

Importance of observation in early childhood studies



Then I will go on to comment on the ways in which observations help support a child's learning and the ways they inform practitioners on their practice in the setting. This allows early years practitioners to evaluate and assess activities and equipment. I will finally discuss the ways in which observation may not be so good for early year setting and how they may affect the children.

An observation is the process in which an individual watches the actions of others, listens to what they say, who they speak to and how they speak.

It can be a certain person, group of people or place over a period of time, to find out information suggest Filcher, & Scott (1999). The observer can be a participant and become part of the activities taking place, or they can be a non-participant and watch from the sidelines. Observations are seen as important as we are able to discover children's unique qualities and strengthen our knowledge about child development. They are beneficial and valued in early childhood studies as they provide educators, students, children and parents with compelling information about a child's development.

Through observations the children will display the milestones they have reached; an early years educator will also get a better understanding of why a child does something. With this information educators, parents, and children can come together and discuss ways in which they can encourage the child to flourish in a healthy and happy environment, which promotes their best interests. Observations are vital in early years setting, when there

is any concern of a child being abused or mistreated an observation can be helpful to look at behavior and attitudes of the child.

Focusing on how they relate to adults and their peers, are they showing any signs of withdrawal. Maier (1987) believes observations " have underlined the iceberg nature of the problem for each child know to have en abused" (1987: 37) this illustrates the necessity of observations when promoting children's well being.

Once a practitioner has spotted any signs of abuse they can then bring it to the attention of staff and government agencies. Observations are beneficial to parents, as they want to know how their child is emerging in the setting, and if the child is meeting their developmental stages.

Parents are the first educators in the life of the therefore they will be the paramount people to supply knowledge about their children as they know them the best. Therefore the relationship between mom, educational setting and parent is vital suggests Allen (1992 in Smith) they need to work collectively so they can become experts about the child. If parents feel any concern about their child's development, for example they feel their child is struggling in a certain area, needs extra support, or concerns about their child's behavior.

They can confide in the early year practitioner voicing their concerns, the practitioner can then carry out an observation on the child to see if the child is actually struggling or need extra support. With the parents and practitioner working together they can provide the right purport for the child, by creating an atmosphere that carters to the child needs promoting the <https://assignbuster.com/importance-of-observation-in-early-childhood-studies/>

child's learning. As a first time observer, I found the experience of observing children very constructive. Adults according to Drummond (1993 in Smith) learn by surveying carefully and evaluating things over, grasping and understanding what they have seen.

I was finally able to link theory to practice as I was watching the children in their natural environment, carrying out activities, movements, conversation that came natural to them. An observation that helped me understand how children communicate, was observation two on Child A. Wrought watching her was able to understand the importance of communication, even at the age of five years six months Child A was able to communicate verbally and non verbally to children expressing her ideas and emotions about partaking in an activity that she was involved in.

Bruce & Megabit (1999) supported my finding as a through facial expression Child A was able to communicate successfully to her peers.

Through the observations I carried out, I have developed new skills I learnt to identify what stage the child is at and think of alternative activities to encourage the child to use new methods, different learning styles, ND move them onto the next mile stone. Was able to Identify significant moments in a child's learning, and consider ways to build on what I had seen.

I was also able to focus on the quieter children in the setting and watch the ways they learn new skills and develop socially and emotional. The more intimately I observe a child, the closer I can come to their learning their thinking, and their questions, their pressing intellectual and emotional

concerns. I found the more understood of the child the more my confidence of observing grew.

Observations can be used to support children's learning social and emotional, intellectually and physical development.

Once observed a child we evaluate their needs and strive to extend their experiences by providing a stimulating atmosphere to facilitate their learning. Piggard (1970) states the "responsibility of adults in supporting learning, is to provide children with a rich and stimulating environment, full of things they could explore." (Smith 1998: 9) through analyzing an observation an early years educator can identify areas which the child may need extra support, and then provide the resources so the child expands their development.

Early years educators should use Vygotsky (1978) Zone of proximal development (ZAP) when supporting children. From the observation the educator knows what the child is capable of doing an educator can then scaffold the child bridging the gap between what a child can do on their own, and what they can achieve with guidance from an expert guide.

From what we witness and interpret we are able to reach an understanding of where the child is and then plan activities and practices to take the child's learning forward.

If child has a learning difficulty for example language, hearing, seeing or speaking impediment, through an observation according to Harding et al (1996) the practitioner can spot this disability alert parents and staff of the

situation, and develop solutions to help the child to progress in a comfortable stimulating environment that caters to their needs. From the observations that carried out, I was able to see where I could support a child's learning further.

