

The [NYC Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards](#) define the NYCDOE’s vision for high-quality Pre-K for All programs in NYC. 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). Grounded in the NYCDOE’s vision for school improvement across the pre-K to 12 continuum, the DOE Framework for Great Schools, the Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards establish a shared set of expectations for pre-K programs across all settings. 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 DECE uses the [Classroom Assessment Scoring System \(CLASS\)](#)¹ 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 2015-2016 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 prekindergarten 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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¹ <http://www.teachstone.org/about-the-class>



Background on 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 assessor observes pre-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	1. Positive Climate 2. Negative Climate 3. Teacher Sensitivity 4. Regard for Student Perspectives	5. Behavior Management 6. Productivity 7. Instructional Learning Formats	8. Concept Development 9. Quality of Feedback 10. Language Modeling
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’ 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’ cognitive and language development are promoted. This includes teacher support of children’ 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, across cultures, and throughout 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.

While the tool itself does not measure student performance outcomes, the results of these studies make CLASS an important piece of the DECE’s work. 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.



CLASS and Other Frameworks

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

The 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.

4. 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 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.

5. How does CLASS relate to QUALITYstarsNY?

QUALITYstarsNY, New York State's Quality Rating and Improvement System, is a voluntary five-star rating system for all types of regulated early childhood programs that serve children from birth through age 5 in New York, and is operated by the New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute (PDI). QUALITYstarsNY includes program assessment, and CLASS is one of the program assessment tools that is used.

Beginning in the 2016 - 2017 school year, all Pre-K for All programs are eligible for a CLASS assessment, whether or not they are participating in QUALITYstarsNY. This is to ensure that data is collected regularly and the DECE has up-to-date information on all programs that was collected in a standardized way.

Assessment Notification and Planning

6. Who is notified about the assessment?

DOE CONTRACTED NYCEECs AND CHARTER SCHOOLS: Notification is sent to the instructional contact and main contact on file for the program are notified via email of the assessment from programassessment@schools.nyc.gov. Program leaders should reach out to their operations analyst if there is a change in contact that needs to be updated.

ACS CONTRACTED NYCEECs (EarlyLearn): Notification is sent to the instructional contact and main contact on file for the program are notified via email of the assessment from programassessment@schools.nyc.gov. Program leaders should reach out to 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.

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





7. Who will schedule and conduct the assessment?

A trained Pre-K Program Assessor working for the DECE will conduct the CLASS assessment at each site. Program Assessors undergo a standardized training, and must pass a lengthy certification test each year in order to use the CLASS tool. Assessors also undergo regular reliability checks throughout the year to ensure they are using the CLASS tool with fidelity.

Program assessors are required to bring their DOE photo identification and CLASS certification card to sites where they are conducting program assessments, and are able to show these when asked.

8. When will the CLASS assessment occur?

Assessments for this school year will be conducted between October 2016 and May 2017. Program leaders will be contacted by a DECE staff member or program assessor with additional information about scheduling and the observation process. Please note that the program assessor will work with program leaders to schedule the program's assessment day, which they will also confirm by email.

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

The DECE will make every effort to avoid proposing assessment dates that overlap with your Quality Review. In addition to that, if you have any concerns with the timing as it relates to your Quality Review, please contact your assessor with that information.

10. 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 this 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 the program.

More information on resources, including webinars offered by the DECE can be found on page six of this document.

11. Does my program need to be ready for our assessment on the first day 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.

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. Programs are encouraged to introduce materials, expectations, and routines slowly throughout the first six weeks, to ensure that students are well acclimated to their classroom.

Assessment Day Details

12. What should my program do during the assessment?

Staff is asked to continue with normal instruction. Once the observation is underway, there will **not be any** interaction between the assessor and the classroom teachers and staff. The assessor may move around the



classroom to observe environment and children in the classroom but will not interfere with classroom activities.

Programs should not adjust their typical daily schedule on the assessment day because it is important that assessors observe a typical day of instruction.

13. 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	Amount of time in each classroom (approximately)
1	4	80 minutes
2	2 in one class, 3 in the other	40 minutes & 60 minutes
3 or more	2 cycles per classroom ²	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.

