

ALCOT

Autism and Low Incidence Classroom Observation Tool

Robert C. Pennington

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Dedication

To my change agents: Daniel, Wesley, Chris, Margaret, Sebastian, Carlos & Amber
Susan, Alexis, Beth, Brenda, Reanna, & Laura
Belva, Don, John, Melinda, Ann
& Becca

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Introduction to the ALCOT

Designing and implementing high quality programs for individuals with severe disabilities can be a daunting task for both the novice and experienced teacher. New teachers often leave their short preparation programs with just enough knowledge and practice to obtain employment and start the school year. Experienced teachers often find that at the end of each school year unforeseen obstacles have prevented them from implementing the spectacular programs that they envisioned when they first started teaching. The fact is that teaching is an extremely difficult undertaking, and the environments in which teaching occurs are not always conducive to the maintenance of best practices. For example, teachers often have little time to plan for systemic program changes and even less time to engage in planning with paraprofessionals, other teachers, and related service professionals. Further, many teachers contact minimal reinforcement for engaging in critical teaching behaviors. Their supervisors and general education peers often have little training or experience in programming for students with severe disabilities, and despite their willingness to help, they are not able to provide useful or specific feedback. Though many teachers persist using best practices amidst a desert of positive feedback, our understanding of human behavior suggests that in the absence of reinforcement, good teaching behaviors may ultimately diminish. This is not good news for our learners with disabilities.

For many individuals with and without disabilities, school serves as the arbiter of quality of life outcomes. That is, the instruction and experiences during one's school career either prepares them for independence and successful navigation of the world around them or binds them to a lifetime of intensive supports and limited choices. Of all possible variables related to student success, data suggest that teacher quality is among the most potent (Hattie, 2009). Therefore, it is prudent to shift focus from improving student outcomes to instead working diligently to support teachers in changing their practices.

The **Autism and Low Incidence Classroom Observation Tool (ALCOT)** was created to help teachers and those charged with supporting them to reflect critically upon their educational programming and assess their progress towards the ideal classroom or program. It was not designed as a formal evaluation instrument, but as a roadmap to help practitioners determine their next steps. Its contents have been derived from over 20 years of work in classrooms and programs serving individuals with moderate to severe disabilities. During that span, the author worked as a

Resources Related to ALCOT Indicators



CEEDAR Center's Innovation
Configuration Evidence-based Practices
for Students with Severe Disabilities

National Professional Development
Center on ASD

National Autism Center's
National Standards Report

Council for Exceptional Children's
Ethical Principles and Professional
Practice Standards for Educators

BACB Professional and Ethical
Compliance Code

classroom teacher, inclusion specialist, autism program consultant, autism training center director, researcher, and teacher educator. These experiences in hundreds of classrooms provided valuable information in determining the key features of effective educational programs for students with disabilities that are included in the ALCOT. Though most of the items can be directly linked to basic and applied research, some of them are derived from educational policy and advocacy for people with disabilities. Finally, the ALCOT does not provide an exhaustive list of potential program components, as it is intended to be a practical instrument that can be used to gather

data in a short period of time. It is a careful set of foundational elements upon which teachers should be able to develop exceptional programs for their students.

The ALCOT

Previous versions of the ALCOT have been used to evaluate district-wide programs to identify professional development needs, assess the success of statewide technical assistance initiatives, provide feedback to teachers during consultation, and to measure the progress of teachers in alternative certification programs. This current version is comprised of 37 quality indicators that span six essential program areas including (a) environmental supports, (b) instructional supports, (c) general instruction, (d) communication instruction, (e) behavior management, and (f) staff interaction. Each program area contains four to nine quality indicators that require evidence of student supports, curriculum features, teaching supports, and teacher behaviors. Finally, each indicator can be scored as Evidenced, Partially Evidenced, or Not Evidenced. A description of what constitutes each level of evidence is included in the ALCOT Scoring Guide table.

Using the ALCOT

As aforementioned, the ALCOT can be used by multiple individuals for a range of purposes, but the program improvement process is likely to be initiated by either a classroom teacher or an administrator/technical assistance provider. There are two general ways that the ALCOT can be administered. First, the ALCOT can be completed through self-report. A teacher or an instructional team may choose or be asked to complete the instrument considering their own program. When applying this method, it is recommended that multiple team members complete the ALCOT independently and then meet to discuss an overall score for each item. When teams complete the instrument together, some members of the team may find it difficult to point out program weaknesses that have not been observed by others. Independent completion followed by group discussion may help to gather more accurate data and capitalize on the unique perspectives of different members of the educational team.

A second way to complete the ALCOT is to assign an outside observer (e.g., administrator, technical assistance provider) to score whether an indicator is present or absent. In general, the observer should plan about 1.5 hours to complete the observation and to interview member(s) of the teaching team. The majority of ALCOT items are designed such that they can be scored at any time of the instructional day. That is, they reflect foundational programming elements that should be ever-present. Further, the observer should provide an opportunity for the teachers to report evidence related to items that might not be easily observed. For example, a teacher might be able to provide critical insight into the frequency and quality of staff interactions. In some cases, an observer may not have access to student records, and therefore, evidence related to the content of behavior intervention plans (BIP) or individualized education plans (IEP) must be obtained from the teacher's report. The scorer should mark the source of the data (i.e., O-observed, R-report) for each indicator on the left column of the ALCOT protocol.

Using ALCOT Data

Once the ALCOT protocol is completed, the next step is to identify areas for improvement. It is not uncommon for several indicators to be absent within a program, and teachers and their supervisors are encouraged to take a deep breath and acknowledge that (a) it is likely that their program is not alone in missing several elements, and (b) this is just a baseline waiting for the

program improvement to begin. When selecting targets, the team should first consider only one to three targets. Though some individuals may revel in building an extended laundry list of “to-dos,” a short and focused list of priorities will be more effective during planning and implementation. When selecting priorities, the team should first consider those items related to student safety and dignity, (e.g., staff can observe all areas of the room and avoid the use of restraint or seclusion based procedures) as every student has a right to an environment in which they are safe and free of coercion. Second, the team should consider those items, that when addressed, will have a pervasive impact across multiple program areas. For example, targeting communication will likely result in decreases in problem behavior, increases in social interactions, and potentially improved access to general education curriculum and more inclusive environments. Similarly, by targeting an increase in the use of positive feedback, teachers may decrease challenging behavior while simultaneously increasing engagement and the acquisition of new skills.

Sample Goals for Program Change



No student will sit for 10 minutes without instruction.

All staff will increase their rate of positive feedback to .5/minute.

Teachers will provide supports for students to receive instruction in the general education classroom for a minimum of 50 minutes a day.

Staff will collect data of students' targeted challenging behavior daily.

