

**Observation Guidance for the  
Early Childhood Education Environment (ECEE) Inclusion Indicators Field Test Fillable PDF  
Draft 4/3/2020**

**Purpose:** The Early Childhood Education Environment (ECEE) Inclusion Indicators observation tool is a technical assistance tool designed to help programs use more inclusive practices. The tool supports coaches and providers who are knowledgeable and skilled in high quality inclusive practices to developing coaching plans that build the capacity of providers to implement high quality inclusive practices regardless of their baseline. The tool is used for formative assessment of implementation of high-quality inclusive practices. This tool is NOT intended for use for evaluation of staff performance. Furthermore, the tool is not intended to provide a raw score that can be compared to any other measure of inclusive practice. Finally, children with disabilities benefit from opportunities to practice skills for learning. The guidance uses “opportunities” because increasing the intensity and dosage of intervention optimizes learning.

**Who uses the ECEE?**

This ECEE observation tool is used by coaches with prior experience working in inclusive settings or by an individual in a similar instructional role. Coaches who have been trained in practices such as practice-based coaching, Pyramid Model, DEC Recommended Practices, LEAP Instructional Practices, embedded instruction and similar evidence-based practices are ideal users. Coaches should have at least 2 months in the environment building relationships and working with children and personnel and have a contextually strong understanding of the environment before filling out the guidance.

**Where should the ECEE be used?**

This observation tool is designed to be used in programs that assume high quality early childhood education practices as measured by appropriate state competencies, rating scales, NAEYC program standards, etc. In addition to this, the observation should occur in programs where there is a 50:50 minimum ratio of children without disabilities to children with disabilities.

**When should the ECEE be used?**

Observers should have working knowledge of the environment and familiarity with the children with disabilities and personnel who work with them. Because there is a limited time to observe, the observer should have a clear understanding of the typical routines and activities in the setting. Additionally, the regular teaching staff should be present on the day of the observation. For example, there should not be substitute teachers present or key service personnel missing. Children with disabilities should be present on the day of the observation.

**How should the ECEE be used?**

Observers should spend a full session (2 hours to full day) in the designated environment. The form is used during the day to make notations and record observations, evidence and interview information. However, the final “score” should be made at the end of the observation session

and after any interview questions, follow up question or conversations with staff take place. Items that are not observed directly should be discussed with the regular staff via interview. There are no specific interview questions. The main idea is to gather the information from staff and providers and build an understanding of the environment for the purposes of developing a coaching plan. Observers should use the “evidence” box to note how the assessment item was observed (or not) through direct observation, interview, permanent product, or other. Decisions for scoring around a 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 should be based on a best estimate after the entire observation. Scorers are **NOT** asked to tally but rather to make a general assessment based on the percentages on the scoring rubric. If there is doubt about scoring, observers are advised to use the lower number.

### **Scoring Information for Indicator 9: Culturally Responsive and Identity Affirming Practices**

There is a large continuum of culturally responsive and identity affirming strategies that personnel can use to dismantle racism and ableism in the learning environment. This indicator is intended to support personnel to reflect on the practices used in the learning environment that strengthen an understanding of diversity and intentionally include children with disabilities and intersecting identities and their families. Observers should reflect generally on how culturally responsive and identity affirming practices are implemented in the environment and potential opportunities for deeper understanding and use of the practices. The rating scale for indicator 9 is different than indicators 1-8. The 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 rating scale is based on the level of implementation of these elements rather than how often the item is observed.

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