# Pre-K Quality Snapshot

## Technical Guide for Educators

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# Overview

The New York City Department of Education (DOE) is dedicated to sharing information about program performance with families in order to help families make the best decisions for their children, set expectations for programs, and promote program improvement.

To that end, the DOE began releasing annual Pre-K for All Quality Snapshots for each Pre-K for All program in January 2017. The Pre-K Quality Snapshot supports the Pre-K for All mission of providing children and families with free, full-day, high-quality pre-K options and partnering with families from the beginning to support their children's learning. The Snapshot gives families information about pre-K programs in an accessible, mobile-friendly, and multi-lingual format to help them make informed decisions for their children.

The Pre-K Quality Snapshot is one tool that provides families with information about program quality. We encourage families to learn more about pre-K programs by visiting pre-K programs, asking questions to pre-K leaders and teachers, and talking to other families about their experiences in pre-K.

The Pre-K Snapshot provides a concise overview of each pre-K program's quality in alignment with the DOE's research-based Framework for Great Schools and the Early Childhood Framework for Quality. The Snapshot features data on aspects of pre-K program quality that we know from research support student learning and draws information from program assessments (ECERS-R/CLASS), the Quality Review (for district schools), and the NYC School Survey to present a multifaceted overview of every Pre-K for All program.

This Technical Guide for Educators describes the methodology used to calculate metric values and ratings in the Pre-K Quality Snapshot.

## Pre-K Quality Snapshot Sections

The Pre-K Quality Snapshot is organized around the Framework for Great Schools, which sets forth six Elements—Rigorous Instruction, Collaborative Teachers, Supportive Environment, Effective School Leadership, Strong Family-Community Ties, and Trust—that drive student achievement and program improvement.

The Pre-K Quality Snapshot does not include an overall grade or rating for any Element or for the program as a whole. Instead, it shares ratings and information on how programs are performing on components of our

monitoring tools as they relate to the Framework.

**Rigorous Instruction**: This section reflects the degree to which teaching teams create engaging activities to help children develop language, social, and thinking skills based on the pre-K learning standards. This section draws upon data from the Early Childhood Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R) and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).

**Collaborative Teachers**: This section measures the degree to which teaching teams work together to improve the program. The data for this section is currently only available for District schools through the Quality Review and the teacher responses from the NYC School Survey. The DOE is currently exploring ways to develop these measures for NYC Early Education Centers (NYCEECs) and will work with NYCEEC program leaders to help develop the best measures.

**Supportive Environment:** This section reflects the degree to which program staff respect and value all children and support every child to meet high expectations. This section draws upon data from the family responses of NYC School Survey and the ECERS-R.

**Effective School Leadership:** This section reflects the degree to which program leadership inspires the pre-K program community with a clear vision for instruction and family engagement. This section draws upon data from the family responses of NYC School Survey.

**Strong Family-Community Ties:** This section reflects the degree to which the program forms effective partnerships with families and outside organizations to support families in meeting children's needs. This section draws upon data from the family responses of NYC School Survey.

**Trust:** This section reflects the degree to which relationships between administrators, teachers, students, and families are based on trust and respect. This section draws upon data from the family responses of the NYC School Survey.

Results are presented either as the percent of positive family responses on the NYC School Survey, or as a four-level scale for ECERS-R and CLASS. In the Pre-K Quality Snapshot, the four levels correspond to Excellent, Good, Fair, and Poor. An explanation for the cut-offs for those ratings is included below.

# Framework Elements

## Metrics, Scoring and Rating

The Pre-K Quality Snapshot draws from the following data sources. The indicator labels for ECERS-R and CLASS have been converted to family friendly language in the report:

