



Rock Your Classroom

Observation Guide Professional Development Tool

Evidence-based Practices for Early Childhood Classrooms



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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.



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?



Supports, Accommodations, Adaptations

[Links to Additional Information](#)
[Right click to open in new window](#)

Universal Supports

- Use **mini-schedules** to show the actions associated with routines (ex. handwashing, lining up).
- Pair the symbol with **corresponding verbal directions and provide guided practice** through the activity in order to give children practice in the correct actions.

[Introduction to Schedules](#)

[Class Schedules](#)

[Universal Design for Learning in Early Childhood](#)

Targeted/Specialized Supports

- Use **individual schedules** for children who need to manipulate the schedule cards or who need photos of actual situations.
- Provide **accommodations** such as **reduced time, breaks, and sensory strategies** for some activities
- Provide **repeated instruction, modeling, and guided practice** for routines and activities.

[Flow Chart for Teaching Visuals](#)

[Individual Schedules](#)

[Schedules for Routines](#)

Intensive Interventions

- Use schedules that are **designed and individualized to meet specific needs**: photos, drawings, objects and representative objects (for children who don't yet understand a photo or drawing), tactile (for children with visual impairments or the need for tactile input).
- Provide **increased monitoring and interaction** activity to give **reminders and reinforcement** for participation
- Provide visuals for **alternative activities** for adaptations for length and level of activities.

[Specialized Schedules](#)

[Schedules for Devices](#)

[Tips and Ideas for Making Visuals - article from CSEFEL \(Vanderbilt\)](#)

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?



Supports, Accommodations, Adaptations

[Links to Additional Information](#) [Right click to open in new window](#)

Universal Supports

- Pair the symbol with **corresponding verbal directions and provide guided practice** through the activity in order to give children practice in the correct actions.
- Provide a visual symbol and verbal cue that indicates that it is time to change activities

[Universal Design for Learning in Early Childhood](#)

[Flow Chart for Teaching Visuals](#)

Targeted/Specialized Supports

- Use **individual schedules** for children who need to manipulate the schedule cards or who need photos of actual situations.
- Provide **repeated instruction, modeling, and continued guided practice** for transitions.
- Incorporate schedules that show **"first" and "then"** to prepare and reassure children who benefit from knowing what will happen next.
- Incorporate a method to let children know that an **activity has been completed** or is over (turning the visual symbol over, or placing the symbol in a "finished" envelope).

[How to Make a First/Then Visual \(Vanderbilt\)](#)

[Schedules for Transitions \(First/Then\)](#)

[Teaching and Supporting Transitions](#)

Intensive Interventions

- Use transition cues that are **designed and individualized to meet specific needs**: photos, drawings, objects and representative objects, tactile, photos of the specific child in area or activity.
- Provide **increased monitoring and interaction** during each transition to give **reminders and reinforcement** for changing activities

[Transition Tip Sheet \(for difficult transitions from ConnectAbility\)](#)

[Helping Children with ASD Transition Successfully - University of Indiana](#)

1. Visual supports are used to enhance instruction

1c. Rules are posted with pictures and words

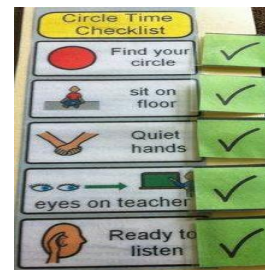
Quality indicators:

- 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



Supports, Accommodations, Adaptations

[Links for Additional Information](#)
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Universal Supports

- Pair the rule symbol with **corresponding verbal directions and provide guided practice** through the activity in order to give children practice in the correct actions.
- Incorporate **frequent verbal statements** to inform children that they are following the rules.

[Displaying Classroom Rules](#)

[General Classroom Rules with photos - Vanderbilt](#)

[Sharing Rules with Families](#)

Targeted/Specialized Supports

- Use **individual rule cards** for children who need to hold or be shown the cards as reminders.
- Use **photos** of the class or a specific child(individualized rules)
- Use **social statements** to make a story about following a specific rule.
- Incorporate a method for self-monitoring to let children **know how they are doing**. Provide a monitoring system.

