

Getting to Know the Assessment Tool

PURPOSE

To provide an opportunity for teachers to reflect and discuss their understanding of quality indicators in a particular assessment tool like the ECERS-R, ITERS-R or CLASS Pre-k. The activity offers a format to self-assess and consider changes to improve quality in the classroom environment.

DIRECTIONS

Teachers work in small learning teams. Learning teams are best defined as ongoing groups of four or five teachers that meet regularly with the focus on increasing understanding about children's learning. For this activity, the learning team determines which item in the assessment tool they want to work on. Once that is determined, each person on the team completes the attached handout titled *Getting to Know the Assessment Tool*. It is fine to use the assessment tool books to guide their thoughts in completing the handout. It is important that the handout is used as an individual tool for reflection that is completed prior to meeting as a group. This allows the learning team to hear varying perspectives and interpretations from one another.

Once each member of the team completes the handout a learning team meeting is scheduled for discussion. In round robin fashion, each person shares one or two components from their completed handout that were of particular interest to them. Once each person has had a turn, the group responds to the guided questions below:

- What are common beliefs we agree upon relating to this item of the assessment tool?
- Are there any areas where we have differing points of view?
- What resources might help guide our group to a better understanding of this item?
- Are there steps we'd like to take to improve this item in our classrooms?

The group generates a list of what they do well and possible next steps to implement or improve this item in their classrooms.

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HANDOUT #1

Teacher:		Date:	
Assessment tool:			
Item or dimension:			
<hr/> Why does this item matter for positive child outcomes?			
Key questions prompted by the item	The environment includes	A child will experience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ■ ■ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ■ ■ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ■ ■ 	
When you think about this item in your own environment, what questions come up?			
What steps are necessary to implement or improve this item in your environment?			

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HANDOUT #2

Teacher: <i>Marta</i>		Date: <i>September 23</i>
Assessment tool: <i>CLASS Pre-K</i>		
Item or dimension: <i>Instructional Learning Formats</i>		
<p>Why does this item matter for positive child outcomes?</p> <p><i>While we want children to have fun play experiences, we also want them to be actively learning.</i></p>		
Key questions prompted by the item	The environment includes	A child will experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Am I involved, asking meaningful questions and expanding children's interests?</i> ▪ <i>Do the children have a wide range of hands-on materials that peak their curiosity?</i> ▪ <i>When I scan the room, are children actively engaged in activities?</i> ▪ <i>Can the children explain what they are learning?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Teachers moving around and working with the children</i> ▪ <i>Lots of materials and experiences for kids to explore, like the new recycled art materials I put out on the art shelf this week</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Never being bored or sitting around waiting!</i> ▪ <i>Active, hands-on learning</i>
<p>When you think about this item in your own environment, what questions come up?</p> <p><i>I think I do a pretty good job with the dimension Instructional Learning Formats during free choice time. But I'm not so sure how well I do during group time. It feels like I spend a lot of time correcting children's behavior and trying to get them to listen. They often seem tuned out. I wonder what a high score in this CLASS dimension looks like during group time.</i></p> <p><i>I would also like to learn more about the effective facilitation indicator within this dimension. What do they mean by "effective questioning?"</i></p>		
<p>What steps are necessary to implement or improve this item in your environment?</p> <p><i>Perhaps I could observe one of Sam's group times? During our learning team sessions he has described some pretty interesting things he's done with the children when they gather as a whole group.</i></p> <p><i>I wonder if our learning team could review some of the CLASS video clips that focus on effective facilitation. The videos might offer some concrete examples. If I'm not sure about this concept, others might be struggling too.</i></p>		