

Ethics of observation

[Sociology](#), [Ethics](#)



Uses of Observation within a work environment:

- Identifies stages of development
- Identifies level of ability
- Use observations to plan activities
- Monitors changes in behaviour
- Use to report suspected abuse/neglect
- Psychological evidence

Why is observation important?

By observing children within a work environment, we are able to learn their interests and dislikes. As teachers, it's important for us to know the children we work with as deeply as we can, so we can relate to them and get in touch with their personalities. Once we have had the chance to observe children, we are able to plan activities and lessons according to individual learning styles and the children's attitudes towards learning. By doing this, we are able to make their first years within a learning environment proceed to their best potential.

Read on to learn about Ethical Issues

Ethical Issues

Before carrying out an observation on any child, make sure you have received permission from the parents of the child, your supervisor and depending on the age of the child, the child herself/himself. Here is a list of Ethical Issues concerning observations

Anonymity is important because all of your observations as a teacher should be kept confidential. If anyone who isn't supposed to read your observations does happen to find them, you need to take careful measures to ensure that only you will be able to make sense of them. You will need to change the names of all children involved in your observation (Child A, B, C etc.) as well as the school name and the members of staff names (Staff A, B, C etc.).

Confidentiality is vital when working with children. You wouldn't want to let a child's file fall into the wrong hands. Only certain people are allowed to read your observations, such as your supervisor, the parents of the child if they ask, and the child themselves. You should ensure that your records are kept in a safe place, and treat them in a confidential manner.

Objectivity is needed within the observations you make within the working place. You cannot let your personal feelings or thoughts intrude with your observations. You must check that all statements are accurate, supported by evidence and are not discriminatory.

Storage of Data is used to ensure that data is kept in a secure place. It makes sure that only authorised people are given access to the records. This ties in with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Rights of the parents and child. Each have the right to refuse being observed and to see the observation record. The parents have the right to refuse permission of observation. Accuracy is essential within an observation to ensure that children are not assessed on inaccurate evidence. The evidence recorded must be as true a reflection of the child's actions as possible. If the record is not as accurate as it could be, we may not take the precautions to

meet the needs of the child. Purpose of the observation is needed. The observation you record should not be used in any way to harm the child. Responsibility to record the observation as accurately and as carefully as possible is yours. Conclusions should be fair and supported by reasonable evidence. This ensures that the observation is used to the benefit of the child.