


Welcome to the CLASS Observation Tool

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System[®] (CLASS[™]) is an observation tool that focuses on the effectiveness of classroom interactions among teachers and children, because it is these daily interactions that promote children's social and cognitive development. Children thrive when teachers create nurturing, well-managed settings and provide frequent and engaging opportunities to learn.

Copyright © 2011 by Teachstone Training, LLC. All rights reserved. / 1 | 3

Classroom Assessment Scoring System[®], CLASS[™], and  are trademarks of Robert C. Pianta.

The Pre-K CLASS Dimensions Guide is adapted with permission from Classroom Assessment Scoring System, by Robert C. Pianta, Karen M. LaParo, & Bridget K. Hamre, 2008, Baltimore: Brookes Publishing. No portion of the Pre-K CLASS Dimensions Guide may be reproduced for any purpose without prior written consent from Teachstone Training, LLC, and Brookes Publishing. For Teachstone Training, LLC, contact contact@teachstone.com; for Brookes Publishing, contact rights@brookespublishing.com.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Positive Climate

Reflects the emotional connection between the teacher and students and among students and the warmth, respect, and enjoyment communicated by verbal and nonverbal interactions

Negative Climate

Reflects the overall level of expressed negativity in the classroom; the frequency, quality, and intensity of teacher and peer negativity are key to this scale

Teacher Sensitivity

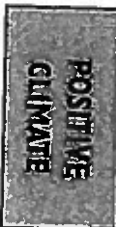
Encompasses the teacher's awareness of and responsivity to students' academic and emotional needs; high levels of sensitivity facilitate students' ability to actively explore and learn because the teacher consistently provides comfort, reassurance, and encouragement

Regard for Student Perspectives

Captures the degree to which the teacher's interactions with students and classroom activities place an emphasis on students' interests, motivations, and points of view and encourage student responsibility and autonomy



Positive Climate



Reflects the emotional connection between the teacher and students and among students and the warmth, respect, and enjoyment communicated by verbal and nonverbal interactions

Low (1,2)	Mid (3,4,5)	High (6,7)
-----------	-------------	------------

Relationships

- Physical proximity
- Shared activities
- Peer assistance
- Matched affect
- Social conversation

There are few, if any, indications that the teacher and students enjoy warm, supportive relationships with one another.

There are some indications that the teacher and students enjoy warm, supportive relationships with one another.

There are many indications that the teacher and students enjoy warm, supportive relationships with one another.

Positive affect

- Smiling
- Laughter
- Enthusiasm

There are no or few displays of positive affect by the teacher and/or students.

There are sometimes displays of positive affect by the teacher and/or students.

There are frequent displays of positive affect by the teacher and/or students.

Positive communication

- Verbal affection
- Physical affection
- Positive expectations

There are rarely positive communications, verbal or physical, among teachers and students.

There are sometimes positive communications, verbal or physical, among teachers and students.

There are frequently positive communications, verbal or physical, among teachers and students.

Respect

- Eye contact
- Warm, calm voice
- Respectful language
- Cooperation and/or sharing

The teacher and students rarely, if ever, demonstrate respect for one another.

The teacher and students sometimes demonstrate respect for one another.

The teacher and students consistently demonstrate respect for one another.

How can I create a more positive climate in my classroom?

Enjoy time with children.

Share in fun, relaxing moments with children. During free time or while walking to lunch, take time to interact with children and enjoy being with them.

Make learning fun.

Look for opportunities to make everyday learning activities fun for children. Think about the things that make children laugh and smile and find ways to integrate these things into everyday activities.

Show your enthusiasm.

Make sure you let the children know that you enjoy your job and like spending time with them. If you are enthusiastic about classroom activities, the children will be as well.

Make positive comments and communicate your warm feelings toward children.

Look for opportunities to comment positively on children's efforts and participation. Clearly communicate your warm feelings toward children. For example, tell a child that you missed her yesterday when she was home sick. Over time, your consistent positive interactions and warmth will help children feel connected to you and comfortable in the classroom.

Engage in social conversation.

Ask children questions about their lives outside the classroom, then remember to ask about things that are important to them, such as family members or their outside activities. Take time to listen when they come up to tell you something exciting that happened to them.

Be respectful and personal.

Be respectful in interactions with children. Use their names when you talk to them and model the use of polite language, such as please, thank you, and you're welcome.

Facilitate positive peer interactions.

Encourage children to engage in positive interactions with each other. Teach and model the importance of sharing, helping others, and being respectful so that children can start using these strategies in interactions with their peers.

⊛ Think of your: Tone of Voice / body Language
How you Respond to
Children.

Negative Climate²

Reflects the overall level of expressed negativity in the classroom; the frequency, quality, and intensity of teacher and peer negativity are key to this scale



Low (1,2)	Mid (3,4,5)	High (6,7)
------------------	--------------------	-------------------

Negative affect

- Irritability
- Anger
- Harsh voice
- Peer aggression
- Disconnected or escalating negativity

The teacher and students do not display strong negative affect and only rarely, if ever, display mild negativity.	The classroom is characterized by mild displays of irritability, anger, or other negative affect by the teacher and/or the students.	The classroom is characterized by consistent irritability, anger, or other negative affect by the teacher and/or the students.
---	--	--

Punitive control

- Yelling
- Threats
- Physical control
- Harsh punishment

The teacher does not yell or make threats to establish control.	The teacher occasionally uses expressed negativity such as threats or yelling to establish control.	The teacher repeatedly yells at students or makes threats to establish control.
---	---	---

Sarcasm/disrespect

- Sarcastic voice/statement
- Teasing
- Humiliation

The teacher and students are not sarcastic or disrespectful.	The teacher and/or students are occasionally sarcastic or disrespectful.	The teacher and/or students are repeatedly sarcastic or disrespectful.
--	--	--

Severe negativity

- Victimization
- Bullying
- Physical punishment

There are no instances of severe negativity between the teacher and students.	There are no instances of severe negativity between the teacher and students.	There are instances of severe negativity between the teacher and students or among the students.
---	---	--

²Negative Climate is scaled in the opposite direction of the other CLASS scales. Higher negativity indicates lower quality.



How can I reduce negative climate in my classroom?

Build close, warm relationships with each child in your classroom.

A strong relationship with the teacher helps children feel safe and secure. When children feel secure, they are less likely to display negative or challenging behaviors.

Think about when and why negativity happens in your classroom and come up with a plan to diminish it.

Ask yourself questions like, "When and why does this child display negative behaviors?" or "Do I react with irritation to specific behaviors or children or during specific activities? Why do I do this? How can I change this?" Then, come up with a plan to diminish these behaviors. For example, when Keira can't sit still during meeting time, instead of becoming irritated and sending her to time out, I will ask my assistant to take her to the puzzle area to play.

Spend one-on-one time with children who present challenging and/or negative behaviors.

Some children need extra support and attention to build a sense of trust and to develop a close relationship with you. A few times a week, spend one-on-one time with a child who presents challenging behaviors doing something that the child enjoys. This will help you to focus on the child's positive qualities while also building the child's trust in you.

If needed, support children in working through intense, negative feelings.

When a child behaves in a negative way, such as by using aggression, calmly intervene and clearly let the child know that type of behavior is unacceptable. Afterward, talk with the child one-on-one about what happened and give her alternatives for dealing with intense feelings such as anger. For example, tell a child that if she feels angry she can talk with you about it, stomp her foot, or take some time to be alone and calm down.

Implement positive, proactive behavior management strategies.

Be proactive and plan ahead to prevent misbehavior and/or potential negative behaviors. For example, tell children you are bringing a timer out to the playground so that each child gets a turn on one of the bicycles. Being proactive cuts down on time you spend responding to misbehavior or negative behaviors. However, if you do need to respond to misbehavior, use low reactivity by keeping your face and demeanor calm and directly stating the behavior you expect.

Take care of yourself.

Teachers work hard and have to juggle a lot to implement a nurturing and educational program for children. When teachers feel overwhelmed or fatigued, they are more likely to react with irritation. Take your lunch and other breaks in your schedule, and whenever possible, use the time to relax and decompress.

Teacher Sensitivity

Encompasses the teacher's awareness of and responsivity to students' academic and emotional needs; high levels of sensitivity facilitate students' ability to actively explore and learn because the teacher consistently provides comfort, reassurance, and encouragement

Low (1,2) Mid (3,4,5) High (6,7)

Awareness

- Anticipates problems and plans appropriately
- Notices lack of understanding and/or difficulties

The teacher consistently fails to be aware of students who need extra support, assistance, or attention.

The teacher is sometimes aware of students who need extra support, assistance, or attention.

The teacher is consistently aware of students who need extra support, assistance, or attention.

Responsiveness

- Acknowledges emotions
- Provides comfort and assistance
- Provides individualized support

The teacher is unresponsive to or dismissive of students and provides the same level of assistance to all students, regardless of their individual needs.

The teacher is responsive to students sometimes but at other times is more dismissive or unresponsive, matching his or her support to the needs and abilities of some students but not others.

The teacher is consistently responsive to students and matches his or her support to their needs and abilities.

Addresses problems

- Helps in an effective and timely manner
- Helps resolve problems

The teacher is ineffective at addressing students' problems and concerns.

The teacher is sometimes effective at addressing students' problems and concerns.

The teacher is consistently effective at addressing students' problems and concerns.

