

Early Childhood: Preschool Classroom Observation

Est. Time: 4 Hours

Objective

Observe aspects of a preschool environment, such as its schedules, routines, environmental design, activities, and transitions.

Overview

Many children spend a large portion of their day in early childhood environments. Because of this, these should be positive learning environments where children have the opportunity to explore a variety of learning materials in a number of grouping formats (e.g., small group, large group) and locales (e.g., inside, outside). By observing different aspects of the classroom environment such as the daily schedule, the age-appropriateness of the activities and routines, and the arrangement of the physical elements, one can often determine whether the environment is conducive to learning and whether the teachers are providing quality care.

Activity

Visit an early childhood program and observe aspects of a classroom (e.g., schedules, routines, environmental design, activities, and transitions).

1. During the observation, take notes using the form below.
2. After the observation, prepare a written description, making sure to include the information below
 - a. Your overall impression of the classroom. Consider the following:
 - Were children actively engaged in classroom activities?
 - Were teachers actively engaged with the children?
 - Did children seem to know what to do?
 - Did children receive support and feedback from adults? Was feedback generally positive or negative, specific or general?
 - b. What was one thing you really liked about the classroom? Explain.
 - c. What was one thing you would change? Explain.

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Preschool Classroom Observation Form

Using only what you have observed, complete the information below. To avoid issues with confidentiality, use the child's initials or a pseudonym instead of her or his full name.

Name:

Date:

Number of adults in classroom:

Children in classroom

Number:

Diversity:

Children with disabilities:

English language learners:

Other observations:

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Activities			
Activity	Start Time	Stop Time	Description
Large-group, teacher-directed activity (if observed)			What activities occurred during the large group?
			What did the teacher do to engage the children?
			How engaged were the children?
Center time (if observed)			How was the center organized?

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Activities			
Activity	Start Time	Stop Time	Description
Center time (if observed)			Did the children have choices about what centers to play in and what to do when they were in the centers? If so, describe.
			Were the children allowed to move freely between centers? If so, describe.
			Were the children engaged with materials, peers, and/or adults? If so, describe.
Other			Describe the activity.

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Activities			
Activity	Start Time	Stop Time	Description
			What did the teacher do to engage the children?
			What were the children doing?
			What were the teachers doing?
Other			Describe the activity.
			What did the teacher do to engage the children?

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Activities			
Activity	Start Time	Stop Time	Description
			What were the children doing?
			What were the teachers doing?
Physical Environment			
Classroom Arrangement		How was the classroom arranged? On a separate sheet of paper, include a sketch of the classroom arrangement.	
		What was hanging on the walls? Was there evidence of children's work displayed in the classroom?	

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Physical Environment	
Schedule	Was a schedule posted? If so, include it.
	Was it illustrated with photos or line drawings that would make it useful to children?
	Where was it posted?
Rules or Expectations	Were classroom rules or expectations posted? If so, include them.
Visual Cues	Were visual cues available in the classroom (e.g., picture schedules, choice boards, markings on floor about where children sit or line up)? If so, describe.

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Physical Environment	
Visual Cues [CONT]	Where were they located?
	What did they look like (e.g., photographs, line drawings)?
Social Environment	
Rules or Expectations	What type of instruction did you observe?
	Did you observe challenging behavior? If so, describe the behavior and how the adults responded to it.

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Social Environment	
Rules or Expectations [CONT]	Describe transitions. What type of support was provided to children during transitions? Were the transitions generally smooth or chaotic?