

TIP SHEET for Implementation of the Playground Stencil Assessment

The following tips can help you to better plan, implement, and collect and organize your data for the Assessment. They assume that you have already established a relationship with at least one contact at a preschool/school site (referred to generally as ‘school’ below).

THE PLAYGROUND STENCIL ASSESSMENT CONSISTS OF TWO PARTS:

- 1) the PRE and POST Playground Scan Observation
- 2) the PRE and POST Teacher Survey (aka, “Questions for Teaching Staff Observing Students”)

PLANNING STAGE TIPS

COMMUNICATION AND SCHEDULING

- Explain the purpose of the Playground Stencil Assessment and its two components*

DO NOT assume that your school contact or teachers/administrators who may be participating or assisting you are aware of the assessment or what you are trying to accomplish.

- Establish the best means of communication*

Since you will be both observing the playground, as well as interviewing with teachers, it is important to ensure that everyone involved in the assessment is aware of the expectations, schedule, logistics, etc. Discuss with your school contact what the best means of communicating information will be – email, calls, etc. – as well as whether communication will be distributed via the contact or directly from you. This will be important in sending reminders, as well.

- Establish a direct line of communication with teachers*

As early as possible in the process, work with your school contact to try to establish a direct line of communication with the teachers who you will potentially survey. Attempt to schedule the Teacher Survey as early as possible – even if you are only to obtain a general idea of days and times that will work, this will help you to plan.

Contacting the teachers directly, rather than through your school contact, is preferred so that you ensure your information is accurately communicated and that they have the opportunity to ask any questions. See tips under “*Scheduling the Teacher Surveys*” for advice on which teachers to survey.

- Scheduling the Playground Scan Observations*

- Schedule on ‘normal’ school days*

Confirm with your school contact that the days on which you plan to visit the school for both the PRE and POST observations do not fall on a school holiday, shortened day, field trip, or other special occasion (e.g., a “special recess activity”) that may skew your results.

If you arrive at the school and there are extreme weather conditions or an unforeseen activity/event is underway, consider rescheduling the observation for another day.

- Schedule according to the UC Calfresh recommended timeline*

- Administer the PRE assessment 1-2 weeks before you paint the playground stencils

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Administer the POST assessment at least 2 weeks following, but within two months of, the unveiling of the painted stencils at the site.

Schedule according to your target population

Depending on the classes/grades that your intervention is targeting, you may need to conduct more than one observation in a day. The priority for observations should be to observe the youth for whom you are targeting. If there is time, you may want to schedule additional observations to capture multiple classes for the age/grade levels targeted.

E.g., A program that is targeting a playground used by 1st and 2nd graders in School ABC with teacher training on the *Stencil Art Activities - A Guide for Grown-Ups* and CATCH, as well as providing the *How to Use CATCH PE K-2nd Card Activities with Playground Stencils* resource should plan to observe the playground when those grades have access to the playground.

Schedule 2-3 observation time periods at the school

Conduct 2-3 observations during the day (am/pm outside play times, recess, lunch, etc.), capturing all targeted student ages/grades (see above). If outside breaks/recess are split by age/grade, ensure that you schedule your observations so that you are observing the targeted age/grade at their designated outside play time/recess. For consistency in recording, the same staff person(s) should complete the observations at PRE and POST.

Schedule your observations on the same day

If you plan to observe more than one class and/or outside breaks (am/pm outside play times, recess, lunch, etc.), try to schedule the observations on the same day PRE and POST. If this is not possible, come back on the next available day in which the conditions would be most similar.

Send reminders

Send reminders to your school contact (and anyone else who will be involved) both a week and a day prior to your scheduled observation.

Scheduling the Teacher Surveys

Work with the teachers' schedules, prepare for changes

As previously stated, it is important to communicate with the teachers as early in the process as possible to coordinate schedules and establish a relationship. The ideal time to schedule the Teacher Survey would be on the observation day. However, you should be flexible within the teachers' schedules.

Schedule according to the UC Calfresh recommended timeline

Administer the PRE assessment 1-2 weeks before you paint the playground stencils

Administer the POST assessment at least 2 weeks following, but within two months of, the unveiling of the painted stencils at the site.

