

So you're being observed...

We know classroom observations can be intimidating. Here are some frequently asked questions about CLASS observations, what they measure, and how this data can be useful.

Q: What is CLASS®?

A: The Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS) is a research-based tool that assesses the effectiveness of classroom interactions among teachers and children. These daily interactions promote children's social, emotional, and cognitive development and lead to better child outcomes.

Q: What happens during a CLASS observation?

A: The CLASS observer moves around the room to watch and take notes on the interactions among teachers and children for periods of 15-20 minutes. Then, they stop to assign scores. They repeat this for 4 cycles. Observers do their best to stay inconspicuous and avoid interfering with classroom activities.

Q: Why am I being observed?

A: Research shows that CLASS measures interactions that predict child outcomes. So observations happen for several reasons. The data might be required for program monitoring, requested by stakeholders, or part of planning or ongoing professional development. Check with a program director or administrator to understand better the purpose or to learn who might see data from your observation.

Q: How should I prepare?

A: You may want to let children know that there will be a visitor in the classroom. Otherwise, you do not need to do anything to prepare. It's natural to be nervous, but try to conduct yourself as usual during the observation. The goal of the CLASS observation is to capture what the classroom is like on a typical day.

Q: How long do CLASS observations last?

A: Observations in a single-age classroom will last about 2 hours. They capture interactions across a variety of classroom experiences. Observations may be paused when children are in outdoor free play.

Q: Who will be conducting my CLASS observation?

A: CLASS observations are conducted by Certified CLASS Observers. To become certified, observers must attend a rigorous 2-day training and pass an annual reliability test to show that they can use the CLASS measure fairly and accurately.

Q: How are the results of a CLASS observation used?

A: Observations identify the highly effective and less effective interactions in your classroom. With objective information, you can continue to engage in the interactions that matter most for children. Data from an observation can also inform professional development needs, for you or for your program as a whole. Ideally, a CLASS observation should be an informative experience for teachers.