

Observations to identify child needs



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Planning, observation and assessment all contribute to supporting the learning and development of children. Careful observation can identify a child's individual needs and interests and ensure that resources and activities are suitable for promoting further development.

The early years recommends that practitioners follow a three-step cycle to effectively meet the needs of individual children. Planning Observation and Assessment. Write only what you see-this ensures accuracy. Write the date and time you're observing, name and age of child, setting where the observation is being done. Avoid opinions, don't say that the child is/ is not enjoying something, if they have not told you that. Continue with regular observations-this provides an overall consistent picture of the child's development, and identify any areas of a child's development that might need additional support or be delayed.

You can learn a lot about the children you are working with by observing them, and you are more likely to be able to meet their individual needs effectively from observation. Formal observations can be used to observe a child's development of a particular skill or knowledge and understanding. The practitioner can use adult-led activities to provide an opportunity for the child to practice this particular skill and observe their participation.

Observations which are spontaneous, help gather information as children will be able to explore naturally without any added pressure. Formal observations can be used to observe a child's development of a particular skill or knowledge and understanding. This is especially useful for development checklist for the child. There are factors to consider when

observing a child and that it is regularly collected to produce a true picture of the child's knowledge and abilities and ensure consistency in the evidence you collect. Many things can affect the validity of observation; tired or hungry or hungry children may not demonstrate skills to the best of their ability and might get different results in completing an observation on a child at different times of the day, illness can affect the child's demonstrating skill if they are ill, or might not want to partake so won't be demonstrating their true abilities. Practitioners should schedule a repeat observation when the child is well to gather the true picture of the child's ability. It is important to see when a child has achieved a particular skill when you carried out the observations at the same time accurate results and consistency. There are many methods of observing and recording observations. Practitioners in early year settings often use a note taking method carrying with them a note pad, to write spontaneous occurrences in what a child's interests and achievements are when they are engaged in an activity with them. This way of taking notes can then be written up after the events in more detail. Time sample is another way of recording information; this is a way of looking at a child's activity over a period of time, observing the child at regular intervals for example every ten minutes for one hour.

A summative assessment is when the evidence is gained through a formative assessment over a period of time and these are helpful when the practitioner needs to review a child's developing progress. A formative assessment is an on-going assessment of the child, and carried out on a regular basis. The early years requires two formal summative assessments, at aged two and at the end of completion of the Early Year setting.

Assessments after observations are the way in which the practitioner can make decisions about what the child can do. For example a practitioner is observing a child and note the child has spent ten minutes building bricks. It shows the practitioner that the child appears happily content doing this activity, it also shows the child can concentrate for a period of time and play independently. They are able to observe if the child is using favourably their left hand or right hand and their eye- to hand coordination is well developed. The practitioner can say if the child had any facial expressions i. e. smiling or frowning whilst doing the activity to show enjoyment or concentration. An observation like this helps the practitioner plan future activities well suited to the child to meet individual needs and abilities of the child, and encourage future development adding other construction activities for the child to try if naturally this is where the child is getting enjoyment. Planning for a child to help their development in their not as strong areas is very important also. And from observations you can assess where the child needs extra encouragement or additional help in certain areas, for example when a group of children asked to put their coats on ready to go outside. You can observe the children who are very capable of doing the task without aid and the children who take longer and need extra time or help. You can plan for this by dividing the children into two groups; group 1 and group 2. Group 1 being the slower children less able to put on their coats are to start getting ready first with extra time allocated than group 2. Planning should be built upon the observation and assessment findings of individual children in order to identify the best steps to take to further their learnings and development. The Early Years development matters document suggests that planning should include looking at what is next for the child including: experiences

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and opportunities, the learning environment, resources, routines and the practitioners' role.

A carer can observe an individual child during outdoor play and recognise that the individual child aged two years is climbing confidently and is beginning to pull themselves up on nursery play climbing equipment outdoors. So the carer can help the individual child by talking to the child about their movements and help them to explore new ways of moving, such as squirming slithering and twisting along the ground like a snake, and moving quickly, slowly or on tiptoe. Plan opportunities for children to tackle a range of levels and surfaces including flat and hilly ground, grass, pebbles, smooth floors and carpets. Provide a range of large play equipment both indoors and outdoors that can be used in different ways such as boxes, ladders -frames and barrels. Provide safe spaces and explain safety to the child and parents. These will help encourage their physical development even further.

The Statutory assessments focus on three prime areas of development ages two and three progress check. The assessment review and identify the child's strengths and any areas of where the child's progress is less than expected. The progress check helps identify the child's natural interests and plan effectively for the individual child. It is a good idea to show the parents how to understand effectively to support the child's learning which can be encouraged at the home environment for the child. The assessment it helps identify any additional special educational need or identify any disability. The practitioners should develop a targeted plan to support the child's future

learning and development involving the parents and careers and other professionals which may be needed.

The report shows reflecting development levels and needs of the child, it shows the areas where the child is progressing well, the areas where additional support may be needed, and focus particularly on where there is a concern that the individual child may have developmental delay, which may indicate a special educational need or disability. It must include any activities and strategies the provider must intend to adopt and address any issues or concerns. Parents must receive a written record of each of the child's prime areas of development. It is of interest to the individual child to encourage the parents to share the information from the progress check with other relevant professionals, including their health visitor and the staff of any new provision the child may transfer to. The progress check and the Healthy Child Programme health and development review at age two, when the Health visitor gathers information on a child's health and development, allowing them to identify any developmental delay and any particular support from which they think the child and family might benefit, should inform each other and support integrated work together. This also helps health and education professionals to identify any strengths as well as any developmental delay. The providers must have parental consent and careers to share information directly with other relevant professionals.

The assessment at the end of early years foundation stage profile must be completed when the individual reaches age five in the final term no later than June 30 in that term. It provides a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected

levels and their readiness for starting year 1. It provides information to the parents, careers practitioners and teachers; the profile reflects ongoing observations, all the relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents and careers and any other adult professionals relevant. The child's development must be assessed against the Early learning goals, practitioners indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels and if not yet reaching expected levels. Year 1 teachers are given the Profile; this will help the teacher acknowledge the child's stage of development and learning needs and help assist with the planning of activities. The Profile must be completed for all children, including with special educational needs or disabilities, with reasonable adjustments to the assessment process for children with special educational needs and disabilities are made appropriately. It is important to know that all children will have differing level of skills and abilities across the profile and it is important that there is a full assessment of all the areas of the child's development to form plans for future activities and to help identify any additional support. Schools must share the results of the Profile with the parents and careers.

The profile must be completed for all children, including of those with special educational needs or disabilities. Adjustments to the assessment process for the children with special educational needs and disabilities must be made as appropriate. Children will have differing levels of skill and abilities across the profile and it is important that there is a full assessment of all areas of their development to inform any future activities and to identify any additional support needs.