Circle

INFANT & TODDLER
TEACHER COMPETENCIES

Observation & Notetaking Form

Teacher _____

Center _____

Coach _____

School Year _____

Observation Date(s) _____

CHILDREN'S LEARNING INSTITUTE

UTHealth
The University of Texas
Health Science Center at Houston

CIRCLE INFANT & TODDLER TEACHER COMPETENCIES

Teacher _____   Center _____

Coach _____   Obs. Date(s) _____

PL=Priority Level   OB=Observed   NS=Observed but Needs Support

PL	Teaching Behavior		Evidence / Notes
**LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION**		
PROVIDING RICH LANGUAGE		
1	**Labels objects, concepts, and actions** throughout the day.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
1	**Describes objects** (how they look, feel, smell, etc.), **experiences** (e.g., "that was a long walk"), **or feelings or internal states** (e.g., "she looks tired").	☐ OB ☐ NS	
1	**Makes comparisons** by talking **about** how **things** are the same (or not the same) and by talking about opposites (e.g., big/small).	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	**Explains how things work** or **why things are done a certain way** (e.g., "We are going to walk quietly because the babies are sleeping").	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	**Links new objects, ideas, or concepts by making connections** to something the child already knows or has experienced (e.g., "That cat is black, just like the one we read about in the book yesterday.")	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	**Narrates what is happening** (e.g., "Ava is eating green peas today. Here comes the spoon!").	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	**"Thinks aloud" by saying his or her perspective out loud** (e.g., "My favorite fruit is banana. I wonder if there will be bananas in this story?").	☐ OB ☐ NS	
ELICITING LANGUAGE		
2	**Elicits language from children by asking** a variety of both closed- and open-ended questions.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	**Encourages two-way conversation** by pausing, making eye contact, asking questions, and allowing children to both initiate and respond to conversational topics.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
3	**Provides opportunities** for children **to participate** both verbally and nonverbally in group activities.	☐ OB ☐ NS	

PL	Teaching Behavior		Evidence / Notes

RESPONDING CONTINGENTLY

PL	Teaching Behavior		Evidence / Notes
2	**Paces interactions with children** by speaking and moving at rates that match children's speed and pausing **to allow turn-taking in conversation** (including with nonverbal children).	☐ OB ☐ NS	
3	**Extends children's interest by adding new content or ideas** to broaden children's understanding or vocabulary (e.g., child points to a plane, teacher says "That's plane flying in the sky. Planes can go really fast. I wonder where that one is going?").	☐ OB ☐ NS	
3	**Accepts children's incorrect communication and gently rephrases it**, modeling the correct grammar and pronunciation or adding words to make a complete sentence.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
3	**Provides an upward scaffold** in response to children's correct and complete verbalizations and gestures **by providing additional details** to deepen children's background knowledge and vocabulary.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
3	**Provides a downward scaffold** in response to children's incorrect, incomplete, or missing verbalizations and gestures by using techniques such as **simplifying the question, starting a word or phrase, and prompting for imitation**.	☐ OB ☐ NS	

EARLY LITERACY

BOOK READING

PL	Teaching Behavior		Evidence / Notes
1	**Reads with an enthusiastic or dramatic voice** and moderates tone based on the content of the book.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
1	**Shares control of the book** by letting children hold it, turn the pages, etc.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
1	**Begins book reading by capturing children's attention** and inviting their interest in the book (positioning children where they can see the book, pointing to and showing book, using excited voice, using children's names).	☐ OB ☐ NS	
1	**Pauses to talk** and ask questions **about pictures in the book**.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
1	**Encourages participation in book readings** (e.g., encourages children to touch/hold books; points to pictures, responds to questions, acts out the story).	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	**Sings songs and recites rhymes**, and encourages children's participation.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	**Uses props and/or extension activities** that are linked to book content (e.g., puppets, dramatic play around book plot).	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	**Links book content to children's own experiences**.	☐ OB ☐ NS	

PL	Teaching Behavior		Evidence / Notes

PRINT AND WRITING

PL	Teaching Behavior		Evidence / Notes
2	**Encourages play with drawing, painting, or writing tools** that promote fine motor skills.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
3	**Models writing as opportunities arise** (e.g., writing children's names on artwork; dictating children's vocalizations) (toddlers only).	☐ OB ☐ NS	
3	Takes advantage of incidental opportunities to **point out environmental print and letters of the alphabet** (toddlers only).	☐ OB ☐ NS	

