

Child Care Today

Observations

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Introducing Early Childhood Observation

Observing children means more than just watching them. Observation is a skill to be practiced and developed over time. When you lack experience with observing children and their environments, you need tools that help you learn what to look for and how to record what you see and hear. The observations in this book will provide you with the tools to become a skilled observer.

TAKING TIME TO OBSERVE

You may ask, “Why should I take time to observe children?” “How will this be a benefit to me?” The answers make a strong case for building your observation skills.

As students and teachers observe children, their understanding of child development deepens in a way that is not possible by just reading a book. Only through firsthand observation can the stages that such theorists as Erik Erikson and Jean Piaget described be effectively analyzed and understood. By observing children closely, early childhood professionals are better able to understand the individual needs and interests of each child in a class. They can plan a developmentally appropriate curriculum and adapt it when necessary.

As child care professionals take time to observe individual children, they identify conditions that require specialized help. For instance, children with delayed or advanced development or possible disabilities (such as hearing impairment) can be identified at an early age. This information can then be shared with parents during parent-teacher conferences. Obtaining special resources and services allows these children to receive the care and education they deserve, at home and in the child care setting.

Observation also produces information that helps in other ways. An observant teacher might notice that a change in the daily schedule could eliminate a traffic problem. Communication with parents is more meaningful when the teacher shares accurate accounts of behavior. Through observation, the child care professional can even discover better ways of working with children and other employees.

For all of these reasons, taking time to observe is necessary and beneficial. As a student, you will use this information to develop your skills. Later, you can put these skills to work when you are on the job.

YOUR ROLE AS AN OBSERVER

If you have not conducted observations of children before, you may be wondering what procedures to follow. Here are some suggestions to guide you.

During most observations, you will sit in the same room with the children. Stay in the background as much as possible—off to the side or perhaps in a corner of the room. Use the following guidelines to avoid drawing attention to yourself:

- Sit in a low chair.
- Position yourself where you can easily observe.
- Wear clothing and accessories that do not attract attention. Simple clothing appropriate to a child care setting is best.
- Avoid making eye contact or starting a conversation with the children.
- If a child asks what you are doing, give a brief but honest answer. You might say, “I’m writing down how children play so I can remember it later.”
- Do not interfere in classroom activities *unless* a child is in immediate danger and no other adult is available.

(Continued on next page)

Protecting Confidentiality

Part of your role as an observer is to protect the privacy of children and families. Always keep observation records confidential. Never leave them in view of others. If the observations will be read by someone other than your instructor or the child care professional in charge of the children, written permission should be obtained from the children's parents or legal guardians. The permission forms should be signed, dated, and placed on file in the child care facility before any observations occur. Some centers require this type of permission before child care students observe, even when records will be kept confidential.

USING THE OBSERVATIONS

Before you begin to work with these observations, take a quick tour through them. You will find observation assignments with different formats. Some are similar to what professionals use on the job, although they may sometimes be called by slightly different names. Others are just for you, the student. Specific descriptions of the different kinds of forms are given later in this introduction.

PREPARING TO OBSERVE

When your instructor assigns you an observation activity, you need to prepare for your experience. The first step is to read the observation form carefully. Note the purpose of the activity, which is stated at the beginning of the form. Check the directions to see exactly what you are expected to do.

Some of the observations require you to view a very specific situation, such as two children, ages three and five, in an art learning center. Some give you more freedom to choose the situation. Still others ask you to observe or interview child care professionals. There are also blank observation forms for each type of observation that you can tailor to your own needs. With some forms, you may need to

make more than one observation at different times. Be sure you understand these requirements before you begin. Unless your teacher tells you otherwise, you should follow the directions exactly as stated.

Reading through the remainder of the form will help you further understand what to look for while observing. In addition, recording your observations will be easier if you familiarize yourself with the form ahead of time.

Where to Observe

Where you decide to observe depends on what you need to observe. For some assignments, such as observing children using learning centers, you will need access to a child care facility—either an in-school program or one in your community. On the other hand, outdoor play could be observed at a variety of locations. Some of the sites you may visit during your class hour may include:

- School playgrounds.
- Park and recreation facilities.
- Nurseries at places of worship.
- YMCAs or YWCAs.
- Your neighborhood.
- Public libraries.
- Shopping centers.
- Private homes.

Making Arrangements to Observe

In many cases, opportunities to observe must be set up in advance. If your school has an on-site child care program, the instructor may arrange opportunities for you to observe specific situations. If you will be visiting an off-site child care program or a private home, either you or your instructor will need to set up the date and time of your visit well in advance.

(Continued on next page)

When making arrangements, explain exactly what you will need to observe and ask about the best time to visit. Remember that child care programs have schedules and routines that have been carefully planned for the benefit of the children. You should try to work around these schedules rather than expecting programs to alter their plans.

Visits to community child care programs offer valuable experiences to the student observer. Preserve these opportunities by acting in a courteous, professional manner before, during, and after you visit. You may want to follow up with a thank-you note to the director of the center and any other employees who helped you.

COMPLETING THE OBSERVATION FORM

Some of the observation activities specify that you should observe for a certain time period, such as exactly ten minutes. In most cases, however, you should observe as long as needed to complete all the information on the form. The directions may specify a minimum length of time to observe.

Try to fill out the observation form completely. However, sometimes this is not possible. For instance, you would be unable to observe whether a toddler can climb stairs if there are no stairs at the observation site. Unless you are given other instructions, in a situation like this you may write “Unable to observe” in the space provided for the observation.

Observing Objectively

Becoming an effective observer involves not only sharpening your vision and listening skills, but also learning to write *objectively* about what you see and hear. Objective observations present facts without interference of personal feelings or prejudices. For example,

which of the following sentences do you think is objective?

- Leon kicked the truck out of Sasha’s hands.
- Leon was frustrated because Sasha was playing with his favorite truck.

If you selected the first statement, you are correct. The first sentence states the facts as they happened. In the second statement, the observer uses personal judgment rather than reporting observed behavior.

Objectively documenting what you see and hear allows you to portray children as they truly are. Careful documentation will help you accurately analyze and draw conclusions about the children you observe. Objective writing and analysis apply to most methods of specific observation.

Video Recording Observations

If video equipment is available, you may want to record your observations for later study and analysis. A more clear and accurate observation may result by doing this, especially when the situation is complicated. *Note that video recording may require special permission from the child care professional and the children’s parents.*

Analyzing What You Have Observed

Many of the forms include follow-up questions to be completed after you observe. Answering these questions will help you summarize your observations and reflect on their meaning. In addition, your teacher may ask you to discuss your observations in class. Comparing your experiences with those of other classmates can provide insight that you could not gain from a single observation. For example, when you and your classmates observe preschoolers of different ages and compare results, patterns of development may become clearer.

(Continued on next page)

As you reflect back on your observations, you will probably draw some tentative conclusions about children's behavior. Be careful, however, not to make final judgments about a child, or children in general, based on limited information. Child care professionals have years of training and experience to draw upon when analyzing behavior. They are also able to observe specific children over a long period of time in order to reach a deeper understanding of their development. As a student, you have fewer and shorter

opportunities to observe. Remember that you may not be getting the whole picture of a child's behavior.

TYPES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD OBSERVATION FORMS

Working with the observation forms will be simpler if you understand the different types of observations. Each observation method that you will use is described here. Examples follow the explanations.

GUIDED OBSERVATIONS

One observation format is distinct from the rest because professionals do not use it. Called a **guided observation**, it is just for you, the student. As you follow the observation directions on these forms, you will answer specific questions about what you see and hear. (In some cases you may want to take notes on a separate sheet of paper, then fill out the form.) These observation assignments are intended to help you recognize, understand, and analyze principles described in your text as you see them in action. A sample guided observation is found on page 8.

(Continued on next page)

Guided Observation: Family Child Care Professional

SAMPLE

Purpose: Identify the skills and responsibilities of a family child care professional.

Directions: Observe and interview a family child care professional for 45 to 60 minutes. Record your responses to the questions that follow.

Site: *Ragusa's Family Day Care* _____ Date(s) of Observation(s): *March 10* _____

Provider's Name: *Gabriella Ragusa* _____

Number and Ages of Children: *Five Children, ages 1-5* _____

1. How long has this person been a family child care provider? *Gabriella has been a family child care provider for nine years.* _____

2. What, if any, child care education and experience does the professional have? _____
She attended a junior college and received an associate's degree in early childhood education. Gabriella worked in a preschool for three years before starting the family day care. _____

3. When does the provider's workday begin and end? *Her workday begins at 7:00 a.m. and ends at 5:30 p.m.* _____

4. How has the professional organized space in the home for operation of the day care business, including space for play? _____
Gabriella uses the finished basement in her home for the child care operation. It has an entrance that opens directly into the backyard. The largest room in the basement is set up with several centers—a small table and chairs along with art supplies, a book corner with puzzles and games, and an indoor climber with foam balls. A nap room off the playroom is equipped with cots and several cribs; a bathroom with changing table is near the nap room. Children are fed in the kitchen. The fenced-in outdoor yard is equipped with swings, a low slide, and sand box. _____

ANECDOTAL RECORDS

An **anecdotal record** (ANN-ik-DOH-tul) is a *written description that focuses on a particular incident*. Included in this detailed written description are the children's names and ages, the setting or location, the date and time, and the nature of the observed behavior. Anecdotal records usually focus on one child at a time, including exactly what the child says and does during a specific episode of observed behavior.

For example, you might write an anecdotal record about a child examining objects with a magnifying glass in the science center. The child's interactions with others are objectively written down, including what each person says and does. This anecdotal record would help teachers see how the child interacts with educational materials and how developmental skills are enhanced through classroom experiences. A sample anecdotal record follows on page 10.

(Continued on next page)

Anecdotal Record: Preschool Social Responsibility

SAMPLE

Purpose: Describe and analyze an incident involving a preschool child or children.

