



# Classroom Code for Interactive Recording of Children's Learning Environments

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Classroom CIRCLE for Android

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# Classroom CIRCLE Overview

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# Classroom CIRCLE Overview

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## **CONTEXT**

### **STRUCTURE**

Centers  
Story Time  
Large Group  
Small Group  
Individual Activity  
Meals and Snacks  
Clean-Up, Set-Up, Transition  
Personal Care  
Therapy  
Restricted Access  
None of Those Listed

## **TEACHER**

### **TEACHER TALK**

Positive Feedback  
Negative Feedback  
Expansion, Repetition, Extension  
Question – Open Ended  
Question – Closed Ended  
Request for Action  
Reading, Reciting  
Singing  
Exuberant Vocalization, Laughter  
General Conversation  
None

### **TEACHER RECIPIENT**

Focus Child Only  
Child's Group  
None

## **CHILD**

### **CHILD SOCIAL**

Negative Social Behavior  
Words – English  
Words – Other  
Communicative Gesture, Vocalization  
Nonverbal Positive Initiation  
Singing  
Laughing  
Social Attention  
None

### **CHILD PARTNER**

Teacher  
Other Professional  
Other Adult  
Individual Child  
Group  
None

## **ACADEMIC CONTENT**

Language/Literacy  
Numeracy  
Science and Nature  
Social Studies  
None of Those Listed

## **LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION**

English  
Spanish  
Other  
English/Spanish Blend  
English/Other Blend  
None of Those Listen

## **TEACHER LITERACY FOCUS**

Phonological Awareness  
Alphabet/Print Concepts  
Comprehension – Story  
Comprehension Other  
Vocabulary  
Reading  
Literacy Involvement  
None of Those Listed

## **TEACHER INVOLVEMENT**

Sharing  
Close Proximity  
General Supervision  
Not Involved

## **CHILD ENGAGEMENT**

Competing Behavior  
Writing  
Reading Words or Letters Aloud  
Academic Manipulation  
Academic Verbal Response or Gesture  
Academic Attention  
Pretend Play  
Music, Recitation  
Non-Academic Manipulation  
Gross Motor  
Eating, Drinking  
Non-Academic Attention to Materials  
None of Those Listed

# General Procedures

## What is CIRCLE?

Classroom CIRCLE (Classroom Code for Interactive Recording of Children’s Learning Environments) is an ecobehavioral classroom observation system that provides a fine-grained assessment of children's experiences in preschool classroom environments. A comprehensive set of indicators are used to provide a description of teacher-child interaction in different classroom contexts. CIRCLE helps to fill a gap in the knowledge, supports, and professional development needed to assist preschool teachers to revise and implement interventions for children who need additional support and/or are unresponsive to current interventions. CIRCLE is fully developed and tested in research and provides a coordinated system for collection, analysis, and management of classroom observation data. The goal is to improve the outcomes of young children with and without risk for disabilities or delays in inclusive preschool settings and to strengthen and improve access, training, and uptake by practitioners using digital technology to improve evidence-based practice.

CIRCLE is the outgrowth of an earlier line of *ecobehavioral* observational research developed at Juniper Gardens Children’s Project to inform instructional research, professional development, and practice issues. Already completed psychometric work with CIRCLE indicates high standards of reliability, stability, and treatment validity. Preliminary work with preschool samples diverse in race, language, and disability and large datasets were produced supporting secondary analyses of data.

The intended users of CIRCLE are School Psychologists, Early Childhood Special Educators, Response to Intervention Teams, Teacher Trainers, and Researchers whose roles include observational assessment.

## The CIRCLE Application:

Observations are made on an Android-based phone or tablet computer (on which the CIRCLE software is running). The observation provides a description of: (a) the context of children’s classroom activities, (b) the behavior of teachers and other adults in the classroom, and (c) the child's engagement with people and objects. The present system was designed for children from 3 to 5 years of age. Variables are recorded on a momentary time-sampling basis as they pertain to an individual child (i.e., the *Focus Child*). Within a single observation session, the data collection program accepts 1-3 Focus Children. The observer focuses on one child at a time, typically switches to a different Focus Child every 15 minutes, and cycles through the selected Focus Children until 30-60 minutes of data are collected for each child. Within each 15-minute block, data are recorded during a series of 60 15-second intervals.

## What Behaviors and Contexts Does it Capture?

The following variables describe typical activities that occur in preschool classrooms and that serve as the context for children’s interactions with the environment.

- **Context Variables** include **Classroom Structure**, which is intended to capture the general context of the Child's classroom activities, **Academic Content**, which describes the primary focus of activities set up by the Teacher to support learning, and **Language of Instruction**, which describes the Child's exposure to verbal and written language.
- **Teacher Variables** include **Teacher Talk** as it relates to verbal behavior toward the focus Child, **Teacher Recipient** which designates whether the Teacher talk is directed to the Focus Child individually or to the Child's group, **Literacy Focus** which identifies Teacher behaviors that may help the Child develop early literacy skills, and **Teacher Involvement** which describes the level of the Teacher's engagement or involvement in the Focus Child's activities.
- **Child Variables** include **Child's Social Behavior** which describes the Child's behavior with other people in the classroom, **Child's Partner** which identifies the recipient of the child's communication or social behavior, and **Child Engagement** which describes the Child's participation in classroom activities.

## Data Collection

At the beginning of an observation session, the observer enters Child ID numbers for the selected Focus Children, as well as other information to identify the data. After timing begins, the observer cycles through: (a) a 15-second interval for observing and recording CONTEXT variables, (b) a 15-second interval for TEACHER variables, and (c) a 15-second interval for CHILD variables. This cycle of Context Intervals, Teacher Intervals and Child Intervals continues until the 15-minute block is complete.

The data entry program signals the observer with a vibration at the beginning of each observation interval and presents a list of the variables to be observed in that interval. The observer then selects the specific category, within each variable, that best describes events that occurred at the moment of the interval vibration. The categories within each variable are assumed to be mutually exclusive and exhaustive (i.e., for each variable, one and only one category is recorded during every 15-second interval).

## Terminology

<i>Interval</i>	A 15-second period for observing and recording the variables for either Context, Teacher or Child – the smallest division within an observation.
<i>Block</i>	A 15-minute period spent observing one child – a series of sixty 15-second intervals.
<i>Observation</i>	A series of 15-minute observation blocks constituting one observation session.
<i>Variable</i>	One of the ten major classifications of observed events: Structure, Academic content, Language of Instruction, Teacher Talk, Recipient of Teacher Talk, Teacher Literacy Focus, Teacher Involvement, Child Social Behavior, Child's Social Partner, and Child Engagement.
<i>Category</i>	A specific code/definition within each variable to describe the setting or behaviors.

## General Priority Rule

If more than one category within a variable seems to apply in the same interval, priority is given to the category that occurs first in the CIRCLE taxonomy. For example, if a Child is saying “Hello” and waving, the observer would record **Words-English** for **Social Behavior** (rather than **Communicative Gesture/Vocalization**) because **Words-English** is listed first in the taxonomy. Please see the Classroom CIRCLE Taxonomy (p. 3) for a list of categories in order of priority, which also matches the list of categories as presented in the data collection software.

## Defining the Child and Teacher

In this manual, the capitalized term, *Child*, always refers to the Focus Child who is being observed at the time. The capitalized term, *Teacher*, refers to the teacher or other adult who is interacting with the Focus Child. Although the adult observed may not always be a teacher, technically, we use the term *Teacher* for the sake of convenience. Aside from classroom teachers, other professionals and adults in the classroom may be observed if they interact with the Focus Child (e.g., physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, adult classroom volunteers).

## Pre-Academic Topics

Several categories refer to *academic topics*. Thus, the observer must clearly understand that, in Classroom CIRCLE, *academic topics* include the following:

- *Early Literacy* – e.g., phonological awareness, comprehension, vocabulary, alphabet and print concepts, reading
- *Early Numeracy* – e.g., numbers, counting, measurement, sequencing, geometric shapes, relative sizes
- *Science and Nature* – e.g., animals, seasons of the year, nutrition, health, weather, plants, the solar system
- *Social Studies* – e.g., history, geography, different cultures

## The *Can't Tell* Category

Every variable includes an option to select **Can't Tell**, which indicates that the variable could not be observed accurately within a particular interval. CIRCLE users should work to minimize use of **Can't Tell** because it results in missing data. However, this category serves an important function by indicating that, at the signal, the observer was not able to select an accurate category with reasonable confidence. Thus, **Can't Tell** helps us to avoid inaccurate data. When **Can't Tell** is selected, a missing code is entered in the data stream. Thus, **Can't Tell** is not considered a category within the variable, but rather is one type of missing data.

*Can't Tell* is designed for use in the following circumstances:

- To indicate that something occurred to prevent the observer from seeing or hearing the key behaviors at the appropriate moment. Common examples are when another person blocks the observer's view of the Child or when a teacher asks the observer a question. The observer should act to remedy the situation as soon as possible (e.g., move to obtain a better view of the Child or answer the teacher's question politely, but succinctly).
- To indicate that the observer could not make a decision about the appropriate category. The observer should discuss the problem as soon as possible with his/her supervisor so that measures can be taken to avoid further problems with that category (e.g., clarification of definitions, additional training).

## Practicing with CIRCLE Data Collection outside of the Classroom

Some work in the office/workplace is necessary to become familiar with the program.

- Walk through the data entry screens to see how they work. Increase the interval time on your device so you will be able to look at everything on the screen.
- Have a partner call out the names of categories while you practice with the program. This will help you find the categories quickly.
- If you have classroom videotapes, practicing with the tapes can be helpful, however, videos don't always provide all the contextual cues that are needed.
- Review the Classroom CIRCLE manual. Become familiar with the ten major classification variables of observed events: Structure, Academic Content, Language of Instruction, Teacher Talk, Recipient of Teacher Talk, Teacher Literacy Focus, Teacher Involvement, Child Social Behavior, Child's Social Partner, and Child Engagement. Read through the specific code/definitions within each classification variable to become familiar with the content.
- Complete the homework exercise scenarios (see Homework Exercise p.97). The scenarios are small snapshots of what is commonly seen and heard in classrooms. You can work alone or with a partner. The purpose of these exercises is to help you think about and learn the definitions and to generate discussion.

## Practice in the Classroom

Classroom practice is essential. We recommend that you work through the steps, and move on to the next step as soon as you feel comfortable. Feel free to adjust the steps to fit your own situation and learning style.

- Increase the time interval setting to 30 seconds or more. If possible, work with a partner and look at what your partner is recording. If it's not disruptive, one person can quietly state what they are entering while the other person makes note of disagreements.



- You may want to start by recording the context only until you feel comfortable with the definitions.
- Next try recording only teacher behaviors.
- When you are ready, record both Context and Teacher Behaviors.
- Next, work on Child Behaviors.
- When you are ready, record both Context and Child Behaviors.
- When you feel comfortable with the codes, code Context, Teacher Behaviors, and Child Behaviors. Gradually reduce the time intervals until you are comfortable with the 15-second intervals.

## Reliability Standards

Structural Criteria: In order to establish reliability, observations must meet the following criteria:

- Observations must be 15 minutes long.
- The interval length must be set to 15 seconds
- Observers must stay with one child for the entire 15 minutes
- Observers must observe independently (i.e., observers do not look at each other's screens and do not talk to one another).
- The reliability observer must be certified previously on Classroom CIRCLE.

Percentage Agreement Criteria: For certification, a trainee must have at least 3 observations that meet the following criteria:

- The overall percentage agreement is 85% or higher.
- The percentage agreement for all 10 variables is 70% or higher.

### Reliability Protocol

1. PRIMARY OBSERVER should always be the person with the most CIRCLE experience.
2. RELIABILITY OBSERVER should always be the person with the least CIRCLE experience.
3. The RELIABILITY OBSERVER'S data will be appended to the RELIABILITY TABLE
4. The PRIMARY OBSERVER'S data will be appended to the OBSERVATION TABLE, which contains data that is used for Analysis

### Checking for Drift

Reliability is conducted on a minimum of 25% of CIRCLE observations being used for Project data. Conducting reliability helps to minimize scoring differences among observers and identify inconsistencies when scoring classroom data.

## Recording Introductory Information

At the beginning of each observation, the observer enters information to identify date, target child(ren), and classroom information. Be sure that the device is recording the initials and numbers you put in. Sometimes the device will use predictive text and want to replace the initials you typed in with other similar initials. If this happens, look at the bar directly above the keypad and select the initials you wish to use.

Introductory data includes the following:

Data	Format	Description
Observer Information	Select	Enter if you are the Primary, Reliability, or Practice Observer
Date	mm/dd/yyyy	Be sure the clock setting is correct in your device so the date setting will appear correctly.
Observer Initials	Max = 3 characters	These will be the initials in your name
Classroom Code	Max = 8 characters	This is a predetermined classroom code linking data to the classroom
Interval length	Drop-down list	The standard interval length is 15 seconds, but may be set to a longer period for training.
Focus Child ID	Max = 15 characters	There must be a unique ID number for each of the 3 Focus Children.
Wave	Max = 3 characters	Enter the wave number depending on the data collection cycle
Focus Child Description	Max = 30 characters	Enter the child's initials in <u>lower case letters</u> . These are used to confirm the Focus Child's identity in the event of ID errors.
First Language	Drop-down list	The first language for each Focus Child: English, Spanish, Other
Second Language	Drop-down list	Second language for each Focus Child (if any)
Next	Arrow	Select Next, and Start Timer when ready. If conducting reliability, be sure that both partners press start timer at the same time.

## Coding/Follow-up

1. If an observation is interrupted (e.g., the child leaves the room), note the amount of time remaining, and determine the appropriate action (PAUSE or STOP).
  - Use PAUSE if you plan to resume the observation before coding another child.
  - Use STOP if you will not be able to resume the observation in your desired timeframe, or if you would like to code another child (see page 90).
2. Record the remaining time when any interruptions occurred and how you proceeded on your CIRCLE Data Collection Summary Sheet in the irregularities and notes sections.
3. Complete the CIRCLE data Collection Summary Sheet. A CIRCLE Log is located on the backside of the sheet. This will help data collectors keep track of the order children are observed, who is leading the class activities, and provide activity notes, which give a short synopsis of what is observed during the 15-minute observation. This information will be helpful to coaches when reviewing CIRCLE data with teachers.



