



## Systematic Observation Procedures

A minimum of three 20-minute observations are needed.

### 1. Choosing times to observe

We want to document “an inability to manage or complete classroom tasks within routine timelines.” Be selective and prearrange times with classroom teachers. Choose 20-minute blocks of time without transitions. Choose instruction times, i.e. times when listening/attention is required or independent work times. Choose a variety of settings, teachers, activities and subjects.

### 2. Basic Method

We are using a “partial interval” observation method with six-second intervals.

- a. Situate yourself in the room so that you have a clear view of the target student.
- b. Identify comparison students: at least two or three same sex students whom you can also see well.
- c. Observe the target student. Record at the end of the interval. Next, observe a peer and then record. Observe target and record. Observe second peer, etc. Alternate between target and peers for 20 minutes. (You will then have 100 data points for each).

### 3. Recording Codes

- a. Basic codes are on “+” and off “o” task.

The definitions of “on” and “off” task are very important. Define them for yourself in terms of observables and concretes. Avoid inference.

#### On-Task

Appropriate behavior for classroom  
Meets teacher expectations or  
acceptable behavior in the classroom  
Eyes on work  
Writing or group responding at  
appropriate time  
Eyes on teacher  
Eyes on student who is responding  
Eyes on visuals used by teacher  
Doing as expected even if accompanied  
by body movements

#### Off-Task

Doing something that is not allowed  
Out of seat when not permitted  
Talking out/blurting out  
Doing something inappropriate  
Not following teacher directions  
Motor behavior, e.g. playing  
with something  
Talking when not allowed  
Passive staring  
On wrong page in book  
Working on wrong assignment, page

## Page 2 – Systematic Observations

- b. More sophisticated codes allow more information about off-task behaviors:  
e.g. “V”=verbal off-task    “P”=passive off-task    “M”=motor off-task
- c. Most sophisticated – use additional codes  
Instead of “V” can use “SV”=social verbal  
Instead of “M” can use “OOS”=out of seat, “MG”=gross, “MF”=fine  
Instead of just “+” can use “+M” to indicate on-task but excess motor movement  
(kicking feet, chewing pencil, playing with hair)  
“EC”=made eye contact with observer

Your comments are very important. Record on the observation sheet as soon as possible after the observation. Include date, time of day, situation/activities, demand/expectations on the student, observations not able to be coded and anything else significant such as physical location of the student in the room.

### 4. Calculation and Reporting Time On-Task and Discrepancies

- a. Calculation percentage of time on-task

$$\frac{\text{\# of intervals on-task}}{\text{\# of intervals observed}} \times 100 = \text{percentage of time on task}$$

$$\text{Example: } \frac{63 \text{ intervals on-task}}{100 \text{ intervals observed}} \times 100 = 63\% \text{ on-task}$$

We generally calculate and report the type of behavior we want to increase (i.e. on-task behavior). The results of this calculation should be reported as “target child was observed to be on-task during x% of the observed six-second intervals”, not as “target child was on-task x% of the time”.

- b. Calculating discrepancies

$$\frac{\% \text{ on-task peers}}{\% \text{ on-task target}} = \text{discrepancy}$$

Note: Use this formula only when peers are more on-task than target

$$\text{Example: } \frac{\text{Peers were on-task } 90\%}{\text{Target was on-task } 60\%} = 1.5$$

“Target student was 1.5 times more off-task than his/her peers”.

We are recommending the use of a 1.5 or larger discrepancy as significant. This level is equal to the target being off-task about two thirds as often as peers. A discrepancy of 2.0 means target was on-task only half as often as peers. A discrepancy of 1.0 means no discrepancy – they were on-task the same proportion of time.

## Partial Interval Recording Form

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ # of Students in Class \_\_\_\_\_ # of Males \_\_\_\_\_

# of Females \_\_\_\_\_ Observer \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Setting \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Codes: On-task +

Off-task: "V" = Verbal

"S" = Social

"M" = Motor

"P" = Passive

"OOS" = Out of seat

"O" = Other or not determined

	10	30	50	70	90		10	30	50	70	90		10	30	50	70	90		10	30	50	70	90
Student																							
	20	40	60	80	100		20	40	60	80	100		20	40	60	80	100		20	40	60	80	100
Peer																							

	10	30	50	70	90		10	30	50	70	90		10	30	50	70	90		10	30	50	70	90
Student																							
	20	40	60	80	100		20	40	60	80	100		20	40	60	80	100		20	40	60	80	100
Peer																							

	10	30	50	70	90		10	30	50	70	90		10	30	50	70	90		10	30	50	70	90
Student																							
	20	40	60	80	100		20	40	60	80	100		20	40	60	80	100		20	40	60	80	100
Peer																							

	10	30	50	70	90		10	30	50	70	90		10	30	50	70	90		10	30	50	70	90
Student																							
	20	40	60	80	100		20	40	60	80	100		20	40	60	80	100		20	40	60	80	100
Peer																							

