

Observation Methods

Strategies / Interventions.

There are many different ways to observe children and as a majority we use the narrative style within our early year's settings. However using a different method to collect evidence could help you to find specific information about a child.

Time sample

This involves recording observations about the child's behaviour and what the child is doing at specific times. This can be done at regular intervals and can be helpful when identifying negative behaviour, as it allows understanding of the context surrounding a situation.

Photographs

Photos of the child, complete with annotations and descriptions about what was taking place when the photo was taken, provide vital insight to who the child is as an individual. This type of observation could be useful when focusing on social relationships or physical development.

Tracker

To record a tracking observation you must first have a floor plan of the setting, including outdoors. The practitioner observes and notes on the floor plan the area in the nursery that the child visits, and how long they were at each activity or area. The child may be tracked for a long or short time, depending on the type of information required.

Event sample

This involves recording how often a child does something. This could be following an instruction, engaging with an adult, attempts to talk etc. It can be done over a period of time to keep a log of events.

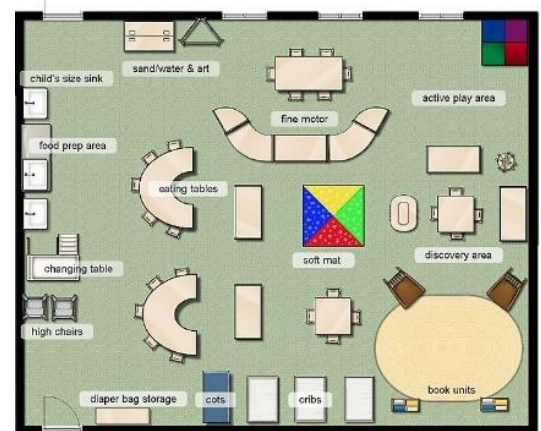


Figure 5.6 Example of an Event Sample

Child's Name	Mary	Age	9.5	Date(s)	September-October 05
Date/Time	Preceding Event	Behavior	Consequence		
9.24/7:48	M. was pouring juice at the snack table. She tipped over the paper cup and spilled a small amount.	M. set down the pitcher and struck out at a stack of paper cups, knocking them from the table.	Jim quickly grabbed M. in his arms and said, "It's OK, it was just a little spill!"		
9.26/8:07	M. entered the block area and began placing trucks from the shelf on the structure Pua and Jenny were building. Pua said, "You can't play."	M. ran from the block area past the art area on her way out the back door. On her way past the water-color table she made a wide sweep with her arm and knocked over a cup of water.	Ginger, who witnessed the block corner scene, followed her out. She took M. in her arms and told her, "I bet it made you mad when Pua told you that you could not build with them."		
10.6/7:55	M. placed her blanket in her cubby on top of a plastic container. The blanket fell out as she turned to walk away.	M. shoved the blanket back into the cubby and pulled the entire contents of the cubby onto the floor and ran out the door to the gate.	Jim, who was greeting the children, followed M. out and said, "Please let me help you get your blanket in straight."		
10.8/8:15	M. was playing with the tinkler toys. Jenny joined her and accidentally bumped her construction and several pieces fell off.	M. screamed at Jenny and said she was stupid. With a single sweep of her arm M. knocked the pieces to the floor and threw herself on the rug.	Ginger gently rubbed M.'s back until she calmed.		

Child Name(s): Joanie Age: 5 Location: Rosewood School Kindergarten Date and Time: May 17, 10:45-11:30 Observer: Susanna Type of Development Observed: Joanie Has Difficulty Completing Tasks		
Event	Time	Notes or Comments
Art Center—leaves coloring activity on table unfinished	10:45	Some of Joanie's behaviors seem to be resulting from failure to follow procedures for use of materials.
Library—looks at book, returns it to shelf.	10:50	
Manipulative Center—gets frustrated with puzzle, piles pieces in center—leaves on table. Pulls out Lego blocks, starts to play. When teacher signals to put toys away, Joanie leaves Lego blocks on table and joins other children.	10:55 11:00	Behavior with the puzzles may come from frustration. Joanie may need help in putting away with verbal rewards for finishing a task and putting materials away.
		Encourage Joanie to get help with materials that are too hard.