



The [Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards](#) define the New York City Department of Education’s (DOE) vision for high-quality *Pre-K for All* programs. They describe the key practices of family engagement, rigorous and developmentally appropriate instruction, professional collaborations, and leadership that support children in gaining the knowledge and skills outlined in the [New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core \(PKFCC\)](#). The Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards establish a shared set of expectations for pre-K programs across all settings grounded in the DOE’s vision for school improvement across the pre-K to 12 continuum, the DOE Framework for Great Schools. High-quality and effective interactions in the classroom are critical to supporting student development and learning across all five domains of the PKFCC, and are imbedded in the Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards.

The NYCDOE’s Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) uses the [Classroom Assessment Scoring System \(CLASS\)](#)<sup>1</sup> to measure the extent to which *Pre-K for All* programs are successfully implementing the practices outlined in the Program Quality Standards related to the interactions between teachers and children in pre-K programs across the city. The CLASS tool is used widely in school districts across the country, and there is a consistent relationship between CLASS scores and a wide range of child development outcomes. During the 2018-2019 school year, the DECE will conduct CLASS assessments in NYCEECs that have not been assessed with this tool, and will begin conducting assessments with the tool in district schools.

The observations conducted and/or the reports prepared as part of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS assessment), or any other assessment of the pre-kindergarten program, shall be used only for purposes of assessing the quality of the pre-kindergarten program generally and shall not be placed in any teacher’s official file or used in any action or employment-related decision involving an individual DOE employee (including, but not limited to, any letter to file, rating or tenure determination), and shall not be introduced by the DOE in any disciplinary proceeding, grievance or arbitration, case or action. Furthermore, the DOE agrees that the results of the CLASS assessments will not be used in any evaluation of any CSA member nor will the reports about CLASS assessments identify specific CSA members by name in any way.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.teachstone.org/about-the-class>



# The CLASS Tool

## 1. What is the CLASS?

The CLASS is an observational tool that provides a common lens and language focused on classroom interactions that research shows support student learning. The evaluator observes pre-K and 3-K classrooms at a site and looks for specific indicators of quality across three domains, which are further broken into ten dimensions:

Domain	Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
Dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive Climate</li> <li>Negative Climate</li> <li>Teacher Sensitivity</li> <li>Regard for Student Perspectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behavior Management</li> <li>Productivity</li> <li>Instructional Learning Formats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concept Development</li> <li>Quality of Feedback</li> <li>Language Modeling</li> </ul>
Description	Assesses whether everyday interactions with children promote a positive classroom climate. This includes assessing adult sensitivity and responsiveness to children, regard for student perspectives, and the degree to which the classroom climate is emotionally supportive.	Assesses the “management of children’s behavior, time and attention in the classroom,” with an emphasis on predictability and stability. This includes measurement of the methods to prevent and redirect misbehavior, and the consistency of schedules and routines.	Assesses how children’s cognitive and language development are promoted. This includes teacher support of children’s analytical and conversational skills and the quality of teacher feedback to children.

The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) uses the CLASS tool to measure and understand **program level** quality. A program’s CLASS scores are the averages of all of the observations collected across classrooms at each site.

## 2. Why CLASS?

CLASS is used in major studies of early childhood programs throughout the United States and the world. As a result of the consistent relationship between CLASS scores and a wide range of child development outcomes, CLASS is widely adopted by many state preschool and/or child care assessment programs. CLASS is a reliable and well tested instrument; it is a *consistent* way to measure quality across all programs.

While the tool itself does not measure student performance outcomes, the connections between CLASS and child outcomes is an important reason why it is used by DECE. The combination of CLASS and ECERS-R, which focuses comprehensively on the quality of the pre-K learning environment, is an important way that the DECE understands the extent to which early childhood programs prepare children for future academic success, build positive relationships among children and adults, ensure that children develop a strong sense of self, and meet the Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards.



# Assessment Notification and Planning



## 3. Who is notified about the assessment?

### *DOE CONTRACTED NYCEECs AND CHARTER SCHOOLS:*

Notification is sent from [programassessment@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:programassessment@schools.nyc.gov) to each site's main and instructional contact on file. Program leaders should notify their operations analyst to update contact information.

### *ACS CONTRACTED NYCEECs (EarlyLearn):*

Notification is sent from [programassessment@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:programassessment@schools.nyc.gov) to each site's main and instructional contact on file. Program leaders should reach out to [earlychildhood@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:earlychildhood@schools.nyc.gov) if there is a change in contact that needs to be updated.

### *DISTRICT SCHOOLS:*

Notification is sent to the principal of the school and to the superintendent from [programassessment@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:programassessment@schools.nyc.gov).

**PRE-K CENTERS:** Notification is sent to the Early Childhood Director of the school and to the superintendent from [programassessment@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:programassessment@schools.nyc.gov).

## 4. Who will schedule and conduct the assessment?

A trained Pre-K Program Evaluator will conduct the CLASS assessment. Program Evaluators undergo a rigorous training, and must pass a certification test each year in order to use the CLASS tool. As part of our team's internal procedures to ensure and maintain consistent calibration and quality implementation, evaluators also undergo regular reliability checks throughout the year to ensure they are using the CLASS tool with fidelity. Reliability checks take place on regularly scheduled assessments. Because of this, multiple program assessment team members may attend the assessment with the evaluator assigned to your program.

Based on the number of classrooms at your program and program type, two evaluators may be assigned to conduct the CLASS observation, or the observation may take place over two days.

Program evaluators are required to bring their DOE photo identification and CLASS certification card to sites where they are conducting program assessments, and can provide identification if asked.

## 5. When will the CLASS assessment occur?

Assessments for this school year will be conducted October 2018 through the beginning of June 2019. Program leaders will be contacted by a DECE staff member or program evaluator with additional information about scheduling and the observation process. Please note that the program evaluator will work with program leaders to schedule the program's assessment day, which they will also confirm by email.

Assessments must take place on a typical day of school in which the daily schedule is roughly followed. School days that may be on either side of holidays, or that include regular schedule changes for children (such as one day of the week that is consistently shortened) are considered typical.



**6. DISTRICT SCHOOLS ONLY: Will the scheduling take the Quality Review schedule into consideration?**

The DECE works with the Quality Review team to understand when Quality Reviews are taking place in order to avoid proposing assessment dates that overlap with your Quality Review. Because Quality Review dates are also scheduled throughout the year and sometimes change, in some instances the proposed date may be close to your Quality Review. If that is the case, or you are concerned by the timing as it relates to your Quality Review, please let your evaluator know as soon as possible so a different assessment date can be arranged.

**7. What should my program do before the assessment occurs? How should we prepare?**

Prior to the assessment, program leaders are strongly encouraged to inform their staff of the assessment details and also of the scheduled date and time, making the CLASS FAQ document and the *CLASS Dimensions Guide* available to all staff. The assessment does not require additional preparation, as it is an observation of the daily interactions in your program.

**8. Does my program need to be ready for our assessment on the first day of school?**

In order to ensure that a typical day of instruction is observed and give children and teachers time to adjust to your pre-K schedule, the DECE does not conduct assessments until the sixth week of school. The first few weeks of pre-K are unique to the rest of the year, since all children and teachers are settling into a new schedule, environment, and are getting to know each other. Programs are encouraged to introduce materials, expectations, and routines slowly throughout the first four weeks, to ensure that students are well acclimated to their classroom.

**9. If I know a certain period of the year will not be typical for my program (for example, my only lead teacher will be out for several months on parental leave), who should I contact?**

Reach out to [programassessment@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:programassessment@schools.nyc.gov) as soon as you are aware of any scheduling conflicts that may impact a portion of the school year for your site.

**10. If I have 3-K at my site, when will my assessment take place?**

The CLASS Pre-K tool requires that children must be 36 months old. Therefore, all assessments will take place after January 1<sup>st</sup> 2019. All 3-K and Pre-K classrooms will be assessed and scores will be averaged together for one program level score.



# Assessment Day Details



## 11. What should my teaching staff do during the assessment?

Your staff should continue with normal instruction as they would on any other day of pre-K.

