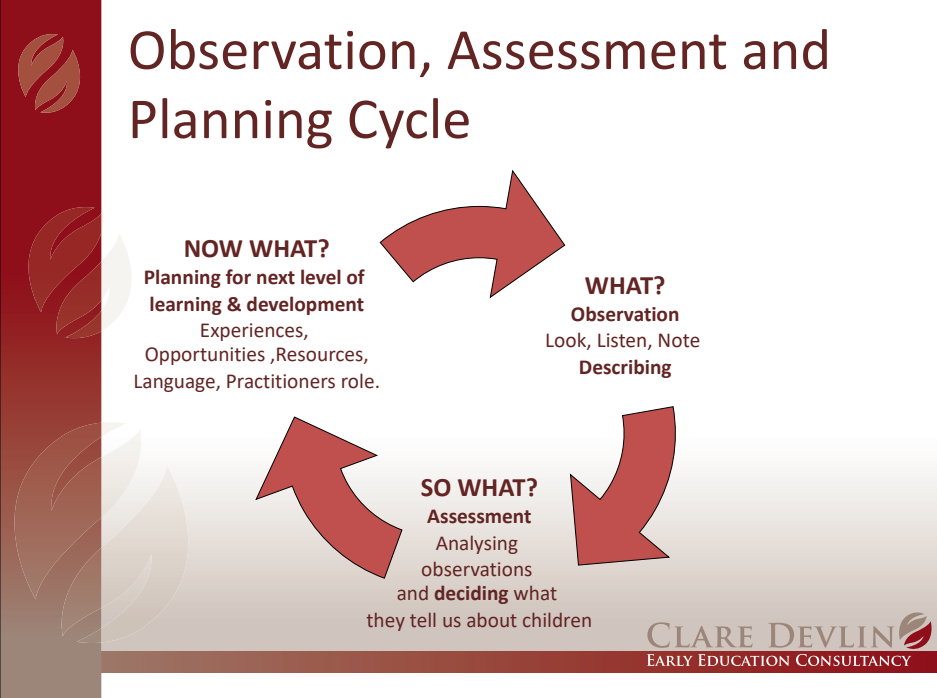


# Observation & Assessment in the Early Years

Believing in the power of "Being with Children"

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## Observation, Assessment and Planning Cycle


**NOW WHAT?**  
Planning for next level of  
learning & development  
Experiences,  
Opportunities ,Resources,  
Language, Practitioners role.

**WHAT?**  
Observation  
Look, Listen, Note  
Describing

**SO WHAT?**  
Assessment  
Analysing  
observations  
and **deciding** what  
they tell us about children



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## Process

**WHAT?**  
*Describe what you observe the child doing – focus on ordinary moments (FACT)*


**SO WHAT?**  
*What are your observations telling you about the child's development across the curriculum/developmental areas?  
What are the child's abilities, understandings / misunderstandings?*

*We wonder ... / We are concerned about ...*

**NOW WHAT?**  
*What is the next level of intended learning and development for the child?*

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## Key things to pay attention to when making observations:

- Social context – is the child within a large group, small group or by themselves?
- What form of communication are they using? Verbal, non-verbal or no communication (just focus on what they are doing). Remember children can successfully communicate non-verbally.
- Physical actions – fine and gross motor. Be specific. Also note facial expressions
- Cognitive – what is the child exploring, doing?
- Duration – how long has the child been engaged in this experience?
- Concentration level – is the child easily distracted or are they totally absorbed in their learning?
- Note your initials, date and involvement level

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Observation, Assessment & Planning (Foundation Stage)		
Name of Child:		Date:
<b>WHAT?</b> Observation <i>Describe what you observe the child doing as he/she moves through the day</i>	<b>SO WHAT?</b> Documenting Learning <i>What are these observations telling you about the child's development across the curriculum areas? What are the child's understandings and misunderstandings?</i>	<b>NOW WHAT?</b> Planning <i>What is the next level of intended learning and development for the child?</i> <small>(Link to planning with child's initials)</small>
	The Arts	
	Language & Literacy	
	Mathematics & Numeracy	
	Personal Development & Mutual Understanding (include TS & PC)	
	Physical Development & Movement	
Involvement Level – High/Medium/Low	The World Around Us (include ICT)	
Well Being – High/Medium/Low		
Additional Comments / We wonder about ... / We are concerned about ...		