| Section | | Data Source |
|---|---|---|
| *Rigorous Instruction* | Materials and practices support children's language learning | ECERS-R, Language & Reasoning Subscale |
| | Teachers support and interact with children during the day | ECERS-R, Interaction Subscale |
| | A variety of learning materials are available to children for plenty of time during the day | ECERS-R, Activities Subscale |
| | Respect and kindness among teachers and children, and responsiveness to children | CLASS, Emotional Support Domain |
| | Management of time, behavior, and child involvement | CLASS, Classroom Organization Domain |
| | Support of children's language and thinking skills | CLASS, Instructional Support Domain |
| *Collaborative Teachers* | The data for this section is currently only available for District schools through the Quality Review and the teacher responses from the NYC School Survey. NYCEEC Snapshots list a set of questions a family can ask a pre-K program to learn about teacher collaboration and growth. | |
| *Supportive Environment* | Children are supported during meals, nap, toileting, and arrival | ECERS-R, Personal Care Routines Subscale |
| | Spaces and furniture are appropriate for children | ECERS-R, Space and Furnishings Subscale |
| | Daily schedule supports learning (right amount of time for play, group learning, and outdoor activity) | ECERS-R, Program Structure Subscale |
| | NYC School Survey family data related to Supportive Environment | |
| *Effective School Leadership* | NYC School Survey family data related to Effective School Leadership | |
| *Strong Family-Community Ties* | NYC School Survey family data related to Strong Family-Community Ties | |
| *Trust* | NYC School Survey family data related to Trust | |

# NYC School Survey

The NYC School Survey is administered annually to parents, teachers, and students in 6th grade and above. The survey gathers information from school and program communities on the six Elements of the Framework for Great Schools.

Every question in the survey is mapped to a particular Element and the questions from the family portion of the survey are reported under the appropriate Element in the Pre- K Quality Snapshot. Because most NYCEEC programs do not have the requisite number of teachers to report results at the program level while maintaining anonymity for the respondents, the Pre-K Quality Snapshot only includes teacher survey data for District schools.

### ► *Question-Level Percent Positive*

For each survey question, the DOE calculates the percentage of "positive" responses (excluding "I don't know" or missing responses from the denominator).

In general, positive responses are defined as those in the favorable half of response options (i.e., out of four possible response options, the two most favorable options are treated as positive responses; out of six possible response options, the three most favorable are treated as positive responses).

For comparison purposes, the report also includes a citywide percent positive for each question and for the overall Element, which is the average percent positive rate from all pre-K settings.

### ► *Element-Level Percent Positive*

For each Element, we calculate the percentage of positive responses. This value is the straight average of the percent positives of all the questions that fall within the Element. This is a different calculation than is used by the grade K-12 School Quality Snapshots in District schools in calculating the overall percent positive for survey data. For more information as to how survey data is used to calculate ratings in the School Quality Snapshot visit: http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm

For comparison purposes, the report also includes a citywide a District[1] average percent positive for each Element, which is the average percent positive rate for each Element from all pre-K settings.

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[1] Charter programs, like all other programs, are compared to their geographic District.

# Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale – Revised

The ECERS-R is a nationally recognized early childhood observation tool the DOE has used since the 2010-11 school year. Each Pre-K for All program receives an ECERS-R assessment in its first year, and then at least once every three years after that. The most recent ECERS-R score for each program used in the Pre-K Quality Snapshot, and only assessments conducted within the last three years are included. For comparison purposes, the report also includes the public citywide average, which includes data from all full day programs from the last three years.

To conduct the ECERS-R assessments, ECERS-R reliable evaluators conduct observations in one classroom chosen randomly at the start of the assessment. The observation lasts between 3 and 3.5 hours while the assessor observes across the following six quality indicators, and concludes with a brief teacher interview to collect information on items that were not observed.

ECERS-R evaluators undergo a rigorous training before conducting official observations, and must show that they score the same as an expert in the ECERS-R tool over three consecutive observations in order to be certified as an ECERS-R evaluator. After initial training, the DOE checks to ensure evaluators continue to accurately use the ECERS-R tool through co-observations that take place throughout the school year, and an annual audit by the purveyor of the ECERS-R tool, the Environment Rating Scales Institute.

The snapshot includes data from the six ECERS-R subscales as well as the overall average. In order to ensure the information is clear to families, the subscale names have been adjusted in the report to include descriptions of what the indicator measures:

| ECERS-R Subscales | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Space & Furnishings** | **Personal Care Routines** | **Language-Reasoning** | **Activities** | **Interaction** | **Program Structure** |
| *As labeled in Supportive Environment:* Spaces and furniture are appropriate for children | *As labeled in Supportive Environment:* Children are supported during meals, nap, toileting, and arrival | *As labeled in Rigorous Instruction:* Materials and practices support children's language learning | *As labeled in Rigorous Instruction:* A variety of learning materials are available to children for plenty of time during the day | *As labeled in Rigorous Instruction:* Teachers support and interact with children during the day | *As labeled in Supportive Environment:* Daily schedule supports learning (right amount of time for play, group learning, and outdoor activity) |
| **Examples of what the observer looks for:** | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Space is clean and well maintained<br>• Sufficient and child-sized furniture<br>• The room is arranged for play and good visual supervision<br>• Displayed work is done by children | • Meals/snacks are well-balanced<br>• Appropriate nap provisions and time<br>• Hand-washing procedures<br>• No safety hazards<br>• Children taught to manage health practices independently | • Wide selection of books are available and read informally<br>• Children encouraged to explain their reasoning when solving problems | • Many and varied materials are available (e.g., art, music, sand/water, dramatic play)<br>• Use of computers is limited<br>• Time children can play with materials is 1/3 of program time | • Children are appropriately supervised throughout the day<br>• Non-punitive disciplinary strategies<br>• Many opportunities for children to talk | • Outdoor play occurs daily<br>• Waiting between daily events is brief<br>• Whole-group gatherings are limited<br>• Parents and classroom staff are involved in setting IEP goals |

The threshold for three bars is set at 3.4. Research shows that ECERS-R scores at or above a 3.4 are correlated with improved academic and socio- emotional child outcomes.[2]  The DOE set the lowest bar at below a 3.0 which is consistent with many state's early childhood quality rating improvement systems:

| ECERS-R Ratings | Indicator Score |
|---|---|
| Excellent (4 bars) | 5.0 to 7.0 |
| Good (3 bars) | 3.4 to 4.9 |
| Fair (2 bars) | 3.0 to 3.3 |
| Poor (1 bar) | 1.0 to 2.9 |

In response to concerns from program leaders and other early childhood educators that some of the Personal Care Routines subscale requirements are very rigid and difficult to meet at the lower end of the scale, the DOE reviewed the Personal Care Routines subscale, which includes metrics for items like cot space during nap/rest, handwashing and cleanliness of outdoor playgrounds. In order to reflect the unique challenges faced by pre-K programs in urban environments, the DOE adjusts Personal Care Routines thresholds by moving each bar cutoff down by roughly 1.5-2.0 points.

We believe this reflects a high standard while taking into account the unique challenges faced by pre-K programs in our city.

| Personal Care Routines Ratings | Indicator Score |
|---|---|
| Excellent (4 bars) | 3.8 to 7.0 |
| Good (3 bars) | 2.3 to 3.7 |
| Fair (2 bars) | 1.5 to 2.2 |
| Poor (1 bar) | 1.0 to 1.4 |

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[2] 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.

For more information on the DOE's use of the ECERS-R, see the *ECERS-R Frequently Asked Questions* Document, here.

## Classroom Assessment Scoring System

The CLASS is a nationally recognized early childhood observation tool the DOE has used since 2012-13. In most cases, each Pre-K for All program receives a CLASS assessment in its second year, and then at least once every three years after that. The most recent CLASS score for each program is used in the Pre-K Quality Snapshot, and only assessments conducted within the last three years are included. For comparison purposes, the report also includes the public citywide average, which includes data from all programs from the last three years.

To be certified as CLASS-reliable, evaluators undergo a rigorous training before conducting official observations. Each evaluator must pass a certification exam administered by the purveyor of the CLASS tool to show that they score the same as an expert in the CLASS tool over several 20 minute observations. After initial training, the DOE checks to ensure evaluators continue to accurately use the CLASS tool through co-observations that take place throughout the school year.

To conduct the CLASS assessments, CLASS-reliable evaluators conduct 20-minute observation cycles in all or most classrooms in a pre-K program. During this time, assessors note the observed interactions between children and teachers across three domains.

The Pre-K Quality Snapshot includes data from the three CLASS domains. In order to ensure the information is clear to families, the domain names have been adjusted in the report to include descriptions of what the domain measures:

| CLASS Domains | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Emotional Support** | **Behavior Management** | **Instructional Support** |
| *In Rigorous Instruction:* Respect and kindness among teachers and children, and responsiveness to children. | *In Rigorous Instruction*: Management of time, behavior and child involvement. | *In Rigorous Instruction:* Support of children's language and thinking skills. |
| **Examples of what the observer looks for:** | | |
| • Smiling, laughter, enthusiasm <br> • Verbal and physical affection <br> • Social conversation <br> • Support for autonomy and leadership | • Clear behavior expectations <br> • Monitoring room <br> • Efficient redirection or misbehavior <br> • Little to no aggression and defiance in students | • Frequent conversation <br> • Teacher involvements and effective questioning <br> • Hands-on opportunities <br> • Open-ended questions and back-and-forth exchanges |