[Specialized and Individualized Rules](#)

[Specific Rules for Activities - Vanderbilt](#)

[Providing Rule Reminders and Positive Feedback](#)

Intensive Interventions

- Provide increased monitoring, repeated instructions, and guided practice along with visuals that are **designed to meet specific needs** (photos, objects)
- Use an individualized schedule for delivery of **reinforcement**, starting with a **few focus rules** and **brief time periods**.
- Provide an **individualized social script** with photos to address specific needs for understanding expectations.

[Social Scripts and Self-monitoring](#)

[Classroom Rule Book](#)

1. Visual supports are used to enhance instruction

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.



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

Supports, Accommodations, Adaptations

[Links for Additional Information](#)
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Universal Supports

- Discuss and display **expectations** for the art center and provide prompts and guided practice in selecting, using, and cleaning up materials.
- Encourage children to work in pairs or small groups and to **share ideas** for open-ended projects.
- Allow **extra time** or an additional time period for children to be able to complete their projects.

[Supporting Children's Projects](#)

[Universal Design for Learning in Early Childhood](#)

[How Process-focused Art Experiences Support Preschoolers - NAEYC](#)

Targeted/Specialized Supports

- Provide a **model** and step-by-step directions on a **mini-schedule** for the activity. Model each step of a teacher-directed project.
- Accommodate for **sensory defensiveness** by allowing a child to choose an alternative method of using materials.
- Use various **placements of paper** (horizontal, vertical) and provide a way to show the border of the artwork (tape, cookie sheet).
- Provide **tools** with various sizes and styles of grips and handles

[Supporting Participation and Success](#)

[Fine Motor Activities for the Classroom](#)

[A Developmental Look at Children's Art](#)

Intensive Interventions

- Provide strategies for children with communication difficulties to participate in **labeling and describing** their projects.
- Provide **adapted materials** for children with physical difficulties or disabilities.
- **Consult and collaborate** with service providers (ex. Occupational/Physical/Vision)

[Accommodations and Adaptations for Classroom Tools](#)

[Fine Motor Development Checklist](#)

[Adapting Activities and Materials](#)

1. Visual supports are used to enhance instruction.

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?



Supports, Accommodations, Adaptations

[Links for Additional Information](#)
[Right click to open in new window](#)

Universal Supports

- Post visuals in play centers and activity areas to support children in making choices, communicating desires, following routines.
- Provide visuals and manipulatives that support story comprehension, retelling and sequencing.
- Organize and clearly label shelves and provide visuals to support cleaning up and putting away materials.
- Provide visuals that remind children about social play and interacting with peers.

[Tier 1 Supports - OSEP Technical Assistance Center](#)

Targeted/Specialized Supports

- Provide visuals that assist children in initiating and engaging in play scenarios and in using materials in the play centers.
- Pair visuals with instructions and guided practice during play centers and activity times.
- Pair photos of real objects with pretend toys and books to help children relate the information to real life
- Provide communication visual prompts to help children engage with peers.
- Provide first-then strips and mini-schedules for play and activities.

[Visuals to Support Social, Communication, and Transition skills](#)

[Visuals for Supporting Beginning Literacy and Math skills](#)

[Visuals for Supporting Play](#)

Intensive Interventions

- Provide supports that are individualized for specific needs (visuals, photos, objects, tactile) to help children understand and relate to instruction.
- Incorporate multi-sensory strategies and increase prompting levels to support participation.
- Provide individualized communication systems and/or adapted materials (tools, seating, movement, and sensory) to support participation.

[Literacy for Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss](#)

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?



Supports, Accommodations, Adaptations

Links for Additional Information
Right click to open in new window

Universal Supports

- Define areas with signs (ex. centers, quiet/calm area, class library).
- Post signs for areas that are not accessible during parts of the day (ex. computer area "closed").

→ [The Universal Design of Early Education - journal.naeyc](#)

Targeted/Specialized Supports

- Use carpets, carpet squares, and placement of furniture to further define areas of the room.
- Provide photos and visuals for students to help clarify and define specific areas (ex. photo of block area with directions for where to play with blocks).
- Provide visuals and instructions for putting away materials. Teach children how to match the labels on bins to the materials they are putting away.

