

# Observing an Infant

ECE 209-L

# What is Observing?



To Observe:

- To see, watch, perceive or notice
- To regard *with attention* in order to learn something

# Why do we observe babies?

- To gain insights & info about the infant
  - Signals
  - Cues
  - Preferences
  - Reactions
  - Responses
- To assess a baby's progress, learning, & abilities
- To document an infant's experiences
- To be a responsive teacher



*Being an effective observer takes time & practice – it's a muscle we develop!*

# Qualities of an Effective Observer

- Recognizes personal biases & preconceived assumptions about children
- Stays focused on what is being observed for periods of time
- Pays attention to details
- Is flexible
- Blends into the environment
- Takes notes unobtrusively
- Shares detailed, objective observations



# Objective vs Subjective Info

## OBJECTIVE INFO

Objective info is what can be:

- Seen
- Counted
- Tasted
- Touched
- Smelled
- Heard

OBJECTIVE VERSUS SUBJECTIVE	
Unbiased	Biased
Not colored by personal feelings	Colored by personal feelings
Equivalent to facts	Equivalent to opinions
Factual & verifiable	Non-factual & non-verifiable

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## SUBJECTIVE INFO

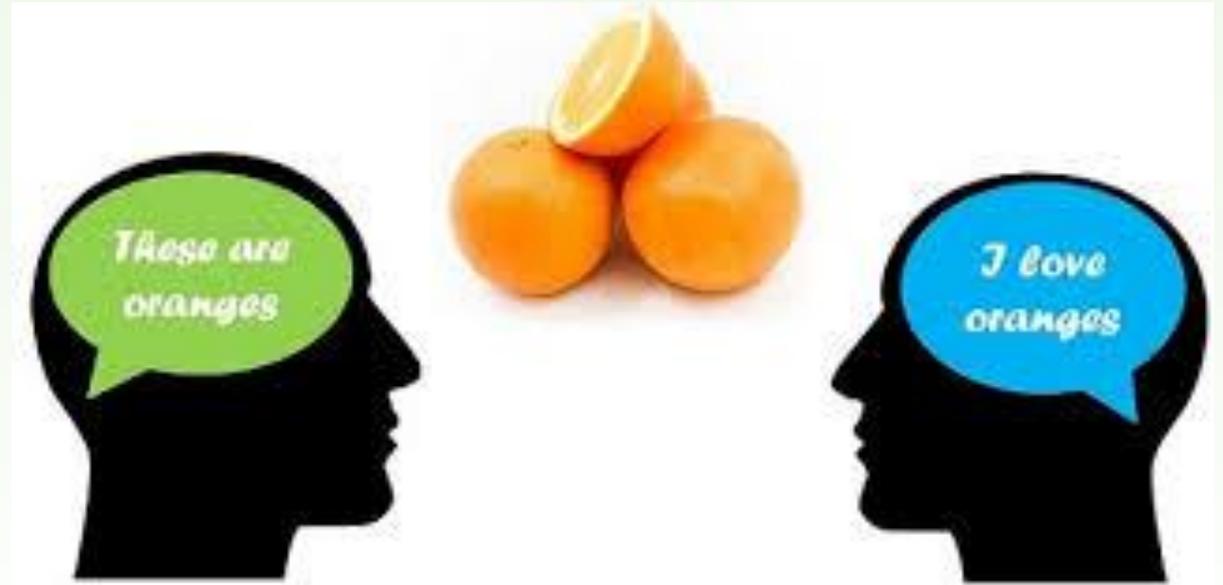
Subjective info is:

- Opinion
- Judgement
- Rumor
- Assumption
- Belief
- Suspicion
- Based on
  - Thoughts
- Feelings
- Ideas
- Decisions

# Subjective Observations

**Subjective observations** are influenced by:

- Past events
- Opinions
- Background
- Personal experience
- Biased information
- Judgements