## Classroom CIRCLE

# Context Variables

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Centers - 16 Story Time - 17 Large Group - 18 Small Group - 19 Individual Activity - 20 Meals and Snacks - 21 Clean-Up, Set-Up, Transition - 22 Personal Care - 23 Therapy - 23 Restricted Access - 24 None of Those Listed - 24	Language/Literacy - 26 Numeracy - 28 Science and Nature - 30 Social Studies - 31 None of Those Listed - 32	English - 34 Spanish - 34 Other - 34 English/Spanish Blend - 34 English/Other Blend - 35 None - 35

ClassCircle (Version 1.3)

Observe classroom CONTEXT now!

14:59 PAUSE STOP

STRUCTURE

(Please SELECT)

ACADEMIC CONTENT

(Please SELECT)

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

(Please SELECT)

SAME AS PREVIOUS



# Context Variables

## Structure Academic Content Language of Instruction

### Structure

The **Structure** variable describes typical activities that occur in preschool classrooms and that serve as the context for children's interactions with the environment.

Events that signal the beginning of a new **Structure**:

- The Teacher signals that a new **Structure** is beginning for the Child or the Child's group (verbally or by other signals).
- The Focus Child begins actions relevant to the new **Structure**. This may include simply moving or walking to the appropriate location.

Events that signal the end of a **Structure**:

- The Teacher signals that it is time to transition to a new **Structure**.
- The Child leaves the location or loses access to relevant materials.
- The Child begins actions relevant to a new **Structure**.



The **Structure** variable is intended to capture the general context of the Child's classroom activities. Thus, **Structure** typically reflects a relatively stable condition, rather than changing from interval to interval. For example, the Child might stop momentarily to tie his shoe during **Centers**, while still sitting in the **Centers** area. The primary **Structure** would still be **Centers**. The observer should NOT change **Structure** to **Personal Care** for the brief period of time that the Child is tying his shoe.

However, sometimes a Child may leave an ongoing activity briefly with the teacher's permission. For example, a Child may be in **Large Group**, but be called aside to brush her teeth. In this case, the child has left the location for **Large Group** and has entered a different activity (**Personal Care**). Thus, **Structure** would be changed to **Personal Care** when the Child leaves the setting of the large group activity and would be changed back to **Large Group** when the Child returns.

If the Child leaves an activity briefly and goes to a location that is not observed (e.g., going to the bathroom), the observer should pause the observation temporarily until the Child returns. The Pause button can be selected during any Teacher interval.

For this variable, it is important to consider what the Child is supposed to be doing, as defined by the Teacher. For example, if the teacher has designated a period of time as **Large Group**, the Child is in that **Structure**, even if she is not participating as intended. In other words, **Structure** describes the situation the Child is in. It does not describe the Child's behavior within that situation.

## Centers

Two or more play or learning areas have been set up for children to choose from. For example, these activities may include (but are not limited to): pre-academic activities (early numeracy, early literacy, science, social studies); fine motor manipulative materials; a library corner; dramatic play activities; art activities; listening stations and play with large motor equipment.

**Centers** are distinguished from a **Small Group** and **Individual Activity** by the fact that children may choose among activities and may move between activities as their interests shift.



This category refers to a selection of activities that have been set up for the children and that focus on different aspects of play and learning (e.g., an art table, a dramatic play area, a block area, and a table for writing letters of the alphabet). This is very different from an unstructured classroom where specific activities and learning areas have not been defined by the Teacher.

Moving between interest areas and making decisions about areas to visit are integral parts of **Centers**. Thus, the time spent choosing and moving between learning areas is considered part of **Center** time.

### Examples:

NOTE: In all of these examples, the activity described is one of several available for the Child to choose from.

- = The Child is participating in a center where children sort blocks by their shapes.
- = The Child is manipulating parquet blocks to match designs printed on cards.
- = The Child is pretending to make dinner in the kitchen area.
- = The Child is building a structure with peers in the block area of the classroom.
- = Children are supposed to choose from four available activities. The Focus Child is sitting in the block area but is not doing anything.
- = The Child has just finished an art activity and is walking toward the dramatic play area.
- = All of the children are supposed to be engaged in one of several activities. The Focus Child is wandering around aimlessly and is not participating in any of the activities.
- = The Child is making a Mother's Day card at the art table. No other children are at the table.
- = The Child is making a Mother's Day card at the art table. To other children are also working on cards for their mothers.
- = The Child is working by herself on a children's computer game.
- = The Child has chosen to participate in a listening station, which is one of three available activities.
- = The Child chose the book area, and the Teacher is reading a story to him



## Story Time

---

The general context involves (a) the Teacher reading to the Child or the Child's group or (b) the Teacher telling a story using materials with print or writing.



**Story Time** often involves a large group of children, but that is not a requirement. **Story Time** can occur with a small group or even with just the Focus Child and a Teacher.

### Examples:

NOTE: In all of these examples, the Child is NOT free to move among a selection of activities, as he would be during **Centers**.

- = The Child is sitting on the Teacher's lap, and the Teacher is reading a book to her.
- = The Teacher is reading *There's a Train Going by my Window* to a group of 10 children. She reads one page at a time and engages in a discussion of each page with the children.
- = The Teacher is telling children a story and using cards to emphasize the key words in the story.
- = The children have been divided into two small groups. The Teacher observed is reading a story to the Focus Child's group. The other group is working on an art project with another teacher.
- = The Teacher is reading a book to the entire class. At the moment of the signal the Teacher is looking for some materials she planned to use as part of the **Story Time** activity.
- = The Teacher has read one book to the children and is looking for a second one to read.
- = The Teacher has asked the children to sit around her for book reading. At the moment of the signal, the Teacher is showing children the title of the book.
- = The Child is participating in a Tier 2 Listening Center.
- = During Tier 3 intervention, the Child and interventionist are looking at a book together.

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## Large Group

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The Focus Child is participating in a learning activity that includes 7 or more children (including the Focus Child) and that does not meet the definition of *Centers* or *Story Time*.

### Examples:

- = The Teacher is using puppets to teach Spanish words to a group of 7 children.
- = A visiting nutritionist is talking to the entire class (10 children) about healthy foods.
- = The Child is participating in a Show-and-Tell activity with 8 peers.
- = The Teacher is engaged with a group of 7 children in a music game.
- = The entire class (18 children) is in an opening activity, talking about the schedule for the day.
- = A group of 7 children is gathered around a small table, while the Teacher shows them how to cut Play-Doh shapes with Christmas cookie cutters.
- = The Teacher has taken 8 children to an outdoor garden, where they are planting herbs.
- = The Teacher is leading 7 children in a yoga activity.

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ The entire class (6 children) is in an opening activity, talking about the schedule for the day. (*Small Group*)

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## Small Group

---

The Focus Child is participating in a learning activity that includes 2-6 children (including the Focus Child) and that does not meet the definition of *Centers* or *Story Time*.