Once priority areas are identified, the team should develop goals and objectives for program improvement. Pennington (2017) suggested that teachers might consider adopting the familiar IEP process to guide them in setting goals for program improvement. Teachers would first identify goals directly related to ALCOT indicators that were not evidenced. For example, when scoring Mrs. Barlow's elementary program, it was noted that staff did not teach academic skills aligned to the general education curriculum. Instead, they focused heavily on worksheets and random activities based on teacher preferences.

The team decided to set a goal that by the end of the school year, teaching staff will provide reading instruction aligned with the general education curriculum to all students in their classroom. It is important to note that the goal focuses on teacher behavior that can be observed and measured. For example, at the end of the year, Mrs. Barlow can count the number of students to which she delivers reading instruction.

Once a goal is identified, the teacher should then develop short objectives or benchmarks to help them make incremental progress towards the goal. In the example above, Mrs. Barlow decides to develop the following benchmarks: (a) By the end of August, Mrs. Barlow will assess all students' reading skills. (b) By the end of September, teaching staff will implement the Early Literacy Skills Builder (ELSB) or the Early Reading Skills Builder (ERSB) with all appropriate students. (c) By the end of October, Mrs. Barlow and paraprofessionals will conduct shared story reading lessons. (d) By the end of October, 80% of students will receive literacy instruction alongside peers without disabilities. Certainly, it would be preferable that all of the objectives are met in the first

weeks of school, but the team must carefully consider the steps involved in implementing each new program feature. For example, prior to implementing a new reading program, the teacher must order the materials, learn the program, and then train others to implement the program with accuracy and fluency. It is important that teachers set objectives or benchmarks that can be reasonably met while responding to the demands of daily programming.

Teachers may also find it helpful to develop a set of implementation steps to help them meet objectives. For example, Mrs. Barlow might identify the following steps for the objective to "assess all students' reading skills": (a) review students' records by August 9th, (b) obtain assessment materials by August 10th, (c) assess students K, J, B, & F by August 14th, and (d) assess students R, Q, S, & X by August 19th. By developing a list of smaller implementation steps, the program team has the opportunity to contact success (i.e., reinforcement) more often for completing smaller and more frequent tasks.

Sample Goals and Matched Objectives



GOAL: No student will sit for 10 minutes without instruction.

OBJECTIVE: Mr. Xin (paraprofessional) will conduct at least two small group lessons a day.

GOAL: All staff will increase their rate of positive feedback to .5/minute.

OBJECTIVE: Mrs. Mims will conduct Discrete Trial Training with 90% accuracy (including the provision of feedback).

GOAL: Staff will collect data of students' targeted challenging behavior daily.

OBJECTIVE: Ms. Jimenez will use event recording to record students' challenging behavior with 80% agreement with a second observer for three consecutive days.

| ALCOT - Protocol for _____ | | Date _____ | | |
|---|---|---------------|---------------------|-----------|
| TARGETED INDICATOR | | | | |
| ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORTS (SOURCE - DIRECT OBSERVATION, REPORT) | | NOT EVIDENCED | PARTIALLY EVIDENCED | EVIDENCED |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R Staff can observe all areas of the classroom | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R Visual supports or tactile cues are displayed throughout the classroom | NE | PE | E |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | O The use of individualized student schedules/calendars are observed | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R Signals clearly indicate when observed transitions are approaching | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R Students are in close proximity to their peers | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R The use of assistive technology or modifications is evident | NE | PE | E |
| INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS (SOURCE - DIRECT OBSERVATION, REPORT) | | NOT EVIDENCED | PARTIALLY EVIDENCED | EVIDENCED |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | O Lesson plans are used to guide instruction | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R Systematic instruction plans are available for some objectives | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R All staff are engaged in instruction/preparation activities when not on a break | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | O Data are collected on multiple student objectives | NE | PE | E |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | O Data are plotted on line graphs | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R Staff report the use of aim lines or data-based decision-making rules | NE | PE | E |
| INSTRUCTION (SOURCE - DIRECT OBSERVATION, REPORT) | | NOT EVIDENCED | PARTIALLY EVIDENCED | EVIDENCED |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R No student sits for more than five minutes without instruction | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R Staff seek attention responses before delivering instruction | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R Staff generally deliver a directive only once and then use prompts or feedback to ensure correct responses | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R Staff deliver consistent feedback during instruction | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R All instructional materials are age appropriate | NE | PE | E |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | O Staff use preference assessments to identify potential reinforcers | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R Instruction occurs in at least two other skill domains besides academic (communication/social/adaptive/life skills) | NE | PE | E |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | O Staff teach academic skills aligned to the general education curriculum | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R Staff demonstrate or report using methods to promote generalization | NE | PE | E |
| COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTION (SOURCE - DIRECT OBSERVATION, REPORT) | | NOT EVIDENCED | PARTIALLY EVIDENCED | EVIDENCED |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | O Students' IEPs contain social/communication objectives | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R All students have a functional communication system | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R Communication instruction is observed across multiple times and partners | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R Students have access to communication supports at all times | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R Staff teach, prompt, or arrange the environment to facilitate peer interaction | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R All students participate in activities with peers without disabilities | NE | PE | E |
| BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT (SOURCE - DIRECT OBSERVATION, REPORT) | | NOT EVIDENCED | PARTIALLY EVIDENCED | EVIDENCED |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R Staff provide students with multiple opportunities to make choices | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R Staff provide praise/preferred stimuli following appropriate behavior | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R Staff refrain from using frequent negative feedback | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R Staff avoid the use of restraint or seclusion-based procedures (See scoring guide) | NE | PE | E |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | O BIPs (Behavior Intervention Plans) are written for persistent challenging behaviors | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R All staff-student interactions promote dignity | NE | PE | E |
| STAFF INTERACTION (SOURCE - DIRECT OBSERVATION, REPORT) | | NOT EVIDENCED | PARTIALLY EVIDENCED | EVIDENCED |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | O Staff communicate weekly with related service staff/parents | NE | PE | E |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | O Staff establish methods for communication with students' families | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R Paraprofessionals are given plans prior to assisting with instruction | NE | PE | E |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | R Staff-to-staff interactions are generally pleasant and reflect responsibility | NE | PE | E |
| TOTAL / 37 | | 4 | 7 | 25 |

To help illustrate how the ALCOT might be used, a completed protocol and a sample implementation plan is provided. Following the scoring of the ALCOT, Mrs. Meyer noticed that though her program meets the majority of quality indicators, two program weaknesses have become apparent. First, three of her nine students do not speak and have been provided no conventional means to communicate. She has been aware of this issue for some time, but has felt “stuck” because she has received little training on how to assess and design a communication program for her students. Further, she

has found it difficult to collaborate with her speech-language pathologist (SLP), who has been contracted from another district due to her district’s shortages in related service personnel.

