

Observation Guide

Extension to Administrator's Walkthrough

Evidence-based Practices for Early Childhood Classrooms



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.

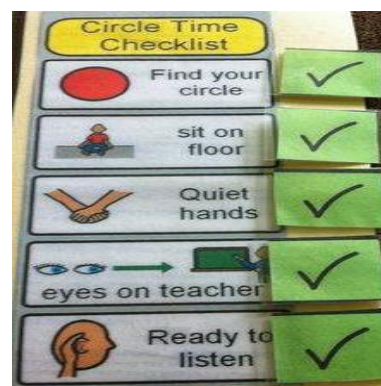
Quality indicators:

- 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 much 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?*



1. Evidence of lesson planning

1a. Instruction is meaningful, purposeful, and addresses FL standards.

Quality indicators:

- Activities are developmentally appropriate for the child's age and skill level.
- Children are working toward an intended goal, such as building a tower or expression through art activities.
- State standards and IEP goals are considered for both adult-initiated and child-initiated activities.
- Teachers prepare for lessons in advance with materials ready when children arrive.



Questions to ask:

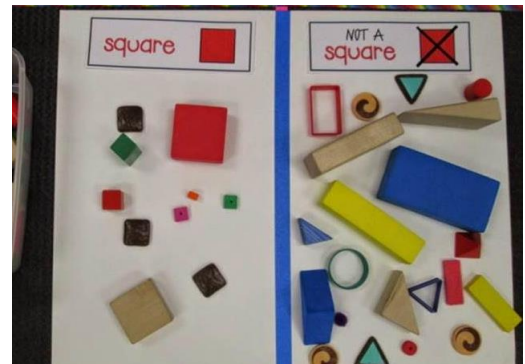
- ✓ What are children learning?
- ✓ How are activities developmentally appropriate?
- ✓ How are IEP goals and State Standards (VPK) embedded into this activity?

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1b. Teachers can verbalize instructional objectives and purpose of activity.

Quality indicators:

- Teachers can explain what children are learning throughout the day for all indoor and outdoor activities.
- Teachers can explain how activities relate to State Standards or IEP goals.
- Teachers are aware of IEP goals, accommodations and/or modifications for diverse learners.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ Do the children understand what they are learning? How do you know this?
- ✓ How are IEP goals and State Standards embedded into this activity?



1c. Plans and activities consider and accommodate for individual needs, including IEP goals.

Quality Indicators:

- Teachers' plans indicate use of adapted materials and activities when needed.
- Teachers' plans indicate multiple modes of presentation of lessons and activities and allow for repetition and practice.
- Teachers plan for and allow multiple modes or responses from children.
- IEP goals are addressed on lesson plans.



Questions to ask

- ✓ Are needed adapted materials readily available to children?
- ✓ Are activities planned to allow for multiple modes of learning and responding?
- ✓ Are IEP goals noted on lesson plans and evident in instructional strategies?



1d. Teachers use ongoing progress monitoring to inform group and individual plans.

Quality indicators

- A system for collecting information about children's performances throughout the day is in use by teachers/staff (examples: clip boards, sticky notes, data collection sheets, targeted goals and skills).
- Teachers/staff use a system for recording and monitoring progress (example: teacher-made progress monitoring tool, curriculum-based document, purchased progress monitoring tool).
- Progress monitoring is evident for skills across domains and at varying developmental levels.
- Information from progress monitoring is used to guide and inform instruction and planning, including provisions for extended practice, re-teaching, prompting and prompt fading, enrichment activities).

Subject	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Reading & Fine Motor	#1 Letter "F" Words The pictures that start with the letter F, then color them.	#2 "999 Tadpoles" 999 TADPOLES by Kim Kimura	#3 "I'm a Shark" I'm a SHARK
Math & Science	#6 Frog Life Cycle Frog Life Cycle	#7 Frog Jump Game Frog Jump Game	#8 Lily Pad Math Lily Pad Math $4 + 2 = 6$
Art	#11 Paper Plate Frog Paper Plate Frog	#12 Egg Carton Frogs Egg Carton Frogs	#13 Bubble Wrap Fish Bubble Wrap Fish

Questions to ask:

- ✓ Does the teacher/staff use a progress monitoring tool that has specific skills listed?
- ✓ Does progress monitoring include a variety of skills across domains and at varying developmental levels?

Lesson Title Here		
Subject Here	Year Group Here	Lesson # of #
Learning Objective	Resource	
Teaching Input		

1e. Observed activity matches information in plan book and/or posted daily schedule.

Quality indicators:

- Teachers keep to the posted schedule in order to maintain consistency and predictability in the classroom.
- Teacher explains the routine and expectations throughout the year and children are able to learn routine.
- The schedule is flexible enough to address teachable moments or unexpected events that may arise.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ What happens if the children are particularly interested in an activity but the time for the activity is exhausted?
- ✓ Under what circumstances do you change or modify the daily schedule/routine?



2. Embedded instructional strategies in developmental domains

2a. Independence and self-care skills are incorporated in daily routines.

Quality Indicators

- Adequate time is allowed for children to participate as independently as possible. Children who need assistance are provided prompts that lead to independence.
- Self-care skills are incorporated into daily routines and children participate in activities such as being "snack helper" or other classroom jobs.
- Children clean up and help organize/put away materials.



Questions to ask

- ✓ Is ample time allowed during the daily schedule for children to perform self-care skills?
- ✓ Are children encouraged and taught to help with cleaning up and other classroom jobs?
- ✓ Are there visuals to support children through the steps of self-care tasks?
- ✓ Is assistance (with a plan for fading prompts) provided for children who need assistance?



2b. Gross and fine motor skills are included in daily lessons and activities.

Quality Indicators

- Movement activities are provided periodically throughout the day (ex. movements, marching, walking like animals during circle and/or transitions)
- Active play is facilitated and encouraged.
- A variety of fine motor activities and materials are available throughout the day.
- Fine motor activities are developmentally appropriate and engaging and children receive assistance in fine motor tasks if needed.
- Adapted materials and tools are available for fine and gross motor activities



Questions to ask

- ✓ Are motor breaks and motor activities built into daily routines (example: movement activities interspersed with seated activities during circle time; movements incorporated into transitions)?
- ✓ Does the classroom offer a variety of fine motor activities, some of which are provided in centers and free choice areas?
- ✓ Do adults encourage and reinforce gross and fine motor activities throughout the day?



2c. Social/emotional skills instruction is provided throughout the day.

Quality indicators:

- Teachers use direct instruction of social emotional skills (such as sharing or turn taking).
- Teachers take advantage of “teachable moments” to reinforce taught skills.
- Teachers clearly communicate expectations and choices.
- Teachers respect and understand the feelings and emotions of children and help them identify acceptable solutions to difficulties.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ When do you provide children with instruction related to acceptable behavior?
- ✓ How are the rules and teacher expectations communicated to children?
- ✓ How are children taught alternative and acceptable behaviors to replace inappropriate behaviors?



2d. Emphasis on language and communication

Quality indicators:

- Teachers actively engage children in social conversation beyond the scope of the prescribed curriculum.
- Teachers identify vocabulary or linguistic concepts and embed them into teaching and learning opportunities.
- Teachers provide opportunities to practice use of new vocabulary or linguistic concepts.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ *How do you incorporate language or communication-building activities into all areas of the daily routine?*
- ✓ *What types of questioning strategies do you use to expand thinking and expressive/receptive communication skills?*



2e. Early literacy activities are embedded throughout the routine.

Quality indicators:

- Books and literacy materials are in all areas of the classroom, including centers.
- Children have access to many books, on a variety of topics of interest, and at developmentally appropriate levels.
- Books are rotated throughout the year and coordinate with the class units of study.
- Children are provided the opportunity to read and write throughout the day during adult-directed and child-directed activities.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ *How often do children visit the reading area or are children read to individually or in small groups?*
- ✓ *Are books on tape available to children?*
- ✓ *When are they utilized?*
- ✓ *What materials are children provided for independent writing? Where are they located in the classroom?*
- ✓ *How are children encouraged to select stories to read for pleasure that are not tied to the current unit of study?*



2f. Children are supported in awareness and use of learning goals

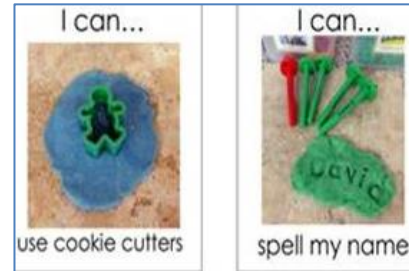
Quality indicators:

- Visuals support themes and daily lessons.
- Teachers reference “what we are learning”, support lessons visually, and follow up with activities to reinforce learning goals.
- Topics are introduced to children so they are oriented to teaching and learning tasks. Children can explain targeted vocabulary.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ *Children: What are you learning here?*
- ✓ *Children: Why is this important?*
- ✓ *Teachers: How do you use questioning to expand thinking and language comprehension/use?*
- ✓ *Teachers: How do you introduce lessons so the children find them meaningful and can make connections to previously learned materials?*



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3. Engagement and responsiveness

3a. Adults and children are engaged in the current activity

Quality indicators:

- Adults are aware of what is happening in the classroom.
- There is a balance of teacher directed and child directed activities.
- Children have the opportunity to make choices and teachers **facilitate** their learning, allowing the children to lead, during this time.
- Teachers check email, work on the computer, or use the cell phone during designated planning times.
- Teachers are having conversations with children and are genuinely interested in the lives of the children.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ *When do you allow children to make choices?*
- ✓ *How do you facilitate, rather than direct, instruction?*
- ✓ *When do you have conversations with children?*



3b. Conversations (child/child or adult/child) are encouraged and observed

Quality indicators:

- Teachers talk with children about instructional and non-instructional activities.
- Teachers and children laugh and teachers seem genuinely interested in the children's attempt to communicate.
- Teachers do not use language and communication for the sole purpose of directing children, teaching a new skill or asking questions about activities.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ *How / when do you have conversations with the children in the class?*
- ✓ *What types of things do you talk about?*
- ✓ *How do you encourage communication beyond instructional topics?*



3c. Adults demonstrate respect and cooperation in working together.

Quality indicators:

- Teachers share in the responsibilities of the classroom.
- Teachers work together as a team when planning, facilitating and implementing daily activities.
- Teachers speak to each other with kind words and professionalism.
- Teachers seem genuinely happy to be in the classroom and enjoying the children and planned activities.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ How are responsibilities shared?
- ✓ Do you enjoy your work and the children you educate?
- ✓ Are duties of teachers/staff varied according to interests and talents? Are the “desirable” and “undesirable” tasks rotated?



3d. Adults are interacting with, or facilitating interaction between children.

Quality indicators:

- Adults are engaged with activities with children.
- Adults allow children to assume the role of activity leader and follow the lead of the children.
- Adults give children the strategies they need to successfully interact with peers and adults.
- Adults exhibit proximity to the children – remaining in areas where children are working and are at the children's eye level.



Questions to ask:

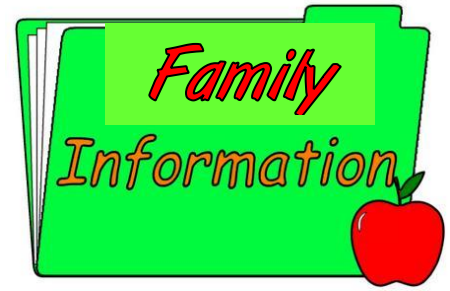
- ✓ When / how do you allow children to “take the lead” in the classroom or during unstructured activities?
- ✓ How do you help children develop independence in their interactions with peers and adults?



3e. There is evidence that teachers communicate and collaborate with families.

Quality Indicators:

- Teachers/staff maintain regular communication with families about classroom themes, schedules, and goals, including suggestions for follow-up at home.
- Teachers maintain communication with families about individual children's performances and needs, being sure to maintain confidentiality for each child.
- Teachers/staff communicate with families in a friendly and respectful manner.
- Teachers/staff consult with and include administrators if problems arise during interactions with families.



Questions to Ask:

- ✓ *Is information about classroom themes and events posted in a family information area (example: bulletin board near entryway) of the room and/or communication sent regularly?*
- ✓ *Are families encouraged to visit (within guidelines established by administrator), correspond, and/or make appointments to visit or conference?*
- ✓ *Do teachers/staff adhere to rules related to confidentiality of students?*
- ✓ *Are communications sent to families to encourage and give suggestions for reinforcing skills at home?*



4. Differentiated Instruction

4a. Teachers conduct ongoing progress monitoring to inform instruction.

Quality indicators:

- Teachers refer to information from progress monitoring to develop differentiated instructional strategies and include these strategies in the lesson plan books.
- Teachers recognize children's different levels of participation and make changes as needed.
- All children are active participants in each instructional lesson.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ *What resources do you use to support scaffolding of instruction?*
- ✓ *Where do you address differentiated instruction in your lesson plans?*
- ✓ *How do you include all children as active participants in the lessons or class activities?*



4b. Scaffolding/Universal Design for Learning practices are demonstrated.