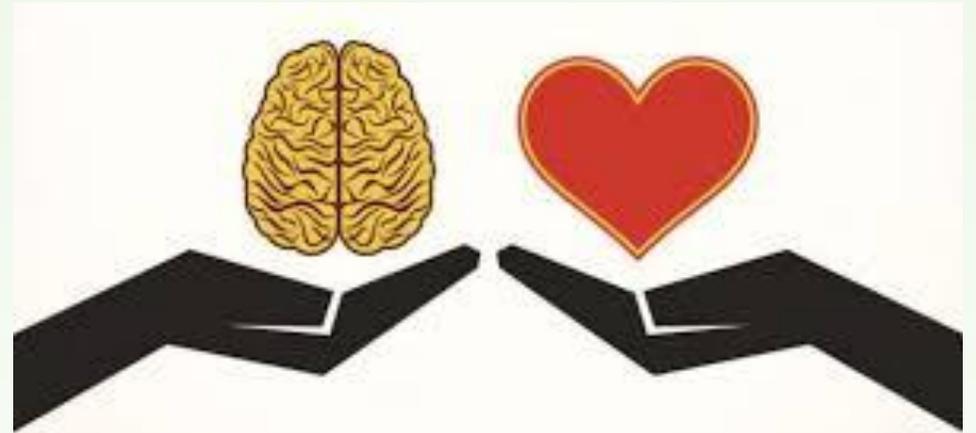


*Results vary widely among observers.*

# Objective Observations

Objective observations:

- Description of what is observed
- States:
  - Facts
  - Details
- Records simply what's seen without:
  - Opinions
  - Interpretations



*Should be the same among observers.*



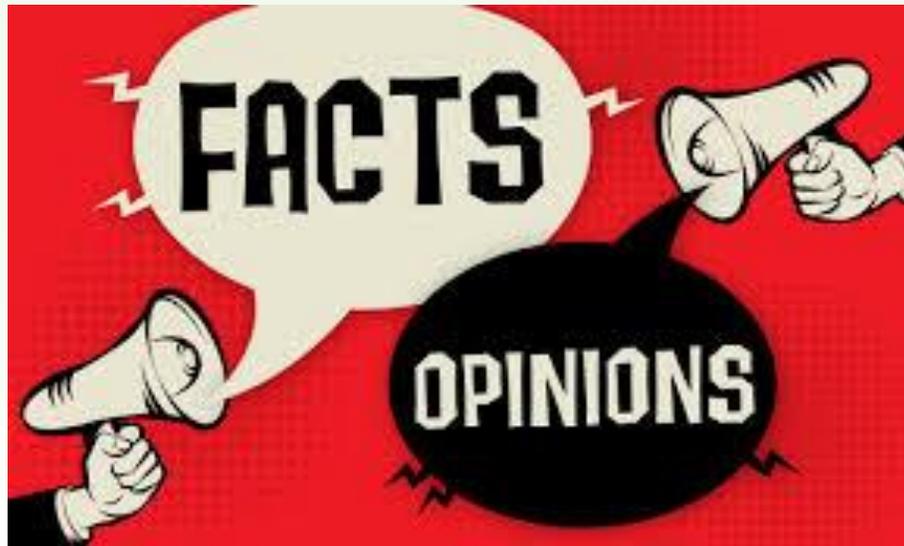
# Objective Observations

- Describe exactly what you:
  - See
  - Count
  - Hear
  - Touch
  - Feel
  - Smell
- State just the facts
- Avoid:
  - Judgments
  - Opinions
  - Assumptions



# Examples of Statements

- Objective statement:
  - Denise held the spoon in her right hand, wrapping all of her fingers around the top of the handle in a fist.



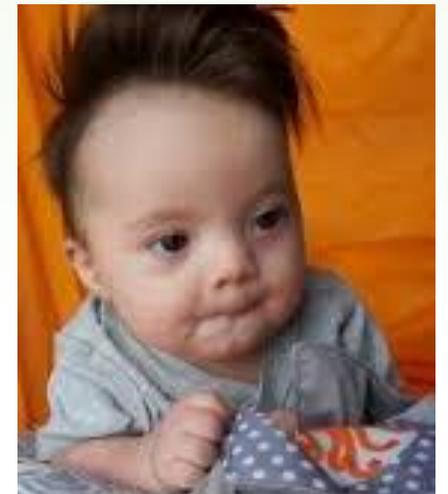
- Subjective statement:
  - Denise is advanced for her age; she can eat with a spoon.

# What to look for in Observations?

- What does the baby do? How?
- How does the baby move?
- What does the baby look/ gaze at?
- What seems to attract the baby's interest? How can you tell?
- What toys, materials, &/or furniture does the baby use? How?
- How does the baby communicate – with sounds/ words & other ways?
- How does the baby interact with people?



How would you describe these infants?



What do you see in these pictures?



# Which words are objective?

- Happy
- Crawling
- Fast
- Sitting
- Smiling
- Hesitant
- Walking
- At a slow pace
- Sleepy
- Hungry
- Relaxed
- Dancing
- Anxious
- Crying
- Soothed
- Angry