Second, the ALCOT revealed that some of her students sit for an extended period of time without instruction. Many of her students appear to need one-to-one instruction, and therefore, when her staff work with students there is a need to leave others to engage in “sensory” activities or play on the computer.

After meeting with her team, she selects two goals around which to focus her efforts: (a) By the end of the school year, all nonvocal students will use a form of augmentative and alternative communication to make requests. (b) Teachers will implement a schedule in which no student will sit for a duration of 10 minutes without instruction. To address these goals, they develop the following plan.

Goal: All nonvocal students will use a form of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) to make requests.

Short-term Objective: Teacher will assess current student levels of communicative functioning and identify an appropriate form of AAC to teach.

Start: 8/10

Projected End: 8/29

Record Progress: Permanent progress

| Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Get three VB-MAPP protocols and prepare assessment materials | Administer VB-MAPP assessments | Meet with parents and SLP to review results and select instructional targets |
| By when: 8/12 | By when: 8/20 | By when: 8/29 |
| Resources VB-MAPP and assessment materials From: SLP & District | Resources None From: N/A | Resources Consultation From: SLP & Parents |

Short-term Objective: Each student will receive at least 150 instructional trials a day (on requesting).

Start: 9/5

Projected End: 9/30

Record Progress: Event recording

| Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 |
|--|---|--|
| Train staff to implement instruction & conduct preference assessments | Implement training during breakfast, snack, and lunch | Develop a matrix to assign classroom staff the responsibility of delivering trials during other periods of the day |
| By when: 9/12 | By when: 9/20 | By when: 9/30 |
| Resources VB-MAPP AAC materials Fidelity checklists From: SLP | Resources AAC materials Data sheets From: Teacher | Resources Matrix From: Teacher & SLP |

Goal: Teachers will implement a schedule in which no student will sit for a duration of 10 minutes without instruction.

Short-term Objective: Paraprofessionals will implement at least three small group lessons each day.

| Start: 8/10 | Projected End: 10/1 | Record Progress: Event recording |
|---|---|---|
| Step 1 Identify areas where small group instruction can be implemented By when: 8/12 | Step 2 Model small group instruction and provide opportunity for rehearsal with feedback By when: See Step 3 | Step 3 Implement: Group lesson 1 by 8/24 Group lesson 2 by 9/14 Group lesson 3 by 10/1 |
| Resources Activity matrix (schedule) From: Teacher | Resources Lesson plan & materials From: Teacher | Resources None |

Short-term Objective: Each student will learn to complete at least three consecutive independent work tasks.

| Start: 8/10 | Projected End: 11/1 | Record Progress: Event recording |
|---|--|---|
| Step 1 Develop list of meaningful tasks By when: 8/17 | Step 2 Prepare materials for tasks By when: 9/1 | Step 3 Introducing instruction on a single task by 9/15 and gradually introduce a new task on mastery of the previous task By when: 11/1 |
| Resources IEP goals, general education teacher feedback From: Teaching staff | Resources Materials From: Teacher & District | Resources Systematic instruction plan for using time delay to teach chained tasks From: Teacher |

It is important to note that the plan above reflects a single possible roadmap to achieving the goal selected by Mrs. Meyer. The ways that teachers might choose to address these targets will reflect the diversity of their training and available resources.

Final Thoughts on the ALCOT and Teacher Improvement

Teaching students with disabilities is one of most compelling careers that one can undertake. It requires the best of each recruit, and unfortunately, it can take what seems like a lifetime to master. The intent of the ALCOT is to provide teachers, administrators, and other support personnel with a tool to help them get their footing on the path towards building better programs for students with severe disabilities. It was developed in a spirit of personal growth, where one's teaching practice is not something to be obtained but to be continually refined and ultimately improved. Given the complexity of the contexts in which teachers are trained and asked to perform, the author suggests that we should not be surprised when teachers implement less than ideal programs. Further, he suggests that like the students under our care, teachers should not be labeled as “bad” or “lazy” but provided supports to help them grow and ultimately flourish. The ALCOT is intended to be one of those supports. Enjoy.

Resources

1. [ALCOT Protocol](#)
2. [ALCOT Scoring Guide](#)
3. [Sample Recommendations](#)
4. [ALCOT Implementation Plan](#)
5. [ALCOT Multiple Administration Log](#)
6. [Related References](#)

| TARGETED INDICATOR | | RATING | | |
|---|---|---------------|---------------------|-----------|
| ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORTS: (SOURCE - DIRECT OBSERVATION, REPORT) | | NOT EVIDENCED | PARTIALLY EVIDENCED | EVIDENCED |
| O | R Staff can observe all areas of the classroom | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Visual supports or tactile cues are displayed throughout the classroom | NE | PE | E |
| O | R The use of individualized student schedules/calendars are observed | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Signals clearly indicate when observed transitions are approaching | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Students are in close proximity to their peers | NE | PE | E |
| O | R The use of assistive technology or modifications is evident | NE | PE | E |
| INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS (SOURCE - DIRECT OBSERVATION, REPORT) | | NOT EVIDENCED | PARTIALLY EVIDENCED | EVIDENCED |
| O | R Lesson plans are used to guide instruction | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Systematic instruction plans are available for some objectives | NE | PE | E |
| O | R All staff are engaged in instruction/preparation activities when not on a break | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Data are collected on multiple student objectives | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Data are plotted on line graphs | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Staff report the use of aim lines or data-based decision-making rules | NE | PE | E |
| INSTRUCTION (SOURCE - DIRECT OBSERVATION, REPORT) | | NOT EVIDENCED | PARTIALLY EVIDENCED | EVIDENCED |
| O | R No student sits for more than five minutes without instruction | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Staff seek attention responses before delivering instruction | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Staff generally deliver a directive only once and then use prompts or feedback to ensure correct responses | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Staff deliver consistent feedback during instruction | NE | PE | E |
| O | R All instructional materials are age appropriate | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Staff use preference assessments to identify potential reinforcers | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Instruction occurs in at least two other skill domains besides academic (communication/social/adaptive/life skills) | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Staff teach academic skills aligned to the general education curriculum | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Staff demonstrate or report using methods to promote generalization | NE | PE | E |
| COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTION (SOURCE - DIRECT OBSERVATION, REPORT) | | NOT EVIDENCED | PARTIALLY EVIDENCED | EVIDENCED |
| O | R Students' IEPs contain social/communication objectives | NE | PE | E |
| O | R All students have a functional communication system | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Communication instruction is observed across multiple times and partners | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Students have access to communication supports at all times | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Staff teach, prompt, or arrange the environment to facilitate peer interaction | NE | PE | E |
| O | R All students participate in activities with peers without disabilities | NE | PE | E |
| BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT (SOURCE - DIRECT OBSERVATION, REPORT) | | NOT EVIDENCED | PARTIALLY EVIDENCED | EVIDENCED |
| O | R Staff provide students with multiple opportunities to make choices | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Staff provide praise/preferred stimuli following appropriate behavior | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Staff refrain from using frequent negative feedback | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Staff avoid the use of restraint or seclusion-based procedures (See scoring guide) | NE | -- | E |
| O | R BIPs (Behavior Intervention Plans) are written for persistent challenging behaviors | NE | PE | E |
| O | R All staff-student interactions promote dignity | NE | PE | E |
| STAFF INTERACTION (SOURCE - DIRECT OBSERVATION, REPORT) | | NOT EVIDENCED | PARTIALLY EVIDENCED | EVIDENCED |
| O | R Staff communicate weekly with related service staff/parents | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Staff establish methods for communication with students' families | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Paraprofessionals are given plans prior to assisting with instruction | NE | PE | E |
| O | R Staff-to-staff interactions are generally pleasant and reflect responsiveness | NE | PE | E |
| TOTAL / 37 | | | | |

