Using Observation Tools to Assess HEAL Strategies

Center for Community Health and Evaluation
Part of Group Health Research Institute


Center for Community Health and Evaluation

Part of a larger evaluation effort

- Clark County, WA
- Portland, OR
- Prince Georges County, MD
- Atlanta, GA
- LiveWell Colorado sites statewide
- Community Health Initiative sites
- Joint initiatives with other funders
How are we telling the story?

1. Tracking the process
   • Documentation of Community Change (DOCC) spreadsheet
2. Measuring change in the population
   • Adult Survey
   • Youth Survey
   • KP Member Data
   • Fitness Gram Data
3. Capturing impact from a community perspective
   • Photovoice
4. Measuring strategy specific changes
   • Specific to sites
   • Ex: Consumer surveys, park observations, teacher surveys, clinic tracking forms, etc.

Examples of Engaging Residents/Youth in Evaluation

HEAL Examples:
✓ Corner store conversion (Long Beach)
✓ Healthy Pick Labeling Program (Whittier)
✓ Active Recess (Antelope Valley)

Other opportunities:
✓ During and after school physical activity
✓ Park improvements/playground installations

What is Observation?

Observation is the collection of information using your senses. By observing, you can document activities, behavior, and physical aspects of a situation without relying on peoples' willingness or ability to respond accurately to questions.
Who will be doing the observation?

You are! We will train you today!

How do we do Observation?

Two types of tools for Observation:
- Observing physical activity in Parks/trails
- Observing physical activity in schools (or after school) playground

Two types of areas for Observation:
- Low use areas
- High Use areas

Part I
Observing Physical Activity in Parks & Trails

How do we do Observation?

CCHE Built Environment Usage Assessment Tool

CCHE has adapted this tool for use in Healthy Eating Active Living communities. Tool is designed to collect information about:

- Users’ characteristics (e.g., age)
- Users’ physical activity level (e.g., Sedentary, vigorous)
- Areas where activities take place and the condition of the areas (e.g., accessibility, usability, etc.)


Selecting time of Observation

Day of Observation

- Select a day and time for observation when there are no special events in the park or bad weather.
- Select two days that you think most activity will occur (usually one weekday and one weekend day)
- Ideally, also choose two “off peak” two hour time slots (again one weekday and one weekend if possible)
Selecting time of Observation

- **Low use areas**: 2 hour time period for observation
- **High use areas**: Several 5 minute scans. Divide up the area into sections (Scan area) Areas where fast moving targets are present (like kids playing basketball) requires smaller scan areas.
- Size of target area should be appropriate to being able to complete a scan and record information within 5 minutes

Conducting the Scan

**High use area**

- Always scan from left to right
- Observe each person in the area once per scan
- Scan first for sedentary, then for moderate, then for vigorous
- If someone enters after you pass, don’t count them
- If someone enters before you scan, count them
- If someone exits before you scan, don’t count them
- If someone exits after you count, keep them in
- Keep in mind if someone changes behavior between scans they could be counted twice or not at all

Conducting the Scan

**Activity Level**

Activity level (Vigorous, Moderate, Sedentary)

**Sedentary** – Sitting, standing, hanging out talking, etc.

**Moderate** – Walking, slow moving activities

**Vigorous** – Running, climbing, basketball

Considerations:

Practice with other observers to ensure people are coding similarly - for example how you differentiate between moderate and vigorous activity level.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Physical Activity</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vigorous</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Vigorous Examples" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Moderate Examples" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sedentary</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Sedentary Examples" /></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Conducting the Scan
High use area

Let’s hear some real life examples....

What to Bring for Observation

• Observation sheets, instructions, pens, clipboard
• ID to identify you as part of HEAL effort
• Two observers needed (for safety concerns or high use area)
• Dress appropriate for weather.

CCHE Built Environment Observation Form
Instructions for Collecting Information

- For each person indicate in one row:
  - **Type of activity** (walk, Bike, Run, Skate, Climb, etc.)
  - **Activity level** (Vigorous, Moderate, Sedentary)
- Also consider other potential observations
  - **Age group** (Child, Adult, Senior)
  - **Gender**
  - **Other**?

Intercept Survey

Intercept Survey helps you learn additional information about people who use the park or trail.

If you are interested please consult CCHE staff to help you develop your questions and add to the survey.

Some example:

- How far do you live from the park? **Probe for number of miles** (e.g. 1/4 of a mile, etc.)
- How much **more physical activity** are you getting because of this park/trail? **Probe for number of minutes per day or per week**. **Probe for whether this number is all year round or part of the year**, etc.
- How this park has impacted you/your community?
Intercept Survey

- Considerations for an intercept survey
- If there are too many people to survey you can randomly sample them (i.e., every second person).
- Be consistent about your sampling method (i.e., every second person for the entire observation time.)
- Identify yourself and tell them the purpose for the questions
- Only survey adults and teens (do not survey children under 13)
- Make people feel comfortable – survey is voluntary and anonymous. Takes couple minutes.

Repeating Observation Follow-up

Day of Observation

- Select similar observation days and time to baseline. For example if the first time you selected a Thursday morning from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., the follow-up day and time should be the same.
- Time of year should also be approximately the same, especially in areas where weather in a big predictor of usage.
- Repeat Intercept Survey

Part II
Observing Physical Activity in School & After School

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Observing Physical Activity in School/ After school

This tool is adapted by CCHE for use in Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) communities.

Form is designed to collect information about:

• Users' characteristics (e.g., age, gender)
• Users' physical activity level (e.g., Sedentary, vigorous)


Selecting time of Observation

Day of Observation

• Select a “normal” day with no field trip when most kids are present.
• Select a day with decent weather (i.e., no pouring rain or snow storm)
• If in a school:
  • Select grades that will be impacted by the strategy.
• Plan to conduct SOPLAY during each recess period scheduled throughout the day.
• Plan to capture students from all grades equally
Selecting Target Areas for Observation

- Areas where fast moving targets (i.e., playing basketball) are present require smaller scan areas compared to areas where kids are more stationary or engaged in jump rope where space is confined.
- Size of target area should be appropriate to being able to complete a scan and record information within 5 minutes.
- Start observation after children have settled into their activities once recess starts.
- May need more than one person to conduct the scan if you have several target areas.

What to Bring for Observation

- Observation sheets, instructions, pens, clipboard
- Wristwatch
- Dress appropriate for whether.

Preparing for Conducting the Scan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSESSOR COMPLETE THIS SECTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessor Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location</td>
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<td>Temperature</td>
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<td>Reached</td>
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<td>Recess start</td>
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<td>End of recess</td>
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<td>Recess length recorded</td>
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SOPLAY Observation Form

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Scan Area</th>
<th>Start Time</th>
<th>Ends</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Accessible</th>
<th>Usable</th>
<th>Supervised</th>
<th>Organized</th>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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Conducting the Scan

- Fill out your name, date, location, temperature, weather
- Accessible (e.g., not locked, etc.)
- Usable for physical activity (e.g., not excessively wet, etc.)
- Supervised by staff (e.g., teacher, YMCA volunteer, etc.)
- Organized PA (e.g., scheduled and personnel present)
- Equipment provided by school or agency

Collect Additional Information

- Ask teachers, principal, coordinator:
  - How many days per week area is used by a child?
  - How many months per year the area is typically used?
  - How many students are enrolled?
Conducting the Scan
High use area

Let’s hear some real life examples....

Please complete survey through link in chat box.

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