



Observation Guide Professional Development Tool

Guide to Evidence-based Practices



Focus on Engagement and Responsiveness:

Adults and children are engaged in the current activity.

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

Adults demonstrate respect and cooperation in working together.

Adults interact with children and facilitate interaction between children.

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

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?*



Supports, Accommodations, Adaptations

Links for Additional Information
Right click to open in new window

Universal Supports

- Plan lessons that address varying needs for extended and guided practice, hands-on activities, and real-life, visual, and photo connections.
- Classroom adults provide feedback, redirection, and supports as needed.
- Classroom adults are observant of children's engagement for purposes of providing support and progress monitoring

[Visuals for Supporting Instruction](#)

[Noticing Student Engagement \(Marzano document\)](#)

[Environments that Invite Learning](#)

[Encouraging Participation in Shared Living](#)

Targeted/Specialized Supports

- Provide adaptations and modifications as needed to assist children in staying engaged and participating.
- Include multi-sensory activities related to lessons and themes in centers and activity areas.
- Ensure that children are given varying modes to respond to activities, questions, and books.

[TATS-Talks-about-Supports-and-Adaptations](#)

[Zoning the Room for Increased Engagement](#)

[TATS Talks - Supporting Communication and Literacy](#)

[Embedding Individualized Instruction](#)

Intensive Interventions

- Consult and collaborate with service providers and therapists to determine supports for children with significant needs in areas such as responding and using/manipulating materials.
- Provide interventions, accommodations, and adaptations to address needs for individual instruction, adapted materials, and physical assistance.

[Accommodations for Supporting Children in Art and Fine Motor](#)

[Supporting Communication for Various Ages and Developmental Levels](#)

[Using Adapted Books to Encourage Participation and Teach Core Words](#)

[Adapting Activities and Materials for Young Children with Disabilities](#)

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?



Supports, Accommodations, Adaptations

Links for Additional Information

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Universal Supports

- Set up the room with items and displays that interest children, talk about them, and encourage children to express interests.
- Provide wait time and encouragement for children who are hesitant to talk or at beginning levels of communication.
- Accept communication from all children in the classroom in the manner they are able to respond. Support efforts of children who have difficulty.

[Talk, Read, and Sing Together Every Day - Ideas for engaging children in conversation](#)

[Reading with Children is an Opportunity for Conversation - project of National Institute of Literacy](#)

[Talking with Young Children](#)

Targeted/Specialized Supports

- Provide visuals such as core boards, communication boards, choice boards to support children.
- Provide opportunities for children to "talk about" what interests them and support them with visuals/pictures/objects.
- Support children in remembering words with visuals, songs, rhyming patterns.

[Word Games for Listening and Talking - resource from US Office of Special Education - pdf](#)
[TATS Focus on Communication and Language - links to strategies](#)

[Encouraging Oral Language and Conversations](#)

Intensive Interventions

- Collaborate with therapists to develop individualized communication systems.
- Be observant of each child's individual levels of development, modes of communication, and preferences for play and toys.
- Teach children to make choices and provide visual and object support.

[Helping Team Members Respond to Various Modes of Communication](#)

[Supporting Children with Various Response Modes](#)

[Supporting Communication for Various Ages and Developmental Levels](#)

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?



Supports, Accommodations, Adaptations

Links for Additional Information
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Universal Supports

- Classroom staff should collaborate to develop a daily schedule that allows them to share in responsibilities.
- Classroom staff should attend trainings and workshops to receive information about best practices for teaching young children.
- Information related to children’s performances for progress monitoring and children’s needs should be shared.

[11 Things Rocking Co-teachers Do](#)

[Establishing Classroom Teamwork](#)

[Collaboration in Co-taught classrooms](#)

Targeted/Specialized Supports

- Roles and responsibilities for all aspects of the day should be clearly defined and indicated on the daily schedule.
- IEP goals, accommodations, and supports should be addressed by all classroom staff and service providers.

