



## Maryland EXCELS Self-Assessment: School-Age

Kindergarten-12 years

The Maryland EXCELS Self-Assessment: School-Age was developed to conduct observations of teaching practices with groups of children of kindergarten age to 12 years old. 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-3rd Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS<sup>®</sup>) published by Teachstone and the Maryland Accreditation [School-Age Only Standards](#).

### Requirements for ACR 2:

- 1) Conduct a self-assessment for at least one classroom/designated space with children of kindergarten age and older.
- 2) Upload the completed **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) is (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 the children and teacher(s) engaged in a variety of activities and routines, including independent play, snack, homework, and small groups.
- A thorough assessment of one classroom could take about two 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/designated space for children of kindergarten age to 12 years old.

## Procedures for the Observer:

- 1) Complete a separate self-assessment for each classroom you will observe. Best Observer Practice is to:
  - Check the daily schedule to avoid being in an area that a teacher or child might want to use soon.
  - 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.
  - Keep your focus on the teacher(s) and limit your interactions with the children.
  - 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.
- 2) Take notes using any methods that help you remember what you observed (tally marks, brief notes, abbreviations, video, etc.).

## Upon completion of each observation:

- 3) 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.
  - **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.
  - **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.
  - **Consistently**: Assign a teacher-child interaction a score of **7 points** if you saw teacher-child interactions taking place throughout the observation.

Consider the children's average experience for each teacher-child interaction using the **Points Range Descriptions**. For example, if there is more than one teacher, 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 average range in that case would be **Sometimes**, so you would put 4 in the Points column.

### 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 times during 20 minutes, with most children*) = 7 points

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

- 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. In the sample below, 20 Total Points divided by 5 rows of Teacher-Child Interactions equals an **Average Score** of 4.00.
- Complete and submit the **Summary Score Sheet** (final page): Record the **Average Score** from each table, fill in the additional program and assessment information, and then upload and submit this page to ACR 2 in your Maryland EXCELS profile.

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 times 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.	
Bending down to speak to a child at eye level.	
Using accepted displays of affection: smile, hug, 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 times 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 or 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 or 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 and among children. Modeling 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.	
Total Points ÷ 9 Teacher-Child Interactions: <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 times 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 times 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. Waiting 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 an activity or attempting a new skill by providing feedback and encouragement specific to that activity/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 times 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 when presenting lessons and information (verbal, visual, hands-on materials).	
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 they feel 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 times during 20 minutes, with most children*) = 7 points



## Summary Score Sheet

Upload and submit the completed Summary Score Sheet(s) to ACR 2 in your Maryland EXCELS profile.

TEACHER-CHILD INTERACTIONS	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/Registration #	
Date of Self-Assessment	
Name of Observer	
Classroom/Designated Space	
Child Care Teacher Name(s)	
Number of children present	
Activities Observed	

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 times during 20 minutes, with most children*) = 7 points