Autism and Low Incidence Classroom Observation Tool: ALCOT Scoring Guide

Environmental Supports (Source - Direct Observation, Materials, Interview)

STAFF CAN OBSERVE ALL AREAS OF THE CLASSROOM

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when all students are within the direct line of sight of a teacher/paraprofessional/or related services provider during the majority of the observation period. Instances may occur when a student is permitted to work alone or take a break for a brief period in an area not directly in staff members' view or a staff member briefly steps into the hallway, closet, or bathroom leaving the student unattended.

E This item is *evidenced* when all students are within the direct line of sight of a teacher/paraprofessional/or related services provider during the observation.

Why is this item important? This item is critical in the prevention of harm to students. Some students may engage in self-injury and other challenging behaviors (e.g., elopement, masturbation, aggression towards others, property destruction) that cannot be addressed if not noticed by a staff member. Further, staff members may miss meaningful instructional opportunities when students are out of their line of sight.

VISUAL SUPPORTS OR TACTILE CUES ARE DISPLAYED THROUGHOUT THE CLASSROOM

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when visual supports or tactile cues (more than one) are observed within the classroom but are not presented by the teacher or used by students. These may include but are not limited to schedules, timers, posted rules, emotional regulation scales, video models, social stories, organizational materials (e.g., labeled areas, color coding, Braille labels).

E This item is *evidenced* when multiple visual supports or tactile cues are present within the classroom and used by staff and students. These may include but are not limited to schedules, timers, posted rules, emotional regulation scales, video models, social stories, and organizational materials (e.g., labeled areas, color coding, Braille labels).

Why is this item important? Visual supports can be used to facilitate student independence by providing environmental cues to teach or prompt student adherence to daily routines and potentially weaken students' reliance on spoken adult directives. Visual supports can also be used to help students understand difficult concepts by providing concrete representations of those concepts. For example, a teacher might place a list of conversation topics on a student's desk to facilitate interactions or use a line on the ground to teach students to stand behind each other when lining up.

THE USE OF INDIVIDUALIZED STUDENT SCHEDULES/CALENDARS ARE OBSERVED

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when an individualized schedule is present but is not used during the observation or is taught to or used by a limited number of students.

E This item is *evidenced* when (a) a schedule is present and (b) multiple children look at, point to, or manipulate the schedule(s) or (a) a schedule is present and (b) the teacher directs the students' attention to the schedule or prompts the use of the schedule.

Why is this item important? Schedules are an essential part of most people's daily lives. They facilitate independence, potentially reduce stress, and help individuals plan for upcoming events. For students with disabilities, they can serve as a prosthetic device for organization that can travel with them from class to class, to home, and out in the community.

SIGNALS CLEARLY INDICATE WHEN OBSERVED TRANSITIONS ARE APPROACHING

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when at least one of the staff members provides warnings prior to some transitions (e.g., uses a timer, verbal countdown, points to the clock).

E This item is *evidenced* when multiple staff members consistently provide warnings prior to transitions (e.g., uses a timer, verbal countdown, points to the clock).

Why is this item important? Generally, people do not enjoy being interrupted, and many students with severe disabilities may not be able to monitor the approaching end of a period of activity. If students are not provided advance notice of an approaching transition, they may engage in challenging behavior when presented with the directive to transition. Further, teachers may miss the opportunity to teach students how to prepare for the termination of an activity (e.g., complete the current item/step and put materials away).

STUDENTS ARE IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THEIR PEERS

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when the majority of students are in close proximity of their peers with the exception of students who are segregated from their peers as a result of recent dangerous behavior but do not have current behavior intervention plans that include steps for promoting pattern behaviors that will permit the students to increase their proximity to peers.

E This item is *evidenced* when no student is segregated from peers unless prescribed in a current and comprehensive behavior intervention plan.

Why is this item important? The close proximity of students to their peers with and without disabilities permits opportunities for critical interactions to occur. These interactions may facilitate learning, reinforce communicative responses, and may serve as the beginnings of meaningful student-to-student relationships.

THE USE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY OR MODIFICATIONS IS EVIDENT

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when a limited number of students use low tech (e.g., objects, pictures, pencil grips) or high tech supports (e.g., AAC devices, computers) to receive targeted instructional stimuli or to respond to those stimuli or when the complexity or difficulty of instructional tasks are modified for a limited number of students.

E This item is *evidenced* when students use low tech (e.g., objects, pictures, pencil grips) or high tech supports (e.g., AAC devices, computers) to receive targeted instructional stimuli or to respond to those stimuli or when the complexity or difficulty of instructional tasks are modified for several students.

Why is this item important? These supports ensure that all students can access instruction and are provided with opportunities to learn. For many students, assistive technology and modifications or accommodations may be prescribed in their individualized educational program and must be observed in use during daily instruction.

Instructional Supports (Source - Direct Observation, Materials, Interview)

LESSON PLANS ARE USED TO GUIDE INSTRUCTION

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when teachers follow written plans that prescribe daily instructional activities. At a minimum, these plans list instructional activities corresponding to different times across the day.

E This item is *evidenced* when teachers follow written plans that prescribe daily instructional activities. These may, at a minimum, describe instructional activities and their content focus corresponding to different times across the day.

Why is this item important? Lesson planning is essential to ensuring that teaching staff are prepared to deliver continuous and engaging instruction throughout the week. It helps staff members prepare for transitions and ensure that materials are ready prior to instruction.

SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION PLANS ARE AVAILABLE FOR SOME OBJECTIVES

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when systematic instruction plans have been developed but are not current, or staff members have not been trained to use them. These plans, at a minimum, describe the targeted responses and instructional procedures.

E This item is *evidenced* when systematic instruction plans are observed in use during instruction or produced upon request and all appropriate instructional staff are trained to use them. These plans, at a minimum, describe the targeted responses and instructional procedures.

Why is this item important? The use of systematic instruction plans helps staff to implement instructional procedures reliably. These plans describe teaching steps so that they can be replicated by new members of the educational team.