## 12. How long will the assessment take, and what classrooms will be included in the assessment?

CLASS assessments will last between 2.5 - 4 hours per day. Some NYCEECs may have their CLASS assessment over multiple days. Please note that most or all pre-K classrooms at the site will be included in the assessment during this time. Each observation cycle is 15-20 minutes long and the number of cycles that will take place in each classroom will depend on the number of pre-K classrooms in the program:

Number of Classrooms	Number of observation cycles per classroom	Aprx Amount of time in each classroom (inclusive
1	4	80 - 100 minutes
2	2 in one class, 3 in the other	40 minutes & 60 minutes
3 or more	2 cycles per classroom <sup>2</sup>	40 minutes
7 or more	75% or more of classrooms will be observed	40 minutes

**ACS CONTRACTED NYCEECs (EarlyLearn):** If a site contracts directly with the DOE and also operates pre-K through the EarlyLearn program, all of the classrooms with pre-K children will be eligible for assessment.

## 13. Which parts of the day will be assessed?

CLASS assessments can take place during any part of the day when the lead pre-K or 3-K teacher is responsible for supervision, except for nap and unstructured gross motor play.

## 14. How are evaluators for each program chosen? Who will schedule the assessment?

All CLASS evaluators undergo rigorous training before conducting official assessments, and the DECE checks to ensure they are accurately using the CLASS tool through numerous co-observations during training and throughout the school year. CLASS evaluators are assigned to programs based on a number of factors, including:

- **Language:** For dual language programs and programs that have indicated a language other than English is spoken in the pre-K day, an evaluator who understands that language is assigned, when possible
- **Geography:** Evaluators are assigned to programs based on location
- **Conflict of Interest:** Known relationships and prior experiences with program staff are considered when making assignments in order to avoid a conflict of interest

<sup>2</sup> In pre-K programs with more than six classrooms, assessors must observe in 75% of the classrooms





**15. What should I do if my program closes on account of inclement weather on the day of our scheduled CLASS assessment?**

**NYCEECs ONLY:** It is the responsibility of each pre-K program to notify its evaluator and the DECE of closure due to inclement weather or unexpected issues that result in program closure, as soon as that decision is made. Please email the program evaluator and [programassessment@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:programassessment@schools.nyc.gov).

**DISTRICT SCHOOLS ONLY:** The evaluator will not visit your school if a school closure is announced. He/she will reschedule your assessment when school resumes.

**16. What should I do if the teacher is not able to make it on the day of the assessment?**

If there is a last minute teacher absence on the assessment day, alert your evaluator as soon as you are aware. The assessment will likely take place in any classrooms where regular program staff are present, and the evaluator may return to collect data for the classroom with an absent teacher.

If you know a teacher will be absent in advance of the assessment date, please let your evaluator know as soon as possible via email. Depending on the size of the program and the amount of days that the substitute teacher has been in the classroom, part or all of the assessment may be rescheduled. In addition to contacting your evaluator, if your program has a long term teacher vacancy, reach out to TRQ at 718-935-4627 or [teachnycprek@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:teachnycprek@schools.nyc.gov) for assistance.

**17. Do program leaders need to be at the pre-K program on the day of assessment?**

While program leaders are not required to be present at the pre-K program on the day of assessment, please make arrangements for yourself or one of your staff members to greet the evaluator on the scheduled assessment date and show him or her to your pre-K classrooms.

**18. Can one of the program leaders be present in the classroom during the assessment?**

While program leaders are welcome to enter the classroom as part of their normal routine, they should not engage with children, or perform any classroom tasks when the evaluator is observing. Children are sensitive to changes in their daily routine. Extra adults in the classroom or other changes to the daily routine could result in atypical children's behavior that can impact CLASS scores.

## CLASS Results

**19. When will I receive my results?**

CLASS reports are emailed to pre-K program directors/principals on a rolling basis from [programassessment@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:programassessment@schools.nyc.gov). Yahoo and AOL users should mark this email address as "not spam" in order to prevent the reports from filtering into spam folders. Program leaders can expect to receive their reports by email within approximately six weeks of the assessment. Once you receive the reports, share them with your pre-K teaching staff.

**DISTRICT SCHOOLS:** Superintendents will also receive the report.



## 20. What will the results look like once I receive them?

You will receive a CLASS Report, which consists of average scores (ranging from one to seven), interpretation guidance for each of the CLASS domains and dimensions, and observed interactions across the observations. Since the DECE uses the CLASS tool to collect **site/school level** data, the scores on the CLASS report will show an average of all of the 15-20 minute observation cycles that are conducted in all classrooms.

