

ASD Observation

Student: _____ Observation Date: _____

Directions:

1. Review the following behavioral examples before entering the classroom so that you have an idea of what kinds of things you may be seeing.
2. Keep in mind that behaviors listed here are the characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Examples listed under each area begin with early indicators; other examples may be more appropriate for students at a higher developmental level.
3. Highlight the behaviors that you observe. Include comments about other behaviors noticed. (Your observations may facilitate the discussion with other team members.)

Social Interactions

- Lack of social smiling
- Lack of greeting
- Does not acknowledge others approaching or leaving
- Does not show or direct attention to teacher when expected
- Does not seek to share activities with other children
- Withdraws from the group/avoids other students/isolates self
- Appears unable to empathize
- Misinterprets other's behaviors and social cues
- Limited awareness of social boundaries (i.e.: sits too close for comfort)
- Inappropriate laughing
- Does not seem aware of social cues or facial expressions
- Minimal participation in group activities (action songs/finger plays, etc.)
- Does not look to see what others are doing when unsure of what to do
- Lack of interest in or response to other children
- Atypical responses to approaches of other children
- Difficulty initiating and maintaining play with others
- Inappropriately intrusive
- Mimics actions from TV or videos without expanding on the theme
- Difficulty learning and following rules of games
- Difficulty with winning/losing/negotiating during games

Additional observations/comments related to social interaction skills:

Communication

- No verbal communication
- Uses others' hand or body to communicate
- Does not point to express interest
- Inattentive to voices
- Limited understanding and use of nonverbal conversational turn indicators
- Inappropriate use of proximity (stands too close to others when talking)
- Lack of or inappropriate use of eye contact
- Flat affect (limited facial expressions)
- Limited understanding of jokes
- Lacks understanding of abstract language (sarcasm, idioms)
- Thinks in concrete terms, interprets everything literally

- Talks too fast or too slow
- Speaks in monotone, robotic, sing song tone
- Overly expressive
- Inappropriate volume for situation
- Immediate or delayed echolalia
- Confuses word order
- Difficulty understanding and answering questions
- Difficulty processing language, following directions
- Constantly asks the same questions
- Difficulty maintaining a topic
- May not accept another person's topic or topic changes
- Appears to expect others to "read their mind"
- Difficulty initiating conversations with adults
- Limited range of conversational topics

Additional observations/comments related to communication:

Behavior

- Pacing, jumping, twirling, constant movement
- Repetitive hand or finger movements
- Staring
- Appears to be sensitive to sounds, touch, light...
- Lines up objects (for example when playing)
- Fascination with watching moving objects
- Spinning
- Preoccupation with specific sections of a videotape
- Distress over changes in environment or daily routine
- Unreasonable insistence on following routines in precise detail
- Seems to have own rules and becomes upset when others don't follow them
- Anxiety associated with transition
- Lack of flexibility
- Difficulty with unstructured time

Additional observations/comments related to behavior:

As you gather informal information from teachers, parents, etc., keep in mind the following behaviors that can also be associated with autism spectrum disorders:

- Sleep difficulties
- Atypical responses to pain/temperature
- Hyposensitive or hypersensitive to sensory (touch, visual, movement)
- Smelling, licking, touching objects
- Intolerant of changes in types of clothing
- Resistant to bathing, brushing teeth, haircuts
- Learns skills in one situation but unable to use it in another
- Difficulty learning new skills
- Needs repetition and practice for new skills/does not learn incidentally

General comments about this observation: