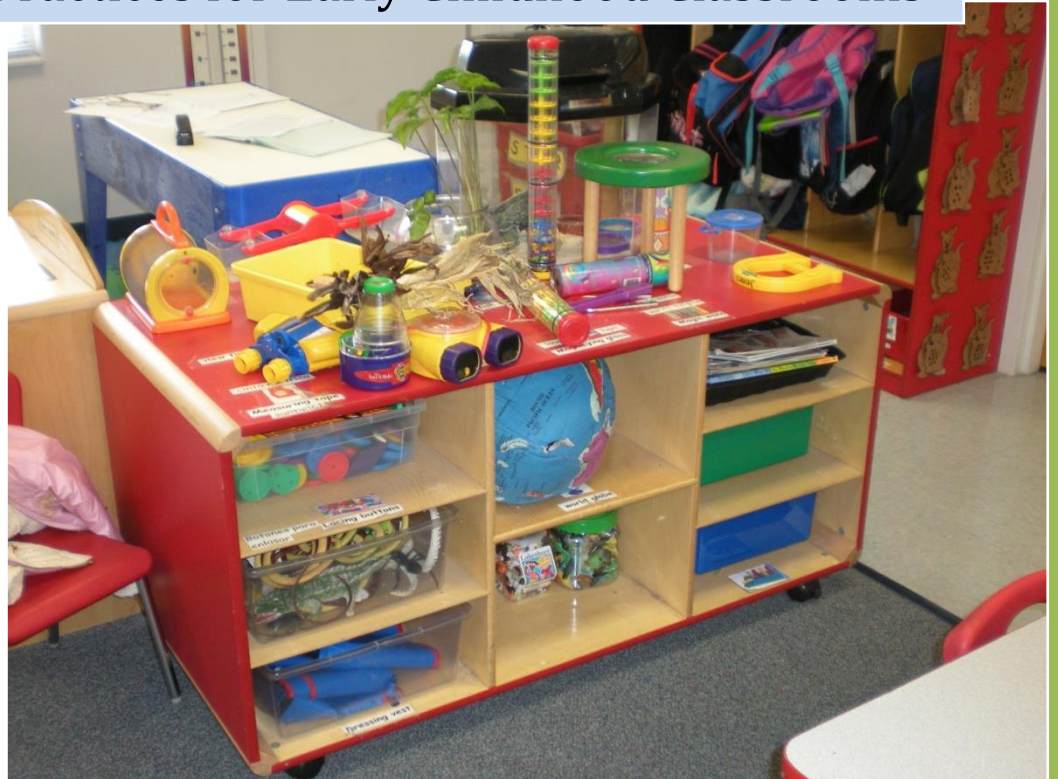




## Observation Guide

Professional Development Tool

# 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.

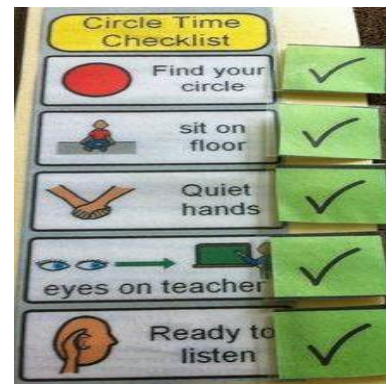
#### Quality indicators:

- 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:

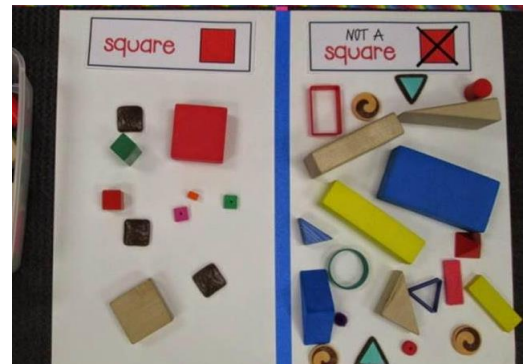
- ✓ *What are children learning?*
- ✓ *How are activities developmentally appropriate?*
- ✓ *How are IEP goals and State Standards (VPK) embedded into this activity?*

