

Positive Environment Checklist

The Positive Environment Checklist (PEC) is designed for use in evaluating whether the settings in which persons with severe disabilities live, work, and go to school are structured in a manner that promotes and maintains positive, adaptive behaviors. The PEC looks at whether settings provide the conditions that support positive behaviors and do not present conditions that make negative behaviors more likely. It also addresses several concerns related to the ways in which program staff support and interact with the people with disabilities in the setting.

The checklist should be used as part of a proactive, preventive approach to addressing problem behaviors. Positive environments will help to minimize the occurrence of problem behaviors. The checklist can be used as a general tool to provide an overall assessment of a setting. Also, when a particular individual is targeted, it can be used as part of a comprehensive analysis of an existing problem behavior(s) to determine whether environmental conditions are contributing to the problem.

The Positive Environment Checklist focuses on the physical, social, and programmatic structure of the environment. Checklist questions are divided into 5 sections: (1) Physical Setting, (2) Social Setting, (3) Activities and Instruction, (4) Scheduling and Predictability, and (5) Communication. Responses to questions in each area should be based on direct observation of the environment, on review of written program documents and records, or on responses obtained from questioning individuals involved in supporting the focus person. Three response options are provided for each question: **YES**, **NO**, and **UNCLEAR**. The term “support provider” applies to family members, educators, and others who provide support and services in the setting. The term “people” refers to the people with disabilities who live, work, or attend school on the setting.

Scoring the completed Positive Environment Checklist is simply a matter of determining which questions received a **YES** response and which received **NO** or **UNCLEAR** responses. **NO** responses indicate areas or issues that should be addressed to create a more positive environment. **UNCLEAR** responses indicate the need for further analysis, perhaps by extended observation or by questioning a larger number of support providers.

Adapted from: Albin, R., & O’Neil, R. (1994). Proactive behavior support: Structuring and assessing environments. Unpublished manuscript available from the Specialized Training Project, University of Oregon.

SECTION 1: Physical Setting

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|---|-----|----|---------|
| 1. Is the physical setting clean, well lighted, and odor free? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 2. Is temperature regulation in the setting adequate? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 3. Is the physical setting visually pleasant and appealing? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 4. Does the arrangement of the setting promote easy access for all individuals within the setting? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 5. Is the setting arranged in a manner that facilitates needed support and supervision? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 6. Does the setting contain or provide interesting, age-appropriate items and materials for people to use? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 7. Is the setting located and structured in a manner that promotes and facilitates physical integration into the “regular” community? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |

SECTION 2: Social Setting

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|--|-----|----|---------|
| 1. Is the number of people in this setting appropriate for its physical size and purpose? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 2. Are the people who share this setting compatible in terms of age, gender, and support needs? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 3. Do the people who share this setting get along with each other? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 4. Is the support provider ratio in this setting adequate to meet the support needs of all of the people here at all times? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 5. Do support providers actively work to develop and maintain a positive rapport and relationship with the people here? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 6. Do support providers promote and facilitate opportunities for social integration with people who are not paid to provide service? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |

SECTION 3: Activities and Instruction

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|--|-----|----|---------|
| 1. Do people in this setting regularly participate (whether independent, supported, or partial participation) in activities and tasks that are useful and meaningful to their daily lives? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 2. Do people participate in a variety of different activities? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 3. Do people participate in a variety of different activities that occur in regular community settings outside of the home, school, workplace? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 4. Do people in this setting receive instruction on activities and skills that are useful and meaningful to their daily lives? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 5. Is the instruction that people receive individualized to meet specific learner needs? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 6. Are people's personal preferences taken into account when determining the activities and tasks in which they participate and receive training? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |

SECTION 4: Scheduling and Predictability

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| 1. Is there a system or strategy used to identify what people in this setting should be doing and when? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 2. Is there a means to determine whether things that should be occurring actually do occur? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 3. Do people in this setting have a way of knowing or predicting what they will be doing and when? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 4. Do support providers prepare people in this setting in advance for changes in typical schedules or routines? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 5. Do people in this setting have opportunities to exercise choice in terms of what they will do, when, with whom, and what rewards they will receive? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |

SECTION 5: Communication

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| 1. Do people in this setting have acceptable means to communicate basic messages (e.g., requests, comments, rejections) to support providers or others in the setting? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 2. Do support providers promote and reward communication? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 3. Are effective, efficient communication strategies being used by or taught to the people in this setting? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 4. Are support providers familiar with the receptive language levels and skills of the people in this setting? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |
| 5. Do support providers have acceptable means to communicate basic messages to the people in this setting? | YES | NO | UNCLEAR |

