

Inclusion Begins with Seeing

An Archetype Approach observation lens for early years practitioners

Observation is not only evidence gathering. It is a way of seeing.

Before we ask, “How do we stop this?”

A child moves constantly. Another watches from the edge. One tries to help everyone. Another disrupts the group just as it becomes settled.

These moments are easy to record as behaviour. But behaviour is only the visible surface. Good observation asks what pattern is forming underneath, what the child may be protecting, and what has become difficult to access.

The aim is not to decide what kind of child this is.

The aim is to notice what the child can reach — and what may be missing.

The six-part observation lens

1. Start with the strength What is alive here before it becomes difficult? Movement, care, humour, independence, imagination, order, intensity, thought, construction, exploration or connection?	2. Notice the narrowing Has the child lost flexibility? A strength becomes a strain when it is the only response available.
3. Look for the opposite What balancing experience is hard to access? Movement may need stillness. Freedom may need order. Connection may need safe independence.	4. Read the environment What changed before the moment? Consider noise, pace, transitions, adult demand, group size, uncertainty, hunger, fatigue and relational safety.
5. Observe recovery What helps the child return? Watch for the people, spaces, rhythms, roles and materials that widen the child again.	6. Plan an invitation Offer the missing balance gently. Do not force the opposite. Create a doorway into it.

Seeing differently does not remove boundaries or expectations. It helps us choose a response that restores access rather than deepens the struggle.

Observe the Pattern, Not Just the Incident

Use one real moment. Write briefly. Stay curious.

1. What happened?

Record only what you could see and hear. Avoid interpretation for now.

2. What strength was underneath it?

What natural energy or capacity may have been trying to find expression?

3. Where did the pattern narrow?

What could the child no longer do: pause, join, separate, adapt, wait, speak, move, imagine, organise or recover?

4. What might restore balance?

Name one environmental adjustment, one relational response and one gentle invitation.

Environment: _____

Relationship: _____

Invitation: _____

5. What will we watch next?

Choose one observable sign that access is widening.

A useful next step is small, specific and observable.

Do not ask, “Did the behaviour disappear?” Ask, “Did the child gain another way to respond?”

This free lens introduces the starting posture of the Archetype Approach. The full framework develops twelve archetypal patterns, six axes of balance, developmental stages and practical planning tools.

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