During observation ten on Child H I focused on her fine motor skills but throughout the observation Child H displayed what she knew about the world through her creative development skills Child H drew a picture of her ether. I as an educator would like to find out what else she knows about the world, this will be done by getting Child H to interpret her thoughts through her creative development skills.

She will also have to use her fine motor skills when making her creations, for example making models out of clay, play dough and paint.

Another observation that I would have supported the child's learning was observation eight with the home corner in the formation of a shop. From this observation I was able to establish that most of the children had fixed ideas on what gender roles should be. I as an educator would like to break down gender stereotype roles, and explain to the children through posters and books that it is ok for a man to look after children and women to be construction workers.

Schoolchild (1994) supports this as she believes that early year practitioners should show children books or pictures of men and women engaging in non typical activities. An observation is the best possible way of gaining information about a child.

An early year educator is then able to present information to staff and parents, this will enable staff to plan, support, improve and extend future learning. Hurst (1991 in Dunn) offers to observation being central to the early educational process, and that planning of the curriculum for children under eight, needs information that only observation can give.

Observations allow an individual to see if the activity they have set is useful for the child's development. If the child is able to understand the task, complete the task, learn from it, and then expand and develop alternative ways of thinking.

The task is well constructed and should continue to be used in the setting. Practitioners find observation useful, as through observations early years educators can “ identify a child's schematic interest and nourish it with worthwhile curriculum content.

Matching curriculum to child can promote a child's motivation and development. ” (1994: 78) Observations not only inform early years educators with information about the child, they also can give information about ones teaching and activities in the setting. Observations help practitioners to reassesses situation.

Bennett (1996 in Smith) believes “ observations allow us to assess our provision to ensure that we are actually doing what we set out to do”. (Smith 1 998: 1 1 7) a piece of equipment can be used differently for children to get the best use out of it.

Observations are a good way to inform early year educators of their performance, are the children are getting the best out of their teaching methods and facilities. Observation allowed practitioners to evaluate and see what needs improving. Bennett(1996 in Smith) states “ observations of activities resources, and areas give practitioners significant information about fairness of access. By spending time observing how an area or a resource is used that we are to say with confidence that our planning has been successful”.

Smith 1 998: 117) Through partaking in observation an early years educator can find that their own skills re developing and not just the child. A practitioner could use assessments and observations to find out whether the changes that have been put in place are successful. Observations grant accesses for early years workers to ensure that entrance to learning landed in the curriculum is available to all children. Precise observations will make suitable provisions and facilitate the curriculum planning within the classroom.

In order to plan for an activity you need a clear objective, what we aim for the children to learn once the activity is over.

Observation flowed by assessments help to establish what activities re going to be the most valuable to the child suggest Harding et al (2000) From observation two on Child A I was able to gather that Child A used the facilities provided in the classroom to the best of her ability. Child A participated in three activities in the space of forty -five minutes ranging from a math’s activity to reading a book and developing choreography.

<https://assignbuster.com/importance-of-observation-in-early-childhood-studies/>

Through observing I would design activities which link into the curriculum, but incorporate movement as Child A seems to be a Kinesthesia learner that likes hand on activity. For that reason an activity that may be of benefit to Child A ND will support her literacy skills, is to read a story e.

G. The three little bears then in groups act out the story. Nevertheless Observations are not always beneficial they have limitations. When the observer participates in the observation, the child may be aware that they are being observed and may feel uncomfortable or pressured to give answer or behave in a way that the observer likes.

Therefore this observation will not be valid, not providing a true picture as the child is not behaving how they would do on a daily bases- This is called observation bias according to L above (1973) those being observed are influenced by the presence of the observer.

Observations only focus on one child or a group of children at a time, so a practitioner cannot relate what one child does and need to what all children need and do. Harmless, & Holbrook, (2000) proposed that the sample size Of observation are too small results cannot be assignable of all children.

Also observations cannot be replicated so findings cannot be checked. Cockerel (1976) suggests that observations relied deeply upon “ his own observational skills and interpretive skills” (1976: 101 2 in Harmless,& Holbrook,) for that reason observation rest upon what the observers thinks and believes and not on what actually happens.

The child's mood on the day of being observed may affect the observation Ansell. Again this is not giving a true indication of the child's behavior and results will not be valid.

Observation are too objective as many practitioners after observing try to place the child into a category, some which the children should not be placed into. In conclusion, observations are important in early settings as they provide, early years educators, students, parents and government agencies with information that s vital to promote a child's well being. Observations provide information that practitioners need to provide an appropriate stimulating environment that will only advance a child's learning.