

Observations at Our Day Nursery



Individual

A child's key worker is responsible for uploading 1 individual observation for each for their key children each month. The following guidance has been put together to support staff in writing these observations.

- Observations should be directly linked to progress, a wow moment for that child, meaning the child has demonstrated that they have learned something new or progressed a skill they previously had.
- Observations should not be planned in advance but rather a practitioner spotting progress in the moment and then recording it. We should avoid taking photos specifically set up to capture a 'photographable moment' as this may not link to an area of development and this is the purpose of recording the observation.
- Observations should then influence next steps, seeing something a child is enjoying or progressing in can then inform where the practitioner can go or support them to go next – practitioners do not have to record next steps as part of the observation if this is not relevant.
- Observations can cover more than one area of the EYFS; for example, understanding of the world and physical development may be covered if the observation read as follows 'Child A developed their fine motor skills and hand eye coordination through turning a switch to make an animal pop up. Once they realised turning the button made the animal pop up they purposely turned it again to get the same response.' Learning within the Early years is often cross curricular; it is fine that the areas crossover, tag all areas that apply.

Group observations (daily updates)

- Ensure children have photo permissions before sharing to wider group.
- Check all photos (including the background of the photo) before including in your observation.
- Ensure that the writing accompanying the observation/update refers to the learning experiences provided and the skills developed as a result.



Babies example chart

	What we're looking for	Observation Example	Next steps example
Communication and language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turning to familiar sounds e.g key person's voice • Notices faces and facial expressions – may copy them • Babbling and starting to copy sounds • Enjoys singing or playing items that make sounds • Begins to use gestures like waving or pointing to communicate 	Baby A turned to the sound of their key worker's voice, smiled and reached for them	None
		Baby B was watching themselves in the mirror. I knelt beside them and began to pull different faces, they observed then started to copy me. When I opened my mouth wide, they did too	Mimic a wider range of different faces for baby B to observe e.g poking out your tongue, raising your eyebrows, tilting your head from side to side
Physical development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crawls or moves in different ways • Pulls themselves upright ready for walking • Reaching out for items they want • Eating finger foods • Passes things from one hand to another • Gains control of their whole body and starts engaging in clapping, rolling, stamping 	Baby A pulled themselves up to stand using the furniture for the first time today	Ensure furniture is arranged and accessible so that Baby A has opportunities to continue practising this new skill. Place motivating toys or objects out of reach to encourage Baby A to cruise along the furniture towards the motivating toy
		Baby B was enjoying playing with a shaker today, he purposefully shook it, noticed the sound and then shook it again to hear the sound.	Engage in singing songs with Baby B that will encourage actions such as shaking
		Baby C joined in meaningfully with our action songs today. She clapped during 'If you're happy and you know it' at the right time.	None

Personal, social and emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be calmed by their key person • Begins to try new things • Engages with others using gestures, gaze and verbal interaction 	<p>Today when tearful after drop off, Baby A reached for and accepted a cuddle from their key person and stopped crying within seconds, this is the quickest they have been calmed and comforted showing they are developing a trusting relationship and feel safe with their key person</p>	<p>None</p>
Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoys songs and rhymes • Joins in with songs and rhymes, either sounds, words or actions • Enjoys sharing a book with an adult 	<p>Today Baby A bopped along to us singing '5 little ducks'. She showed real enjoyment, grinning and moving her body to the music.</p>	<p>Continue singing different rhymes and action songs, modelling simple actions such as signing 'duck' during the song.</p>
		<p>Baby B repeatedly gestured towards the shelf in baby room whilst vocalising, I asked what they wanted and they pointed to the books. I offered a choice and they indicated which story they wanted to read, we then sat and enjoyed the story together.</p>	<p>During story times always offer a choice between two books so that baby B feels confident in making a choice using gesture, pointing or vocalising.</p>
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stacks objects like stacking cups • Listens to number rhymes • Puts objects in and out of something • Pours water and splashes 	<p>Baby A attempted to stack blocks in the baby room today, they persisted when they blocks fell down and were able to carefully place 3 blocks one on top of the other.</p>	<p>None</p>
		<p>Baby B explored a range of loose parts on the carpet. They put them in and out of different containers, noticing that some fit inside and some did not. They kept trying until all the small parts were inside the container and the rest were left on the carpet.</p>	<p>Provide a range of different sized containers for Baby B to explore with loose parts fit in them. Model putting them in and out and also seeing how the different loose parts can fit together.</p>