Directions: Observe a child (or children) age three, four, or five in a child care program or other setting. As you do, look for a specific incident that interests you. Describe this incident in the space below. Provide as much detail as you can. Describe where and when the incident took place, who was involved, and what was said and done. Include details about tone of voice, body movements, and facial expressions. If necessary, continue your description on another sheet of paper.

Site: New Horizons Day Care Center Date of Observation: February 1

Name(s) and Age(s) of Child(Children) Involved: Sari, four years old

Description of Incident:

Four-year-old Sari entered the classroom clinging to her father's thigh. As her father signed her in on the attendance sheet, Sari cried quietly into her father's pant leg. Sari's father bent down and asked her why she was crying. She said she wanted him to stay with her for awhile. Her father said he would. Without talking, Sari led him to the double easel in the art center. Sari stood at one side of the easel. Her father pulled up a child's chair and sat on it at the other side of the easel. They both picked up paintbrushes and began to paint. Sari told her father she was painting the sun. Sari's father told her it was the best sun he had ever seen. Sari smiled and asked what he was painting. Her father said he was painting a tree. Sari said she could paint a tree, too. He responded, "I bet you can make really good trees." After two minutes passed, Sari's father said he had to go to work. Sari said, "Can't you paint another tree?" Her father put his arm behind her back and around her waist and said he would like to but his boss would be upset if he was late for work. Sari lowered her head a bit and whispered, "Okay." Her father knelt down and Sari hugged him around the neck. Her father walked out the door. Sari returned to the art easel and continued to paint her sun picture.

CHECKLISTS

A **checklist** is a *list of specific information for which the observer is looking*. The observer makes a check mark next to each item on the list to indicate its presence or absence. This is a relatively quick and easy way to record information.

A typical checklist might provide an outline of skills children are expected to master over time. These might be organized by developmental area, such as physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development. Checklists can be used when observing environmental factors in a center, too. For instance, you could use a checklist to record whether specific types of items are provided in a learning center.

The checklists in this book ask you to record your observations by making a check mark in either the “Yes” column or the “No” column next to each item. Often there is also a “Comments” section in which you can record additional details, if needed.

By completing checklists at different times of the year, teachers can identify specific skills or behaviors children have mastered as the result of maturation or experience. Checklists are often used to help teachers prepare for parent-teacher conferences. A sample checklist is found on page 12.

(Continued on next page)

Checklist: Preschooler Self-Concept & Self-Esteem

SAMPLE

Purpose: Identify signs of positive self-concept and high self-esteem in a preschool child.

Directions: Observe a preschooler (ages three to five) at a child care program or other site. Your observation should last at least one hour but may be spread over several visits. Look for evidence of the characteristics listed below. Record your findings by placing a check mark (✓) in the appropriate column. If you had no opportunity to observe a particular characteristic, write “Unable to observe” in the “Comments” column. Also use this column to record any additional details you wish to remember.

Key to Responses	
Yes—Characteristic observed	No—Child showed lack of characteristic

Site: Little Pals Learning Center Date of Observation: 10-15

Child’s First Name: Michael Age: 3 years

Characteristics	Yes	No	Comments
1. Knows personal name and gender.	✓		<i>Smiled broadly when name was said.</i>
2. Identifies things he or she can do.	✓		
3. Appears to enjoy playing alone as well as with others.		✓	<i>Didn’t play much with other children.</i>
4. Shows respect for own rights.	✓		
5. Shows respect for rights of others.		✓	<i>Kept only train set to himself.</i>
6. Smiles and laughs frequently.	✓		
7. Compares self favorably to others.			<i>Unable to observe.</i>
8. Appears to enjoy learning and performing new skills.	✓		
9. Shows confidence when learning new tasks.	✓		
10. Has patience with self when learning new tasks.		✓	<i>Became frustrated when trying to cut paper with scissors.</i>
11. Accepts positive comments from others.	✓		
12. Speaks well of self.			<i>Unable to observe.</i>
13. Shows pride in friends and/or family.	✓		
14. Maintains eye contact with others.		✓	<i>Looked away when one of the teachers tried to talk with him.</i>

RATING SCALES

Like a checklist, a rating scale lists specific information for which the observer is seeking. However, there is an important difference. When using a **rating scale**, the observer *records a letter or numerical evaluation of listed items*. For example, the observer might rate a child's level of skill on a scale of 1 to 5. A different rating scale might require the observer to note whether a child shows a particular trait often, sometimes, rarely, or never. Using a rating scale requires more thought and perhaps more time than using a checklist. However, it provides a more complete picture than is possible with simple "yes" and "no" answers.

Rating scales are used to record information about one child at a time. A teacher completes several rating scales on each child over an extended period of time to reach an accurate picture of each child's maturation. Like checklists, rating scales are often used to prepare for parent-teacher conferences. An example of a rating scale is found on page 14.

(Continued on next page)

Rating Scale: Self-Help Skills

SAMPLE

Purpose: Observe and rate the degree to which a preschool child is able to complete specific self-help tasks.

Directions: Observe a preschooler (ages three to five) as he or she attempts the self-help tasks listed in the chart. For each task, circle the number that indicates the preschooler’s level of success, referring to the rating scale below. If you had no opportunity to check for a particular skill, write “Unable to observe” in the “Comments” column. Also use this column to record any additional details you wish to remember.

Rating Scale

1—Unwilling to attempt task.
 2—Attempts task without success.
 3—Achieves partial success (for example, buttons coat partway).
 4—Completes task with some difficulty.
 5—Completes task with ease.

Site: Child's home Date of Observation: 4-21

Child's First Name: Carol Age: 3 years, 2 months

Self-Help Tasks	Rating	Comments
1. Combing hair	1 2 3 4 (5)	
2. Brushing teeth	1 2 (3) 4 5	<i>Needed encouragement to continue brushing.</i>
3. Taking off coat/sweater	1 2 3 4 (5)	
4. Putting on coat/sweater	1 2 (3) 4 5	<i>Needed help finding sleeves.</i>
5. Unzipping clothing	1 2 3 4 (5)	
6. Zipping clothing	1 2 (3) 4 5	<i>Needed help getting started.</i>
7. Unbuttoning clothing	1 2 3 (4) 5	<i>Took several minutes of working at it.</i>
8. Buttoning clothing	1 (2) 3 4 5	<i>Became frustrated and gave up.</i>
9. Putting on shoes	1 2 3 (4) 5	<i>Had trouble getting heels in shoes.</i>
10. Tying shoes	1 2 3 4 5	<i>Unable to observe (shoes had hook-and-loop fasteners).</i>

FREQUENCY COUNTS

If you want to know how often certain events happen in a preschool classroom, you might use the frequency count method of observation. A **frequency count** is a *record of the number of times a particular behavior or situation occurs during a specific period of time*. Rather than observing all the behaviors of a specific child, the observer watches for one type of behavior displayed by any of the children in the group.

For example, a teacher may want to determine how often toddlers who are ready for toilet training express a need to use the toilet. The teacher selects a number of time periods during the day to observe specifically for toileting needs. During each designated time period—which may last three to five minutes—the teacher makes a tally mark whenever a child expresses a need to use the toilet. (Incidents that take place outside the designated time periods are not recorded.) At the end of each observation day, the teacher counts the total number of tallies.

This method of observing and recording behavior can be used over a period of weeks or months to see if specific behaviors increase, decrease, or stay the same. Teachers often use this technique when trying to decide if new class activities or new discipline techniques are making a difference in children's behavior. You will find a sample frequency count on page 16.

(Continued on next page)

Frequency Count: Sharing

SAMPLE

Purpose: Compare how frequently children of different ages share willingly as they play in small groups.

Directions: In this activity, you will make nine different observations. First, spend five minutes observing a group of three to four children, all age three, as they play together. Each time one of the children shares willingly, make a tally mark in the first square under “Observation 1” below. Then observe two other groups of three-year-olds for five minutes each. Record those results under “Observation 2” and “Observation 3.” Repeat the process with three groups of four-year-old children, then three groups of five-year-old children. Try to observe about the same number of children each time so that you can make meaningful comparisons.

Site: Sun Valley Preschool Date(s) of Observations: January 6, 7, 10

Age Level	Observation 1	Observation 2	Observation 3
3 Years	I	II	None
4 Years	II	III	I
5 Years	III	III	III

RUNNING RECORDS

When using a **running record**, the observer creates a *sequential record of anything that happens during a specific period of time*. The period of time observed may range from ten minutes to a whole day. During this time, the observer writes down, minute by minute, everything that happens during the observation.

The observer's description often focuses on one child at a time. For example, the observer might want to examine how a particular child spends his or her time during choice time. The observer chooses a time period to observe and record whatever the child is doing. When completed, this running record gives teachers insight into the child's interests, developmental skills, and attention span. An example of a running record follows on page 18.

(Continued on next page)

Running Record: Art During Choice Time

SAMPLE

Purpose: Compare how two children of different ages use the art center in a child care program during choice time.

Directions: Visit a child care program at a time when choice time is scheduled (children play on their own in whatever learning centers they wish). For exactly five minutes, observe a three-year-old child playing in the art center. Record a description of everything the child does minute by minute. Make your description as complete as you can. Then repeat the procedure, this time observing a five-year-old child in the same situation.

Observation A—Three-Year-Old Child

Site: Country Kids Day Care Date of Observation: March 1

Child's First Name: Tina Age: 3 years, 5 months

Beginning Time: 3:00 p.m. Ending Time: 3:05 p.m.

