

DIRECTED OBSERVATIONS
SHS 331: NORMAL LANGUAGE ACQUISITION
University of South Alabama, Dept. of Speech Pathology and Audiology
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Project Overview:

You are required to complete three directed observations of typically developing preschoolers during this semester. You will submit a typed report of each directed observation worth 25 points (3 reports X 25 points = 75 pts). Arrangements are being made with cooperating area childcare programs. Each class member will be assigned a childcare program for all three directed observations. (Other childcare programs may be used if approved by the course instructor.) You will not be given credit for observations made at unapproved locations. This is for the protection of children, childcare facilities, you, and USA. The observations will take place across the semester. Packets of information, including additional readings and references, specific project directions, forms for notetaking, and report guidelines, will be placed outside the lab, Room 2522. You must read this packet before completing each observation. Reading and independent study are expected prior to visiting the childcare facility. Each observation lasts one hour. You are required to get the director, assistant director, or classroom teacher to sign your observation form at the end of each visit. This signed form will be submitted with your typed report for grading. **You may not complete these directed observations until you have completed the HIPAA training in the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology.**

DIRECTED OBSERVATION TOPICS:

- 1 - Speech** - The focus of this directed observation is the child's speech development. You will be listening for speech sounds, overall speech intelligibility, and speech patterns that are different from the adult pronunciation.
- 2 - Sentences** - During this hour, you will be recording the child's utterances so that you can count the number of morphemes, observe the sentence types, and determine the child's use of various grammatical morphemes.
- 3 - Communicative Interaction** - Observe one child in social and play interactions with (an) other child/ren. Apply information regarding the communicative purposes of language.

Guidelines for Directed Observations:

Preparation:

1. Sign-off in the appropriate project packet outside of Room 2522 indicating that you have reviewed the guidelines and project specifics before each directed observation.
2. Dress to make a good first impression, but be prepared to be on the floor, seated at child-sized furniture, or on the playground.
3. Take clipboard, paper, and pencil to record your thoughts and take relevant notes.

DO NOT TAPE RECORD.

Upon Arriving at the Child Care Program:

- 1. Be courteous and respectful at all times!**
2. Go to the main office area and introduce yourself. (The first person you encounter may not be familiar with the project. Ask to speak to the director if necessary.) If for some reason the childcare program is not able to accommodate your observation on that date, leave politely and plan to reschedule.
3. Ask to be placed in a classroom to observe a child between ages 2 to 5 years old.
4. Upon entering the assigned classroom, make certain to introduce yourself to the classroom teacher and other adults.

Observing a Child:

- 1. You are responsible for maintaining confidentiality.** That means that you are not to write down the names of any children in the childcare program, **not** even the name of the child you are observing. Make up an alias or use the first initial of the child you are observing. Information overheard regarding the childcare program or

individual children and families is not to be repeated in any form. Do not engage in lengthy conversations with the teachers about the child or children in the classroom.

2. Although you may be with a group of children, try to focus your attention on one child for the hour.

3. Ask the classroom teacher for the child's age, not the birth date. Record the age and sex of the child for your written report.

4. You most likely will be a "participant observer," so don't hesitate to be involved with the child and other children. However, avoid directing the play or conversation. Follow the lead of the classroom teacher at all times.

Completing the Written Report:

It is recommended that you begin the written report within 24 to 48 hours after completing the observation. This will enable you to improve report accuracy.

DO...

- Conduct yourself in a courteous manner at all times.
- Maintain child and childcare program confidentiality at all times.
- Use professional behavior - including introducing yourself.
- Take direction from the facility director and classroom teachers.
- Follow ASHA's Code of Ethics

DO NOT...

- Complete the observation without permission from the appropriate person/persons at the facility.
- Assume that you have the "right" to be there - this is a generous opportunity given by the program.
- Misrepresent your credentials by sharing your observations of children in the program with teachers.
- **GOSSIP**

Each student understands that by not abiding by these rules, they run the risk of receiving a zero on this assignment.