

CHAPTER 44

SECTION 3

OPERATIONS MANUAL

FIRST GRADE UNSTRUCTURED PEER INTERACTION

OBSERVATION SYSTEM

I. First Grade Unstructured Peer Interaction Observation

The First Grade Peer Interaction Observation is an instrument that examines the characteristics of the Study Child's experiences during an unstructured peer interaction with classmates during recess in two different ways: by observing the frequency of child behaviors including Study Child-peer interactions and by rating qualitative characteristics of the child.

The behavior (frequency) scales are used to record the occurrence of several designated behaviors in the following areas activity, teacher behavior, child behavior with peers, and child engagement. They also capture the setting. The qualitative scales are used to record global quality in terms of the child's levels of negative affect, positive affect, prosocial behavior, and assertiveness during a recess/free play period. Each recess observation will last approximately 20 minutes. During that period, qualitative ratings for the Study Child will be coded as well as behavioral ratings for the teacher and Study Child.

The procedure during a 20 minute observation cycle is the following:

- 20 minutes devoted to the observation and recording of behavior scales (following a schedule of 30 seconds of "observe" time; 30 second of "record: time).
- A brief period at the end of behavioral ratings for note-taking for child qualitative ratings. Unstructured Peer Interaction Qualitative ratings will then be given.

A. Unstructured Peer Interaction Observation Priorities

We wish to observe the study child interacting with peers during the least structured time of the school day. Typically this will occur during recess. The Unstructured Peer Interaction Observation must be during a “non-teacher directed” time. Schedule the observation based on the following priorities:

1. Outside recess time (free play, non-teacher directed)
2. Inside recess or free play in gym or other large multipurpose room
3. Inside free play in the study child’s classroom
4. Lunchroom time.

B. Required Observation Time

It is ideal to observe for 20 minutes. 15 minutes is the required minimum. Begin the observation the moment the children get outside or to the gym, etc. IF necessary, observe during the transition time of cleaning-up, lining-up, and walking inside in order to complete 15 minutes of observation.

If the child leaves the recess area to go to the bathroom, code “other” under setting. If the child returns in 5 minutes or less, resume the observation and continue coding. IF the child is still gone at 5 minutes, stop coding “other”. Stop audio observe/record prompt tape. Continue tape and coding when the child returns. 15 minutes of coding is required (5 for other, 10 for observation).

**DEFINITIONS FOR FIRST GRADE
UNSTRUCTURED PEER INTERACTION OBSERVATION (recess)
BEHAVIORALS**

I. SETTING

Note: This is the setting where the recess observation occurs.

Playground – Any outside playground area adjacent to or on school grounds. The playground may or may not contain equipment. It may be an empty grassy area, a ball field, or a paved area designated for play.

Gym – A gymnasium that is part of the school. Or a Multipurpose room that is used for a combination of gym/auditorium, gym/cafeteria or gym/music room, etc. This room may or may not contain equipment such as basketball goals, etc.

Classroom – The Study Child’s classroom

Other – Any area used for recess that does not fit into one of the above categories. This might include a nature trail area, a city park, or the hall outside of SC’s classroom. Other is also coded during intervals when child leaves recess to go to bathroom.

II. ACTIVITY

Note: The **predominant** activity in which the Study Child is engaged in during the observation interval.

Note: IF you must observe during a transition (cleaning up equipment, lining up to return to classroom), in order to complete 15 minutes of observation time, DO NOT code an activity. LEAVE ACTIVITY BLANK for the minutes during which the transition occurs.

Free with Playground Equipment – Free choice and Study Child uses equipment.

Equipment may include play ground equipment such as swings, monkey bars, climbing/multipurpose apparatus, play house, sandbox, watertable, obstacle course/fitness equipment. Equipment may also include the use of balls, jump ropes, rings, mitts, ramps, large building blocks, if the equipment is not being used as part of a structured game such as dodgeball, kickball, etc. If indoors, the equipment may be any play, center or art materials. It may also include using a computer. If playing computer game with another child, select structured game instead.

Free Play with No Equipment – Study Child and peers playing freely but without equipment. Talking to peers, chasing peers (not organized tag). May use “found items” such as sticks and stones to dig in dirt or as a part of fantasy play. If indoors, this may include such things as talking with peers, running in gym, or fantasy play without props. It also includes children eating snack during recess or free play.

