

**Observation Record Keeping**

**Front sheet:** An observation front sheet should contain the information needed to make sense of the observation, while maintaining confidentiality. You can customise the sheet, but it should contain the following information.

* First name or initial only (all children involved)
* Gender (all children involved)
* Age in years and months (all children involved)
* Method of observation
* Date of observation
* Start and finish times
* Type of setting
* Immediate context
* Adults involved in the observation (Roles only)
* Signature of authorisation

**Second page/section:** this is where you record why you are observing and what you have seen – this may be in the form of a narrative account of what you see, or may be the completion of a tick list or time schedule you have devised or is in use in the setting.

Whatever documentation you use, you must specify the aim of your observation, so that you are clear what you are looking for both when you undertake the observation and when you read the data back afterwards. You can set this out simply using any of the following phrases:

Aim: To observe Child A doing...

To find out...

In order to...

**Third page/section:** this is where you consider what the data you have gathered tell you about the child, in relation to your aim. For example, if you were observing a child doing a craft activity to assess fine and gross motor skills, you need to link how you have seen the child hold a paint brush or pencil or use a pair of scissors to what theory tell us about his development or particular milestones or targets in health/developmental/educational profiles, e.g. the EYFS.

**Fourth page/section:** from what you have seen, and how you have evaluated your data against theory, etc., you can now identify next steps for this child’s development. Consider what activities you could plan for this child, and who else you could involve in progressing this development – other colleagues, specialists (if appropriate), other children. Also consider what other resources could be used to support this child’s progression.

**Please note:**

* If you only complete stages 1 and 2, all you have is some interesting data but NOT an observation.
* By completing stage 3 you now have an understanding of the child’s development and have fulfilled you initial aim, so you have completed an observation.
* However, for this to be of any use to you as a practitioner, and to evidence your own professional knowledge and understanding, you also need to complete stage 4, demonstrating how you intend to use this information.

An example pro-forma for narrative observation follows:

**Observation Record**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name/Type of Setting: | | | |
| Date of observation: |  | | |
| Immediate context of observation |  | | |
| Name of observer |  | | |
| Child/children involved | | | |
| Name/identifier: | | Age in months | Gender: |
| Type of observation: | | | |
| Start time: | | | |
| End time: | | | |
| Adults involved (role only) | |  | |
| Name of supervisor and signature to authorise observation | | Name:  Signature:  Date: | |

**Section 2:**

Aim of Observation: link to appropriate framework/curriculum

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Line number\*  1  5  10  15  20 | Data – narrative account |

\*by recording line numbers when you have written your account it makes it easier to refer to specific pieces of data by their line number rather than writing them out, in section 3.

**Evaluation**

**Section 3: links between data and theory:**

**Section 4: conclusions/assessment/next steps**