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Observation, Assessment & Planning: <u>Breathnú, Measúnú &amp; Pleanáil</u> (Foundation Stage) <u>(Bonchéim)</u>		
Name of Child: <u>Ainm an Pháiste</u>		Date: <u>Dáta</u>
<b>WHAT? Cad é?</b> Observation: <u>Breathnú</u> <i>Describe what you observe the child doing as he/she moves through the day</i> <u>Déan cur síos ar aghníomhaíochtaí an pháiste agus é / í ag gluaiseacht tríd an tó.</u>	<b>SO WHAT? Mar sin de?</b> Documenting Learning: <u>Clárú foghlaim</u> <i>What are these observations telling you about the child's development across the curriculum areas?</i> <u>Cad é atá an breathnú seo ag léiriú duit faoi thorbairt an pháiste sa churaidem?</u> <i>What are the child's understandings and misunderstandings?</i> <u>Cad íad tuiscintí agus míthuiscintí an pháiste?</u>	<b>NOW WHAT? Anois</b> Planning: <u>Pleanáil</u> <i>What is the next level of intended learning and development for the child?</i> <u>Cad é an chéad chéim eile atá i gceist?</u> <u>bhfoghlaim agus forbairt an pháiste?</u> <small>(Link to planning with child's initials)</small> <u>(Nasc le pleanáil le hinsealacha an pháiste)</u>
	The Arts ( <u>Na hEalaíona</u> )	
	Language & Literacy ( <u>Teanga &amp; Litearthacht</u> )	
	Maths & Numeracy ( <u>Matamaitic &amp; Uimhearthacht</u> )	
	Personal Development & Mutual Understanding (TS & PC) ( <u>Forbairt Phearsanta &amp; Comhthuiscint</u> )	
	Physical Development & Movement ( <u>Forbairt Fhísiúil &amp; Gluaiseacht</u> )	
Involvement Level – High/Medium/Low <u>Leibhéal an inchor - Ard / Meán / Íseal</u>	The World Around Us (ICT) ( <u>An Domhan Thart orainn</u> )	
Well Being – High/Medium/Low <u>Follántacht - Ard / Meán / Íseal</u>		
Additional Information/Queries: <u>Eolas breise / Ceistanna</u>		

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**Remember to observe *Everyday Ordinary Things!***

- Speech and language development
- Physical development and abilities
- Health issues and lifestyle choices
- Social and emotional development
- Behavioural concerns
- Exploring and thinking abilities – progress in curriculum areas
- Any safeguarding concerns

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*To give children the childhood they deserve we need to “recover our ability to see, rather than judge and dismiss”*

