



Advisor Assessment Observation Instrument

Advisor Assessment Observation Instrument

Instructions

This Advisor Observation Instrument is used by Advisors as part of the Military School-Age (MSA) candidate assessment procedure for the Military School-Age Associate credentialing program. Through its use, many of the more observable aspects of competence required of a candidate can be assessed. In addition to observations, Advisors may interview candidates and use other knowledge of the candidate's work with youth to complete this report.

Observations must be completed while observing the candidate working with youth in an out of school program.

A. Procedures for completing the observation

1. Scheduling the observation:

- a. The Advisor is required to observe the candidate two times, each at least three weeks apart. All observations must be done within six months prior to the date the candidate submits the Assessment Request Form. **Before observing:**
 - i. Read the observation instrument thoroughly before observing a candidate.
 - ii. Enter the information on the cover sheet.

2. During the observation:

- a. Be as inconspicuous as possible. Remember that you are trying to collect information on how the candidate works with youth. Therefore, listen and watch. Of course, you should be courteous if youth approach you, but try to avoid interacting with youth, asking questions, or interrupting in any way. Keep note of any questions you have for the candidate and save them until after the observation.
- b. Before actually observing the candidate, spend 10 to 15 minutes becoming familiar with the setting you are observing.
- c. Move around as needed while observing. Be sure to observe both the candidate's interactions and the youth's experiences, as well as aspects of the physical setting.
- d. If more than one adult is working with the group being observed, concentrate your attention only on the candidate's behavior.
- e. After each Functional Area, indicate at least one strategy for growth. Each strategy should be constructive specific and outline concrete suggestions for improvement.

3. After the observation:

- a. After you complete the observations, inform the candidate. Be prepared to share your information with the MSA Representative.

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B. Observation Instrument guidelines

For each observation:

1. Rating:

Your observation provides critical information regarding candidate performance. Use your objective professional judgment when entering ratings.

You will rate the candidate's performance on a series of items in each Functional Area. Your rating will indicate whether the candidate's performance on the item occurs rarely, sometimes, or most of the time. **Before deciding on your rating**, however, you will check off some specific indicators of the candidate's performance that you observe.

The *Observation Instrument* is organized in the following way:



1.1 The indoor and outdoor environments are maintained to reduce and prevent injuries and accidents.

- **Each item to be rated is “numbered.” Numbered items** describe general aspects of the candidate's performance that represent competence. Next to each item is a box. You will rate the candidate by writing the number 1, 2, or 3 rating code in this box.

[1] Rarely. As you observed the candidate, you were unable to witness evidence of this action being taken, or you observed evidence infrequently, or actions taken were inappropriate, or this item does not apply to this candidate's situation.

[2] Sometimes. You were able to observe some evidence of the action.

[3] Mostly. The candidate repeatedly demonstrated the behavior described. You observed much evidence that the candidate was acting in a competent manner.
- Below each numbered item are one or more **indicator statements**. These describe more specific aspects of competence that are expected of the candidate. You are to look for these statements and check off each as you observe the candidate's performance. Check only if they have relevance to the situation/setting/individual you are observing. All statements need not be checked to determine a rating. The checkmark does not indicate an affirmation of positive performance, but rather that you have considered this aspect during this observation. One checkmark means you took into consideration this behavior during one of your visits. Two checkmarks means you took into consideration this behavior during two of your visits. Three checkmarks means you took into consideration this behavior during three of your visits.

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1.1 The indoor and outdoor environments are maintained to reduce and prevent injuries and accidents.



There are designated separate areas for quiet and active play to avoid congestion and collision.

- Examples are also provided as samples of what to look for. They are not required and it is possible for an indicator to be checked even if a specific example is not observed. Always look for alternate examples of ways in which an item can be observed.

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1.1 The indoor and outdoor environments are maintained to reduce and prevent injuries and accidents.

_____ There are designated separate areas for quiet and active play to avoid congestion and collision.

Ex.: The quiet area is away from the music and art areas.