The threshold indicator score for three bars is set at 5.0 in the Emotional Support and the Classroom Organization domains and at 3.3 in the Instructional Support domain. Research shows that CLASS

scores at or above those levels are correlated with improved student outcomes.[3]To determine the one-bar threshold for CLASS, the DOE mirrored their minimum cut scores used in federal Head Start monitoring: 4.0 in Emotional Support, 3.0 in Classroom Organization and 2.0 in Instructional Support.

| CLASS Emotional Support Rating | Indicator Score |
| --- | --- |
| Excellent (4 bars) | 6.0 to 7.0 |
| Good (3 bars) | 5.0 to 5.9 |
| Fair (2 bars) | 4.0 to 4.9 |
| Poor (1 bar) | 1.0 to 3.9 |

| CLASS Classroom Organization Rating | Indicator Score |
| --- | --- |
| Excellent (4 bars) | 6.0 to 7.0 |
| Good (3 bars) | 5.0 to 5.9 |
| Fair (2 bars) | 3.0 to 4.9 |
| Poor (1 bar) | 1.0 to 2.9 |

| CLASS Instructional Support Rating | Indicator Score |
| --- | --- |
| Excellent (4 bars) | 5.0 to 7.0 |
| Good (3 bars) | 3.3 to 4.9 |
| Fair (2 bars) | 2.0 to 3.2 |
| Poor (1 bar) | 1.0 to 1.9 |

For more information on the DOE's use of the CLASS, see the *CLASS Frequently Asked Questions* Document, here.

## Quality Review

The Quality Review is a process that evaluates how well schools are organized to support student learning and teacher practice. It was developed to assist DOE schools in raising student achievement by looking behind a school's performance statistics to ensure that the school is engaged in effective methods of accelerating student learning. Experienced educators conduct a one- or two-day school visit; they talk with parents,

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[3] 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.

students, teachers, and school leaders, visit classrooms, and use the Quality Review Rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement. Before reviewers visit schools, school leaders complete a self-evaluation based on the rubric. Reviewers draw upon this document and other school data during conversations they have with principals, teachers, students, and parents during the school visit.

After the school visit, the school receives a Quality Review Report that is published on its DOE webpage. The Quality Review Report rates across indicators of the Quality Review Rubric and includes narrative information on a select group of indicators. The report provides the school community with evidence-based information about the school's development and serves as a source of feedback for school leaders to improve the school's support for students.

The Pre-K Quality Snapshot includes ratings that the school received during its most recent Quality Review (that took place after August 2012) in the Collaborative Teachers section for District programs in Indicator 4.2:

- 4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved learning

# Missing Data

## ECERS-R and CLASS

Some programs have not had an ECERS-R or CLASS assessment in the last three school years or had an assessment but have not received their final report.  If a program does not have an ECERS-R or CLASS score in the last three years, those portions of the Snapshot will indicate "N/A" for not available. If you have questions about your program assessment score, please contact programassessment@schools.nyc.gov.

## NYC School Survey

In order to maintain the anonymity of the school survey, the DOE does not publish results from the survey if fewer than five respondents submitted the survey. If a program had fewer than five families respond to the survey, those portions of the Snapshot will indicate "N/A" for not available. If you have any questions about your survey results, please contact surveys@schools.nyc.gov.

## Quality Review

If Quality Review data is unavailable for a District school, its Element scores will be blank for Collaborative Teachers. For NYCEECs, which do not receive Quality Reviews, the Collaborative Teacher section includes guiding questions to support families in learning more from programs about how they support their teachers.

## Additional Resources & Pathways for Questions

**Online Resources**

- For resources about the Pre-K Quality Snapshot for **families**, visit  nyc.gov/prek
- For resources about the Pre-K Quality Snapshot for **pre-K programs,** visit  https://infohub.nyced.org/partners-and-providers/early-childhood/early-childhood-educators/building-family-community-relationships

**Questions**

- **Pre-K for All program leaders**, please direct questions to your Instructional Coordinator, Social Worker, or Operations Analyst
    - If you have questions about **ECERS-R/CLASS,** please email programassessment@schools.nyc.gov.
- If a family has questions about **Pre-K for All enrollment**, direct them to call our Pre-K for All Outreach Team at (212) 637-8000 or email OutreachTeam@schools.nyc.gov.