[Checklists for Teacher and Associates - FDLRS document](#)

[TATS Talks about Classroom Collaboration](#)

[Five-Step Process for Collaborative Planning - Minnesota Division of Special Education](#)

[Best Practices for Collaborating with Preschool Service Providers](#)

Intensive Interventions

- All classroom staff should provide supports in self-care routines.
- Collaborate with therapists and service providers to develop specific individualized plans. All staff should be aware of the plans and of the supports needed.
- Health plans and emergency response should be shared with all staff.
- Classroom staff should be familiar with the stages and sequence of child development.

[Domains of Development - Chart](#)

[TATS Talks - Overview of Developmental Domains](#)

[1,2,3 Care - Toolkit for Trauma-Informed Supports](#)

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 by 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?*



Supports, Accommodations, Adaptations

Links for Additional Information Right click to open in new window

Universal Supports

- Arrange the room so that children have a variety of interesting activities.
- Provide centers and toys that encourage children to initiate activities and to invite friends to join.
- Reference and discuss skills for peer interactions during activities. Relate books to social skills.

[Activities that Encourage Cooperative Play](#)

[Book Nook - Example of Using Books to Support Social Emotional Skills](#)

Targeted/Specialized Supports

- Provide and teach visuals related to class rules, peer interactions.
- Facilitate peer interactions and encourage skills such as initiating play, problem solving, and handling conflict.
- Remain in close proximity to groups of children for monitoring, providing guided practice of play and interaction skills.
- Provide feedback, reinforcement, and additional instruction and practice

[Facilitating Peer Interaction - University of Arizona](#)

[Teaching Young Children Self-Control Skills](#)

[Supporting Children During Play](#)

[Helping Children Learn to Make Decisions](#)

[Grouping Children for Social Growth](#)

Intensive Interventions

- Develop or use a curriculum of lessons that address specific skills. Provide intensive intervention and additional instruction for children who are experiencing difficulties.
- Provide and teach visual cues for social interaction.
- Develop social stories that address a specific skill for children experiencing difficulty. Include visuals and actual photos in the story.

[How to Choose a Social Skills Curriculum](#)

[Process for Teaching Social Skills](#)

[TATS Talks - Developing and Teaching Social Skills Lessons](#)

[Facilitating Peer Interaction](#)

[Visual cue Scripts for Playing with Friends](#)

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 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?*
- ✓ *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?*



Supports, Accommodations, Adaptations

Links for Additional Information
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Universal Supports

- Develop a system (family bulletin board, newsletter) to share information with families.
- Welcome families and allow for regular times in your schedule for meetings, conferences (as directed by school administration)
- Communicate regularly regarding children’s progress and needs as well as suggestions for reinforcing skills at home.

- [*A Family Engagement Guide from Head Start*](#)
- [*Tips for Schools to Enhance Family Engagement*](#)
- [*Internet Resources for Partnering with Families*](#)

Targeted/Specialized Supports

- Update family members regularly regarding progress related to IEP goals as well as other skills noted in progress monitoring.
- Collaborate with families to present information (visuals, vocabulary, routines) consistently.
- Provide resources and information about community resources that might be beneficial to the family.
- Plan efficiently for IEP to present progress and current levels and collaborate with the family in determining goals.

- [*Encouraging Family Engagement - CEC checklist*](#)
- [*Sharing Class Rules with Families*](#)
- [*Links to TATS Talks to Families \(6 resources about ESE and Transition\)*](#)
- [*Engaging Families in Early Childhood Education*](#)

Intensive Interventions

- Discuss skills and behaviors related to children’s disabilities honestly but kindly with family members.
- Involve families in setting goals and in helping to monitor the impact of interventions in the home setting.
- Provide information about community resources and support groups that might be helpful to the family.
- Collaborate and have discussions with families to not only identify issues but to celebrate progress in steps toward goals.

- [*Solutions for Families - Tips for Parents of Young Children with Challenging Behavior*](#)
- [*Engaging Families in Ongoing Child Assessment*](#)
- [*Unplanned Journey - Resources for Families with Children with Disabilities*](#)
- [*Partnering with Families of Children with Disabilities*](#)