ALL STAFF ARE ENGAGED IN INSTRUCTIONAL PREPARATION ACTIVITIES WHEN NOT ON A BREAK

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when the majority of staff members are engaged in instruction, data collection, material development, health care supports, or environmental arrangement activities without a lapse for 10 consecutive minutes.

E This item is *evidenced* when all staff members are engaged in instruction, data collection, material development, health care supports, or environmental arrangement activities without a lapse for five consecutive minutes.

Why is this item important? “All hands on deck” are required to ensure that students are safe and actively engaged in meaningful instructional activities. When all staff members are not effectively engaged in programming, staff may find it difficult to supervise all children, prepare materials for upcoming activities, and deliver instruction within the most effective student-to-staff ratios. Using all staff effectively helps to facilitate an overall positive and productive work environment.

DATA ARE COLLECTED ON MULTIPLE STUDENT OBJECTIVES

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when staff present progress data for a randomly selected student but those data are not current (more than two weeks old).

E This item is *evidenced* when staff are observed collecting data on student performance or data are presented for a randomly selected student that represents performance within the last two weeks (10 school days).

Why is this item important? Current student data are required to ensure that students are not exposed to ineffective instruction or intervention for an extended period of time. Further, data may serve to reinforce good teaching practices.

DATA ARE PLOTTED ON LINE GRAPHS

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when line graphs depicting performance data are observed, but the depicted data are not current (within 10 school days).

E This item is *evidenced* when line graphs depicting multiple students' recent performance data are current and observed.

Why is this item important? Raw data are difficult to interpret, but when they are plotted on a graph, teaching staff are able to quickly observe patterns in student performance and respond accordingly. Graphs make it easier to apply data-based decision-making rules.

STAFF REPORT THE USE OF AIM LINES OR DATA-BASED DECISION-MAKING RULES

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when the teacher provides a vague description of data patterns that would evoke a change in instruction.

E This item is *evidenced* when the teacher describes the use of aim lines or specific data patterns and suggests specific timelines for evaluation.

Why is this item important? The application of systematic procedures for interpreting data can lead to increased student performance and ensure that students spend as little time as possible in receipt of ineffective instruction.

Instruction

(Source – Direct Observation, Materials, Interview)

NO STUDENT SITS FOR MORE THAN FIVE MINUTES WITHOUT INSTRUCTION

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when no student sits for 10 consecutive minutes without instruction as defined by staff presenting instructional content to students alone or in a group or when the students are engaged in assigned independent instructional tasks.

E This item is *evidenced* when no student sits for five consecutive minutes without instruction as defined by staff presenting instructional content to students alone or in a group or when the students are engaged in assigned independent instructional tasks.

Why is this item important? Many students with ASD and intellectual disability may not acquire skills from observation alone and often learn new skills at a slower rate than their peers without disabilities. As a result, these students require more opportunities to practice skills and explicit instruction across a broader set of skills. Teachers must maximize student instructional opportunities so that students will have the best chance to acquire skills that will facilitate the highest quality of life for each student.

STAFF SEEK ATTENTION RESPONSES BEFORE DELIVERING INSTRUCTION

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when some staff members engage students' attention before presenting instructional stimuli. Example: The teacher points to a set of picture choices and says, "Look!" before the directive, "Touch the vehicle."

E This item is *evidenced* when all staff members generally engage students' attention before presenting instructional stimuli. Example: The teacher points to a set of picture choices and says, "Look!" before the directive, "Touch the vehicle."

Why is this item important? Students may not attend to teacher directives or relevant instructional materials without the delivery of cues for attention or the requirement for the student to emit an observing response (e.g., pointing to the material, repeating a portion of the direction). When students do not attend to these important antecedent stimuli, they may fail to respond or make inadvertent errors. Further, they may fail to connect relevant cues to the correct response.

STAFF GENERALLY DELIVER A DIRECTIVE ONLY ONCE THEN USE PROMPTS OR FEEDBACK TO ENSURE CORRECT RESPONSES

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when some staff members generally deliver a directive once; then if the student does not respond or makes an error, the staff provides a prompt or feedback to evoke the correct response. It is acceptable for staff members to repeat the directive immediately followed by a model of the correct response.

E This item is *evidenced* when all staff members generally deliver a directive once; then if the student does not respond or makes an error, the staff member provides a prompt or feedback to evoke the correct response. It is acceptable for the staff member to repeat the directive immediately followed by a model of the correct response.

Why is this item important? When teachers repeatedly deliver directives in the absence of prompts or instructional feedback, students may (a) become increasingly frustrated, (b) learn that response is not always required, or (c) may stop attending to teacher directives.

STAFF DELIVER CONSISTENT FEEDBACK DURING INSTRUCTION

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when some staff members provide feedback following the majority of student responses (e.g., head nod, thumbs up, “Yes, that is a banana,” “Good job,” “That’s not correct; the answer is four”).

E This item is *evidenced* when all staff members provide feedback following the majority of student responses (e.g., head nod, thumbs up, “Yes, that is a banana,” “Good job,” “That’s not correct; the answer is four”).

Why is this item important? The delivery of feedback is a key element in the instructional cycle. In the absence of feedback, students may not consistently respond or may fail to discriminate between correct and incorrect responses.

ALL INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ARE AGE APPROPRIATE

PE This item is *partially evidenced* if the majority of instructional stimuli are similar to those used by same-aged peers. (Does not include self-selected reinforcers)

E This item is *evidenced* if all instructional stimuli are similar to those used by same-aged peers. (Does not include self-selected reinforcers)

Why is this item important? The use of age-appropriate materials has two distinct benefits. First, it promotes student dignity and counters outdated perceptions that people with disabilities are more like young children than people of their same age. Second, age-appropriate materials will likely be more acceptable by peers with and without disabilities and therefore provide a context around which naturalistic interactions can occur.

STAFF USE PREFERENCE ASSESSMENTS TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL REINFORCERS

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when staff members describe the use of reinforcer inventories (surveys) or informal observation to identify potential reinforcers.

E This item is *evidenced* when staff members describe the recent use (i.e., within the last 20 school days) of reinforcer inventories (surveys), free operant assessment (systematic observations) or trial-based preference assessments.

Why is this item important? The delivery of reinforcing stimuli (e.g., praise, tangibles) following correct responses is a cardinal feature of high-quality instruction. Unfortunately, it can be difficult to predict what will be reinforcing to a particular individual. For example, many young children with ASD or intellectual disability may not initially find praise to be reinforcing. It is important that procedures to identify potential reinforcers are implemented regularly to ensure that teachers and staff have the most powerful reinforcers at their disposal during instruction.

