# **Observation Guides**

# **-Preschool/Kindergarten Practicum Placements-**

Practicum students are expected to spend time observing in the practicum setting before they begin to assume responsibilities in the practicum. Guided observation is intended to be the primary activity of the practicum student during the first two weeks of the placement. It is the shared responsibility of the cooperating professional, university supervisor, and student to plan opportunities for observation and processing of observation notes. Below are guides that will assist in conducting observations in practicum placements. These guides may be adapted to interview format in cases where components are difficult to observe.

**Preschool/Kindergarten Observation Guide 1**

*Directions: Conduct an observation focusing on the following components. Take notes on what you observe.*

1. Focus on individual children
   1. Strengths in different areas of development: cognition, language, affective/emotional, gross motor, fine motor
   2. Developmental accomplishments in children of different ages
   3. Skill deficits in children
2. Observation of the teacher
   1. Behaviors the teacher encourages in children, and how
   2. Behaviors the teacher discourages in children, and how
   3. Behaviors the teacher ignores
   4. Techniques the teacher uses for 1-1 instruction
   5. Techniques the teacher uses for group instruction
   6. Techniques the teacher uses to encourage play
   7. Procedures the teacher uses in bathroom, snack, greeting, transition
   8. Techniques the teacher uses to modify activities for individual children
   9. Techniques the teacher uses to motivate children to participate
3. Focus on the environment
   1. Materials available for play
   2. Materials used in instruction
   3. Materials chosen by children
   4. Organization of the instructional space
   5. Behavior of children in different scheduled activities
4. Observations of other events
   1. Therapies
   2. Parent conferences

**Preschool/Kindergarten Observation Guide 2**

*Directions: Conduct an observation of an activity focusing on the following components. Take notes on what you observe.*

1. Objectives
   1. Appropriateness
2. Activities
   1. Appropriateness
   2. Motivation value
   3. Participation of children
3. Presentation
   1. Clarity of directions
   2. Relevance of teacher language to objectives
4. Teacher language
   1. Level
   2. Precision/simplicity
   3. Rate of speaking
   4. Voice quality/pitch
5. Materials
   1. Choices provided
   2. Placement
   3. Management
6. Grouping for instruction
   1. Placement within the group
   2. Range of objectives included
7. Management
   1. Reinforcement
   2. Tone
   3. Consistency
   4. Follow through
8. Assessment
   1. Appropriateness
   2. Data system matched to objectives

**Preschool/Kindergarten Observation Guide 3**

*Directions: Conduct document reviews and observations focusing on the following components. Take notes on what you observe.*

1. Look through 2-3 folders of children in your classroom to gain a better understanding of the kinds of assessment information that are included.
   1. Which types of professionals have assessed the child?
   2. What kind of assessments were done by each professional?
   3. Is there evidence that these assessments were shared with the teacher?
   4. What evidence have you seen in the classroom that these assessments made any difference?
2. Observe the teacher giving a criterion-referenced test in 2-3 areas of development.
   1. How was the assessment integrated into the daily schedule?
   2. If any group activities were used, how did the teacher manage to test all children present?
   3. How did the teacher's verbal directions reflect the items she was testing?
   4. How did the teacher record data?
   5. Describe the teacher's placement of materials.
   6. How did the teacher use reinforcement?
3. Observe a weekly planning meeting.
   1. How do team members make sure that there is a logical connection between activities on different days?
   2. How are individual objectives integrated into activities?
   3. How are child data used in the next week's planning?
4. Using the lesson plan as a guide, observe the teacher teaching at least two large group and two small group activities.
   1. Did the teacher follow the sequence of the plan?
   2. Did the teacher use the verbal directions/questions stated in the plan?
   3. Did the teacher use different verbal directions/questions for individual children?
   4. What kind of reinforcement did the teacher use?
   5. Was the activity engaging for the children? Why?
   6. How many of the children accomplished the objective(s) set for them?
   7. If the teacher did not follow the plan:
      1. Were the changes a result of some child action?
      2. Did the teacher still teach the objectives?
   8. What methods did the teacher use to motivate children to participate?
      1. Was a game format used?
      2. What kind of materials were used?
      3. Was there variety in the presentation/expected response?
      4. Was the activity appropriate in length?
      5. How did the teacher use their voice?
      6. What kind of reinforcement was used?
   9. How did the teacher help each child to accomplish his objectives?
      1. Were verbal requests directly related to the desired child responses?
   10. When the child was in error, how did the teacher use:
       1. Questions?
       2. Demonstrations?
       3. Prompts?
       4. Other correction methods?
5. Study the classroom schedule, and during weekly planning meetings, pay attention to discussions about the schedule.
   1. What objectives are worked on in each of the different time slots?
   2. Why do the different time slots occur in the order in which they do?
   3. How are transitions accounted for in the schedule?
   4. How often is the schedule changed?
   5. Why?
6. Observe where different adults are during different times of the day, and during weekly planning meetings, pay attention to discussions about what the different adults will do.
   1. What does each adult do at different times of the day?
   2. How is the role of the assistant different from that of the teacher?
   3. On what basis are decisions made about where adults will be?
7. List the rules for children's behavior that you think exist in the classroom, and at weekly planning meetings, pay attention to discussion of management problems related to the rules.
   1. What rules are stated?
   2. Are there any unwritten rules?
   3. What procedures do teachers use to teach the rules?
   4. What procedures do teacher use to reinforce the rules?
   5. What tone of voice do teachers use when reminding children of the rules?
   6. How well do the rules work?
8. Ask the teacher what prevention techniques she uses: list these and make a checklist. Using the checklist, observe the teacher at different times of the day.
   1. What techniques did she use and in what circumstances?
   2. Did they work and why?

**Preschool/Kindergarten Observation Guide 4**

*Directions: Conduct an observation of an activity focusing on the following components. Take notes on what you observe.*

1. Activity setting
2. Teacher behavior
3. Expectation for child behavior
4. Use of materials
5. Classroom management procedures
6. Organization of classroom space
7. Movement of children within the classroom

**Preschool/Kindergarten Observation Guide 5**

*Directions: Conduct observations focusing on the following components. Take notes on what you observe and reflect.*

1. How do the teachers direct the children in the routine of the day?
2. How do the teachers manage the behavior of individual children?
3. How do the teachers manage the behavior of the group?
4. How do the teachers help the children feel secure in a new environment?
5. How do the teachers structure the formal and informal learning experiences?
6. How do the teachers explain the rules of the room?

**Preschool/Kindergarten Observation Guide 6**

*Directions: Conduct observations focusing on the following components. Take notes on what you observe and reflect.*

1. How do the teachers gather information about the needs of each child?
2. How do the teachers provide language stimulation in the classroom?
3. How do the teachers follow through on the expectations they have for children?
4. How do the teachers adapt materials, activities, the environment, and routine situations to meet the individual needs of children?
5. How do the teachers work together to create a smoothly running classroom? List specific examples.

**Preschool/Kindergarten Observation Guide 7**

*Directions: Conduct an observation if a center focusing on the following components. Take notes on what you observe.*

1. Center
2. What are the goals of this center?
3. How are objectives for individual children addressed in this center?
4. What does this center look and sound like (consider organization, materials, number of children, etc.)? Include a diagram of the center.
5. How engaged are children in this center?
6. How are children learning in this center?
7. How successful was the center?
8. What contributed to the success or lack of success of the center?
9. How might the center be modified in the future? How could it be improved or built upon?