Event Recording

In event recoding, the number of times that a target behavior occurs is recorded in contrast to time sampling and interval recording. Event recording is appropriate as the method of observation for behaviors that occur either very seldom or very often . An example of an appropriate behavior to be recorded might be temper tantrums.

Event recording requires the observer to note exactly when a behavior starts and stops so that each "event" can be recorded as a single incidence of the behavior. This data is transformed to rate data at the end of the observation period by dividing the number of times the behavior occurred by the total number of minutes (or hours) in the observation period. The resulting number reflects the rate at which the target behavior occurred per minute (or hour).

In the case of temper tantrum data, for example, the teacher might note that Sam has five temper tantrums in the course of a three-hour preschool class. Dividing the five tantrums by the three hours in the observation period indicates that Sam had 1.67 tantrums per hour. Another way to report the data would be to say that Sam had a tantrum approximately once every 36 minutes (180 minutes divided by five tantrums). However, caution should be exercised in reporting this data since the rate data can suggest a regularity in behavior that may not exist (e.g. if the child has five tantrums within the first hour of class, the rate would still be 1.67 tantrums per hour).

Event Recording Form

Child's Name _____ Date _____ Grade _____

Teacher _____ # of Students in Class _____ # of Males _____

# of Females _____ Observer _____ Title _____

Setting _____ Time _____

Target Behavior: (Defined so that it is clear when a behavior episode begins and ends).

How many times did the behavior occur (count each entire episode as one time)?

Divide the number of episodes by the total time observed (minutes if the behavior occurs very often; hours if the behavior occurs rarely).

The target behavior occurred at the rate of _____ episodes per _____ (time/unit).

Target Behavior: (Defined so that it is clear when a behavior episode begins and ends).

How many times did the behavior occur (count each entire episode as one time)?

Divide the number of episodes by the total time observed (minutes if the behavior occurs very often; hours if the behavior occurs rarely). The target behavior occurred at the rate of
_____ episodes per _____ (time/unit).