

Infant Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS®) Internal Self-Reflection Tool

Program Name: _____ Classroom: _____

Teacher's Name(s): _____ Date: _____

Partner(s): _____

The Infant Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS®) focuses on the effectiveness and quality of teacher-child interactions; the extent to which teachers provide infants with a secure base for exploration, how teachers sensitively respond to their individual cues and needs, and encourage their early language development. The nurturing and trusting connections built with infants, and the engaging opportunities provided for them to learn builds strong foundations for social, emotional, and cognitive development.

The Internal Self-Reflection Tool is specifically developed to support you in your continuous quality improvement efforts. It will help you become more familiar with the Infant CLASS® tool, reflect on your current practices, and get started looking at and developing goals around teacher-child interactions. This tool can be used independently by teachers, classroom teams, or can be used with a trusted partner; a Quality Coach, mentor, assessor, technical assistance consultant, or another childcare provider. Be as open and honest as you can during this self-reflection process. It will assist you in developing goals to help build your professional growth.

The self-reflection tool includes checklist items and open-ended questions for teachers to read and reflect on. The tool was organized to align with the one Infant CLASS® domain and dimensions as shown below:

Responsive Caregiving

- Relational Climate
- Teacher Sensitivity
- Facilitated Exploration
- Early Language Support

*Throughout this tool, teachers will rate how consistently (Always, Sometimes, Never) they utilize the practices in each dimension. Each term is defined below to assist in answering these questions:

- **Always** – Practice is used on a regular basis (frequently) throughout the entire classroom day.
- **Sometimes** – Practice is used occasionally, rather than all the time with children.
- **Never** – Practice is used very rarely or not at all when working with children.

“We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience.”

- John Dewey, philosopher and educator

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The **Responsive Caregiving** Domain assesses the positive connection between teachers and children, including joint attention and enjoyment, a respectful and gentle approach used by teachers, and lack of negativity. This domain measures teacher’s responsiveness to children’s emotions and needs, their interactions and involvement during routine care and play, how they follow the children’s lead and provide them with choices, their use of language to label and describe, and using imitation and repetition when children use language.

Relational Climate	How Consistently?		
	Always	Sometimes	Never
I sit next to the infants on their level and join in their play and activities.			
I provide the infants with verbal and physical affection (e.g. gentle touches, hugs, positive comments).			
The infants and I smile and laugh together frequently.			
I use a warm, calm tone of voice with infants and do not display irritation or frustration during my interactions with them or other adults.			
How do I build warm, supportive relationships with each infant I work with?			
How do I communicate intentions, transitions, or changes to infants before acting on them (e.g. letting the infant know you will be wiping their nose before physically touching them)?			
In what ways might my attitudes, emotions, or interactions negatively impact the children or group?			

Teacher Sensitivity	How Consistently?		
	Always	Sometimes	Never
During routines and activities, I position my body so it is turned towards the infants and I can easily look around the room.			
I take notice and acknowledge infants who are making bids for my attention, as well as those who are not.			
I quickly recognize and respond to the infant’s positive and negative emotions and their needs for attention, comfort, or assistance.			
The infants look for and reach for me when trying something new and when they are upset.			

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What verbal and nonverbal (physical) cues do the infants give when indicating a need for help or attention? How do I respond to those cues? Am I always able to respond in a timely manner; why or why not?

If an infant is sending me signals, but I can't get to them immediately, how do I let them know that I am coming?

How do I adjust my responses/actions based on the needs of the infants (e.g. when trying to soothe a crying infant, a teacher may try to engage them with a rattle, but when that doesn't seem to be working, they switch to rocking them instead)?

Facilitated Exploration	How Consistently?		
	Always	Sometimes	Never
I regularly move around the room, playing with and talking to the infants, during play and within routines (e.g. diaper changes, feeding, etc.).			
I imitate infants' behaviors/actions (e.g. clapping your hands together in response to an infant clapping their hands).			
I provide opportunities and time for infants to safely explore the room and materials on their own.			
I support infant's engagement and development by verbally encouraging them or adding to an experience (e.g. excitedly saying "You can do it," as an infant learning to crawl moves toward a toy, showing them how to push a button so an animal pops up).			
How do I use routine times (diaper changes, mealtimes, etc.) to interact and communicate with infants one-on-one?			
How do I know an infant is interested in learning more about or explore something? What are some signals that show me they are not interested in an activity or material?			

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How am I encouraging peer interactions in the classroom?

Early Language Support	How Consistently?		
	Always	Sometimes	Never
I label and describe objects, people, and pictures in the classroom.			
I use complete sentences and a variety of descriptive words when speaking to and interacting with infants.			
I encourage infants to talk by imitating and initiating sounds or words with them.			
I respond to infant's communication attempts and actions by adding more words or phrases (e.g. when an infant says "da" and points to a picture, you extend this by stating that it's a white dog and they go woof, woof).			
How do I model language for infants? Reflect on if I ever verbally describe what I am doing or infants' actions during play and routines.			
What techniques do I use to engage infants in back-and-forth exchanges? How do I encourage and model turn-taking during these conversations?			
How do I have conversations with nonverbal infants? What are some ways nonverbal infants might communicate with me?			

References: *Improving Teacher–Child Interactions: Using the CLASS* [PDF]. (2013). The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning. Retrieved from: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/using-the-class-in-hs-preschool-programs.pdf>

Teachstone Training, LLC. (2014). *CLASS Dimensions Guide: Infant*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing.

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Take some time to review your reflections. Notice the positive teacher-child interaction strategies you are already doing to promote children’s social and cognitive development. What areas would you identify as strengths within in each dimension of the Responsive Caregiving domain?

Responsive Caregiving
Relational Climate:
Teacher Sensitivity:
Facilitated Exploration:
Early Language Support:

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During the reflection process, also consider some areas for growth. You can also collaborate with an assistant, peer, or partner during this; you can exchange feedback, provide support, and hold each other accountable throughout the process. Below is a template that will allow you to create a plan to move from reflection to action.

1. Identify and develop 3 goals that focus around your needs; indicate the CLASS® dimension as well.
2. Identify why each is important to you.
3. Outline the process you will follow to achieve each goal; focus on observable and measurable steps.
4. Begin implementation within a realistic time frame.
5. Set date to complete the self-assessment again, so you can **review your progress**, celebrate your successes, and possibly identify new areas to address.

Goal/Dimension	Why is this important	Steps/Process	Monitoring Review

*It is important to remember that change is gradual. Continue with the process, learn from it, and see the beneficial outcomes for the classroom environment, children, and teachers.