

CLASS+ Overview

What is CLASS+ and what does it measure?

Beginning in 2021, DECE will be using a selection of supplemental assessment scales alongside the CLASS assessment tool that we are collectively calling CLASS+. The CLASS+ for pre-K combines the CLASS Environment Scales with selected elements of the ECERS-3 tool along with scales designed to measure practices that support social-emotional development taken from the A-TSRS.¹ CLASS+ allows CLASS evaluators to collect information on critical aspects of the classroom environment, health and safety practices and practices that support the emotional well-being of children while conducting a CLASS assessment.

Why is the DECE using the CLASS+?

Ensuring our children are in healthy and safe learning environments is essential for high-quality early childhood education. The Covid-19 pandemic has reinforced the value of providing programs with feedback on a consistent basis to help them meet and maintain these basic needs. While the ECERS-3 tool remains our primary tool for assessing the classroom environment, the CLASS+ tool allows us to provide ongoing feedback on critical aspects of classroom environments in years when programs do not receive an ECERS-3 assessment. In addition, it provides specific feedback about Social Emotional Learning strategies and practices that staff may use in the classroom to support children.

What is the difference between what the CLASS+ measures and what the ECERS-3 tool measures?

Both the ECERS-3 tool and the CLASS+ tool measure the classroom environment and practices related to health and safety as well as interactions around accessible materials. However, the ECERS-3 tool provides a more in-depth and comprehensive look at these aspects of program quality. In addition programs will receive feedback on the daily program structure as part of the ECERS-3 observation process. In an ECERS-3 observation, one classroom is randomly selected to be observed. This classroom is used as a sample for the environment and practices utilized on a programmatic level.

The CLASS+ focuses on a selection of critical environmental factors and key practices. Although this tool does not capture environmental data in as much depth as the ECERS-3, because it is designed to work in conjunction with the CLASS tool, it allows us to collect data from every classroom that is observed using the CLASS tool. This offers us a glimpse of the classroom environment and practices related to health and safety in more classrooms.

¹ The CLASS Environments Scales is an assessment tool designed to capture environmental factors that are related to interactions measured in by the CLASS tool developed by Teachstone, creators of the CLASS tool. ECERS-3 is an assessment tool designed to assess the learning environment in early childhood programs, developed by ERSI. The A-TSRS is an assessment tool often used alongside the CLASS tool designed to capture additional information about specific pedagogical practices, developed through collaboration between Harvard University and New York University.

How will CLASS+ data be used?

Beginning with the FY21 school year and on, CLASS+ data will be used to provide programs with additional feedback about their classroom environments and health and safety practices that they may use to inform their own professional development. Borough support staff may use CLASS+ data to inform coaching plans for programs. This data will also allow the DECE to identify programs that would benefit from more in-depth feedback with an ECERS-3 observation in the following school year.

How will observations using the CLASS+ be conducted?

The CLASS+ scales will be used alongside the CLASS tool, as evaluators will gather CLASS+ data during normal CLASS observations. CLASS Evaluators will not conduct a separate observation using the CLASS+ tool.

The CLASS+ tool is designed to be used alongside the CLASS tool and to capture environmental factors that a CLASS evaluator would normally see in the course of an observation. Therefore there is minimal impact on established procedures for CLASS. At most, the CLASS+ may add a few minutes to the amount of time a CLASS evaluator spends in the classroom or may walk through the classroom(s) before children arrive in order to look at some materials.

When will I get CLASS+ feedback?

Any major areas of focus that arise during the course of an observation will be communicated to program leaders as soon as possible after the observation. On the day of the observation, the evaluator will make efforts to meet with the program leader to discuss trends and areas of focus from the CLASS and CLASS+ tools. Programs and Borough Staff will receive a CLASS+ report in addition to their standard CLASS report. CLASS+ will be included as an addendum to the CLASS report which programs will receive in approximately 6 weeks after their assessment.

Additional CLASS+ Resources

You can find an Introduction to CLASS+ Webinar [here](#) and the accompanying PDF [here](#). Additional resources will be posted on Program Assessment [InfoHub](#).