<http://flbt5.floridaearlylearning.com/>

### 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 <i>The pictures that start with the letter F, then color them.</i>	#2 "999 Tadpoles" 999 TADPOLES <i>by Kim Kimura</i>	#3 "I'm a Shark" <i>by Kim Kimura</i>
Math & Science	#6 Frog Life Cycle	#7 Frog Jump Game	#8 Lily Pad Math $4 + 2 =$
Art	#11 Paper Plate Frog	#12 Egg Carton Frogs	#13 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

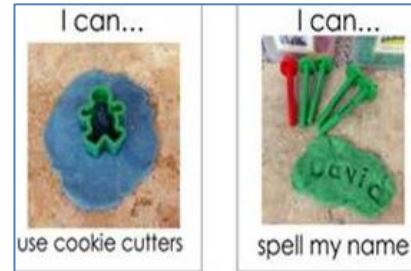
### Quality indicators:

- 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?*





### 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:

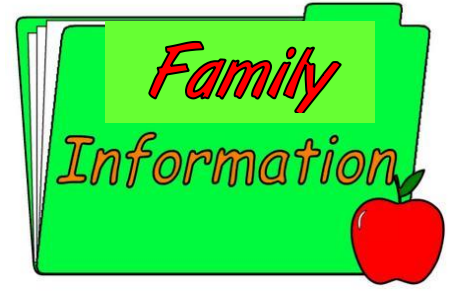
- ✓ When / how do you allow children to “take the lead” in the classroom or during unstructured activities?
- ✓ How do you help children develop independence in their interactions with peers and adults?



**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?

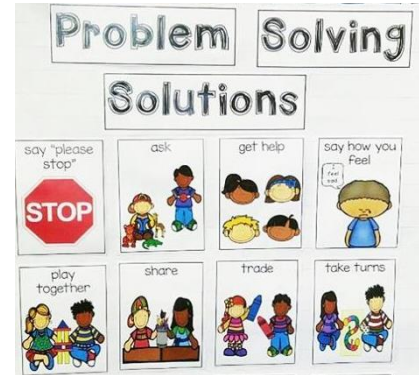




## 5b. Direct instruction is provided for social skills and replacement behaviors.

### 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.

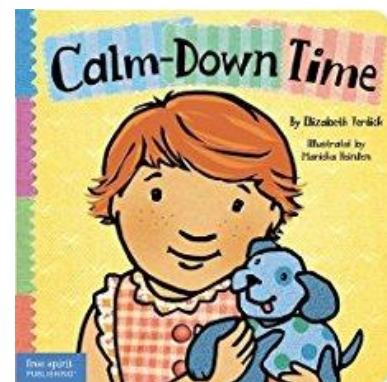
### Quality indicators:

- 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.

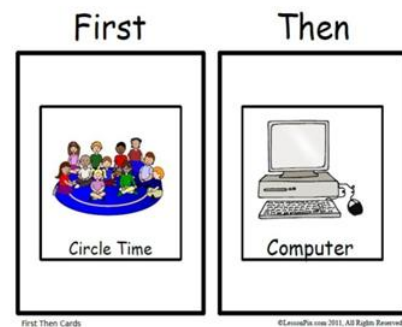
### Quality indicators:

- 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:

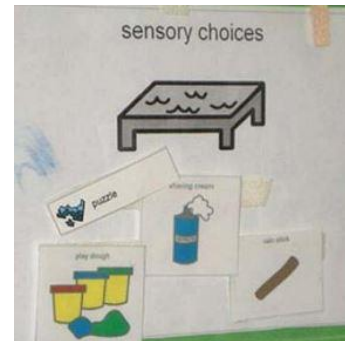
- ✓ How do you prepare children for transitions?
- ✓ What activities do you prepare to ease transitions?
- ✓ What types of visual supports do you use to ease transitions?
- ✓ Are these supports used throughout the day, week or year?
- ✓ Are they changed as the needs of the children change?



## 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?*

