

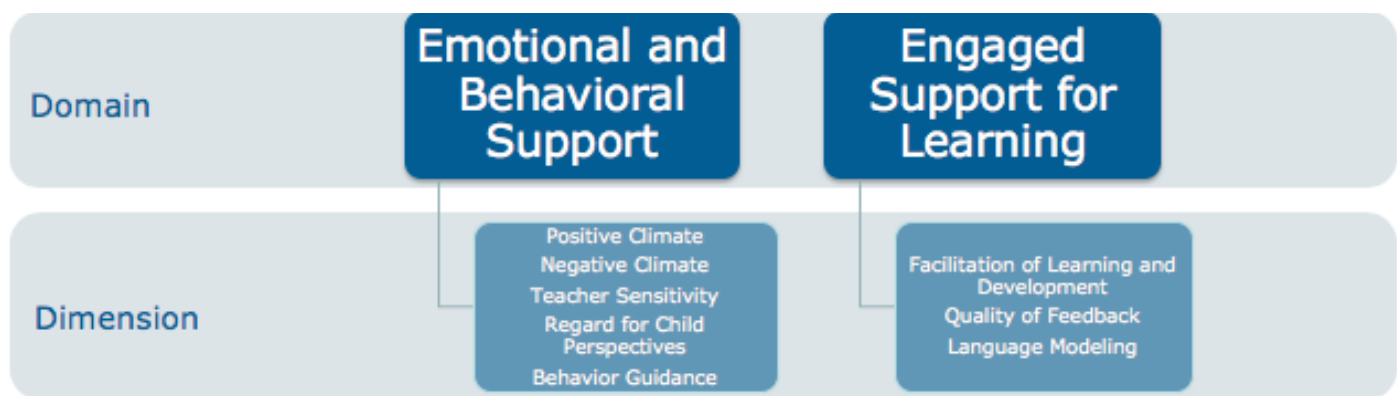


Toddler CLASS[®] Coding Tips



How to use this resource: This tip sheet doesn't cover everything you need to remember when coding with the Toddler 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 Toddler CLASS Manual for comprehensive coding information.

The Toddler CLASS Framework



Domain-Level Tips

- The first Toddler CLASS domain is called Emotional and Behavioral Support to reflect the fact that this domain includes both the types of interactions that support toddlers' social-emotional development and teachers' behavior-related interactions.
- Behavior Guidance is grouped with the dimensions focused on emotional support. This is because research has shown that teachers' social-emotional and behaviorally-focused interactions with toddlers are more closely connected than they are for older children.
- The second Toddler CLASS domain is named Engaged Support for Learning to reflect the fact that the focus in toddler classrooms is on what teachers do to support engagement, cognition, and language.
- Engaged Support for Learning is similar to the Classroom Organization and Instructional Support domains at the older age levels.

Dimension-Level Tips

Positive Climate

Definition: This dimension reflects the connection between the teacher and children and the warmth, respect, and enjoyment communicated by verbal and nonverbal interactions.

Things to Remember

- While positive peer connections are considered in the relationships indicator, it is not necessary to see these for a high-range score.
- Positive Climate is focused on the types of teacher involvement in children's activities that build relationships with toddlers.
- Don't forget to take careful notes on whether teachers communicate what they are going to do before touching or moving toddlers' bodies. The extent to which teachers do this is considered when scoring the respect indicator.

Negative Climate

Definition: This dimension reflects the overall level of expressed negativity in the classroom. The frequency, quality, and intensity of teacher and child negativity are the key to this scale.

Things to Remember

- This dimension is scored opposite of the other dimensions. A low score is desirable.
- Negative Climate is not opposite of Positive Climate or the lack of the types of interactions that are scored there. Instead it looks at how much negativity is present in the classroom.
- Because child negativity is common among toddlers, Negative Climate scores are often higher in toddler classrooms than at the other age levels.

- Child negativity can still be in the low range even if there are moments of peer disputes or child frustration as long as these instances are brief, don't increase in intensity, and toddlers quickly reengage in more positive interactions.
- While instances of severe negativity, like a teacher hitting a child, are very uncommon in toddler classrooms, Negative Climate is still automatically scored in the high range if these behaviors are observed even if there is no evidence for the other indicators.

Teacher Sensitivity

Definition: This dimension encompasses the teacher's responsiveness to and awareness of children's individual needs and emotional functioning. The extent to which the teacher is available as a secure base (being there to provide comfort, reassurance, and encouragement) is included in this rating.

Things to Remember

- Look look look as you collect data in toddler classrooms! Toddlers often express their needs through nonverbal actions, and these can be very subtle.
- Highly-effective toddler teachers check in with all toddlers regularly, not just those who are clearly communicating that they need assistance.
- The genuine problem resolution behavioral marker considers the extent to which teachers work through problems with toddlers to ensure that the problem is resolved in a way that is effective for all the children.

Regard for Child Perspectives

Definition: This dimension captures the degree to which the teacher's interactions with children and classroom activities emphasize children's interests, motivations, and points of view and encourage children's responsibility and independence.

Things to Remember

- Eliciting children's expression and ideas assesses the extent to which teachers ask questions that encourage children to share their ideas and explain how they see the world, not the extent to which they encourage children to talk more generally.

- When teachers give children classroom jobs or responsibilities, pay attention to whether teachers support children in doing these tasks as independently as they can. At the high range, the focus is on developing children's independence not on getting children to do these tasks perfectly.
- The peer perspective taking behavioral marker looks at the extent to which teachers work through conflicts with children rather than solving them for them.

