

Rock Your Classroom



Observation Guide

Evidence-based Practices for Early Childhood Classrooms



Focus on Engagement and Responsiveness

Adults and Children are engaged in the current activity.

Conversations (child/child and child/adult) are encouraged and facilitated.

Adults interact with and facilitate interactions between children.

Adults demonstrate respect and cooperation in working together.

There is evidence that teachers communicate and collaborate with families.

1. 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 to 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:

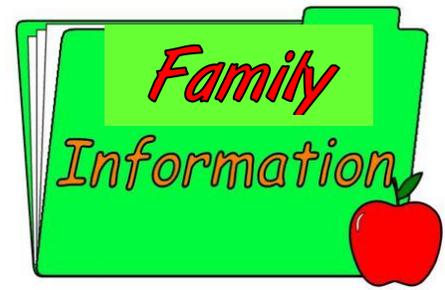
- ✓ *When / how do you allow children to “take the lead” in the classroom or during unstructured activities?*
- ✓ *How do you help children develop independence in their interactions with peers and adults?*



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?*

