ECD 108 Activities for School Age Children

**Observation Directions**: The goal of this assignment is to provide you with an opportunity to learn about some of the types of care and educational programs for young children by visiting four different early childhood settings, as well as to focus your attention to different educational purposes during your observations.

**Introduction:**

* Name of the program
* Location of the program
* Type of program
* Name of the director
* Number and the age range of all the children served in the program
* Date and time of your visit
* Name of specific room observed
* Number and ages of the children in the room observed
* Number and titles of teaching staff present

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**For the body of the observation include the description of the following areas and program components:**

**Body of the Observation**

**Give a complete overview of the building and location of the center.** Briefly describe what type of building houses the center. Then describe the complete physical setting of the center, including the number and arrangements of all the rooms and any special features of the center. You may create a map of the center if you wish. If you do a map, you must still include a commentary about the physical set-up and any special features of the program.

**Describe the outside playground.** Discuss this area in terms of size (dimensions), location, physical arrangement and types of materials and equipment. Include a description of any special playground features. Add a commentary on what you think of the playground. Is it developmentally appropriate, is there enough for children to do, etc.? You may submit a map of the playground, but also include a commentary about the size, location, arrangement of equipment, and any special features.

**Describe the specific room observed.** Include size (dimensions), arrangement, and types of learning areas (art or dramatic play, etc.), equipment, and materials. Offer a commentary about these features with regard to developmentally appropriate layout and use of the space in the early childhood classroom. You may submit a map of the classroom and still include a summary of all required information listed here in Number 3.

**Describe the activities in progress during your visit.** Request to see a copy of the room schedule if available and determine which “segment” you are observing. Clearly describe what children were doing and the kinds of materials and equipment they were using at the time. How were they using the materials? What were the teachers doing? How were they interacting with the children? Offer comments about the developmental appropriateness of the activities and equipment as well.

**Describe the emotional climate of the room.** (Form example, busy, bustling, quiet, tense, relaxed, loud) Consider children’s and adults’ body language and facial expressions as well as tone of voice. Write any dialog between children and adults that you might overhear that might clarify the emotional climate of the room. How did the children and adults relate to each other socially and emotionally?

**Describe the goals and philosophy of the program** (sometimes called the educational goals). Request a program brochure or other literature that has the program’s goals and/or philosophy. (You may also visit the program’s website, if needed.) Quote the philosophy or put it in your own words. Describe any evidence of the stated philosophy you see in the classroom (e.g. activities; schedule, materials; teacher-child relationships; child-child relationships).

**Explain your overall impression of the center and the specific classroom you observed.** Include description of what you think are the program’s strengths and challenges. Include how you might improve the challenges/weaknesses. Consider whether you would enjoy working here or if you would enroll your child in this program.