

# Autism Initiative: Training Series

## ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Chapter 4.1: Monitoring and Evaluating

#### Part 1: Review of Concepts

- *Behavior* is what people say and do. It can be observed, described and recorded.
- An *operational definition* is a description of a behavior that breaks it down into clear, objective, and measurable terms.
- *Interobserver agreement* is the measure of reliability between data collected by two or more independent observers. It provides a measure of how well two or more observers agree on the occurrence of a behavior and can be affected by how clear the operational definition of the behavior is.

#### Part 2: Discussion Questions for Staff

1. *Why is it important to operationally define behavior?*
  - **Answer:** There is not a “correct” answer for this question. Encourage discussion among staff about their thoughts.
2. *How can operationally defining behavior help with communication among staff?*
  - **Answer:** There is not a “correct” answer for this question. Encourage discussion among staff about their thoughts.
3. *With regards to evaluating progress, why is it important to establish operational definitions before beginning data collection?*
  - **Answer:** There is not a “correct” answer for this question. Encourage discussion among staff about their thoughts.
4. *How do operational definitions and interobserver agreement relate to one another?*
  - **Answer:** When interobserver agreement is high, it suggests that the definition of the target behavior is clear and that the two observers are recording data in the same way.

#### Part 3: Individual and Group Activity

Have staff complete the worksheet on the following page independently. Then as a group compare their responses and discuss them in relation to writing operational definitions and communicating about behavior.

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## Forming Operational Definitions

Write an operational definition for each of the behaviors underlined in the space provided.

1. Each time Jamie raises her hand Mr. Jones calls on her.

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2. Mike's mother told him when the floor was clean, she would give him his allowance.

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3. After you sneeze you should clean your hands.

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