Minute	Description of Behavior
1	<i>Tina walked over to the easel and picked up a brush with blue paint on it. The teacher's aide said, "Tina, you need to put on a smock to paint at the easel." Tina put the paintbrush back into the paint container.</i>
2	<i>She reached for a smock and put it on. Tina tried to tie the smock but couldn't. She asked Chad, age 5, who was on the other side of the easel, to tie it for her. Chad put down his paintbrush and tied Tina's smock.</i>
3	<i>Tina went back to her side of the easel. She picked up the paintbrush with blue paint and began painting large blue circles on her paper.</i>
4	<i>Tina continued painting circles. Then she walked back to Chad's side of the easel and said, "What are you painting, Chad?" Chad answered, "A tree." Tina said, "I'm making blue suns." She went back to painting circles.</i>
5	<i>Tina put the brush with the blue paint back into the container. She said, "Got to have some red, some red." She picked up a brush with red paint and began making dots on the paper.</i>

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Guided Observation:

Purpose: _____

Directions: _____

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Provider's Name: _____

Number and Ages of Children: _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Checklist:

Purpose: _____

Directions: _____

Key to Responses	
Yes —Characteristic observed	No —Child showed lack of characteristic

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Child's First Name: _____ Age: _____

Characteristics	Yes	No	Comments
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			

Rating Scale:

Purpose: _____

Directions: _____

Rating Scale

1—Unwilling to attempt task.
 2—Attempts task without success.
 3—Achieves partial success (for example, buttons coat partway).
 4—Completes task with some difficulty.
 5—Completes task with ease.

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Child's First Name: _____ Age: _____

	Rating	Comments
1.	1 2 3 4 5	
2.	1 2 3 4 5	
3.	1 2 3 4 5	
4.	1 2 3 4 5	
5.	1 2 3 4 5	
6.	1 2 3 4 5	
7.	1 2 3 4 5	
8.	1 2 3 4 5	
9.	1 2 3 4 5	
10.	1 2 3 4 5	
11.	1 2 3 4 5	
12.	1 2 3 4 5	

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Running Record:

Purpose: _____

Directions: _____

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Child's First Name: _____ Age: _____

Beginning Time: _____ Ending Time: _____

Minute	Description of Behavior
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

Observation
C-1

Checklist: Infant Development

Purpose: Identify the developmental changes that occur during infancy by comparing the abilities of two infants of different ages.

Part I—Directions: Observe two infants—one infant up to six months of age, the other seven to 12 months of age. Ask the care professional to work with the infants to test for the developmental characteristics listed below and on the next page. Record your findings on the chart by placing a check mark (√) in the appropriate column.

Key to Responses	
Yes —Skill observed	No —Child unable to demonstrate characteristic
? ? —No opportunity to observe this characteristic	

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Infant A—First Name: _____ Infant B—First Name: _____

Age: _____ months Age: _____ months

Length: _____ inches Length: _____ inches

Weight: _____ pounds Weight: _____ pounds

Developmental Characteristics	Infant A Birth-6 months			Infant B 7-12 months		
	Yes	No	?	Yes	No	?
Presence of Reflexes						
1. Rooting reflex (turns toward a touch on cheek or lips).						
2. Grasping reflex (closes hand when palm is touched).						
3. Walking motion (“steps” when held upright with feet touching floor).						
Sensory Development						
4. Responds to caregiver’s voice.						
5. Focuses on human face (or picture of face).						
6. Follows moving object with eyes.						

(Continued on next page)



Developmental Characteristics	Infant A Birth-6 months			Infant B 7-12 months		
	Yes	No	?	Yes	No	?
Motor Development						
7. Lifts head and chest when lying on stomach.						
8. Reaches for objects.						
9. Grasps objects.						
10. Rolls self over.						
11. Creeps on hands and knees.						
12. Walks with help of adult.						
13. Stands alone.						
14. Picks up small objects between thumb and forefinger.						
15. Feeds self.						
Intellectual Development						
16. Looks for objects after seeing care professional hide them.						
17. Appears to recognize some spoken words (such as own name, "mommy," "bottle," "no").						
18. Vocalizes sounds that imitate adult language.						
19. Speaks several words.						
Emotional and Social Development						
20. Shows distress when primary caregiver leaves the room.						
21. Shows pleasure when primary caregiver returns.						
22. Shows distress when strangers approach.						

Part II—Directions: Summarize your observations of the two infants by answering the following questions on a separate sheet of paper and attach it to this observation.

23. In general, what differences did you observe between the two infants?

24. What evidence do you see of general patterns of development?



Checklist: Toddler Development

Purpose: Identify developmental changes that occur during the toddler stage.

Part I—Directions: Observe a child between 18 and 36 months of age. Your total observation time should be at least one hour but may be spread over several visits. Look for the signs of development listed below and on the following pages. Record your findings by placing a check mark (✓) in the appropriate column. If you had no opportunity to observe a particular behavior, write “Unable to observe” in the “Comments” column. Also use this column to record any additional details you wish to remember.

Key to Responses	
Yes —Skill observed	No —Child lacked this skill or characteristic

Site: _____ Date(s) of Observation(s): _____

Child’s First Name: _____ Age in Months: _____

Signs of Development	Yes	No	Comments
Physical Development			
1. Walks independently.			
2. Climbs up stairs. (Describe how.)			
3. Walks down stairs. (Describe how.)			
4. Pushes self on wheeled toy.			
5. Pedals wheeled toy (such as a tricycle).			
6. Feeds self using fork or spoon.			
7. Stacks two to four blocks.			
8. Stacks five or six blocks.			
9. Assembles six-piece puzzle.			
10. Scribbles with a crayon.			
11. Turns pages of book one at a time.			
12. Recognizes when diaper is soiled.			
13. Uses toilet (as needed) when taken there.			
14. Asks to use toilet when needed.			

(Continued on next page)



Signs of Development	Yes	No	Comments
Intellectual Development			
15. Solves problems through trial and error.			
16. Observes adults and copies their behavior.			
17. Uses two-word sentences.			
18. Uses three- to four-word sentences.			
19. Responds to “yes” and “no” questions.			
20. Identifies body parts by pointing and naming.			
21. Repeats bits of favorite rhymes and stories.			
22. Tells about experiences.			
23. Follows simple directions (such as “Pick up the ball.”).			
24. Shows understanding of prepositions (such as “The ball is inside the box.”).			
25. Matches items that are alike.			
Emotional Development			
26. Shows frustration at lack of abilities.			
27. Resists cooperating or does opposite of what is asked.			
28. Responds appropriately to reasonable choices.			
29. Shows signs of fears.			
Social Development			
30. Engages in parallel play.			
31. Engages in cooperative play.			
32. Engages in small group activities for short periods.			
33. Shows understanding of one or more simple rules.			

(Continued on next page)



Signs of Development	Yes	No	Comments
Social Development, continued			
34. Shares willingly.			
35. Exhibits some self-help skills (such as washing own hands, putting away toys).			

Part II—Directions: Summarize your observations by answering the following questions in the space provided.

36. In what ways did the toddler you observed seem typical of this age group? _____

37. Did any of the toddler’s behavior seem unusual for this age? Explain. _____

38. What signs of a toddler’s increasing independence did you observe? _____

39. Has this observation experience helped you better understand toddlers? Why or why not?

Guided Observation: Toddler Development



Purpose: Describe changes in development during the toddler stage.

Directions: Observe a group of toddlers of mixed ages in an early childhood setting for at least one hour. You may want to observe these toddlers more than one time. Record your responses to the questions or statements that follow.

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Number and Age Range of Toddlers: _____

1. Describe the types of small motor skills you observe the toddlers using. _____

2. Describe ways that the toddlers use eye-hand coordination. _____

3. Describe the large motor skills you observe being used by younger toddlers (12 to 18 months) and older toddlers (19 to 36 months). How do they differ?

(Continued on next page)

Observation
C-4
Continued

4. Describe the self-help skills you observe in younger and older toddlers. What changes appear to be most significant during this stage?

5. Give at least three examples of ways the toddlers communicate nonverbally.

6. List at least five words you hear the toddlers using. How often do you hear the words “me,” “my,” “mine,” and “no”?

(Continued on next page)



Checklist: Preschooler Development

Purpose: Identify developmental changes during the preschool stage.

Part I—Directions: Observe a child who is three, four, or five years old. Your observation should last at least one hour but may be continued over several visits. Look for signs of development listed below and on the next page. Record your findings by placing a check mark (√) in the appropriate column. If you had no opportunity to observe a particular behavior, write “Unable to observe” in the “Comments” column. Also use this column to record any additional details you wish to remember.

Key to Responses	
Yes—Skill observed	No—Child lacked this skill or characteristic

Site: _____ Date(s) of Observation(s): _____

Child’s First Name: _____ Age in Months: _____

Signs of Development	Yes	No	Comments
Physical Development			
1. Walks down stairs. (Describe how.)			
2. Easily changes directions while running.			
3. Throws a ball. (Describe how.)			
4. Catches a ball. (Describe how.)			
5. Skips.			
6. Stacks seven or more blocks. (Note number.)			
7. Draws recognizable shapes.			
8. Draws recognizable pictures.			
9. Draws some alphabet letters.			
10. Cuts with scissors.			
11. Buttons clothing.			
Intellectual Development			
12. Demonstrates imagination and symbolic thought (for example, uses a stuffed animal as a “baby” or pretends a tricycle is a car).			
13. Sorts objects by one variable, such as color.			

(Continued on next page)



Signs of Development	Yes	No	Comments
Intellectual Development, continued			
14. Groups objects by size.			
15. Counts by rote. (Note highest number recited in sequence.)			
16. Counts three objects accurately.			
17. Applies grammar rules, even when inappropriate (may say “foots” or “breaeked”).			
18. Uses most grammar rules correctly.			
Emotional Development			
19. Shows some self-control (for example, says “I want that” instead of grabbing toy from another child).			
20. Shows some empathy for others (for example, comforts child who is sad).			
21. Shows pride in abilities by demonstrating them to others.			
22. Willingly helps with chores.			
Social Development			
23. Plays in groups of two or three.			
24. Plays in groups of four to eight.			
25. Joins in activities suggested by others.			
26. Suggests activities.			
27. Plays cooperatively with others.			
28. Refers to one or more “best friends.”			
29. Shares willingly.			
30. Shows awareness of differences between boys and girls.			
31. Shows awareness of racial or ethnic differences.			

(Continued on next page)



Signs of Development	Yes	No	Comments
Ethical Development			
32. Indicates awareness that certain actions result in reward or punishment.			
33. Shows signs of guilt after misbehavior.			
34. Tells adult when someone breaks a rule.			

Part II—Directions: Summarize your observations by answering the following questions in the space provided.