### Examples:

- = Three children are sitting at a small table with the Teacher. The Teacher is holding up pictures of animals and talking about each of the animals.
- = The Focus Child and another child are helping the Teacher make cookies in the kitchen.
- = The Teacher has taken 4 children to an outdoor garden, where they are planting herbs.
- = A group of 3 children is gathered around a small table, while the Teacher shows them how to cut playdough shapes with Christmas cookie cutters.
- = The Teacher is taking turns rolling a ball on the floor, with the Focus Child and another child.
- = The Teacher asked the Focus Child and 4 other children to go to the art table. The children are making Valentine cards for their families.

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ The teacher is leading a group with 7 children. They are painting trees while having conversation about trees. (***Large Group***)
- ≠ The Teacher is reading a story to a group of 3 Children during small group activities. (***Story Time***)

## Individual Activity

The Child is in a play or learning activity that does not involve any other children and that does not fit the definition of any of the preceding categories. A Teacher may or may not be involved in the activity with the Child. This category also does not include activities that would qualify as personal care and manipulative therapy.



If a Teacher is present in the Child's activity, the extent of the Teacher's involvement may vary. For example, sometimes the Teacher may provide continuous prompting and pacing. At other times, the Teacher may take more of an observer role and make occasional comments to the Child.

If a selection of play/learning activities is available to the Child, ***Centers*** would be recorded.

### Examples:

- = The Teacher has asked the Focus Child to come to a small table to sort blocks by size and shape. No other children are present in the activity. The teacher is standing nearby but is not interacting directly with the Child.
- = A speech/language pathologist (the "Teacher" in this case) is working with the Focus Child individually.
- = During individualized intervention, the Child is playing an early literacy game with the interventionist.
- = The Child is sitting at the table with other children while working alone on her journal. The teacher has instructed children to work independently.
- = After lunch, the children are asked to pick out a book. Some children do this individually, but the focus child chooses to sit with another child, looking through the pages of a book, making up a story based on the pictures and telling it to the other child. (The Teacher has given instruction to children to work individually.)

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ The Child is able to choose from three different activities set up in the classroom. Currently, the Child is sitting at a table by herself, sorting blocks by shape and size. (***Centers***)
- ≠ A physical therapist is helping the Child walk on a balance beam. (***Manipulative Therapy***)
- ≠ The Child is washing her hands at the sink, and no other children are nearby. (***Personal Care***)

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## Meals and Snacks

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The Focus Child, individually or with a group, is having a meal or snack. Besides time spent eating, this category also includes:

- Meal-time personal care, such as wiping hands and face, *but only while the Child is sitting at the table.*
- Tasks such as passing out food and pouring drinks, *but only while the meal is in progress.* It does not include set-up before the meal or clean-up after the meal has ended.

### Examples:

- = During lunch, the Child is passing food around the table
- = The Child is drinking juice at the snack table.
- = The Child is eating a sandwich during lunch.
- = The Child is having a snack at the table with other children.
- = The Child is wiping his hands on a napkin at the table.
- = The class has finished eating breakfast and children are brushing their teeth, but the focus Child is still eating breakfast.

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ Simply holding or carrying around food or a drink during Centers. (***Centers***)
- ≠ Children are sitting at the table waiting for their food to be served. (***Clean-up, Set-Up Transition***) or (***None of Those Listed*** if children have been waiting for a longer period of time with nothing to do.)

---

## Clean-Up, Set-Up, Transition

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The Child is involved either individually or as a group member in clean-up or set-up tasks other than those that take place in the midst of meals or personal care. It also includes classroom transitions that involve clean-up or set-up tasks for the children, and the time children may have to wait between the end of one **Structure** and the beginning of the next.

### Examples:

- = Wiping off the table after snack
- = Setting the table before lunch
- = Helping the Teacher put toys away after Center Time has ended.
- = Laying out mats for circle time
- = Setting up chairs for a group activity
- = Standing in line, waiting to go outside

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ Children waiting for a long-time during transitions with nothing to do causing behavior disruptions in the classroom. (*None of Those Listed*)

## Personal Care

---

The Child is involved in activities such as dressing, toileting, hand-washing, etc., other than those that take place during a meal or snack. The Child's participation may be either active (e.g., washing her own hands independently) or passive (e.g., having hands washed by the Teacher).



With ***Personal Care***, we are looking for activities with a primary focus on personal care.

Thus, the category does not include very brief interruptions during other activities (e.g., when the Teacher interrupts the Child's play momentarily to wipe the Child's nose). However, if the child leaves the location of an ongoing activity (e.g., to wash hands during a small group activity), **Structure** would be changed to ***Personal Care*** until the child returns.

### Examples:

- = The Child is putting on his coat and boots to go outside.
- = The Child is washing her hands after art activities.
- = The Child is brushing her teeth after lunch.
- = The Teacher is wiping the Child's hands after lunch.

## Therapy

---

The Child is receiving manipulative therapy or physical stimulation exercises that have a therapeutic purpose (e.g., PT or OT). The Child's participation may be either active or passive.

### Examples:

- = A therapist is extending the Child's arms and legs as part of a therapeutic exercise.
- = The Teacher is rolling the Child on a physio-ball.
- = A physical therapist is supervising the Child's walk on a balance beam.
- = An OT is using hand-over-hand guidance to help the Child with self-feeding.

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ One-on-one therapy, such as speech therapy, that does not include physical manipulation or physical guidance. (***Individual Activity***)

## Restricted Access

The Child does not have access to age-appropriate play or instructional materials and none of the previous categories apply. This category includes situations in which (a) no toys or instructional materials are visible to the observer, (b) toys may be visible but are not physically accessible to the Child, or (c) the Teacher has prohibited the Child from playing with toys.

### Examples:

- = The Teacher has placed the Child in a “time out” chair.
- = The Child picks up a newspaper and starts waving it around. It is the only thing the child has to play with.
- = A Child with limited motor skills is sitting or placed in an area without access to toys or learning materials.

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ Instead of using time-out, the Teacher has placed the child in a “safe place,” where books and soft toys are available for the child to use. (*Individual Activity*)
- ≠ Children are waiting to go outside, and the Teacher has told them not to get any toys off the shelf. (*Clean-Up, Set-Up, Transition*)

## None of Those Listed

The Child’s **Structure** does not fit any of the preceding categories.



Most situations observed in a typical day will fit one of the specific categories described above. Whenever ***None of Those Listed*** applies, the observer should discuss the situation with his/her supervisor.

### Examples:

- = The Child is watching a television program that is not focused on a *pre-academic* topic.
- = Children are watching a cartoon while waiting for their parents to pick them up.
- = There are toys in the classroom, and children are allowed to play with them. However, nothing has been set up or structured by teachers (as would be the case for Centers, or individual and group activities).
- = Children are playing together with toys on the carpet with no teacher interaction and Center activities are not available.
- = Children are waiting for a long time between activities with nothing to do.



## Academic Content

**Academic Content** categories describe the primary focus of activities set up by the Teacher to support learning of knowledge and skills related to one of the following content areas:

- Language/Literacy
- Numeracy
- Nature/Science
- Social Studies

To determine **Academic Content**, as set up by the Teacher, the observer should consider both:

- Teacher behavior, including any instructions or prompts the Teacher has provided, and
- Materials the Teacher has set out for children to use – **We are looking for materials the teacher has set up in a learning center or activity to focus on certain skills or themes, not just materials that happen to be available in the classrooms.**

The Teacher does not have to be directly involved in the activity at the time of the observation. For example, the Child might be in a center where children have library books to look at, without direct Teacher involvement (*Language/Literacy* content).