Quality indicators:

- Teachers differentiate instruction for children in need.
- References to differentiated instructional strategies are included in the lesson plan books.
- Teachers recognize children's different levels of participation and make changes as needed.
- All children are active participants in each instructional lesson.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ *What resources do you use to support scaffolding of instruction?*
- ✓ *Where do you address differentiated instruction in your lesson plans?*
- ✓ *How do you include all children as active participants in the lessons or class activities?*



4c. Accommodations or modifications are used as needed and/or indicated on IEP's

Quality indicators:

- All children are active participants in the class activities.
- Activities are modified to accommodate the needs of children who are unable to meet the same instructional standards as their typically developing peers.
- Accommodations or modifications are documented in lesson plan books.
- Accommodations or modification are in accordance with IEPs.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ What types of modifications are used to ensure participation of children with special needs in all activities?
- ✓ What types of accommodations are used to ensure the participation of children with special needs in all activities?
- ✓ How are you documenting accommodations or modifications?
- ✓ Are you aware of, and implementing, accommodations or modifications for children with IEPs?



4d. Varieties of group sizes (whole, small, individualized) and length of activities are used.

Quality indicators:

- Sizes of groups vary and children are grouped in ways that expose them to multiple abilities and activities.
- Small group and individual practice is provided as follow-up for teaching skills introduced in whole group lessons.
- Teachers/staff are aware of and plan for shortening the time of activities or breaking activities into short/small components when needed to address needs.
- Teachers are aware of class/group size ratio indicated on IEP's and provide some groupings that address the recommended ratio when possible (teachers should note this in lesson plans).



Questions to ask:

- ✓ How are group sizes varied and used in the classroom? Are children grouped with different peers on a regular basis?
- ✓ Is the length of time of activities varied or individualized based on learning needs of the children?



4e. All children have opportunities to participate with peers in activities.

Quality indicators:

- Children with special needs are active participants in all class activities.
- Lesson plans include notes related to IEP goals, accommodations, modifications or differentiated instructional strategies as needed.
- Materials and activities are varied to accommodate for individual needs in learning styles, attention spans, needs for movement, repetition, and multiple modes of response.
- Teachers demonstrate and encourage empathy and tolerance and teach skills for interacting and problem-solving with peers.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ Are needed accommodations and adaptations readily available to facilitate all children being included in activities?
- ✓ Does an atmosphere of inclusion and friendship exist in the classroom?
- ✓ Do all teachers/staff work to support all children's participation in activities?



5. Facilitation of Social Skills and Behavior Management

5a. A system is in place for teaching and providing practice for behavior expectations.

Quality indicators:

- Teachers are proactive instead of reactive.
- Teachers promote and recognize positive behavior.
- Teachers review the daily rules throughout the day allowing time for direct instruction and practice.
- Rules are posted with pictures and words.
- There are between 3 – 5 rules that are developed with child assistance.
- Teachers are aware of developmentally appropriate behaviors.



Questions to ask:

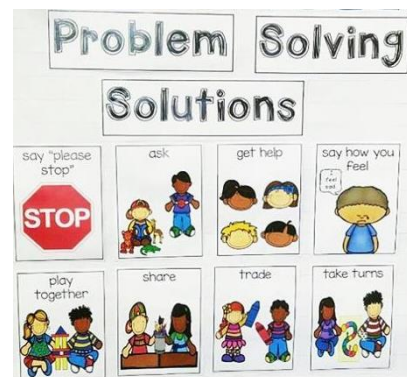
- ✓ How do children know what the rules mean?
- ✓ How often do you review the rules and classroom expectations?
- ✓ How do you take into account what is developmentally appropriate for typically developing children and children with special needs when addressing behavioral issues?



5b. Direct instruction is provided for social skills and replacement behaviors.

Quality indicators:

- Direct instruction is provided by the teachers related to acceptable behavior with examples and non-examples provided.
- Teachable moments are used to further explain classroom expectations.
- Children are provided with an alternative behavior and new skills are taught.
- Visual supports are used.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ How do children know what to do?
- ✓ How do you teach replacement behaviors?
- ✓ What visual supports are used to assist in the correction of inappropriate behavior?



5c. Additional supports and instruction are provided to students with behavioral/social difficulties.

