Pennsylvania

School-Age Professional Credential

Parent/Community Representative Observation Instrument

Pennsylvania Early Learning

Keys to Professional Development

Instructions

Purpose of the Observation

Your purpose in observing a Candidate in his/her work environment is to gather information about how s/he manages children's health and safety, how s/he interacts with children and parents, how s/he guides the learning and well-being of children.

Given the length of time you will observe, you can not expect to see as much as you may want to fully assess the Candidate's competency in working with school-age children. Children may be exploring a science project on the day that you visit, and you may not see the Candidate engaging them in a creative or dramatic arts project. Children might be particularly well-behaved on the day that you visit, and you might not see the Candidate exercising any guidance or discipline strategies. On any given day, you won't be able to observe the Candidate fulfilling every competence that the Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential expects of him/her.

Your observation along with observations conducted by the Advisor and SAC Assessor, and a collection of other documentation will be considered in determining the award of the credential.

Scheduling the Observation

The Parent/Community Representative must observe the Candidate at least once for 1.5 hours and the observation must occur within six (6) months prior to the Candidate's submission of the Assessment Visit Request Form.

Preparing to Observe

Review the Parent/Community Representative Observation Instrument thoroughly before you begin observing. It is designed to help you know what to look for and make the most of your observation time. Following are a few practical hints for conducting the observation:

1. Schedule the observation in advance so that the Candidate is prepared for your visit. Be sure to check with the Candidate at least (1) day prior to the visit to confirm the visit and time. When scheduling the observation visit, be sure that you are scheduling the visit on a "typical" day – not a fieldtrip day for example.
2. Become familiar with the program and its setting for 10-15 minutes before beginning to observe the Candidate. This will also allow the children and the Candidate to get comfortable with your presence.
3. Observe quietly without interruptions. Listen and watch as the Candidate goes about his/her work. Listen and watch children's experiences that reflect on the Candidate's competence.
4. Blend into the woodwork. Without being discourteous or disrespectful to children or staff, resist the temptation to interact with them, interrupt, or ask questions.
5. Note your questions on the Parent/Community Representative Observation Instrument.

- Move around inconspicuously to observe various aspects of the program and the Candidate's work.
- Keep your focus on the Candidate rather than on any other staff member.

6. Follow all instructions and procedures in the Observation Instrument.

Using the Observation Instrument

In the instrument, you will find a brief description of each Functional Area and suggested indicators to look for to help you complete your observation. During your observation, look for examples of what the Candidate is doing in each Functional Area and describe as many examples as you can. If you observe behaviors demonstrating this competency then mark the box labeled "observed". If you do not observe behavior demonstrating the competency then mark the box labeled "not observed."

Functional Areas12: Operations Management and 13: Professionalism are not easily observable and have not been included in the instrument. The Candidate will have other opportunities to demonstrate their competency in these areas.

Parent Community Representative Observation Instrument

Name of the Parent/Community Representative		
Name of Candidate		
Program Name		
Program Location		
Date		

Directions: Please complete the following observation form before you sign the Candidate's Assessment Request Form.

_____

Parent/Community Representative's Signature

STATEMENT

To be completed by the School-Age Credential Assessor at the Local Assessment Review Meeting.

"The Parent/Community Representative Observation Form is complete and is in compliance with the requirements of the credentialing process."

_____ _____

School-Age Credential Assessor *Date*

Functional Area 1: Safe	Observed	Not Observed
Candidate provides a safe environment to prevent and reduce injuries.		

What you are looking for:

- ☐ Maintains visual and auditory supervision of children at all times.
- ☐ Provides safe equipment and materials in good repair.
- ☐ Reinforces safety rules.
- ☐ Emergency procedures are posted and followed.

Notes:

What questions would you like to ask the Candidate that would tell you more about his/her competence in this Functional area?

Functional Area 2: Healthy	Observed	Not Observed
Candidate promotes good health and nutrition and provides an environment that contributes to the prevention of illness.		

What you are looking for:

- ☐ Provides nutritious snacks and or meals.
- ☐ Cleans and disinfects surfaces before using for meal preparation or eating.
- ☐ Provides and model pleasant snack and food experiences for children and include nutritional education.
- ☐ Washes hands often and encourages children to do the same. Always before and after eating, after messy or outdoor activities, and after toileting and/or blowing nose.

Notes:

What questions would you like to ask the Candidate that would tell you more about his/her competence in this Functional area?

Functional Area 3: Out-of-School Environments	Observed	Not Observed
Candidate uses space, relationships, materials, and routines as resources for constructing an interesting, secure, and enjoyable environment that encourages play, exploration, and learning.		

What you are looking for:

- ☐ Provides a variety of quiet, noisy and creative activities for all children.
- ☐ Creates a variety of well-equipped and inviting interest areas separating quiet areas from noisy areas.
- ☐ Provides schedules and routines.

