

Methods of observation. level 3 diploma in children and young peoples workforce



A running record is a very detailed description of the behaviour of a child over a short period of time, often less than five minutes. The observer watches a child or group of children and note down everything he sees, which gives the portrait of the child and his activity during this particular period of time.

The observer sits quietly and tries not to draw attention to him as his interaction may affect the behaviour of the child. It helps to avoid eye contact! These observations usually cover a short period of time are written in the present tense because you record things as they happen. Sticky note could be use to jot down the information. It is a good method to look at several area of development.

Observation can be taken without child being aware. Running records are a useful tool and worth the time involved, especially when you are specifically looking for a child's skill acquisition, how a child initiates interactions with others, or discussions the children have with each other. This method of observation can be difficult to use on a regular basis because of the time element involved. It is one reason why running records are not used as frequently as other forms of documentation.

Checklists Checklists or developmental guide are often used for assessing a child on one particular day, can be used over a long period. It can be use for all the children in the establishment on a regular basis to enable the staff to plan for each child's needs. They need to be prepared in advance and is used to measure children's progress. They are a good way to note a child's

progress and achievements. This method can be used for several children at a time.

Many settings use tick charts and checklists, although it is not a good idea to rely totally on these because after reading two or three children's records, it is hard to remember what the child can do. Think about using them as a basis for further observations and to act as an overall audit of how a child is working towards the Development Matters statements and the early learning goals. Tick charts work better if comments are also used to bring them to life or when you link them to other observations that you have done. Time and event samples Methods of observation where you record an event in intervals of x minutes (time) or when you record certain specific behaviours only when they occur (event).

They used to detect whether children have real problems or just are perceived to have by adults and carers or can be used to see how frequently resources are being used. This method can be used as proof of evidence in case conferences and staff meetings to see how serious the problem is and how the staff can help the situation Time Sample Time sample is a series of written records throughout a period of time. The length of time between the observations and the length of time you observe for will depend on the overall time scale for the completed record. This depends on the reason you are carrying out the observation in the first place. If you want to discover if a child is able to concentrate for the duration of story time you may decide to look at the child every minute and record what they are doing.

Time sampling can be used for finding out how children behaviour changes over time or how children use toys and equipment or often used on a child about whom there may be a concern e. . shy, withdrawn etc One of the advantages of using this method is can observe the holistic view of child. It is easy to record.

The observer needs to be self discipline. The possible disadvantage of this method could be the information that collected can be superficial. It Collects fragmentary information and Can miss significant events. Event Sample This method is used to record events during as long a period as possible, and at least a week. The events you are looking out for may be displays of aggressive or lack of self -control. You would record these events each time they occurred, noting down the time of the day, the duration of the event, whether they were provoked or not, and a comment on the seriousness of the behaviour.

The aggressive behaviour might include hitting, biting, scratching, and verbal abuse or temper tantrum. The advantages of event sample are very important, they give us very precise data, when the data has been collected the data is very accessible. One very important advantage is that it can reveal unexpected patterns and behaviour. The disadvantages of event sample are that when the child is observed it is very difficult not to be noticed this by the child this is turn may give false results. Another main disadvantage is observing a child may be very difficult at times, the observer may lose concentration therefore not able to log all the details. Anecdotal Narrative of descriptive paragraph recorded after the behaviour occurs.

An anecdote is a story. In reality when the child is being observed its like telling a story when and what happens. It is a very difficult thing to do but the data collected is very important to child psychologists, all the data collected is normally in the past the When used for observing; it is a story about a child's behaviour. Anecdotes are the most commonly used tool in gathering information about children. One of the main reasons for this is because they are quick to record. It is a good idea to carry a notebook and pen with you at all times.

Quickly jot down some brief notes to jog your memory. Later when time permits refer to your notes and write them up as an anecdotal observation.

Target childThe target child technique is used to watch a one particular child and exactly what activity that child does over a set period of time. Any language used or social interaction is also noted. To make it easy to note observations abbreviations can be used but any abbreviations you might use must be noted on the observation This observation gives you more focused example of a child's behaviour and allow you to focus on one child over a period of time.

Give freedom to add anything that feels important to the child. If codes are used, the codes have to be learned and need to be practised before use.

Observer needs time to excessively on one child because sometime it is hard to focus on one child when so many children are playing side by. The above that have been mentioned are the most frequently used, but there are other methods that can be used and are mentioned below; Diary writing Diary writing is useful in helping the observatory make a child profile.

When the behaviour is recorded in a diary over a period of time, the steps of development and growth will occur. Sociogram A sociogram is a map or diagram of the child's friendships and interactions within a group of children. It can be used across a range of age groups and reflects a pattern of social interaction in a child Work samples An assortment of work samples collated over a period of time can help trace the child's development. Work samples can include drawings, paintings, collages, writing samples, and photographs of construction projects.

Dated examples of children's work reflect creativity and provide specific examples to share with parents. Photographs Photographs of the child at work, play or on an outing are very valuable. For the parent they are an excellent medium in providing insights into a child's day. Photographs can be taken of children climbing on the obstacle course, sitting in a high chair, dancing or gardening. They are suitable for any aspects of a child's day.

Photographs capture a glimpse of a child's day that otherwise would not be seen. Video recording Although it is an expensive way to record children's behaviour, video recording can capture the child in a unique way and provide a different perspective of the child's day. A Practical Guide to Child Observation and Assessment Christine Hobart Jill Frankel 3rd edition