Child Care & After-School Physical Activity Standards Direct Observation Tool

Evaluation of Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities

Child care facility ID *(Transtria use only):*_____

Facility name:_____

Facility address:_____

Observer 1:_____

Observer 2:_____

Size of facility (number of youth):_____

Community partnership:_____

Date:_____

Weather:_____

Start Time: __ __ : __ __   O AM O PM

End Time: __ __ : __ __   O AM O PM

Facility characteristics					
1. What is the type of facility? (*Circle one.*)					
School	Community center	Child care center	Faith-based center	Other, specify:	
2. What types of services does this facility provide?					

	No	Yes
2.a. Early child care and education only	☐	☐
2.b. After-school care and education only	☐	☐
2.c. Both early child care and after-school care/education	☐	☐
2.d. Summer care and education (all ages)	☐	☐
2.e. Other, specify:	☐	☐

Days of service	Start time	End time	Not open
3.a. Sunday			
3.b. Monday			
3.c. Tuesday			
3.d. Wednesday			
3.e. Thursday			
3.f. Friday			
3.g. Saturday			

Comments:

Child Care & After-School Physical Activity Standards Play Spaces Mapping Table

Facility Name/Address: _____ Observer Name: _____

Community Partnership: _____ Weather Condition: _____ Date: _____

Play Space	Setting	Location	Type	Condition	Surface	Intervention
1	☐ Park ☐ School ☐ Community Center ☐ Early childhood education center ☐ Other playground ☐ Other recreation facility ☐ Other:	☐ Indoor ☐ Outdoor	☐ Court ☐ Field ☐ Playground ☐ Pool ☐ Gym ☐ Multi-purp. room ☐ Multi-purp. field ☐ Other:	☐ Usable ☐ Equipment ☐ Other:	☐ Sand/dirt ☐ Grass ☐ Gravel ☐ Wood chips/ mulch ☐ Foam/ rubber/ tile ☐ Cement/ pavement ☐ Hardwood ☐ Carpet ☐ Other:	
2	☐ Park ☐ School ☐ Community Center ☐ Early childhood education center ☐ Other playground ☐ Other recreation facility ☐ Other:	☐ Indoor ☐ Outdoor	☐ Court ☐ Field ☐ Playground ☐ Pool ☐ Gym ☐ Multi-purp. room ☐ Multi-purp. field ☐ Other:	☐ Usable ☐ Equipment ☐ Other:	☐ Sand/dirt ☐ Grass ☐ Gravel ☐ Wood chips/ mulch ☐ Foam/ rubber/ tile ☐ Cement/ pavement ☐ Hardwood ☐ Carpet ☐ Other:	
3	☐ Park ☐ School ☐ Community Center ☐ Early childhood education center ☐ Other playground ☐ Other recreation facility ☐ Other:	☐ Indoor ☐ Outdoor	☐ Court ☐ Field ☐ Playground ☐ Pool ☐ Gym ☐ Multi-purp. room ☐ Multi-purp. field ☐ Other:	☐ Usable ☐ Equipment ☐ Other:	☐ Sand/dirt ☐ Grass ☐ Gravel ☐ Wood chips/ mulch ☐ Foam/ rubber/ tile ☐ Cement/ pavement ☐ Hardwood ☐ Carpet ☐ Other:	