INSTRUCTION OCCURS IN AT LEAST TWO OTHER SKILL DOMAINS BESIDES ACADEMIC (COMMUNICATION/SOCIAL /ADAPTIVE/LIFE SKILLS)

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when instructional opportunities are provided across two instructional domains (including academic) during a one-hour observation. Instructional opportunities may be embedded. For example, after completing a reading lesson in the Early Literacy Skills Builder program, the teacher embeds opportunities for the student to practice requesting skills for a preferred stimulus.

E This item is *evidenced* when instructional opportunities are provided across at least three instructional domains (including academic) during a one-hour observation. Instructional opportunities may be embedded. For example, after completing a reading lesson in the Early Literacy Skills Builder, the teacher embeds opportunities for the student to practice requesting skills for a preferred stimulus.

Why is this item important? To ensure that students make sufficient progress in the diverse range of skills necessary to be successful in current and future environments, teachers must provide instruction across multiple skill domains. Successful teachers often find ways to embed the instruction of skills from one domain into lessons primarily focused on skills in a different domain.

STAFF TEACH ACADEMIC SKILLS ALIGNED TO THE GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when staff members provide academic instruction aligned to the general education curriculum of similar-aged peers across one content area.

E This item is *evidenced* when staff members provide academic instruction aligned to the general education curriculum of similar-aged peers across multiple content areas.

Why is this item important? Recent literature in the areas teaching academics to students with severe disabilities have demonstrated that these students can make progress in the general education curriculum with the use of carefully designed supports and teaching strategies. Academic instruction provides students with skills necessary to go further in natural environments and provides context for understanding the complex world.

STAFF DEMONSTRATE OR REPORT USING METHODS TO PROMOTE GENERALIZATION

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when staff members use at least one strategy to promote generalization. Strategies may include but are not limited to using multiple examples of instructional stimuli, using materials that are common to natural environments, and teaching in a variety of settings and across different instructors or communicative partners.

E This item is *evidenced* when staff members use multiple strategies to promote generalization. Strategies may include but are not limited to using multiple examples of instructional stimuli, using materials that are common to natural environments, teaching in a variety of settings and across different instructors or communicative partners.

Why is this item important? Many students with ASD or ID may not apply newly acquired skills in novel situations. This is problematic as it is impossible to train every student to respond to every possible example of instructional stimuli or naturalistic situation. If staff do not program for generalization, they may run the risk of teaching their students into a “box.” That is, students learn to perform skills under tightly controlled instructional arrangements that do not reflect the requirements of the real world.

Communication Instruction (Source – Direct Observation, Materials, Interview)

STUDENTS' IEPS CONTAIN SOCIAL/COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when a teacher indicates that at least 75% of students have social/communication objectives.

E This item is *evidenced* when a teacher indicates that all students have social/communication objectives.

Why is this item important? Communication is arguably the most critical set of skills to be acquired in a person's lifetime. Unfortunately, individuals with ASD and ID present with a range of challenges in communicating effectively across a range of purposes and audiences. Due to its importance, social/communication targets should be featured prominently on students' IEPs or instructional programs.

ALL STUDENTS HAVE A FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

(E.G., VOCAL, SIGN, AAC)

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when all students use or are in the process of learning a response form that can be understood by multiple communicative partners (e.g., eye gaze, sign language, vocal, picture based, technology).

E This item is *evidenced* when all students can respond to instructional opportunities using a response form that can be understood by multiple communicative partners (e.g., eye gaze, sign language, vocal, picture based, technology) and when the teacher reports that all students can express basic wants and needs using one of the forms listed above.

Why is this item important? As aforementioned, communicative competence is essential to an individual's quality of life. In the absence of a functional communication system, students are at an increased risk for harm, abuse, and isolation. Further, students require a communication system to participate fully in educational programming and to receive maximum benefit from opportunities to engage in interactions with peers. Finally, many students will engage in challenging behavior to access or escape stimuli because they do not have a better way to communicate their wants and needs.

COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTION IS OBSERVED

ACROSS MULTIPLE TIMES AND PARTNERS

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when the teacher manipulates the environment or delivers cues/prompts to evoke a communicative response (e.g., joint attention, a request, labeling, a greeting, or conversational skills).

E This item is *evidenced* when the teacher manipulates the environment or delivers cues/prompts to evoke a communicative response (e.g., joint attention, a request, labeling, a greeting, or conversational skills) multiple times and across different communicative partners.

Why is this item important? For most individuals, communication skills have developed through a lifetime of hundreds (in some cases, thousands) of daily interactions. It is unlikely that students will obtain any substantial repertoire if they only receive communication instruction during a limited portion of the day and with a single communicative partner. Communication instruction should occur all day and across a range of partners (e.g., teaching staff, related service personnel, peers, parents).

STUDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO COMMUNICATION SUPPORTS AT ALL TIMES

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when students have access to their devices or picture-based communication systems at all times during all instructional activities.

E This item is *evidenced* when students have access to their devices or picture-based communication systems at all times. Score this item as evidenced if there are no students that currently require these supports.

Why is this item important? All students must have access to their communication devices. Not providing access to such devices is a form of restraint and limits students' freedom by restricting their ability to express their wants and needs to interact with others in their environment.

STAFF TEACH, PROMPT, OR ARRANGE THE ENVIRONMENT TO FACILITATE PEER INTERACTION

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when staff members arrange the environment to facilitate peer interactions. For example, students are seated so that they must share materials.

E This item is *evidenced* when staff members provide instruction (e.g., model, prompt, explicit social skills instruction) and arrange the environment to facilitate peer interactions.

Why is this item important? In most settings, individuals are required to interact and often cooperate with others. If students are not provided opportunities in educational settings to interact with their peers, it may be difficult to learn appropriate social skills for use in other settings. Further, peer interactions may provide additional opportunities to teach a range of skills (e.g., communication, turn-taking, reading social cues).

ALL STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES WITH PEERS WITHOUT DISABILITIES. (SEE LOCATION BELOW)

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when at least 75% of students interact with peers without disabilities in or outside (e.g., out of school peer support networks) of the general education classroom.

E This item is *evidenced* when all students interact with peers without disabilities in or outside (e.g., out of school peer support networks) of the general education classroom.

Why is this item important? The successful inclusion of people with disabilities within naturalistic environments often depends on establishing relationships with those without disabilities. These relationships will have lasting benefits for both students with and without disabilities.

Behavior Management (Source - Direct Observation, Materials, Interview)

STAFF PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE CHOICES

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when staff members present some students with an opportunity to choose reinforcers, activities, locations, staff/peers, or instructional stimuli.

E This item is *evidenced* when staff members present all students with multiple opportunities to choose reinforcers, activities, locations, staff/peers, or instructional stimuli.

Why is this item important? Students with disabilities are often provided with fewer choices than their peers without disabilities. Providing choices can serve as a powerful antecedent intervention as students can in real time select those activities or instructional stimuli that have more reinforcing properties and thus may be more likely to engage in desirable responses.