Notes:

What questions would you like to ask the Candidate that would tell you more about his/her competence in this Functional area?

Functional Area 4: Physical	Observed	Not Observed
Candidate provides a variety of equipment, activities, and opportunities to promote the physical development of school-age children.		

What you are looking for:

- ☐ Provides a variety of materials, equipment, and activities that promote fine motor skills (e.g. art work, puzzles, Legos® or blocks)
- ☐ Provides a variety of materials, equipment, and activities that promote gross motor skills (e.g. running, jumping, climbing, cooperative games etc.)

Notes:

What questions would you like to ask the Candidate that would tell you more about his/her competence in this Functional area?

Functional Area 5: Cognitive	Observed	Not Observed
Candidate provides hands-on activities, experiences, and opportunities that encourage curiosity, exploration, and problem-solving appropriate to the developmental levels and learning styles of school-age children and support appropriate academic standards.		

What you are looking for:

- ☐ Creates an environment where children learn through playing and exploring.
- ☐ Encourages children to be in charge of their own learning.
- ☐ Helps children develop their language skills, through conversation and written materials.
- ☐ Implements a daily schedule that promotes a balance of children's academic needs with their needs to relax, have snacks, learn new skills, get exercise, and develop social skills.

Notes:

What questions would you like to ask the Candidate that would tell you more about his/her competence in this Functional area?

Functional Area 6: Communication	Observed	Not Observed
Candidate actively communicates with school-age children and provides opportunities and support for school-age children to understand, acquire, and use verbal and nonverbal means of communicating thoughts and feelings.		

What you are looking for:

- ☐ Candidate and children converse frequently taking turns in conversation. Conversation is not for the sole purpose of giving direction or disciplining.
- ☐ Children are asked open-ended questions which require longer and more complex answers.
- ☐ Candidate includes reading and writing materials in all interest areas.

Notes:

What questions would you like to ask the Candidate that would tell you more about his/her competence in this Functional area?

Functional Area 7: Creative	Observed	Not Observed
Candidate provides opportunities that stimulate school-age children to play with sound, rhythm, languages, materials, space, and ideas in individual ways and to express their creative abilities.		

What you are looking for:

- ☐ There is evidence of children's creative work (e.g. artwork displayed.
- ☐ Activities encourage more creativity than coloring books or prepackaged craft projects.
- ☐ Children are exposed to a variety of creative experiences (e.g. drama, music, art).

Notes:

What questions would you like to ask the Candidate that would tell you more about his/her competence in this Functional area?

Functional Area 8: Self	Observed	Not Observed
Candidate provides physical and emotional security for each school-age child and helps each school-age child to know, accept, take pride in himself or herself and develop a sense of independence.		

What you are looking for:

- ☐ Respects the individuality of children.
- ☐ Provides opportunities for children to experience success and to acknowledge their own progress and successes.
- ☐ Encourages children to solve their own problems, intervening only when it seems they can't find a solution or when someone might get hurt.
- ☐ Uses genuine praise and recognition to acknowledge children's efforts and accomplishments.

Notes:

What questions would you like to ask the Candidate that would tell you more about his/her competence in this Functional area?

Functional Area 9: Social	Observed	Not Observed
Candidate helps each school-age child feel accepted in the group, helps children learn to communicate and get along with others, and encourages feelings of empathy and mutual respect among school-age children and adults.		

What you are looking for:

- ☐ Models positive ways to interact with other people of all ages and backgrounds.
- ☐ Sets up an area that encourages children to socialize (e.g. soft furniture, music, magazines, and books).
- ☐ Encourages children to help each other.
- ☐ Allows plenty of time for children to talk to each other and staff..

Notes:

What questions would you like to ask the Candidate that would tell you more about his/her competence in this Functional area?

Functional Area 10: Guidance	Observed	Not Observed
Candidate provides a supportive environment in which children can learn and practice appropriate and acceptable behaviors as individuals and as a group.		

What you are looking for:

- ☐ Speaks with children in same tone and respect used with adults.
- ☐ States directions and reminds children of rules in positive terms (e.g. redirecting, reminders, and positive reinforcement).
- ☐ Gives children opportunities to handle their differences without adult assistance.
- ☐ Talks to children about their day, their friends, concerns and feelings.

Notes:

What questions would you like to ask the Candidate that would tell you more about his/her competence in this Functional area?

Functional Area 11: Families	Observed	Not Observed
Candidate maintains an open, friendly and cooperative relationship with each school-age child's family, encourages their involvement in the program, supports the school-age child's relationships with his or her family, respects the diversity of family structures and understands that children develop with in the context of their families and culture.		

What you are looking for:

- ☐ Candidate greets parents upon arrival or departure.
- ☐ Has regular communication with parents and families.
- ☐ Shares interesting, positive information about each child's day with family.

Notes:

What questions would you like to ask the Candidate that would tell you more about his/her competence in this Functional area?