→ [Designing Early Childhood Inclusive Classroom](#)

→ [Examples of Clearly Defined Areas - Specialized Supports and Intensive Interventions](#)

Intensive Interventions

- Arrange the room so that there is ample space for navigating for children who have special equipment, wheelchairs, walkers, and seating.
- Provide adaptations within each area for children with needs for tactile, visual, hearing, motor, and/or communication supports.

→ [Examples of Clearly Defined Areas - Specialized Supports and Intensive Interventions](#)

2. Classroom materials are sufficient and in good condition.

2b. Shelves, bins, and areas for each child's 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?



Supports, Accommodations, Adaptations

[Links for Additional Information](#)
[Right click to open in new window](#)

Universal Supports

- Labels for each child's areas for storing backpacks, lunchboxes, and individual items should be labeled with their names in addition to a recognizable visual (symbol, photo)

→ [Universal Design Tip Sheet](#)

Targeted/Specialized Supports

- Provide visual mini-schedules and/or social scripts to support children in the processes for locating, using, and putting away materials.
- Include labels to indicate that some areas are "closed" and that some materials are "Teacher" materials.
- Provide direct instruction and guided practice along with visual mini-schedules for children who are not yet familiar with the directions and actions of cleaning up, putting away items according to category.

→ [Examples of Labels for Specialized Supports and Intensive Interventions](#)

→ [Visuals for Supporting Play](#)

Intensive Interventions

- Provide hooks, cubbies, and bins that are accessible for children with motor, movement, or positioning needs. Examples: some bins with easily-removed lids, oversized hooks for hanging items, a cubby on the end of a row so that it is accessible for a child using a wheelchair.
- Consider accommodations for vision, tactile, and hearing when labeling the areas and the materials in the room.
- Provide labels related to safety. Emphasize and display safe use of furniture to decrease behaviors such as climbing on the shelves and tables.

→ [Examples of Labels for Specialized Supports and Intensive Interventions](#)

2. Materials are sufficient and in good condition.

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

Quality indicators:

- Materials are stored on child-sized shelves.
- 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?



Supports, Accommodations, Adaptations

[Links for Additional Information](#)
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Universal Supports

- Consider the following when choosing materials:
 - ✓ Wide range of developmental levels
 - ✓ Wide and varied range of interests
 - ✓ Addressing all domains of development throughout the day
 - ✓ Variety in materials that provide: physical motor play, quiet time, pretend play, manipulative items, problem solving, individual as well as group activities

→ [Best Toys for Young Children by Age and Stage - NAEYC](#)

→ [Planning a Developmentally Appropriate Program for Children](#)

Targeted/Specialized Supports

- Provide visual scripts and guided interactive play to assist children who need support in understanding how to use some toys or in engaging in pretend play with peers.
- Increase engagement for all children through the use of peer buddies.
- Provide visuals that are specific to toys and materials for making choices and for communicating with peers during play.

→ [Let's Play Project - Guidelines to Promote Play Opportunities for Children with Disabilities](#)

→ [Toy Tips - Ideas and Options for Children with Special Needs](#)

→ [Examples of Supports and Adaptations for Toys and Materials](#)


Intensive Interventions

- Include toys that are cause and effect in nature and that have a variety of responses (ex. lighting up, making noise, moving) and that have a variety of required actions to activate.
- Include toys such as puzzles with large knobs and specialized materials with accommodations for tactile, vision, hearing needs.

→ [AT Participation Supports for Young Children with Disabilities](#)

→ [Examples of Supports and Adaptations for Toys and Materials](#)

→ [Adaptive Materials Resources](#)