Play Space	Setting	Location	Type	Condition	Surface	Intervention
4	☐ Park ☐ School ☐ Community Center ☐ Early childhood education center ☐ Other playground ☐ Other recreation facility ☐ Other:	☐ Indoor ☐ Outdoor	☐ Court ☐ Field ☐ Playground ☐ Pool ☐ Gym ☐ Multi-purp. room ☐ Multi-purp. field ☐ Other:	☐ Usable ☐ Equipment ☐ Other:	☐ Sand/dirt ☐ Grass ☐ Gravel ☐ Wood chips/ mulch ☐ Foam/ rubber/ tile ☐ Cement/ pavement ☐ Hardwood ☐ Carpet ☐ Other:	
5	☐ Park ☐ School ☐ Community Center ☐ Early childhood education center ☐ Other playground ☐ Other recreation facility ☐ Other:	☐ Indoor ☐ Outdoor	☐ Court ☐ Field ☐ Playground ☐ Pool ☐ Gym ☐ Multi-purp. room ☐ Multi-purp. field ☐ Other:	☐ Usable ☐ Equipment ☐ Other:	☐ Sand/dirt ☐ Grass ☐ Gravel ☐ Wood chips/ mulch ☐ Foam/ rubber/ tile ☐ Cement/ pavement ☐ Hardwood ☐ Carpet ☐ Other:	
6	☐ Park ☐ School ☐ Community Center ☐ Early childhood education center ☐ Other playground ☐ Other recreation facility ☐ Other:	☐ Indoor ☐ Outdoor	☐ Court ☐ Field ☐ Playground ☐ Pool ☐ Gym ☐ Multi-purp. room ☐ Multi-purp. field ☐ Other:	☐ Usable ☐ Equipment ☐ Other:	☐ Sand/dirt ☐ Grass ☐ Gravel ☐ Wood chips/ mulch ☐ Foam/ rubber/ tile ☐ Cement/ pavement ☐ Hardwood ☐ Carpet ☐ Other:	

Child Care & After-School Physical Activity Standards Direct Observation Tool

Facility Name/Address: _____ Observer Name: _____

Community Partnership: _____ Weather Condition: _____ Date: _____

Start Time	Area	Teacher/Provider Behavior		Preschool 3-5 (# of children)				Elementary School 6-10 (# of children)				Middle School 11-14 (# of children)				High School 15 + (# of youth)			
(1 min)		Active Instruction	Observe	S*	M**	VA***	Activity Code+	S	M	VA	Activity Code	S	M	VA	Activity Code	S	M	VA	Activity Code
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*S=Sedentary, **M=Moderate, ***VA=Very Active

+Activity Codes: **0** = No identifiable activity (i.e., not moving); **1**= Aerobics; **2** = Baseball/Softball; **3**= Basketball; **4** = Dance; **5** = Football; **6** = Gymnastics; **7** = Martial Arts; **8** = Racquet sports; **9** = Soccer; **10** = Swimming; **11**= Volleyball; **12** = Weight training; **13** = Other playground games; **14** = Walking; **15** = Jogging/Running; **16** = None of the above

Child Care & After-School Physical Activity Standards Direct Observation

Introduction

This tool and protocol were developed by the evaluation team from Transtria LLC (Laura Brennan, PhD, MPH, Principal Investigator; Allison Kemner, MPH; Tammy Behlmann, MPH; Jessica Stachecki, MSW, MBA; Carl Filler, MSW) and Washington University Institute for Public Health (Ross Brownson, PhD, Co-Principal Investigator; Christy Hoehner, PhD, MSPH) as well as feedback from national advisors and partners. This tool and protocol were adapted from the System for Observing Play and Leisure Activity (SOPLAY) and System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC) tools, protocols, and operational definitions.

Funding was provided for the *Evaluation of Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities* by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (#67099). Transtria LLC is leading the evaluation and dissemination activities from April 2010 to March 2014. For more information about the evaluation, please contact Laura Brennan (laura@transtria.com) or Allison Kemner (akemner@transtria.com).

Prior to conducting the observations

Safety
- Assess the safety of the environment for observing before entering the area:
- If dangerous or suspicious activities are taking place, leave the premises, notify the Project Director or Coordinator, and determine whether to schedule a new observation.
- If weather conditions (ice or snow, thunder or lightning) are not ideal for collecting data, leave the premises, notify the Project Director or Coordinator, and determine whether to schedule a new observation period.