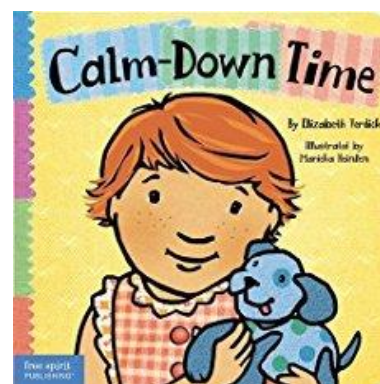
Quality indicators:

- Children remain in group activities and are not seated away from the other children on a regular basis unless it is indicated on their behavioral plan or IEP.
- Children who experience difficulties with social behavior are reminded of and retaught skills and strategies as needed.
- Frequent and continued attempts are made to include all children in instruction and class activities.
- Children are not removed from activities (such as recess) because of difficulty in a class activity earlier in the day.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ How do you use "time out" in the classroom or at recess?
- ✓ Are children removed from scheduled activities because of an unrelated behavioral issue?



5d. Transitions are anticipated, taught, and supported throughout the day.

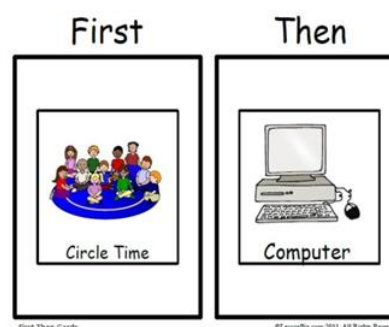
Quality indicators:

- Transitions are planned instructional times and are documented in the lesson plan book.
- Children are prepared in advance for transitions during a morning review of the daily schedule and again when the activity is changing.
- Teachers provide children with skills and practice related to transitions, referring to the classroom rules and expectations.
- Teachers use visual supports to ease transitions such as first/then boards, daily schedules, picture cues or individualized daily schedules.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ How do you prepare children for transitions?
- ✓ What activities do you prepare to ease transitions?
- ✓ What types of visual supports do you use to ease transitions?
- ✓ Are these supports used throughout the day, week or year?
- ✓ Are they changed as the needs of the children change?



5e. Opportunities and instructions are provided for making choices and initiating activities.

Quality indicators:

- There is a balance of adult directed and child directed activities throughout the day.
- Children are able to make choices during structured activities – such as stories or songs during the morning circle time.
- Children are able to make choices during unstructured activities – such as centers and recess.
- Children are permitted time to participate in academic or learning tasks of their choice without direct instruction from the teachers.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ At what times of the day are children permitted to make choices for preferred activities?
- ✓ Do you allow children to make choices during structured activities? How so?



5f. Teachers' actions provide a nurturing and respectful environment.

Quality indicators:

- Teachers speak with kind words and a soft tone of voice to all children, even those who can be defiant.
- Teachers share their concerns to children in a constructive manner and are proactive rather than reactive.
- Children are respected.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ *How do children know that they are cared for and respected in the classroom?*
- ✓ *What proactive strategies are put in place to prepare for children with behavioral issues?*



6. ESE supports and services

6a. Teachers/staff are aware of IEP goals, accommodations, and special needs.

Quality indicators:

- Teachers are aware of the goals written into the IEP for children with special needs.
- Teachers embed IEP goals into daily activities.
- Children with special needs are active participants in class activities with accommodations and modifications as needed.
- Integration of IEP goals is documented in lesson plans.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ *How do you document integration of IEP goals into the lesson plans?*
- ✓ *How often do you refer to the IEP and goals?*
- ✓ *How / when do you collect data toward goals?*



6b. Teachers meet required deadlines, updates, progress monitoring, IEP mandates.

Quality indicators:

- Teachers are aware of dates for IEP reviews, progress reports, and the paperwork needed for scheduling meetings and sending invitations.
- Teachers provide information about meetings, evaluation/re-evaluation needs to administrator and appropriate district personnel.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ *Is the teacher up-to-date on required IEP components?*
- ✓ *Does the teacher communicate with parents, administrator, and staff as indicated on the IEP?*



6c. Teachers/staff coordinate and plan with service providers (ex. SLP, OT, PT)

Quality indicators:

- Teachers/staff coordinate with service providers by sharing information about individual student and classroom needs.
- Teachers/staff provide information, schedules, and planning notes to service providers and assist in providing an integrated model of therapy.



Questions to ask:

- ✓ *Does the teacher coordinate with and include service providers in plans, lessons, and activities?*
- ✓ *Does the teacher welcome therapists into the classroom and facilitate an inclusion model of service delivery?*

