

What Does Normalization Look Like?

An Observation Tool for Ages 3–6

Area of Development	What You May See	Questions for the Observer
1. Love of Order	Returns materials to their places; notices when something is out of order; follows familiar sequences; becomes comfortable with predictable routines.	Does order help this child feel oriented and capable?
2. Love of Work	Chooses purposeful activity; enjoys repetition; takes satisfaction in completing a task; prefers doing to being entertained.	Does the child seek meaningful work independently?
3. Concentration	Becomes deeply absorbed; works without frequent adult intervention; repeats an activity; persists through difficulty.	What conditions allow this child to concentrate most deeply?
4. Attachment to Reality	Shows interest in real activities, people, nature, and how things work; prefers authentic experiences.	What real-world experiences capture the child's attention?
5. Love of Silence & Solitude	Can work peacefully alone; tolerates or seeks quiet; doesn't require continual social stimulation.	Can the child enjoy their own company and the quiet of the environment?
6. Sublimation of Possessiveness	Shares space and materials more easily; becomes less focused on ownership; values using and caring for materials.	Is the child's interest shifting from <i>having</i> to <i>doing</i> ?
7. Obedience	Responds to reasonable requests; listens; increasingly cooperates without repeated commands or threats.	Is cooperation becoming internally motivated rather than externally imposed?
8. Independence & Initiative	Gets needed materials; begins work without prompting; solves simple problems; asks for help appropriately.	What does the child now do without adult assistance?
9. Self-Discipline	Controls movement; waits when necessary; manages impulses; returns to work after interruption; respects others' work.	Is control increasingly coming from within?
10. Joy	Shows satisfaction in work; smiles or expresses delight after mastering something; demonstrates calm contentment; takes pride in contribution.	Does the child's activity produce genuine satisfaction?
11. Meaningful Choice	Makes purposeful choices; stays with chosen work; chooses according to interest and developmental need rather than simply novelty.	Is the child choosing <i>work</i> , or merely choosing stimulation?

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The Most Important Question:

What is the child showing us about the conditions they need in order to develop?

- What captures this child's concentration?
 - What interrupts concentration?
 - Where is the child becoming more independent?
 - What unnecessary adult assistance could be removed?
 - What environmental condition could be improved?
 - What opportunities for purposeful work could be expanded?
 - What evidence of growing self-discipline are we seeing?
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How to use this tool:

Observe the child over time, across different activities and settings. Use this set of questions to help you look for patterns rather than isolated behaviors. The goal is to understand the child's development. Avoid judging, grading or labeling the child's behavior.

A Simple Observation Scale

Rather using a numeric scale to describe the child's activities, I recommend using four descriptive levels:

Emerging — We occasionally see this quality.

Developing — The quality appears regularly, especially under favorable conditions.

Established — The child demonstrates the quality consistently and independently.

Deepening — The quality is becoming integrated across different situations.

Remember: This tool is not a developmental scorecard.

It is an observational tool to help you recognize obstacles to development in order to remove those obstacles. A child may show strong concentration but struggle in other aspects of normalization, such as order or social cooperation.

Normalization is a **process of personal integration** for the child. Our job is to act as observers and guides to this process of normalization.