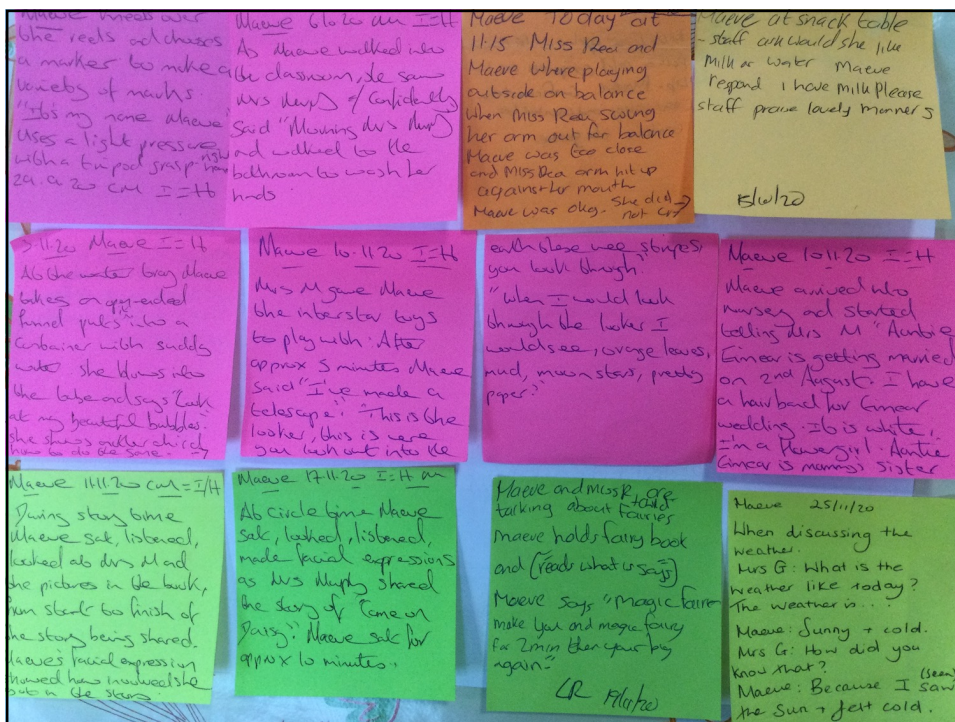
*Donald Hoffman*

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15. 18. -15.26


Maeve:

- L-W: Knows that marks convey meaning.
- P-DS not yet applying approp. pressure.
- PSE- Confident to speak to adult.
- PSE- Knows routines + is conf. with environment.
- PSE- brave + understanding.
- PSE- Can make choices.
- PSE- Appropriate use of social communication skills.
- PSE- Uses equipment appropriately.
- L-TR: Has clear language + good range of vocab.

Build vocab on BE Engage well with other chr.  
 & when appropriate with Aware of family relationship + event.  
 during M. with aware of time + happenings in future  
 everyday exps.

- L-LT Can listen well + attend to story.
- PSE - Good concentration + good imagination. <sup>The Arts</sup>

Deep sensory aware An. Aware of and can describe weather conditions appropriately.  
 Fine skills  
 M Marks?



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Observation, Assessment & Planning (Pre School)		
Name of Child: Maeve Date: (29.09.20 – 19.11.20) 25.11.20		
<p><b>WHAT? (Observation)</b></p> <p>Describe what you observe the child doing as he/she moves through the session</p> <p>When you have completed the So What section – simply staple your observations on top of this box.</p> <p>You do not need to write anything in this box!</p> <p>Involvement Level – High/Medium/Low</p> <p>Well Being – High/Medium/Low</p> <p>Additional Information/Queries:                      We Wonder: Collect more observations on Maeve outdoors. Tune in to her understanding of maths and use of mathematical language</p>	<p><b>SO WHAT? (Learning)</b></p> <p>What are these observations telling you about the child's development across the 6 key areas?                      What are the child's understandings and misunderstandings?</p> <p><b>Personal, Social &amp; Emotional Development</b>                      Confident to speak to adult. Knows routines and is comfortable with the environment. Brave and understanding. Can make choices. Uses social communication appropriately. Uses equipment appropriately. Engages well with other children. Good levels of concentration.</p> <p><b>Physical Development &amp; Movement</b>                      Not yet applying appropriate pressure when mark making. Pincer control and hand muscles are developing.</p> <p><b>Language Development</b>                      Has clear verbal communication and a good range of vocabulary. Can listen well and attend to stories.                      Know that marks convey meaning</p> <p><b>Early Mathematical Experiences</b>                      Aware of time and happenings in the future. Confident to express ideas through model making.</p> <p><b>The Arts</b>                      Demonstrates good imagination</p> <p><b>The World Around Us</b>                      Aware of family relationships and events. Aware of and can describe weather conditions appropriately.</p>	<p><b>NOW WHAT? (Planning)</b></p> <p>What is the next level of intended learning and development for the child? (Link to planning with child's initials)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to build and extend vocabulary through everyday experiences</li> <li>Develop deep sensory awareness through:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling heavy items</li> <li>pressing down firmly on objects, e.g. hole puncher, potato prints ...</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Encourage a deeper understanding of maths at the various experiences</p>
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Alfie 26/11/19  
played dough for 20 mins by himself. Used dough extruders... repeatedly made a wall for Kingy on a laminate dough mat + social story. I made minutes Durtyjs with ques (v...)

