

## Observation Defined

Observing means that you are carefully watching and taking mental note of the child's behavior, words and feelings. You are also observing your own thoughts and feelings. When a teacher observes a child, their conversation is not instructional or task orientated. Rather, the conversation is intentionally open ended, drawing out what the child wants, needs and wishes to express. We use observation to see the child, hear the child and to connect emotionally to the child.

There are two conversation techniques: **Narrating & Labeling**

### Narrating

Narrating does not include any teaching, directing, questioning or even positive reinforcement. There are three forms of narration that will help you when you are observing a child: **Reflection, Imitation and the Sportscaster Technique.**

- **Imitation**

When we initially connect with children, it is often with imitating what they are doing. Imitation is a non-verbal narrating tool. When you imitate, you watch the child carefully and follow his or her lead. So if the child is stacking blocks, you start stacking blocks.

- **Reflection**

Reflection is when you listen to the child and repeat back their words in a slightly different way. For example, if the child said, "Painting is my favorite thing," you might say, "You really like to paint."

Reflection is also when you copy the child's actions and words. For example, if the child raises their hands and cheers "Yeah!", you would also raise your hands in a cheer and join in with saying, "Yeah" or something similar such as "Yahoo!"

- **Sportscaster Technique**

The Sportscaster Technique is when you carefully watch the child and describe what you see. So if the child is sorting beads by color, you might say, "I see that you picked out all of the blue beads and now you are sorting out all of the green beads."

### Labeling

Labeling is when you communicate out loud what you notice about a child's feelings, what you notice about their emotions. So if a child has a frown on their face, you might say, "I see you are unhappy, can you tell me what is wrong?"

References:

B. Hamre, R. Pianta: **Effective Classroom Interactions**, University of Virginia 2013.

A. Dombro, J. Jablon, C. Stetson: **Powerful Interactions**, NAEYC 2011