



The National Center on
Quality Teaching and Learning

Tips for Teachers

Collecting and Using Anecdotal Records



“How do you know whether your children are learning what they need to know?”

- Watch them during everyday activities in your classroom.
- Write down what children do or say during everyday activities.

“What should the description you write down include?”

- Describe children’s progress toward important curriculum targets.
- Write an objective description—what you see or hear.

“How do you go about collecting anecdotal records?”

- Plan ahead to collect information in important curriculum areas.
- Include the date & time, names, and setting along with the objective description.
- Keep it simple—use clipboards, labels, sticky notes, paper or an activity matrix.
- Go high tech—record observations using a handheld electronic device.

“How do you use the anecdotal records you collect?”

- Put the information into your program’s curriculum system or computerized assessment system.
- Analyze them so that you know whether children are learning what they need to know.
- Use the information to improve children’s learning. Decide what and how to teach.

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For more information

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