(P1)

Alfie (Foundation Stage)

Date: 27/11/19

WHAT?	NOW WHAT?
<p><b>Emerging Learning</b> What are these observations telling you about the child's development across the curriculum? What are the child's understandings and misunderstandings?</p> <p><b>Language &amp; Literacy</b> IFL - speech very unclear, hard to understand. Reading - really interested in books - Asks a lot of questions Writing - able to hold a pencil and make shapes - can write some letters Really engaged in play which develops mathematical concepts of shape, space, measure. Has some knowledge of numbers</p> <p><b>Mathematics &amp; Numeracy</b></p> <p><b>Personal Development &amp; Mutual Understanding (include TS &amp; PC)</b> Still on the outside trying to get on, Wants to engage with others - Is asking questions in order to understand</p> <p><b>Physical Development &amp; Movement</b> - falls quite a bit. Fine motor skills developing well - scissor, skulls / pencil cutter / can thread beads. Enjoys building in large spaces with wooden blocks (apart + outside)</p> <p><b>The World Around Us (include ICT)</b> really curious about how things work esp cars, engines. Enjoys pretend play in home corner</p>	<p><b>Planning</b> What is the next level of intended learning and development for the child? (Link to planning with child's initials)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help Alfie integrate more into the group.</li> <li>Arrange for him to be involved in small group games (inside + outside)</li> <li>Initiate role play situations in home corner with Alfie + a few other boys.</li> <li>Provide prompts + fade out as children interact with each other</li> <li>Use circle time + Patsy lessons / puppets to talk about friendships</li> <li>Provide factual books in areas of play that interest Alfie.</li> </ul>
<p>Engagement Level - High/Medium/Low</p> <p>Well Being - High/Medium/Low</p> <p>Additional Comments / We wonder about... / We are concerned about ... speech, falling?</p>	

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Northern Ireland Curriculum

## Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Well Being	Relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>finds it difficult to separate from parents</li> <li>is happy and confident to come to school</li> <li>finds it difficult to adapt to new situations</li> <li>can cope with routines and changes</li> <li>often seeks attention</li> <li>shows increasing confidence</li> <li>behaviour can be challenging</li> <li>usually demonstrates acceptable behaviour</li> <li>needs to develop an awareness of other people's needs/feelings</li> <li>is sensitive to the needs and feelings of others</li> <li>can express his/her own feelings and emotions</li> <li>shows pride in completed work</li> <li>responds positively to praise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is polite and well mannered</li> <li>is more comfortable with adult company than that of his/her peers</li> <li>prefers to play alone</li> <li>seeks the company of other children</li> <li>relates well to both adults and peers</li> <li>is beginning to establish friendships</li> <li>forms friendships easily with other children</li> <li>occasionally has difficulty playing co-operatively with other children</li> <li>requires adult support to play co-operatively</li> <li>has made good progress in developing the ability to share resources and take turns</li> <li>plays co-operatively and shares resources</li> <li>takes turns and shares</li> <li>engages in collaborative play</li> <li>shows signs of leadership in group play</li> <li>knows when to seek help from friends/adults</li> <li>is developing respect for others</li> <li>is aware of how actions can affect others</li> </ul>

### Guidance on Assessment in the Primary School

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## Signals of Involvement

- Concentration
- Energy
- Creativity
- Facial expression and posture
- Persistence
- Precision
- Language
- Satisfaction

*An “involved” child is gaining a deep, motivated, intense and long term learning experience*  
*Prof Ferre Laevers*

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## Mihayli Csikszentmihayli “State of Flow”

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## Child Involvement Scale


**Low Level Involvement** (*Attending*)  
The child is inactive

This level is characterised by children staring into space, appearing totally absent, doing nothing, displaying no energy and being passive.

Also used to address moments when the child is apparently active but there is an absence of cognitive demand. The child is displaying simple, repeated, stereotyped activity.

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**Medium Level Involvement** (*Participating*)


Mainly Continuous Activity

The child is busy at an activity but it is at a routine level and the real signals for involvement are missing. There is some progress but energy is lacking and concentration is at a routine level.

The child can be easily distracted.