35. In what ways did the child you observed seem typical of this age group?

36. Did any of the child’s behavior seem unusual for this age? Explain.

37. Has this observation experience helped you better understand preschoolers? Why or why not?

Checklist: Preschooler Self-Concept & Self-Esteem



Purpose: Identify signs of positive self-concept and high self-esteem in a preschool child.

Part I—Directions: Observe a preschooler (ages three to five) at a child care program or other site. Your observation should last at least one hour but may be spread over several visits. Look for evidence of the characteristics listed below. Record your findings by placing a check mark (✓) in the appropriate column. If you had no opportunity to observe a particular characteristic, write “Unable to observe” in the “Comments” column. Also use this column to record any additional details you wish to remember.

Key to Responses	
Yes—Characteristic observed	No—Child lacked characteristic

Site: _____ Date(s) of Observation(s): _____

Child’s First Name: _____ Age: _____

Characteristics	Yes	No	Comments
1. Knows personal name and gender.			
2. Identifies things he or she can do.			
3. Appears to enjoy playing alone as well as with others.			
4. Shows respect for own rights.			
5. Shows respect for rights of others.			
6. Smiles and laughs frequently.			
7. Compares self favorably to others.			
8. Appears to enjoy learning and performing new skills.			
9. Shows confidence when learning new tasks.			
10. Has patience with self when learning new tasks.			
11. Accepts positive comments from others.			
12. Speaks well of self.			

(Continued on next page)



Characteristics	Yes	No	Comments
13. Shows pride in friends and/or family.			
14. Maintains eye contact with others.			
15. Appears to enjoy performing self-help skills.			

Part II—Directions: Summarize your observations by answering the following questions in the space provided. Use an additional sheet of paper if necessary and attach it to this activity.

16. What evidence of a positive self-concept and high self-esteem did you observe?

17. Did you see any evidence of a need to strengthen the child’s self-concept or self-esteem? Explain.

18. What steps can a child care program take to build children’s self-esteem?



Part II—Directions: Summarize your observation by answering the following questions in the space provided.

1. Why do you think the children involved in this incident behaved as they did?

2. What further observations would you want to make before reaching any conclusions about preschool children's social responsibility?

3. How has this observation aided your understanding of preschool social responsibility?

Guided Observation: School-Age Development



Purpose: Identify signs of physical and intellectual development shown by a school-age child.

Directions: Observe a school-age child (ages six to 12 years old) for at least one hour. As you do, look for evidence of the physical, intellectual, emotional, and social skills that are developing during the school-age years as discussed in your text. List three physical, intellectual, emotional, and social skills below and describe the specific behavior you observed.

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Child's First Name: _____ Age: _____

Physical Skills	Description of Behavior
Intellectual Skills	Description of Behavior

(Continued on next page)

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Observation
C-9
Continued

Emotional Skills	Description of Behavior
Social Skills	Description of Behavior

Running Record: School-Age Games



Purpose: Identify signs of emotional and social development shown by a school-age child while playing a game with peers.

Part I—Directions: Observe a small group of school-age children as they play a game together, such as table tennis, a board game, or hopscotch. For exactly ten minutes, observe what happens during the game, focusing your attention on one child. Record a minute-by-minute description of everything the child does, including interaction with the other children. Make your description as complete as you can.

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Child's First Name: _____ Age: _____

Number and Ages of Other Children: _____

Beginning Time: _____ Ending Time: _____

Minute	Description of Behavior
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

(Continued on next page)



Minute	Description of Behavior
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

Part II—Directions: Summarize your observations by answering the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. How would you describe the child's level of self-confidence and self-esteem in this situation? Give an example to support your answer.
2. What examples of cooperation (or lack of it) did you observe?
3. Did the child you observed seem to place more value on winning or on the enjoyment of the game? Explain.
4. To what extent did the child seem concerned with following rules and playing fair? How does this relate to emotional and social development?

Guided Observation: School-Age Children— Six to Eight Years



Purpose: Identify the signs of development in school-age children.

Directions: Observe a group of six- to eight-year-old children for at least one hour. You may want to observe these children more than one time. Record your responses to the questions or statements that follow.

Site: _____ Date(s) of Observation(s): _____

Number and Ages of Children: _____

1. Describe the small-motor skills you observe in these children. _____

2. Describe the large-motor skills you observe in these children. _____

3. According to Erik Erikson, school-age children strive to be industrious. Describe several behaviors or actions you observe that support this theory.

4. Observe school-age children involved in a group project. How do the children utilize social and language skills to work cooperatively?

(Continued on next page)



5. During physical education time or outdoor active play, observe school-age children in an organized group game. What rules are the children able to follow?

6. Are the children dependent on teachers for enforcing the rules, or do the children enforce rules for each other? How is this accomplished?

7. How are group play disputes handled between children? What social values, such as honesty, do the children strongly defend?

8. Identify friendships between the children. Considering the behaviors you observe, on what basis do you think these friendships are formed?

Running Record: School-Age Behavior



Purpose: Identify and describe behavior related to the intellectual, emotional, social, or moral development of school-age children.

Directions: Observe a group of school-age children. Your observation should last at least one hour, but may take place over several visits. Choose one of the following topics for your observation:

_____ Creativity _____ Self-esteem _____ Cooperation _____ Peer pressure

Look for two events that relate to your chosen category. Each time you observe such an event, describe what happens in the space provided. If necessary, continue your descriptions on another sheet of paper.

Record 1

First Names and Ages of Children: _____

Site: _____ Date and Time: _____

(Continued on next page)

Guided Observation: Program Goals



Purpose: Identify how a child care program’s environment, routines, and activities support basic program goals.

Part I—Directions: Make arrangements to observe a preschool child care program for at least one hour. As you observe, look for specific examples of ways the program meets the basic program goals listed in the left column. Record your examples on the chart.

Name of Program: _____

Observation Date: _____

Program Goals for Children	Examples
1. Gain high self-esteem and a positive attitude.	
2. Learn self-help skills that lead to independence and responsibility.	
3. Develop positive social skills, such as cooperation and sharing.	
4. Learn problem-solving skills.	
5. Improve communication skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.	

(Continued on next page)



Program Goals for Children	Examples
6. Develop curiosity about the world.	
7. Improve ability to think and play creatively.	
8. Gain respect for the feelings and rights of others.	
9. Learn to properly handle and store play materials.	

Part II—Directions: Summarize your observations by answering the following questions in the space provided. (Use additional paper if necessary and attach it to this activity.)

10. Which goals does this child care program seem to emphasize? Why do you think so?

11. Which goals appear to be more challenging to meet than others? Why do you think that this is true?

Guided Observation: Learning Centers



Purpose: Identify how learning centers function by observing them in use.

Directions: Observe the learning centers in an early childhood classroom for at least 30 to 60 minutes. You may observe more than one time. Complete the questions or statements that follow.

Site: _____ Date(s) of Observation(s): _____

Number and Ages of Children: _____

1. Place a check mark next to the learning centers present in this classroom.

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| _____ Math | _____ Block | _____ Active Play |
| _____ Science | _____ Music | _____ Woodworking |
| _____ Art | _____ Water/Sand Table | _____ Cooking |
| _____ Language Arts | _____ Dramatic Play | |
| _____ Other (specify): _____ | | |

2. In the space provided, draw a simple diagram of the classroom including entrances and exits, learning centers, etc. Using a separate color, indicate the traffic patterns in this classroom.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing a diagram of a classroom.

(Continued on next page)



3. Describe the types of boundaries that are used to clearly define the learning centers.

4. Give at least two examples of the types of equipment, toys, and materials found in each learning center.

5. Are children allowed to work in learning centers independently? If so, give an example of one such activity that you observe.

6. How do children choose which learning centers to use? _____

7. How is the number of children in each center controlled to prevent overcrowding?

8. What is the role of the teacher while children are using the learning centers?

Guided Observation: Classroom Environments



Purpose: Examine how the environment helps meet the care needs and educational needs of young children.

Directions: Observe an early childhood classroom for at least 30 minutes while children are present. Record your responses to the questions or statements that follow.

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Number and Ages of Children: _____

1. How are the entrances to the classroom and learning centers set up to give a friendly welcome to children and parents? How might they be improved?

2. Describe the space that is set apart in the classroom for communication with parents (for example, a parent bulletin board or sign-in table).

(Continued on next page)



3. Observe all areas of the classroom, including restrooms and eating areas. What evidence do you see that this classroom is clean, safe, and healthy? What problems, if any, do you notice?

4. How does the design of the physical space ensure that children experience success with activities? Give an example.

5. Describe three qualities you see that make this classroom child-friendly.

(Continued on next page)



6. Describe how classroom materials and equipment are organized to prevent clutter.

7. Describe the way that children's work is displayed. _____

8. What is the general noise level of the classroom? Is there a pleasant hum of activity or disruptive noise? Are children's voices or teachers' voices dominant?

9. Is the classroom active and colorful, while at the same time not overstimulating? Give an example to support your answer.

(Continued on next page)



10. List an example of each of the following types of play that you observed.

Active play: _____

Quiet play: _____

Group play: _____

Independent play: _____



Checklist: Classroom Safety

Purpose: Identify the safety measures practiced in a child care program.

Part I—Directions: Observe a classroom in a child care center, looking for evidence of the safety precautions listed below. Record your findings by placing a check mark (√) in the appropriate column. Use the “Comments” column to record any additional details you wish to remember.

Key to Responses	
Yes—Precaution observed	No—Precaution has not been taken

Site: _____

Age Range of Children: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Safety Precautions	Yes	No	Comments
1. Toys and equipment are developmentally appropriate for the age group.			
2. Equipment is in good repair and safe for use.			
3. Arrangement of classroom furniture and equipment is well organized to prevent accidents and injuries.			
4. Emergency telephone numbers are posted close to the telephone.			
5. The classroom contains a first aid kit.			
6. Fire extinguishers are easily accessible and well marked.			
7. Fire extinguishers have up-to-date inspection stickers.			
8. Emergency evacuation plans for fires, storms, and earthquakes are posted in the classroom.			
9. Poisonous substances, such as medicines and cleaning supplies, are in locked cabinets away from children.			

