

***Review of Head Start,  
EHS & EHS-CCP  
Classroom Assessment  
Scoring System (CLASS)***



# Head Start

- The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is an observation tool developed to describe and measure the effectiveness of educator-child interactions in learning settings. CLASS includes three broad domains of educator-child interactions that support children's learning and development: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. Within each domain are multiple dimensions of educator-child interactions and behaviors.
- The CLASS tool is based on developmental and educational psychology theory and research suggesting that interactions between children and adults are the primary way of supporting children's development and learning, and that effective, engaging interactions and environments form the foundation for all learning in early childhood classrooms.
- CLASS is scored by trained and certified observers using a specific protocol. Following an observation of educator-child interactions, CLASS Observers rate each dimension on a 7-point scale, from low to high.
- Score Ranges - Seven-point scoring scale
  - Low Range (1-2) – Behaviors and interactions are rarely present or low-quality, superficial, strained, rote, or ineffective.
  - Middle Range (3-5) – Behaviors and interactions are somewhat present during the classroom observation or a part of some children's experience. Interactions are mixed; some interactions remain superficial, ineffective, or absent, whereas others demonstrate more intentional support that deepen children's experiences.
  - High Range (6-7) – Behaviors and interactions are meaningful, consistent, sustained, and reflective of most children's experience in the classroom. Interactions deepen children's experience or understanding and convey a level of intentional and effective support.
- During the 2011-2012 program year, the Office of Head Start (OHS) began using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) teacher-child observation instrument during its on-site reviews.
- In 2022, CLASS 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (CLASS 2.0) was released and includes enhancements with a focus on improving equity, access, and impact. CLASS 2.0 includes more diverse and inclusive definitions and representation, considerations for scoring across diverse settings, and guidance for reducing bias.
- CLASS Thresholds – The Office of Head Start has published two sets of thresholds for CLASS scores as a part of the Designation Renewal System (DRS): Quality Thresholds and the Competitive Thresholds. During an OHS CLASS Federal Review, if a Recipient receives a score below the Quality Threshold for one or more of the CLASS domains, OHS provides support for quality improvement. If a Recipient receives a score below the Competitive Threshold for one or more of the CLASS domains, then the Recipient is required to compete for continued funding.

**City of San Antonio Head Start Program  
Federal Review Results and Office of Head Start Thresholds**

Source	Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
2014 – 2015 OHS Monitoring	5.9978	5.8216	2.5585
2019 – 2020 OHS Monitoring	5.8500	5.6788	2.6818
Quality Threshold	6	6	3
Competitive Threshold	5	5	2.3/2.5*

\*Observations conducted on or after August 2025



**Office of Head Start National Average Scores**

Source	Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
2011-2012	5.90	5.45	2.98
2012-2013	5.99	5.63	2.72
2013-2014	6.10	5.83	2.90
2014-2015	6.03	5.80	2.88
2015-2016	6.00	5.73	2.83
2016-2017	6.07	5.83	3.00
2017-2018	6.08	5.80	2.96
2018-2019	6.05	5.79	2.91
2019-2020	6.03	5.78	2.94
2020-2021*	-	-	-
2021-2022**			
2022-2023**			
2023-2024**			

\*Due to COVID-19, CLASS Observations were not conducted

\*\*Data pending

**City of San Antonio Head Start Program**

**Internal Monitoring CLASS Results**

**CLASS 2008**

Program Year	% Classrooms Observed	Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
2012-2013	60%	5.83	5.26	3.70
2013-2014	60%	5.74	5.32	3.39
2014-2015	60%	5.57	4.84	2.91
2015-2016	60%	5.82	5.18	2.86
2016-2017	60%	5.65	5.02	2.99
2017-2018	60%	5.78	5.16	2.98
2018-2019	100%	5.75	5.19	3.12
2019-2020*	N/A	-	-	-
2020-2021*	N/A	-	-	-
2021-2022	100%	5.88	5.32	3.25

\*Due to COVID-19, CLASS Observations were not conducted

**CLASS 2.0**

Program Year	% Classrooms Observed	Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
2022-2023	60%	5.92	5.39	3.09
2023-2024	60%	6.14	5.69	3.36

**Resources & Information**

- [Use of Classroom Assessment Scoring System \(CLASS\) in Head Start](#)
- [National Overview of Grantee CLASS Scores by Year](#)
- [Resources on CLASS Pre-K](#)

