

NYC Department of Education

# Early Childhood Program Assessments

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and  
Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale –  
Revised (ECERS-R) Release

**NOTE: COVID-19 interrupted completion of planned site assessments, potentially impacting average assessment scores**

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, early childhood sites moved to remote instruction in March 2020. As a result, no site assessments were conducted in spring 2020.
- Since public reporting is based on the last three years of data, and because almost all sites were assessed in prior years, we are still able to report on at least one assessment score from the last three years for most eligible sites.
- However, approximately 300 sites are missing scores within each assessment, and approximately 100 sites are missing both. The exclusion of these sites may impact any averages reported. Since sites are not assessed in a random order, there may be some systematic omission of sites that were scheduled for spring assessments based on site characteristics. **As a result, average scores should be interpreted with caution, since average scores may reflect systematic exclusion of certain sites.**

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale– Revised (ECERS-R) are nationally recognized tools for measuring quality connected with student outcomes and are related to the Early Childhood Framework for Quality (EFQ)

- Both CLASS and ECERS-R are observation-based instruments that are valid and reliable at levels that are above what is considered acceptable for assessment tools.
- Both CLASS and ECERS-R are used nationally and internationally in quality assessment and improvement efforts, to monitor programs, evaluate programs to reward those with higher quality, evaluate the quality of programs to inform families, and to guide educators towards creating higher quality programs for the children they serve.
- Both tools measure what children directly experience in their programs that has an impact on their learning and development.

# Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale - Revised

- The DOE has been administering ECERS-R since 2010-11 in NYCEECs and DOE District Schools
- ECERS-R assessments are conducted by Early Childhood Program Evaluators, who undergo a standardized training, and must pass a rigorous certification test by the tools' authors each year in order to use each of the tools.
- These ECERS-R reliable assessors conduct observations in one classroom chosen randomly at the start of the assessment. The observation lasts for 3.5 hours while the assessor observes across the following six quality indicators:

Space & Furnishings	Personal Care Routines	Language-Reasoning	Activities	Interaction	Program Structure
<i>Factors related to the physical indoor and outdoor spaces</i>	<i>Practices and provisions to meet health and safety, nap, and toileting needs</i>	<i>Materials and practices that support language development</i>	<i>Kinds of materials and amount of time that children have to access them (play)</i>	<i>Practices regarding formal and informal interactions and supervision</i>	<i>Factors related to the daily schedule, and provisions for students with disabilities</i>
Examples of what the observer looks for:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Space is clean and well maintained</li> <li>•Sufficient and child-sized furniture</li> <li>•The room is arranged for play and good visual supervision</li> <li>•Displayed work is done by children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Meals/snacks are well-balanced</li> <li>•Appropriate nap provisions and time</li> <li>•Hand-washing procedures</li> <li>•No safety hazards</li> <li>•Children taught to manage health practices independently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Wide selection of books are available and read informally</li> <li>•Children encouraged to explain their reasoning when solving problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Many and varied materials are available (e.g., art, music, blocks, sand/water, dramatic play)</li> <li>•Use of computers is limited</li> <li>•Time children can play with materials is 1/3 of program time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Children are appropriately supervised throughout the day</li> <li>•Non-punitive disciplinary strategies</li> <li>•Many opportunities for children to talk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Outdoor play occurs daily</li> <li>•Waiting between daily events is brief</li> <li>•Whole-group gatherings are limited</li> <li>•Parents and classroom staff are involved in setting IEP goals</li> </ul>

## NYC scores on ECERS-R have increased in the last school year in almost all indicators

- Research shows\* that an average overall ECERS-R score of 3.4 is correlated with improved student outcomes. 94% of programs assessed between 2017-18 and 2019-20 scored at or above 3.4, down from 95% of the assessed programs reported last year.
- NYC scores improved or remained stable across four of the six ECERS-R indicators.
- While there is no public national score for ECERS-R, the DOE's scores are outpacing those of New Jersey's Abbott District pre-K at a similar stage of implementation in Language-Reasoning and Activities.

ECERS-R Score	2017-18 DOE Average Score	2018-19 DOE Average Score	2019-20 DOE Average Score	DOE Change (2017-18 to 2019-20)	DOE vs. Abbott in 6 <sup>th</sup> year of implementation	2005-06 Abbott Score**
#(%) Programs assessed in the last three years	1,761 (99%)	1,748 (97%)	<b>1,491 (82%)</b>	<b>-257*** (-15%)</b>	_____	(representative sample)
Overall ECERS-R Score	4.3	4.3	4.4	<b>+0.1</b>	-0.5	4.8
Space and Furnishings	3.9	3.9	4.0	<b>+0.1</b>	-0.8	4.7
Personal Care Routines	2.8	2.8	2.9	<b>+0.1</b>	-1.3	4.2
Language - Reasoning	5.4	5.4	5.2	<b>-0.2</b>	+0.2	5.0
Activities	4.7	4.8	4.9	<b>+0.2</b>	+0.5	4.3
Interaction	5.4	5.4	5.3	<b>-0.1</b>	-0.6	5.9
Program Structure	4.0	3.9	4.0	<b>+0.0</b>	-1.0	5.0

\*Le, Vi-Nhuan, et al. "Identifying Baseline and Ceiling Thresholds within the Qualistar Early Learning Quality Rating and Improvement System." *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 30 (2015) 215-226.

