TALLY SAMPLING RECORDS

What Is tally sampling?

Tally Sampling is a quantitative method that allows observers to record **how often** a targeted behaviour or list of behaviours occurs. Observers often use a specific **grid** format (see below) to record their observations.

Why use tally sampling?

Clear, objective information about how often certain behaviours occur can be very useful to educators. Using this type of quantitative data, educators can look for patterns and identify factors that in turn can help with planning activities, experiences and interventions.

How do I use a tally sampling grid?

The first step is to design the grid you will be using. You have a variety of options here – you can record information about one child or a group of children. The key is to choose the categories for both the **columns** (listed vertically down the left-hand side) and the **rows** (listed horizontally across the top). By adjusting these categories, you can custom-design your grid to help you record the specific data you are interested in.

Being positive and objective, and using descriptive language are also important things to keep in mind when when creating your categories . (click here to see some related Exercises).

Once your grid is ready, you may begin recording your observations, marking a tick (or some other symbol) in the appropriate boxes.

Sample tally record

In this example, the observer is looking for quantitative information about one child and 5 specific behaviours. At the top of the form, it is a good idea to record the purpose of your observation, in the form of a "How often…" question. So, your recording grid might look like this:

How often does Flavio do the following behaviours?

Date(s):

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	TOTAL
Hits another child						
Bites another child						
Pushes another child						
Takes a toy from another child						
Yells at another child						
TOTAL						

When you have finished observing, your grid could look like this:

How often does Flavio do the following behaviours?

Date(s): February 12- 16, 2012

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	TOTAL
Hits another child	✓✓✓		✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	9
Bites another child			✓			1
Pushes another child	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓✓✓ ✓	14
Takes a toy from another child				✓✓		2
Yells at another child				✓✓	✓✓✓✓	6
TOTAL	6	2	6	8	10	

At the end of the time period you have set (e.g. a week), you will have collected quite a lot of quantitative data. Now, you are ready to start to analyze the information. A good place to start is to add up the totals for each row and column – these totals give you an important initial starting point for your analysis. A helpful next step might be to then summarize your data, noting any overall patterns or specific trends.