



Observation Guide

Evidence-based Practices for Early Childhood Classrooms



Focus on Classroom Space:

Visual Supports are used to Enhance Instruction

Daily schedule is posted with pictures and words

Schedule is used as a teaching tool

Rules are posted with pictures and words

Class display is child-centered and/or related to instructional units

Additional visuals are used to support instruction

Classroom Materials are Sufficient and in Good Condition

Classroom areas are organized, clearly defined, and uncluttered

Shelves, bins, and areas for children's personal items are labeled

Materials are of sufficient quantity, interest, and variety to engage all children.

1. Visual supports are used to enhance instruction

1a. Daily schedule is posted with pictures and words.

Quality indicators:

- The schedule is taught or referred to throughout the day and throughout the school year.
- The daily schedule is posted at the children's eye level and is visible from most areas of the room.
- Rules are age appropriate and do not contain vague language (such as "nice hands").



Questions to ask:

- ✓ How often do you refer to the schedule throughout the day?
- ✓ How do you use the schedule to teach the routine and class expectations?



1b. Schedule is used as a teaching tool to enhance transitions.

Quality indicators:

- Teachers refer to the schedule throughout the day using it to share expectations.
- Teachers use the schedule to prepare children for changes in activities and movement from one instructional time to another.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ How do you use the daily schedule to support transitions?
- ✓ How often do you refer to the schedule throughout the day?



1c. Rules are posted with pictures and words.

Quality indicators:

- Children are able to see the rules, posted with pictures and words, from all areas of the room.
- Pictures are provided that clearly define the rules of the classroom.
- The number of rules ranges from three to five rules.
- Children participate in rule development.
- Rules are referred to throughout the school day and school year.
- Rules are easily understood by young children.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ How do you develop the classroom rules?
- ✓ How do you teach the rules to the children?
- ✓ How often do you refer to the rules throughout the day or the school year?
- ✓ How do you address rules that have been broken



1d. Class displays are child-created and/or related to instructional units.

Quality indicators:

- The classroom display changes throughout the year.
- The display is predominantly child created.
- There is variety in the display – some projects are academic such as writing or patterning, some projects are class projects, and some are purely for exploration and creative expression.
- The materials are hung at eye level.
- Encourage the artistic process by allowing children to explore and create with art materials. Avoid products that are adult-directed and allow little creative expression.



**Artistic Process
Emphasized:**
Children are permitted to explore and create

Questions to ask:

- ✓ When are children allowed to create their own artwork or explore with creative materials?
- ✓ Are children allowed to create class projects that differ from the teacher provided samples?



**Product development
is emphasized:**
Adult directed activity with minimal creative expression.

1e. Additional visual supports are used to support instruction.

Quality indicators:

- Use of pictures to support verbal communication such as stop signs, individualized picture schedules, scripted stories for social situations or first/then boards.
- Incorporation of manipulatives to support stories, finger plays and pictures paired with written words.
- Labeled shelves for organization.
- Visual supports provide non-verbal reminders and can enhance oral language development.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ How do you incorporate visual supports to enhance instruction?
- ✓ How do you use picture cues to support children who are having difficulty with task completion, following the schedule or adhering to rules?
- ✓ Are they consistently used throughout the day, month or year?
- ✓ Are they revised as needed?



2. Classroom materials are sufficient and in good condition.

2a. Classroom areas are organized, clearly defined, and un-cluttered.

Quality indicators:

- All areas of the room are clearly defined.
- Materials are organized and easily accessed by children and adults.
- Storage of materials not being used in centers or for current instructional units is minimal and not taking up classroom space.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ How often do you rotate materials?
- ✓ How many of the classroom materials are available for use by the children?
- ✓ Which materials in the classroom can only be accessed by adults?

2b. Shelves, bins, and areas for children's personal items are labeled.

Quality indicators:

- Words, pictures and shape outlines may be used when labeling.
- Children know where to put materials when not in use.
- The organizational system for the room is taught to the children.



Questions to ask:

- *How do children know where materials are stored or where to get desired materials?*
- *How do the children know where to put materials when they are done?*



2c. Materials are of sufficient quantity, interest, and variety to engage all children.

Quality indicators:

- Materials are stored on child-sized shelved.
- There are multiples of high interest class materials and shelves are stocked.
- There are plenty of activities available in the class that are rotated throughout the year, to keep children actively engaged and extend learning.
- Class materials are in good condition.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ *How often are materials rotated?*
- ✓ *Do children have access to high interest toys during center time activities?*
- ✓ *Can the children access materials independently?*

