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**UNIT:** Child Care Careers**LESSON:** Observations

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**COMPETENCIES:**Identify the purposes of observations and complete assigned observations. **(CDA VII)**

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**OVERVIEW/SUMMARY:**

Observations are a crucial part of working with young children. This is the method by which you will learn about specific children with which you will work, as well as learning about children in general.

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**MOTIVATOR:**

The teacher should wear a trench coat with the collar turned up, a hat down over his/her eyes, and dark glasses, or binoculars. As each student's name is called for roll call, the teacher should walk over to the student and observe what he/she is doing, give him/her a thorough looking over, then return to the front of the class. Explain that you have been "observing" the class. Tell them some of the interesting things you saw during your observations (these must ALL be POSITIVE comments!). Some ideas might be, John has clean fingernails, Sam has shining clean hair, Celia is chewing cinnamon gum, Jed has new shoelaces, etc. After you've finished this bit of drama, remove your costume and proceed with an explanation that the role observations play in this course and how the observations will be completed.

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**LESSON OPTIONS/SUPPLIES:****TEACHER NOTE:**

An excellent idea you may wish to incorporate into your classroom is to keep a computer file on each child in the child care lab. When observations are made on that child, they are then entered into the computer. At the end of the class, the observations are printed and given to the parents or guardians of the child as a "Baby Book." Parents love this idea because they do not miss the funny and endearing actions of the young child. A fun way to make these observations a spontaneous activity for your students, is to simply cut the back pockets from old jeans, leaving them sewed as a pocket. Make a straight stitch down the pocket to make a place for a pencil in one side and observation cards in the other side. Attach a ribbon to the pockets so the students can wear them as a necklace during the time they are in the lab. When they observe something of interest, they should write the child's name, the date, and a description of the activity to be entered into the computer file.

**OPTION 1--CDA VII**

**TEXTBOOK READING:** Read Chapter 16 in the text, "Caring for the Developing Child," and complete the correlating worksheet.

**OPTION 2--CDA VII**

**OBSERVING AND WORKING WITH CHILDREN:** Review information with students. You may wish to make a transparency from this information sheet to use as a lecture guide.

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**OBSERVATIONS , Overview**

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**OPTION 3--CDA VII**

**EVENT SAMPLING:** An event sampling is an observation to help understand a problem or event. The caregiver watches closely to observe and analyze the situation, then records what happened right before and immediately following the event. Review the information with the students, then have them complete the assignment.

**OPTION 4--CDA VII**

**ANECDOTAL NOTES:** An anecdotal record is a short story about your impressions of a child. It might include things you are concerned about the child's behavior patterns, moods, and achievements. This is a continuing observation which allows you to chart the child's progress. Review the information with the students, then have them complete the assignment.

**OPTION 5--CDA VII**

**TIME SAMPLE:** A time sample is a short description of an observation written at timed intervals; only the facts are recorded. Emotions and interpretations should NOT be included in this observation. Review the information with the students, then have the students complete the assignment.

**OPTION 6--CDA VII**

**CHECKLIST:** Review the checklist with the students.

**OPTION 7--CDA VII**

**LONG TERM STUDY:** If you use the long term study in your classroom, each student must be assigned one specific child to observe. Review the assignment with the class. This assignment should be given at the beginning of the semester and must allow students to observe and gather more information about the child they are observing at least once a week (options 3-6 could be part of the long term study). You may wish to have the students complete observations on two or three children, then write the final paper about the child for which they have collected the most information. This is useful if one of the children quit coming to child care for some reason.

**OPTION 8**

**ON-GOING ANECDOTES:** Provide the students with paper and a pencil as they enter the classroom each day. Throughout the time they spend with the children, they will record anecdotes they hear the children say, including the child's name and date. The anecdotes are then turned in to an assigned place. Once a week, a student should record all of the anecdotes on a computer record for each child. At the end of the child care experience, a printout of the child's anecdotes can then be given to the child to take home to his/her parents.

**OPTION 9--CDA VII**

**SAMPLE OBSERVATIONS:** Make a transparency from two or three outstanding observations that have been completed in your class. Explain why these are good observations and what you expect the students to do during their observation. Some samples are included in this lesson.