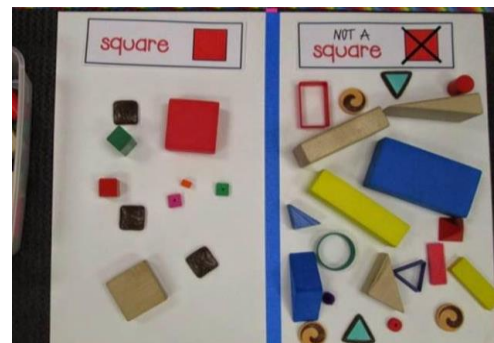
1. Evidence of lesson planning	
1a. Instruction is meaningful, purposeful, and addresses FL standards.	
<p>Quality indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities are developmentally appropriate for the child’s age and skill level. • Children are working toward an intended goal, such 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. 	
<p>Questions to ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What are children learning? ✓ How are activities developmentally appropriate? ✓ How are IEP goals and State Standards (VPK) embedded into this activity? 	<p>Link to Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards</p>
<p><i>Supports, Accommodations, Adaptations</i></p>	<p>Links for Additional Information <i>Right click to open in new window</i></p>
<p>Universal Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Teachers and staff should be familiar with Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards and be aware of the sequences of development described in each domain of the document. → Plans should allow for extension activities related to themes and skills. → Plans should allow for and encourage child-directed and social play activities. 	<p>Resources for Universal Design for Learning</p> <p>Teacher Toolkit for VPK and FELDS</p>
<p>Targeted/Specialized Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Lessons and themes should relate to “real-life” and objects and visuals that represent the information should be provided. → Pre-requisite skills and pre-requisite vocabulary should be directly taught → Lessons should provide for additional and extended practice of skills with re-teaching as needed. → IEP information (learning goals, present levels, learning styles and needs for support) is considered when planning and referenced in the lesson plans. 	<p>Individualizing Instruction in Preschool</p> <p>Sample Lesson Plan (editable)</p>
<p>Intensive Interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Prompting strategies should be pre-planned, taught to staff, and used consistently. → Manipulative and real-life objects should be provided. → Consult with family, service providers, and classroom staff to be sure that activities are accessible to children with intensive needs. → IEP information (learning goals, present levels, adaptations, learning styles and needs for support) is considered when planning lessons and activities. 	<p>Standards-based Instruction for Children with Intellectual Disabilities</p>

Evidence of Lesson Planning

1b. Teachers know and can describe instructional objectives and purpose of activities.

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?



Supports, Accommodations, Adaptations

Links for Additional Information
Right click to open in new window

Universal Supports

- Plans should be based on and correlated to the standards.
- Teachers and staff should be aware of how the lesson and the activities related to the standards, IEP's (as applicable), and progress monitoring (both formal and classroom-based) tools

[Teacher Toolkit for VPK and FELDS](#)

[Resources for Universal Design for Learning](#)

Targeted/Specialized Supports

- Display visuals stating and showing learning goals for lessons, activities, and specific needs
- Cue children to learning goals and show corresponding visuals before lessons and before introducing key details.
- Inform children verbally and visually how they are doing and remind them of what they have learned
- Teach skills directly and provide additional guided practice.

[Guide for Individualizing Instruction from Head Start Inclusion](#)

[FI VPK Assessment to Guide Quality Instruction](#)

[Sample Matrix: Know the Goal](#)



[Planning Matrix from Head Start](#)

Intensive Interventions

- State the goals for children with significant needs with simple and clear words and visuals, followed by prompting and guided practice.
- Collaborate with families and service providers to determine IEP goals and how they will be addressed.

[Ideas to Engage Students with Significant Multiple Disabilities](#)

[Planning Matrix from Head Start](#)







Evidence of Lesson Planning	
1c. Plans and activities consider and accommodate for individual needs, including IEP goals.	
<p>Quality Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	
<p>Questions to ask</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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? 	
<i>Supports, Accommodations, Adaptations</i>	<p>Links for Additional Information Right click to open in new window</p> <p><u>Teacher Toolkit for VPK and FELDS</u></p> <p><u>Resources for Universal Design for Learning</u></p>
<p>Universal Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Teachers and staff should become familiar with strategies for children who have been identified to have needs for support. → Plan for accommodations and specialized materials as appropriate. Consult with service providers and family members regarding meeting the needs. → Monitor progress as well as success of supports in order to share information with family 	<p><u>Individualizing Instruction in Preschool</u></p> <p><u>Guide for Individualizing Instruction from Head Start Inclusion</u></p> <p><u>FL VPK Resource - Language Scaffolding</u></p> <p><u>Example Lesson Plan with Standards and Accommodations (editable)</u></p>
<p>Targeted/Specialized Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Plan and implement a systematic process of prompting → Provide photos, visuals, and objects related to themes and lesson information. → Plan for using specialized and adapted materials for motor, vision, and cognitive needs. Plans should include information related to each child's access to activities. → Allow for extended practice, re-teaching, and strategies such as decreased time at one task, sensory breaks, and hands-on practice. 	<p><u>Adapting Materials and Activities</u></p> <p><u>Children with Multiple Disabilities - Tips for Teachers</u></p> <p><u>Standards-based Instruction for Children with Intellectual Disabilities</u></p> <p><u>Example Lesson Plan with Standards and Accommodations (editable)</u></p>
<p>Intensive Interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Consult and collaborate with family and service providers to support goals and be certain that adapted materials are provided. → Include skills that are related to real-life and provide examples during lessons that allow children to use the information. → Include adaptive and self-care skills in the daily schedule and provide sufficient support and practice for children to learn the skills. → Implement specific plans to address behaviors, communication, AAC use, as needed. 	

