



The Maryland EXCELS Self-Assessment: Preschool was developed to conduct observations of teaching practices with groups of children from 3 to 5 years of age. It is used to satisfy the Level 3 requirements for program self-assessment. This tool is based upon the Maryland State Department of Education's [Supporting Every Young Learner: Maryland's Guide to Early Childhood Pedagogy](#) and is aligned with the Pre-K Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®) published by Teachstone.

#### Requirements for ACR2:

- 1) Conduct a self-assessment for at least one classroom/designated space from each age group (i.e. for at least one group of three to five year olds) based upon enrollment at the time of the observation.
- 2) Upload the **Summary Score Sheet** page to your Maryland EXCELS profile in ACR 2.

#### Guidelines for the Observer:

- Prior to conducting an observation, familiarize yourself with the teacher-child interactions listed on the following pages. The observer will focus on how the teacher(s) are interacting with the children.
- Best practice is to conduct the observation on a "typical day." A "typical day" would have at least 75% of enrolled children in attendance; no substitute teacher(s)/special guests; no parties/special events; etc.
- Observe children and teacher(s) engaged in a variety of activities and routines, including independent play, snack or mealtime and small groups.
- A thorough assessment of one classroom could take about 2 hours, but does not need to be conducted continuously.
- To support your **Program Improvement Plan**, we encourage you to use this self-assessment in every classroom with children from 3 to 5 years of age.



### Procedures for the Observer:

- 1) Complete a separate self-assessment for each classroom you will observe.
- 2) Best Observer Practice is to....
  - a) Blend into the background and, as much as possible, position yourself out of the line of sight of the teachers. Move around the room, as needed, when activities and groupings change.
  - b) Check the Daily Schedule to avoid being in an area that a teacher or child might want to use soon.
  - c) Keep your focus on the teacher(s) and limit your interactions with the children.
  - d) Make sure you can hear interactions between the teacher(s) and children. The children's reactions to what the teacher(s) are saying and doing is an indication of the effectiveness of any interaction.
- 3) Take notes using any methods that help you remember what you observed (tally marks, brief notes, abbreviations, video, etc.).

### Upon completion of each observation:

Decide if the teacher-child interaction in each row took place **Consistently**, **Sometimes**, or **Rarely**. Assign a score to each teacher- child interaction row based on the Points Range Descriptions listed here and found at the bottom of each page.

- a) **Rarely:** Assign a teacher-child interaction a score of **1 point** if you did not see a teacher-child interaction taking place at all, or only saw it once or twice during the observation.
- b) **Sometimes:** Assign a teacher-child interaction a score of **4 points** if you saw a teacher-child interaction a few times, with different children, during the observation.
- c) **Consistently:** Assign a teacher-child interaction a score of **7 points** if you saw a teacher-child interaction taking place throughout the observation.

*Continued on the following page....*

#### Points Range Descriptions:

Rarely (*once or twice during 20 minutes*) = 1 point

Sometimes (*three to five times during 20 minutes*) = 4 points

Consistently (*more than five time during 20 minutes, with most children*) = 7 points.



If there is more than one teacher, consider the children’s average experience for each teacher-child interaction using the **Points Range Descriptions**. For example, you might assign 7 points to a teacher who **Consistently** engaged with the children, while the other teacher who **Rarely** engaged with many children during that time would be assigned 1 point. The teacher-child interaction **Range** for that row would be **Sometimes**, so you would put 4 in the Points column.

To get the **Average Score** for each table, add up the Points assigned to each row to get the **Total Points**. Divide the **Total Points** by the number of rows in that table. Put the **Average Score** on the last page (**Summary Score Sheet** page). In the Sample below, 20 Total Points divided by 5 rows of Teacher-Child Interactions equals an **Average Score** of 4.0.

