

Family Child Care Provider (FCC) Third Party Observation Protocol: In Person 2026-2027

Site Preparation for In Person Observations

1. The University of Louisiana at Lafayette (UL Lafayette) CLASS observer can call the provider the morning of the observation to ensure the site is open and will begin at the anticipated start time with the expected children in attendance. If the provider does not answer the observer should leave a voicemail and/or text the provider.
2. The observer(s) should arrive at the site location early (30 minutes) before the scheduled observation time to give the provider and children time to habituate to their presence in the home. Should children approach the observer(s) they will kindly redirect them.
3. Observer(s) should remind the provider that they will be as unobtrusive as possible during the visit and ask the provider where they would like them to sit or stand during the observation, being aware that the observer(s) may need to move around during the observation. Observer(s) may bring a portable pop-up chair to sit on during the observation.

Conducting Observations

1. The UL Lafayette CLASS observer is trained in two age configurations (infant-toddler and preK) and will bring materials for all age configurations to the observation.
2. The observer(s) will verify the ages of the children enrolled based on the September 30th cut-off date. This information should be documented on the observation checklist. For mixed age groups, the tool will be selected for the age of the majority of the children. If there is a combination of infant, toddler, and preK children present or infant and preK children and there is no clear majority among the age groups, the infant-toddler tool will be used. **However, if the observer's ticket (age type) does not match the information verified with the provider, the observer should contact the UL Lafayette CLASS administration.**
 - a. Infant-Toddler- birth-35 months
 - b. PreK 3-5- years of age
3. The observation can begin when at least one child is present.
4. Observer(s) will observe for 20 minutes (infant-toddler and preK). Observer(s) will score independently for 10 minutes.
5. During the 10 minute scoring period, the observer(s) should find a space out of the way to code and the observer(s) may leave the main room to score if space is limited. For example, observers may go outside, sit in their car, or move to another room in the home.
6. Observers will watch and code nearly all activities, including:
 - Outsidess time (toddler and infant age groups)
 - Snack and mealtimes

- Bottle feeding
 - Preparing for nap
 - Infant care and response to needs
 - Hand-washing, self-care, and other daily routines
 - Transitions
7. Observers will not watch and code the following:
- Nap time when all children are sleeping
 - Bathroom time for preschool-age children
 - Outside time for preK
8. In family homes there may be a designated space for children to play such as a large family room or activities may take place in the same space where other family members interact and live.
9. The provider and observer(s) will use the following guidance from [Teachstone's Sample Observation Protocol for Observing in family Child Care Homes](#) when addressing activity content/format:
- a. Whole-group or group time format: the provider is addressing the majority of the children at once. This can include stories, songs, calendar instruction, discussions, book reading, or demonstrations.
 - b. Small group time: the provider decides what children are to be doing and assigns which children to participate, even if the provider is not participating in the group. Children are working in small groups that have been organized or directed by the provider. Small groups can include group art projects, writing stories, collective building, cooking projects, small group instruction, science experiments, structured PE activities, etc.
 - c. Free choice/centers or individual activities/formats: children are able to select what and where they would like to play or learn. Activities can include individual art projects, blocks, pretend play, puzzles, reading, puppets, computers, science areas, etc. The provider should use Teachstone's guidelines and capture interactions where the majority of the children are interacting with the teacher. If multiple adults are interacting with children, the observer(s) should move around the room to capture most of the interactions.

For example, if there are two providers interacting with children during center time, the observer(s) should focus on the main provider for 10 minutes capturing his/her interactions and 10 minutes capturing the second provider.
 - d. For routines/transitions the observer should move around the room(s) and capture the interactions.
10. Ending a cycle early- if an observer needs to end a cycle early due to circumstances such as all children going down for a nap, going home or going outside (for preK observations) the UL Lafayette CLASS observer may assign ratings to the CLASS codes on what has been observed up to that point only if the observer has been observing for 10 minutes. If not, the observer will need to start a new observation cycle when the children wake up or the circumstances allow the next cycle to begin.

11. Multiple adults- the observer should weigh the interactions of each adult based on the number of children with whom they are working, the amount of time they spend with the children, and their responsibility for the activities. The interactions of non-caregiver adults, such as parents dropping off their children or family members who live in the home, should be considered in coding only if they enhance or detract from children's experiences.
- Example: A grandmother who does puzzles with preschoolers while the provider sets out lunch is enhancing the preschoolers' experiences.
 - Example: A neighbor who engages the provider in a long conversation which takes the provider's attention away from the children is detracting from their experiences.

Concluding the Observation

1. When the last cycle of observation is complete, and the 10-minute scoring period has ended the UL Lafayette CLASS observer(s) will inform the provider the observation is complete.
2. The UL Lafayette CLASS observer(s) will notify the provider of the procedures for data entry into the Early Childhood Observation System (ECOS) with highest/lowest feedback and kindly thank them for allowing the observer(s) to visit.
3. There will not be an exit interview or discussion of scores with the provider.
4. Observer(s) should document in their notes any potential issues during the observation (i.e. interruptions, ending cycles early, communication issues, safety concerns, etc.). Observer(s) should contact the UL Lafayette CLASS administration if they are unsure how to proceed on documenting or addressing issues.