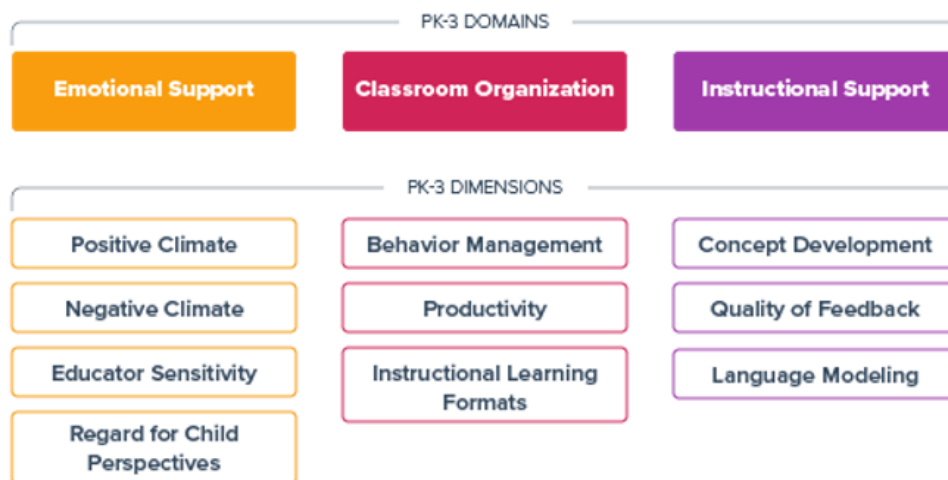




How to use this resource: This tip sheet only covers some of what you need to remember when coding with the 2nd Edition Pre-K to 3rd-grade CLASS tool. It focuses on the most common points of confusion and things observers often forget when coding. While this is a great tool to prepare for reliability testing, please look at your Observation Field Guide for comprehensive coding information.

The Pre-K-3rd CLASS Framework



Domain-Level Tips

- The interactions considered in the Emotional Support and Classroom Organization domains set the stage for effective Instructional Support domain interactions. If teachers don't support children's social-emotional needs and provide an organized setting, it is unlikely that teachers will have time to engage in much Instructional Support or that children will be poised to learn from any Instructional Support interactions.
- The Classroom Organization domain is ultimately about managing time and children's attention in the classroom. The less time teachers spend managing behavior and time because children aren't engaged, the more time will be available for learning each day.
- Instructional Support is not about the content of the curriculum or the learning activities provided. Instead, it focuses on how teachers use these things to support children's cognitive and language development.

Dimension-Level Tips

Positive Climate

Definition: Educators foster connections and a sense of belonging between adults and children, among peers, and as a classroom community. Verbal and nonverbal communications between educators and children and among children convey warmth, respect, and collaboration. The educators' interactions enhance each child's enjoyment of the learning setting and their experience of it as a caring community.

Things to Remember

- Remember to pay attention to the level of warmth and enjoyment in the interactions among children when scoring this dimension, not just educator-child interactions. Friendly peer interactions taking place in a language the other doesn't understand can be counted as evidence of Relationships.
- Remember that smiling and laughter are just two behavioral markers for Enjoyment. There are many ways to discern whether a learning setting is warm and welcoming.
- Respect is something that varies cross-culturally. Before going into the classroom, learn what types of behaviors would indicate that respectful interactions are occurring in the context where you'll be collecting data and look for them.

Negative Climate

Definition: Educators and children express little relational negativity verbally or nonverbally. Educators and children rarely display irritability, anger, or disrespect toward others. Educators do not enact threats or severe punishment that cause disruption to the learning setting.

Things to Remember

- This dimension is scored opposite of the other dimensions. A low score is desirable.

- Negative Climate is not opposite of Positive Climate or the lack of the types of interactions that are scored there. Instead it looks at how much negativity is present in the classroom. Classrooms can demonstrate low range evidence of Positive Climate, yet have no evidence of Negative Climate.
- Expressions of negativity can vary cross-culturally. When in doubt, look at the way the children respond to an interaction to discern whether it is evidence of expressed negativity.
- If there are any instances of severe negativity, Negative Climate is automatically scored in the high range.

Educator Sensitivity

Definition: Educators are aware of and responsive to children's needs-- social, emotional, physical, academic, linguistic, and cognitive. The educators' sensitivity supports children's feelings of safety and comfort in the learning setting and facilitates children's ability to actively participate, explore, and take risks.