Structured Game/Child Initiated – Study Child and peers participate in game children decide to play. The game may or may not involve equipment—tag, dodgeball, kickball, hopscotch, red rover, tether ball arm wrestling. There is some structure to the game with

some notion of rules or keeping score involved. The rules of the game must be stated or clearly understood from the beginning. If children are playing a fantasy game they've made up, you must hear rules or some notion of "win/lose" stated up front. For example, "Let's play the spider game. If I touch your legs below this bar, then I get to be the fly and you're the spider." Indoors structured games include board games, computer games, and "I spy" type games as well as structured games typically played out of doors.

Structured Activity/Teacher Directed – Study Child and peers participate in teacher directed activity or game. The teacher suggests, sets up, or directs game activity.

Time-Out – The Study Child is in some form of time-out or has been separated from the main group for disciplinary reasons. He/she may be sitting or standing apart from the group or sent to a special place—time-out chair, in the hallway outside the classroom or gym doorway, the corner. The SC may be asked to perform a task as part of punishment—walking the circle or washing chairs or equipment. Other children may be in time-out with the SC.

III. TEACHER BEHAVIOR

Note: Adult interactions with the Study Child or behaviors directed toward the Study Child are coded under TEACHER BEHAVIOR. Adults include lead teachers, classroom aides, student teachers, parent volunteers, or other adults who are monitoring or responsible for the Study Child.

Note: Teacher Behavior codes can be double coded with one another.

Social Conversation – The teacher talks with the Study Child or small group containing the SC about general sorts of things, not related to academics, discipline, or suggestions

for activities. The conversation needs to include multiple responses or more than a single exchange between teacher and Study Child. Social conversations may begin with the following types of statements or questions ... “I saw you and your mother at the mall Saturday.” “I like your mittens. Are those new?” “You and Ann really like playing in the new play house don’t you?” Social conversation must be positive or neutral in nature. Conversation that is negative in nature is coded under negative affect.

Responds – The teacher responds to the Study Child’s bid for assistance in getting materials, explaining the rules of the game, offering suggestions for activities, or conversation. The Study Child must initiate. A response doesn’t have to be effective. The teacher must merely acknowledge the child. For example, SC: “May I go to the bathroom?” Teacher: “You need to ask your regular teacher.” Responds may or may not involve Teacher Negative Affect.

Intervenes – The teacher intervenes in peer conflict with the Study Child or small group containing the SC. Intervenes may or may not involve Teacher Negative Affect. This code is used only for intervention when there is conflict. DO NOT code for intervenes when distress. Intervention for distress is noted when rating teacher monitoring.

Discipline – The teacher directs discipline specifically toward the Study Child or a group containing the Study Child. The teacher may direct the Study Child to Time-Out, or to another punishment task. Specific reminders to the Study Child to use the equipment in a less dangerous way, or to play less aggressively would be coded under Discipline. However, gentle reminders to the entire group even if it contains the Study Child are NOT coded under this category. The reminders and discipline must be directed specifically to the Study Child or if directed to the entire group must be particularly firm or harsh in nature. Discipline may or may not involve Teacher Negative Affect.

Teacher Affect Negative – The teacher’s behavior and conversation toward the Study Child or a group of which the Study is a part is of a negative nature. His/her tone of voice is angry or harsh or hostile. The teacher’s remarks toward Study Child, or group of which SC is a part, are critical and/or points out negative aspects of the child’s behavior. Threats which explicitly deal with personal injury or withholding privileges directed toward the Study Child are also coded under this category. Rhetorical comments which are negative in tone and content should also be coded under this category. For example, “Is that how we use jump ropes in 1st grade?” “Do you want to sit instead of swing?” said in a negative tone would be Coded under Negative Affect.

V. CHILD BEHAVIOR TOWARD PEERS

Note: Peers are considered other first grade children or children assigned to that classroom (in cases of multi-age classrooms). If children from other classrooms are participating in recess with the SC, they are peers for purposes of coding.

Note: For Child Independent, Activity with 1 or 2 peers, or Activity with 3 or more peers you may code only one per observe cycle (**code predominant one**).

Note: An interaction may involve talking, playing on equipment together, playing a game together, running or chasing with peers. It must include more than eye contact. There should be smiling (or jeering), touching and/or talking involved. IF there is merely proximity to peers and no interaction, then Child Independent is coded rather than Activity with Peers.

Child Independent – The Study Child is not interacting with other children. He is focused on an activity that he is doing himself. The Study Child is involved in an activity that may or may not be similar to peers' activities, if they are nearby. Examples include, the Study Child is sitting alone on a playground bench, he is running alone to another activity, the Study Child is swinging alone while peers are involved in different activities, or parallel swinging with no interaction, the Study Child is in time-out alone, or with peers if there is no interaction. The Study Child may be watching peers.

Activity with 1 or 2 peers – The Study Child is interacting with 1 or 2 peers. The interaction may involve talking, playing on equipment together, playing a game together, running or chasing with peers. It may also involve interacting with peers that are in time-out with SC.