	10	30	50	70	90		10	30	50	70	90		10	30	50	70	90		10	30	50	70	90
Student																							
	20	40	60	80	100		20	40	60	80	100		20	40	60	80	100		20	40	60	80	100
Peer																							

Target:  $\frac{\text{\# of intervals on-task}}{\text{Total \# of intervals}} = \frac{\quad}{\quad} = \quad\%$

$\frac{\% \text{ on-task peer}}{\% \text{ on-task target}} = \frac{\quad}{\quad}$

Peer:  $\frac{\text{\# of intervals on-task}}{\text{Total \# of intervals}} = \frac{\quad}{\quad} = \quad\%$

DISCREPANCY: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

## Duration Recording

Duration recording requires the observer to measure the **total amount** of time that the child engages in the target behavior. The observer records the time at which the target behavior episode begins and the time at which it ends. For both event and duration recordings, the target behavior must be defined so that the behavior that marks the start of an episode is clearly specified as are the conditions that are considered to mark the end of the episode.

In the example of Sam and his temper tantrums, the teacher could record the length of time each of the five tantrums endured (e.g. 2'20", 5'45", 3'15", 8'05" and 1'50"). While this data could be averaged to tell us that Sam's tantrums last an average of 4 minutes, 30 seconds, the proper interpretation for behavioral **rate** data is to find the total amount of time that Sam was tantruming (21'15") and divide that by the total time spent observing (3 hours or 180 minutes) to find that Sam spent almost 12% of his preschool class engaged in temper tantrums. If part of Sam's IEP called for decreasing his tantrum behavior, then both event and duration recording data would be useful as a pre- and post-intervention data.

## Duration Recording Form

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ # of Students in Class \_\_\_\_\_ # of Males \_\_\_\_\_

# of Females \_\_\_\_\_ Observer \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Setting \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

### Target Behavior:

EPIISODE	STARTING TIME	STOPPING TIME	TOTAL LENGTH OF EPIISODE
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

Total \_\_\_\_\_

## Event Recording

In event recoding, the number of times that a target behavior occurs is recorded in contrast to time sampling and interval recording. Event recording is appropriate as the method of observation for behaviors that occur either very seldom or very often. An example of an appropriate behavior to be recorded might be temper tantrums.

Event recording requires the observer to note exactly when a behavior starts and stops so that each “event” can be recorded as a single incidence of the behavior. This data is transformed to rate data at the end of the observation period by dividing the number of times the behavior occurred by the total number of minutes (or hours) in the observation period. The resulting number reflects the rate at which the target behavior occurred per minute (or hour).

In the case of temper tantrum data, for example, the teacher might note that Sam has five temper tantrums in the course of a three-hour preschool class. Dividing the five tantrums by the three hours in the observation period indicates that Sam had 1.67 tantrums per hour. Another way to report the data would be to say that Sam had a tantrum approximately once every 36 minutes (180 minutes divided by five tantrums). However, caution should be exercised in reporting this data since the rate data can suggest a regularity in behavior that may not exist (e.g. if the child has five tantrums within the first hour of class, the rate would still be 1.67 tantrums per hour).



## Event Recording Form

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ # of Students in Class \_\_\_\_\_ # of Males \_\_\_\_\_

# of Females \_\_\_\_\_ Observer \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Setting \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

**Target Behavior:** (Defined so that it is clear when a behavior episode begins and ends).

How many times did the behavior occur (count each entire episode as one time)?

Divide the number of episodes by the total time observed (minutes if the behavior occurs very often; hours if the behavior occurs rarely). The target behavior occurred at the rate of \_\_\_\_\_ episodes per \_\_\_\_\_ (time/unit).

## Latency Recording

It is often useful to know how much time elapses between a specified event (such as a parent request that a child come to dinner) and the defined behavioral response to that event (the child's arrival at the dinner table). The measure of time that elapses between these two events results in a latency recording. Recording begins at the **end** of the first event and continues until the **onset** of the second event. Latency recording is most useful with problems of compliance. The times recorded are averaged over the number of times the event pairings were observed.

A mother might record the coming-to-dinner behavior of her child every night for a week in order to establish a baseline. At the end of the week, she would add the recorded latencies and divide by seven. She would then know, on average, how long it took her child to respond to her request to come to dinner. Such data might provide the basis for an intervention plan to shorten the average latency, thereby improving the child's compliance behavior.



## Latency Recording Form

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ # of Students in Class \_\_\_\_\_ # of Males \_\_\_\_\_

# of Females \_\_\_\_\_ Observer \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Setting \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

### Target Behavior:

What stimulus will mark the beginning of the observation period?

What behavior on the part of the child will indicate the end of the observation latency, that is, what suggests that compliance has begun?