As with other Context variables, **Academic Content** should be recorded as it pertains to the focus Child at the moment of the vibration signal. To identify content, the observer should consider what he/she has observed during the time leading up to the signal (i.e., the past 15 seconds).



For this variable, it is important to consider what the Child is supposed to be doing, as defined by the Teacher. For example, if the Teacher has set up an activity to focus on *Numeracy*. *Numeracy* would be recorded for **Academic Content**, even if the Child is not participating as intended. In other words, **Academic Content** describes the activity the Child is in, rather than the Child's behavior within that activity.

Similarly, this variable is based on the primary focus of the Child's activity, rather than a specific comment the Teacher might be making at the moment of the vibration signal. For example, during set-up for an art activity, the Teacher might take the opportunity to ask the Child, "What color are these crayons?" Although the Teacher's question could be considered *Comprehension-Other* under the Teacher variable of **Literacy Focus**, this would not necessarily mean that the primary focus of the entire activity is *Language/Literacy*. Remember that the **Academic Content** categories describe the general context of the Child's activity rather than a single discrete behavior at the moment of the signal.

## Language and Literacy

The Child is in an activity the Teacher has set up to focus on content and skills related to one of the following:

- Phonological awareness
- **Comprehension related to a book or story**
- **Comprehension related to non-numerical concepts such as colors and same/different**
- Vocabulary
- Alphabet/print concepts (including emergent writing)
- Reading

To identify ***Language/Literacy*** content, as set up by the Teacher, the observer should consider the behavior of the Teacher AND materials the Teacher has set out for children to use. However, the Teacher does not have to be directly involved in the activity during the time we are observing the focus Child.



Often, activities will include content that fits more than one academic category, such as matching printed names of animals to pictures of those animals. Following the general priority rule, ***Language/Literacy*** would be recorded because it comes before ***Nature/Science*** in the category list.

As with other Context categories, ***Language/Literacy*** describes the activity the Child is in, rather than the Child's participation within that activity.

### Examples:

- = During Large Group, the Teacher has asked children to sing the ABC song.
- = The Teacher leads the entire class in singing, "The Itsy Bitsy Spider." She has asked the children to listen to words that rhyme and emphasizes rhyming words for the children.
- = The Teacher is leading a small group focused on words that start with the \s\ sound. The Teacher points to a picture of a strawberry and says, "This is a strawberry. Who can tell me what the first part of the word strawberry is?"
- = The children are making quacking sounds and flapping their arms every time they hear the teacher say the word "duck" while reading a book.
- = During story time, the Teacher holds up a book with a barn on the front and asks the Focus Child, "What do you think this book is about?"
- = After finishing a page in a book about a frog, the Teacher asked, "Why did the frog leave the pond?" At the tone, the Teacher is waiting for a child to respond.
- = During small group, the Teacher has written first children's names on flashcards. As she holds up each one, she asks whose name it is.

- = During centers, children have a stack of plastic letters and numbers. They are supposed to pick out the ones that are numbers.
- = During centers, the Child is looking through books in a library center.
- = Still in the library center, the Child is looking at other children across the room.
- = During centers, the Child and two peers are matching plastic letters to pictures that start with those letters.
- = During large group, the Teacher is leading children in a discussion of animals who might live in a zoo. As they talk about specific animals, the Teacher is emphasizing beginning sounds (e.g., “This is a zzzebra. It starts with a zzz sound. Can you say zzzz?”).
- = The Teacher pulls items out of a bag and asks children to name the item and describe what it’s used for.

Does NOT include:

- ≠ The focus Child is spontaneously singing the ABC song during lunch. *(None of those listed)*
- ≠ The children are singing, “Itsy Bitsy Spider.” Although it rhymes, the Teacher is not focusing on rhyming sounds during the activity. *(None of those listed)*

## Numeracy

The Child is in an activity the Teacher has set up to focus on content and skills related to one of the following:

- Numbers
- Counting or arithmetic
- Measurement
- Sequencing
- Geometric shapes
- Relative size or weight

To identify **Numeracy** content, as set up by the Teacher, the observer should consider the behavior of the Teacher AND materials the Teacher has set out for children to use. However, the Teacher does not have to be directly involved in the activity during the time we are observing the focus Child.



Often, activities will include content that fits more than one academic category, such as an activity that is focused on the names of different geometric shapes. In this case, **Language/Literacy** would be recorded because the activity focuses on vocabulary, as well as shape recognition, and **Language/Literacy** is higher in the priority list. By the same token, if an activity focuses on both counting animals and talking about what those animals eat, **Numeracy** would be recorded because it comes before **Nature/Science**.

As with other Context categories, **Numeracy** describes the activity the Child is in, rather than the Child's participation within that activity.

### Examples:

- = During Large Group, the children are singing “One, Two, Buckle My Shoe” and holding up their fingers for each number.
- = The focus Child is participating in a center where children are supposed to sort different colored blocks by their shapes. Although, the Teacher set up the center, she has been working with children in another center for the past few minutes.
- = The teacher is pointing to the numbers 1 through 10 on the wall while the children name them.
- = The teacher asks children in the child's group, which stick is tall and which one is short.
- = During large group, the teacher asks the children who have short hair to stand up and the children who have long hair to sit down.

- = During small group, the teacher asks the children to put all of the big animals in one group and the small animals in another group.
- = Teachers organize an indoor scavenger hunt in the classroom. Each child has a clipboard with shape and number items to find. The teachers walk with the children, pointing out these items and encouraging the children to mark off found items.

Does NOT include:

- ≠ The Child is participating in an art center. The Teacher stops by to see what children are making. At the moment of the tone, the Teacher is pointing at two small tubs full of crayons, and asks, “Which basket has more crayons than the other?” (***None of Those Listed*** because the Teacher’s comment is incidental and not the primary focus of the activity.)

## Science and Nature

The Child is in an activity the Teacher has set up to focus on content and skills related to science and nature, such as animals, seasons of the year, nutrition, health, weather, plants, and/or the solar system.

To identify ***Science/Nature*** content, as set up by the Teacher, the observer should consider the behavior of the Teacher and materials the Teacher has set out for children to use. However, the Teacher does not have to be directly involved in the activity during the time we are observing the focus Child.



If the Child's activity focuses on more than one Academic Content topic, remember to use the category that comes first in the list. As with other Context categories, ***Science/Nature*** describes the activity the Child is in, rather than the Child's participation within that activity.