COGNITIVE SKILLS

OBSERVING AND THINKING SKILLS

PL	Teaching Behavior		Evidence / Notes
2	Draws attention to details of objects, actions, and events to **encourage observation**; encourages toddlers to verbalize their own observations.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	**Demonstrates and explains how things work** to help children understand cause and effect.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	**Talks about sequence** including steps to complete a task, repeated patterns, a daily schedule, or time concepts (e.g., today, tomorrow, before, next).	☐ OB ☐ NS	
3	Promotes **flexibility in thinking** by playing games that include **small surprises** or **hide-and-find**, offering **open-ended materials** and encouraging **multiple uses** (e.g., using bib as piece of clothing or for peek-a-boo), or **explaining schedule changes**.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
3	**Models problem solving** by talking while thinking through a problem, considering options, and reflecting on an outcome.	☐ OB ☐ NS	

HANDS-ON LEARNING

PL	Teaching Behavior		Evidence / Notes
1	Offers **opportunities and experiences** for infants and toddlers to **explore using all five senses**.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
1	Follows children's lead to **maintain their attention** and support their interests.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
1	**Encourages imitation** when demonstrating skills and extending play.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	**Encourages continued effort, persistence,** or hard work on a task or problem.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	**Models and joins in pretend play** (with or without props) (toddlers only).	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	**Engages children in math activities** such as shape recognition, counting, measuring, sorting, or classifying (toddlers only).	☐ OB ☐ NS	

PL	Teaching Behavior		Evidence / Notes

SCAFFOLDING LEARNING

PL	Teaching Behavior		Evidence / Notes
3	Scaffolds children's learning by **simplifying** (e.g., **breaking down task into smaller steps**; demonstrating and **prompting for imitation; starting a task for child to finish**; giving **hand-over-hand** assistance; giving **clues** or prompts; **simplifying a task by narrowing choices**; offering a simpler version of a toy).	☐ OB ☐ NS	
3	Scaffolds children's learning by adding **challenge** (offering a more **difficult task**; offering **more choices**; suggesting a **new challenge**.)	☐ OB ☐ NS	

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BUILDING TRUST AND EMOTIONAL SECURITY

PL	Teaching Behavior		Evidence / Notes
1	**Responds promptly and sensitively** (warmly and with genuine concern/understanding) to children's verbal and nonverbal signals, feelings, interests, and needs.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
1	**Expresses warmth and affection** through positive nonverbal behaviors such as getting down to **child's eye level, smiling, cuddling, using reassuring touch, gentle tone of voice**, and **pacing** that matches the child's energy level.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
1	**Provides comfort** to children in distress by responding quickly and calmly to provide **physical comfort**, or simply using **gentle, soothing words**.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
1	Is **consistent and predictable** in responsive behaviors, following through with commitments to children, and being consistent in classroom management and setting limits on behavior.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
1	Follows a **consistent daily schedule and routines** (may be shown by including **signals for transition routines**, references to visual daily schedule, talks about schedule, talks about change in daily routine when needed).	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	**Explains what comes next** using simple reminders, especially before and during transitions.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	Models **respect for diversity** including culture, ethnicity, gender roles, special needs, and home languages, includes reading books or using materials that reflect diverse backgrounds.	☐ OB ☐ NS	

PROMOTING EMOTIONAL UNDERSTANDING

PL	Teaching Behavior		Evidence / Notes
2	**Labels feelings** and emotions expressed by infants and toddlers, and may also **label teacher's own feelings** in an appropriate way.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
3	**Encourages** children to **talk about their feelings**; may include modeling talking about own feelings, feelings of peers and/or characters in a story, and inviting children to continue such conversation (toddlers only).	☐ OB ☐ NS	
3	Makes **connections** between children's or storybook characters' **emotions, actions, and events** (e.g., "Joey stomped his foot because he felt mad"; "The pig was scared when the wolf blew his house down").	☐ OB ☐ NS	
3	**Plans activities** to support children's **understanding of emotions** through songs, book readings, pretend play, or other teacher-initiated activities (toddlers only).	☐ OB ☐ NS	

