



5 Ways to Make Observations More Valuable

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Observing children and documenting our findings is an essential step in engaging with emergent curriculum. I am often asked what makes an observation appealing and valuable.

Here are 5 steps in making observations that can lead to meaningful curriculum development:

I. Be Present:

Observing children doesn't mean sitting on the side lines and watching things go by. Instead, be part of what's happening around you. Join the play, make a sincere comment in a conversation: be present. Notice non-verbal cues and interactions between children.

2. Find your Moment:

When you spend time with children, you come across hundreds of situations you can record. Listen to your heart! Pick a situation, a conversation or a moment that is of value to you. Observations based on personal values or intentions are more meaningful.

3. Take Note:

Even if you are blessed with a perfect memory making little notes about your observations will make a difference in quality. Keep a notepad close by and make notes as you engage with children. Try to catch some direct quotes that stand out for you – draw, create your own written language, whatever it takes for you to remember as many details as possible.

4. Notice your Emotions:

Rich observations come from the heart. Be sure to take a note of all your feelings: are you confused, curious, happy, satisfied? Your note will help bring you back to the moment later and all the emotions you were experiencing at the time.

5. Reflect:

As soon as you can, take a few quiet moments and go back to your notes to reflect on your observation. Reflection is an essential part of observation that usually gets lost. Ask yourself: “why did I find this moment valuable?” “what is this observation telling me?” “how does this observation confirm or contradict something I knew before and how does it add to my knowledge?” Sometimes it may be best to leave your observation with a few open questions – the great thing about questions is they don’t always have just one answer.

Interested to learn more about observation and documentation? Visit our website to learn about upcoming courses and events: <http://www.reggiolarning.ca/courses-and-events/>

Artwork by Ava, age 10.

