

# Observation & Recording Skills

## Objectivity

To record objectivity is to avoid making judgments or generalizations. Objective recording is non-interpretive. “the children were much too noisy while they were putting away the blocks,” is a judgment about the level of sound. In contrast, “The children putting up the blocks laughed and called out across the room to those who were setting the table for snack time,” describes exactly what happened.

## Specificity

Specificity requires that the details of the situation be included. Give specific details as to numbers of children and adults involved in an activity, amount and kinds of materials, or other specific relevant information.

## Directness

The skill of directness requires that notes include a person’s direct quotes. Jason said, “I was playing with that doll first.” This is a difficult skill to master, but it gives concrete information to work with when interpreting observation data.

## Completeness

Completeness in recording means describing incidents from beginning to end. A complete recording would describe the setting; state who was involved, what action occurred, what the reaction was, and how the incident concluded.

## Mood Clues

When mood clues are included in recording, the observer is helped to make inferences about the social-emotional climate of a situation. Mood clues are tones of voice, facial expressions, body posture, hand gestures, and other nonverbal clues.