

## BEAM Step 2: Observation Tools

**Introduction:** After your team has gathered information using the *BEAM Information Gathering Form*, your team may decide that you need more specific information before you can develop a support plan for a particular child. In order to gather more information you will either need to directly observe the child or gather information over time to observe patterns of events that may be influencing the child's behavior. Below are suggestions for gathering more information. In this packet you will find forms that can be used to assist in this process.

**Overview:** This section will describe how to collect information about *frequency*—how often the behavior occurs, *antecedents* and *consequences*—the observable events that happen right before and consequences right after the target behavior, and *setting events*— events that may not happen in your setting, but may “set the stage” for the child to have a difficult day, such as interrupted eating and sleeping patterns, missed medication, etc. In addition your team may also need to document the child's interaction patterns to better understand his/her relationship history.

**Frequency:** *Scatterplots* are often used to chart how often a behavior occurs and to provide information about when the challenging behavior is most likely to occur (see Appendix A for an example form). An observer will need to watch the child in their natural setting and tally the target behavior as it occurs. Over time an analysis of these charts can indicate how often a behavior is occurring and can indicate times that are most difficult for the child. These times then can be targeted in the support plan.

**Recording Events in the Environment:** *ABC Charts (Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence)* are most often used to document events in the immediate environment that directly influence the child's behavior. An observer will first target a specific behavior and describe it in concrete, observable terms. For example, the description “aggressive behavior” is too vague and may be better stated as “Claire hits other children”. Once the team has a clear target behavior then an observer can record what happens right before an episode of challenging behavior and what happens right after the challenging behavior (see Appendix B for a sample form and examples).

**Recording Events that are Removed in Time:** *Setting Event Checklists* can be designed to meet your particular needs. *Setting events* can include eating and sleeping patterns, medication schedules, visits with friends or other family members, traumatic events, etc. (see Appendix C for a list of setting events and examples of forms) These forms should be designed to be sent home or to child care settings to gather the necessary information on an ongoing basis. The information from these forms can be compared to the *ABC Charts* or *Scatterplots* to see if there is an increase in challenging behavior on the days certain events occur outside of school.

**Recording Interactions:** A *Child-Teacher Interaction Checklist* has been designed to record a child's interaction patterns over time. A child's relationship history will directly impact their interactions in the classroom setting. For this reason it is important to document a child's interaction patterns particularly if you are concerned about abuse, trauma or neglect in the child's life (see Appendix D for a sample form). The teacher or primary care provider can complete this form periodically to look at patterns over time and to note changes in the child's behavior.



**Appendix B**  
**"ABC" Chart**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Observer: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of behavior(s) of interest: \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Time	Antecedent (Before)	Behavior	Consequence (After)	Comments

Reichle, J., & Johnston, S. (1993). Replacing challenging behavior: The role of communication intervention. *Topics in Language Disorders, 13*, 61-76. Copyright © 1993, Aspen publishers, Inc., <http://www.aspenpub.com>.

**Appendix C**  
**Setting Event Checklist**

Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Check any of the following events that occurred last evening (p.m.) or this morning prior to work (a.m.).

	AM	PM
Was refused some requested object/activity.	_____	_____
Fought or argued.	_____	_____
Was disciplined/reprimanded.	_____	_____
Was hurried or rushed more than usual.	_____	_____
Slept fewer/more hours than usual.	_____	_____
Was under the care of someone new/favorite caretaker was absent.	_____	_____
Experienced a long wait time.	_____	_____
Environment was too loud, too crowded.	_____	_____
Medications were changed/missed.	_____	_____
Appeared excessively tired.	_____	_____
Appeared excessively agitated	_____	_____
Appeared excessively active.	_____	_____
Appeared to be in bad mood.	_____	_____
Appeared to be in bad mood.	_____	_____
Appeared/complained of being ill.	_____	_____
Other ( _____ )	_____	_____

From Gardner, W.I., Cole, C.L., Davidson, D.P., & Karan, O.C. (1986). Reducing aggression in individuals with developmental disabilities: An expanded stimulus control, assessment, and intervention model. Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, 21, 3-12.

## Appendix D

### Child-Teacher Interaction Checklist

- \_\_\_\_\_ Child shows things to the teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child asks the teacher for help
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child accepts comfort when upset
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child is lighthearted/playful with teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child makes smooth/easy transitions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child easily follows teacher suggestions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child spontaneously hugs teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child checks in with teacher during day
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child stops misbehavior when asked by teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child is happy to see the teacher
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child is more interested in materials than people
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child stays distant from teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child acts if doesn't notice or hear teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child moves away from teacher when upset
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child is irritable/fussy with the teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child seeks comfort, then rejects teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child often cries and is difficult to console
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child is demanding/impatient with teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child resists classroom routines
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child cries to get teacher to do what child wants
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child cries when teacher leaves
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child is rough with teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child acts as if teacher will interfere with activities
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child becomes easily angry and frustrated