.*
- ▶ How do I find out?
- ▶ *I will observe her fine manipulative skills during a cutting and sticking activity.*

Examples

Aim:

- ▶ To observe Mary, aged 3 years 2 months using her fine manipulative skills while using a scissors at the cutting and sticking table, to see how her skills compare to the development norms.



Homework Discussion and Responses

Aims Activity 1 Sheet

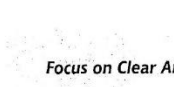
What do you think about the first list of aims?

Would you know exactly what you are meant to be observing?

What do you think about the second list?

Are they any better? Why/why not?

Could the aims in the second list be improved? If so, how?



Focus on Clear Aims

Aims Sheet
(Paired Activity)

In pairs, read through this first set of aims:

- to observe a child playing
- to observe and understand play and the different aspects
- to observe social and emotional skills
- to observe a child with particular needs
- to observe a child's physical development.

In your opinion, how specific are these aims?
Would you be able to carry out an observation/assessment from these?
Is there any room for improvement?

Now read through the second set of aims:

- my aim is to observe a child aged 3 years 4 months playing in the indoor sand tray
- my aim is to observe the social development of a child aged 2 years 6 months during circle time
- my aim is to observe the emotional development of a child aged 1 year 8 months when being left by mum at nursery
- my aim is to observe a child aged 3 years 2 months who has difficulty walking
- my aim is to observe a child aged 3 years 11 months using fine manipulative skills while cutting with a pair of scissors
- my aim is to observe the foot and eye co-ordination of a child aged 2 years 10 months while kicking a football outside in the garden.

In your opinion, how specific are these aims?
Would you be able to carry out an observation/assessment from these?
Is there any room for improvement?

60 Lesson 9 Focus on Clear Aims
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Homework Discussion and Responses

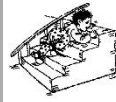
- ▶ Which Image matches each aim?
- ▶ A – image 4
- ▶ B – image 3
- ▶ C – image 5
- ▶ D – image 1
- ▶ E – image 6
- ▶ F – image 2

Focus on Clear Aims Worksheets

Name:

Read through the aims on this page and match them to the observation graphics.

 **A.** My aim is to observe Patrick, aged 6 months, during a one-to-one session with his carer to see how well he can sit when being supported.

 **B.** My aim is to observe Akshay, aged 3 years 10 months, for his social and emotional development stage during a quiet moment in the book corner.

 **C.** My aim is to observe Patty, aged 8 months, coming into nursery and saying goodbye to her mum to see how she copes.

 **D.** My aim is to observe Gareth, aged 2 years 3 months, at the colouring table and to see how well his manipulative skills are progressing through watching him use a pencil.

 **E.** My aim is to observe Jamila, aged 4 years, and to find out if she is able to recall and match shapes and colours.

 **F.** My aim is to observe Mark, aged 18 months, during outside play to see if he is able to climb up and down four steps.

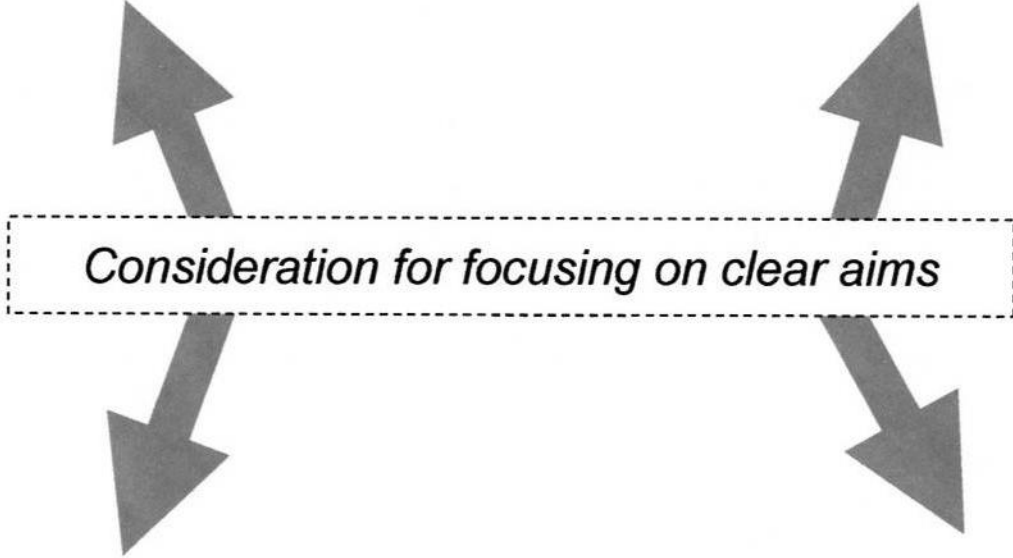
Focus on Clear Aims Lesson 9 61

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Board Plan 9.1

Do not generalise.

Tailor-make them to suit what you need to find out, i.e. do not write the aim 'to observe a child with a particular need'.



Consideration for focusing on clear aims

The clearer the aim, the better the observation/assessment.
The better the observation/assessment, the better our understanding of the child.

Think about what particular need the child has, i.e. is it a physical need (impaired hearing or mobility), special educational need, emotional need etc. Observe them doing what exactly?

Examples:

- ▶ To observe two children aged three years and four months and three years and five months playing with small-scale toys, focusing on language development.
- ▶ To observe a baby aged five months interacting with their primary carer.
- ▶ To observe a three year old child during a junk modelling session, focussing on fine manipulative skills

Compare these examples to your own aim for observation 1, are you on the right track?
Can you improve it?

The difference between an aim and objective



Objectives are usually measurable, they are usually what you are going to do to meet your aim.



For example, if your aim is to win the lottery, your objective is to buy the ticket. Your memory is the measurable element, do you remember to buy the ticket?

Objective Examples

- ▶ To assess facial expression, gestures and turn-taking.
- ▶ To comment on language development, paying particular attention to vocabulary.

By next week:

Design a front sheet for your observations

Observation

No. of children

Age

No. of adults

Setting

Method

Aim

► Example of Front Sheet Layout

NAME OF OBSERVER: A.N. Other **NAME OF CHILD:** J

DATE OF OBSERVATION: 25.06.04

EXACT AGE OF CHILD: Three years and five months

GENDER: Female

TIME OBSERVATION STARTED: 10:00 a.m.

TIME OBSERVATION FINISHED: 10:10 a.m.

METHOD USED: Written (or narrative)

NUMBER OF CHILDREN: 3 **NUMBER OF ADULTS:** 1

AIM OF OBSERVATION: to observe a child aged three years and five months playing in the water tray, focusing on physical development.

OBJECTIVE: To assess J's hand-eye coordination and comment on whether she has developed hand dominance.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF OBSERVATION SETTING:
J is playing with two other children at the water tray. The tray is in the messy play area of the pre-school room of a day nursery. There is one adult with the children.

OBSERVATION VERIFIED BY: A Person