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RUNNING RECORDS

What is a running record

Writing a running record requires the educator to act like a video camera, recording all significant behaviours and interactions as they happen. Whereas [anecdotal records](#) are written after the fact, running records are written as the action is unfolding. If you were to read one out loud, it might sound a bit like the running commentary of a sports event: “Cournoyer passes the puck to Savard. Savard carries the puck down the boards, over the blue line. He winds up, he shoots, he scores!”

Why use running records?

A running record involves writing down **everything** that is happening, in the order that it happens. Observers limit the amount of editing they do as they record. Instead, the idea is to record as much raw data as possible. Using this rather open-ended method means that educators can gather a lot of information in a relatively short period of time. As such, these are a popular choice for professionals in the field.

How do I write a running record?

Running records are written as the action is unfolding in front of you, so use the present 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.

Give yourself a tentative time frame for writing a running record. For example, decide ahead of time that you will observe the children at the sand box for the first 15 minutes of Free Play. The process of writing a running record can be quite tiring. It also requires the educator to step out of her active role in order to record her observations on the spot. This is referred to as the **spectator-observer role**. Getting organized ahead of time is key.

Sample running record - [see clip](#)

Annette kneels down next to Maya and begins wiping her face with a wet cloth. As Annette starts to wipe Maya's right hand, Maya grabs the cloth with her left hand and yanks it away from Annette. Annette asks, "You wanna do it?" Maya starts wiping her mouth and tongue, clutching the cloth tightly in both hands. Annette smiles, claps her hands together and exclaims, "OK! Good job!" Annette reaches out and begins to lift Maya's bib over her head. Maya transfers the wet cloth to her right hand, then, as the bib is lifted up and over her head, grabs it with both hands again. She wipes the cloth across her cheek and mouth, then vigorously swipes at her tongue four times.

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

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