### Examples:

- = The children are coloring pictures of raindrops and clouds. Occasionally, the Teacher has asked related questions about weather, such as, "Rain comes from clouds. Where can you find clouds?" At the moment of the tone, the Teacher is not saying anything.
- = During centers, the Child is in a center the Teacher has set up around an aquarium. Children have been asked to help feed the fish, and the Teacher has talked about things fish need to grow.
- = The children are taking turns adding ingredients to a pudding recipe.
- = The teacher is leading a group activity making tornadoes in plastic bottles.
- = During center time, the Child is at the sensory table playing with animals in the sand.
- = The Teacher instructs a child (other than the focus child) during large group time to place the appropriate weather picture on the calendar during a discussion about the weather.
- = During centers, the Child is putting together pieces of an animal puzzle. The Child is at a center where the teacher has set out puzzles and activities on an animal theme.
- = Children are matching pictures of animals to pictures of places where the animals would live.
- = The lesson theme for the week is trees. During large group, the teacher is showing the class a picture of a tree and is talking about how the leaves are changing colors.
- = The class has finished making applesauce. The teacher has passed out cups full of cooked applesauce for the students to eat. When the signal goes off, she is asking, "What happened to the apples when we cooked them?"
- = The Teacher is leading a small group activity talking about the five senses.

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ As the children are putting on their coats for recess, the teacher asks, "Why do we need to wear coats outside today?" (***None of Those Listed***)
- ≠ During centers, the Child is working on a puzzle with pictures of animals. In this center, the Teacher has set out a variety of puzzles that do not have a central nature theme. (***None of Those Listed***)

## Social Studies

The Child is in an activity the Teacher has set up to focus on content and skills related to history, geography, different cultures, holidays, and/or social traditions.

To identify ***Social Science*** content, as set up by the Teacher, the observer should consider the behavior of the Teacher and materials the Teacher has set out for children to use. However, the Teacher does not have to be directly involved in the activity during the time we are observing the focus Child.



If the Child's activity focuses on more than one Academic Content topic, remember to use the category that comes first in the list. As with other Context categories, ***Social Studies*** describes the activity the Child is in, rather than the Child's participation within that activity.

### Examples:

- = During a Large Group just before winter break, the Teacher is asking the Child's group about holidays their family will celebrate during the break.
- = In a small group activity, the Teacher is showing children a puzzle map of the United States. She asks, "What state do we live in?"
- = During opening circle on Martin Luther King Day, the Teacher says, "Who can tell me what we are celebrating today?"
- = During center time the Child is playing with ethnic food in housekeeping and the teacher is helping the group put together a grocery list to make tacos.
- = During center time, the Child is putting together a puzzle with pictures of people from various cultures/countries. All of the puzzles in the center relate to the theme of different countries.
- = The Teacher is passing around instruments during large group, discussing the name and the origin of the instruments.

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ While chatting with the Child during transition, the Teachers asks, "Do you know what today is?" (referring to a holiday). (***None of Those Listed***)
- ≠ The Child is wearing a kimono during center time. (***None of Those Listed***)

---

## None of Those Listed

---

The **Academic Content** does not fit any of the preceding categories listed.



In preschool classrooms, there may be many learning opportunities that do not fit one of the academic content categories. Thus, this category does not imply that the Child is not in a beneficial activity.

### Examples:

- = The children are painting pictures of their choice with finger paint.
- = The children are sitting around the table, eating lunch.
- = During arrival time Children are selecting activities from the Puzzles Center and the Manipulatives Center and taking them to a table, at the signal the child is snapping together interlocking blocks.
- = The children are selecting puzzles from centers, at the signal the child removes puzzle from the shelf.
- = It is center time in the classroom, but the focus child came in late and is eating lunch.
- = The children are sitting in large group/circle area; the teacher is cleaning up after table activities. Children are not being directed in any activity, nor is there music, video, etc.
- = During Centers, the focus child is washing hands at the time of the signal.
- = Children were singing a song teaching them counting and numbers. At the time of the signal, it is only music.



## Language of Instruction

---

This variable is used to describe the Child's exposure to verbal and written language in the classroom and can vary from one interval to another. For example, if a teacher is reading an English book and talking only in English, **English** would be recorded for that interval. In the next interval, if the teacher is holding up a Spanish book for children to see, but is giving instructions to pay attention in English, **English/Spanish Blend** would be recorded.

**Language of Instruction** is recorded based on all of the following:

- Language(s) used by teachers who are talking to the Focus Child or other children in the classroom.
- Instructional materials the teacher is presenting to the Focus Child or the Child's group (e.g., when the teacher is reading to the children, showing flash cards that have words and pictures or looking at an iPad screen)
- Instructional materials the Focus Child is using or looking at (e.g., when the Child is looking at a book he/she selected from the reading corner, or labels on toy shelves).

Examples of materials that can define **Language of Instruction** include the following:

- Books
- Cards and posters with words on them
- Recorded stories
- Labels on objects around the classroom
- Computers, iPad, or other relevant technology tools

Languages used by other children in the classroom are not used for defining **Language of Instruction**.

## English

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All instruction is in English (considering both teacher talk to children and materials used.)

## Spanish

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All instruction is in Spanish (considering both teacher talk to children and materials used.)

## Other

---

All instruction is in a language other than English or Spanish.

### Examples:

- = The Teacher is reading a book written in French and is not using any language other than French.
- = The Child is listening to Somali songs on headphones.

## English/Spanish Blend

---

Instruction includes some English and some Spanish elements.

### Examples:

- = The child is looking at a picture that has the name printed in both English and Spanish
- = The Teacher is talking to the children using a blend of English and Spanish words: “Look, the name of this book is, “Este no es mi monstruo”.
- = The Teacher is reading a Spanish book, but has stopped to ask a question in English.

## English/Other Blend

---

Instruction includes some English elements and some elements in another language (except Spanish).

## None

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No teachers are talking to the children, the Teacher is not presenting materials with words, and the Child is not using any materials with words.

### Examples:

- = The Child is playing alone with dolls and no teacher talk is currently occurring in the classroom.
- = The Child is looking at pictures on a computer screen, and there are no words that correspond with the pictures and the teacher is talking to another teacher in the classroom.
- = The Children are sitting in large group/circle area; the teacher is cleaning up after table activities. Children are not being directed in any activity, nor is there music, video, etc.
- = The Children are playing and talking together with blocks and cars, but teachers are not interacting with children.



## Classroom CIRCLE

# Teacher Variables

TEACHER TALK - p. 40	TEACHER RECIPIENT - p. 51	TEACHER LITERACY FOCUS - p. 52	TEACHER INVOLVEMENT - p. 64
Positive Feedback - 41 Negative Feedback - 42 Expand, Repeat, Extend - 43 Question – Open - 44 Question – Closed - 45 Request for Action - 47 Reading, Reciting - 48 Singing - 48 Exuberant Vocal, Laugh - 49 General Conversation - 49 None - 50	Focus Child - 51 Child's Group - 51 None – 51	Phonological Awareness - 53 Alphabet/Print Concepts - 55 Comprehension – Story - 57 Comprehension – Other - 58 Vocabulary - 59 Reading - 60 Literacy Involvement - 61 None of Those Listed - 63	Sharing - 65 Close Proximity - 66 General Supervision - 67 Not Involved - 67

ClassCircle (Version 1.3)

Observe TEACHER now!

14:31

TALK

(Please SELECT)

RECIPIENT OF TEACHER TALK

(Please SELECT)

LITERACY FOCUS

(Please SELECT)

INVOLVEMENT

(Please SELECT)

SAME AS PREVIOUS



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## Teacher Variables

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### Teacher Talk Teacher Recipient Teacher Literacy Focus Teacher Involvement

Teacher variables describe a Teacher's behavior *toward the Focus Child or a group the Focus Child is part of*. When multiple teachers are present, more than one teacher may be talking to and/or involved with the Child at the same time. In such cases, the General Priority Rule applies. For each variable, the observer should consider the behaviors of both teachers and code the highest category that applies between the two of them.

