



# Observation Guidelines

The *Skyline College Child Development Laboratory Center (CDLC)* welcomes observations by students, parents, faculty and staff. The program is open for observations from 8:00 – 12:00 PM and from 3:00 – 5:00 PM. The *CDLC* limits the number of observers at one time to one (1) per classroom. It is necessary to schedule an appointment to conduct an observation. Observers will not be allowed to drop-in. If you would like to schedule an observation, please contact our administrative office at (650) 738-7070 or [skylinecdc@smccd.edu](mailto:skylinecdc@smccd.edu).

The following procedures have been developed for observations at the *CDLC*. These procedures help to ensure that the children's behavior is natural and minimally influenced by the presence of observers. We appreciate your cooperation in following these guidelines and hope you find your observations helpful in your understanding of typical child development and child care centers.

1. All observers **MUST** make an appointment for observations.
2. You must sign in on the *Observer Sign-In Sheet* located in the Office and leave your cell phone turned off in your bag. You may need to present your Student ID and/or photo identification.
3. You should have something to write with and on, and paper. Use what you see, not how you feel about it, to guide your process and accurately document observations. Objective observations just describe what you see, not your interpretation of what you see.
4. You will need to check in with the Head Teacher in the classroom where you are observing to ask where to best place yourself in the classroom or yard. You should find a place to sit down low, at the child's level on the floor or a chair. If you are standing you will be asked to sit down and watch children. You should not interfere in any way, being as unobtrusive as possible. When observing in the yard, station yourself around the perimeter of the play environment as unobtrusively as possible. Feel free to move around the perimeter to follow the course of play or to get a better vantage point from which to observe. Bring appropriate clothing to observe outside in inclement weather.
5. Move as slowly and quietly as possible so that children are not distracted.
6. Everything that you see or hear is **STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**. All information obtained for class observation assignments, research or projects is confidential and staff and children's names should be changed before submitting final drafts.
7. You should refrain from engaging in conversation. If children talk to you or ask about what you are doing you can say, "I'm watching you play." Please do not talk to other observers, staff, or parents.
8. You should refrain from comments to or about children. Children are capable and competent, not "cute" or "funny". Children, parents, and staff may overhear comments made, positive or negative.
9. You should not react to any behaviors that children have that may surprise or shock you. Understand that you are observing for a short period of time and may not fully understand the dynamics of the situation being observed. If you have any questions about a child's behavior or teacher facilitation, please speak with the Director.
10. Staff need to carry out their normal everyday tasks and activities with children. If you need to speak with or interview a teacher, please schedule appointment to do so.

***If you have any questions, comments or would like to schedule an observation please contact:***

**CDLC Administrative Office  
Building 14  
(650) 738-7070  
[skylinecdc@smccd.edu](mailto:skylinecdc@smccd.edu)**