Understanding the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeat actions that have an effect and begin to intentionally do things to get an effect Explore materials with different properties using all senses 	<p>Baby A pressed a button on the pop up toy and noticed immediately that the animal had popped up. They then continued to close the pop up and press the button to make it pop up again whilst smiling.</p>	None
		<p>Baby B investigated the treasure basket on the carpet by pulling all of the items out and using their fingers to feel the contrasting textures. They consistently showed a preference for the furry, soft material and would seek this over the rougher textures of brushes/fabrics.</p>	<p>Gather a range of similar soft or funny materials to explore and note Baby B's reactions and responses. Model how to engage with other textures such as brushing gently with the brushes or playing peekaboo with other fabrics.</p>
Expressive arts and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show attention to music and sounds Move to music Respond to games like 'peekaboo' Respond emotionally and physically to changes in music Create marks using paint or other sensory materials 	<p>Baby A actively engaged in playing peekaboo today. She would widen her eyes and giggle every time I moved to hands to show my face and then sign asking for 'more'.</p>	<p>Play peekaboo with a sensory scarf and see if baby A can hide themselves and move the scarf to reveal themselves in order to get a reaction from an adult.</p>
		<p>Baby B put her hands in paint and moved them all around, showing enjoyment in feeling the texture on her hands. She was able to then move her hands onto paper to create marks and smiled when an adult showed her the marks she had made.</p>	<p>Provide some different materials for Baby B to make marks in, such as cornflour and water or sand and note her reactions and responses to these different textures.</p>

Transition example chart

	What we're looking for	Observation Example	Next steps example
Communication and language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies gestures or words to get what they want • Begins to use intonation (changing pitch, volume etc) • Understands single words in context • Beginning to respond to 1 key word instructions • Recognises and can find an object when asked 	Transition child A demonstrated clear understanding today when asked 'Where is the 'animal', he pointed to the correct animal toy every time.	Adult to move the animals around and see if Transition child A could still recognise the correct animal. Try with different items such as food or toys.
		Transition child B was able to follow instructions, when I said 'it's snacktime' they put their toy away and moved over to the snack table, showing they had understood and were ready for snack.	None
Physical development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking with confidence and navigating space • Fitting themselves into different spaces e.g dens or tunnels • Exploring movement with a ball, kicking or rolling 	Transition child A enjoyed building a den out of boxes today. They successfully climbed in and out of the box, working out where their body could fit within the space and indicating they needed help at times if they struggled to get out.	Create different shaped dens and observe how Transition Child A moves in and out of the different den, observe if they can navigate the space as skillfully or whether they need further support
Personal, social and emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starts to manage transitions (away from parents) • Starts to use engagement with adults to ask for what they want • Plays with increasing confidence by themselves knowing their key person is nearby 	Today Transition Child A took a toy to the carpet and explored independently. They would look back regularly to check I was still close by but this was all the reassurance they needed to engage in some solitary play.	None

Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Says some words in songs or rhymes • Has a favourite book and seeks it out • Pays attention to pictures (or features like flaps) within books • Makes mark in sensory materials 	Transition Child A joined in with the nursery rhyme Incy Wincy Spider, doing the actions for spider and sunshine and saying the word 'spider' too.	None
		Transition Child B watched me make marks in sand today. They observed me draw circles with my finger and they began making circles too.	Adult to model other simple marks such as lines up and down or side to side for child to copy
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes part in number rhymes • Reacts to a change in an amount of something • Develops counting like behaviour, nodding or touching items as an adult counts • Building with a range of resources • Scooping, pouring and filling in sensory trays 	During our number song this morning Child A vocalised when an adult was counting the speckled frogs. Each time they touched a frog and paused, Child A would vocalise, indicating they understood there was a change in the number.	Begin to generalise this skill to counting other items, when there's an opportunity to count do so and pause each time you touch the item you're counting to allow Child A to vocalise or indicate they know there's a change in number.
		Within sensory play Child B was scooping and filling rice into different bowls. They would then pick them up and pour them out to empty them, realise they were empty and then fill them up again.	None