Survey according to your target population

Depending on the classes/grades that your intervention is targeting, you will want to conduct the Teacher Survey accordingly. If you are unsure of which teachers to target because you have

not identified specific classes or grades to target, you could discuss your options with your school contact and/or the principal. It is also important to consider your resources in choosing how many teachers you will be able to train in using playground stencils and/or CATCH.

Survey the teachers who will be on the playground during your observation

Survey as many teaching staff as possible of those observing students on the playground. If recess is split by grade, ensure that you survey teachers from as many different targeted classes/grades as possible. Collect surveys from the SAME teaching staff at PRE and POST.

Send reminders

Send reminders to the teachers with whom you will conduct the survey, as well your school contact, both a week and a day prior to your scheduled observation.

MATERIAL PREPARATIONS

Verify your versions of the assessment tools

Before you print any surveys for the school visit, ensure that you have the most recent version of the assessment tools. If you are unsure, please contact Angie Keihner by phone (530-752-8813) or email (akeihner@ucdavis.edu) at the UC CalFresh State Office (UC CalFresh SO).

Print the number of copies you need ahead of time, label them as relevant, and have extras on-hand

Print enough copies for the number of Playground Observations you plan to do during the day and enough copies of the Teacher Survey for the number of teachers you plan to survey. You should also plan to have a few extra copies on-hand.

You can save time the day of your assessment by completing the observation information at the top of the Assessment form, as well as labeling the teacher surveys with ID codes that will allow you to match the PRE and POST data.

IMPLEMENTATION STAGE TIPS

PLAYGROUND SCAN – the following are Playground Scan-specific tips for questions that needed further clarification beyond what is found on the scan itself.

- *Question 1* - The **total** students count should include all students on the playground, regardless of their activity.
- *Question 2a* - The count for students **actively** playing in the **play space** should include all students who are active, regardless of where on the playground that they are active.
- *Question 2b* - The count for students **actively** playing on the **playground stencils** count should **ONLY** include students who are in the area where the stencils will be painted (**PRE**) or those active on the stencils (**POST**).
- *Question 3* - The count of **sedentary** students should include all students on the playground who are sedentary (i.e., not active), regardless of where on the playground that they are.

- *Question 7* - Check the types of stencils that are visible to you on the playground. If you are unsure if a stencil is from a SNAP-Ed provided template or an “other” stencil that the school created itself, verify your observations with the school contact.
- *Additional Observations* - Write down as many notes on the activities that you see happening as possible. These additional observations can provide contextual information that could explain engagement in the stencils. For example, one observer completing an Assessment in the past noted the school had an “arts and crafts” area on the playground, which provided a possible explanation for lower-than-expected engagement with the stencils and more sedentary behavior.

BEFORE LEAVING THE SCHOOL AND FOLLOW-UP

Thank the teachers and school contact before you leave and via email after your visit

After your teacher interviews and before you leave the school, be sure to express your appreciation for their help. This is a great time to:

- Address any concerns or questions that they may have
- Address any concerns or questions that you, yourself, may have
- Confirm your return date/time, if this is your PRE assessment visit
- Express your appreciation for their time and help, as well as to emphasize the role that this assessment will play in improving their school
- Follow-up with an email soon after your visit to reiterate the above (especially as you may not have had the time or opportunity to do so in person) and to address follow-up items

SURVEY COMPLETION STAGE TIPS

DATA INTEGRITY

Not down notes immediately following your visit

Take some time immediately after the Playground Observations and Teacher Surveys to write down any contextual notes, feedback, or other observations you want to remember. You may forget some of your thoughts as time passes.

Debrief following your visit

Soon after your school visit, schedule a short debriefing session with your staff (or discuss on the way back from your visit!) – talk about what things went well and what could be improved, as well as feedback received from the school staff. Please share any feedback that may help improve the Assessment or Tip Sheet with Angie Keihner at the UC CalFresh SO by email (akeihner@ucdavis.edu).

File and scan your surveys as soon as possible

Once you return to the office, file the surveys in a safe place and scan copies to your computer so that you have back-up copies available, should you need it. Please also send your scanned PRE/POST playground stencil assessments to Angie Keihner (akeihner@ucdavis.edu). The UC CalFresh SO will review the data submitted and follow-up with any questions.