

Tips for Writing Good Observations

- All observations **MUST** be done in *licensed children’s centers. Resources for centers to visit can be found on the class website. Observations should be accurate, clear, and objective. Avoid giving your opinions or making inferences about things like,
 - Goodness or badness
 - Intentions
 - Emotions
 - Feelings
- Focus on one child. When you read your observation to yourself, it should be very clear who it is about.
- If you struggle with your writing skills, use the writing lab, tutoring center, a skilled high-school student, or peers to review your assignments before they are due. Then you can make changes as needed prior to submitting your assignments. 30% of your grade on written assignments is based on writing skill.

The following pointers will help you be successful in writing good observational reports.

1. Learn to type and use the spellcheck/grammar check functions in your writing program.
2. They’re, Their, There can get you into a lot of trouble. These are three versions of commonly used words. Use them correctly.
 - a. They’re means “They are”, as in, “**They’re** all coming inside now.
 - b. Their is the possessive form of they, as in, “Amelia and her parents got into **their** car and drove away.”
 - c. There designates a location in time and space, as in, “There were five children at the play-dough table.”
3. Another common problem is the use of the words Then and Than.
 - a. **Then** connotes the relationship between actions, such as, “We will learn about anecdotal records and **then** running records.”

- b. **Than** connotes a comparative measurement, such as, “Amanda is taller **than** Dylan.”
4. The over use of the word “**then**” is a big problem. Try to limit your use of it in your observational reports. It is redundant (repetitive) and unnecessary. Read your sentences back to yourself out loud. They are usually better without “**then**” in them.
5. Learn the correct format for quotations. Anytime you are reporting what the child said, you must use the standard quotation format.
 - a. Example: Kevin could not reach the ball. He said, “Teacher Pam, will you get the ball for me?”
6. When children are using tricycles, the word that describes how their feet work is **pedal**. So, he pedals, she pedaled, he is pedaling.
7. Write your observational reports in past tense. This means your verbs will often end in “ed”. Such as, “Julia played with the trains.” “Kevin walked from the blocks to the carpet area.” “Keifer asked the teacher, “May I have my turn now?” Be sure that all of you writing is in PAST TENSE.

*Licensed Children’s Centers are programs that operate either preschool and/or full-day childcare services for children between 30 months and 5 years of age. They are licensed by the State of California, Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing and receive site visits and inspections on a regular basis.

For the purposes of this course, you may NOT observe in Family Child Care homes. Past experience has demonstrated that these observations are not effective for the purpose of this course.