

Quality Counts Santa Cruz County CLASS® Assessment Protocol

Qualifications and Requirements of Assessors

- a) All assessors retained to conduct Quality Counts Santa Cruz County (QCSCC) CLASS® assessments must meet the training, certification and calibration qualifications specified by the authors of the tool and the Quality Counts California (QCC) Implementation Guide.
- b) All assessors will be familiar with and follow protocols described by this document and the QCC Implementation Guide.
- c) Assessor qualifications should include cultural and linguistic responsiveness. Sites should be matched to assessors with the appropriate language capacity. During the scheduling process, the administrators should be asked to identify the primary language of instruction and any dominant cultural norms of staff and enrolled families.
- d) Assessor qualifications should include an understanding of the intent of the CLASS® PreK tool items so that the assessor can use well-informed judgment and appropriate flexibility when assessing programs with various philosophies and curriculums.

Establishing and Maintaining Assessor Reliability

CLASS

- a) Each CLASS assessor must have proof of current certification from Teachstone demonstrating reliability on the CLASS® 2008 PreK tool.
- b) CLASS drift testing* must be conducted at least one time between annual recertifications. The drift testing may be carried out in one of two ways:
 - 1. Online calibration during an assigned period of time – code one 20-minute video and achieve at least 80 percent reliability. Observers also may review a one-hour webinar debrief of the video after coding.
 - 2. Live double-code with an experienced CLASS-certified assessor identified by the consortium.

*See QCC Implementation Guide for further details on CLASS Drift Testin

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Scheduling Observations

To the extent possible, observations are scheduled at least two weeks in advance. The observation is scheduled with the Director or Site Supervisor. The QCC Implementation Guide requires that scheduling be for the site and that the classroom(s) selected is/are not shared with the site until the day of observation. The following information needs to be verified for all assessments at the site when scheduling the observations:

- All names of lead teachers and regular staff for each classroom including their title/role (for example, Brenda Smith, Lead teacher, Juan Corlado, other teacher);
 - Enrollment numbers (number of children enrolled per classroom, and number of children in each of the applicable age categories) and the birth date of the oldest and youngest child enrolled;
 - The program cycle/ year and operating hours;
 - Languages spoken in the program (For a language other than English, what percentage of time is the language spoken in the classroom?)
 - Any dominant cultural norms of staff or enrolled families;
 - Any special circumstances impacting the classroom(s);
 - Daily routine/schedule (When selecting the observation day with the site, please remind them that the day of observation should be as “typical” as possible to avoid special events, holidays, and field trips). The observer may request an emailed copy of the classroom schedules;
 - The mailing address (for orientation information), site address (for observation day), report address (for sending the final report), phone number (person available on the day of observation), fax, email;
 - Any special parking and location instructions.
- a) Decide with the Director or Site Supervisor what date or in what scheduling window the observation will take place. The time of the observation should be based on their schedule. Prior to finalizing an assessment date, ask, “On the day or in the window we have selected for the observation, how many children are typically present?” Note: If fewer than half (51%) of the children enrolled are not scheduled to be present on any given day, do not schedule the observation for that day.

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- b)** Share the following information with the site director.
- The Observer will be at the site 20 minutes prior to the start of the observation time.
 - All classrooms at the site should understand that they might be selected for observation on the agreed upon date.
 - The observation will last 3 to 4 hours (depending on the hours serving children in any given classroom)
 - The Site Contact will receive a call or email 2 days prior to the observation date to confirm the appointment.
- c)** Observers will know which randomly selected classroom has been chosen for observation and will have a randomly selected back up classroom. An observer will move from the selected classroom to the back up, if any of the following circumstances occur:
- The lead teacher of record is absent
 - The majority of the usual teaching team is absent (check against information collected when scheduling the observation)
 - Fewer than 51% of enrolled children or fewer than 7 children (whichever is greater) are present in a center-based classroom. (Check against information collected when scheduling the observation)
 - Field trip, other school event, or unusual circumstance (for example power failure, broken pipes, severe weather, emergency or illness causing observer or provider/lead teacher to leave etc.) disrupts the usual classroom routine