Things to Remember

- Watch closely. Children sometimes express their needs nonverbally.
- Educator Sensitivity is not an assessment of how nice a teacher is. The “sensitivity” referenced in the dimension name is about the level of educators’ awareness of and responsiveness to needs.
- Remember that a child’s problem could be something like needing more glue to continue an art project. The focus here isn’t just on big problems that children get upset about. At the high range, we want to see teachers noticing and responding to nearly all needs.
- Even when an educator addresses a problem, it doesn’t mean they have effectively resolved it. Observers should look to the children involved to see if they appear helped to determine whether a problem has been resolved.
- There may be few problems during a cycle. In these cases, observers should pay attention to any small cues from children as opportunities to show their responsiveness. If few needs are observed, you can score responsiveness and problem resolution in the high range as long as educators demonstrate a high level of awareness and children show a high level of comfort. This results in a high range score for the dimension.

Regard for Child Perspectives

Definition: Educators emphasize children's emerging sense of self and help children develop and express their unique interests, motivations, and points of view by providing opportunities for children to experience autonomy and direct their own learning. Children's interests and choices guide classroom experiences and, as a result, children are meaningful contributors to activities.

Things to Remember

- Educators can score in the high range for flexibility and student focus while having a plan for the day, as long as they integrate children's ideas and choices into their plan.
- The child expression indicator looks at the extent to which teachers encourage children to share their ideas and how they see the world. Questions that don't encourage children to share their own ideas or perspectives like, "What letter does 'Elephant' start with?" aren't strong evidence here.
- Educators can score in the high range for allows movement and set and enforce expectations for children's movement, as long as these are developmentally-appropriate and teachers don't enforce them too rigidly.

Behavior Management

Definition: Educators support children's growing behavioral regulation skills by creating developmentally informed, clear, consistent expectations and proactively supporting cooperative behaviors. Children may demonstrate challenging behaviors as they learn these skills, but educators' methods for preventing and positively redirecting these behaviors result in the occurrences being infrequent, mild, and quickly resolved.

Things to Remember

- Behavior Management focuses on active misbehavior. The strategies teachers use to keep children engaged in desired activities are instead captured in Instructional Learning Formats.

- If you see minimal behavioral problems and educators are monitoring and not reacting to non-challenging behaviors, it is safe to assume effective strategies are in place. The classroom can score in the high range even if you don't see teachers provide many explicit behavioral expectations.
- If educators' behavioral expectations aren't developmentally-appropriate and children aren't cooperating, that is not considered disruptive behavior and Child Behavior can still be high range. If educators are reactive to this developmentally appropriate behavior count this in the Proactive indicator.
- Children's home languages can be used to help children understand expectations, but they shouldn't be used exclusively to manage behavior. If this is the case, these interactions should be considered ineffective examples for Redirection of Behavior and as examples of Disrespect in Negative Climate.
- Educators may implement specific redirection techniques to support children with significant behavioral needs who are harming themselves or others. If educators implement these techniques with irritation and anger, consider these interactions in Negative Climate.

Productivity

Definition: Educators use time and structure activities, routines, and transitions so that children have regular, ongoing opportunities to participate and know how to do so.

Things to Remember

- Productivity doesn't look at the quality of activities or at children's engagement level. It is just looking at whether children are consistently provided with activities to do.
- The transitions indicator is unique, because you don't always score it. If the same activity continues for the entire cycle, then you only code the other three indicators of Productivity. However, transitions within an activity and transitions between activities are codeable.

Instructional Learning Formats

Definition: Educators facilitate activities by supporting work and play in ways that enhance children's engagement. Educators balance this facilitation with moments of observation as children engage in independent or peer play or work. Educators support children's general engagement and enhance their focus on specific learning objectives within activities. Through these efforts, children remain deeply engaged in work and play, as demonstrated by their active participation and focused attention.

Things to Remember

- At the high range for this dimension, an educator's facilitation gets students to focus and actively participate. If an educator, for instance, has provided a hands-on activity and asks questions, but children aren't engaging, their facilitation isn't effective.
- Educators cannot be everywhere at once. For high range, it isn't necessary to, for instance, see an educator facilitate children's involvement in every center during a given cycle, as long as they are making an effort to move around the room and help children get the most out of materials.
- The clarity of learning objectives indicator can be challenging to score. While advanced organizers, summaries, and reorientation statements are strategies educators can use to make learning objectives clear to children, it's not necessary to see these behavioral markers. Educators can also help children know how to focus by consistently using targeted questions or materials. Ultimately, coders should look to the children to determine whether learning objectives are clear. Do they know what they should focus on? Do you see evidence that they could tell you what they were learning or why they were doing any activity?

Concept Development

Definition: Educators use instructional strategies and activities that help children learn about and understand concepts and content. Educators facilitate learning opportunities that support children's development of thinking skills and creativity. Factual information is taught in the context of these learning opportunities rather than in rote ways that focus only on memorization or recall. Educators help children create meaning by linking new concepts and content to prior knowledge and ensuring it is connected to their lived experience.

