



How to Observe, Record and Report

Core Training

Course Description

Documentation is an extremely important part of the work that we do in Children's Services. It is important that all documentation be timely, objective and detailed. As caregivers, you will have the most interaction with the children and youth served by the Ministry and it is imperative that the observations and knowledge you have be recorded and shared with the child or youth's caseworker.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this session you will be able to:

- Describe the purpose and importance of observing, recording, and reporting information about a child in care.
- Demonstrate the differences between behaviour description and interpretation.
- Understand what influences your own observations.
- Record information regarding a child.
- Describe what to include in a daily log and a monthly report.
- Work with Children's Services/DFNA's.

Key Messages

- Observing and reporting are important skills for caregivers.
- Documentation provides important information to the rest of the child protection team as well as to the caregiver and the birth family.
- Observing and recording should be strategic; select the correct behaviours and situations.
- Documentation can protect caregivers from false allegations.
- Observation should have specific strategies and focus in order to be most useful.
- Observation should be objective, whereas interpretation is subjective. Both have a place in documentation but they are not the same thing.
- Caregivers should be aware of factors affecting their objectivity in order to compensate.
- The daily log is the basis of documentation which then goes into the monthly summary.

Resources

Many caregivers struggle with knowing what to document. Below is an excerpt from the 'How to Observe Record and Report' training that highlights key areas for consideration in daily and incident reporting.

What to Record

There are several areas to consider when recording behaviour:

1. **Response to Routine** (how is the child adjusting to and fitting into the rhythm of the family?)
2. **Response to Positive Discipline and Praise** (What discipline methods have been used and the child's response?)
3. **Response to Activities** (What is the activity? Who chose it? Who else was involved? Participation? Skills?)
4. **Relationship with Peers** (How is the child getting along with peers? Any behaviour patterns? Is the child a leader or follower? Are there particular challenges with certain peers?)
5. **Relationship with Adults** (How is the child getting along with adults and caregivers? Which adults? Is there a variety of responses with different adults?)
6. **Attitude toward Self** (Is it positive or negative? Has the child made any comments about their abilities, school, etc.?)
7. **Critical Incidents**
 - Elements of danger or risk
 - Crisis or turning point for the child
 - Disclosures
8. **Interaction with Members of their Biological Family** (visits, phone calls, statements, behaviour changes)
9. **Physical and Mental Health** (medications, appointments, state of health)
10. **Significant Events** (birthdays, graduation, Christmas, outings, etc.)
11. **School** (Attendance, progress, reports, peer interaction, teacher interaction)
12. **Absences** (AWOL)
13. **Relationship to Case Plan** (changes? goals being met? goals that may need to be changed?)