Behavior Guidance

Definition: This dimension encompasses the teacher's ability to promote behavioral self-regulation in children by using proactive approaches, supporting positive behavior, and guiding and minimizing problem behavior.

Things to Remember

- In Behavior Guidance, the focus is on the strategies teachers are using to teach toddlers how to behave in the classroom. Consistently communicating what children should be doing, providing positive reinforcement, and effectively redirecting behavior are all parts of high-range Behavior Guidance. These interactions take up meaningful amounts of classroom time, and that's okay.
- This is very different from the Behavior Management dimension in the older age levels. In high range Behavior Management, teachers spend minimal time talking about or redirecting behavior because students are old enough to be expected to understand what to do and to behave accordingly if effective behavioral strategies are in place in the classrooms.
- Minimal waiting and minimal wandering are behavioral markers in problem behavior, because when toddlers aren't consistently engaged in classroom activities, problem behavior tends to result.
- Problem behavior can be scored in the high range even if there is some disruptive behavior in the classroom, as long as it is brief and the children quickly re-engage in classroom activities.

Facilitation of Learning and Development

Definition: This dimension considers how well the teacher facilitates activities to support children's learning and developmental opportunities. How the teacher connects and integrates learning into activities and tasks should be included in this rating.

Things to Remember

- Learning opportunities in toddler classrooms can happen equally during structured classroom activities, meals, outdoor play, and routine care, such as, diapering.
- If teachers are consistently involved in children's activities, that isn't necessarily sufficient for active facilitation to score in the high range. For high range, you need to see that teachers are facilitating classroom activities in a way that provides intentional support for children's learning and development.
- Expansion of cognition considers the behaviors that encourage toddlers to think deeply. The behavioral markers under this indicator can be hard to understand.

Here's a quick breakdown:

- Teacher provides and embeds information: This refers to a teacher inserting information to expand children's learning. For example, if a child is playing with a stuffed animal, the teacher might say, "You have a pink elephant", and then add, while pointing to the elephant's trunk, "This is its trunk. Elephants use their trunks to pick up things like you do with your hands."
- Teacher relates information to children's lives and experiences: This is anything a teacher does to connect information to toddlers' real world experiences. So, after the teacher reads a book about farm animals, she might remind the children about when they took a field trip to a local farm.
- Teacher integrates concepts across activities and tasks: This marker considers the extent to which teachers make connections between activities. For example, children might play with fruit in the grocery store center and then the teacher might talk with them at snack about how they played with grapes, apples, and pears during center time.
- Teacher encourages thinking skills: There are many ways teachers can encourage children to think, such as, asking them open-ended questions, engaging them in problem-solving, and asking them to make predictions.

Quality of Feedback

Definition: This dimension assesses the degree to which the teacher provides feedback (in response to what children say and/or do) that promotes learning and understanding and expands children's participation.

Things to Remember

- Feedback loops with toddlers often involve a mix of verbal and non-verbal interactions. In some cases, all of the toddlers' interactions are non-verbal. For example, a toddler holds up their artwork for a teacher, the teacher responds by asking, "What are you painting?" The toddler then says, "Sun," and the teacher responds, "What a lovely sun! What color are you going to use next?"
- Not all back-and-forth exchanges are feedback loops. In order to count as feedback, the exchange has to be in response to a child's comment or action and aimed at increasing participation or understanding. Back-and-forth exchanges that don't meet these criteria are considered in Language Modeling instead.
- Remember that feedback can be provided to help children complete a task (e.g. washing their hands independently by verbally guiding them through the steps) or to expand learning or understanding (e.g. asking a child a follow-up question that encourages them to think).
- Not all scaffolding is verbal. Physical assistance like holding a block tower steady so a child can keep building is a type of scaffolding.
- The type of evidence considered in encouragement and affirmation either encourages a child to persist in a task ("Keep going! I know you can walk across the balance beam") or recognizes a child's effort ("Wow! You found all the green counting bears"). Positive comments like "good job!" and "nice work" that tell children they have completed an activity fit in Positive Climate.

Language Modeling

Definition: This dimension captures the quality and amount of the teacher's use of language-stimulation and language-facilitation techniques to encourage children's language development.

Things to Remember

- Back-and-forth exchanges can look very different in a toddler classroom depending on how verbal the children are. They often involve a mix of verbal and non-verbal interactions.
- Many of the interactions that support language development of less verbal toddlers aren't explicitly captured in the behavioral markers. Here are some common examples: Contingent responding in supporting language use can be in response to non-verbal children's actions. For example, if a toddler pushes their chair away from the table and stands up, the teacher might respond, "I see you're all finished with lunch. Where do you want to go play?" Repetition and extension can take the form of providing words for toddlers' non-verbal communication. For example, if a child points at a doll, the teacher could say, "You want the baby doll". It can also take the form of labeling. For instance, a teacher could say, "That's a green frog," when a child points to a picture of a frog in a book.
- At the high range, teachers must frequently repeat and extend children's comments.
- Self- and parallel talk for toddlers must happen while the actions are happening. So, if a teacher says, "I'm going over to the sink," before she walks to the sink, that doesn't count as self-talk.
- Remember that using multiple languages in the classroom doesn't automatically increase or decrease the Language Modeling score. Regardless of the number of languages in use, the score is based on the consistency of the evidence for each of the indicators.