

## Promoting Excellence in ECI

# Observer Guidelines

In agreeing to become an observer, you accept the following broad guidelines:

I agree to observe another practitioner during one specific consultation / interaction / meeting / intervention with a child / family. The setting may be a family home / community setting / kindergarten. The entire observational process should take between 2 and 3 hours, including pre-observation phone call, the observation itself, and a follow-up conversation.

### Nomination

I will nominate myself as an observer by contacting an observational subject from the ECI Learning Event website by phone or email.

### Pre-Observation

When I contact the observational subject, I will ask them to brief me about the observational environment and topic and their specific objectives for the consultation I will observe.

I should explain to the observational subject what my specific interest is in the observation topic and what my own objectives are for making the observation.

I should be made aware by the observational subject that during the meeting (i) I should build the minimum amount of rapport with the child / family to create comfort with her / his presence, (ii) I should position themselves out of the sphere of activity to be as unobtrusive as possible, (iii) I may take notes if I wish, remembering that the purpose of my observation is NOT to give the subject feedback, but to observe ONE set of approaches to a specific situation.

The observational subject will seek necessary permissions from all those participating in the consultation regarding the presence of an observer. I will be required to recognise (i) full confidentiality and (ii) the fact that I am primarily observing another practitioner, not the child / family / other professionals.

### The Observation

During the observation, I should (i) introduce myself as an observer, (ii) build minimal rapport, (iii) find a place where I can observe silently and unobtrusively, unless there are obvious reasons why this should not be the case and then (iv) allow the observational subject to proceed with the consultation as if I were not present (as fully as possible!)

### Follow-up Conversation

This conversation can occur immediately after the observation, or at some later stage; either in person (over a coffee, for example), by telephone or, less desirably, by email.

I should remain aware that the purpose of the observation is NOT for me to give feedback, but to observe and discuss one set of approaches to a specific issue.

Useful questions for me to consider and discuss may be:

1. Were the objectives for the consultation met?
2. What specific behaviours / skills did I observe?
3. What attitudes / beliefs did the observational subject carry into the consultation?

Useful joint discussion to have with the observational subject may be:

1. If this consultation was to occur again, what could the observational subject do that would meet her/his objectives more quickly / easily / powerfully?
2. If I, the observer, were to have a similar interaction, what would I find personally challenging? How would I do it?