

Common observations myths

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There are so many varying ways that services do things it often leaves questions and myths for educators.

Paperwork can drive some educators crazy and others have a host of questions on what to do, where to place, how much to do and so on.

Here are some of the most common.

Q: How many observations should one child have? Is there a requirement?

A: There is no specific requirement that dictates the number of observations that **MUST** be done for a child. It is more about ensuring that you have regular observations on all the children in your care and realistically this often means that it equates to one a month per child. This is sufficient if they are valid observations.

That said, it is important to note that while you are observing that child once per month you will also have the follow up. Within your weekly program you should be following up any emerging interests that occurs within the room and for individual children which should also be noted and done on an ongoing daily basis so having observations once per month is fine.

Q: Who is responsible for observations?

A: In a good service it is an equal task. It is not just left up to the room leader/coordinator to complete. In a well running service individual observations can be grouped per educator within the room so everyone can have a group of children they can observe each day and this is rotated so that every educator observes every child at some point and it provides a balanced overall snapshot of the child's development.

Having said that, there will be times depending on the days children attend, how often the staff attend (ie: a staff may only work 3 days per week and only see the same set children) that dictate how the observational rotation works.

A good system is to look at the number of children that attend your room then work out how many children need to be observed each day in order to complete a monthly observation per child and select educators to observe specific children per day. This can be tracked using a calendar or spreadsheet, add the child's name on the day along with the educator of who will be observing which child so that it is clear to all in the room and is a easy reference point and allows for the monitoring of each educator observing each child.

It is important to note that whilst all should be contributing to the observations the role of the room leader/coordinator is to ensure the observations are applicable and relevant and to mentor educators should they need it. They should always read/monitor the observations done within the room by other educators.

Q: Should observations be visible? Where do they go?

A: While we may want to shout it from the rooftops that we have completed all the mountain of paperwork and are up to date observations should be kept confidential and as such are **NOT** be displayed for **all** parents to view but rather only by the child's family. The most common place they are kept is in each individual child's portfolio, however, this is not prescriptive.

Q: Can I add observations to a child's Individual Portfolio?

A: Absolutely, they ideally should be added into their portfolio. This is the perfect opportunity for a parent to access

and see how their child is going, their day at the service and their learning in action as well as what follow up approach is going to take place to further extend on their child's skills and abilities. It provides a reference point for inclusion for the parents and allows them the opportunity to be a part of the ongoing assessment that is occurring at the service.

A copy also needs to be kept of each child's observation in their file for the service to keep as portfolios are for parents records.