(Continued on next page)



Part II—Directions: Summarize your observations by answering the following questions in the space provided.

10. In what ways do you feel this early childhood classroom serves as a good example when it comes to safety measures?

11. In what ways do you feel the safety of the classroom could be improved?

12. Choose one of the precautions listed in the chart. Why is it important? What might happen if this precaution were not taken in a classroom?

Guided Observation: Health Environment



Purpose: Examine the health practices and procedures that affect children in an early childhood setting.

Directions: Interview one or more care professionals and observe the health environment in an early childhood setting. Record your responses to the questions that follow. Observe for at least 30 to 45 minutes.

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Number and Ages of Children: _____

1. Describe the play and sleep space provided for the children. Does it seem adequate? Why or why not?

2. How often are sheets washed? _____

3. Is there an isolation room with sleeping spaces for ill children? _____

4. How are care professionals made aware of the special needs of children with allergies or disabilities?

(Continued on next page)



5. What sanitation procedures are practiced? _____

6. Is the classroom, including restrooms and eating area, well ventilated and cleaned and sanitized regularly? Describe what you see and smell.

7. Describe the record-keeping procedures used for tracking feeding, diapering (if necessary), sleeping patterns, and illness.

(Continued on next page)



8. Is the telephone number posted for reporting suspected child abuse? If so, where?

9. How are care professionals trained in reporting cases of child abuse? _____

10. What reporting procedures are followed when a child care professional suspects child abuse?



Running Record: Observing a Daily Routine

Purpose: Analyze the effectiveness of a specific daily routine in a child care program.

Part I—Directions: Visit a child care program in order to observe one of the routines listed below. For exactly ten minutes, observe what happens during the routine, focusing your attention on one child. Record a minute-by-minute description of everything the child does and how staff members interact with the child. Make your description as complete as you can.

Routine observed (check one):

- Arrival Preparing for nap/rest time Cleanup after an activity
 Preparing for outdoor play Toileting Departure

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Child's First Name: _____ Age: _____

Beginning Time: _____ Ending Time: _____

Minute	Description of Behavior
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

(Continued on next page)



Minute	Description of Behavior
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

Part II—Directions: Summarize your observations by answering the following questions in the space provided.

1. Did the child appear to be comfortable and familiar with this routine? Explain.

(Continued on next page)



Checklist: Meal Service for Young Children

Purpose: Analyze and evaluate mealtime procedures in an early childhood setting.

Part I—Directions: Observe meal service in a child care program. As you observe, look for answers to the questions listed below and on the next page. Record your findings by placing a check mark (✓) in the appropriate column of the chart. If you cannot answer a question based on your observation, write “Unable to observe” in the “Comments” column. Also use this column to record any additional details you wish to remember.

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Number and Ages of Children: _____

Circle the type of meal service observed:

Breakfast Morning Snack Lunch Afternoon Snack Supper

Questions	Yes	No	Comments
Menu			
1. Did the meal or snack appear to be healthful, without excess fat and sugar?			
2. Which of the following food groups were represented in the menu?			
a. Bread, Cereal, Rice, and Pasta Group			
b. Vegetable Group			
c. Fruit Group			
d. Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese Group			
e. Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, and Nuts Group			
3. Did any children with special food needs (such as those with allergies) receive food that was different from other children?			
4. Were there any ethnic foods served? Specify.			
5. Was at least one finger food served? Specify.			
6. Was enough food available to satisfy all the children, including second portions if desired?			

(Continued on next page)



Questions	Yes	No	Comments
Meal Service and Mealtime Atmosphere			
7. Was the meal prepared and presented in an appetizing manner?			
8. Were children allowed to serve themselves using child-size serving dishes and utensils?			
9. Was food served in child-size pieces?			
10. Did adults sit with the children?			
11. Was there pleasant conversation during the meal?			
12. Did most of the children appear to enjoy the meal?			
13. Were the children encouraged to stay seated during the meal?			
14. Were children encouraged to use their napkins effectively?			
Personal Hygiene, Sanitation, and Safety			
15. Did children and teachers wash their hands before eating?			
16. Did children eat only from their own plate?			
17. Were clean dishes and utensils provided if children dropped them on the floor?			
18. Was food discarded when dropped on the table or floor?			
19. Did children and teachers brush their teeth after eating?			
20. Was information on how to help choking victims posted in the eating area?			

Part II—Directions: Summarize your observation by answering the following questions on a separate sheet of paper and attach it to this activity.

- 21. What was your overall impression of the meal service you observed?
- 22. Were the utensils, tabletops, and food preparation surfaces sanitized appropriately after use?
- 23. Describe an aspect of the meal service that impressed you positively. What did you like about it?
- 24. What improvement(s) would you suggest and why?



Part II—Directions: Summarize your observation by answering the following questions in the space provided.

1. For what signs of health did the child care professional seem to be checking?

2. Did the child seem comfortable with the routine? Explain. What did the care professional do to make the routine go smoothly?

3. How has this observation aided your understanding of health checks?



Checklist: Managing Behavior

Purpose: Identify techniques used for managing the behavior of children in a group care setting.

Part I—Directions: Observe a child care professional in a program for preschoolers (ages three to five). Your observation should last at least one hour but may be spread over several visits. As you observe, look for answers to the questions listed below and on the next page. Record your findings by placing a check mark (✓) in the appropriate column of the chart. Support your answer to each question by writing a specific example in the space provided. (You may continue your examples on an additional sheet of paper, if necessary.) If you cannot answer a question based on your observation, write “Unable to observe” in the “Examples” column.

Site: _____ Date(s) of Observation(s): _____

First Name of Teacher: _____

Number and Ages of Children: _____

Behavior Management	Yes	No	Examples
1. Do you see evidence that the teacher has expressed clear expectations to children in terms of classroom behavior?			
2. Does the teacher show consistency in enforcing rules?			
3. Does the teacher try to prevent behavior problems from happening?			
4. Is the teacher able to monitor the activities of all children at all times?			

(Continued on next page)



Behavior Management	Yes	No	Examples
5. Does the teacher help children identify and verbalize their own feelings?			
6. Does the teacher try to help children understand how other people feel?			
7. Does the teacher encourage children to negotiate, compromise, and solve problems on their own?			
8. Does the teacher encourage children to develop self-control?			
9. Does the teacher redirect children to appropriate behaviors when needed?			
10. Does the teacher use a firm voice when correcting behavior?			

Guided Observation: Managing Group Time



Purpose: Identify effective techniques for managing behavior during group activities.

Directions: Observe a child care professional during group time. Observe the entire group activity for at least 30 minutes. Record your responses to the questions that follow.

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Age(s) of Children: _____

1. How many children are in the group? How many adults? _____

2. How does the teacher gather the children to the group time area? _____

3. How does the teacher help children identify their own personal space during group time?

4. How does the teacher use facial expressions to focus attention during group time?

5. How does the teacher use tone of voice to focus attention during group time?

(Continued on next page)



6. Describe the group time activity. Was it successful? Why or why not? _____

7. Describe the pace of group time (relaxed, hurried, etc.). How many minutes are devoted to group time? Do the children seem interested the entire time?

8. How does the teacher encourage the children to participate? _____

9. How does the teacher draw distracted children back into the group activity without stopping the whole group process?

10. How does the teacher end the activity? How are the children directed to the next activity? Is the transition smooth or confused and disorganized?

Guided Observation: Effects of Teaching Style



Purpose: Examine the effects of a teacher's teaching style on children in the classroom.

Directions: Observe a teacher in a child care setting for at least one hour. Record your responses to the questions that follow. You may want to observe this teacher more than one time. If needed, use additional paper for your responses and attach it to this activity.

Site: _____ Date(s) of Observation(s): _____

Number and Ages of Children: _____ Teacher's Name: _____

1. Are the children, rather than the teacher, the main focus in this classroom? Explain.

2. How does the teacher's energy level and personal teaching style influence the overall classroom environment?

3. Give an example showing the teacher's personal teaching style. Does he or she act as a facilitator or more as a presenter of information?

(Continued on next page)



4. Does the teacher make use of “teachable moments”? Give an example.

5. How does the teacher encourage children’s discoveries and investigations? Give an example of how questions are asked to help children clarify their thinking.

6. How do the learning experiences the teacher plans show that the teacher is well acquainted with each child’s development and learning needs?

7. In what ways does the teacher allow children to be somewhat self-directed in the classroom?

8. How do the children respond to the teacher’s style of teaching? Give specific examples.

Guided Observation: Diversity & Cultural Awareness



Purpose: Relate ways that diversity and cultural awareness are shown in the classroom environment and activities.

Directions: Observe a child care program and interview one or more of the child care professionals. Allow at least one hour. Look for evidence that the program includes diversity and cultural awareness. Record your answers to the questions that follow. Use additional paper if necessary.

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

First Name(s) of Care Professional(s): _____

Number and Ages of Children: _____

1. How does the program philosophy address cultural awareness and diversity? Describe the basic elements of this philosophy.

2. From the list below, check the ways that different cultures are represented in the classroom.

- a. Multicultural songs are sung at music time Yes ____ No ____
- b. Children's books include stories from other cultures Yes ____ No ____
- c. Children's books include children from a variety of
cultural and racial backgrounds Yes ____ No ____
- d. Menus reflect foods from various cultures Yes ____ No ____
- e. Cooking projects include multicultural foods Yes ____ No ____
- f. Musical instruments reflect cultural diversity Yes ____ No ____

(Continued on next page)

Guided Observation: Inclusion of People with Disabilities



Purpose: Analyze whether and how a child care program encourages acceptance and inclusion of those with disabilities.

Directions: Observe at an early childhood program and interview an early childhood professional concerning inclusion of people with disabilities. Observe for at least 30 minutes. Record your responses to the questions that follow. If necessary, use additional paper for your answers.

