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ANECDOTAL RECORDS

What Is an anecdotal record?

An anecdotal record (or anecdote) is like a short story that educators use to record a significant incident that they have observed. Please see the [Observing](#) section for a short discussion of what educators might consider significant. Anecdotal records are usually relatively short and may contain descriptions of behaviours and direct quotes.

Why use anecdotal records?

Anecdotal records are easy to use and quick to write, so they are the most popular form of record that educators use. Anecdotal records allow educators to record qualitative information, like details about a child's specific behaviour or the conversation between two children. These details can help educators plan activities, experiences and interventions. Because they can be written after the fact, when an educator is on his break, for example, or at the end of the day, using anecdotal records allows the educator to continue to work (this is often referred to as the "participant-observer role") without having to stop to write down his observations.

How do I write an anecdotal record?

Anecdotal records are written after the fact, so use the past tense when writing them (click [here](#) to see an Exercise that will help you – the 3rd set of questions will help you practice your verb tenses).

Being [positive](#) and [objective](#), and using [descriptive language](#) are also important things to keep in mind when writing your anecdotal records. [Click here](#) for related exercises.

Remember that anecdotal records are like short stories; so be sure to have a beginning, a middle and an end for each anecdote.

Sample anecdotal records

Anecdotal record - [see clip](#)

Caitlyn sat on the big white chair looking at a board book. She pointed to a picture of a train, and chirped, “Choo choo!”

Anecdotal record – [see clip](#)

Phoenix and Rory each piled up a mound of snow in front of them on the picnic table. The girls began to sing, “Happy birthday to me, happy birthday to me.” When they finished singing, both girls puffed out their cheeks and pretended to blow out the candles on top of their snow cakes.

[Click here](#) for exercises to help practise writing anecdotal records.

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