\*\*Frede, E., et al. The Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study (APPLES) – Interim Report (June 2007). Retrieved from: [NIEER](#)

Note: Averages reflect the average score of three school years. The 2017-18 average score reflects the average score of programs assessed between the 2015-16 and 2017-18 school years, the 2018-19 average score reflects the average score of programs assessed between the 2016-17 and 2018-19 school years, and the 2019-20 average score reflects the average score of programs assessed between the 2017-18 and 2019-20 school years.

\*\*\*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, sites were not assessed in spring 2020. As a result, many sites are missing scores.

# Classroom Assessment Scoring System

- The DOE has been administering CLASS since 2012-13 in NYCEECs and District Schools were assessed for the first time in the 2015-16 school year.
- CLASS assessments are conducted by Early Childhood Program Evaluators, who undergo a standardized training, and must pass an extensive yearly certification test that is required by the purveyor of the tool, Teachstone, in order to conduct observations.
- Evaluators conduct observations in every classroom in cycles of 20 minutes. During this time, assessors note the observed interactions between children and teachers.

CLASS Domains		
Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
Are teacher interactions with children emotionally supportive and promote a positive classroom climate? This includes assessing teacher sensitivity and responsiveness to children and teacher regard for student perspectives.	Is children’s behavior effectively managed in a consistent way? This includes the stability of schedules and routines and the quality of guidance.	Do teachers promote children’s cognitive and language development by supporting children’s analytical and conversational skills and providing feedback?
Examples of what the observer looks for:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smiling, laughter, enthusiasm</li> <li>• Verbal and physical affection</li> <li>• Social conversation</li> <li>• Support for autonomy and leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear behavior expectations</li> <li>• Monitoring room</li> <li>• Efficient redirection or misbehavior</li> <li>• Little to no aggression and defiance in students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent conversation</li> <li>• Teacher involvements and effective questioning</li> <li>• Hands-on opportunities</li> <li>• Open-ended questions and back-and-forth exchanges</li> </ul>

## NYC results increased in most Domains, and are higher than national pre-K programs in most Domains

- Research shows that CLASS scores of 5.0 in Emotional Support and Classroom Organization and 3.3 in Instructional Support are correlated with improved student outcomes.\* **99.9%** of DOE sites with CLASS scores met at least one of these three thresholds for positive student outcomes.
- Many model pre-K programs across the country use CLASS to assess sites, like the National Head Start Program. The DOE's results are higher than National Head Start average in most domains, and have continued to rise over time.

CLASS Domains	2017-18 DOE Average Score	2018-19 DOE Average Score	2019-20 DOE Average Score	<i>DOE Change from 2017-18 to 2019-20</i>	<i>DOE versus Head Start in 2019-20</i>	National Head Start Average for 2019-20
# (%) of programs assessed in passed three years	1,730 (97%)	1,723 (96%)	<b>1,475 (81%)</b>	<b>-248** (-15%)</b>	—————	(representative sample)
Emotional Support	6.6	6.7	<b>6.8</b>	<b>+0.2</b>	<b>+0.7</b>	6.1
Classroom Organization	6.5	6.6	<b>6.7</b>	<b>+0.2</b>	<b>+0.9</b>	5.8
Instructional Support	3.0	2.9	<b>2.8</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>-0.1</b>	2.9

\*Burchinal, Margaret, et al. "Threshold analysis of association between child care quality and child outcomes for low-income children in pre-kindergarten programs." *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 25 (2010) 166-176.

\*\*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, sites were not assessed in spring 2020. As a result, many sites are missing scores.

+ Averages reflect the average score of three school years. The 2015-16 average score reflects the average score of programs assessed between the 2013-14 and 2015-16 school years, the 2016-17 average score reflects the average score of programs assessed between the 2014-15 and 2016-17 school years, and the 2017-18 average score reflects the average score of programs assessed between the 2015-16 and 2017-18 school years

## The DOE uses CLASS and ECERS-R as one of many data points to consider when differentiating support and targeting resources

- Analysis of the City's CLASS and ECERS-R results, along with other data, help DECE prioritize the supports that are currently provided to early childhood programs and determine what additional supports will be needed in the future.
- Differentiated supports and resources for sites are aligned to the Early Childhood Framework for Quality (EFQ) and include:
  - Professional learning sessions for leaders and teachers across four instructional series
  - On-site support visits provided by Instructional Coordinators and Social Workers
  - Interdisciplinary Instructional Units grounded in the New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core available online
  - Family engagement supports, including resources on social-emotional development, extending learning into the home, and successful transitions into and out of pre-K