

Observation Instrument for Autism Classrooms

Classroom/Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Support Staff: _____

Administrator/Observer: _____

- Score: 2: Present and being actively used
 1: Present, but not being used; or partially achieved
 0: Absent
 NA: no opportunity to evaluate

Quality Classroom Indicator:	Score	Comments
ENVIRONMENTAL ARRANGEMENT		
Room arrangement has clearly defined visual boundaries for specific activities, allows for supervision of all students at all times; and prevents or minimizes problem behaviors.		
Visual supports are at the correct level of symbolic functioning, and are used to enhance predictability, facilitate transitions, and help convey expectations.		
Materials and furniture are age appropriate.		
Individual workstations are arranged left-right or top-bottom, and tell how much work, what work, when finished, and what's next. Materials in workstations are varied from day to day and are educationally and functionally related to student IEPs.		
SCHEDULING, ACTIVITIES, AND INTENSITY		
A staff schedule showing staff and student assignments, locations, and activities, is prominently posted and being followed.		
A daily classroom schedule is posted at student level, is visible and appropriate for students' level of symbolic functioning, and is used throughout the day.		
Schedule and activities reflect appropriate distribution of curriculum for the age, level and individual needs of students in the classroom.		
Schedules reflect a variety of learning formats for each student, including 1:1 instruction, small group, large group, independent work, and social interaction/leisure options.		
Individual schedules are at child level and are being used correctly.		
Large group transitions are infrequent and supported by environmental arrangement and scheduling.		
Staff ratio of at least 1 adult for every 3 students is maintained during observation.		
Activities are language-based, and staff encourage commenting, asking and answering questions; staff create opportunities to promote communication between students.		
Students remain actively engaged in learning opportunities throughout observation, with no more than 2 minutes down time.		
During 5 minute observation, staff interact with each student at least once to teach or promote learning.		
INSTRUCTION AND INTERACTION		
Communication directed to students is clear and relevant, appropriate to language ability, grammatically correct and presents opportunities for dialogue (rather than being largely directive).		

Comments directed toward students follow a ratio of 7:1 instructive/positive comments to corrective comments.		
During instruction, staff deliver instructional cues clearly, prompt as needed, and reinforce correct responses or deliver error correction as needed.		
Inter-staff communication is respectful of students and limited in content to classroom issues and instruction. Confidentiality of students is preserved.		
All classroom staff are involved in delivering instruction, including during out-of-classroom activities (lunch, recess, CBI).		
All classroom staff can state IEP objectives being worked on for each student when asked.		
Instructional methods reflect the unique needs of students, and are grounded in research-based practices, including DTT, incidental teaching, and direct instruction.		
Instruction pace promotes high rates of correct responding, and uses appropriate schedules of reinforcement.		
Instruction is individualized, incorporates natural and individualized reinforcers, and encourages spontaneous use of skills in different settings		
“Hands-on” contact with students promotes independence and preserves dignity.		
Skills are taught in the context of naturally occurring activities and daily routines.		
Students with slow rates of learning are provided intensive levels of instruction, including daily one-on-one instruction sessions.		
Data are collected during instructional activities for each student; data are tracked, summarized and reported and brought to student study/IEP meetings.		
Daily communication with parents is informative, positive and non-judgmental.		
CORE CURRICULUM AREAS		
Staff create many opportunities for spontaneous use of communication skills, and foster communication through a variety of instructional approaches.		
Use of AAC devices or PECS or sign for students using these supports is encouraged in all situations, and students are not denied access to their communication systems.		
Behavior problems are minimized by using choices, clear expectations and positive reinforcement.		
Students displaying behavioral difficulties have an individualized behavior plan or have been referred for an FBA.		
Opportunities for meaningful interaction and friendships with non-disabled peers are provided. Social skills instruction is planned and supported by staff.		
Curriculum and schedule reflect an emphasis on the core deficits of autism; activities emphasize social interaction skills with adults and peers, functional communication for all students, age appropriate engagement, and maximizing independent functioning.		

Comments: