

Child Observation Chart

Child's name: _____

Date: _____

Observer's name: _____

Time started: _____

Time ended: _____

Instructions: Go with your child to an area of the house where you will both be comfortable. Sit down and observe the child for five minutes. Take notes. Do not talk, interact or play with the child, just watch. Write down what movements he makes with his arms, legs, body and head. Note whether these movements are slow or fast or repetitive. Note his vocalizations and try to describe the sounds (for example: eeeoooo-ugh, or coughs, or rasping noises).*

Arm movements	Hand movements
Leg movements	Feet movements
Torso movements	Facial movements
Vocalizations	Other

**These instructions come from Martin Kozloff's excellent book, *Educating Children with Learning and Behavior Problems*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc. (1974), Page 9.*

Analysis of Movements

1. Review the notes about the child's physical movements on the checklist.
2. Decide which movements are desired and which are undesired. For example, both feet on the floor is a useful physical movement, alternating feet to walk is a desired movement, touching a toy is a desired movement. Flapping hands or tapping fingers are generally not desired movements. Screeching or shrieking are not desired vocal movements. Saying a word or a sound in an appropriate tone of voice is a desired vocal movement. Smiling is a desired facial movement. Tongue hanging out is not a desired facial movement.
3. Make a list of all movements that you like and that could be used to build desired behaviors. You could use a highlighter to mark the desired movements (just ignore the undesired ones). Don't worry if you only have a few. You will soon have more.
4. Post the list of desired movements in a couple of places around the house as reminders.
5. Start marking and reinforcing your child every time he performs one of the desired movements. To clarify: use a clicker or other device to make a short, sharp sound at the exact time the child does the desired behavior. Give him a small food treat immediately after the click sound. If your child bounces a lot, then mark and reinforce whenever he has both feet on the floor. If your child flaps his hands, mark and reinforce when his hands are at his side or are still. If your child makes a lot of weird noises, mark and reinforce for every Appropriate Vocalization, or for Quiet Mouth. Ignore undesired movements (unless they lead to dangerous or destructive situations, in which case intervene and re-direct the child).
6. Continue marking and reinforcing any and all appropriate physical movements. Your child will feel encouraged to do more of the movements you like and will most likely experiment with other movements to see if those new movements will earn reinforcement. Your child's range of desired movements will increase, and you will find more opportunities to mark and reinforce. As you mark and reinforce more movements, you will learn to see more opportunities to mark and reinforce.
7. Once the child is performing more desired physical movements, keep it going. Expand the settings in which the child is performing these movements (from the house to the yard, or the yard to the playground). Work on duration of the behavior. Use the TAGteach principles described in the book to build these movements into useful behaviors.

*The book, **Autism Chaos to Calm: Discovering Solutions to the Everyday Problems of Living with Autism** by Martha Gabler, provides step-by-step details describing the shaping of many useful behaviors.*