STAFF PROVIDE PRAISE/PREFERRED STIMULI FOLLOWING APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when staff members frequently present praise or preferred stimuli (e.g., tokens, edibles, access to activities) to some students following appropriate behavior.

E This item is *evidenced* when staff members frequently present praise or preferred stimuli (e.g., tokens, edibles, access to activities) to all students following appropriate behavior.

Why is this item important? Nearly a century of empirical research supports the strong relationship between behavior and positive consequences. That is, behaviors that result in immediate access to preferred stimuli or escape from aversive stimuli are more likely to occur more frequently in the future. The thoughtful delivery of praise and other reinforcing stimuli following desirable behavior is a key feature of any educational program and may produce a positive learning environment for students.

STAFF REFRAIN FROM USING FREQUENT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when the majority of staff members (all but one) avoid the use of negative feedback statements towards students. This does not include error correction when a student is informed of an error and then provided instruction to teach the correct response. Negative feedback may include threatening statements, negative statements about a student to another student, or verbal reprimands.

E This item is *evidenced* when all staff members avoid the use of negative feedback statements towards students. This does not include error correction when a student is informed of an error and then provided instruction to teach the correct response. Negative feedback may include threatening statements, negative statements about a student to another student, or verbal reprimands.

Why is this item important? When staff direct insults or frequent negative statements towards students, it may increase the aversive characteristics of the educational environment. This may increase challenging behaviors that result in escape or avoidance and may reduce students responding during instructional activities. Further, it can produce an overall negative classroom climate resulting in a less inviting atmosphere for staff, peers, and others, resulting in increased isolation within the school.

STAFF AVOID THE USE OF RESTRAINT OR SECLUSION-BASED PROCEDURES

PE *Not Applicable* This item can only be scored as *evidenced*.

E This item is *evidenced* when staff members do not use time out from positive reinforcement, overcorrection, or physical restraint, or the presentation of other aversive stimuli. If a restraint or seclusion-based procedure is observed, it must be (a) written into a behavior plan, (b) consented to by the student's parent or guardian, (c) implemented because data show that previous reinforcement-based procedures were not effective, and (d) must be accompanied by daily data collection and scheduled times to review the data to determine whether the procedures should be continued.

Why is this item important? Restraint- and seclusion-based procedures often produce unwanted side effects (e.g., avoidance, increased aggression, stress). Therefore, in most cases it is unethical to use them without first attempting less intrusive/aversive procedures (e.g., instruction, functional communication training). Further, because punishment procedures tend to have an immediate but often temporary effect, teachers can unknowingly become trapped in a troublesome cycle of using them.

BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLANS ARE WRITTEN FOR PERSISTENT CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when behavior plans using specific behavioral intervention procedures (e.g., differential reinforcement of alternative behavior, functional communication training) are written for some students with behaviors that interrupt learning or are dangerous to themselves or others.

E This item is *evidenced* when behavior plans using specific behavioral intervention procedures (e.g., differential reinforcement of alternative behavior, functional communication training) are written for all students with behaviors that interrupt learning or are dangerous to themselves or others.

Why is this item important? Challenging behaviors often reduce opportunities for students to participate in naturalistic environments, may cause harm, and may produce stress for families, peers, and teaching staff. If a carefully designed BIP is not established, teachers may resort to using less effective strategies or, at worst, using procedures that strengthen problem behavior or result in harm to the student or others.

ALL STAFF-STUDENT INTERACTIONS PROMOTE DIGNITY

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when staff members refrain from unnecessary touching of students or talking about students in their presence during the entire observation.

E This item is *evidenced* when staff members use age-appropriate language towards all students and refrain from unnecessary touching of students or talking about students in their presence during the entire observation.

Why is this item important? Historically, people with disabilities often have not been treated as valued members of society. As special educators, it is important to use our behavior to facilitate a model culture in our schools where individuals with disabilities are treated with respect and dignity.

Staff Interaction

STAFF COMMUNICATE WEEKLY WITH RELATED SERVICE STAFF

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when staff members communicate with some related service personnel (e.g., speech therapist, occupational therapist, behavior analyst) at least once every two weeks concerning student performance and instructional strategies.

E This item is *evidenced* when staff members communicate at least once a week with appropriate related service personnel (e.g., speech therapist, occupational therapist, behavior analyst) concerning student performance and instructional strategies.

Why is this item important? Related service professionals address skills and supports that generally have a pervasive impact on students' daily functioning. Therefore, program components designed by related service personnel must be implemented by other professionals. Frequent contacts will increase opportunities for professionals to more effectively plan, provide and respond to feedback, and strengthen relationships.

STAFF ESTABLISH METHODS FOR COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS' FAMILIES

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when staff communicate informally with families at least once a week.

E This item is *evidenced* when staff have established communication systems in place for sharing and receiving information between school and home that results in the transfer of information multiple times a week. Examples may include sending home a daily communication book or log, maintaining a class blog, or sending home video via a student's tablet.

Why is this item important? Families are key players in students' success. When frequent and meaningful communication occurs between schools and families, stronger relationships can develop. These relationships often result in an increased understanding of the student and family, family and school through shared resources, and the easier navigation of challenges that arise.

PARAPROFESSIONALS ARE GIVEN PLANS PRIOR TO ASSISTING WITH INSTRUCTION

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when paraprofessionals are provided with a daily schedule of activities prior to beginning the day.

E This item is *evidenced* when paraprofessionals are provided with an overall daily schedule of activities prior to beginning the day that provides specific instructions as to what content should be addressed during each activity.

Why is this item important? The presentation of plans to paraprofessionals before the school day may result in more efficient transitions throughout the day increasing the time available to present instruction to students. Further, this preparation may reduce staff stress as they can prepare for the activities that occur throughout the day.

STAFF-TO-STAFF INTERACTIONS ARE GENERALLY PLEASANT AND REFLECT RESPONSIVITY

PE This item is *partially evidenced* when staff-to-staff interactions are generally pleasant and one staff member generally provides directives to the rest of the staff.

E This item is *evidenced* when staff-to-staff interactions are pleasant, and staff members engage in discussions concerning educational programming that is responsive to the needs of students and staff members.

Why is this item important? Though often overlooked, positive staff relationships are critical to the efficient running of an education program. Staff members that appear comfortable in providing and responding to each other's feedback may be more likely to address programming issues as they arise. Further, positive staff interactions may promote resilience in the teaching profession.

Sample Recommendations

Below is a list of sample recommendations that might be used to support teachers to address identified areas of program weakness. It is paramount that support strategies are individualized to meet the unique needs of each teacher or program team and thus not just selected from the list below.