## Latency Recording Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

TIME	MUSIC THERAPY	SPEECH THERAPY	OCCUPATIONAL	ABA THERAPY
:30				
1:00				
1:30				
2:00				
2:30				
3:00				
3:30				
4:00				
4:30				
5:00				
5:30				
6:00				
6:30				
7:00				
7:30				
8:00				
8:30				
9:00				
9:30				
10:00				
10:30				
11:00				
11:30				
12:00				
12:30				
13:00				
13:30				
14:00				
14:30				
15:00				
Total % of Intervals				

### Coding Key:

E = Actively Engaged

A = Attending

N = Not Engaged

I = Inappropriate Behavior



## Directions for using the group instruction observation chart

This observation chart is designed to record student information in 5-minute intervals. The items – group type, topic, check for comprehension and comments – will be recorded once per observation. The other categories will be recorded at each 5-minute interval of the group time.

<b>Time:</b>	Record the start time of the group. Continue for each 5-minute interval.
<b>Group Type:</b>	Check box to indicate where students are receiving instruction – at their desks or in group of the floor (record this only once at the start of observation).
<b>Topic:</b>	What is the topic of instruction (e.g. math tallies)? (Record this only once at the start of observation).
<b>Attend:</b>	Did the student attend during each 5-minute interval?
<b>Visual Information:</b>	Describe visual information available to student during each 5-minute interval.
<b>Redirect:</b>	Tally the number of times the student needed to be redirected to speaker during each 5-minute interval.
<b>Behavior:</b>	If student engaged in non-attending behavior during the 5-minute interval, describe the behavior (e.g. talked to neighbor, played with materials on desk, laid down, etc.).
<b>Check for Compliance:</b>	If an activity follows group instruction, ask the student to tell you what he/she needs to do to begin, and so on. (Record once at end of group).
<b>Comments:</b>	Enter any comments e.g., student was able to explain what he needed to do, required verbal cues to begin, or student initiated activity but forgot the sequence of steps to complete the activity etc. (Record once at end of group).

Observation Group Instruction

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

TIME	GROUP TYPE		TOPIC	ATTEND	VISUAL INFORMATION	RE-DIRECT (TALLY #)	BEHAVIOR	CHECK FOR COMPREHENSION	COMMENTS
	FLOOR	DESK							



How Many Times Count Chart

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Class or Time Period: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe behavior being monitored: \_\_\_\_\_

Cross out a number each time the behavior occurs on that day or during the particular class or time period.

25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23
22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Dates: \_\_\_\_\_



Anecdotal Observation Form

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Setting/Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE	TIME OBSERVED	BEHAVIORS OBSERVED

_____	_____
Signature	Position

Interval Frequency Count Form

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Observer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

INTERVAL (TIMES)	BEHAVIOR 1	BEHAVIOR 2	BEHAVIOR 3	ACTIVITY/CONTEXT

TOTALS:                    \_\_\_\_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior 3: \_\_\_\_\_

## Interval Frequency Count Form

Student Name: Jane Smith Grade: 6 Age: 11 School: Sunny Brook

Teacher: John Public Observer: Jill Jones Date: 9/20/06

INTERVAL (TIMES)	BEHAVIOR 1	BEHAVIOR 2	BEHAVIOR 3	ACTIVITY/CONTEXT
9:00 – 9:30	III	I	I	Small group reading
9:30 – 10:00	II	0	II	Transition to music
10:00 – 10:30	IIII	I	0	
10:30 – 11:00	II	0	0	
11:00 – 11:30	0	0	0	
11:30 – 12:00	III	0	0	
12:00 – 12:30	0	0	0	
12:30 – 1:00	0	0	0	
1:00 – 1:30	IIII	IIII	III	
1:30 – 2:00	0	0	0	
2:00 – 2:30	0	0	0	
2:30 – 3:00	IIII IIII	III	II	

**TOTALS:**                      30                      10                      8

Behavior 1: Negative Self-Statements

Behavior 2: Hitting, Kicking

Behavior 3: Attempting to Leave School Building

## Duration Recording Form

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Observer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior: \_\_\_\_\_

EPISODE	DATE	STARTING TIME	STOPPING TIME	TOTAL LENGTH OF EPISODE	ACTIVITY/CONTEXT
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

### Directions:

- Fill in identifying information and indicate the behavior to be observed.
- Record the time the behavior starts and the time the behavior ends for each episode.
- Subtract the starting time from the stopping time for the total length of episode.

## Duration Recording Form

Student Name: Jane Smith Grade: 6 Age: 11 School: Sunny Brook

Teacher: John Public Observer: Jill Jones Date: 9/20/06

Behavior: Temper tantrums

EPISODE	DATE	STARTING TIME	STOPPING TIME	TOTAL LENGTH OF EPISODE	ACTIVITY/CONTEXT
1	9/20/06	9:55	10:03	8 minutes	Jane fell to the floor and cried when asked to transition from sea work to gross motor.
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

### Directions:

- Fill in identifying information and indicate the behavior to be observed.
- Record the time the behavior starts and the time the behavior ends for each episode
- Subtract the starting time from the stopping time for the total length of episode.