



## Comfortable Cafeteria Environmental Analysis

**Instructions:** Plan a date and time to observe a lunch period for a particular grade(s). If possible, let the supervisors know ahead of time that you'll be observing to see how the students on your caseload are participating. During the observation, try to be an inconspicuous observer. Aim to 'fit in' by looking friendly, walking around casually and saying 'hi' to students and showing an interest. Informally ask students what they like or don't like about lunch.

Use this form to guide your observations of lunch from entering to exiting the cafeteria. Your focus will be on the physical, social and emotional, and sensory aspects of the environment. Note any concerns and/or positive qualities. Provide comments and suggestions in the right hand column.

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade level: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Environmental Aspects	Concerns or challenges	Positive qualities or strengths	Describe observations. Suggestions
<p><b>Describe Social Environment:</b>  <i>Student interactions</i> →                      Positive? Relaxed?                      Friendly? Stressed?                      Negative? Do they appear to be enjoying themselves?</p>			
<p><i>Mealtime conversations &amp; friendships.</i> Are certain students excluded?                      Loners? Are students with disabilities integrated? Do they have meaningful conversations?</p>			
<p><i>Supervisor interactions</i> →                      Do supervisors interact in positive ways with students? Greet them by name? Smile? Handle conflict well? Walk around the room?</p>			
<p><b>Behaviors/Routines</b>                      Have students been informed of the rules and do they follow them?                      Note any problematic behaviors. What factors seem to promote behavioral challenges?</p>			



Environmental Aspects	Concerns or challenges	Positive qualities or strengths	Describe observations. Suggestions
<b>Sensory Factors</b>			
<u>Auditory</u> Describe overall noise level: loud, average, quiet			
Are students able to have conversations at their tables using an indoor voice? Do some students seem irritated by the noise?			
What method is used to control noise? How do supervisors modify volume?			
<u>Visual</u> Is the environment appealing to look at? Calming or alerting? (note decorations, wall color, table and chair arrangement)			
Lighting: Fluorescent? Or natural lighting?			
<u>Taste</u> Do student complain about the taste of the lunch? Do students seem to enjoy the food they eat?			
<u>Tactile/Touch</u> Is there an excessive amount of unexpected touch due to arrangement of chairs and tables; proximity of students to each other?			
<u>Movement</u> Can students easily move around the room to throw out trash and transition?			
Is there an excessive amount of standing in line?			



<p><b>Routines:</b> Are there set routines for transitioning to and from the cafeteria, for getting food, and cleaning up?</p>			
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Overall, rate your perception of students' participation and enjoyment of lunchtime.

	Low	Average	High
Student enjoyment of social interaction with peers & mealtime conversations; positive conversations; including others			
Student enjoyment of eating their lunch; do they seem happy			
Supervisor enjoyment in interacting with students; friendly with positive interaction?			

**Cafeteria Supervisors** – Observations of ‘active supervision’.

- Ratio of adults to students (approximate): At minimum, there should be 1 adult for every 50 students. The more adult ‘presence’ in the cafeteria, the better.

- Identify which of the following elements of active supervision were observed; make comments

\_\_\_ Adults move frequently and deliberately around the cafeteria, providing particular attention to problem areas (e.g. students waiting in line).

\_\_\_ Systematically scan the cafeteria for positive behaviors (gives positive reinforcement) and challenging behaviors (re-directs).

\_\_\_ Give behavior specific praise occasionally (‘I appreciate how you’re talking with an inside voice.’ ‘Thank you for cleaning up your space.’). Aim for 3 positive comments for every corrective statement.

\_\_\_ Interacts with students in a positive and caring way. Smiles, calls students by name, shows an interest in students’ lives (e.g. asks students how they’re doing and listens).



Describe the **STRENGTHS** of the current Cafeteria/Lunch environment –

Describe **students' at-risk** of experiencing challenges at lunch (social, sensory-based, motor, etc.) – Identify any students who might need additional supports or accommodations in order to participate and enjoy their lunchtime.

Make **SUGGESTIONS** for changes that could be made to improve the Cafeteria environment/experience so that students can enjoy eating a meal and socializing with friends and so supervisors can enjoy their job.

Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_



Developed by Louise Demirjian, MA, OTR/L, Lauren Baird, MOT, OTR/L, & Susan Bazyk, PhD, OTR/L for *Every Moment Counts* (2014, revised in 2021) Refer to [www.everymomentcounts.org](http://www.everymomentcounts.org) for all the information needed to implement the Comfortable Cafeteria program.