## 21. How will the results of the assessment be used by the DECE?

Assessment results will be used in conjunction with other information for a variety of purposes including:

- Contract Renewals: The DECE will consider these assessments when they make contract renewal decisions for NYCEECs.
- Support assignments: the DECE will use these results to prioritize the supports that are currently provided to pre-K programs and determine what additional supports will be needed in the future. These supports are delivered through Instructional Coordinators, Social Workers, professional learning opportunities offered to teachers and program leaders, and other support provided.
- Research: The DECE will use assessment results to understand the efficacy of supports offered by the division such as professional learning opportunities.

The observations conducted and/or the reports prepared as part of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS assessment), or any other assessment of the pre-kindergarten program, shall be used only for purposes of assessing the quality of the pre-kindergarten program generally and shall not be placed in any teacher's official file or used in any action or employment-related decision involving an individual DOE employee (including, but not limited to, any letter to file, rating or tenure determination), and shall not be introduced by the DOE in any disciplinary proceeding, grievance or arbitration, case or action. Furthermore, the DOE agrees that the results of the CLASS assessments will not be used in any evaluation of any CSA member nor will the reports about CLASS assessments identify specific CSA members by name in any way.

## Resources

### 22. What CLASS resources does DECE offer to pre-K programs? What other resources are recommended to learn more about the CLASS?

A number of resources are available to those wanting to learn more about the CLASS tool:

- In the year of a program's CLASS assessment, the DECE will send programs a copy of the *CLASS Dimensions Guide*.
- [Teachstone's resource page](#) is a good source of free information from the tool developers<sup>3</sup>
- Program leaders may want to consider registering for the CLASS Observation Training for a more in-depth understanding of the tool. More information about CLASS training can be found on the [Teachstone website](#).<sup>4</sup>
- DECE webinars: The DECE has also developed a webinar series to walk pre-K staff through the scale and some of the requirements. To view the webinars, please visit the Division of Early Childhood Education's [Program Assessment](#) page :
  - [CLASS 101: The pre-K Program Assessment Process](#) - This webinar contains information about why the DECE uses the CLASS tool and what the CLASS tool measures. CLASS 101 also covers what to expect before, during, and after a CLASS assessment, and what resources are available to



support you.

- [CLASS 102: Introduction to the CLASS Dimensions](#) - This webinar contains information about how teacher-child interactions contribute to child outcomes and what effective interactions look like in two of the CLASS domains: Emotional Support and Classroom Organization. This webinar also includes strategies for improving interactions in the Regard for Student Perspectives and Instructional Learning Formats dimensions.
  - [CLASS 103: Understanding the Instructional Support Domain](#) - This webinar provides information about why the Instructional Support Domain is important and what effective interactions look like in this domain. This webinar also includes strategies for improving the Concept Development, Quality of Feedback, and Language Modeling dimensions.
  - [CLASS 104: Interpreting your CLASS Report](#) - This webinar provides information on how to read and interpret your CLASS report, and how to use CLASS data and recommendations to inform your pre-K program goals.
- In person training opportunity dates will be advertised in P-Weekly and the Bulletin. Training dates are also updated on the [Program Assessment](#) website page with Protraxx registration links.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://teachstone.com/resources/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://teachstone.com/services/training/class-observation-training/>



# CLASS and Other Frameworks

## 23. How does CLASS relate to the NYC *Pre-K for All* Program Quality Standards?

The Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards are the DECE’s vision for high quality pre-K and encompass practices across three core areas: family engagement, teaching and learning, and leadership. The CLASS assesses the extent to which programs are meeting the standards related to classroom interactions, engaging children in meaningful activity, and creating a positive classroom culture.

## 24. How does CLASS relate to the [Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core \(PKFCC\) Learning Standards?](#)

The Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (PKFCC) focuses on expectations for what children should know and be able to do by the end of the school year to be on the path toward college and career readiness, and is guided by the principle that “children learn in the context of interactions and relationships” (PKFCC, p. 7). CLASS measures the kinds of interactions between children and teachers that support student success, such as quality of feedback, concept development, and language modeling, which are all critical components of the PKFCC.

If you have any further questions, please contact  
[programassessment@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:programassessment@schools.nyc.gov)

**We look forward to your partnership in building high-quality programs for our youngest learners.**

