Supports for Documenting

Kristie Pretti-Frontczak, early childhood expert and researcher, reminds us that when we document information, we record, chronicle, or detail information needed to make important decisions. Therefore, we can define the step of documenting as the process of recording relevant information by writing, tallying, scoring, and/or by creating permanent products (e.g., videos, audio, photos).

Checklist For Documenting:
1. Have we used multiple methods to document including numbers, narratives, and visuals?
2. Have we used the most efficient and effective methods for documenting?
3. Have we documented objectively, and avoided judgment and labels?
4. When possible, have we utilized digital technologies (e.g., google drive, dropbox, youtube, EverNotes, email, shared cloud/server space, smartphone/pad)
5. Have we maintained confidentiality?
6. Have we adhered to privacy policies?
7. Have we included situational information and performance information?
8. Have we documented relevant information within a reasonable timeframe from when it was gathered?
9. Have we documented the perspective of all relevant team members, even if there isn’t full agreement?
10. Have we documented only relevant information that can be used to make instructional decisions?

Tips For Documenting:
There are at least three broad methods for documenting, each with its own advantages and disadvantages:

- **Written documentation** (e.g., running records, anecdotal records, jottings)
  
  **Advantages:**
  - Can provide a detailed and comprehensive of the child’s actions and context in which those actions occurred.
  - Minute-by-minute exchanges allow for examination of patterns and a child’s ability to extend their ideas and actions.
  - Allow for consideration of related factors such as who else was involved or interacting and/or what was said or done by others.
  
  **Disadvantages:**
  - Amount of time required to generate can be extensive.
  - Amount of information that is included may distract from the original question or intent of creating the running record.
• **Numerical documentation** (e.g., raw scores, frequency counts, duration/time intervals, rating, mean/median/mode) and standard scores (e.g., percentile rank, developmental quotients/DQs)

  **Advantages:**
  • Easy to create and easy to share.
  • Forms for documenting numbers can be reused and easily modified.
  • Can document numbers for individual children or groups of children.

  **Disadvantages:**
  • May be difficult to explain to others.
  • May not provide a holistic picture of performance.

• **Artifact documentation** (e.g., video recording, audio recording, photograph, drawing/painting)

  **Advantages:**
  • Supports looking at trends over time.
  • Allows for a greater understanding of not only the outcomes, as well as the learning process.
  • Illustrates what children are able to do, what they’re interested in, and their growth over time in a variety of ways.

  **Disadvantages:**
  • May be difficult to store, and can take time and effort to collect.
  • The amount of information that is included may distract from the original question or intent.

Common "places" for documenting:

  • Forms (e.g., rating forms, recording forms, demographic forms, survey forms)
  • Protocols (e.g., test protocols, interview protocols)
  • Graphics (e.g., diagrams, maps, charts)
  • Plain "paper" (e.g., sticky notes, journals, paper)

General guidelines for documenting:


  This chapter presents an overview of assessment practices for trainees. Students are given a working definition of assessment as well as the different types and methods. Practical examples, visual illustrations and tips are embedded in the text.