# **EHS & EHS-CCP**

- The Early Head Start Program began using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) teacher-child observation instrument for both Infant and Toddler classrooms in the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) Program during the 2017-2018 program year. CLASS was implemented to support professional development planning as one method of data driven decision-making.
- CLASS is an observation instrument that assesses the quality of teacher-child interactions in center-based classrooms that support children's learning and development.
- CLASS was designed to create a common vocabulary that can be used to describe different aspects of effective teaching and caregiving.
- CLASS dimensions are based on developmental theory and research suggesting that teacher-child interactions are a primary way of optimizing children's learning and developing.
- The Office of Head Start does not require CLASS observations for Early Head Start Programs.
- Score Ranges - Seven-point scoring scale
  - Low Range (1-2) – Behaviors and interactions are rarely present or low-quality, superficial, strained, rote, or ineffective.
  - Middle Range (3-5) – Behaviors and interactions are somewhat present during the classroom observation or a part of some children's experience. Interactions are mixed; some interactions remain superficial, ineffective, or absent, whereas others demonstrate more intentional support that deepen children's experiences.
  - High Range (6-7) – Behaviors and interactions are meaningful, consistent, sustained, and reflective of most children's experience in the classroom. Interactions deepen children's experience or understanding and convey a level of intentional and effective support.
- Infant CLASS Tool Design
  - Primarily used in classrooms serving children 15 months or younger but can be used up to 18 months old.
  - Observations should be carried out during routine care times such as feeding, diapering, and putting infants down for a nap.
- Toddler CLASS Tool Design
  - Primarily used in classrooms serving children 15 – 36 months old.
  - Observations should be carried out during routine care times, structured and unstructured times of the day.
- During November 2020, the Early Head Start program at Stafford Early Childhood Center opened adding 10 classrooms to the program.
- During the 2020-2021 program year due to COVID-19 and health and safety concerns, the decision was made not to complete CLASS observations.
- Observations were reintroduced in the Spring for the 2021-2022 program year and continued in the Fall for the 2023-2024 program year.
- Due to the return to Fall observations in the 2022-2023 program year, the PreK CLASS tool was not used. Age groups were still within the acceptable range for the Toddler CLASS tool.\*



## Early Head Start Classroom Assessment Scoring System

### CLASS Data

Program Year	Number of Observable Classrooms	Classroom Data Aggregated	Percent of Data Used
2017-2018	33	28	84%
2018-2019	34	26	76%
2019-2020	33	33	100%
2020-2021	-	-	-
2021-2022	42	37	88%
2022-2023	45	43	96%
2023-2024	47*	26	100%

\*Due to limited resources, 55% of classrooms were observed using random sample.

### Infant CLASS Comparisons

Dimensions					Domain
Program Year	Relational Climate	Teacher Sensitivity	Facilitated Exploration	Early Language Support	Responsive Caregiving
2017-2018	5.55	5.15	4.6	4.05	4.84
2018-2019	5.92	5.46	4.63	4	5
2019-2020	5.08	4.96	3.92	3.67	4.41
2020-2021	-	-	-	-	-
2021-2022	5.19	5.19	5	5.19	5.14
2022-2023	5.79	5.88	5.25	5.13	5.51
2023-2024	5.93	5.86	5.21	5.79	5.7

### Toddler CLASS Comparisons

Dimensions						Domain	Dimension			Domain
Program Year	Positive Climate	Negative Climate	Teacher Sensitivity	Regard for Child Perspective	Behavior Guidance	Emotional and Behavioral Support	Facilitation of Learning and Development	Quality of Feedback	Language Modeling	Engaged Support for Learning
2017-2018	5.69	1.36	5.14	4.83	4.56	5.37	3.67	3.11	3.22	3.33
2018-2019	5.54	1.64	5.11	4.71	4.89	5.32	3.89	3.25	3.36	3.5
2019-2020	5.88	1.52	5.29	4.6	4.67	5.38	2.93	2.45	3.07	2.82
2020-2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2021-2022	5.73	1.27	5.34	4.82	5	5.52	3.93	3.11	3.75	3.6
2022-2023	5.88	1.08	5.55	5.13	5.12	5.72	3.97	3.28	3.78	3.68
2023-2024	6.03	1.06	5.59	5.29	5.12	5.79	4.15	3.32	4.03	3.83



**Early Head Start  
Classroom Assessment Scoring System**

**PreK CLASS Comparison**

	Dimensions				Domain				Domain	Dimension			Domain
Program Year	Positive Climate	Negative Climate	Teacher Sensitivity	Regard for Student Perspective	Emotional Support	Behavior Management	Productivity	Instructional	Classroom Organization	Concept Development	Quality of Feedback	Language Modeling	Instructional Support
2021-2022	6	1.21	5.21	4.93	5.73	5.29	4.19	4.5	4.86	3.07	3.14	3.34	3.21
2022-2023*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2023-2024	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-