Activity with 3 or more peers – The Study Child is interacting in a group with 3 or more peers. The interaction may involve talking, playing on equipment together, playing a game together, running or chasing with peers. It may also involve interacting with peers that are in time-out with SC.

Shared Positive – Study Child and peer/s share clear enjoyment of a mutual activity. It may involve smiles, laughter, giggles or silly faces exchanged during an activity.

Ambiguous Rough and Tumble Play, Chasing (Study Child) – The Study Child initiates rough and tumble play or chasing with peer/s that is not clearly positive or negative in nature. May also include activities such as wrestling and football. Intent is ambiguous. Clear laughter and giggling during chase would not be coded as ambiguous. Shrieking during chase would be considered ambiguous.

Ambiguous Rough and Tumble Play, Chasing (Peer) – Peer/s initiates rough and tumble play or chasing with Study Child that is not clearly positive or negative in nature. Intent is ambiguous.

Physical Aggression – The Study Child is physically aggressive toward a peer. The Study Child hits, throws, trips, pushes, pinches. The aggression can be initiated by the Study Child or in retaliation. It can include unnecessary roughness. This category does NOT include innocent bumps that are misperceived by peers. It does not include ambiguous rough and tumble play, or chasing.

Other Negative Behavior – The Study Child carries out a negative act toward a peer. This category includes verbal aggression as well as nonaggressive negative acts which have the intent to hurt or annoy a peer. The behavior can either be initiated by the Study Child or in retaliation. Examples include, taunting, scolding, name calling that is clearly negative in intent. It includes taking away materials, etc. (not part of regular game like in soccer or keep-away).

Tattles on Peer – Study Child reports behavior of another child to teacher. Draws teacher's attention to another child.

Peer Negative Behavior – The Study Child receives an aggressive or other negative behavior from a peer. The negative overture could be nonaggressive negative act, verbal or physical aggression.

VI. CHILD ENGAGEMENT

Note: If time-out is coded for activity, then code engaged or inappropriate for engagement.

Engaged – The predominant involvement of the Study Child throughout the interval is involvement in a teacher sanctioned activity. Examples include participating in a game, playing on equipment, running, talking to peers, or waiting for turn in an ongoing game. May also be engaged in time-out as teacher has requested. For example, walking the circle or washing chairs as instructed or sitting quietly in corner as instructed.

Unoccupied – The Study Child is predominately uninvolved throughout the interval. She/he may be daydreaming looking up at the sky or ground without focus on current activity, or wandering looking for an activity in which to become involved. Also, include instances of intently watching a peer or group without being involved in the activity.

Inappropriate – The Study Child is predominantly involved in an activity not sanctioned by the teacher. This behavior is either obviously inappropriate (i.e., aggression, taking other children’s equipment) or behavior that the teacher verbally indicates to be inappropriate such as dangerous play or dangerous use of equipment. If in time-out, Study Child is not doing as teacher requested. For example, talking to peers if teacher has asked to sit without talking. Or not appropriately performing the task that has been assigned for punishment... sitting rather than walking circle, or playing in water rather than washing chairs.

**QUALITATIVE CHILD RATINGS
END OF VISIT PEER AND TEACHER RATINGS
UNSTRUCTURED PEER INTERACTION OBSERVATION**

I. Child ratings

Rate 1-7. 1 being the lowest rating, 7 the highest.

A. Positive Affect (rate 1-7)

Positive affect reflects an overall happy mood and pleasant state of the child.

Positive affect is demonstrated through physical and vocal expressiveness. The positive affect may be displayed by interactions with peers or adults or may be seen as a sense of contentment.

The child who receives a high rating on positive affect seems to “sparkle” or to “radiate”. The child with a low rating may not display negative affect, rather the child at the low end of positive affect merely does not display overt signs of a positive mood. He/she may appear low-keyed or display flat affect. This child provides no real indication of being happy, content, or even in a pleasant state.

Indicators of child positive affect include: (a) smiles, (b) laughter, (c) positive tone of voice, and (d) enthusiasm.

Ratings on this scale should be based on quality and quantity of behavior. Ratings should reflect a balance of both the intensity of the child’s positive affect and the relative amount of time positive behavior is shown. A child who demonstrates an overall sense of contentment, with no other signs of positive or negative affect, will receive a rating of 4 for positive affect.