Site Orientation and Preparation for the Site Visit

- a) Prior to the program observation:**
- Visit is scheduled per QCC Implementation Guide (scheduled visit, classrooms not specified to program until assessor is on site)
 - QCSCC will send preparation materials to site director and include confirmation and informational handouts as follows:
- CLASS**
- Confirmation Letter
 - Timeline
 - Your Classroom Assessment Scoring System Review and Next Steps
 - Family Notification (via family letter)
 - Staff Notification Template
 - Assessor accountability/ staff verification form
- b) Two days prior:**
- Observer will contact the site to confirm their appointment and confirm lead teachers and permanent staff by phone or email
 - Observer will obtain map/directions and confirm any special parking and location instructions

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c) Day of observation:

- Allow plenty of time to arrive 20 minutes early
- **Remember:**
 - Clipboard with materials (i.e., ID badge, tape measure, probe, pencils, erasers, etc.)
 - CLASS 2008 PreK RATING TOOL

d) The program observation:

- Once on the premises, the Observer will wear their ID badge at all times.
- Upon arrival, the Observer will locate the primary contact, identify themselves, provide their ID badge, and briefly reconfirm the details of the visit, specifically:
 - Review staff names and roles asking site staff to verify Observer's visit by signing the assessor accountability form. Compare staff present with the names of staff furnished previously by site
 - Determine if sampled classroom(s) meet criteria for assessment that day. If not, Observer will go to previously identified alternate classroom (see protocol for scheduling)
- During the observation:
 - Observers should follow any suggestions staff may have to remain unobtrusive in the care environment, while remaining polite, and courteous throughout the visit.
 - Observers should not be a participant in classroom activities.
 - If at any time, the Observer is asked to leave the care environment, they will do so (documenting the time they left).
 - In classrooms with more than one teacher/adult, the Observer will follow the guidelines on page 10 of the Teachstone CLASS Pre-K Manual which instruct the Observer on who to code and how to weigh contributions of each adult when assigning scores.
 - If the provider asks any questions about the observation, the report, coaching, training, etc., the Observer will refer them to the QCSCC Program Manager and provide contact information.
 - Observers should keep notes in possession and close to them at all times. The Observer should make sure that their notepad is not left in plain view or unattended, and turn the notepad over when necessary.
 - Prior to departure, the Observer should thank the staff for allowing him/her to observe the classroom.

e) Following the program observation:

- Ensure that no personal belongings or data are left behind.
- Complete score sheets and summary reports before the next scheduled visit.
- Submit to QCSCC Program Manager for review, following local protocol for submitting documents and reports.

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Classroom Observation Methodology:

CLASS

- a) *Time of Day:* The time of observation shall be based on the recommendations of the classroom observation tool and scheduled so that activities required for a complete assessment can be observed. For part-day programs, the assessments will be conducted during the hours of operation of that part-day program.
- b) *Language:* The observer must speak the dominant language of classroom instruction.
- c) *Use of Photos:* Use of photos is prohibited.
- d) *Activities Observed:* Observation of the classroom's interactions will be based on the recommendations of the observation tool and what must be observed in order to complete the tool.
- e) *Indoor/ Outdoor CLASS Observation:* The observation protocol for indoor and outdoor CLASS observation will be based on Teachstone observation recommendations. Teachstone recommends that the Pre-k CLASS observations be conducted indoors. If the indoor teaching activity is extended to the outdoors, the CLASS observation may continue outdoors to follow the teaching activity.
- f) *CLASS Observation Cycles:* The observer will conduct a minimum of 4 observation cycles. Each CLASS cycle will be based on 20 minutes of observation and/or as recommended by Teachstone. If more than 4 observation cycles occur, the first 4 will be used to derive the assessment score.