

Observing independent play

When considering each section below, keep in mind:

- how vision is used
- which other senses are being used
- which senses are being used together eg auditory and tactile.

During observation of the child’s independent play in a natural situation, look out for the following:

Active exploration

- Intentional/repeated movements
- Search techniques in surrounding space
- Exploration/manipulation of objects eg with one hand, both hands, other body parts
- Awareness of cause and effect
- Any preference shown for specific objects or types of object
- Early play schema eg hitting, banging. Later play schema eg filling and emptying, opening and closing
- Combining two objects in play
- Searching for objects when child is not in direct physical contact with them
- Using objects purposefully/creatively
- Using objects appropriately eg bouncing ball
- Awareness of objects’ functions.

Stereotype behaviour and play

- Does the stereotype behaviour change in different environments, or when things happen around the child?
- Does the child use the object only in relation to the body?
- Does the stereotype play follow a constant pattern or is there a variation in the way the object is used?

Play observation form

Name of child: Date:

Observer’s name:

Observe the child playing alone in a familiar, natural environment. Write below an account of what the child is doing using the “Observing independent play” criteria as a guide: