

## Play Matrix Observation

Watch your chosen child during a discovery, exploration or free choice time or over a series of a few days. As (s)he moves about, briefly and objectively describe the play you observe. Using this form you will place your brief description into a box noting both the cognitive and social category of the play. **See explanation of categories below.** Record multiple items (you may have multiples in one box with others left blank) throughout this period of time. What insight does this observation provide?

	Functional	Symbolic/Constructive	Symbolic/Dramatic	Games with Rules
Solitary				
Parallel				
Associative				
Cooperative				

Insight gained from this observation: This includes both reflection on what you have seen (age and stage of development, typical behaviors and other prior knowledge about the child, environmental context (both classroom and home), noticeable patterns as well as any questions you may have after this observation) as well as actions to explore (interactions (peer-to-peer and/or adult-to-child), environmental changes, experiences and/or provocations for the child).

Parten's Social Stages of Play	Piaget's Cognitive Stages of Play	Smilansky's Stages Play
<p><u>Solitary Play</u></p> <p>Children play alone with toys; if other children are nearby, they go un-noticed.</p>	<p><u>Practice Play</u></p> <p>Children explore the sensory qualities of objects and practice motor skills.</p>	<p><u>Functional Play</u></p> <p>Children engage in sensory and motor exploration of toys, materials, and people in order to learn about them.</p>
<p><u>Parallel Play</u></p> <p>Children play side-by-side with little interaction, engaged with their own toys. Aware of and pleased by the company of others.</p>	<p><u>Symbolic Play</u></p> <p>Children use objects, actions, and roles to represent reality and familiar or imagined situations.</p>	<p><u>Constructive Play</u></p> <p>Children manipulate objects in order to create something.</p>
<p><u>Associative Play</u></p> <p>Pairs and groups of children play together and share materials but cooperation and negotiation is rare.</p>		<p><u>Dramatic Play</u></p> <p>Children pretend to be other than what they are and use actions, objects, or words to represent things or situations.</p>
<p><u>Cooperative Play</u></p> <p>Groups of children engage in sustained play episodes in which they plan, negotiate, and share responsibility &amp; leadership.</p>		
	<p><u>Games with Rules</u></p> <p>In solitary or group play children recognize and follow rules that conform to the expectations and goals of the game.</p>	<p><u>Games with Rules</u></p> <p>Children behave according to rules in order to sustain play.</p>

Adapted from Feeney, Maravcik & Nolte, 2013.