

## Promoting Excellence in ECI

# Observational Subject Guidelines

In agreeing to become an observational subject, you accept the following broad guidelines:  
I agree to allow another practitioner to accompany me to 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 on the ECI Learning Event website by forwarding the following details to [ah@workwell.com.au](mailto:ah@workwell.com.au): my name, contact phone number / email, observational environment and observational topic e.g., Andrea Mahoney, [andream@eciadvance.org.au](mailto:andream@eciadvance.org.au), family home, mother with depression.

### Pre-Observation

When I am contacted by a potential observer, I will brief them about the observational environment and topic and my specific objectives for the consultation they will observe.

I should ask the observer about their specific interest in the observation topic and what their objectives are for making the observation.

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

As appropriate, I will seek necessary permissions from all those participating in the consultation regarding the presence of an observer. I will explain that the observer (i) will observe full confidentiality and (ii) is primarily observing me, the practitioner, not the child / family / other professionals.

### The Observation

During the observation, I should (i) introduce the observer to the child / others, (ii) enable them to build minimal rapport, (iii) recommend a place where the observer can remain silent and unobtrusive, unless there are obvious reasons why this should not be the case and then (iv) proceed with the consultation as if the observer 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.

The observer should be reminded that the purpose of the observation is NOT feedback, but to demonstrate one set of approaches to a specific issue.

Useful questions to ask the observer may be:

1. Were my objectives for the consultation met?
2. What specific behaviours / skills did you observe?
3. What attitudes / beliefs do you think I carried into the consultation?

Useful joint discussion to have with the observer may be:

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