For example, Teacher A is leading the Focus Child's group in a circle activity, and is sitting at the opposite side of the circle from the Focus Child (more than an arm's length away). Teacher B is sitting beside the Focus Child. At the moment of the signal, Teacher A is asking the entire group what they did over the weekend, and Teacher B is talking to another child (not the Focus Child). The observer would record **Question – Open-Ended** under **Teacher Talk** (which applies to Teacher A) and **Close Proximity** under **Involvement** (which applies to Teacher B). We are capturing the fact that the Child is in close proximity to a Teacher AND is receiving an open-ended question from a Teacher.

#### Important note about timing

CIRCLE variables are recorded by a *momentary* time sampling method. This means that the observer records the Teacher behavior that is occurring exactly at the moment that the interval signal begins. To do this, the observer should already be focusing on the Teacher when the signal begins. Coding will not be accurate if the observer notices the signal, and then looks at the Teacher. Thus, as soon as Child variables have been recorded, the observer should look up at the Teacher, focus, and be ready to record the behavior that occurs when the vibration signal begins. The same strategy should be used during intervals for recording Child behaviors.

For verbal behaviors, the observer should code whatever is said at the moment of the signal. However, it is important to let the Teacher finish a sentence before recording to capture the essence of the talk accurately.

## Teacher Talk

---

The **Teacher Talk** categories describe Teachers' verbal behavior toward the Child or the Child's group. Nonverbal vocalizations may be included (e.g., "Whee!"). But, except for signs, nonverbal gestures (e.g., pointing, head nodding) are not included in this category.

🔔 **Specific priority rule for Teacher Talk:** If one Teacher is talking to the Child individually and another Teacher is talking to the Child's group, priority is given to comments that are directed to the Child individually.

If the Teacher is in the middle of a sentence at the moment of the tone, the observer should wait until the sentence is completed before deciding on a code. Following the General Priority Rule (p. 7), if a comment fits more than one category, the observer should record the category that appears first in the category list.



## Positive Feedback

The Teacher verbally indicates approval of the Child or the Child's group in one of these ways and the comment does not fit the definition for ***Expansion, Repetition, Extension***. Each of the following can be counted if they are directed to the Child individually or to the Child's group as a whole (as long as the Child is included).

- Making a positive comment to or about the Child
- Expressing affection or positive feelings
- Agreeing with something the Child has said
- Indicating that the Child's behavior is correct
- Confirming what the Child has just said without actually repeating it
- Thanking the Child for something
- Stating that the Child made a good effort, even if the task was not performed correctly



Saying simply “OK” is *not* included unless it is said in a very positive or enthusiastic manner.

This category may include comments that describe positive or desirable behaviors and the beneficial consequences without explicit qualifiers like *nice, good, great*, etc. For example: “When everyone is sitting this quietly, I know that you are ready to begin.”

### Examples:

- = “Oh, you're such a big girl!”
- = “You look so pretty.”
- = “Good for you!” (said to the Child's group)
- = “What a nice picture you made.”
- = “Thank you all for helping me set the table.”
- = “That's not quite right, but you made a good try.”
- = “Look what a good job Billy did!” (when Billy is the Focus Child)
- = The Teacher responds, “Yes, it sure is”, after the Child says, “That's a big dog.” (The Teacher has not repeated anything the Child said.)
- = “I like the way everyone is sitting quietly.”
- = During a Listening Center, the facilitator says, “Great, you found the right page!”

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ The Teacher responds, “Yes, it's really big!” after the Child says, “That's a big dog.” (***Expansion, Extension, Repetition***)

## Negative Feedback

The Teacher indicates disapproval of the Child or the Child's group by one of the following:

- Making a critical, disapproving comment about the Child or the Child's behavior
- Indicating that the Child's behavior was incorrect or unacceptable, without complimenting the Child's effort
- Giving the child a verbal prohibition (i.e., using words such as “stop,” “quit,” or “don't”)
- Speaking to the Child in a loud, angry, or sarcastic tone of voice



**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Although an angry tone of voice would qualify as **Negative Feedback**, an angry tone is not required if the content fits the definition above. Sometimes the tone may actually be kind.

### Examples:

- = The Child's group is running, and the Teacher says, “We don't run in the hall, please.”
- = While the Child is playing with a peer, and the Teacher says, “Please don't be so rough.”
- = The Child is having trouble putting a block in the shape sorter, and a Teacher says, “That's not right. That's the wrong one.”
- = The Child tries to leave an activity in the classroom, and the Teacher says, “No, we're not done yet. Please come back.”
- = The Child and two peers are banging cymbals together. The Teacher says, “You're all being too noisy.”
- = The Teacher yells the Child's name to indicate disapproval of what the Child is doing.
- = The Child reaches for a cookie, and the Teacher says, “No, you can't have that now.”
- = The Child forgot a marker needed for the activity, and the Teacher says, “Babies do that.”
- = The Teacher says, “If you don't stop throwing things, I will have to call your dad.”
- = The Child is throwing a block and the Teacher says, “We do not throw blocks in this classroom.”

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ Redirecting the Child's behavior without saying a word such as “don't” or “stop”: A Teacher redirects a Child who is throwing toys by saying, “Oh, come help us with this puzzle.” (**Request for Action**)
- ≠ Stating the desired behavior: The Teacher sees the Child leaning back in his chair and says, “All legs need to be on the floor.” (**Request for Action**)

## Expansion, Repetition, Extension

The Teacher does any of the following:

- Repeats or imitates the all or part of the Child's words
- Lengthens, restates, or expands something the Child has just said
- Gives words to the Child's non-verbal communication (e.g., saying, "Oh, you want the red one," when the Child points to a crayon).

### Examples:

- = The Child says, "That dog is big." And the Teacher says, "That's a big dog, isn't it?"
- = While pushing a toy car, the Child says, "I'm making it go." And the Adult says, "You're pushing the car. You're making the car go fast."
- = The Adult asks, "What color paper do you want to use?" The Child points to a red sheet of paper, and the Adult responds, "You want the red paper."
- = The Child points to a toy on the shelf and looks to the Adult for help. The Adult says, "Oh, you want some help, don't you?"
- = During story time, the Teacher points to a picture in the book and says, "What kind of animal is this?" The Child says, "Tiger," in unison with other children. The Teacher repeats, "Tiger."

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ After the Child says, "That's a big dog," the Teacher says, "Yes, it is! (***Positive Feedback***)"

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## Question – Open-Ended

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The Teacher is requesting communication from the Child or the Child's group. The Teacher:

- Asks the Child for a verbal or communicative response AND
- Phrases the request so that it asks for more than a simple discrete answer

The request is giving the child an opportunity to give an elaborated response that reflects the child's knowledge, ideas, feelings, or opinions. The request can take different forms:

- Asking for information in the grammatical form of a question (e.g., "What do you think will happen next in the story?", "What did you do on your vacation?")
- Making a statement that clearly requests communication from the Child (e.g., "Tell me about your family's pet.") or that provides a very clear pause for the Child to fill in, (e.g., "Some of the things we saw at the zoo were...").