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**High Level Involvement** *(Interacting)*


Sustained Intense Activity

The child displays continuous involvement which is demonstrated by the involvement signals


Not all signals need be present but essential are:

- concentration
- creativity
- energy
- persistence

This intensity must be present for almost all the observation period

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**Emotional Well-being**


When children:

- Are in touch with their feelings and emotions
- Can increasingly regulate their own emotions
- Can adapt to, cope with, and recover from stressful events
- Display positive interactions and show empathy with peers
- Display positive interactions with adults characterized by closeness and low conflict
- Experience satisfaction
- Act spontaneously
- Display inner rest and relaxation
- Show vitality and self-confidence
- Feel at ease, are open to new experiences and enjoy life

*Prof Ferre Laevers, Belgium*

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## Well-Being Scale

**Low Level**  
Extremely low well being. These children usually feel and look low. They show no signs of well-being. Often these children display signs of emotional discomfort. They seldom enjoy themselves and may enjoy hurting others.

**Medium Level**  
These children seem quite happy. Occasionally they show signs of discomfort or leave a neutral impression with regards to well-being.

**High Level**  
These children generally seem happy. Moments of wellbeing clearly out number the moments of discomfort. Extremely high level of well-being. These children feel like “fish in water”. They radiate vitality, relaxation and inner peace.

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## Remember!

Children are not available to learn if their emotional well-being is not secure

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<p>During Play, James chooses to sit by himself in the book area with his favourite book "Little rabbit Foo Foo" – he reads aloud with accuracy, fluency and expression.</p> <p>He is not distracted by other play activity.</p> <p>I = H 24/01/15 DC</p>	<p>In Literacy time, James writes a sentence using high frequency words. He attempts new words using his knowledge of letter sounds.</p> <p>His letter formation is large and untidy.</p> <p>James scribbles around his work.</p> <p>I = H 25/01/15 FD</p>
<p>James refuses to sort colours during Numeracy task time. He says to the teacher, "I know my colours".</p> <p>He quickly names all of the colours of the cubes.</p> <p>He then pretends that the cubes are farm animals.</p> <p>I = M/L 26/01/15 FD</p>	<p>The teacher invites the children to copy her picture of a penguin.</p> <p>James draws a picture of the "penguin huddle".</p> <p>At show and tell time, everyone laughs at James' drawing which appears messy.</p> <p>James tells the story of how the penguins huddle for warmth.</p> <p>I = H 26/01/15 LD</p>

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Observation – Foundation Stage J.

Name of Child/Children: James Date: 21 Jan 15 years

WHAT?	SO WHAT?	NOW WHAT?
<p>Observation Describe what you observe the child doing as he/she moves through the day</p>	<p>Learning What are these observations telling you about the child's development across the curriculum areas?</p>	<p>Planning What do you need to do in order to support the child's learning and development?</p>
<p>Involvement Level – High/Medium/Low</p>	<p>The Arts - Knows colours. - Draws from memory. - Read with expression. - Engages in dramatic play.</p> <p>Language &amp; Literacy - Can recall stories + events. - Responds appropriately to text – using expression. - Attempts new words, problem solves, writes without prompt.</p> <p>Mathematics &amp; Numeracy - Colour recognition + naming. - Needs more challenge + lacked involvement.</p> <p>Personal Development &amp; Mutual Understanding (include TS &amp; PC) - Experiences high levels of involvement when experience is self-initiated. - Displays empathy. - Tendency to engage in solitary play + experience.</p> <p>Physical Development &amp; Movement - Fine motor skills less well developed (writing).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage J to work with other class.</li> <li>Small groups + pairs + large group.</li> <li>Support</li> <li>Fun skills:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lacing.</li> <li>- stitching.</li> <li>- Kneading.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Well Being – High/Medium/Low</p>	<p>The World Around Us (include ICT) - Shows curiosity about living things. - Can sequence events. - Interested in animals (local + global).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan for differentiated learning in maths – ensure challenge.</li> </ul>
<p>Additional Comments / We wonder about ... / We are concerned about ... Can J. use decoding strategies or is he reading from memory? Concern re social interaction – follow up.</p>		

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## Management of Observation Process

- Observe all of the children all of the time
- Target 3 children per week (whole team)
- Work as a team at all times
- Make time for assessments (preferably as a team but rarely possible) – you will need approximately 15-20 minutes per targeted child. That is 3 children per week.)
- ***Connect assessments to planning*** – what does the child need support with in order to progress in their learning and development?
- Progress will be picked up through spontaneous and future ongoing observations

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