

What to Expect on the Day of the CLASS® Observation

Third-party CLASS® observations will be performed by certified, reliable observers who have had in-depth training in how to conduct the observation. Observers are staff members and contractors of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (UL Lafayette). They are trained to execute the protocols developed by the Louisiana Department of Education, Teachstone® and UL Lafayette. At least two weeks before the scheduled observations are to begin, UL Lafayette emails electronic letters to the site principals and/or directors and carbon copies the Community Network Lead Agency contacts. It is imperative that site principals and/or directors inform staff members that observations will occur.

Upon arrival at the site, the observer will report to the administration office and:

- Introduce themselves to office staff and administrator (if available),
- Present identification and sign-in on appropriate site documentation,
- Present a *Child Care Criminal Background Check* determination letter,
- Receive a **current classroom roster** to verify classroom information with administrator/director or designee (i.e., classroom locations by age, ensure 50% of enrolled children are in attendance),
- Verify the correct spelling of the educator's name,
- Receive an **updated daily schedule** for the classroom being observed,
- Ask the educator or administrator if there are any special considerations of which the observer should be aware and
- Request access to a quiet space for four, 10-minute scoring cycles (pre-K only).

Sites are asked to report any scheduling conflicts to UL Lafayette before the observation window begins. Based upon site-reported optimal learning times, the CLASS® observation typically starts at the beginning of the school day and continues throughout the morning for approximately two hours (120 minutes). The total time the observer is present at the site is dependent upon the daily schedule and extracurricular activities.

The following activities, 'pull-outs, and specials' **will not** be observed:

- Physical Education,
- Music,
- Computer,
- Library,
- Art,
- Cafeteria-based meals,
- Toileting in pre-K classrooms where the whole classroom visits the toilet together,
- Outdoor recess **is not** included in pre-K observations but is included in infant and toddler observations (as per Teachstone® guidelines). Observers may seek clarification on outdoor activities with multiple classes outdoors at the same time, ensuring they can follow their lead educator and the children in that classroom.

Upon entering the classroom, the observer will introduce themselves and request an updated daily schedule (if they have not received one from the office). Based on the daily schedule, the observer will plan for the observation/scoring. The educator should notify the observer of any schedule deviations, or special considerations, which may affect the observation. The observer may be accompanied by a second observer to shadow score simultaneously. The primary purpose of this shadow score is to ensure inter-rater reliability, which has no reflection of the quality of the site being observed nor alters the score.

The observation will consist of **four 20-minute observation cycles** each followed by **10-minute** scoring cycles (average 120-minute total time) for pre-K, toddler and infant observations.

In pre-K classes, when possible, the observer will leave the classroom to complete each 10-minute scoring cycle. If a quiet space is not available at the site, the observer may sit outdoors to complete scoring. This is not an opportunity to collect additional observational data for pre-K observations. In order to minimize distraction in infant and toddler classrooms, UL Lafayette follows Teachstone's® recommendation that observers remain in the classroom when scoring. If observers remain in the classroom, they will turn their back on the class and quietly complete the scoring. If children approach an observer, they will kindly redirect the child into classroom activities.

Observers **will not**:

- Ask educators to change schedules, move rooms, wake up children or rearrange children or groups
- Engage in back-and-forth conversations with children or educators
- Conduct observations during the 10-minute break time between cycles
- Conduct more than four cycles of observations
- Use their phone during the observation
- Share feedback immediately following an observation

If an observation is unable to be completed due to non-compliance by a site, UL Lafayette will notify the LDOE immediately. Any issues or concerns with observers should be reported to accountability@la.gov or to the UL Lafayette CLASS team at classactull@gmail.com. In the unusual circumstances of any suspected abuse or neglect observed at the time of the observation the observer must report the observed behaviors to the Department of Children and Family Services as mandated by law.

At the conclusion of the observation, the observer will confirm with the teacher that the observation is complete. ***There will not be an exit interview after the observation***, however, general feedback on the two highest and two lowest scoring CLASS® dimensions for all observations will be available on the Early Childhood Observation System (ECOS) within 2 weeks of the observation being conducted.

Any questions or concerns about the observation procedures can be addressed to Kara Farmer-Primeaux at UL Lafayette at 337.482.1569 or classactull@gmail.com.