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Number and Ages of Children: _____

First Name of Early Childhood Professional: _____

1. Describe the program's philosophy on including children and adults with disabilities.

2. How does the classroom reflect individuals with disabilities as part of daily life?

- a. Children's books include characters with disabilities Yes ____ No ____
- b. Dramatic play dolls reflect people with disabilities Yes ____ No ____
- c. Posters on the walls include persons with disabilities Yes ____ No ____
- d. Dress-up props include items related to disabilities, such as eyeglass frames, child-size crutches, or wheelchairs Yes ____ No ____

3. Are the classroom entrance and pathways accessible to those with disabilities? Explain your answer.

(Continued on next page)

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____



4. What activities and materials are provided that ensure children with disabilities can fully participate at the center?

Activities: _____

Materials: _____

Rating Scale: Self-Help Skills



Purpose: Observe and rate the degree to which a preschool child is able to complete specific self-help tasks.

Directions: Observe a preschooler (ages three to five) as he or she attempts the self-help tasks listed in the chart. For each task, circle the number that indicates the preschooler's level of success, referring to the rating scale below. If you had no opportunity to check for a particular skill, write "Unable to observe" in the "Comments" column. Also use this column to record any additional details you wish to remember.

Rating Scale

1—Unwilling to attempt task.
 2—Attempts task without success.
 3—Achieves partial success (for example, buttons coat partway).
 4—Completes task with some difficulty.
 5—Completes task with ease.

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Child's First Name: _____ Age: _____

Self-Help Tasks	Rating	Comments
1. Combing hair	1 2 3 4 5	
2. Brushing teeth	1 2 3 4 5	
3. Taking off coat/sweater	1 2 3 4 5	
4. Putting on coat/sweater	1 2 3 4 5	
5. Unzipping clothing	1 2 3 4 5	
6. Zipping clothing	1 2 3 4 5	

(Continued on next page)

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____



Self-Help Tasks	Rating	Comments
7. Unbuttoning clothing	1 2 3 4 5	
8. Buttoning clothing	1 2 3 4 5	
9. Putting on shoes	1 2 3 4 5	
10. Tying shoes	1 2 3 4 5	

Checklist: Preschooler Responsibility



Purpose: Identify the degree to which a preschooler demonstrates responsibility.

Part I—Directions: Observe a preschooler (ages three to five) in a child care program. Your observation should last at least one hour but may be spread over several visits. Look for evidence of the characteristics listed below. Record your findings by placing a check mark (✓) in the appropriate column. If you had no opportunity to observe a particular characteristic, write “Unable to observe” in the “Comments” column. Also use this column to record any additional details you wish to remember.

Key to Responses	
Yes—Characteristic observed	No—Child lacked characteristic

Site: _____ Date(s) of Observation(s): _____

Child’s First Name: _____ Age: _____

Characteristics of Responsibility	Yes	No	Comments
1. Puts toys away.			
2. Keeps personal items in cubby.			
3. Assists in cleanup activities.			
4. Helps with chores willingly.			
5. Follows directions given by the teacher.			
6. Makes own choices when appropriate.			
7. Requests permission for privileges as appropriate.			
8. Accepts consequences for misbehavior.			

(Continued on next page)



Part II—Directions: Summarize your observations by answering the following questions in the space provided.

9. In what ways did the child you observed demonstrate a sense of responsibility?

10. In what ways did the child care program you observed encourage responsibility and self-help skills?



Part II—Directions: Summarize your observation by answering the following questions in the space provided.

1. How would you explain the child's behavior in this incident? _____

2. What further observations would you want to make before reaching any conclusions about preschool children's intellectual development?

3. How has this observation aided your understanding of preschool intellectual development?

Running Record: Art During Choice Time



Purpose: Compare how two children of different ages use the art center in an early childhood program during choice time.

Part I—Directions: Visit an early childhood program during a scheduled choice time (children play on their own in whatever learning centers they wish). For exactly five minutes, observe a three-year-old child playing in the art center. Record a description of everything the child does, minute by minute. Make your description as complete as you can. Then repeat the procedure, this time observing a five-year-old child in the same situation.

Observation A—Three-Year-Old Child

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Child's First Name: _____ Age: _____

Beginning Time: _____ Ending Time: _____

Minute	Description of Behavior
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

(Continued on next page)

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____



Observation B—Five-Year-Old Child

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Child's First Name: _____ Age: _____

Beginning Time: _____ Ending Time: _____

Minute	Description of Behavior
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Part II—Directions: Summarize your observations by answering the following questions in the space provided.

1. What small-motor skills did the three-year-old child demonstrate?

(Continued on next page)



2. What small-motor skills did the five-year-old child demonstrate?

3. What evidence of creativity and decision making did you see when observing the three-year-old child?

4. What evidence of creativity and decision making did you see when observing the five-year-old child?

5. What similarities did you observe in the way the two children used the materials in the art center?

6. What differences did you observe in the way the two children used the materials in the art center?



Guided Observation: Art Center

Purpose: Identify how art center materials and activities encourage creativity and skill development in young children.

Directions: Observe the art center and art activities in an early childhood classroom for at least 30 to 50 minutes. Record your responses to the questions or statements that follow.

1. From the following list, check whether items are provided for children.
 - a. Smocks to protect clothing Yes ____ No ____
 - b. Easy access to materials Yes ____ No ____
 - c. Child-size tables and chairs Yes ____ No ____
 - d. Space to dry art work Yes ____ No ____
 - e. Space to display art work Yes ____ No ____
 - f. Right- and left-handed art tools Yes ____ No ____
 - g. Art tools for those with disabilities Yes ____ No ____
 - h. Sponges and paper towels for easy clean-up Yes ____ No ____
 - i. Paint easels and chalkboards Yes ____ No ____

2. List at least three examples of art materials provided for each category that follows.

Drawing tools: _____

Painting tools: _____

Paper for drawing, painting, and cutting: _____

(Continued on next page)



Collage materials for gluing: _____

3. Are both teacher-planned and child-initiated art activities available in the art center? Give examples.

4. How are creativity and imagination stimulated in the art center? _____

5. What materials and activities are provided to reinforce small-motor skills?

6. Give an example of language skills you observe children using in the art center.

(Continued on next page)

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____



7. Give an example showing how each of the following concepts is developed in the art center.

Art concepts: _____

Math concepts: _____

Science concepts: _____

Checklist: Language Skills of Preschoolers



Purpose: Identify specific signs of language development shown by a preschool child.

Part I—Directions: Observe a preschooler (ages three to five) at an early childhood program or other site. Your observation should last at least one hour, but may be continued over several visits. Look for evidence of the skills listed below and on the next page. Record your findings by placing a check mark (✓) in the appropriate column. If you had no opportunity to observe a particular skill, write “Unable to observe” in the “Comments” column. Also use this column to record additional details.

Key to Responses	
Yes—Skill observed	No—Child unable to perform skill

Site: _____ Date(s) of Observation(s): _____

Child’s First Name: _____ Age: _____

Language Skills	Yes	No	Comments
Speech & Listening Skills			
1. Hears and responds to differences in sounds.			
2. Responds to spoken language (for example, looks up when name is called).			
3. Listens attentively.			
4. Responds appropriately to simple commands.			
5. Uses spoken language to communicate with adults.			
6. Uses spoken language to communicate with other children.			
7. Contributes to simple conversations.			
8. Speaks in one- or two-word sentences.			
9. Speaks in complete sentences.			
10. Speaks clearly enough for others to understand.			
11. Routinely pronounces sounds and words correctly.			

(Continued on next page)



Language Skills	Yes	No	Comments
Speech & Listening Skills, continued			
12. Identifies rhyming words.			
13. Uses past tense verbs correctly.			
14. Uses proper word order in statements and questions.			
Reading Skills			
15. Pretends to read books to self or others.			
16. Predicts plot by looking at pictures.			
17. Memorizes favorite books.			
18. Shows interest in letters and numbers.			
19. Recognizes some letters and numbers.			
20. Identifies first letter in first name.			
21. Identifies first letter in last name.			
22. Identifies own complete written name.			
23. Reads basic words.			
Writing Skills			
24. Pretends to write by scribbling.			
25. Traces letters and words.			
26. Writes some letters and numbers.			
27. Writes letters found in name.			
28. Writes name.			
29. Experiments making words using a computer.			
30. Shows interest in writing letters to others.			

(Continued on next page)



Part II—Directions: For each of the following areas, identify one skill that the child you observed has not yet mastered. Then describe an activity you might plan in order to promote that skill.

31. Speech or listening skill: _____

Activity: _____

32. Reading skill: _____

Activity: _____

33. Writing skill: _____

Activity: _____



Guided Observation: Language Arts Center

Purpose: Identify how language arts center materials and activities benefit children.

Directions: Observe children using a language arts center during choice time for at least 30–60 minutes. Record your responses to the questions that follow. If necessary, use additional paper for your answers.

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Number and Ages of Children: _____

1. Describe what equipment or play materials are provided in this center to encourage children to develop the following language skills.

Speech: _____

Reading: _____

Writing: _____

Listening: _____

(Continued on next page)

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____



2. How does the teacher interact with children in the language arts center? _____

3. Describe how print materials are used in this center. Would you say it provides a “print-rich” environment? Why or why not?

4. How are children’s books used in this area? _____



Frequency Count: Dramatic Play Behavior

Purpose: Determine how frequently a preschool child exhibits specific behavior during dramatic play.

Part I—Directions: Observe a preschooler taking part in dramatic play with other children. Your observation should last at least 30 minutes but may be conducted in more than one session, if needed. Look for the specific behaviors listed below. Record your findings by making a tally mark each time the behavior occurs.

Site: _____ Date(s): _____

Child's First Name: _____ Age: _____

Behavior	Tally
1. Uses an object symbolically.	
2. Takes on adult role (such as parent or police officer).	
3. Takes on fantasy role (such as animal or superhero).	
4. Directs own actions (chooses role and decides what to do).	
5. Directs others (for example, "You be the store clerk.").	
6. Accepts direction from others.	
7. Resists direction from others.	