2. During each observation visit, you are to look for indicators of competence, checking off statements as you see them. Remember, “examples” are samples of what to look for but are not required. Generally, indicators will not be checked off in the order they appear in the instrument, and you may end up with one, two, or three checkmarks on the same indicator.
3. Once you have enough indicators checked off to form an opinion of the candidate’s performance, rate the candidate on the numbered items by writing the 1, 2, or 3 rating code. If all indicators are checked, it is likely, but not necessary, that the item will be rated a 3. However, an item may be greater than the sum of its parts. All indicators might be checked while the item may still be rated a 2 or a 1. Some items may have to be rated after you have reviewed your notes and had a little time to think about the observations.
4. For every item, explain your rating in the comments section. Note brief examples of what the candidate did or did not do. Also note any peculiar circumstances that prevent the candidate from complying with the item.
5. **Each item should be rated by the time your observation is completed.** If you are not able to rate every item based on what you observe, then it will be necessary to ask the candidate interview questions to complete the rating of those items.
6. If the candidate’s rating is based on what the candidate says, rather than what you observed, write “I” (for “interview”) in the comments section. Write down the question you asked and the candidate’s response. During the follow-up interview, ask open-ended questions that are not threatening and do not lead the candidate to an answer. For example, if you need information on trips, you might

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ask, “How are trips usually handled?” Listen carefully to the candidate’s response, record pertinent information, and rate the item, based on all the relevant information you have collected.

7. Following each Functional Area section, space is provided for: (a) Additional Comments. In that space, list any additional aspects of the candidate’s competence that you observed which relate to the competence in the Functional Area, but which cannot be categorized under the existing items; (b) Strategies for Growth. In that space you are required to make at least one recommendation. You may make the recommendations after your first, second or third observation, or after all three. Write the date of each recommendation. Try to be as specific as possible. Give the candidate concrete examples and references to improve their skills and knowledge.

C. Completing Functional Areas 12 and 13

These Functional Areas are not directly observable. Comments on these indicators may be based upon an interview with the candidate. You may need to schedule additional time to conduct this interview.

Functional Area 1: Safe

FUNCTIONAL AREA 1: SAFE

Rating scale: 1-rarely, 2-sometimes, 3-mostly

Candidate provides a safe environment to prevent and reduce injuries.

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1.1 The indoor and outdoor environments are maintained to reduce and prevent accidents and injuries.

_____ Potentially hazardous equipment is maintained to reduce and prevent injuries and accidents.

_____ There are designated separate areas for quiet and active play to avoid congestion and collisions.

Ex.: Explained a rule for the new activity.

Observation comments

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1.2 Youth are taught habits that will reduce and prevent accidents and injuries.

_____ Youth are involved in making the program safety rules.

_____ Rules and procedures for sports and games are explained before play begins.

_____ Youth are informed about potential hazards in environment.

Ex.: Power cords, electrical outlets, proper use of equipment.

Observation comments

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1.3 Procedures for responding to emergencies, accidents, and injuries are organized and well planned in advance.

_____ Procedures for fires and other emergencies are posted.

Ex.: Phone numbers for contacting families and emergency services including poison control, fire department, and medical help.

_____ Intervention is immediate when youth are involved in unsafe play.

_____ Potentially dangerous situations are anticipated.

Ex.: Instructions for evacuation are presented so they can be understood by youth and adults; safe auto and bus travel procedures are understood.

Observation comments

Functional Area 1: Safe

Additional Comments:

Strategies for Growth:

Functional Area 2: Healthy

FUNCTIONAL AREA 2: HEALTHY

Rating scale: 1-rarely, 2-sometimes, 3-mostly

Candidate promotes good health and nutrition and provides an environment that contributes to the prevention of illness.



2.1 Sanitary indoor and outdoor environments are maintained to promote wellness and reduce the spread of disease.

_____ Surfaces and objects are cleaned and sanitized before use for food preparation.

_____ The facility has adequate ventilation and lighting, comfortable room temperature, and good sanitation.

Ex.: Windows open daily; thermostat is regulated.

Observation comments



2.2 Good hygiene, nutrition, and health habits in youth are encouraged.

_____ Correct handwashing procedures are used by Candidate and youth are encouraged to wash their hands.

Ex.: Liquid soap, running water, individual paper towels; adults supervise to teach proper procedures.