Student comfort

- Seeks support and guidance
- Freely participates
- Takes risks

The students rarely seek support, share their ideas with, or respond to questions from the teacher.

The students sometimes seek support from, share their ideas with, or respond to questions from the teacher.

The students appear comfortable seeking support from, sharing their ideas with, and responding freely to the teacher.

TEACHER
SENSITIVITY

How can I increase my sensitivity to children's needs?

Understand each child's social and academic functioning and individualize accordingly.

Use formal and informal assessment throughout the year to understand each child's level of social and academic functioning. Use this information to individualize the curriculum and your interactions with each child. As you plan and implement daily activities, anticipate and respond to each child's strengths and needs so that your activities are developmentally and individually appropriate.

Take time to notice how children are doing in the moment.

Actively monitor how children are doing throughout the day. During center times, walk around the room, get down on the children's level, and engage in play with them. During small group lessons, check in with each child to ensure they all understand the activity. During large group lessons, watch for children who appear disengaged or confused. These "in the moment" interactions will keep you consistently aware of children's individual needs so that you can provide timely and appropriate support.

Respond in the moment to children's academic and emotional needs.

Consistently monitor children to be aware of how they are doing in activities. Be aware if work is too difficult (or too easy) for children and respond in a timely manner. For example, if you are working on making patterns with children and you notice a child does not understand, work individually with the child as soon as possible to help him understand the activity and related concepts. If necessary, adapt the activity to meet the child's academic needs.

Tune in to and be responsive to children's non-verbal cues.

Young children don't always express what they are thinking or feeling. Check in with individual children, especially when a child's facial expressions and body language tell you that the child needs academic or emotional support, and be responsive as needed. If a child can't express his thoughts in words, use language to describe what he might be thinking and then provide comfort or assistance.

Make every effort to listen to and respond to children.

Teachers are often overwhelmed with questions and children's requests. Try to take time to respond to all questions or requests. Respond immediately or let the children know you heard them and will respond at a later point – and then make a point to follow up. This lets children know that they are important to you and that you are someone who helps and is responsive to their needs.

Actively encourage children to see you as a source of comfort and support in the classroom.

Although some children rely on the adults in their life for comfort and support, others have had fewer positive experiences with adults and may need explicit teaching and experience in how to rely on adults for emotional and academic support. Making statements to the class or individuals such as, "I can help if you are having a hard time," and regularly providing comfort and assistance to children encourages them to see you as someone they can go to for support.

In challenging moments, try taking your children's perspectives.

Every teacher experiences moments that test his or her patience. By making an active effort to take children's perspectives during these challenging moments, you may find yourself being less reactive and more responsive to children's needs.

Regard for Student Perspectives

Captures the degree to which the teacher's interactions with students and classroom activities place an emphasis on students' interests, motivations, and points of view and encourage student responsibility and autonomy

Low (1,2)	Mid (3,4,5)	High (6,7)
-----------	-------------	------------

Flexibility and student focus

- Shows flexibility
- Incorporates students' ideas
- Follows students' lead

The teacher is rigid, inflexible, and controlling in his or her plans and/or rarely goes along with students' ideas; most classroom activities are teacher-driven.

The teacher may follow the students' lead during some periods and be more controlling during others.

The teacher is flexible in his or her plans, goes along with students' ideas, and organizes instruction around students' interests.

Support for autonomy and leadership

- Allows choice
- Allows students to lead lessons
- Gives students responsibility

The teacher does not support student autonomy and leadership.

The teacher sometimes provides support for student autonomy and leadership but at other times fails to do so.

The teacher provides consistent support for student autonomy and leadership.

Student expression

- Encourages student talk
- Elicits ideas and/or perspectives

There are few opportunities for student talk and expression.

There are periods during which there is a lot of student talk and expression but other times when teacher talk predominates.

There are many opportunities for student talk and expression.

Restriction of movement

- Allows movement
- Is not rigid

The teacher is highly controlling of students' movement and placement during activities.

The teacher is somewhat controlling of students' movement and placement during activities.

The students have freedom of movement and placement during activities.

How can I increase my regard for children's perspectives?

Actively seek out, listen to, and support children's ideas, points of view, and active participation.

Take the time to ask children questions that help them develop and express their own ideas. Listen closely to what they say and make sure that your lessons aren't dominated by teacher talk. Provide many opportunities for children to talk and make meaningful contributions in a variety of classroom activities.

Be flexible and go with the flow of children's ideas.

While there are times in the day when you need to follow a schedule or implement a teacher-directed activity, make an effort to be flexible when you can. For example, if you are reading a book on animals and the children start making animal sounds and movements, go ahead and let them do this. Playing an active role will increase their engagement in the story.

Give children a choice.

There are many times during the day when you can give children some choice in what they are doing. If you are planning on singing a song during circle time, ask them which song you should sing. Let a child choose which book to read in the cool-down time after recess.

Provide time for child-initiated activities and learning.

During activities such as center time, allow children to select where they will play and what they will do there. Observe children as they work in centers, then follow their lead, and embed learning opportunities into your interactions with them based on what they are doing and the skills and abilities you observe.

Provide children with real responsibilities in the classroom.

Many classrooms have "jobs" for children. Make sure that these jobs provide some real responsibilities for children and think about ways to increase their level of responsibility as the year goes on. Perhaps at the beginning of the year the calendar leader simply points to the days of the week, but later leads the whole morning calendar routine. Try not to micromanage these jobs, but let the children take them on and make them their own.

Encourage children to mentor others.

Even young children love the opportunity to feel like experts among their peers. Look for opportunities to facilitate these peer interactions. For example, you may identify a child as an expert on block building and structure a construction project in which this child acts as the leader of the group. It is important to monitor and facilitate these interactions as needed to provide the child with an optimal balance between support and independence.

Allow children reasonable freedom of movement.

Recognize that young children tend to move around a lot and that some may have a difficult time sitting still for long periods of time. Provide activities throughout the day that allow children to be active. During activities such as meeting time when children need to sit for a while, allow for movement that is natural and comfortable for them without being disruptive. For example, a child wiggling or sitting up on his knees in the back row may be fine as long as it does not disrupt others.

CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION

Behavior Management

Encompasses the teacher's ability to provide clear behavioral expectations and use effective methods to prevent and redirect misbehavior

Productivity

Considers how well the teacher manages instructional time and routines and provides activities for students so that they have the opportunity to be involved in learning activities

Instructional Learning Formats

Focuses on the ways in which the teacher maximizes students' interest, engagement, and ability to learn from lessons and activities

Behavior Management³

Encompasses the teacher's ability to provide clear behavioral expectations and use effective methods to prevent and redirect misbehavior

Low (1,2)	Mid (3,4,5)	High (6,7) ⁴
-----------	-------------	-------------------------

Clear behavior expectations

- Clear expectations
- Consistency
- Clarity of rules

Rules and expectations are absent, unclear, or inconsistently enforced.

Rules and expectations may be stated clearly but are inconsistently enforced.

Rules and expectations for behavior are clear and consistently enforced.

Proactive

- Anticipates problem behavior or escalation
- Low reactivity
- Monitors

The teacher is reactive, and monitoring is absent or ineffective.

The teacher uses a mix of proactive and reactive responses; sometimes he or she monitors and reacts to early indicators of behavior problems but other times misses or ignores them.

The teacher is consistently proactive and monitors the classroom effectively to prevent problems from developing.

Redirection of misbehavior

- Effective reduction of misbehavior
- Attention to the positive
- Uses subtle cues to redirect
- Efficient redirection

Attempts to redirect misbehavior are ineffective; the teacher rarely focuses on positives or uses subtle cues. As a result, misbehavior continues and/or escalates and takes time away from learning.

Some of the teacher's attempts to redirect misbehavior are effective, particularly when the teacher focuses on positive behavior and uses subtle cues. As a result, there are few times when misbehavior continues, escalates, or takes time away from learning.

The teacher effectively redirects misbehavior by focusing on positives and making use of subtle cues. Behavior management does not take time away from learning.

Student behavior

- Frequent compliance
- Little aggression and defiance

There are frequent instances of misbehavior in the classroom.

There are periodic episodes of misbehavior in the classroom.

There are few, if any, instances of student misbehavior in the classroom.

³Behavior Management is often defined very broadly to include strategies that teachers use to keep students engaged as a means of preventing misbehavior. The CLASS Behavior Management dimension focuses on the prevention of more active misbehavior; the teacher's use of strategies to engage students is captured in Instructional Learning Formats.

⁴At the high end of Behavior Management, evidence of some teacher behaviors such as proactive strategies and effective redirection may not be evident because behavior is so well managed. If there is no evidence of student misbehavior, it is assumed that effective behavioral strategies are in place and a classroom may score in the high range.



How can I provide effective behavior management in my classroom?

Be proactive.

Intervene before situations escalate and help children problem-solve. Anticipate moments when misbehavior is likely to occur, such as during transitions, and provide children with preferred alternative behaviors: "Put all the blocks away and then join us in the circle."

Monitor and redirect children's behavior.

Look for cues, such as body language and facial expression, that indicate children may be moving toward more disruptive or inattentive behavior. Redirect before minor misbehavior escalates. Effective and quick redirection for individual children includes eye contact, gentle touch, a known gesture, moving closer to the child, or using the child's name: "Ella, what do you see happening in this picture?" Develop classroom routines that quickly reorient the whole class when they are too loud or not paying attention, such as clapping your hands twice, lowering your voice, or singing a song.

Clearly state expectations for behavior.

Make classroom rules easy for children to understand and repeat them regularly. Be specific about expectations so that children know exactly what behavior you expect. If a child is poking a peer during circle time, prompt him to stop by saying "Robert, please put your hands in your lap and focus your eyes up here," rather than, "Stop that, Robert."

Be consistent with consequences.

Immediately following any misbehavior, provide children with a predictable response to the behavior. If it is a classroom rule for children to raise their hands in order to respond, be consistent in only calling on children with a hand raised. Make sure that children know when this rule is or is not in effect.

Provide specific feedback when children behave well.

Rather than telling children, "You are doing a nice job," or "You're behaving really well today," give children specific information about what they are doing well. Saying, "I really like the way Cindy and DeQuan are working together to clean up the blocks area," encourages this behavior and shows the other children which types of behavior you expect.

Encourage children to settle disputes.

Teach children a set of problem-solving steps to handle disputes so that they learn over time how to address problems with minimal help from you.

Productivity⁵

Productivity

Considers how well the teacher manages instructional time and routines and provides activities for students so that they have the opportunity to be involved in learning activities

Low (1,2) Mid (3,4,5) High (6,7)

Maximizing learning time

- Provision of activities
- Choice when finished
- Few disruptions⁶
- Effective completion of managerial tasks
- Pacing⁷

Few, if any, activities are provided for students, and an excessive amount of time is spent addressing disruptions and completing managerial tasks.

The teacher provides activities for the students most of the time, but some learning time is lost in dealing with disruptions and the completion of managerial tasks.

The teacher provides activities for the students and deals efficiently with disruptions and managerial tasks.

Routines

- Students know what to do
- Clear instructions
- Little wandering

The classroom routines are unclear; most students do not know what is expected of them.

There is some evidence of classroom routines that allow everyone to know what is expected of them.

The classroom resembles a "well-oiled machine"; everybody knows what is expected of them and how to go about doing it.

Transitions

- Brief
- Explicit follow-through
- Learning opportunities within

Transitions are too long, too frequent, and/or inefficient.

Transitions sometimes take too long or are too frequent and inefficient.

Transitions are quick and efficient.

Preparation

- Materials ready and accessible
- Knows lessons

The teacher does not have activities prepared and ready for the students.

The teacher is mostly prepared for activities but takes some time away from instruction to take care of last-minute preparations.

The teacher is fully prepared for activities and lessons.

⁵Productivity ratings should not consider the quality of instruction or student engagement, which are considered in other dimensions.

⁶Some interruptions to instructional time may be out of the teacher's control (e.g., fire drills). Regardless of the cause of lost instructional time, simply code students' observed exposure to instructional activities.

⁷Observers should be conservative in judgments about the pacing of activities because in most classrooms there is significant variability in the amount of time students need to process information and complete activities. Only in cases of very slow pacing, in which a majority of students are clearly spending significant time waiting during instruction, should pacing influence a Productivity score.

How can I be productive in my classroom?

Provide consistent, clear learning activities.

Think about squeezing as much instructional time into the day as possible. Provide an alternative activity for children who complete a task early. Give short, simple instructions to let children know exactly what they are supposed to do.

Be organized and efficient, and plan ahead.

Prepare for instructional activities in advance so that all materials are ready and accessible. Practice lessons ahead of time and plan your daily schedule with efficiency in mind. Make sure that your children know the plan and provide them with clear instructions for what comes next.

Minimize disruptions to learning.

In the face of inevitable distractions, such as announcements or someone entering the room, keep the children's focus on the activity at hand with quick redirections. Be proactive in thinking about how to reengage the children as soon as a disruption is over.

Minimize time spent on managerial tasks.

Take care of managerial tasks, such as recording attendance, quickly or during times when children are involved in a learning activity on their own or with another adult.

Make the most of transitions.

Develop consistent and interesting routines to help children transition from one activity to the next or one area of the room to another. Think of ways to embed learning moments in transition activities. For example, dismiss children from a whole-group activity by calling on children whose names start with specific letters.

Instructional Learning Formats

Focuses on the ways in which the teacher maximizes students' interest, engagement, and ability to learn from lessons and activities

Low (1,2)	Mid (3,4,5)	High (6,7)
------------------	--------------------	-------------------

Effective facilitation

- Teacher involvement
- Effective questioning
- Expanding children's involvement

The teacher does not actively facilitate activities and lessons to encourage students' interest and expanded involvement.

At times, the teacher actively facilitates activities and lessons to encourage interest and expanded involvement but at other times merely provides activities for the students.

The teacher actively facilitates students' engagement in activities and lessons to encourage participation and expanded involvement.

Variety of modalities and materials

- Range of auditory, visual, and movement opportunities
- Interesting and creative materials
- Hands-on opportunities

The teacher does not use a variety of modalities or materials to gain students' interest and participation during activities and lessons.

The teacher is inconsistent in his or her use of a variety of modalities and materials to gain students' interest and participation during activities and lessons.

The teacher uses a variety of modalities including auditory, visual, and movement and uses a variety of materials to effectively interest students and gain their participation during activities and lessons.

Student interest

- Active participation
- Listening
- Focused attention

The students do not appear interested and/or involved in the lesson or activities.

Students may be engaged and/or interested for periods of time, but at other times their interest wanes and they are not involved in the activity or lesson.

Students are consistently interested and involved in activities and lessons.

Clarity of learning objectives

- Advanced organizers
- Summaries
- Reorientation statements

The teacher makes no attempt or is unsuccessful at orienting and guiding students toward learning objectives.

The teacher orients students somewhat to learning objectives, or the learning objectives may be clear during some periods but less so during others.

The teacher effectively focuses students' attention toward learning objectives and/or the purpose of the lesson.



How can I provide effective instructional learning formats in my classroom?

Use appropriate materials and make them available.

Prepare and use age-appropriate, interesting and relevant materials. Make these materials available to children at centers or workstations. Look for opportunities to include interesting materials in group lessons as well.

Actively involve children.

Plan activities that encourage participation. Think about questions to ask and ways to invite children to participate. Encourage children to count aloud or chorally respond to shared information, such as a repetitive line of story text, a song, or a nursery rhyme. Ask children to pass out materials, turn pages, or use manipulatives.

Present information using a variety of modalities.

Plan activities so that children have interesting things to look at, listen to, or touch. When appropriate, provide opportunities that allow children to move. This may be as simple as doing hand movements during a song or as active as reenacting a story.

Get involved.

Although children can learn a lot during independent and peer play, they learn the most when their play and learning are facilitated by an adult. This is particularly important during center time. Make sure to move around to different centers, talk to children about what they are doing, and push the learning opportunities provided by the center. It is important to note that you can enhance these learning moments without being overly directive or interfering with children's independence. For example, if a few children are playing in the block area, sit down with them, ask about what they are building, and talk to them about what their plan is for their building. This will help develop their planning skills and keep them productively engaged in the activity for a longer time.

Share their interest and enthusiasm.

Have fun, too! Clap, sing, or join in. If you demonstrate your interest and enthusiasm for activities, the children will as well.

Ask many questions.

Ask questions that direct the children's attention to what you are discussing. Young children can quickly lose focus if they don't have an active role in an activity.

When appropriate, clearly state the learning objective of an activity.

When appropriate, explicitly state learning objectives at the beginning of an activity. This helps children to focus their attention on the learning objective. For example, tell the children that as you read a poem they will listen for the sound the letter "B" makes, which is /b/, and they will clap every time they hear the /b/ sound.

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

Concept Development

Measures the teacher's use of instructional discussions and activities to promote students' higher-order thinking skills and cognition and the teacher's focus on understanding rather than on rote instruction

Quality of Feedback

Assesses the degree to which the teacher provides feedback that expands learning and understanding and encourages continued participation

Language Modeling

Captures the quality and amount of the teacher's use of language-stimulation and language-facilitation techniques

Concept Development⁸

Measures the teacher's use of instructional discussions and activities to promote students' higher-order thinking skills and cognition and the teacher's focus on understanding rather than on rote instruction

Low (1,2)	Mid (3,4,5)	High (6,7)
-----------	-------------	------------

Analysis and reasoning

- *Why* and/or *how* questions
- Problem solving
- Prediction/experimentation
- Classification/comparison
- Evaluation

The teacher rarely uses discussions and activities that encourage analysis and reasoning.

The teacher occasionally uses discussions and activities that encourage analysis and reasoning.

The teacher often uses discussions and activities that encourage analysis and reasoning.

Creating

- Brainstorming
- Planning
- Producing

The teacher rarely provides opportunities for students to be creative and/or generate their own ideas and products.

The teacher sometimes provides opportunities for students to be creative and/or generate their own ideas and products.

The teacher often provides opportunities for students to be creative and/or generate their own ideas and products.

Integration

- Connects concepts
- Integrates with previous knowledge

Concepts and activities are presented independent of one another, and students are not asked to apply previous learning.

The teacher sometimes links concepts and activities to one another and to previous learning.

The teacher consistently links concepts and activities to one another and to previous learning.

Connections to the real world

- Real-world applications
- Related to students' lives

The teacher does not relate concepts to the students' actual lives.

The teacher makes some attempts to relate concepts to the students' actual lives.

The teacher consistently relates concepts to the students' actual lives.

⁸The Concept Development dimension is not just about the development of a specific concept (e.g., seasons, subtraction) but about teachers' use of strategies to encourage understanding and thinking skills.

How can I provide more effective concept development ?

Focus on understanding concepts.

Challenge children to think about the hows and whys of learning. Focus their attention on the process of generating solutions to a problem rather than just getting the correct answer. Ask open-ended and thought-provoking questions, such as, "Why doesn't this shape belong with the others?"

Encourage use of analysis and reasoning skills.

Use instructional strategies that focus on critical thinking, such as sequencing, comparing and contrasting, and problem-solving activities. Ask questions that promote thinking, such as, "Why do you think Jon is smiling?" and "How would you feel if this happened to you?"

Promote exploration of concepts.

Ask children to predict, experiment and brainstorm as ways to explore concepts and expand approaches to learning. If a child provides one possible answer to a question, praise her for the thought and then encourage other children to think of alternative solutions.

Link concepts across activities.

Purposefully choose learning activities, both within a given day and across weeks and months, that focus on similar concepts. Make clear connections among these concepts for your children so that their knowledge and understanding can be generalized and flexibly applied in different situations.

Apply concepts to the real world.

During explanation of a concept, use examples that are likely to occur in children's lives and encourage them to add their own examples. For example, if you are teaching children sequencing, ask them to tell you the order of the steps necessary for brushing their teeth.

Take time to plan for concept development.

While you are putting together your lesson plans for the week, take a moment to think about how you might embed more concept development into a few of your lessons. Come up with questions or activities that will stimulate the children to think deeply and understand concepts more fully. For example, during a lesson on identifying letters, rather than testing children using letter cards, encourage them to generate a list of letters they know and then look around the room for those letters.

Encourage children's creativity.

One way to facilitate children's creativity is to encourage them to explore a variety of open-ended materials and use them in different ways. For example, children might use blocks to build a house or railroad. Later, they might cover the blocks with paper and turn them into cell phones to use in dramatic play. When appropriate, take time to support children in brainstorming and planning before they create something. If children want to build a castle with blocks, help them brainstorm the different parts of a castle and who lives in a castle, and provide them with paper to draw their castle before they build it.

Quality of Feedback⁹

Assesses the degree to which the teacher provides feedback that expands learning and understanding and encourages continued participation

Low (1,2)	Mid (3,4,5)	High (6,7)
-----------	-------------	------------

Scaffolding

- Hints
- Assistance

The teacher rarely provides scaffolding to students but rather dismisses responses or actions as incorrect or ignores problems in understanding.

The teacher occasionally provides scaffolding to students but at other times simply dismisses responses as incorrect or ignores problems in students' understanding.

The teacher often scaffolds for students who are having a hard time understanding a concept, answering a question, or completing an activity.

Feedback loops

- Back-and-forth exchanges
- Persistence by teacher
- Follow-up questions

The teacher gives only perfunctory feedback to students.

There are occasional feedback loops—back-and-forth exchanges—between the teacher and students; other times, however, feedback is more perfunctory.

There are frequent feedback loops—back-and-forth exchanges—between the teacher and students.

Prompting thought processes

- Asks students to explain thinking
- Queries responses and actions

The teacher rarely queries the students or prompts students to explain their thinking and rationale for responses and actions.

The teacher occasionally queries the students or prompts students to explain their thinking and rationale for responses and actions.

The teacher often queries the students or prompts students to explain their thinking and rationale for responses and actions.

Providing information

- Expansion
- Clarification
- Specific feedback

The teacher rarely provides additional information to expand on the students' understanding or actions.

The teacher occasionally provides additional information to expand on the students' understanding or actions.

The teacher often provides additional information to expand on students' understanding or actions.

Encouragement and affirmation

- Recognition
- Reinforcement
- Student persistence

The teacher rarely offers encouragement of students' efforts that increases students' involvement and persistence.

The teacher occasionally offers encouragement of students' efforts that increases students' involvement and persistence.

The teacher often offers encouragement of students' efforts that increases students' involvement and persistence.

⁹Quality of Feedback is generally observed in response to a student's or students' answer to a question or as a student progresses on his or her work or involvement in an activity, whereas Concept Development is the method a teacher uses as he or she provides instruction or activities.

How can I improve the quality of feedback I provide?

Focus on the process of learning.

When children give correct answers, use this as an opportunity to create a learning moment by asking follow-up questions such as, "How did you know that?" or "How did you figure that out?"

Scaffold learning.

If a child is having a hard time understanding a concept or coming up with an answer, provide hints to help her get to the answer rather than just telling her or moving to another child. For example, you may begin by asking a child an open-ended question related to a topic. If he doesn't respond, clarify the concept and give him a range of possible answers or things to think about. If he is still unable to answer, try simplifying your questioning to something more concrete, like a yes or no question, to support the child in responding.

Provide specific information about why answers are correct or incorrect.

Rather than telling children "nice job" or "good work," give them specific information about why their answers are correct or incorrect. This not only provides the child with more information, but it also may help other children who weren't sure of the correct answer.

Engage in "feedback loops."

Some of the best feedback occurs when teachers ask a series of follow-up questions to elicit a deeper understanding from children. After a child responds, ask another question of that child or of the whole class. Keep this conversational "feedback loop" going until you are sure children really understand what you are trying to teach.

Give lots of specific feedback.

Always be on the lookout for opportunities to provide feedback to children. Walk around the classroom when children are working independently. Take the time to listen and respond in a thoughtful way to what children have to say during group lessons.

Encourage children to persist in their work.

Recognize and praise children's efforts and encourage them to persist in thinking about something or completing a task. For example, you might say to children who are working on a large floor puzzle, "I see how hard you are working on that big puzzie. With teamwork, I know you guys will be able to do it. Call me over if you need any help!"

Language Modeling¹⁰

Captures the quality and amount of the teacher's use of language-stimulation and language-facilitation techniques

	Low (1,2)	Mid (3,4,5)	High (6,7)
<p>Frequent conversation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back-and-forth exchanges • Contingent responding • Peer conversations 	There are few if any conversations in the classroom.	There are limited conversations in the classroom.	There are frequent conversations in the classroom.
<p>Open-ended questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions require more than a one-word response • Students respond 	The majority of the teacher's questions are closed-ended.	The teacher asks a mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions.	The teacher asks many open-ended questions.
<p>Repetition and extension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeats • Extends/elaborates 	The teacher rarely, if ever, repeats or extends the students' responses.	The teacher sometimes repeats or extends the students' responses.	The teacher often repeats or extends the students' responses.
<p>Self- and parallel talk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maps own actions with language • Maps student action with language 	The teacher rarely maps his or her own actions and the students' actions through language and description.	The teacher occasionally maps his or her own actions and the students' actions through language and description.	The teacher consistently maps his or her own actions and the students' actions through language and description.
<p>Advanced language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of words • Connected to familiar words and/or ideas 	The teacher does not use advanced language with students.	The teacher sometimes uses advanced language with students.	The teacher often uses advanced language with students.

¹⁰In classrooms that may be considered bilingual, the teacher may move between speaking in English and Spanish. However, speaking two languages in the classroom does not increase the rating of Language Modeling independent of using indicators under "High." Therefore, it is expected that teachers in bilingual classrooms that are rated "High" will be engaging in frequent conversation, asking open-ended questions, and so forth, regardless of the language used. A teacher who repeats book as both "book" and "libro" or water as "water" and "agua" to children should not be rated higher than a teacher who uses only the word "book" or "water."

LANGUAGE MODELING

How can I improve language modeling in my classroom?

Ask open-ended questions.

Children generate thoughts, information and reasons when asked a question that doesn't have a known answer. Questions like, "What do you think?" or "How do you know?" encourage children to use language in more sophisticated ways, rather than just giving right answers or short responses.

Have conversations.

Conversations can occur throughout the day during structured times, such as meeting time, and unstructured times, such as snack and free play. Converse with children individually and in small and large groups. Listen to what children say and respond in a way that shows you are interested in what they have to say. Ask follow-up questions to keep the conversation going and include some open-ended questions to encourage children to contribute more to the conversation.

Promote child-initiated language.

Encourage children's use of language by giving them opportunities to share their thoughts and ideas. Provide relevant and interesting topics and things for children to talk about.

Repeat and extend children's responses.

Build on what children say, model appropriate and more complex language and syntax, and provide examples for the different ways we use language. For example, if a child says, "That boy gives me his boat," a teacher may respond, "Evan gave you his boat." This response models the social language skill of using a person's name and offers correct grammatical forms.

Use self-talk and parallel talk.

Talk about what you are doing or what the children are doing to help them link language and action in a way that can help develop their vocabulary and language skills. An example of self-talk would be: "I'm going to give each of you two graham crackers. I'm opening the box, and now I am handing them out to each of you." In parallel talk, you provide language for children's actions such as, "You put on a chef's hat and an apron, and now you're getting out a pot."

Use advanced language.

Use different kinds of words, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions, as well as new or unfamiliar vocabulary. Talk about these words in simple terms that relate to the children's lives. For example, if a child lists all the colors in her hat, "Red, blue, yellow, green," respond with, "It's a multi-colored hat." This links what the child knows to more advanced language and summarizes known concepts with a new related word.

Encourage children to talk to one another.

Provide opportunities for peer interactions and model conversations. Use clear language to model interactions: "Kiara, do you want the truck? Ask your friend, 'May I have the truck?'" Encourage children to share stories and talk with one another. Comments like, "Meal time is a great time for us to talk with our friends!" encourage children to initiate conversations with each other.