B. Negative Affect (rate 1-7)

Negative affect reflects the anger, hostility, and aggression of the child. The child who receives a high rating on negative affect expresses physical aggression or verbal assaults. The anger and aggression may be directed at peers, teachers, or materials (i.e., aggressive play which is accompanied by negative affect and anger). This type of behavior is to be distinguished from aggressive fantasy play and playful aggression that occurs in the context of the positive affect and shared goals with a play partner. Subtle indication of anger and aggression such as destructive use of materials, aggressive use of toys, and pouting should be considered in making this rating.

C. Prosocial (rate 1-7)

Prosocial reflects the extent to which the study child is involved in two types of prosocial behavior: sharing or turntaking, and expressions of caring or concern. One aspect of this dimension evaluates the extent to which the study child shares materials, attempts to include a peer in an activity, or **actively** allows a peer a turn at an activity. The child's sharing must be active or mutual, not simply in response to the peer's aggressive behavior. Sharing and turntaking include the study child's waiting (patiently !) for a turn with equipment the friend is using. It also includes patient turntaking that is a part of game being played. Another aspect of the prosocial dimension evaluates the

degree to which the study child expresses caring and concern. This can be demonstrated by: doing something for the other child that is kind and shows caring; showing interest in the friend's wishes, feelings, or activity; making positive comments about the friend or the friend's activity, praising the friend; showing appreciation for something the friend does or says; encouraging the friend; attempting to console a friend who is distressed or upset; attempting to help the friend (when the intent is truly to help and not simply to gain access to equipment), or using verbal expressions of politeness ("please", "thank you"). The expression of caring/concern may be nonverbal (e.g., giving the peer a hug; holding hands to help on the balance beam; demonstrating how to use a piece of equipment or to perform a skill). Sharing/turntaking and expressing care and concern are the two aspects of behavior considered in the prosocial rating. To receive a 7, a child should strongly demonstrate both aspects (sharing/turntaking and expressions of caring) of prosocial behavior. A 5 or 6 rating is given if very strong indicators of one aspect of prosocial behavior is seen or a bit of both is seen. A 4 is given if one aspect is seen but is not particularly strong. Lower rating (2 or 3) are given if only a very brief expression of either type of prosocial behavior is seen. A 1 is given if no prosocial behavior is seen. Both quality and quantity are considered.

II. Peer Ratings

A. The study child's predominant style of peer interaction during positive or neutral situations:

- 0 - Few or no interactions with peers
- 1 - Interacted mostly with one specific peer
- 2 - Interacted with same 2 children or one small group (4 or less) throughout
- 3 - Interacted with different children/different groups throughout

B. The study child's predominant style of peer interaction during negative situations:

- 0 - No negative peer interactions
- 1 - Involved one specific child
- 2 - Involved more than one child or different children

** In order to code a 1 or a 2 for this category, you must have coded either "physical aggression", "other negative behavior" or "peer negative behavior" in the peer observation behavioral.

C. How assertive was the study child during the recess period?

- 0 - Demonstrated no assertiveness with peers during recess
- 1 - Asserted himself/herself a few times during the recess observation
- 2 - Asserted himself/herself several times during the recess observation

Assertiveness is seen as the study child's willingness to join a peer or a group for an activity; to suggest an activity or change in activity. Also, it is the study child stating that it is his turn or his ball (piece of equipment).

D. Did the Study Child invite peers to play during the recess observation?

- 0 - None
- 1 - Once or twice
- 2 - More than twice

Invitations to play may be verbal or a "come on" type hand or head gesture.

E. Did the Study Child accept peers' invitation to play during recess observation?

- 0 - Never accepted
- 1 - Accepted once
- 2 - Accepted more than once

Accepting an invitation to play may be verbal, joining in, nodding, or running towards the suggested activity.

E. Did the Study Child reject peers or decline peers' invitation to play during recess observation?

- 0 - Never rejected or declined
- 1 - Rejected or declined once
- 2 - Rejected or declined more than once

Declining an invitation to play may be verbal, a head shake no, or clearly ignoring by walking away or turning away.

F. Study Child's predominant mode of dealing with conflict.

- 0 - No conflict occurred
- 1 - SC avoids further conflict (runs, leaves)
- 2 - SC stays involved (negative)
- 3 - SC solves
- 4 - SC seeks adult help

There must be "peer negative" coded in the behaviorals to code conflict response here. Anything under "peer negative" would be considered conflict (physical aggression, verbal aggression, taking equipment that is not part of a game).

III. Teacher's Monitoring and Involvement

Once descriptor will be selected for the teacher's general style of monitoring and involvement during recess.

- 0 - No monitoring or involvement
- 1 - Involved only reactively to resolve conflict or to aid in distress
- 2 - Monitors visually, may check-in occasionally
- 3 - Positive participation, monitoring as well as some social interaction and helping with activities.