

Behavior Observation Forms

Overview

These behavioral observation forms were designed for teachers, paraeducators, parents, and others who may be interacting in a school or home program with a child with challenging or atypical behaviors. The forms provide convenient and relatively thorough means of taking data on behaviors that a child might be exhibiting and about which the team would like to gather more information.

Recording relatively detailed observations is a good first step in performing a functional behavior assessment or analysis on a targeted behavior and can help provide baseline data for a program designed to modify it.

You may wish to document a targeted behavior on more than a single occasion, and in a variety of settings (if, indeed, the behavior occurs in a variety of settings), to get a better feel for the various factors (antecedents and consequences) that may be influencing the behavior.

There are several sections to this document: the instructions for using the both of the behavior observation forms and the intensity rating scale and reproducible masters for each form. You are welcome to freely copy and distribute the form and this introductory material; I only ask that you keep the footer intact so that those using the document can locate the latest versions.

Instructions for the Behavior Observation Forms

There are two behavior observation forms included in this document; each documents similar information. The only difference, really, is that Form A has larger fields, allowing more room for writing, but limiting the number of records on a page. Form B has smaller fields, but has more records on each page. If you're taking more detailed records, you may wish to use Form A. If you're taking a great number of records, you might wish to use Form B to help limit the number of papers you have to shuffle through. If you make conscious use of record numbers, you can mix and match the use of these forms as your needs

For each observed location fill in each of the fields in the record. Explanations for the fields are below. Examples given are for typical school situations, but the form can just as easily be used for behaviors observed in the home or around the community.

Date

Record the date of the observation.

Record Number

It may be handy to give each recorded observation a number for ease of reference later on in the program. Recording the page number in the field at the top can help speed up reference, as well.

Use Intensity Scale Number

If you have created an intensity rating scale for the observed behavior you can write the number here so referencing the scale is easier.

Start and End

Record the time (as precisely as possible) that the behavior begins and ends.

Intensity

If you have developed a rating scale for this behavior, you can record the intensity of the behavior here.

Initials

For most programs, a variety of adults may be working with a single child. Recording the observer will help eliminate confusion over who may have seen what. It is also important to note the observer as trends may become apparent that certain behaviors may only be seen when certain people are working with a child, and this can be very helpful in assessing the functional nature of these behaviors.

Setting

Where and when did the behavior occur? Some possible settings might be:

- Bathroom
- Gym
- Library
- Lunchroom
- Music room
- OT room
- Play area
- Playground
- Reading group
- Speech room
- Work area

People

Who were the significant people involved with the activity, antecedent events, or around the child at the time of the behavior? Note particularly those people who interacted with the child before, during, and after the behavior, and anyone who may have exited or entered the area before, during, or after the behavior. Form B doesn't include a section for people, but such details could be added when filling in the Setting section.

Activity

With what was the child involved when the behavior occurred? Some possible activities might be:

- Arrival/dismissal to or from class
- Attending alone to one person (during one-on-one instruction, etc.)
- Attending as part of a large group (during an assembly, concert, etc.)
- Attending as part of a small group (during a reading group, time on the carpet, etc.)
- Inside play
- Listening to a story
- Lunch
- Math
- Recess
- Riding the bus
- Snack
- Toileting
- Transitioning between tasks, areas, rooms, etc.
- Unstructured time
- Waiting (for a turn, in line, etc.)
- Working as part of a large group
- Working as part of a small group
- Working independently
- Working one-on-one with an adult

Antecedent

What happened right before the targeted behavior that the child might be responding to? Some possible antecedent events might be:

- A break in the routine
- A demand or request is made of the child
- A loss of a privilege
- A particular sound, sight, texture, etc.
- A reprimand
- A request
- Attention given to someone or something other than the child
- Delivery of reinforcement
- Denial of a request
- Difficulty with a task
- Feedback for an action, answer, etc.
- Physical contact

Behavior

What, exactly, did the child do? Be as descriptive as possible, describing what the behavior looked like, sounded like, at whom or what it may have been directed, etc.