_____ A supply of sanitary pads and tampons is kept in the girls' bathroom.

_____ Candidate models habits that promote health and nutrition; youth have access to nutritious meals and snacks.

Ex.: Eating vegetables and fruits for snacks.

_____ Youth are assisted with learning ways to recognize, reduce, and cope with stress.

Ex.: Taking a deep breath, verbally describing feelings, walking/running.

Observation comments

Functional Area 2: Healthy



2.3 Policies and procedures for child abuse and neglect are in place.

_____ Applicable laws and regulations relating to reporting child abuse and neglect are adhered to, and written policies are kept.

_____ Candidate is knowledgeable of physical and behavioral signs of possible abuse or neglect and responds appropriately.

_____ Military service regulations that minimize the risk of child abuse and neglect are followed.

Ex.: Making sure all youth are supervised appropriately.

Observation comments

Functional Area 2: Healthy

Additional Comments:

Strategies for Growth:

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Functional Area 3: Out-of School Environment

FUNCTIONAL AREA 3: OUT-OF-SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Rating scale: 1-rarely, 2-sometimes, 3-mostly

Candidate uses space, relationships, materials and routines as resources for constructing an interesting, secure, and enjoyable environment that encourages play, exploration and learning.



3.1 Indoor and outdoor environments are organized to support a variety of activities.

_____ Activity spaces are appropriately located near resources.

Ex.: Art activities on washable floor, near water source.

_____ Portable items such as baskets and carts are used to arrange materials in shared space.

_____ A balance of simultaneous activity choices is offered.

Ex.: Active and quiet; indoor and outdoor; individual, small group, large group.

_____ Materials that build on interests youth develop outside the program are provided.

Ex.: Board games, tape or CDs, art supplies, and magazines.

Observation comments



3.2 A variety of age-appropriate materials are available.

_____ Uses a variety of materials.

Ex.: Balance of hard/soft, quiet/active, unlimited possibilities/one solution, messy/neat, indoors/outdoors, pretend/real.

_____ Materials reflect diversity and show no bias.

Ex.: Different kinds of music, sports equipment, reading materials.

_____ Materials allow youth to be successful and provide appropriate challenges.

Ex.: Toys and materials for different skill levels and adapted for youth with special needs if necessary.

Observation comments

Functional Area 3: Out-of School Environment



3.3 Schedule and routines meet youth's developmental and individual needs.

_____ Youth's interests are determined by observing, talking with and listening to them.

_____ Interest areas are created and rotated to reflect changing skills and interests.

Ex.: Woodworking area, math area, music area, experiment area.

_____ Older youth are supported as they create spaces designed for their use only.

Observation comments

Functional Area 3: Out-of School Environment

Additional Comments:

Strategies for Growth:

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Functional Area 4: Physical

FUNCTIONAL AREA 4: PHYSICAL

Rating scale: 1-rarely, 2-sometimes, 3-mostly

Candidate provides a variety of equipment, activities, and opportunities to promote the physical development of youth.

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4.1 A variety of activities are offered which enable youth to develop their motor skills.

_____ Youth are encouraged to use their large and fine muscles in daily routines.

Ex.: Walk, run, climb, throw, writing, sculpting, etc.

Observation comments

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4.2 A variety of activities are offered that support development of muscles, flexibility, balance or other physical skills.

_____ Different levels of activities for physical development are planned and implemented.

Ex.: Exercise, dance, kickball, climb, pedal, etc.

Observation comments

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4.3 Program activities are adapted to meet individual needs and special needs of youth with disabilities.

_____ Activities, materials, and equipment accommodate different fine motor skill levels.

Ex.: Materials adapted for youth with special needs.

_____ Youth are encouraged to keep track of their own progress rather than comparing themselves to others.

Observation comments

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4.4 Physical development is reinforced and encouraged through an appropriate environment, activities, and interaction.

_____ Youth are encouraged when they learn new skills and are assisted upon request.

Ex.: Jumping rope, swimming, skiing, ping pong.