Evidence of Lesson Planning

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

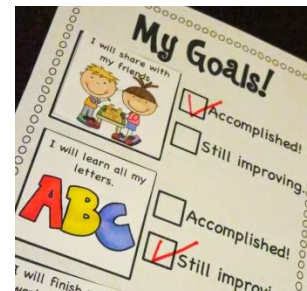
Quality indicators

- 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.

Subject	Monday	Tuesday
Reading & Fine Motor	#1 Letter “F” Words 	#2 “999 Tadpoles” 999 TADPOLES 
Math & Science	#6 Frog Life Cycle 	#7 Frog Jump Game 
Art	#11 Paper Plate Frog 	#12 Egg Carton Frogs 

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?



Supports, Accommodations, Adaptations

Links for Additional Information Right click to open in new window

Universal Supports

- Refer to FL Standards and to developmental checklists in order to determine appropriate ranges of skill development in each domain.

[Resources related to Progress Monitoring](#)

[Early Childhood Building Blocks for Inclusion \(University of Ohio\)](#)

Targeted/Specialized Supports

- Provide visuals that support children in understanding goals for specific lessons and activities.
- Provide visual expectations and a marking system such as checks or stickers to help children self-monitor.
- Support children in rating and determining “How I am Doing” related to the steps of learning a skill.
- Collect data that is related to specific steps of activities and record the needs for supports. Consult and collaborate with family members and service providers to help determine “next steps” for children.

[Guide for Individualizing Instruction from Head Start Inclusion](#)

[Sample Group Matrix](#)

[Example: Activity Matrix \(Individual\)](#)

[Checklist based on Routines](#)

[Flow Chart for Using Data](#)

[Opportunities for Observation and Data Collection](#)

Intensive Interventions

- Collect data that is detailed for each activity to describe the level of prompting and support needed, as well as the rate of progress. Data such as this is important for reviewing and revising learning goals.
- When collecting data related to behavior supports, include information that can be used in determining antecedent behavior as well as reinforcers.
- When collecting data related to communication, note the child’s modes of communication as well as reasons for communicating.

[Accommodations and Modifications at a Glance](#)

[Example: Activity Matrix \(Individual\)](#)

[Flow Chart for Using Data](#)

[Opportunities for Observation and Data Collection](#)

Evidence of Lesson Planning

1e. Activities match 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?*



Supports, Accommodations, Adaptations

Links for Additional Information
Right click to open in new window

Universal Supports

- Visual supports for schedules and routines are displayed and referenced throughout the day.
- Visuals include a variety of representations in order to meet unique needs.

[Resources for Universal Design for Learning](#)

Targeted/Specialized Supports

- Children are provided assistance and support in learning the meanings of classroom visuals and are provided guided practice during routines and activities.
- Provide schedules that accommodate for needs for visual, cognitive, behavioral, and communication support, example: high contrast printing, object, tactile, photo schedule.
- Provide for and indicate in the posted schedule times for groups of various sizes as well as for individualized instruction as needed

[Grouping Children to Promote Growth](#)

[The How and Why of Using Small Groups in Preschool](#)

Intensive Interventions

- Provide strategies within routines to assist with transitions, example: first/then cards, timers to show when activities end or begin.
- Provide schedules that accommodate for needs for visual, cognitive, behavioral, and communication support, example: high contrast printing, object, tactile, photo schedule.
- Provide individualized assistance, prompting, and guided practice
- Provide for and indicate in the posted schedule times for groups of various sizes as well as for individualized instruction as needed