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

Assessors are assigned by geographic proximity and availability. Assessors will reach out to programs to schedule the assessment. Programs will have at least two weeks advance notice to schedule the visit.

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 assessor 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 assessor and programassessment@schools.nyc.gov.

DISTRICT SCHOOLS ONLY: The assessor will not visit your school if a school closure is announced. He/she will reach out to reschedule your assessment when school resumes.

16. What should I do if there is a substitute teacher in one of the pre-K classrooms on the day of assessment?

Program leaders should tell the assessor when he/she arrives about the substitute teacher. 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.

² In [sitespre-K programs](#) with more than six classrooms, assessors must observe in 75% of the classrooms.





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 assessor 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 when the assessor is observing. Extra adults in the classroom 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. Yahoo and AOL users should add the email address to their "whitelist" in order to prevent the reports from filtering into spam folders. Program leaders can expect to receive their reports by email within six weeks of the assessment. Once you receive the reports, share them with your pre-K teaching staff.

DISTRICT SCHOOLS: Superintendents and Early Childhood Directors will also receive a copy of the report at this time.

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

Results will come in the form of 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. Can the DECE send CLASS scores that identify what happened in each classroom during the assessment?

No, the assessment is conducted and the information reports in a way that looks at the program as a whole, and it is not possible to separate the scores by classroom assessment. In order to ensure that all pre-K programs can be assessed with the CLASS tool, and also because the DECE uses the CLASS tool to understand the interactions that happen in the program **overall**, the DECE uses program-wide monitoring protocols to conduct CLASS assessments. According to the publisher's guidelines, scores at the classroom level are only accurate when four or more observation cycles are conducted in any given classroom. As such, if pre-K programs have more than one classroom, not enough observation cycles will be conducted in each classroom to provide classroom-specific data.

22. How will the results of the assessment be used?

- Program leaders and principals are encouraged to consider CLASS specific indicators (noted with bullets on the report) under each CLASS dimension in conjunction with other information to help inform program supports.



- Instructional coordinators and social workers will use these results to target their support to pre-K programs
- Contract Renewals: The DECE will consider these assessments when they make contract renewal decisions for NYCEECs
- Pre-K Quality Standards: The DOE will use these assessments to measure a program's quality
- 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, the professional learning opportunities we offer teachers and program leaders, and information we provide through our communications channels.

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.

23. What follow up will occur after the results are available?

Analysis of the city's CLASS results will be used to help DECE 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, the professional learning opportunities we offer teachers and program leaders, and information we provide through our communications channels.

Resources

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

In the year of a program's CLASS assessment, the DECE will send programs who have not received one in previous years a copy of the *CLASS Dimensions Guide*.

More information, including on-demand webinars, can be found on [Teachstone's resource page](#).³

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](#).⁴ Teachstone is now hosting this training in NYC on a monthly basis, and those interested can register [here](#).⁵ Please note that the DOE will not pay for this training.

³ <http://teachstone.com/resources/>

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

⁵ <http://teachstone.com/services/training/regional-training/new-york-city-regional-trainings/>



The DECE is offering a four-part webinar series for on the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). The webinars address common questions that the DECE receives from program leaders before and after their assessment, and were developed based on feedback that more opportunities to learn about the tools are desired. The webinars will be recorded and made available to program leaders at a later date. If you are interested in attending, please go to join.me/programassessment on the following dates and times:

- **September 29, 12:30 – 1:30:** CLASS 101 – Introduction to Pre-K Program Assessment: CLASS
- **October 11, 12:00-1:30:** CLASS 102 – Introduction to the CLASS Dimensions
- **October 25, 12:00-1:30:** CLASS 103 – Understanding the Instructional Support Domain
- **December 6, 12:00-1:30:** CLASS 104 – Interpreting your CLASS Report

25. Where can I get more information?

For more information on CLASS, please visit [Teachstone's website](https://www.teachstone.org).⁶

Please also visit the Division of Early Childhood Education's website for additional [educator resources](#).⁷

If you have any further questions, please contact
programassessment@schools.nyc.gov

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

⁶ <http://www.teachstone.org/about-the-class/>.

⁷ <http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/EarlyChildhood/educators/UPK.htm>

