

# Observing and documenting



These tip sheets are designed to help all professionals who work with young children to promote respect and gender equity in their work.

Supporting children to have respectful and equitable relationships when they are young can help them grow into resilient, caring and well-functioning young people and adults and is a key step towards preventing family violence and all forms of violence against women. This involves nurturing children and helping them learn the skills to acknowledge and accept difference, resolve conflict and solve problems. It is also about challenging gender stereotypes, so children of all genders grow up feeling heard, valued and respected.

## Why is observation important?

Observing children's play gives us a deeper understanding of their learning. Observation is an important reflective tool, giving us valuable knowledge about our own approaches and how children engage with the materials and environments available to them.

Observing how children express and understand gender is critical to the intentional teaching of respectful and gender equitable relationships. It can help you to ensure that the physical environment is set up to promote equality.

## Documenting data

The [National Quality Framework](#) for early childhood education and care encourages professionals to collect and document these observations, including:

- Reflective journals
- Photographs
- Videos
- Samples of children's work and drawings
- Conversations with children



## Tips for observing and documenting children's play and learning

Think about the learning materials and play spaces you provide for children:

- Are some spaces used more by some groups of children than others?
- Are there aspects of the resource or space that reflect stereotypical gender roles and assumptions?
- Are resources or spaces organised or located in ways that exclude certain groups of children?

Consider how children engage with spaces and materials:

- What play themes are children displaying that indicate their ideas about gender? For example, do girls adopt caring and nurturing roles while boys assume provider roles?
- Are there some spaces that could encourage limiting gender roles?
- How do children respond to resources and spaces that challenge gender norms? For a list of books that challenge norms and stereotypes, go to [City of Monash and Generating Equality and Respect Library Booklist](#)



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