_____ Youth are encouraged to make up and organize their own games.

Observation comments

Functional Area 4: Physical

Additional Comments:

Strategies for Growth:

Functional Area 5: Cognitive

FUNCTIONAL AREA 5: COGNITIVE

Rating scale: 1-rarely, 2-sometimes, 3-mostly

Candidate provides activities and opportunities that encourage curiosity, exploration, and problem solving appropriate to the development levels and learning styles of the youth.



5.1 A variety of interesting materials and activities are available to encourage youth to experiment and make discoveries.

_____ Youth are exposed to new information, ideas, concepts, and experiences.

Ex.: STEM activities, field trips, etc. .

_____ Youth are encouraged to the steps in the scientific method.

_____ Materials help youth learn to classify, sequence, and understand cause and effect.

Observation comments



5.2 Interactions build on youth's natural curiosity and interests.

_____ Youth are allowed plenty of time to talk to each other and to the candidate.

_____ Opportunities are provided for youth to explore natural science and the outdoor environment.

Ex.: Nature explorations, science/nature area.

Observation comments



5.3 Youth have opportunities to develop and use skills.

_____ Open ended questions are asked so youth can think of several possible ideas or solutions.

Ex.: "What will happen if...?"

_____ Evaluative questions are asked so youth learn to make judgments.

Ex.: "What would you do if...?"

_____ Youth are encouraged to make decisions and solve problems on their own, without adult assistance.

Observation comments

Functional Area 5: Cognitive

Additional Comments:

Strategies for Growth:

Functional Area 6: Communication

FUNCTIONAL AREA 6: COMMUNICATION

Rating scale: 1-rarely, 2-sometimes, 3-mostly

Candidate actively communicates with youth and provides opportunities and support for youth to understand, acquire and use verbal and nonverbal means of communicating thoughts and feelings.

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6.1 Environment is interesting and varied to encourage youth to develop and use communication skills.

_____ Environment is arranged so youth can work, play, and talk in small groups.

_____ Materials, time, and space are provided for youth to make up their own games and activities.

_____ Reading and writing materials are included in all activity spaces.

Ex.: Paper, pens, notepad.

Observation comments

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6.2 Interaction with youth encourages them to express their ideas and feelings.

_____ Candidate helps youth find words to express their ideas and feelings.

Ex.: "It's okay to feel disappointed. We all feel that way sometimes"; "That's an interesting idea you have for saving energy. How would we try to do that?"

_____ Candidate accepts youth's use of slang and popular expressions while serving as a model for standard use of language.

_____ Candidate listens attentively to what youth have to say and shows respect for their ideas.

_____ Youth are encouraged to share folklore, oral traditions, stories, songs, and books that reflect their family background and culture.

Observation comments

Functional Area 6: Communication



6.3 Opportunities are provided for youth to use their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills.

_____ Audio and video equipment are provided so youth can record their storytelling, plays, skits, and other creations.

_____ The activity areas are stocked with materials that encourage writing.

Ex.: Pens, pencil, paper, book-binding materials, computer and programs.

_____ Props, costumes, and other materials encourage language development activities such as performing arts, making up skits, and puppetry.

_____ Group meetings are used as opportunities for youth to share their ideas, raise concerns, and discuss solutions.

Observation comments

Functional Area 6: Communication

Additional Comments:

Strategies for Growth:

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Functional Area 7: Creative

FUNCTIONAL AREA 7: CREATIVE

Rating scale: 1-rarely, 2-sometimes, 3-mostly

Candidate provides opportunities that stimulate youth to play with sound, rhythm, language, materials, space, and ideas in individual ways and to express their creative abilities.



7.1 A rich and varied environment invites exploration and experimentation.

_____ Open-ended materials are provided.

Ex.: Paint, blocks, string, construction paper, blank tapes, materials for science experiments.

_____ Environment is arranged so youth can spread out, explore, and be messy.

_____ Use of coloring books, pre-packaged craft projects, and dittos is avoided.

Observation comments



7.2 Activities and experiences promote self-expression.

_____ There is sufficient storage space for projects and creations that cannot be completed in one day.

_____ Youth are invited to display or share the results of their creative work.

_____ Variety of activities are planned that introduce youth to drama, dance, music, literature, film, and other forms of visual art.

Ex.: Painting, drawing, sculpture, plays.