[Ideas to Engage Students with Significant Multiple Disabilities](#)

[Opportunities for Observation and Data Collection](#)

[Checklist based on Routines](#)

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

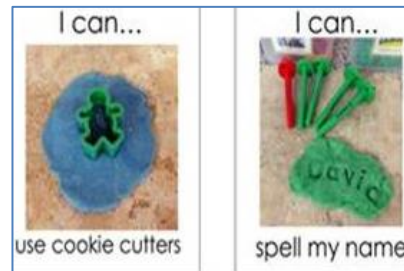
Quality indicators:

- 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 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:

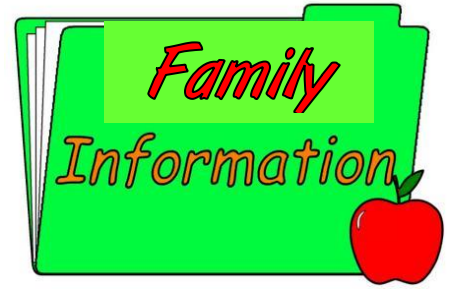
- ✓ When / how do you allow children to “take the lead” in the classroom or during unstructured activities?
- ✓ How do you help children develop independence in their interactions with peers and adults?



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?*



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.

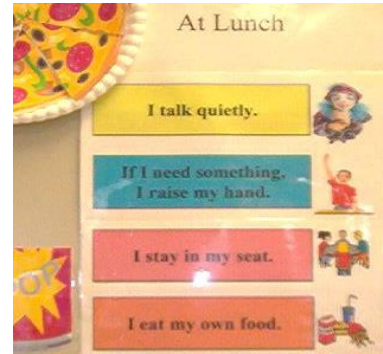
Quality indicators:

- 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:

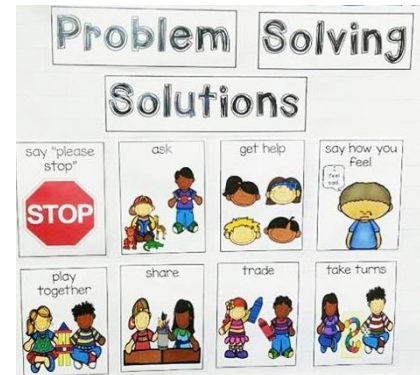
- ✓ How do children know what the rules mean?
- ✓ How often do you review the rules and classroom expectations?
- ✓ How do you take into account what is developmentally appropriate for typically developing children and children with special needs when addressing behavioral issues?



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.

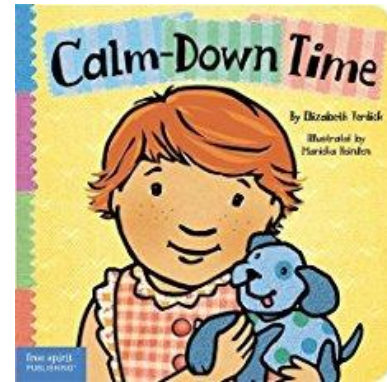
Quality indicators:

- 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.

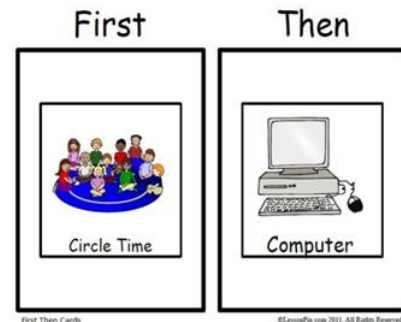
Quality indicators:

- 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:

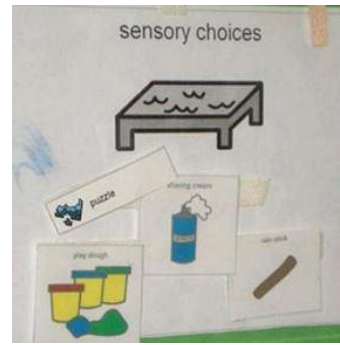
- ✓ How do you prepare children for transitions?
- ✓ What activities do you prepare to ease transitions?
- ✓ What types of visual supports do you use to ease transitions?
- ✓ Are these supports used throughout the day, week or year?
- ✓ Are they changed as the needs of the children change?



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?*