<b>(SAMPLE) COMMUNICATION Teacher-Child Interactions</b>	<b>Points</b>
<b>Engaging a child in a social conversation.</b> <i>Examples of various observer note taking methods:</i> <span style="margin-left: 150px;"><i>Teacher 1: / / //</i></span> <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><i>Teacher 2: / ///</i></span>	<b>4</b>
<b>Kneeling down to speak to a child at eye level.</b> <i>T1: did not happen 0</i> <span style="margin-left: 200px;"><i>T2: bent over, but not at eye level</i></span>	<b>1</b>
<b>Using accepted displays of affection: smile, hug, give high five, etc.</b> <i>T1: /// laughs ///</i> <span style="margin-left: 150px;"><i>T2: High 5 / smile 1</i></span>	<b>4</b>
<b>Providing positive guidance to support appropriate behavior.</b> <i>T1: "I like how...", "See what -- is doing?"</i> <span style="margin-left: 150px;"><i>T2: Said "No, Don't" over and over XXX 0</i></span>	<b>4</b>
<b>Giving clear directions and explanations for completing activities, tasks, and transitions.</b> <i>T1: clean up song; move by colors;</i> <span style="margin-left: 150px;"><i>T2: helped ////</i></span>	<b>7</b>
<b>Total Points ÷ Teacher Interactions: 20 ÷ 5 = 4.00</b> <b>AVERAGE COMMUNICATION SCORE = 4.00</b>	<b>Total Points 20</b>

Points Range Descriptions:

Rarely (*once or twice during 20 minutes*) = 1 point.

Sometimes (*three to five times during 20 minutes*) = 4 points.

Consistently (*more than five time during 20 minutes, with most children*) = 7 points.



<b>COMMUNICATION Teacher-Child Interactions</b> <i>Communication takes place with words, gestures and actions in the physical layout of the classroom environment. Teachers support this by...</i>	<b>Points</b>
Engaging a child in a social conversation.	
Kneeling down to speak to a child at eye level.	
Using accepted displays of affection: smile, hug, give high five, etc.	
Providing positive guidance to support appropriate behavior.	
Giving clear directions and explanations for completing activities, tasks, and transitions.	
Acknowledging a child's reactions.	
Providing a balance of teacher-directed and child-directed activities.	
Providing time for children to practice self-regulation.	
Total Points ÷ 8 Teacher-Child Interactions: <b>AVERAGE COMMUNICATION SCORE:</b>	<b>Total Points</b>

Points Range Descriptions:

Rarely (*once or twice during 20 minutes*) = 1 point.

Sometimes (*three to five times during 20 minutes*) = 4 points.

Consistently (*more than five time during 20 minutes, with most children*) = 7 points.



<b>ENGAGEMENT Teacher-Child Interactions</b> <i>An early childhood educator continuously promotes a responsive learning environment to improve the children’s participation. Teachers support this by...</i>	<b>Points</b>
Having children complete a task that requires intellectual involvement. For example: Encouraging children to solve problems and conduct experiments; engaging children with activities requiring thinking and decision-making.	
Connecting prior knowledge of the children with new information.	
Helping a child feel comfortable and accepted. For example: Connecting activities to a child’s life; Speaking informally with a child to gain information about her/him.	
Using effective pacing with established routines and rules; Planning activities for children that finish a task early.	
Building positive relationships: with children; among children; model respectful peer-to-peer relationships.	
Using effective verbal feedback.	
Monitoring children’s understanding and facial expressions.	
Demonstrating enthusiasm, intensity and humor.	
Providing time for children to digest and react when information is presented.	
<b>Total Points ÷ 9 Teacher-Child Interactions:</b> <b>AVERAGE ENGAGEMENT SCORE:</b>	<b>Total Points</b>

Points Range Descriptions:

Rarely (*once or twice during 20 minutes*) = 1 point.

Sometimes (*three to five times during 20 minutes*) = 4 points.

Consistently (*more than five time during 20 minutes, with most children*) = 7 points.





