

Guided Observation Assignments
EDPR 250: Early Field Experience with Infants and Toddlers
Fall 2016
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Over the course of the semester, you will complete six guided observation assignments. Early childhood educators who engage in high quality teaching and caregiving practices must develop their ability to be sensitive and objective observers. Each assignment will encourage you to focus on one of the domains described in the Illinois Early Learning Guidelines. There will be a few prompts for each section of the assignment to help you get started. It is possible that some of the questions will not apply to your observation and this is not a problem. Use the prompts to help you shape your assignment, but do not feel limited or that you must answer each one.

Each day is composed of many interactions and moments. We might even think of these moments as different “stories.” These moments will likely have a beginning, middle, and end. For example, in your assignment, you might describe an entire mealtime, exploration of a particular toy, or a few moments of outdoor play. You will want to take notes about these “stories” while you participate in your practicum site and then choose one of those as your focus for the guided observation. Each observation write up should have three clearly labeled sections.

Observation: “Zoom in” on one child. Tell a “story” in detail. Focus on one child. In your narrative, please include relevant details such as their age, gender, or particular developmental milestones that the child has reached (e.g. crawling, rolling over, pulling up, walking) that will help the reader understand this moment is developmentally meaningful. Only describe what you observe, not what the child is thinking or feeling. For example, describe crying, but do not say the child is “sad.” Or describe a child “reaching” for a toy rather than “interested in” a toy.

Interpretation: Make sense of the story...Provide an explanation of what you think the child’s behavior, communication, and actions mean. Make a connection to the IELGs. What does what you observed demonstrate or tell you about the developmental stage of the child you described? What is challenging for that child? What is easy for the child?

Reflection on Teaching Practices: What might you do as a teacher to continue to support this particular child in this developmental area? What have you seen in the classroom that promotes or hinders the child’s development or learning? Zoom out... Look at the environment. Consider the relationships in the classroom that you have seen among the teachers and children. Did you see appropriate classroom practices (from the DAP book or the IELGs) that are represented? Would you change something in the

environment if it were your own classroom? Did you try anything to support the child in your interactions with them? Did these strategies work or not work?

Other expectations:

- 12 point, Times new roman or other basic font
- Double spaced
- 1.5 – 3 pages
- Proper spelling and grammar
- Clear connections to the course readings (you can simply refer to IELG, page X or DAP, page X). There is no need for a formal APA style citation in these assignments.

Submit assignments on the Moodle website. A link for submission will be provided.

Each assignment is worth 10 points for a total of 60 points during the semester. Late assignments will lose 2 points per day if the course instructor is not informed in advance of your need for an extension. The due dates and topic of each observation are on the Moodle course website. I will post a specific prompt for each assignment on the Moodle course website.