

# Identifying Best Practices in Autism Education: A Walkthrough Tool for Administrators



School Division: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Administrator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ # of Staff: \_\_\_\_\_ # of Students: \_\_\_\_\_

**INSTRUCTIONS:** This tool is designed for use when observing any instructional setting where students with autism are taught. Such settings may include (but are not limited to) intensive support classrooms, general education classrooms, inclusion classrooms, outdoor spaces, and off-site job training locations. The indicators within include best practices for teaching in these settings. Prior to completing the checklist during an observation, familiarize yourself with each of the 34 indicators.

As you observe in the classroom, circle:

**F** for the indicators that you see fully implemented (observed across all students, by all staff, or across all activities),

**P** for those indicators that you see partially implemented, or

**N** for those not at all observed. Make any notes regarding the implementation of the indicator.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT		Observed
1	Staff can visually monitor students from all locations in the classroom.	F P N
2	Staff proactively prevent classroom disruptions by engaging students in activities.	F P N
3	Classroom arrangement includes designated areas for specific activities, including breaks, instruction, and calming/cool down.	F P N
4	Personal and classroom visual schedules in various formats (e.g., written, picture, checklist) are available, portable, durable, and utilized.	F P N
POSITIVE LEARNING CLIMATE		Observed
1	Staff demonstrate caring and calm by using a positive or neutral tone of voice, open and relaxed body language, and neutral or positive facial expressions, and are polite in their interactions within the classroom.	F P N
2	Staff include students in conversations about them and do not talk about students in front of them.	F P N
3	Student privacy is maintained, with special consideration given during self-care tasks and behavioral incidents.	F P N
4	Staff respond to off-task behavior in a timely manner by redirecting and reengaging the student in tasks.	F P N
5	Students are redirected and corrected by being told, in concrete and easily understood terms, what to do instead of what not to do.	F P N
EFFECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICES		Observed
1	Students use instructional materials that are relevant to grade-level standards (e.g., low-level, high-interest materials utilized in upper grades rather than preschool materials).	F P N
2	Lessons are differentiated to provide different supports or challenges to students with varying abilities.	F P N
3	Lessons follow the "I do, we do, you do" sequence of skills practice.	F P N
4	Students have multiple opportunities to respond to questions during instruction.	F P N
5	Students have multiple opportunities to engage in independent practice during instruction.	F P N
6	During instruction, the teacher provides varied, specific, and frequent praise when students are correct.	F P N
7	During instruction, the teacher redirects and/or reteaches when students make errors.	F P N

(continued)

As you observe in the classroom, circle:

**F** for the indicators that you see fully implemented (observed across all students, by all staff, or across all activities),

**P** for those indicators that you see partially implemented, or

**N** for those not at all observed. Make any notes regarding the fullness of implementation of the indicator.

8	Classroom instruction includes a mix of whole group, small group, and one-to-one teaching opportunities.	F	P	N
9	Communication devices/supports are used consistently for modeling communication exchanges during instruction.	F	P	N
10	Staff instruct students during transitions, unstructured time, and unplanned disruptions.	F	P	N
<b>INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-DETERMINATION</b>				<b>Observed</b>
1	Staff teach and honor independent choice-making.	F	P	N
2	Supports are in place for students to complete tasks as independently as possible (e.g., classroom labels, visual steps of tasks, designated location for student materials, etc.).	F	P	N
3	Students are allowed an opportunity to try a skill before assistance is provided by an adult.	F	P	N
4	Self-advocacy statements are taught, and self-advocacy attempts are honored. These include (but are not limited to) vocal statements, vocal approximations, or behaviors indicating, "I need help," "I don't want to do this right now," or "I want to do it my way."	F	P	N
<b>SOCIAL COMMUNICATION</b>				<b>Observed</b>
1	Staff acknowledge and respond to student communication attempts (in any modality) appropriately.	F	P	N
2	Students have consistent access to personalized assistive technology that is provided at all times and across all environments.	F	P	N
3	Students are taught to travel with their communication systems.	F	P	N
4	Students are taught to independently utilize their functional communication system, including augmentative or alternative communication supports.	F	P	N
<b>BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS</b>				<b>Observed</b>
1	Proactive strategies are used to prevent interfering behaviors (e.g., offering breaks, sensory strategies, shortened tasks, etc.).	F	P	N
2	Movement and sensory activities that assist with alertness and calming are interspersed with seated work.	F	P	N
3	Positive or replacement behavior is reinforced consistently across settings and staff.	F	P	N
4	Reinforcement provided is individualized and occurs more frequently than correction.	F	P	N
5	Classroom-wide reinforcement system is positive, clear, and concrete.	F	P	N
<b>DATA COLLECTION</b>				<b>Observed</b>
1	Staff collect data on student academic progress during instructional activities/lessons.	F	P	N
2	Staff collect data on interfering behavior.	F	P	N

**Comments:**