



**Companion Guide to Maryland EXCELS Self-Assessment: Preschool**  
**Examples of Observable Teacher-Child Interactions**

Keep this Companion Guide on hand to help you focus on the kinds of teacher-child interactions to look for when conducting a Maryland EXCELS Self-Assessment: Preschool.

<p><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></p>	<p><b>Examples of Observable Teacher-Child Interactions</b>  <i>You might hear other examples that support teacher-child interactions.</i></p>
Engaging a child in a social conversation.	Talks with children about their home activities, weekend activities, children’s favorite things.
Kneeling down to speak to a child at eye level.	Moves to child’s eye level when speaking with them.
Using accepted displays of affection: smile, hug, give high five, etc.	Uses appropriate physical actions to show affection that are also welcomed by the child.
Providing positive guidance to support appropriate behavior.	Starts directions with “Please do” phrases instead of “Don’t/Stop/Not.”
Giving clear directions and explanations for completing activities, tasks, and transitions.	Explains activities one step at time.
Acknowledging a child’s reactions.	Uses phrases such as, “I understand you are frustrated,” or, “You seem upset.”
Providing a balance of teacher-directed activities (TDA) and child-directed activities.	Ends TDA before children get bored. A variety of activity types are available.
Providing time for children to practice self-regulation.	Offers guidance for behavior management and waits for the child to comply before intervening.



<p><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></p>	<p><b>Examples of Observable Teacher-Child Interactions</b> <i>You might hear other examples that support teacher-child interactions.</i></p>
<p>Having children complete a task that requires intellectual involvement. For example, encouraging children to solve problems and conduct experiments, and engaging children with activities requiring thinking and decision-making.</p>	<p>Provides open-ended activities with more than one result. Asks, “What do you think will work?” or, “What would you like to try?”</p>
<p>Connecting prior knowledge of the children with new information.</p>	<p>Reminds child of previous activity: “Remember when we explored...?”</p>
<p>Helping a child feel comfortable and accepted. For example, connecting activities to a child’s life or speaking informally with a child to gain information about them.</p>	<p>Uses child’s name, refers to their family, or engages in informal, open conversations with children.</p>
<p>Using effective pacing with established routines and rules and planning activities for children who finish a task early.</p>	<p>Uses strategies, gives 5-minute warnings, states Plan/Do/Review, or “extra” activities are readily accessible.</p>
<p>Building positive relationships with children and among children, and by modeling respectful peer-to-peer relationships.</p>	<p>Lets children choose a partner, acts as a role model with co-teacher; or assigns children to a new partner.</p>
<p>Using effective verbal feedback.</p>	<p>Gives praise specific to the skill or task: “Look how well you...,” rather than only stating, “Good job!”</p>
<p>Monitoring children’s understanding and facial expressions.</p>	<p>Checks in between instructions or adjusts activities based upon children’s attention spans.</p>
<p>Demonstrating enthusiasm, intensity, and humor.</p>	<p>Uses verbal and physical expressiveness.</p>
<p>Providing time for children to digest and react when information is presented.</p>	<p>Waits after giving instructions and information.</p>



<p><b>QUESTIONING AND DISCUSSION Teacher-Child Interactions</b></p> <p><i>High-level questions and discussions are essential to support each child's concept development. Teachers support this by:</i></p>	<p><b>Examples of Observable Teacher-Child Interactions</b></p> <p><i>You might hear other examples that support teacher-child interactions.</i></p>
<p>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 (e.g., why, how, what if, how do you know).</p>	<p>Asks questions that have more than one correct answer. Asks questions that have more than a one-word answer. Pauses to let children think about an answer.</p>
<p>Asking children to explain, infer, compare, analyze, and evaluate information that has been presented.</p>	<p>Asks open-ended questions. Asks follow-up questions based upon their answer: “How do you know?” or “How did you figure that out?”</p>
<p>Asking questions to make connections to a child’s prior knowledge.</p>	<p>Asks, “How did you know?” or “How did you figure that out?”</p>
<p>Introducing a topic to children by clearly stating objectives.</p>	<p>Uses Plan/Do/Review: “Now we are going to…”</p>

<p><b>FEEDBACK Teacher-Child Interactions</b></p> <p><i>Feedback is specific to a child’s demonstration of skills, rather than simply a positive comment or praise. Teachers do this by:</i></p>	<p><b>Examples of Observable Teacher-Child Interactions</b></p> <p><i>You might hear other examples that support teacher-child interactions.</i></p>
<p>Asking follow-up questions to encourage children’s responses. Asking children to elaborate on their answers. Waiting enough time for the child to respond.</p>	<p>Asks, “How did you know?”, “How did you figure that out?”, or “Tell us more about…”</p>
<p>Providing children with in-the-moment, objective feedback that reinforces proficient and developing skills.</p>	<p>Uses encouraging comments: “You are doing it!” or “We see how hard you are trying to ___!”</p>
<p>Stating specific, concrete expectations for the skill being developed, i.e., step-by-step instructions as needed.</p>	<p>Repeats directions as needed. Uses Plan/Do/Review.</p>
<p>Motivating children to feel competent and capable of completing a task/skill by providing feedback and encouragement specific to that task/skill.</p>	<p>Uses supportive comments: “I knew you could ___!” or “Let’s try ___ together!”</p>



<p><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></p>	<p><b>Examples of Observable Teacher-Child Interactions</b> <i>You might hear other examples that support teacher-child interactions.</i></p>
<p>Developing lessons that reflect children’s interests and skills and meet each child’s developmental needs and abilities.</p>	<p>Asks children what they want to do. Provides choices of activities. Groups children by skills and interests.</p>
<p>Using multiple methods when presenting lessons and information (verbal, visual, hands-on materials).</p>	<p>Provides materials that use several senses. Lets children handle materials.</p>
<p>Providing children with opportunities to choose to work individually, in small groups, or in large groups.</p>	<p>Lets children choose different groupings throughout the day.</p>
<p>Connecting a child’s real-life experiences to the discussion and lesson plans.</p>	<p>Mentions the child’s family activities, weekend activities, or home life.</p>
<p>Supporting each child so they feel safe and respected.</p>	<p>Uses child’s name. Uses child’s home language.</p>