

INFANTS & TODDLERS

- [VIDEOS](#)
- [OBSERVING](#)
- [EXERCISES](#)
- [OBSERVING LAB](#)
- [ABOUT](#)



- [OBSERVING](#)
- [ANECDOTAL RECORDS](#)
- [RUNNING RECORDS](#)
- [ABC RECORDS](#)
- [TALLY SAMPLING](#)
- [CHECKLISTS AND RATING SCALES](#)
- [OBJECTIVITY](#)
- [DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE](#)
- [POSITIVE LANGUAGE](#)
- [ANALYSIS](#)
- [DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAINS](#)

POSITIVE LANGUAGE

What is positive language?

When educators use positive language to write their observations, it means they are recording the details of what happened, instead of recording that the details of something that didn't happen. Using positive language is especially important when writing qualitative observations like anecdotes, running records and ABC records.

How do I stay positive when I record my observations?

As much as possible in your observations, try to avoid words like "didn't," "can't," "won't," "not," etc. Often, recording in this type of detail will take longer and may require one or two extra sentences.

While it may seem easier and quicker to use phrases that contain these negative words; when you do, you are "robbing" your observations of important details about what did happen, how something happened or even how nothing happened!

Why is positive language important?

By using positive words and phrases in your observations, you are making your writing more descriptive, and this will be helpful for analyzing your observations and coming up with strategies to support development and learning.

For example, if you record: “Piper didn’t kick the ball properly,” it will be quite challenging to come up with specific strategies to help Piper learn to kick more successfully.

But if you write: “Piper pulled back her right leg, swung it towards the ball and her foot swished through the air above the ball,” you have a much better starting point for your analysis.

Example of positive language

Here are two anecdotal records that describe the same event ([see clip](#)).

The anecdote on the left is written using negative language.

The anecdote on the right is more detailed and is written using positive language.

Suzanne asked Errald if he was playing with the trains and he didn't answer.

As she lowered him to the floor, Suzanne asked Errald "Are you playing with trains? Are you playing trains?" Errald silently snuggled in to Suzanne's arms, laying his left cheek against her shoulder.

©INFANTS & TODDLERS 2014. All rights reserved. [Contact us](#)