PL	Teaching Behavior		Evidence / Notes

SUPPORTING COOPERATION AND SELF-REGULATION

PL	Teaching Behavior		Evidence / Notes
1	Uses descriptive, **specific praise** to encourage positive behavior (includes praising children's actions, ideas, cooperation with peers, following directions, etc.).	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	**Offers a positive behavior to replace a child's negative or undesired behavior**; tells and/or models what children should do instead (e.g., "Let's draw on this paper instead of the wall," or "Use gentle hands like this." Substitute a toy/activity when a child wants a toy that is already in use).	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	**Offers choices** between two or three things to allow children to practice independence and build self-confidence. *Excludes choices offered to redirect behavior.*	☐ OB ☐ NS	
3	Offers verbal and physical **cues for self-control** such as **gestures, songs/rhymes** that remind children to use specific behaviors, modeling **how to ask for help,** or **offering alternative behavior choices** (toddlers only).	☐ OB ☐ NS	

SUPPORTING SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

PL	Teaching Behavior		Evidence / Notes
1	Engages in **back-and-forth play**, (e.g., peek-a-boo, rolling a car or ball back and forth) including **sharing control** and giving child enough time to take a turn.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	**Models prosocial behaviors** throughout the day, including using **polite manners, offering comfort, modeling turn-taking** and **sharing**.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	Helps children **share space** by finding places for them to sit or stand when needed, providing enough materials, and modeling cooperative play.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	**Supports turn-taking** by modeling, explaining why and how to take turns, prompting, and specifically praising taking turns.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
3	**Plans small or large group activities for peer interactions** by creating opportunities to engage in back-and-forth peer play, work together on a task, or group songs/games/dances.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
3	**Prompts children for peer interaction behaviors** such as words and gestures for greetings, polite manners, invitations to play, requests to peers, and responses to questions from peers.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
3	Helps **resolve conflicts with peers** by staying close during play times, remaining calm, giving children words and actions they can use with each other, setting limits to keep children safe, offering help, and encouraging empathy.	☐ OB ☐ NS	

PL	Teaching Behavior		Evidence / Notes

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

SUPPORTING FINE AND GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

PL	Teaching Behavior		Evidence / Notes
1	Engages **infants** in **tummy time activities** (infants only).	☐ OB ☐ NS	
1	Provides **supported sitting for infants** (e.g., in lap, various kinds of seats) (infants only).	☐ OB ☐ NS	
1	Promotes **gross motor skills** (crawling, pulling to stand, jumping, dancing, ball play, running, climbing, balancing, etc.) with **games, toys, and songs.**	☐ OB ☐ NS	
1	Promotes **fine motor practice** (e.g., grasping skills, building with blocks, lacing, simple puzzles, fill-and-empty activities); supports **hand-eye coordination** and/or **using both hands together**. *Excludes drawing, painting, or writing tools; see Early Literacy domain.*	☐ OB ☐ NS	

PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

PL	Teaching Behavior		Evidence / Notes
1	**Responds** promptly to **signals of physical needs**, including pain, discomfort, need for diaper change/potty; hunger or feeding cues; sleepiness.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
1	Teaches **correct words** for **body parts** and their **functions**.	☐ OB ☐ NS	
1	**Models and encourages independence in hygiene routines** (e.g., washing and drying hands, wiping face, blowing nose, covering cough, brushing teeth) (toddlers only).	☐ OB ☐ NS	
1	**Supports and encourages independence in feeding skills** (e.g., holding bottle, using fingers and/or utensils) (older infants and toddlers only).	☐ OB ☐ NS	
1	**Supports and encourages independence in dressing/undressing** (e.g., taking off shoes, unzipping jacket, putting arms through sleeves) (toddlers only).	☐ OB ☐ NS	
1	**Supports and encourages independence in toileting routines** (e.g., pulling pants down and up at potty time, flushing) (toddlers only).	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	**Talks about** and **offers nutritious food.**	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	Teaches **words and actions** related to **safety** (e.g, hot, dirty, safe/not safe, danger, stop, spit it out).	☐ OB ☐ NS	
2	**Models** and **encourages expression of internal states** by **verbalizing observations** of physical needs (e.g., hunger, fullness, sleepiness, pain, needing a diaper change/potty) and encouraging children to **express their needs.**	☐ OB ☐ NS	