

ENVIRONMENT RATING SCALES OBSERVATION GUIDELINES

Over the years we have had wonderful cooperation from a number of child care and education programs. The program in which you are observing is making a contribution to your training that will benefit the early childhood profession. In turn, we should be respectful of the programs' need to continue to operate effectively, and the rights of the children and adults in the program. The following guidelines are designed to make our presence a pleasant experience for those being observed as well as a good practice session in the use of the rating scales.

Respect privacy

- You must keep everything you see or hear confidential. You may not repeat anything about the staff, children or facility that you become aware of as part of this course.
- Keep track of your observation materials at all times. Do not put things down and walk away from them for any period.

Maximize opportunities for higher reliability

- You may observe only in the areas assigned to your group. Please stay with your group and leave together.
- Please stay indoors or outdoors as a group in order to improve your chances of good reliability.
- Take notes on a pad and/or on your scoresheet to help in scoring and forming questions that you may need to ask.

Affect the environment as little as possible

- Teachers/providers will be involved with the children during your visit and should not be asked to talk with you or answer questions.
- You may acknowledge children if they approach you. If they ask, you can tell them that you are watching them play today, or that you have to finish your work. Do not otherwise take part in their activities.
- Observers should not interfere with ongoing activities in any way. Station yourself around the perimeter of the rooms, as unobtrusively as possible. You should move around periodically to get a better vantage point during the observation.
- If it does not interfere with the ongoing program, you may sit in a chair or on the floor so that children are not intimidated by your height. Please do not sit on other furniture, such as shelves, tables, the children's chairs near an activity table, or on play equipment.
- Please move if you are in the way of adults or children. Remain sensitive to what is happening around you.
- You may look at materials that are in plain view on open shelves, if you can do so without disturbing the group. However, a close inspection of these materials is best done when the children are out of the room.
- Do not look through drawers, in cabinets, or in other closed spaces, unless you have gotten the teacher's/provider's permission. If permitted, you may take a few minutes to look in storage spaces used for child care materials while children are outside. If this is not possible you will be able to ask your group leader about the contents of these spaces during the feedback session.
- Do not leave tote bags or purses within reach of children. It is best to not even take them into the classroom.

Be a polite visitor

- Wear your nametag, so all know who you are.
- Have cell phones turned off unless an emergency situation exists.
- Refrain from talking with other observers during the observation.
- Try to keep a neutral facial expression so that children and/or staff are neither drawn to you nor concerned about your response to them.