

Review of Early Head Start and Head Start Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)



EARLY HEAD START

Early Head Start Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

- 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) - Quality of teacher-child interactions is low and typically includes: poor management of behavior, rote teaching, or lack interaction between teachers and children, except for negative climate
 - Middle Range (3-5) - Classrooms show a mix of effective interactions with periods when interactions are not effective or are absent
 - High Range (6-7) - Effective teacher-child interactions are consistently observed throughout the observation period, except for negative climate.
- 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.

CLASS Data

Program Year	Number of 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%

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

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

Early Head Start Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

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	4.79	4.5	4.86	3.07	3.14	3.43	3.21

HEAD START

- 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.
- CLASS is an observation instrument that assesses the quality of teacher-child interactions in center-based classrooms that support children's learning and development in three domains: Emotional Support; Classroom Organization; and Instructional Support
- Score Ranges - Seven-point scoring scale
 - Low Range (1-2) - Quality of teacher-child interactions is low and typically includes: poor management of behavior, rote teaching, or lack interaction between teachers and children
 - Middle Range (3-5) - Classrooms show a mix of effective interactions with periods when interactions are not effective or are absent
 - High Range (6-7) - Effective teacher-child interactions are consistently observed throughout the observation period
- Re-competition – A Recipient scores below a competitive threshold in one or more Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®) domains during a CLASS Federal Review.

City of San Antonio 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**			

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

**Data pending

**City of San Antonio Head Start Program
 2012 – 2013 through 2021-2022 Internal Monitoring CLASS Results**

Program Year	Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
2012-2013	5.83	5.26	3.7
2013-2014	5.74	5.32	3.39
2014-2015	5.57	4.84	2.91
2015-2016	5.82	5.18	2.86
2016-2017	5.65	5.02	2.99
2017-2018	5.78	5.16	2.98
2018-2019*	5.75	5.19	3.12
2019-2020**	-	-	-
2020-2021**	-	-	-
2021-2022	5.88	5.32	3.25

**Program implemented CLASS Observations in 100% of Head Start Classrooms*

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

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](#)