Items to remember
- Pencils, a copy of the paper tools for all data collectors, clipboards
- Comfortable shoes, umbrella (if it's raining), sunscreen
- Data collectors' contact information (in case of emergency)
- List and map of sites for data collection, identifying boundaries of the area
- Letter from the Project Director or Coordinator explaining the reason for data collection
- Transportation to and from the site for observers, if needed

Direct Observation schedule

Recommended timeframe for observations:
- Scan one area for 15-30 minutes.
- Scans should last for 30 seconds to 1 minute (depending on the number of people in the area).
- There should be a 1 minute rest between scans.

Schedule observations at different times of the day (2-3 times per day recommended). Example times:
- Morning (7:30 AM)
- Noon (11:30 AM)
- Afternoon (3:30 PM)
- Evening (6:30 PM)

Schedule observations for multiple times a week (2-3 days recommended). Example schedules:
- Two weekdays (Monday through Friday) and one weekend day (Saturday and Sunday) if applicable
- Example: Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday

Facility characteristics

1. What is the type of facility? Circle one.

- School: An institution for the teaching of children
- Community center: A building or other place where members of a community may gather for social, educational, or cultural activities
- Child care center: A facility or organization offering day care
- Faith-based center: A building or other place that serves as a meeting place for a religious congregation
- Other: Note any type of facility not listed above.

2. What types of services does this facility provide? Place an **X** in the appropriate box (□) corresponding to Yes or No.

- 2.a. Early child care and education only: Education and child care programming for pre-school age children
- 2.b. After-school care and education only: Education and afterschool programming for school age children
- 2.c. Both early child and after-school care/education: Education, child care, and programming for pre-school and school-age children
- 2.d. Summer care and education (all ages): Education and programming during summer months for pre-school and school-age children
- 2.e. Other: Note any type of service provided by the facility not listed above.

For Question 3, document the days and hours of service. For each day of the week that services are offered, fill in the start and end times, or place an **X** in the box for Not open if the facility does not offer services that day.

- 3.a. Sunday
- 3.b. Monday
- 3.c. Tuesday
- 3.d.Wednesday
- 3.e. Thursday
- 3.f. Friday
- 3.g. Saturday

Child Care & After-School Physical Activity Standards Direct Observation Mapping Table (Instruction Sheet)

The purpose of mapping is to record various features in different child care and after-school play spaces. Completion of the map will allow for a better understanding of the individual behaviors observed in the designated play spaces.

Before observing activities, recorders should have knowledge of the play space where they are going to conduct observations. A rough sketch should be made of the overall play space (and how it has been divided into areas for different observers, if necessary). In the case where multiple play spaces are observed, each area should be numbered on the sketch. In addition, all permanent structures and natural and constructed boundaries should be recorded in the sketch. A copy of the sketch should be retained for reference during data analysis.

Below you will find detailed descriptions for each column within the Child Care & After-School Play Spaces Mapping Table.

Play space: All descriptive details about the play space should be easily referenced between the sketched map and the Mapping Table. From the sketched map, place the area number in the first column of the Mapping Table and follow the row across to complete all categories. [Note: The area numbers will also be referenced in the "Child Care & After-School Physical Activity Standards Direct Observation Tool."]

Setting: Record whether the play space being used is a park, school, community center, early childhood education center, other playground, other recreation facility, or other space (specify).

Location: Record whether the play space being used is indoors or outdoors.

Type: Choose from the following categories.

- Court: An area marked for basketball, volleyball, racquetball, and/or other court games. It contains permanent markings specifically for court games.
- Field: An area marked for football, soccer, baseball, and/or other field games. It contains permanent markings or goals, backstops, or other features specifically for field games.
- Playground: A self-contained space for swinging, sliding, climbing, or other types of play.
- Pool: Consists of wading or swimming pool and the surrounding space.
- Gym: A large indoor space primarily for physical activity and game play.
- Multi-purpose room: An auditorium, classroom, studio, or other indoor space that may be used for physical activity (e.g., dance, aerobics, strength training).
- Multi-purpose field: An open, outdoor, unmarked field that may be used for physical activity.
- Other (specify): Record any other type of area not specified above.

Condition: This section provides basic descriptive information about the designated play space.

- Usable: Play space is safe for physical activity (e.g., equipment is in good condition).
- Equipment: Equipment is provided (e.g., balls, jump ropes).
- Other: Specify any other condition of interest.

Surface: Record what type of surface is present on the majority of each play space. Choose from the following: sand/dirt, grass, gravel, wood chips/ mulch, foam/ rubber/ tile, cement/ pavement, hardwood, carpet, and other (specify).

Intervention: Record the specific intervention changes that assist children in participating in physical activity in this play space. This will include modifications such as lines painted on courts (e.g., four-square), cuts in the grass or field areas (e.g., baseball diamonds), and poles (basketball hoops, etc.). *Do not* record temporary improvements such as chalk lines and portable nets. A modification identifies what the area is primarily designed for, regardless of how it used at a particular time. Identify spaces that have multiple improvements that overlap but cannot be used simultaneously. For instance, a court space may have poles and painted lines that are used for both volleyball and basketball.

Child Care & After-School Physical Activity Standards Direct Observation Instruction Sheet

Use the following codes and definitions to assist you in completing the observation tool.

Observers: Observers will be split into groups of two to observe different areas at the same time (see example below). Areas correspond with the play spaces on the Parks and Play Spaces Mapping Table.

> Play Space 1: Observer 1
>
> Observer 2
>
> Play Space 2: Observer 3
>
> Observer 4

Start Time: This is the clock time for the beginning of each observation period. Each observation will last the same amount of time (with the length of time dependent on the number of individuals within the observed area) with a one minute break in-between observations to record (see below for an example). In the first column, record the start time for each period of observation.

> Period 1: Minute 1 – Observation
>
> Minute 2 – Break/Record
>
> Period 2: Minute 3 – Observation
>
> Minute 4 – Break/Record
>
> Period 3: Minute 5 – Observation
>
> Minute 6 – Break/Record

Map: Before observation begins, the observers will split the area into sections and each observer will be responsible for observing his/her section. The observers should record the area number in the second column of the observation tool.

Scanning: When scanning an area, observers should start on the far right end of the area and scan to the left side, then back to the right side for the duration of the scan time. During the scan, the observer should complete the observation tool by tallying activity by age group, in addition to reporting the activity codes for the age group. You should count the same individual's activity level multiple times if they enter your line of vision more than once in the scan time. However, only mark each activity code one time per scan time (see below).

Teacher Behavior: Mark the behavior the teacher/provider is engaged in for the *majority* of the observation interval. Select only one. **Active Instruction** involves showing children how to conduct themselves in an activity and management of children, game play, equipment use, etc. **Observation** includes watching children participating in an activity and discussion of well-being, sports, and activities.

Age/Grade: Each age/grade category has its own count. Observers should try to identify a child's age before academic grade. Only when age is unknown, should observers identify the grade that the child is currently in. Please provide the number of youth or individuals represented during the observation period participating in different intensity levels of activity and their specific activity (i.e., activity code).

Activity Level (Sedentary (S), Moderate (M), Very Active (VA)): During scans of the target area, all children should be accounted for as either participating in very active, moderate, or sedentary behaviors. Mark a tally mark for each individual in the proper activity level and age box (i.e. if you see a 14 year old walking, put a tally mark in moderate under Adolescent).

- **Sedentary** behaviors are defined as activities in which people are not moving (e.g. standing, sitting, playing board games)
- **Moderate** intensity behaviors require more movement but no strenuous activity (e.g. walking, biking slowly)
- **Very active** behaviors show evidence of increased heart rate and inhalation rate (e.g. running, biking vigorously, playing basketball)

Activity Codes: Define what tasks individuals are participating in during the scanning period. All codes are labeled at the bottom of the observation tool. Use each code only one time per observation period (e.g., write "14" once in the space for activity codes even if more than one individual is observed walking).