

Linking Observations to Planning:
What to look for when analysing
observations of children in play or child-initiated activities

*When observing a child in play or a child initiated activity many areas of learning and aspects of the characteristics of learning will be are likely to be in evidence. The following questions are designed to help you analyse your observations. **What seemed to be most significant?***

The Characteristics of Learning: how children learn

These are the particular characteristics which have been highlighted in the revised EYFS 2012.

Playing and Exploring: Was there evidence of the child:

- *Finding out and exploring:* e.g. showing curiosity and particular interests?
- *Playing with what they know:* e.g. representing their experiences in their play, taking on a role and acting out experiences? Using and applying they already know and can do? Is there evidence of new concepts, skills and knowledge the child is showing interest in/grappling with?
- *Being willing to have a go:* initiating an activity, trying something out, taking risks and challenging her/himself?

Active Learning: Was there evidence of the child:

- *Being involved and concentrating:* being deeply involved in the play or activity?
- *Keeping on trying:* showing persistence?
- *Enjoying achieving what they set out to do:* enjoying the challenge and feeling pleased with achievements?

Creating and thinking critically: Was there evidence of the child:

- *Having their own ideas:* and thinking up their own ways of solving problems?
- *Making links:* making connections and noticing patterns and using these to begin to predict?
- *Choosing ways to do things:* making decisions and planning, sometimes reflecting back too?

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Making relationships: Any evidence of building relationships with other children – e.g. negotiating, sharing and cooperating? Did the child show interest in other children's ideas or points of views?

Self confidence and self awareness: How confident did the child seem? Who initiated the play/activity? How independent did the child appear? Did the child appear to enjoy what she/he was doing?

Behaviour and self control: How did the child express feelings and/or respond to the feelings of others? Was there evidence of growing control over own behaviour – if so, how was this shown?

Communication and Language

Listening, attention and understanding: Did the child appear to be listening and understanding what others say? How was this shown?

Speaking: How was the child communicating? With very young children, look for gestures, sounds, early words. With older children look for evidence sustaining a conversation with adult or child; expressing imaginary or real ideas; using language to create or add to a storyline; talking about present, past or future events; questioning or clarifying thoughts.

Physical Development

Moving and handling: Any significant evidence about how the child moved, which show developing gross motor skills? Any significant evidence about the child's fine motor skills or use of tools?

Literacy

Reading and writing: Any evidence of the child reading or using reading like behaviour? Any evidence of the child using writing, emergent writing or using writing like behaviour?

Mathematics

Did the child use number or calculating in any way in their play? Did the child talk about shapes or measuring in any way in their play? What evidence was there evidence of any mathematical language or problem solving?

Understanding the World

People and communities and the world: Any evidence of understanding about other people, respect for others or growing awareness of different cultures? Any evidence of interest in exploring, observing, investigating or showing interest in the environment around them or further afield. Any evidence of the child investigating cause and effect, making predictions or giving explanations? Any talk about how things work and, if so, what?

Expressive Arts and Design

Being Imaginative: Was there evidence of developing or sustaining a storyline, taking on a role or assigning roles to others, using props creatively? Was there evidence representing their own ideas through a range of media music, or movement

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