(Continued on next page)



Part II—Directions: Summarize your observations by answering the following questions in the space provided.

8. What patterns did you notice in the way the child took on and acted out roles?

9. How has this observation helped you gain a better understanding of dramatic play?



Guided Observation: Dramatic Play Center

Purpose: Describe how dramatic play activities and props benefit the development of young children.

Directions: Observe activities and props in a dramatic play center for at least 30 to 60 minutes. Record your responses to the questions or statements that follow. You may want to observe more than once.

Site: _____ Date(s) of Observation(s): _____

Number and Ages of Children: _____

1. What types of dress-up clothes and props are provided in this learning center?

2. Describe the other types of equipment provided in this center. _____

3. Does this learning center provide positive experiences for children regardless of gender, cultural or ethnic backgrounds, and abilities (including those with disabilities)? Give three examples to support your answer.

(Continued on next page)



4. What is the role of the teacher in this center? _____

5. How does the teacher facilitate play in this area? _____

6. Give at least one example showing how each of the following skills is developed in this learning center.

Social skills: _____

Language skills: _____

7. As you observe children's play in this center, what evidence of creativity and imagination do you find?

8. Describe a conflict between children that occurred while you were observing. How was it resolved?



Rating Scale: Social Development

Purpose: Rate the social development of a preschool child by observing the occurrence of specific behavior over time.

Part I—Directions: Observe a preschooler (ages three to five) interacting with other preschool children during play. If possible, observe the child on more than one occasion. The total time of your observations should be at least one hour. Look for the specific behaviors listed below. Record your findings by placing a check mark (√) in the appropriate column to indicate how consistently each behavior occurred over time. If you had no opportunity to check for a particular behavior, write “Unable to observe” in the “Comments” column. Also use this column to record any additional details you wish to remember.

Site: _____ Date(s) of Observation(s): _____

Child’s First Name: _____ Age: _____

Behavior	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Comments
1. Initiates play with other children.					
2. Joins in play initiated by other children.					
3. Plays with children of both genders.					
4. Waits for a turn when appropriate.					
5. Shows respect for the personal and property rights of others.					
6. Shows empathy for others’ feelings.					
7. Helps others.					
8. Expresses happiness for others’ successes.					
9. Shows self-control when angry.					
10. Handles conflicts by compromising and negotiating.					

(Continued on next page)



Guided Observation: Music Center

Purpose: Describe how music center equipment and activities encourage creativity and music skills in preschoolers.

Directions: Observe preschool children in a music learning center. If possible, plan your observation at a time when you can observe both choice time and a music activity. Observe for at least 30 to 45 minutes. Record your responses to the questions or statements that follow. Use additional paper if necessary and attach it to this observation.

Site: _____ Date(s) of Observation(s): _____

Number and Ages of Children: _____

1. List the equipment and materials found in the music center. _____

2. Identify any instruments from different cultures or countries located in this center.

3. What props, such as scarves or ribbon sticks, are available to encourage children to respond to music through movement and dance?

(Continued on next page)



4. How does the teacher encourage children to explore different sounds in the music center?

5. Describe a teacher-planned music activity you observed. _____

6. Give an example of a child-initiated activity you observed. _____

7. Give two examples showing how creativity and imagination are encouraged in this learning center.

8. How are materials and equipment stored to be visible and accessible to children?

9. Which equipment in the music center seems most popular with the children? Why do you think this is so?



Running Record: Music During Choice Time

Purpose: Identify skills that are developed as a child uses the music center in an early childhood program during choice time.

Part I—Directions: Visit an early childhood program at a time when choice time is scheduled (children play on their own in whatever learning centers they wish). For exactly ten minutes, observe a preschool child (age three, four, or five) playing in the music center. Record a description of everything the child does minute by minute. Make your description as complete as you can.

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Child's First Name: _____ Age: _____

Beginning Time: _____ Ending Time: _____

Minute	Description of Behavior
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

(Continued on next page)



Minute	Description of Behavior
8	
9	
10	

Part II—Directions: Summarize your observations by answering the following questions in the space provided.

1. In what way(s) did the child’s play experiences help reinforce concepts and skills related to music (such as tempo, beat, pitch, and melody)? Give specific examples.

2. What other benefits did the child’s play experiences provide? Give an example for at least three of the following areas of development:

Motor skills: _____

Vocabulary development: _____

Memory: _____

Attention span: _____

Expressing and coping with emotions: _____

Cooperation: _____

Appreciation of own or other cultures: _____

Self-expression: _____



Guided Observation: Math Center

Purpose: Identify how math center equipment and activities help children learn basic math skills.

Directions: Observe children using a math learning center during choice time for at least 30 minutes. Record your responses to the questions or statements that follow.

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Number and Ages of Children: _____

1. What types of materials are provided for children to use in the math learning center?

2. Give at least one example of how each of the following skills is developed in the math center.

Math skills: _____

Language skills: _____

Sensory skills: _____

Small-motor skills: _____

(Continued on next page)



Checklist: Classification & Seriation

Purpose: Identify a preschooler's skills related to classifying objects and placing objects in order by size.

Part I—Directions: Observe a preschooler (ages three to five) at an early childhood program or other site. Your observation should last at least 30 minutes. Look for evidence of the skills listed below. Record your findings by placing a check mark (√) in the appropriate column. If you had no opportunity to observe a particular skill, write "Unable to observe" in the "Comments" column. Also use this column to record any additional details you wish to remember.

Key to Responses	
Yes—Skill observed	No—Child unable to perform skill

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Child's First Name: _____ Age: _____

Child's Skills	Yes	No	Comments
Classification			
1. Identifies colors (note which ones).			
2. Identifies shapes (note which ones).			
3. Notes similarities and differences in objects.			
4. Matches objects that have common characteristics (such as matching one triangle to another triangle).			
5. Groups objects according to characteristics or functions (such as sorting all the forks out of a set of flatware).			

(Continued on next page)



Child's Skills	Yes	No	Comments
Seriation			
6. Notices differences in size.			
7. Sorts objects according to increasing or decreasing size.			

Part II—Directions: Summarize your observations by answering the following questions in the space provided.

8. What skills related to classification and seriation did the child appear to have mastered?

(Continued on next page)



Checklist: Numbers & Space Relationships

Purpose: Identify a preschooler’s skills related to understanding numbers and space relationships.

Part I—Directions: Observe a preschooler (age three to five) at an early childhood program or other site. Your observation should last at least one hour but may be continued over several visits. Look for evidence of the skills listed below. Record your findings by placing a check mark (✓) in the appropriate column. If you had no opportunity to observe a particular skill, write “Unable to observe” in the “Comments” column. Also use this column to record any additional details you wish to remember.

Key to Responses	
Yes—Skill observed	No—Child unable to perform skill

Site: _____ Date(s) of Observation(s): _____

Child’s First Name: _____ Age: _____

Child’s Skills	Yes	No	Comments
Numbers			
1. Counts by rote to ten.			
2. Shows understanding of one-to-one correspondence (for example, gives one napkin to each child when asked).			
3. Counts objects using rational counting (note highest number of objects counted).			
4. Recognizes numerals 0 through 9, identifying them by name.			
5. Places numerals in correct sequence.			
6. Plays games that require counting.			

(Continued on next page)



Child's Skills	Yes	No	Comments
Space Relationships			
7. Recognizes whole objects and their parts.			
8. Puts manipulative toys (such as snap beads and puzzles) together.			
9. Takes manipulative toys apart.			
10. Places an object inside or outside of a box when asked.			
11. Describes position of objects (over, under, in front of, etc.).			
12. Describes direction of movement of persons or objects (forward, backward, sideways).			

Part II—Directions: Summarize your observations by answering the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

- 13. What skills related to numbers and space relationships did the child appear to have mastered?
- 14. With what skills did the child appear to need more practice?
- 15. Identify a skill you listed in response to question 14 above. What are two ways a teacher could promote development of that skill during classroom routines or activities?

Guided Observation: Science Center



Purpose: Describe how science center materials and activities benefit the development of children.

Directions: Observe activities in a science learning center during choice time for at least 30 minutes. Record your responses to the questions or statements that follow.

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Number and Ages of Children: _____

1. Check the appropriate response regarding the location of the science learning center.

a. Is the center near windows for sunlight? Yes ____ No ____

b. Is the center near an electrical outlet? Yes ____ No ____

c. Is the center near a water source? Yes ____ No ____

d. Does the center have a washable floor? Yes ____ No ____

2. List the types of learning materials and equipment found in this learning center.

3. What special safety precautions do you observe in this center? _____

(Continued on next page)

Guided Observation: Active Play Center



Purpose: Describe how large-motor equipment and activities in the active play center encourage development in children.

Directions: Observe preschoolers involved in large-motor activities in the active play learning center for at least 30 to 45 minutes. You may observe more than one time. Record your responses to the questions or statements that follow.

Site: _____ Date(s) of Observation(s): _____

Number and Ages of Children: _____

1. What large-motor equipment (such as climbers and slides) is provided in this center?

2. List the toys or learning materials (such as balls and hula hoops) provided in this center.

3. How is this center designed to prevent injuries? _____

4. What teacher-planned large-motor activities (such as games) are conducted in this area?

(Continued on next page)



5. Describe how adults interact with children playing in this learning center.

6. What social skills do you see children using while playing in this center?

7. How do children use language to communicate with each other while playing in this center?
Does one child take the lead or do all the children interact equally?

8. Describe a situation in which a child (or group of children) shows signs of social development,
such as sharing or following rules, while participating in active play.

Checklist: Large-Motor Development



Purpose: Identify a preschooler’s large-motor skills.

Part I—Directions: Observe a preschooler (age three to five) at an early childhood program or other site. Your observation should last at least one hour but may be continued over several visits. Look for evidence of the skills listed below. Record your findings by placing a check mark (√) in the appropriate column. If you had no opportunity to observe a particular skill, write “Unable to observe” in the “Comments” column. Also use this column to record any additional details you wish to remember.