<p>Understanding the world</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore natural materials using senses • Notices change in both indoor and outdoor environments • Explores and responds to changes in environment 	<p>Child A noticed a sound when in the garden, they looked around then up at the sky and pointed, saying 'aeroplane'.</p>	<p>Extend the understanding by adding to the child's observation, for example 'Yes an aeroplane, aeroplane goes 'nyawwww'as it flies.</p>
<p>Expressive arts and design</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore their voice and enjoys making different sounds • Begin to join in with familiar rhymes and songs • Begin to explore instruments • Be attracted to faces and mimic different faces • Intentionally make marks • Start to pretend play, knowing that one object can represent another e.g a wooden block can be a phone • Explore and manipulate different materials 	<p>During music time Child A used a beater to tap and bang some different instruments. They stopped when they made the noise to listen, then banged to make more noise</p>	<p>Play stop and go anticipation games with a wider range of instructions. Try playing fast and slow and observe whether Child A can copy your fast or slow tempo</p>
		<p>Child B picked up a brick and held it to their ear, pretending it was a phone and saying 'Hello Mummy'.</p>	<p>None</p>

Toddler example chart

	What we're looking for	Observation Example	Next steps example
Communication and language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listens to an adult talk with interest • Begins to make themselves understood and gets frustrated when they can't • Starting to communicate feelings using either words or gestures • Developing their pretend play • Participating in short two way conversations 	<p>During circle time, Toddler A said they were 'happy' and was able to explain why. They said they were happy because they played with their friends.</p>	<p>Continue to verbally label emotions and provide example reasons as to why those emotions have been felt e.g I'm sad because I miss Mummy. I'm tired because I have been running lots.</p>
		<p>Toddler B developed their roleplay skills today whilst playing with the babies. Toddler B took a blanket and wrapped the baby up, patting and ssshing them to put them to sleep.</p>	
Physical development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving in different ways such as climbing, jumping, running • Building independently with a range of resources • Start to use trikes or bikes • Develop manipulation and control fine motor skills • Beginning to manage buttons and zips when dressing, taking trousers on and off 	<p>Toddler A has learnt to balance carefully when walking across the logs in the garden, they know to hold out their arms and look forwards to keep steady. They walked across independently and were very proud!</p>	<p>Begin to transfer these new balancing skills to other equipment, create balance obstacles courses with blocks or try using a balance bike</p>
		<p>Toddler B was able to zip their coat up independently after lots of practice. They showed real perseverance and can now do their coat zip up and down independently.</p>	

<p>Personal, social and emotional</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins to develop sense of autonomy, communicating what they want • Feels they can express their emotions • Grows in independence and wants to try to do more by themselves • Develops friendships 	<p>Toddler A has been joining in more with group activities round the tuff tray. Previously, they have found this quite overwhelming and preferred to play in quieter spaces but they have developed more confidence in interacting with their peers and sharing space</p>	<p>Adults to encourage play with ½ peers using child's interests. For example setting up dinosaur small world and inviting Toddler A plus a friend to engage in some roleplay with social interactions modelled by the adult</p>
<p>Literacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knows repetitive words or phrases within stories • Begins to answer simple questions about stories • Explores stories using props • Begins to make marks or draw freely with pens/pencils • Starts to give meaning to their marks 	<p>Toddler A is now able to answer a 'where' question when asked where a character in a familiar book is. They will point to the character and sometimes say their name too.</p>	<p>Begin to ask other questions about familiar stories such as who or why?</p>
<p>Mathematics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins counting occasionally missing some numbers • -Uses big and small and more and lots • Completes puzzles • Notices patterns in things and organises or groups items 	<p>Toddler A was able to successfully select different big and small animals when they were mixed together. They grouped all the big animals and grouped the small animals separately, telling me 'these are big' 'these are small'.</p>	<p>Add some other sizes animal (medium) and see if they can put them in order. Also, see if they can find other items that are big and small, not just animals.</p>
		<p>Toddler B has developed their problem solving skills and is now completing inset puzzles without adult prompting, they move the pieces around and will try different spaces until they find the correct fit.</p>	<p>Offer other opportunities to problem solve within a real life context. E.g set a table with one less chair than needed and see what Toddler B suggests you do.</p>

<p>Understanding the world</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore items in more depth using senses • Makes connections between features of their family and other families • Begins to notice differences between people • Begins to show care for animals 	<p>Today during garden play Toddler A found a ladybird. They were very excited and told me and asked me to come. They carefully watched the ladybird and made sure none of their friends got to close to it so that it wasn't hurt. I suggested we move the ladybird to keep it safe and they said yes, watching me and saying 'bye bye'.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Expressive arts and design</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joins in confidently with singing or action songs • Will move body different to different rhythms and tempo • Begins to play instruments with purpose • Express their feelings and ideas through mark making • Use their imagination to consider what they can create with different materials 	<p>Toddler A now requests her favourite songs and will sing along to them loudly and confidently. This is huge progress as previously she didn't like to sing if people were watching.</p>	<p>None</p>
		<p>Toddler B has begun to request different colours when engaging in messy art activities. He is expressing himself through telling us his preferences and then creating beautiful art work!</p>	<p>Offer different choices of materials or tools to also create art with</p>