Things to Remember

- Although the word “concept” is in the dimension title, this dimension is not about how teachers teach specific concepts (seasons, addition, the alphabet). Instead, it looks at what educators do to encourage children’s understanding and use of higher-order thinking skills.
- Depending on children's abilities, they may be working on skills that are below their chronological age level. Observers should focus on how educators support children's thinking and understanding rather than the complexity of concepts.
- "Effective why and/or how questions” is a behavioral marker for analysis and reasoning. Not all questions with “how” or “why” fit here, only ones that encourage children to engage in higher-order thinking. For example, “Why is your shoe untied?” isn't evidence for this indicator. There are open-ended questions and prompts that don’t start with “why” and “how” that also fit here, because they encourage children to think deeply (“Tell me about your story.”)
- "Producing" is a behavioral marker for Creativity. Observers are often tempted to give credit for this whenever children engage in something artistic. Yet, many art activities in Pre-K to 3rd-grade classrooms don’t require higher-order thinking, for example, making a hand turkey or coloring in an image of the water cycle.
- Integration evidence needs to be explicit. If an educator plans three activities about Election Day and the class does them sequentially but the educator doesn’t make any explicit connections between the concepts in these activities, you haven’t seen evidence of integration.
- If an educator asks a question like, “Have you ever ridden on a train?” while reading a book about trains, this educator connects to children’s everyday lives. However, a few scattered examples like this aren't sufficient for the high range.
- When teaching specific content or procedures, educators may need to use rote instruction. For mid or high range, educators need to exhibit evidence of the indicators. If content-specific instruction is rote, the low range is appropriate.

Quality of Feedback

Definition: Educators provide feedback that builds on children's knowledge and skills to expand understanding or increase persistence. Effective feedback is extended, specific, and individualized, meeting children where they are and scaffolding support as children deepen and refine their learning. Educators also enhance children's motivation and persistence by encouraging and affirming their efforts rather than work products.

Things to Remember

- Educators can provide feedback to individual children or to a group.
- Peers can also provide feedback, especially at the upper end of this age range.
- Feedback can help children complete a task (for example, putting their belongings away when they arrive by verbally guiding them through the steps) or expand learning or understanding (for example, asking a child to explain their thinking).
- Not all back-and-forth exchanges are feedback loops. In order to count as feedback, the exchange has to be in response to a child's comment or action and aimed at increasing participation or understanding. Back-and-forth exchanges that don't meet these criteria are considered in Language Modeling instead.
- Not all scaffolding is verbal. Physical assistance, like holding a block tower steady so a child can keep building, is a type of scaffolding.
- The type of evidence considered in encouragement and affirmation either encourages a child to persist in a task ("Keep going! I know you can sort all the planes by color") or recognizes a child's effort ("Wow! You counted all the way to 15"). Positive comments like "good job!" tell children they have completed an activity, and fit in Positive Climate instead.
- Feedback loops can include non-verbal interactions. For example, a child points to a letter in a book, the teacher responds, "That's an 'A'. Do you see any other 'A's'?" The child looks at the page for a moment and then looks up at the teacher, and the teacher responds, "Look at the top of the page." The child looks back down, points to another 'A' and says, "I found one!"
- The other four indicators of Quality of Feedback are components of feedback loops.

Language Modeling

Definition: Educators promote and expand children's language development and verbal and nonverbal communication skills. Educators support children's development in both the language(s) of instruction and children's home language(s). Educators encourage conversations, provide individualized language support, and use varied descriptive language such that children understand and communicate more in the learning setting.

Things to Remember

- Educators may not be fluent in all the children's home languages, but there should be evidence that they respect, validate, and encourage the use of home language (s) in the learning setting.
- Although this dimension focuses on language, for nonverbal children or those learning the language(s) of instruction, other communication skills, such as using gestures or a communication device are also included.
- At the high range for frequent conversation, the back-and-forth exchanges should feel like real conversations where children are treated as valued conversational partners.
- Educators cannot extend children's communication if they don't have opportunities to talk. If children have limited opportunities to communicate, score the communication extensions indicator in the low range.
- The open-ended prompts indicator considers any questions or prompts that require children to respond using multiple words (“What did you do last weekend?” “Why are you mixing blue and green paint?”). Language Modeling doesn’t consider the extent to which these questions encourage children to think. That’s captured in Concept Development.
- Engagement strategies that involve speaking in unison (e.g., call-and-response, reciting words on a word wall) only count for Language Modeling if they are used to connect familiar words to new vocabulary. Otherwise, these strategies count as evidence for Instructional Learning Formats.
- If educators use multiple languages to help children understand language, such as connecting new words to words in a child's home language, this may be considered evidence of advanced language.