Observations and Regulation 5

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Child Care (Pre-School Service) Regulations (No:2), 2006

• Regulation 5
• Health, Welfare and Development of the Child
• A person carrying on a Pre-School Service shall ensure that each child’s learning, development, and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the service through the provision of the appropriate opportunities, experiences, activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child and the child’s cultural context.
What Pre-School Inspectors Look for:

• Extent to which personal care provided meets the basic needs of the infants and children.
• Extent to which relationships around children are supported.
• Extent to which the physical and material environment supports children’s development.
• Extent to which the programme of activities and its implementation supports children’s development.
Why Observe?

- *Gather information* formally and informally

- *Share it* for the benefit of the child

- *Regular feedback to parents* on child’s progress
Observation allows you to….

Understand a child’s developmental progress, strengths, abilities and interests.

– Her hand/eye coordination
– Her social skills
– Her conversational ability
– Colour recognition
– Food likes and dislikes
– Her sleep pattern
– Toilet pattern
– You should be able to say “Mary can………”
Observation allows you to…

- Evaluate your own work… “Is an activity too easy or too hard?”, your style of interaction – does it engage the child?
- Evaluate the daily routine. Are children frustrated because they do not have enough time to finish their activities?
- Plan for change: you can plan for more developmentally appropriate activities.
Who has access to records?

- *Parents* access to all information about their own child
- *Authorised Persons* eg
- *Preschool Service Officers*
- *Child Protection concerns* – info can be shared on a need to know basis
Confidentiality

• Parents – only their own child’s records

• Where are records stored?

• Parental consent
Types of Observations

• Observation is challenging during early childhood because a child’s development is rapid, uneven, and highly influenced by the environment.

• No two children are the same; each child has a unique rate of development. In addition, no two children have the same family, cultural, and experiential backgrounds.

• Clearly, these variables mean that a “one-size-fits-all” assessment method will not meet the needs of most young children.
Types of Observation

**Event sampling**: observing a particular behaviour and only records examples of this behaviour.

**Narrative Records**: Essay type, describes exactly what child is saying and doing.

**Time sampling**: Use to get a general picture of a child’s activities. The child is observed in time intervals over a period of time. For example every 30 mins over a 3 hour period. You must decide the time intervals before you begin observing.
Observations

**Target Child Observations:** Observe a child at regular intervals throughout a session or sessions, a very full picture can be built up of the child’s activities, interaction and developing skills and understanding. This is usually pre-coded.

**Diary Records:** Used in the daily and everyday running in service – can be a good way of communicating with parents.

**Flow charts:** Records a child’s movement within the childcare setting over a specified period of time.
Types of Observation

- **Anecdotal notes.** – Wearing apron with pockets – capturing key moments. Recording what exactly children are saying, doing etc.

- **Cameras** – Parental Permission obtained.

- **Developmental checklist**

- **Storytelling** – writing down children’s stories and play discussion over a period of time.
Observations

- Combining the written observations with samples of child's art, writing, pictures of block work or photographs of outside play, helps you establish an active dialog with the child and his or her family, even as the child is growing and changing. Reflecting on these observations allows EYP’s to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which children interact with their environment to construct meaning.
Suggested Templates

• Developmental checklist: See Sample
  Always remember – you are not making a diagnosis!
  (NCNA Observation Books).

• Observation report: See sample
  (based on checklist and any other formal/informal observation)
Josie Drips Down a Hill
Josie had been painting a while when I saw her make a hill by pushing the paper toward the paint tray.
I had never seen anyone do this before, so I began to take pictures. Josie was closely watching the paint.
Josie touched the brush to the painting at the top of the hill. A drip slowly ran down the hill making a blue line.
Josie filled her brush again and added more blue paint at the top of the slope in the very same place.
Then she added paint to the pink area on top of the hill.
This second drop of paint began to slide down hill through the pink area. The first drip line was now all the way at the bottom.
Josie pushed the paper towards the paint tray and made the hill steeper. The drip was going almost straight down now.
She added more paint to the top.
Josie watched intently as the drip slowly made its way to the bottom of the hill.
What it means:
Josie, you discovered how to make paint draw a line by sliding down a hill. You concentrated on how it moved. Not only were you a painter, today you were a scientist. You did an experiment. You watched the effect of the hill on the drip that you caused. That careful looking is how scientists discover how things work. You wondered about something and figured it out.
Opportunities and Possibilities
Josie seems to have a disposition to wonder and be intrigued with the physical properties of paint that is worth exploring in greater detail. We can bring out the easels tomorrow with thick paint and water that she can mix. Eye droppers may help, too. We will want to show these drip lines to the other children, for it may spark their interest, too. Then a group of children might have some ideas of what to try next.
Parent’s voice:

“Josie you are amazing. I see you do this kind of close looking many times. Now you can see yourself doing it, too.”

“It was a joy to read this story to Josie.”
We read it over again and again.”

“I never would have paid any attention to those horizontal lines at the bottom of her painting without seeing the pictures of her absolute concentration in making them.”

“Thank you, teachers, for stopping to look at this precious person we love.”
Create a system
Aistear’s Guidelines on Assessment

- Advises EYP’s to include samples of children’s work, notes, photographs and video or audio records, stories, daily diaries or records of care, checklists, and reports.
- The guidelines suggest storing these in practitioners’ files, in central files and/or in children’s learning portfolios.
- A learning portfolio can take the form of a folder, a scrapbook, or something similar in which assessment information can be stored.
- The collection tells the story of each child’s learning journey – his/her efforts, progress and achievements over time.
Create a system

Develop a recording system that works for you.

Make a plan for who and what you will observe.

Figure out a system that allows you to cover for one another while someone steps out of the action to observe for a few minutes.
Create a system

- Checklists
- Note book
- Post-its
- Labels

Gather, analyse and file
What to record/not to record

Remember

• Confidentiality
• Non-judgemental
• Objectivity - When recording: write what you see – give a description. For example: write - she had a smile on her face – rather than “she was happy”.
• Should represent exactly what is observed with no personal interpretation
• Observation of the child (not background/other info)
How to Record

- Hasty judgements are to be avoided.
- Always be aware of safety, environment and procedures.
Parental Involvement

- Parental consent – include on reg form
- Parent observation and feedback must be taken into account
- If something significant comes to light as a result of observation (formal or informal, the parent must be informed immediately)
- Record
Other staff involvement

• Sharing information and recording
  Need to know basis
  Relevance
  Confidentiality
What happens next

• Analyse & Evaluate
  ➢ Discuss how the child’s play is progressing – this gives a good insight into the child’s interests and abilities.
  ➢ What did you learn?
  ➢ Does it change your ideas?
  ➢ Do you need to do anything differently?
  ➢ Are there any patterns?
  ➢ Do we need to change the environment, what equipment and materials need to be made available?
  ➢ Do you need to look at support and other resources?
What happens next?

• Build a Resource File.....to add good ideas to expand on theme and develop a holistic curriculum/programme – this info comes from your observations.

• Focus on the child’s strengths and abilities and if there are concerns be supportive and put a plan in place.

• Discuss with parents & staff

• Review & revise programme
How often?

• Minimum once a term