

GUIDELINES FOR OBSERVING CHILDREN

1. Know **WHY** you are observing – and know **WHAT** your focus is for each observation. You will receive instructions about this prior to each observation.
 - **When observing a child look for what the child is able to do** rather than what the child is not yet doing. Stay focused on the positive.
2. Let the director/lead teacher know what you will be doing during your observations. Comply with their requests for appropriate behavior within their center. If your supervisor asks you to aide in the classroom while doing your observation, comply and set up another time for the observation.
 - Be respectful of the teachers, children and their parents.
 - Sit don't stand – alone or in a group!
 - No food, drink, gum chewing or smoking in the classroom.
 - Dress appropriately to be able to sit on the floor, engage with children, and get messy, yet look professional for the field.
 - If you can't make your observation time, please advise the lab in advance.
3. In most cases you will be a non-participant observer. Be as inconspicuous as possible. (Pretend to be paint on the wall.) Be BORING but not rude to the children.
4. Remain detached from the situations you observe. You are not in your "teacher" role during the observations.
5. Be non-judgmental. You are observing behaviors not judging them in terms of good or bad, or right or wrong.
6. Collect "clean data". Impose or introduce nothing into the setting that might change the behavior or the children.
7. Be professional. Your behavior reflects not only on yourself but also on Ohlone and the ECS department.
8. Maintain **CONFIDENTIALITY**. The rights of the child and his/her parents must be respected. *Do not use the real name of the child when writing about the child or discussing your observations in class.* Do not talk about the child to anyone other than the parent(s) and then NEVER within the child's hearing.
9. Respect the child's right not to participate in a particular task or situation you need to observe.
10. Record what you observe. Do not alter or fabricate data.
11. If you observe a licensing violation, you are mandated to report it. If you are not sure if a violation has occurred, discuss the situation with your instructor.
12. You may aide as needed in the classroom after the first six weeks of the course, as an aide you may interact with the children, support classroom activities, and help the teachers as needed. While you may be asked to occasionally help support teachers with the small "housekeeping" duties such as cleaning and refilling paint cups, setting up the snack/lunch table, etc. However, you are not to be used as a custodian.