Key to Responses	
Yes—Skill observed	No—Child unable to perform skill

Site: _____ Date(s) of Observation(s): _____

Child’s First Name: _____ Age: _____

Large-Motor Skills	Yes	No	Comments
1. Changes directions easily when running.			
2. Walks on tiptoe.			
3. Walks sideways.			
4. Walks backwards.			
5. Climbs stairs without help, alternating feet.			
6. Descends stairs without help, one foot at a time without alternating feet.			
7. Descends stairs without help, alternating feet.			
8. Climbs play yard equipment.			

(Continued on next page)



Large-Motor Skills	Yes	No	Comments
9. Climbs ladder, both feet on each step.			
10. Climbs ladder, alternating feet.			
11. Jumps in place (both feet).			
12. Hops forward (both feet).			
13. Hops forward (one foot).			
14. Jumps over low obstacle.			
15. Gallops.			
16. Skips.			
17. Walks on a low balance beam.			
18. Tosses a beanbag overhand.			
19. Tosses a beanbag underhand.			
20. Follows movement directions, such as "walk in a circle."			
21. Moves body rhythmically to music.			
22. Rides a tricycle.			

(Continued on next page)



Large-Motor Skills	Yes	No	Comments
23. Rides a scooter.			
24. Pulls and pushes a wagon.			
25. Pumps a swing using legs.			

Part II—Directions: Summarize your observations by answering the following questions in the space provided.

26. What evidence of abilities in the following areas did you observe?

Strength: _____

Balance: _____

Muscle coordination: _____

(Continued on next page)

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____



Eye-hand coordination: _____

27. How might observing children's large-motor skills help a teacher plan activities for active play?
Give a specific example.

Guided Observation: Early Childhood Professional



Purpose: Identify the professional skills used by an early childhood professional.

Part I—Directions: Arrange to interview and observe a teacher in an early childhood program. Allow about 20 to 30 minutes for the interview and at least 45 minutes to observe. (The interview and observation can be done in either order and on separate occasions, if needed.) Record responses in the space provided. If you need more space, continue your responses on another sheet of paper.

Early Childhood Professional's Name: _____

Early Childhood Program: _____

Job Title: _____ Age Group of Children: _____

Date of Interview: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Interview Questions

Ask the early childhood professional the following questions and record his or her responses.

1. How long have you worked as an early childhood professional? _____

2. When does your work day usually begin and end? _____

3. What techniques do you use to manage your time effectively? _____

(Continued on next page)



4. What is the most stressful part of your job? Why? _____

5. What techniques do you use to minimize stress or to handle stress when it occurs? _____

6. What tips can you share for getting along with coworkers? _____

Your Observations

Observe the early childhood professional working with children in the classroom. Record your responses to the items that follow.

7. Describe the professional's dress and grooming.

8. Give an example showing the professional's use of communication skills in relating to coworkers or children.

(Continued on next page)



9. What evidence do you see that the professional uses (or fails to use) cooperation and teamwork when working with other program employees?

10. Give an example of a problem the professional faced while you were observing. How did he or she handle it?

11. What evidence do you see that the professional has either a positive attitude or a negative attitude toward his or her job?

Part II—Directions: After conducting the observation and the interview, summarize your impressions by answering the following questions.

12. Do you feel this early childhood professional enjoys his or her job? Explain your answer.

(Continued on next page)

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____



13. What parts of the early childhood professional's job would *you* find stressful? Why? _____

14. If you were an employer, which quality shown by this professional would you find most valuable?

Why? _____

15. Do you feel this professional sets a good example for the early childhood profession? Why or why not? _____

Guided Observation: Family Child Care Home Provider



Purpose: Identify the skills and responsibilities of a family child care home provider.

Directions: Observe and interview a family child care home provider for 45 to 60 minutes. Record your responses to the questions or statements that follow.

Site: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Provider's First Name: _____

Number and Ages of Children: _____

1. How long has this person been a family child care home provider? _____

2. What, if any, early childhood care or education and experience does the provider have? _____

3. When does the provider's work day begin and end? _____

4. How has the home provider organized space in the home for operation of the child care business, including space for play?

(Continued on next page)



5. What special safety precautions or practices do you observe? _____

6. Does the provider plan activities for children? If so, what types? _____

7. What types of records does the provider maintain? _____

8. List at least three tasks you observe the provider performing. _____

9. What parts of the job does the provider appear to enjoy most and least? Why do you think so? _____

(Continued on next page)

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____



10. What parts of the job appear to be stressful? _____

11. How does the home provider cope with stress? _____

12. Describe any examples of parent-provider communication you see. Are they positive or negative? Explain why or how.



Guided Observation: Program Security Features

Purpose: Describe strategies early childhood programs use to ensure program security.

Directions: Arrange to observe at a child care center for at least one hour. Select two different classrooms to observe for at least 30 minutes each. (Observations may be done over several visits if needed.) Be sure to observe during typical morning arrival and afternoon departure times. The director of the program can inform you of those times. Provide answers to the questions below. Use additional paper if you need more space to fully respond.

Site: _____ Date(s) of Observation(s): _____

Number and Ages of Children Per Class	Number of Adults Per Class
Infants	
Toddlers	
Two-year-olds	
Three-year-olds	
Four-year-olds	
Five-year-olds	

Number of Adults in Director's Office or Reception Area: _____

- Does the program allow entrance only to staff and enrolled families? If yes, how is entrance to others restricted? If no, what would you recommend to ensure better security?

(Continued on next page)



2. Were you greeted by an adult immediately upon entering the center? Yes No

If no, how long were you unobserved? How did you make your presence known? How could your unobserved entry be prevented?

3. In what areas did you observe security cameras?

If no security cameras were present, where would you recommend they be placed for better security?

4. Ask the director what steps the program takes to prevent children from leaving with unauthorized people. Record the answer here.

5. In what ways were strangers prevented from entering the child care center's outdoor play area? If none existed, provide suggestions to ensure safety.

6. Are criminal background checks completed on staff before employment? Yes No

(Continued on next page)



7. Were teacher-to-child ratios maintained in all classrooms to ensure adequate help in case of an emergency? Yes No

8. Were classrooms and children's bathrooms easy to visually supervise to prevent inappropriate adult behavior with children? Yes No

If not, how would you suggest improving security?

9. Did all locks on doors and gates appear to be in working order? Yes No

If not, list malfunctions and report them to the program's director.

10. Was there a means for parents to sign children in at arrival and out at departure? Yes No

If yes, describe it. If not, recommend a procedure.

11. Interview the director on ways children's names, addresses, and phone numbers are kept confidential. Record his or her responses here.

12. Does the center have a procedure for obtaining parents' permission for using children's photos or names on the program Web site? Yes No

If yes, describe the procedure here. If not, what would you recommend as a procedure?

Guided Observation: Observing an Outdoor Play Space



Purpose: To identify how children's overall development is nurtured by a well-designed outdoor play area.

Directions: Observe an outdoor play area for preschoolers and record information related to the criteria listed below.

1. Equipment, toys, or games to develop large muscles and motor coordination.

2. Equipment, toys, or games that encourage social interaction and cooperative play.

3. Spaces that allow children to experience nature first-hand.

4. Shaded play spaces that provide limited sun exposure.

5. Landscaping that is used to encourage science and nature study.

(Continued on next page)



6. Spaces that are created for active play and wheeled toys.

7. Green spaces that allow running and playing large group active games.

8. Water source provided to prevent dehydration.

9. Staff conducts safety checks for accident prevention.

10. Cozy spaces that allow children to engage in quiet play, while still allowing easy supervision.

11. Play space is used as an outdoor classroom, not just a playground or recess area.

12. Play area is secured to prevent children from wandering off or from allowing intruder's entry.

Guided Observation: Family-Friendly Program Features



Purpose: To identify a wide variety of ways to welcome and include families in an early childhood setting.

Directions: Arrange to tour an early childhood program including classrooms, community spaces, and outdoor play areas. After observing all areas, provide examples of any of the features listed below.

1. Types and location of adult-size seating available to parents.

2. Features or spaces provided to foster communication among parents as well as between parents and program staff.

3. Examples of family life and varying cultures reflected in classroom materials and facility décor.

4. Describe ways parents are invited to be involved in daily child care operations.

(Continued on next page)



5. Ways in which families were greeted at arrival time to help children's transition from home to child care.

6. Preparations taken by teachers to ensure that children and parents had a warm reunion and easy child care departure at day's end.

7. Strategies for prominently posting vital information, such as menus, billing dates, or program newsletters.

8. Examples of how both fathers and mothers were welcomed and included in the child care center.

9. Examples of parent education and support provided by the center.

Guided Observation: Teaching for Varying Learning Styles



Purpose: Identify ways preschool teachers offer curriculum activities that engage children of varying learning styles.

Directions: Arrange to visit a child care program and observe learning centers and children's activities to record how teachers plan with varying learning styles in mind.

Site: _____ Date(s) of Observation: _____

Number and Ages of Children: _____

1. Describe play and education materials, as well as activities, in the classroom that encourage children to learn through each of the learning styles listed below.

Bodily-kinesthetic/tactile:

Visual:

Auditory:

Spatial:

(Continued on next page)

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____



Logical-mathematical:

Musical:

Interpersonal:

Intrapersonal:

Naturalistic:

Guided Observation: English Language Learner Classroom



Purpose: To identify strategies teachers use to provide support to children learning English as well as their first language.

Directions: Arrange to visit a child care center and observe a four-year-old classroom that includes children who are learning English as their second language. Provide examples of the following features.

1. Spoken and written language models are provided in both languages in all activities.

2. Parent-suggested lullabies, songs, stories, games, books, and finger plays from children's cultures and primary language are used throughout the day.

3. Children's activities offer many hands-on experiences with real items to help build concepts.

4. Teachers praise and motivate children to use both languages.

(Continued on next page)



5. Children are welcome to express themselves in their preferred language throughout the day.

6. All children engage in culturally diverse activities involving dance, music, literature, celebrations, and active games.

7. Children's home cultures are reflected in classroom décor.

8. If necessary, parents are provided with program literature in their primary language as well as English.
