

Classroom Observation and Consultation

Policy:

Head Start Performance Standards for Child Mental Health requires that all children are periodically observed in the classroom, including home base, and that the mental health professional doing the observation consult with the classroom staff about the classroom environment and about any concerns regarding individual children's social-emotional development.

Procedure:

1. A minimum of two classroom observations will be scheduled for part year classrooms and three classroom observations for full year classrooms. Classroom observations may also occur if a classroom has a change in Teacher and/or teacher assistant; new child enrollment; or a major life crisis occurs for a child.
2. At the request of an Education Manager or Classroom Teacher, the mental health professional can do targeted consultation around classroom issues—for example, how to teach a social emotional skill to the class or how to deal differently with transitions. This may or may not involve observing the classroom.
3. All formal classroom mental health observations will be done by an individual who meets the requirements for “Qualified Mental Health Professional” as defined in OAR 309-032-0180 (9).
4. Mental health observations will be reported on the “Mental Health Classroom Observation” form and placed in the consultation book in the Center.
5. The mental health professional doing the observation will provide feedback to the classroom staff on ways to enhance children's social emotional development; and any potential issues surrounding an individual child's social emotional interactions and development. The education manager will be invited to participate in the discussion of the mental health observation.
6. If the mental health professional identifies potential issues surrounding an individual child's social emotional interactions and development, the Child & Family Advocate or Teacher will discuss the issues with the child's parent. This will be documented in the progress notes and on the Mental Health Face Sheet in the child's file. The documentation will include what follow-up the parent would like to see occur as a result of the observation.
7. Any potential classroom concern which might negatively impact a child's social-emotional development identified during the observation will be discussed with classroom staff and the Education Manager. The Education Manager will make a determination of how to follow up on the identified concern of the Mental Health Professional.