Observation comments



7.3 Interaction with youth encourages and respects original ideas, thoughts, and expressions.

_____ Youth are encouraged to express their ideas and feelings.

_____ Youth are encouraged to take risks, learn from their mistakes, and to try again.

_____ Youth are helped to understand that it takes hard work and practice to develop their talents.

_____ Candidate is responsive to youth's ideas for projects and activities.

Observation comments

Functional Area 7: Creative

Additional Comments:

Strategies for Growth:

Functional Area 8: Self

FUNCTIONAL AREA 8: SELF

Rating scale: 1-rarely, 2-sometimes, 3-mostly

Candidate provides physical and emotional security and helps youth to know, accept, and take pride in themselves, and to develop a sense of independence.



8.1 Positive and supportive relationships are developed with each youth.

_____ Youth are shown in many ways they are appreciated, valued, and enjoyed.

Ex.: Listening, using positive words, accepting the way they speak, showing interest in what they are doing.

_____ Youth are observed to identify what makes them unique; and adults let youth know their individuality is valued.

_____ Youth know they are cared for by being offered gentle, appropriate, physical or nonverbal contact.

Ex.: A smile, a touch, a hug.

Observation comments



8.2 Youth are helped to accept and appreciate themselves and others.

_____ Youth learn about and appreciate a variety of cultures and ethnic groups, including their own.

_____ Genuine praise and recognition are used to acknowledge youth's efforts and accomplishments.

_____ Candidate models recognition of personal efforts and accomplishments through self-praise.

Ex.: "I am so proud of myself for completing this crossword puzzle. It took a week, but I finally did it."

Observation comments

Functional Area 8: Self



8.3 Youth are provided with opportunities to feel successful and competent.

_____ Competitive sports and games are offered that help youth learn to value fairness, cooperation, and personal growth.

Ex.: Softball, soccer, tug of war.

_____ A wide variety of materials, equipment, and activities are provided to meet a wide range of abilities.

_____ Youth have opportunities to develop leadership skills.

_____ Youth's interests are identified through observation, surveys, and conversation. The information is used to plan activities and provide materials.

Observation comments

Functional Area 8: Self

Additional Comments:

Strategies for Growth:

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Functional Area 9: Social

FUNCTIONAL AREA 9: SOCIAL

Rating scale: 1-rarely, 2-sometimes, 3-mostly

Candidate helps each youth feel accepted in the group, helps youth learn to communicate and get along with others, and encourages feelings of empathy and mutual respect among youth and adults.

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9.1 Youth are encouraged to develop friendships and enjoy being with their peers.

_____ Youth who have difficulty being accepted by their peers are observed and assisted.

_____ Opportunities are provided for youth to belong to groups.

_____ Enough time is provided for self-selected activities so youth can decide with whom they want to be.

Observation comments

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9.2 Youth are helped to understand and respect the feelings of others.

_____ Youth are encouraged to help one another.

_____ Books are provided that help youth deal with their feelings about friendship, conflicts, ethnic diversity, and similar topics.

_____ Youth are encouraged to value what makes each person a unique individual.

Observation comments

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9.3 Environment and experiences help youth develop social skills.

Ex.: Taking turns, no hitting or pushing.

_____ Opportunities are offered for youth to be involved in the community.

Ex.: Visiting a local hospital, helping with volunteer organization, raising money for charity.

Observation comments

Functional Area 9: Social

Additional Comments:

Strategies for Growth:

Functional Area 10: Guidance

FUNCTIONAL AREA 10: GUIDANCE

Rating scale: 1-rarely, 2-sometimes, 3-mostly

Candidate provides a supportive environment in which youth can begin to learn and practice appropriate and acceptable behaviors as individuals and as a group.

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10.1 Environment encourages self-discipline.

- _____ Youth are involved in setting limits and making rules.
- _____ Daily schedule allows youth to choose their own activities.
- _____ Youth are allowed to experience the consequences of their behavior.

Ex.: "Since you continued to throw paper on the floor even after I spoke to you about it, you will have to pick it up."

Observation comments

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10.2 Positive methods are used to guide individual youth.