Preschool example chart

	What we're looking for	Observation Example	Next steps example
Communication and language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listens to longer stories and can recall what happened • Understands questions or instructions that contain 2 parts • Begins forming their own viewpoints • Starts to organise themselves and friends within their play 	<p>Child A can now recall their favourite story and retell it without using the book. They sequence the events and can answer some simple questions too, showing real comprehension of the story.</p>	None
		<p>Child B is beginning to give or take instruction within their play, for example they can organise a group by saying 'you stand here and I'll stand here.' They have a clear vision and direction for their play and can communicate this to their peers.</p>	<p>Support Child B to manage any conflicts that might arise within play, for example if another child doesn't want to do what they have suggested. Explain to them that everyone has their own ideas of how to play and it is okay for these to be different</p>
Physical development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to explore movements such as skipping, hopping or balancing on one leg • Use whole body to make movements such as waving a flag • Takes part in group activities as part of a team • Starts to remember 2/3 moves in sequence • Beginning to make healthy choices around food and safety 	<p>Child A is now able to confidently hop on one foot, whilst in the garden today they hopped all along the path and were very proud of themselves!</p> <p>Child B has developed their gross motor skills by engaging in activities that encourage whole body coordination, they were able to create a big piece of art whilst standing and using their arms to mark make vertically on a sheet using paint.</p>	Practice these skills in games like hopscotch

Personal, social and emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can select the resources needed to achieve a goal • Develops a sense of community and responsibility • Becomes more outgoing with new people within their familiar setting • Begins to elaborate on ideas within their play • Can follow rules and knows why they are important 	<p>Child A coped with visitors in the room today, this is something they previously would have felt quite worried about and needed lots of reassurance. Today, they noticed there was a visitor, checked in with their key person and then were able to go off and continue playing.</p>	<p>None</p>
Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands that print has meaning and different purposes e.g lists, stories, names • Develops phonological awareness and starts to recognise some sounds • Engages in extended conversations using a wider range of vocabulary • Begins to write their initial or their name 	<p>Child A is beginning to recognise their initial and point it out when they see it written. Today they said 'Look, it's A' and pointed to a title on a display board.</p>	<p>Continue to point out when you see their initial too and make the phonics sound. Start to focus on some other key sounds, either linked to phonics sound of the week or other letters of their name</p>
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can recite numbers past 5 • Develops 1:1 correspondence • Starts to link numerals to amounts • Uses more mathematical language such as 'more than' 'fewer than' • Applies problem solving skills to real life • Talks about 2d and 3d shapes • Begins to notice patterns in their environments 	<p>Child A recognised shapes when in the room today, telling us that's a square and that's a triangle. When I asked how many sides does a triangle have they said, three!</p>	<p>Continue to discuss different properties of shapes</p>

<p>Understanding the world</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore collections of materials with similar or different properties and describes them • Begins to take interest in different occupations • Explores how things work • Can make sense of their history • Shows care and respect towards other living things including plants and animals 	<p>During her play today Child A pretended to become a dentist she applied real life knowledge of this occupation talking about keeping teeth clean and needing to sit in the dentist's chair.</p>	<p>Ask further questions and also begin to explore other occupations together, asking questions about their role</p>
		<p>We went to feed the chicken's today and Child B was very careful around the chickens. He told us that we must be quiet not to scare the chickens and that we shouldn't move too quickly as this could scare them too!</p>	
<p>Expressive arts and design</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small world play • Join different materials with ideas about what to create • Can create closed shapes with continuous lines when drawing • Explores colours and colour mixing • Shows different emotions within their art and crafts • Listens and responds with increased attention to songs and sounds • Play instruments with increasing control 	<p>Child A chose to paint today, she mixed some colours and covered her paper She brought the paper to me and said 'Look, it's love. The paper was all pink and red'. She had associated these colours with expressing feelings of love.</p>	<p>Ask what feelings other colours made her think of, give some examples when I see red it reminds me of feeling angry but when I see blue colours I feel calm.</p>