

- Advisors should not interfere with classroom activities in any way. Please be as unobtrusive as possible.
- Advisors should position themselves around the perimeter of the room. You may move around the perimeter to get a better view during the observation. Please stay with the group, indoors or outdoors.
- You may sit on a chair or the floor, so children are not intimidated by your height. Please do not sit on other furniture, such as shelves, tables, the children's chairs near activity areas, or play equipment.
- Please refrain from talking with the candidate or other staff while you are observing. You are in the classroom to observe your candidate, not to rate the program or evaluate other staff performance. Take notes on a pad to help in scoring and forming questions that need to be asked of your candidate after the observation.
- Your candidate and other staff will be involved with the children during your observation. Rather than interrupt their work, schedule a feedback time away from children when you can share your suggestions and ask your questions.
- You may acknowledge children if they approach you, but do not otherwise take part in classroom activities. You can tell curious children that you are watching them play today, or that you have to finish your work.
- Please move if you are in the way of teachers or children.
- Do not look through drawers, cupboards, or other closed spaces without the permission of the teacher/provider or program director. You may ask your candidate about the contents of these spaces during your feedback session. Of course, you may look at materials on open shelves and in storage bins.
- Please do not leave tote bags or purses within the reach of children. Carry all personal possessions with you unless you are given a safe place to store them while observing.
- Try to keep a neutral facial expression so that children and/or staff are neither drawn to you nor concerned about your response to them.
- Everything you see or hear is confidential. Do not repeat anything about staff, children, or the facility that could be traced back to your observation. NOTE: The only exception to this is in the event that you observe a reportable violation or dangerous condition. As a CDA advisor, you are a mandated reporter.

Based on materials from the National Training Institute for Child Care Health Consultants

### Some DON'Ts and DO's of CDA Advising

The following lists are included as reminders of *WHAT TO DO* and *WHAT NOT TO DO* as a CDA advisor. It's hoped that you will find the list both helpful and amusing.

#### WHAT NOT TO DO:

- Know it all. Use jargon and flaunt your professional status or knowledge.
- Learn NOTHING about your candidate or the candidate's field site.
- Be definite, dogmatic, and unyielding.
- Sulk when your advice is not taken.
- Avoid giving constructive feedback.
- Conspire to cause unwanted change or upheaval in the program.
- Take on the program as your personal "fix it" mission.
- Treat your candidate as a therapy patient.
- Don't take time to establish rapport and trust with your candidate.
- Expect immediate results and get mad when you don't see change.
- Talk about one person to another, or ask questions that do not pertain to your role as a CDA advisor.
- Criticize the program to insiders and outsiders.
- Be unreliable, disorganized, unresponsive, or rushed.
- Spend your time talking about your own personal life, problems, stresses.
- Have no plan for sharing information or bringing your relationship to closure.

#### WHAT TO DO:

- Have materials and thoughts organized before your first meeting with candidate.
- Read ALL material carefully and call the CCR&R regional office with questions.
- Develop a list of questions that will help you understand the candidate's knowledge.
- Schedule at least three visits with the candidate at times convenient to you both.
- Give yourself plenty of time to complete the observations.
- Arrive on time for your visits and give the candidate your full attention.
- Introduce yourself to the program director, where applicable, and explain that you are there to watch the candidate only.
- Don't be afraid to say you don't know something.
- Don't get sucked in to program politics or staff issues.
- Use feedback to give positive, as well as negative, comments and suggestions.
- Don't try to fix it if it ain't broke—it may simply be a different way of doing something.
- If your candidate asks for advice on a specific child, first ask what the candidate has already observed. Lead the teacher to new ideas, rather than providing all the answers. This helps the candidate grow in his/her knowledge and encourages ownership of the solution.

## **ND CCR&R Child Care Resource & Referral**

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- Be sensitive to your candidate's feelings required your observation and feedback. Many candidates are extremely nervous, perhaps even frightened, by the observation process and may react with shyness, obvious discomfort, or anger. Work hard to put your candidate at ease and make the experience a positive opportunity for growth.

(Adapted from Conoley & Conoley, 1992; Dettmyer, Thurston, & Dyck, 1993; Schulte & Wesley, 1992)

*Leading the Way for Child Care in North Dakota*

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Eastern North Dakota 800-941-7003 or 218-299-7026 ~ Western North Dakota 888-223-1510 or 701-223-1510

[www.ndchildcare.org](http://www.ndchildcare.org)