Environmental Supports

- Post a daily schedule to serve as a cue for staff to remind students of upcoming changes.
- Consider displaying a digital timer on students' desks or on a smart board to indicate the duration of an activity or upcoming transitions.
- Use the Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiatives Assessment to identify student's AT needs (WATI.org).
- Assign individual teaching staff to adapt or ready technology for particular activities.

Instructional Supports

- Develop a schedule for the teaching staff that includes instructional, preparation, and data collection responsibilities.
- Train paraprofessionals to collect data during instruction.
- Pair staff for the purpose of conducting weekly reliability checks.
- Create/use graphs to accompany data sheets.
- Teach staff to use self-management strategies by self-monitoring collection of data and the application of data-based decision rules.

Instruction

- Use behavioral skills training (BST: provide instructions, model, rehearsal with feedback) to increase staff fidelity to procedures.
 - Implement published curricula that include scripted instructional procedures.
 - Train staff to implement preference assessments prior to instructional sessions.
 - Staff develop and train students to use structured work tasks.
 - Teach staff to adjust mastery criteria to include performance across multiple stimuli or contexts.
-

Communication**Supports**

- Set a digital timer to remind staff to check whether all communication supports are in close proximity to students.
- Train staff to identify and respond to communication attempts by students.
- Train all staff to serve as both prompter and communicative partner when the picture exchange communication system is used.
- Start a peer network to facilitate peer interaction within and outside of school settings. (See Carter et al., 2013)

Behavior**Management**

- Train staff to collect data on the occurrence of teacher feedback, schedule weekly observation probes, and post data in a public location within the classroom.
- Train staff to implement token/reinforcer boards with particular students so that they can keep track of how often they deliver reinforcers.
- Schedule a staff meeting to collaboratively develop a list of words or practices that reflects a culture that promotes student dignity.
- Work with staff to develop a list of ethical guidelines that reflect local district, CEC, and BACB guidelines.
- Require staff to watch the Many Faces of Autism course to increase their understanding of their students. (<https://autismcertificationcenter.org>)

Staff Interaction

- Provide a staff schedule and teach paraprofessionals to ask for directions prior to implementation.
 - Use digital media to share videos of student performance.
 - Schedule biannual parent workshops or gatherings.
 - Schedule weekly staff briefings where all staff are given opportunities to provide input.
 - Use role play to teach staff how to provide feedback to each other and how to respond to that feedback.
 - Develop a communication parking lot where staff can write questions or comments to other team members (e.g., related service staff) when they are to present.
-

ALCOT Implementation Plan Worksheet

Team Members _____

Page _____

Goal:

Short-term Objective:

Start:

Projected End:

Record Progress:

(e.g., Permanent Product, Event Recording, Interval Recording)

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

By when:

By when:

By when:

By when:

Resources

Resources

Resources

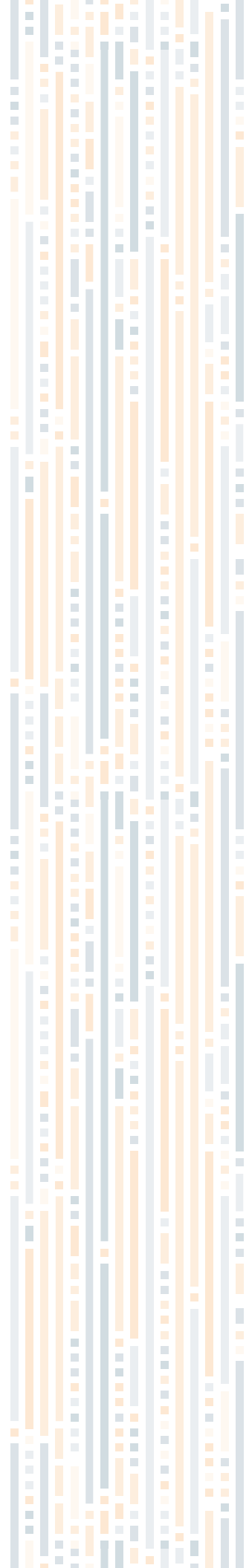
Resources

From:

From:

From:

From:



| TARGETED INDICATOR | DATE | | | | |
|---|------|---|---|---|---|
| ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORTS (SOURCE - DIRECT OBSERVATION, REPORT) | | | | | |
| O R Staff can observe all areas of the classroom | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Visual supports or tactile cues are displayed throughout the classroom | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R The use of individualized student schedules/calendars are observed | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Signals clearly indicate when observed transitions are approaching | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Students are in close proximity to their peers | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R The use of assistive technology or modifications is evident | E | E | E | E | E |
| INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS (SOURCE - DIRECT OBSERVATION, REPORT) | | | | | |
| O R Lesson plans are used to guide instruction | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Systematic instruction plans are available for some objectives | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R All staff are engaged in instruction/preparation activities when not on a break | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Data are collected on multiple student objectives | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Data are plotted on line graphs | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Staff report the use of aim lines or data-based decision-making rules | E | E | E | E | E |
| INSTRUCTION (SOURCE - DIRECT OBSERVATION, REPORT) | | | | | |
| O R No student sits for more than five minutes without instruction | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Staff seek attention responses before delivering instruction | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Staff generally deliver a directive only once and then use prompts or feedback to ensure correct responses | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Staff deliver consistent feedback during instruction | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R All instructional materials are age appropriate | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Staff use preference assessments to identify potential reinforcers | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Instruction occurs in at least two other skill domains besides academic (communication/social/adaptive/life skills) | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Staff teach academic skills aligned to the general education curriculum | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Staff demonstrate or report using methods to promote generalization | E | E | E | E | E |
| COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTION (SOURCE - DIRECT OBSERVATION, REPORT) | | | | | |
| O R Students' IEPs contain social/communication objectives | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R All students have a functional communication system | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Communication instruction is observed across multiple times and partners | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Students have access to communication supports at all times | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Staff teach, prompt, or arrange the environment to facilitate peer interaction | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R All students participate in activities with peers without disabilities | E | E | E | E | E |
| BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT (SOURCE - DIRECT OBSERVATION, REPORT) | | | | | |
| O R Staff provide students with multiple opportunities to make choices | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Staff provide praise/preferred stimuli following appropriate behavior | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Staff refrain from using frequent negative feedback | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Staff avoid the use of restraint or seclusion-based procedures (See scoring guide) | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R BIPs (Behavior Intervention Plans) are written for persistent challenging behaviors | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R All staff-student interactions promote dignity | E | E | E | E | E |
| STAFF INTERACTION (SOURCE - DIRECT OBSERVATION, REPORT) | | | | | |
| O R Staff communicate weekly with related service staff/parents | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Staff establish methods for communication with students' families | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Paraprofessionals are given plans prior to assisting with instruction | E | E | E | E | E |
| O R Staff-to-staff interactions are generally pleasant and reflect responsivity | E | E | E | E | E |
| TOTAL / 37 | | | | | |

Related References

Environmental Supports

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