- _____ Youth's misbehavior is discussed in private conversations.
- _____ Candidate listens and accepts youth's feelings of anger while helping them understand the consequences of expressing those feelings inappropriately.
- _____ Genuine, positive praise is used when youth use appropriate behavior.

Observation comments

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10.3 Youth are helped to understand and to express their feelings in acceptable ways.

- _____ Appropriate ways to express negative feelings are modeled.
Ex.: Writing, painting, talking about them.
- _____ Creative outlets are provided for expressing strong feelings.
- _____ Families work with candidate to help youth with a challenging behavior express their feelings in acceptable ways.
- _____ Candidate talks to youth about their day at school, their friends, their concerns, and their feelings.

Observation comments

Functional Area 10: Guidance

Additional Comments:

Strategies for Growth:

Functional Area 11: Families

FUNCTIONAL AREA 11: FAMILIES

Rating scale: 1-rarely, 2-sometimes, 3-mostly

Candidate maintains an open, friendly, and cooperative relationship with each youth's family; encourages involvement in the program; supports the child's relationship with her or his family.

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11.1 Candidate frequently communicates with families to exchange information about their youth at home and at the program.

_____ A variety of communication strategies are used to inform families about the program.

Ex.: Newsletters, phone calls, notes, meetings.

_____ Candidate shares interesting, positive information about youth with families.

Observation comments

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11.2 There are a variety of ways for families to participate in their youth's life at the program.

_____ Families are involved often in making decisions about their youth's activities at the program.

_____ Families are encouraged to visit the program at any time.

_____ Candidate and families share suggestions to coordinate program and home experiences.

Observation comments

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11.3 Support to families is provided.

_____ Orientation is provided for new families so they can get to know staff and learn what youth do each day.

_____ Families' needs and interests are surveyed to provide appropriate workshops and resources.

_____ Additional support is offered when families are under stress.

Ex.: Referrals to support groups.

Observation comments

Functional Area 11: Families

Additional Comments:

Strategies for Growth:

Functional Area 12: Program Management

FUNCTIONAL AREA 12: PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Rating scale: 1-rarely, 2-sometimes, 3-mostly

Candidate is a manager who uses all available resources to ensure an effective operation. The Candidate is a competent organizer, planner, recordkeeper, communicator, and a cooperative coworker.

This Functional Area is not directly observable in the daily program routine. Checkmarks next to indicators or comments may be made based upon interviewing the candidate or thorough knowledge of the candidate's work from sources other than observation. Do not rate the candidate; record three comments in this Functional Area.

Participate in program observations and assessments.

- _____ Maintains up-to-date records on youth's growth, health, interests, behavior, and progress.
- _____ Asks families for information about their youth's interests, behavior, and progress.
- _____ Uses a broad collection of effective teaching/learning strategies, tools, and accommodations.
- _____ Appreciates and uses strength of other team members.
- _____ Involves youth in planning and evaluating the program.
- _____ Reviews program policies before starting a new task.
- _____ Participates in regular staff meetings to plan and evaluate the program.

Functional Area 12: Program Management

Additional Comments:

Strategies for Growth:

Functional Area 13: Professionalism

FUNCTIONAL AREA 13: PROFESSIONALISM

Rating scale: 1-rarely, 2-sometimes, 3-mostly

Candidate makes decisions based on knowledge of youth development theories and practices, promotes quality youth programming, and takes advantage of opportunities to improve competence, both for personal and professional growth and for the benefit of youth and families.

_____ Continues to gain knowledge of physical, cognitive, language, emotional, and social development as a basis for planning program goals.

_____ Continually assesses own performance and seeks opportunities to improve skills.

_____ Keeps all personal information about youth and families confidential.

_____ Works with other professionals and families to develop effective strategies to communicate to decision makers the needs of youth and families.

_____ Keeps up-to-date on program and legal reporting requirements for staff members and seeks information on child abuse and neglect.

_____ Takes opportunities for professional and personal development by joining appropriate professional organizations, attending meetings/workshops/courses, and conferences.

_____ Recognizes that fatigue, low morale, and lack of work satisfaction decreases effectiveness and finds ways to meet her or his needs and maintain energy and enthusiasm.

Functional Area 13: Professionalism

Additional Comments:

Strategies for Growth:
