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Observational tool for infant-caregiver activities and therapeutic interventions

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Observational tool for infant-caregiver activities and therapeutic interventions

This checklist is designed to capture infants' experiences during infant focused activities in a variety of settings. We are primarily thinking of activity where the infant is engaged in activities together with their caregiver. We intend this tool to help activity providers capture what the infants are experiencing within the activity and from their caregiver in discreet events, as well as measure change over time with the add-ons. These have a scaling tool suitable for participatory sessions taking place over time, and for therapeutic Interventions looking to facilitate change over time.

Adaptability: This tool was designed for use with 0-3 year olds but is applicable to a broader age range. The categories and classifications of experiences/behaviours should remain the same with older children, but the examples may need reworded to apply. Similarly, for all ages, you may wish to add examples that are specific to your activity to help coders, although we have tried to use general examples. You can contact the authors if you wish to check any examples before use. When adapting the tool please cite the original.

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Instructions:

The main checklist can be used at one off activity, or repeated at each session, to capture the breadth of different experiences available to the infant. All behaviours or experiences captured are from the Infant's perspective. Depending on what suits your setting you can tick each one that you observe during the session immediately after it is finished, you can tally them during the session (so you may have multiple ticks for some), or you can choose to check them at time points throughout a session.

The add-on scales look to capture changes over time if the activity runs for a number of weeks. If you are doing participatory activity, you can use the first add-on to measure any changes over time by scaling each of the 4 domains immediately following each session. If you are running a therapeutic session looking to make change in attachments/Infant wellbeing, you can use the second add on to scale 5 domains immediately following each session.

Infant activity observation checklist

code..... date.....

For infant and caregiver activities: Tick if behaviour was observed at end of session, or at time points, or keep a tally during sessions			
	Infant's behaviour/experience	Example	Observed
Agency	Choosing/asking/initiating	Infant selecting colours, reaching for materials, gesturing to carer, initiating play	
	Having an impact	Infant seeing mark making, cause & effect in toy, making a sound, seeing that they are having effect on carer	
	Receiving affirmation from carer	Carer notices/comments on/praises infant's demonstrations of agency – e.g. 'look you made a mark'	
Engagement	Shows interest/concentration	Infant is focused on the activity	
	Shows anticipation	Infant excited when an activity brought out, or when they see a material/toy	
	Shows pleasure/enjoyment	Infant smiling or laughing, verbalising joy	
Relationships	Part of a shared goal	Playing/creating together with their carer	
	Experiences carer facilitating their goal	Carer helped them achieve what they wanted e.g. passed them materials, laid out paint, helped reach toy	
	Experiences sensitive carer responses	Infant's cue was responded to e.g., distress was soothed, a need was met, parent reacted to infant's interest, followed lead	
	Part of 'Conversations'	Infant is part of turn taking with carer (verbal or in art/play), mutual eye contact, referential communication (showing each other things)	
	Receives pleasant touch from caregiver	Infant is getting soothing, cuddling etc from carer	
Development	Experiences sensory enrichment	Infant trying novel experiences, exploring sensory materials, feeling textures, visual or audio stimulus	
	Uses fine motor skills	Infant manipulating brushes, holding crayons, pressing buttons	
	Uses gross motor skills	Infant painting with whole body, stacking boxes, crawling/cruising/walking	
	Has opportunity for language development	Infant offered opportunities for language development e.g., carer using words for colours, or baby trying words	

Add on scaling tool 1, for change across longer term participatory activities:

Shifts in infants experience of interaction over time for longer term activities : Immediately after session, scale observation of the main experience			
Shared Goals: Engaged in child-led activity together with shared infant-carer goals (e.g., joint art work) or carer facilitating infant's goal (e.g. finding them the resources they want, holding something while they work etc)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Most of session	<input type="checkbox"/> Regularly	<input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely
Connection: Experiencing mutually rewarding connection (e.g., enjoying to and fro 'conversations' through art, music, play or verbal)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Most of session	<input type="checkbox"/> Regularly	<input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely
Infant Directed Communication: Communication to infant is appropriate - affirming, positive, offers praise, gives reasonable guidance, putting reasonable boundaries in place			
<input type="checkbox"/> Most of session	<input type="checkbox"/> Regularly	<input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely
Engagement: Infant and parent both engaged by the activity, focused on taking part, showing pleasure etc			
<input type="checkbox"/> Most of session	<input type="checkbox"/> Regularly	<input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely

Add on scaling tool 2, for therapeutic interventions:

Shifts in infants experience of attachments over time for therapeutic interventions: Immediately after session scale observation of the main behaviour experienced by infant from carer			
Shared Goals			
Shared infant-carer goals, or carer is facilitating infant's goal, most of the time	Some of the time spent in shared or facilitated goals	Carer (or infant) mainly focused on solo goals	Carer prevents or hinders infant's goal
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Responsiveness			
Infant's cues and needs mostly receive a sensitive response	Cues/needs sometimes receive a sensitive response	Many cues are missed, or infant doesn't seek for their needs to be met	Infant's cues/needs rejected
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connection			
Most time spent in mutually rewarding connection, with serve and return, eye contact, synchronicity etc	Some time spent in mutually rewarding connection	Considerable time spent not connected, opportunities for connection missed	Carer (or infant) showed rejection of connection
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical Contact			
Most time spent seeking or enjoying proximity or in pleasurable contact with carer	Some time spent seeking/enjoying proximity or in pleasurable contact	Little time spent in pleasurable physical contact or seeking proximity	Carer (or infant) avoiding proximity/physical contact or physical contact rough or unpleasant
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Infant Directed Communication			
Communication to infant is mainly appropriate - affirming of infant, positive, offers praise, gives reasonable guidance, putting reasonable boundaries in place	Communication is sometimes appropriate, including affirmations or reasonable guidance/boundaries	Communication is often absent, e.g., praise missing where would be expected, boundaries not given when needed	Communication is negative, e.g., critical or mocking language, harsh boundaries, not age appropriate
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>