

# OBSERVATION SKILLS

**Workshop for teaching assistants at The American  
School Kinshasa  
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# WHAT ARE OBSERVATION SKILLS?

Observation skills refer to the ability to use all five of your senses to recognize, analyze and recall your surroundings.

Observation is the key to understanding young children and finding out more about them as individuals. It is a fundamental aspect of the assessment and planning cycle, and provides a firm basis for reflection.



# HOW CAN OBSERVATION SKILLS HELP US IN THE CLASSROOM?

We observe to find out

- What children enjoy and what their interests are
- Friendships they may have developed
- Identifying specific learning needs
- To evaluate an activity
- The child's well-being
- Particular areas of development- physical, intellectual, social emotional
- To get to know child better.



# WHAT DO YOU SEE?

Look at the picture on your table. Write down everything that you see.

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# RECORDING TECHNIQUES

## **Time samples**

This involves recording observations about the child's behaviour and what the child is doing at specific times. This can be done at regular intervals and can be helpful when identifying negative behaviour, as it allows understanding of the context surrounding a situation.

## **Running records**

This method involves noting down what you see and what the child says as it is happening. It should be written in present tense and include as much detail as possible.

## **Anecdotal records**

This method involves factual accounts of events that have taken place. Anecdotal records should be written in the past tense and cover the three W's: What, When and Where? Other non-verbal cues such as body language, reactions and facial expressions should be included in an event.



# RECORDING TECHNIQUES

## Jottings

This involves jotting down brief sentences detailing important events, behaviours and conversations.

## Work samples

Work samples include the child's paintings, drawings, writings, figures and other crafty creations. You should also take down some notes detailing what the child said or did surrounding these work samples.

## Photographs

Images of the child, complete with annotations and descriptions about what was taking place when the image was taken, provide vital insight to who the child is as an individual.



WATCH THESE VIDEOS AND RECORD EVERYTHING YOU SEE.









# TRANSFERRING THE DATA

In your group share what you observed in the video and put a picture together about this child.

- What have you learnt about this child?
- How does this information inform your teaching?
- What are your next steps?