

Observing A Child's Language

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These are guidelines to focus your observations of a child's interactions in the Practicum Site. This can be used to discover situations in which the child interacts (strengths) and contexts in which he/she is quiet and may become frustrated, does not follow or engage with others, or others have difficulty understanding her/him.

Repeated observations of the same child's interactions in the program can be informative about the child's:

- Health
- Developmental stage
- Zone of proximal development
- Interests
- Needs

Write the date on each observation note.

Recording Observation Notes:

Watch the child closely in several different settings and with different people over a few days.

Observe Social Interaction

Who does he/she seem to interact best with?

Adults?

Which adults?

Peers?

Which peers?

Who does he/she seem not to interact with?

Adults?

Which adults?

Peers?

Which peers?

Who does he/she experience problems interacting with?

Adults?

Which adults?

Peers?

Which peers?

How does he/she interact during playtime in the program?

Does the child watch others and not engage in play?

Look at types of child play (playing alone - no interaction, playing beside others - some interaction, playing with someone, playing in a group - a lot of social interaction) and note types of play (Functional, Constructive, Dramatic, Games with Rules)

What activities does the child engage in?

What activities does the child not engage in?

Summarize the adults, peers, activities, and contexts that seem to make communication and interaction the most enjoyable and manageable for this child:

Observe Expressive Language

Observe the Child's **Expressive Language** and record examples (uses two-word sentences, uses three-word sentences, uses four-word sentences, uses five word-sentences; uses long, complex sentences and can participate in a conversation; sentences are more grammatically correct

Does the child ask questions such as "Where?", "What?", "Who?" and gradually asks "Why?", "When?", "How?"

Write an example:

Does the child tell stories?

Write an example:

Does the child use their imagination?

Write an example:

Does the child use a small or large variety of words?

Write an example:

Does the child seem to be adding new words frequently?

Summarize the child's expressive language and areas that seem to be at age level, above age-level and below age level.

Observe Receptive Language

Does the child understand words that are spoken to her/him?

Can the child follow a simple direction? (e.g., stand up, sit here)

Can the child follow two-part directions (go to the shelf and pick out a book; walk over to the sink and wash your hands)

Can the child understand opposites ("in/out", "go/stop")?

Can the child understand prepositions ("over", "behind")?

Does the child show that she/he can understand a simple story in a picture book?

Does the child show that she/he can understand a story in a book without pictures?

Summarize the child's receptive language and areas that seem to be at age level, above age-level and below age level.