



Preparing Early Childhood Professionals for Inclusion

Anti-Bias Classroom Observation Checklist Environmental Evaluation

Adapted from Derman-Sparks & Edwards (2010)

Specialized Instruction Objective 3.2:

Students will have an understanding of modifications and adaptations to instructional materials for young children with disabilities as directed by appropriate professionals and related service providers.

Suggested Use: The Anti-bias Environmental Checklist is a tool for practitioners in early childhood settings to determine that the environment is inclusive of all young children.



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Anti-Bias Classroom Observation Checklist

Environmental Evaluation

Name _____ Date of Observation _____

Child Care Center

Age Range of Classroom _____

Permission from Director and Classroom Teacher (signatures required)

_____ (Director) Date _____

_____ (Teacher) Date _____

Your task is to observe the classroom environment and take objective notes on what you see. You are not there to evaluate or judge the environment. You do not have permission to interact with the children.

You are there to look for elements of an anti-bias classroom and to reflect on your own biases and attitudes, and how this may affect your own teaching style and practices.

This observation should take about an hour to complete.

Please answer the following questions regarding the Center you are observing. You can use the notes column to write any specific observations for each question that you think are important.

Anti-Bias Classroom Observation Checklist Environmental Evaluation

IMAGES: POSTERS, DRAWINGS, PHOTOGRAPHS, PUZZLES, AND GAMES

Criteria	Yes/No	Notes
1. Do the images around the classroom appear to represent all the children, families, and staff in the program?		
2. Is there a balance in the images among the different groups (i.e., there is not just a token representation of one or two images for certain groups)?		
3. If the classroom population is racially/ethnically homogeneous, are there images present of the major racial/ethnic groups in the community?		
4. Are there images present that accurately reflect the daily lives of the families in the community (e.g., a variety of work settings, and family recreational activities)?		
5. Is there a fair balance of images of women and men doing tasks at work and in the home?		
6. Are there images of elderly people from various backgrounds doing a variety of activities?		
7. Are there images of people with different abilities from various backgrounds shown at work and with their families? (Please note if any of the images show the person with a disability being dependent or passive.)		
8. Do the images reflect the diversity of family structures present in the community (e.g., hetero and homosexual parents, one-parent and two-parent families, interracial and multiethnic families, families with adopted children, families with members who have a disability)?		
9. Do the images of important individuals (past and present) reflect a diversity of racial/ethnic, gender, and physical/cognitive ability, and include people who participate(d) in struggles for social justice?		

BOOKS

Criteria	Yes/No	Notes
1. Do the children's books reflect diversity of gender roles, racial and cultural backgrounds?		
2. Do the children's books depict a variety of family structures and income levels?		
3. Do the children's books feature individuals with special needs and a range of abilities?		
4. Do the children's books show people from all the above backgrounds and abilities in an accurate portrayal of their daily lives?		
5. Are the children's books available in languages other than English, especially those languages spoken by children, families, and staff in the program and in the community?		
6. Do the children's books include lifecycle and holiday celebrations representing all the children and families at the center?		

TOYS, MATERIALS, AND EQUIPMENT

Criteria	Yes/No	Notes
1. In the dramatic play areas, are there items for a diversity of gender play – e.g., tools and space for working in and out of the house, rooms in the house other than a kitchen, male and female work and play costumes?		
2. In the dramatic play areas, is there diversity in the personal objects, toys and pretend food that reflects a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds?		
3. In the dramatic play areas, is there accessibility for use by children with physical, visual or auditory special needs?		
4. In the dramatic play areas, are there child size and child height mirrors?		
5. During your observation, were the children exposed to music from various cultural styles (pre-recorded or created in the classroom)?		
6. In the art materials, are there a variety of colors of crayons, paints, play dough, and collage materials that the children can use to represent their own skin tone?		
7. Do the dolls and action figures represent a diversity of groups – e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, culture, occupation, physical ability?		
8. Do the other toys and games in the classroom reflect a diversity of groups?		

STAFF INTERACTIONS

Criteria	Yes/No	Notes
1. Do teachers/caregivers pick up on nonverbal cues and verbal expressions of interest at the same speed with both girls and boys? (If no, please note which group's interests and cues seem to be picked up more quickly.)		
2. Do teachers/caregivers pick up on nonverbal cues and verbal expressions of interest with children with disabilities?		
3. Do teachers/caregivers pick up on nonverbal cues and verbal expressions of interest with children of color?		
4. Do teachers/caregivers offer girls and boys the same access to physical activities and playground equipment? (If no, please note which group gets more access.)		
5. Do teachers/caregivers allow both girls and boys the freedom to express their feelings? (If no, please note which group has more freedom to express their feelings.)		
6. Do teachers/caregivers help or assist girls and boys equally? (If no, please note which group gets more help.)		
7. Do teachers/caregivers help and protect all children equally? (If no, please note which group gets more help.)		
8. Do teachers/caregivers create opportunities for children with physical or cognitive limitations to interact actively and independently with materials and the other children?		
9. Do teachers/caregivers respond to an aggressive act in the same way no matter the gender, race/ethnicity, or disability status of the child? (If no, please note which group gets a more or less harsh response.)		
10. For children who speak languages or dialects other than English, is there an attempt by staff to learn and use key words and phrases in their language?		
11. Do the teachers/caregivers use visual aids, gestures, and physical prompts to children with cognitive disabilities or limited language skills?		

REFLECTION

Briefly write your reflections about this observation: did the center seem to be with or without biases; did you discover any of your own biases while doing this exercise; do you have any suggestions for the center to make it a more inclusive setting for all the children present. (Please use the back of this sheet if you need more room.)

Materials from this checklist have been adapted from the following:

Derman-Sparks, L. & Edwards Olsen J. (2010). *Anti-bias education for young children and ourselves*. Washington DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.