

Naturalistic observation – practice being a psychologist assignment

[Philosophy](#)



ASSIGNMENT # 1: NATURALISTIC OBSERVATION – Practice being a psychologist

1. Select a child or two to observe.
2. Observe his or her behavior for half an hour. TAKE NOTES! It has been my experience that you learn more from this exercise if you have a particular topic in mind before you begin. Some possibilities that come to mind * How do children resolve conflict? * What methods do children use to attract adult attention? * What rules (if any) do young children play by, and how are these enforced? * How do the social interactions of popular children differ from unpopular ones?

Please do NOT feel you have to choose one of the topics above, pick any area that is of interest to you. Some people have a hard time picking a topic and prefer to go observe first and select a topic that strikes them as interesting. For example, you may see one child throw a ferocious temper tantrum and decide to focus on how the other children react. As I said, I would pick a topic first, but you don't have to be like me and it doesn't win you any extra points if you are! DO NOT PUT THE CHILD'S NAME IN YOUR NOTES ANYWHERE! One of the most important ethical values a psychologist must have is trustworthiness.

CONFIDENTIALITY is crucial to being a good psychologist and it is never too early to learn. Whatever you observe, whatever you learn about a person, no matter what their age, should be kept in strict confidence and only shared with people who have a need to know. Make up a name for the child, use "Child A" or simply a blank.

3. Write up a two to three page description of your observation. Include:
 1. Age(s) or child or children
 2. gender
 3. Topic — if you have one
 4. Location where behavior was observed
 5. Description of behavior you observed
 6. Your conclusion —

It is perfectly

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okay to say “ This study was a complete failure and I did not learn anything about my topic, but I DID learn —” Research turns out that way more often than people think. You may include any other information you feel is relevant, such as child’s ethnicity, size, dress, etc. A brief example I observed Melissa and Joy (not their real names) who are two four-year-old girls. The topic I was interested in was sharing, particularly how much sharing is done spontaneously compared to how often children must be reminded to share by adults.

I observed the girls from 10 to 10: 30 a. m. on Monday, January 26th. They were both playing in the “ Building Area” of the child care center they attend. The building area has large wooden blocks, cardboard bricks and duplos, each in separate containers. When my observations began, Melissa was playing with the wooden blocks and had her back to Joy, who was looking at the duplos, but had not taken any out yet. She turned around and said, “ I want to play with THOSE blocks” in a loud voice. Melissa answered, “ No, you doo-doo head,” and hit Joy on the head with a wooden block.

At this point, the teacher gently put her hand on Melissa’s back and guided her to the time out chair saying, “ We don’t hit people, Melissa. Now you just sit here for a moment. ” — There would be a bunch more in here on your observations — In conclusion, in reviewing my results I found that young children DO sometimes engage in sharing without being prompted, as when Joy handed Melissa the duplos for the house she was building. Most of the time, though, the two children I observed in that age group either each played with their