

## Guidance on observing Children's Play

We recommend that you spend around 10-20 minutes doing your observations and concentrate on a particular child or group of children.

### DO

- Be as unobtrusive as possible
- Record exactly what you observe
- Maintain confidentiality and anonymity when recording
- Tell other colleagues/workers what you are doing and get their co-operation
- Sensitively tell children what you are doing – in order to learn from them....
- Consider the impact of children's different social and cultural backgrounds in any analysis
- Spend as much time as possible watching rather than writing – consider using shorthand or abbreviations
- Make the observation the sole focus of your attention
- Reflect on the issues arising
- Remember this is not about children's development, it is solely about their playing
- Think about how it relates to what you are learning
- If possible record children's mood and what they say

### DO NOT

- Interfere or stop the flow of the children's play
- Get so close that you significantly impact upon the play or disturb their privacy
- Make assumptions about what children are doing, feeling, thinking, learning.....
- Try to observe everything that is happening in the play setting
- Observe adult-led activities