<b>QUESTIONING AND DISCUSSION Teacher-Child Interactions</b> <i>High level questions and discussions are essential to support each child's concept development. Teachers support this by...</i>	<b>Points</b>
Asking high-level questions that help children develop understanding of a concept or topic. Asking open-ended questions requiring more than a one-word response (Why; How; What if; How do you know)	
Asking children to explain, infer, compare, analyze and evaluate information that has been presented	
Asking questions to make connections to a child's prior knowledge	
Introducing a topic to children by clearly stating objectives	
Total Points ÷ 4 Teacher-Child Interactions: <b>AVERAGE QUESTIONING AND DISCUSSION SCORE:</b>	<b>Total Points</b>

Points Range Descriptions:

Rarely (*once or twice during 20 minutes*) = 1 point.

Sometimes (*three to five times during 20 minutes*) = 4 points.

Consistently (*more than five time during 20 minutes, with most children*) = 7 points.





<b>FEEDBACK Teacher-Child Interactions</b> <i>Feedback is specific to a child's demonstration of skills, rather than simply a positive comment or praise. Teachers do this by...</i>	<b>Points</b>
Asking follow-up questions to encourage children's responses; Asking children to elaborate on their answers; Wait enough time for the child to respond.	
Providing children with in the moment, objective feedback that reinforces proficient and developing skills.	
Stating specific, concrete expectations for the skill being developed; i.e. step by step instructions as needed.	
Motivating children to feel competent and capable of completing a task/skill by providing feedback and encouragement specific to that task/skill.	
Total Points ÷4 Teacher-Child Interactions: <b>AVERAGE FEEDBACK SCORE:</b>	<b>Total Points</b>

Points Range Descriptions:

Rarely (*once or twice during 20 minutes*) = 1 point.

Sometimes (*three to five times during 20 minutes*) = 4 points.

Consistently (*more than five time during 20 minutes, with most children*) = 7 points.





<b>INDIVIDUALIZATION Teacher-Child Interactions</b> <i>Individualization is an approach to learning that balances the needs of each child with the curriculum content. Teachers do this by...</i>	<b>Points</b>
Developing lessons that reflect children’s interests and skills, and meet each child’s developmental needs and abilities.	
Using multiple methods (verbal, visual, hands-on materials) when presenting lessons and information.	
Providing children with opportunities to choose to work individually, in small groups, or in large groups.	
Connecting a child’s real-life experiences to the discussion and lesson plans.	
Supporting each child so she/he feels safe and respected.	
Total Points ÷ 5 Teacher-Child Interactions: <b>AVERAGE INDIVIDUALIZATION SCORE:</b>	<b>Total Points</b>

Points Range Descriptions:

Rarely (*once or twice during 20 minutes*) = 1 point.

Sometimes (*three to five times during 20 minutes*) = 4 points.

Consistently (*more than five time during 20 minutes, with most children*) = 7 points.







## Maryland EXCELS Self-Assessment: Preschool (3 to 5 years)

### Summary Score Sheet

**Upload the completed Summary Score Sheet for each classroom/designated space to ACR 2 in your Maryland EXCELS profile.**

	AVERAGE SCORES
COMMUNICATION Teacher-Child Interactions	
ENGAGEMENT Teacher-Child Interactions	
QUESTIONING AND DISCUSSION Teacher-Child Interactions	
FEEDBACK Teacher-Child Interactions	
INDIVIDUALIZATION Teacher-Child Interactions	

Program/Provider Name:	License # or Registration #:	Classroom/Designated Space:
Staff Name(s):		
Date of Self-Assessment:	Number of children present:	Activities Observed:
Name of Observer:		

Points Range Descriptions:

Rarely (*once or twice during 20 minutes*) = 1 point.

Sometimes (*three to five times during 20 minutes*) = 4 points.

Consistently (*more than five time during 20 minutes, with most children*) = 7 points.