Consequence

What happened after the behavior occurred? A consequence isn't necessarily always something that the teacher, parent, or peer *purposefully* introduces as a result of the behavior, so be sure to observe and record as many details as possible about the reactions of people and any changes that may have occurred in the environment.

Comments

Include any comments that you feel might be helpful in addressing the observed behavior. You may wish to use this area to hypothesize about the function that this behavior is serving for the child.

Instructions for the Intensity Rating Scale

Should you wish, you can create a rating scale to objectively detail the intensity of a particular behavior (or set of behaviors). Often such scales range from a score of from one to five or one to ten, but any range can be used. Take, for example, the following scale, for a range of possible responses to a request for Austin to begin a work task.

1. Austin begins work promptly with no refusal.
2. Austin shows some aversion to the request (talking back or initial refusals), but begins work within 10 seconds.
3. Austin continues to argue or refuse after 10 seconds of request by an adult.
4. Austin attempts to leave the work area.
5. Austin knocks over chairs or throws materials.
6. Austin makes physical contact with his teacher or a peer.

Often, these scales are designed to address only negative or challenging behaviors. The scale above, however, while largely composed of more challenging responses, includes also the expected, positive response (number 1). I'd argue that it is as important to take data when the child is behaving positively as when he's not. Taking such data may shed some light on which environmental antecedents and consequences are helping to elicit that behavior. So, I usually include the expected behavior, to ensure that I'm documenting when I see that behavior.

I've included a separate reproducible master for creating intensity rating scales. If you are using these sheets to collect data on targeted behaviors, it can be helpful to copy this form onto the back of the observation form, for easy reference when observing "in the heat of the moment". The sections can be filled out as follows.

Behavior

Define, as completely as possible, the behavior to which this intensity scale is to be applied.

Scale Number

It may be handy to number your scales, to make referencing them easier. This field corresponds with the "Use Intensity Scale Number" field in the behavior observation form.

Numbered Boxes

In each of the numbered boxes define a specific level of intensity for that behavior. The scales are typically arranged in order of severity, either in ascending or descending order of intensity.

Behavior Observation Form A

Student: _____

Page: _____ of _____

Date: _____ Record #: _____ Use Intensity Scale # _____

Start		Antecedents	Behavior	Consequences
End				
Intensity				
Initials				
Setting		People	Activity	Comments

Date: _____ Record #: _____ Use Intensity Scale # _____

Start		Antecedents	Behavior	Consequences
End				
Intensity				
Initials				
Setting		People	Activity	Comments

Date: _____ Record #: _____ Use Intensity Scale # _____

Start		Antecedents	Behavior	Consequences
End				
Intensity				
Initials				
Setting		People	Activity	Comments

Date: _____ Record #: _____ Use Intensity Scale # _____

Start		Antecedents	Behavior	Consequences
End				
Intensity				
Initials				
Setting		People	Activity	Comments

Behavior Observation Form B

Student: _____

Page: _____ of _____

Date:	Setting	Activity	Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence	Comments
Record #:						
Start:						
End:						
Intensity:						
Scale #:						
Initials:						

Date:	Setting	Activity	Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence	Comments
Record #:						
Start:						
End:						
Intensity:						
Scale #:						
Initials:						

Date:	Setting	Activity	Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence	Comments
Record #:						
Start:						
End:						
Intensity:						
Scale #:						
Initials:						

Date:	Setting	Activity	Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence	Comments
Record #:						
Start:						
End:						
Intensity:						
Scale #:						
Initials:						

Date:	Setting	Activity	Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence	Comments
Record #:						
Start:						
End:						
Intensity:						
Scale #:						
Initials:						

Date:	Setting	Activity	Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence	Comments
Record #:						
Start:						
End:						
Intensity:						
Scale #:						
Initials:						

Date:	Setting	Activity	Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence	Comments
Record #:						
Start:						
End:						
Intensity:						
Scale #:						
Initials:						

Intensity Rating Scales

Student: _____

Page: _____ of _____

Behavior: _____ Scale # _____

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10

Behavior: _____ Scale # _____

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10

Behavior: _____ Scale # _____

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10