# Infant CLASS® Coding Tips

How to use this resource: This tip sheet doesn't cover everything you need to remember when coding with the Infant CLASS. Instead it focuses specifically on the most common points of confusion and things observers often forget when coding. While this is a great tool to use to prepare for reliability testing, refer to your Infant CLASS Manual for comprehensive coding information.

The Infant CLASS Framework
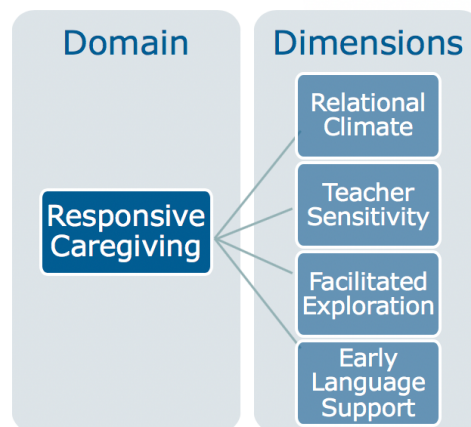
Domain-Level Tips

- The infant domain is called Responsive Caregiving because all effective infant-teacher interactions are in response to infants' cues.
- The Infant CLASS only has a single domain, because all four infant dimensions are so closely related. Nearly every teacher-infant interaction can be considered in multiple dimensions in the Infant CLASS and some even impact the effectiveness level of all 4 dimensions.
- As you code each dimension, remember to look up and down your scoresheet to make sure you are noticing every piece of evidence that's important for scoring the dimension you are focused on not just what you've written in the corresponding box.
- Important interactions across the dimensions can occur during both play and caregiving routines.

Dimension-Level Tips

Relational Climate

Definition: Reflects the connections, emotions, and respect conveyed by teachers as well as the infants' responses to these interactions

Things to Remember
- Joining in activities with infants is considered when scoring relational behaviors.
- Don't forget to take careful notes on whether teachers communicate what they are going to do before touching or moving infants' bodies.
- The levels of connection, warmth, and respect among caregivers is also considered when scoring this dimension.

Teacher Sensitivity

Definition: Encompasses teachers' awareness of and responsiveness to infants' verbal and nonverbal cues, including availability to provide comfort, skill in resolving distress, and timeliness and contingency of responses.

Things to Remember
- Look look look as you collect data in infant classrooms! Most infant cues are nonverbal, and many of these nonverbal cues are very subtle.
- Highly-effective infant teachers acknowledge and check in with all infants regularly, not just those who are clearly asking for their attention.
- Remember to balance your attention equally across the infants as you observe. Take care not to just notice the cues from the infants who are most actively seeking out teachers' attention.

Facilitated Exploration

Definition: Considers teachers' facilitation of experiences and interactions in routine care and playtime to support infants' engagement and development.

Things to Remember
- The indicators of this dimension build on one another. Teachers typically have to be involved in infants' experiences (Involvement) in order to notice what infants' interests are (Infant focused) and then build on those interests (Expansion of infants' experiences).
- For this reason, if a teacher builds on an activity and it isn't in response to an infants' interest, this isn't evidence of expansion of infants' experience.
- This dimension considers interactions that promote all aspects of infant development (cognitive, motor, social-emotional, verbal, etc.).
- Watch out for overstimulation. If teachers are continuing with an activity or moving quickly even though infants are indicating through their cues they are not interested or need a slower pace, they are not being infant-focused.

Early Language Support

Definition: Captures the amount and effectiveness of teachers' use of language-stimulation and language-facilitation techniques to encourage infants' early language development.

Things to Remember
- Teacher talk considers any language in the classroom, not just language directed specifically at infants. This is because infants benefit from being in a language-rich environment.
- By contrast, communication support and communication extension only consider language that is directed at infants.
- Communication support considers any interactions that encourage infants to verbalize. This includes the types of behaviors mentioned in the behavioral markers, as well as behaviors like asking infants direct questions.

- Communication extension considers the behaviors that encourage infants to go further in their attempts to use language. The behavioral markers under this indicator can be hard to understand. Here's a quick breakdown:
  - Provide words for infants' communication: This refers to a teacher putting something into words that an infant is communicating non-verbally. For example, if an infant is yawning, the teacher can say, "Wow! That's a big yawn. You are really sleepy."
  - Expand and extend on infants' communication: This is essentially taking any sounds or words an infant says one step further. So, if an infant holds out a ball and says, "Baa!" the teacher could reply, "Baa! That is a ball."
  - Modeling turn-taking: This one is about role-playing back-and-forth exchanges, so infants can learn how conversation works. In some cases, the infant may make sounds or say words, and the teacher will contingently respond in between the infant's vocalization. In other cases, the infant may remain silent, but the teacher will pause in between each thing they say to give the infant time to respond, mimicking the flow of a contingent conversation.