

Did I Really See That?

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Purposes for Observations

Observation – Watching to learn.

- Getting to know children.
- To plan appropriate learning activities.
- Designing an effective classroom environment.
- Foster children's competence and success
- Skill assessment (accountability)

What You Bring to An Observation

- **Assumptions**
- **Perceptions**
- **Ideas**
- **Preferences**
- **Knowledge**

Observing or Summarizing

Observing – an ongoing process of asking questions and making decisions.

- Recording just the facts. (action terms)
- Words to avoid when recording observations (*seems; is trying; I think; appears; meant; wants; looks like; avoids; I believe; likes; doesn't like; can't; I feel; wrong*).

Summary – teacher/observers ideas concerning the observations. (remember, summaries are the results of numerous observations). Can include teacher/observers thoughts, ideas or opinions.

Guidelines for Writing Observations

Recording helps the teacher organize his or her observations about a particular child and about the children as they play and learn together in a group.

- **Give the date, time, location and name of the child.**
- **Include the child's own words, contained in quotation marks.**
- **Record only what you observe.**
- **Focus on what the child can do. Be positive!**
- **Keep notes on different developmental areas.**
- **Record events in the order in which they occur.**

Points to Remember

- **Design your own plan for observations.**
- **Include who and what you will observe.**
- **Be mindful of what you bring to the observation.**
- **Record observations accurately.**
- **Design a system for recording notes.**
- **Observe with a purpose; at different times and different actions.**
- **Remember open records act.**