### Examples:

- = "Tell me what you're drawing."
- = "If this same thing happened to you, what would you do?"
- = "What do you remember about the farm animals? Can you tell me?"
- = "Why do we brush our teeth?"
- = "What area do you want to play in today?"
- = "How do you think it would make your friend feel if you asked her to play with you?"
- = "Tell me about the shapes you used to build your tower."

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ "Do you want red or blue?" (*Close Ended Question*)
- ≠ "Do you like the apples?" (*Close Ended Question*)

## Question – Closed-Ended

The Teacher requests communication AND phrases the request so that it asks for a simple discrete answer. Asking for “simple discrete” answers includes asking for:

- A yes/no response – “Do you like this book?”
- A very short (1-2 word) specific answer – “What color is this?”
- A nonverbal communicative gesture that has a common, conventional meaning (e.g., nodding yes, shaking head no, raising one’s hand to answer a question, or giving thumbs up or down) – “Do you give this story a thumbs up or thumbs down?” (Children are supposed to respond with a gesture. For more information about communicative gestures, see the category of Communicative Gesture, Vocalization under Child Social Behavior (p. 66).

This category includes requests made in the form of a question (e.g., “Is this the end of the story?”), as well as statements that clearly indicate the Child is expected to give an answer (e.g., “Tell me what this number is.”).



Note that the difference between open-ended and closed-ended requests is defined by the Teacher’s phrasing of the request, NOT by the Child’s actual response.

A gesture with a common, conventional meaning is one that has the same meaning in different contexts (e.g., nodding means “yes;” thumbs up signals approval). (See p. 80)

### Examples:

- = “What shape is this?”
- = “Is this a circle?”
- = “Where does your shoe go?”
- = “Do you want juice or milk?”
- = “Are you thirsty?”
- = “Raise your hand if you know the answer to the question.”
- = “How many children are here today?”
- = “What area do you want to play in today? The science area is open and the math area is open.”
- = “What is the next classroom activity on our schedule for the day?”
- = “Is the child happy or sad in this picture?”
- = “What sound does /s/ make?” (*Note: This would also be coded as **Phonological Awareness** under **Teacher Literacy Focus**.)*
- = “What is the name of this letter?” (*Note: This would also be coded as **Alphabet/Print** under **Teacher Literacy Focus**.)*

**Does NOT include:**

- ≠ Comments that sound like a question, but that are actually requesting a specific action, rather than asking for communication (e.g., “Would you come here, please?”). (***Request for Action***)
- ≠ Simple conversational feedback in which the Teacher is not clearly asking for a response from the Child, such as "Oh really?", "Oh yeah?", or "It's hot outside, isn't it?" (***General Conversation***)
- ≠ Confirming what the Child has just said. For example, the Child says, "That's a circle"; and the Teacher says, "Yes, you're right. That's a circle, isn't it?" (***Expansion, Repetition, Extension***)

## Request for Action

The Teacher asks the Child or the Child's group to perform a particular behavior in the immediate setting AND the request specifies the behavior the Child is expected to perform. A ***Request for Action*** typically contains a verb describing what the Child is supposed to do (e.g., "Start cleaning up now."; "Would you please come to the table?"). The category does not include requests for verbal or communicative behavior (i.e., asking the Child to say something or to respond with a conventional communicative gesture such as nodding or raising his/her hand).

### Examples:

- = "Come to the table, please."
- = "Clap your hands with me to show how many parts are in the word *cowboy*."
- = "Can you stomp your feet?"
- = "Show me how you build a tower."
- = "Try to make it taller."
- = "Could you sit down please?"
- = "Please, get your carpet squares. It's time for Circle now."
- = "Would you please pick up those blocks?"
- = "Raise your hand if you liked the book."

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ Comments phrased as instructions that merely describe what the Focus Child is already doing. For example, as the Child opens a door on a manipulative toy, the Adult says, "Yeah, good job, open that door." (***Positive Feedback***)
- ≠ Comments that imply that a Child is supposed to perform a particular behavior, but that do not describe that behavior. For example, the Adult says, "You need help." The statement implies that the Child should ask for help, but does not state it explicitly. (***General Conversation***)
- ≠ Requests for verbal or communicative behavior, such as, "Tell me how old you are," (***Question – Closed-Ended***) or "Tell me what the story is about." (***Question – Open-Ended***).

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## Reading, Reciting

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The Teacher is reading or reciting a poem or passage to the Focus Child or to the Child's group. The teacher must be reading or reciting at the time of the signal.



This category is recorded only when the Teacher is actually reading or reciting the words or letters. Naming printed numerals would not be included. Also, stopping to talk about the material would not be included.

### Examples:

- = The Teacher is reading a story to the Focus Child who is sitting in the Teacher's lap.
- = A Teacher is reading a story to the entire class, which includes the Focus Child.
- = The Teacher is reciting a poem to the Focus Child while pointing to the words in a book.
- = The Teacher is pointing to printed alphabet letters and naming them one by one.
- = The Teacher and Child are saying a nursery rhyme together, without a printed reference.

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ The Teacher is pointing to one page in the book and says, "Who can tell me what this tiger is saying?" (*Question – Open Ended*)

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## Singing

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The Teacher is singing, rapping or chanting with/to the Focus Child or the Child's group.

### Examples:

- = The Teacher is singing *Itsy Bitsy Spider*.
- = The Teacher is singing along with the Child's group during *Wheels on the Bus*.
- = The teacher and Child are singing the alphabet together.
- = The Teacher is singing along with the children to the Hokey Pokey song, and the teacher sings, "Put your left foot out" at the time of the signal. (This is singing because it is part of the song and not a separate request for action).



## Exuberant Vocalization, Laughter

The Teacher does one of the following:

- Speaks or vocalizes to the Child or the Child's group in a positive and exuberant tone of voice.
- Laughs in a joyful, positive way while interacting with the Child or the Child's group.



With an ***Exuberant Vocalization***, the Teacher often seems to be trying to engage the Child.

### Examples:

- = The Teacher says, "Wow!" when the Child shows a toy to the Teacher.
- = The Adult laughs at something cute the Child says.
- = The Teacher says, "Whee!" when Child and peers are pushing cars down a ramp.

## General Conversation

This category describes any Teacher talk that is directed to Child or the Child's group and that does not fit any of the preceding categories. For example, this might include comments such as:

- Directions ("Here, I'll show you how we tie our shoes.")
- Information ("This is a potato, this is a turnip, and this is a carrot.")
- Incidental comments ("It sure is cold today.")

### Examples:

- = The Teacher is telling the children about plans for the day.
- = A Teacher is pretending to talk for a puppet while the Child's group watches.
- = A Teacher is describing the Child's play with blocks: "Oh, you're building a tower."
- = The Teacher says, "That's a giraffe" when the Child asks the name of the animal.
- = The Teacher says, "Yes" when the Child asks, "Is this my chair?"
- = The Teacher takes the Child to the quiet area of the room to calm her calm down, and the Teacher is talking with the Child about what happened.
- = The teacher is describing a character in the story. (**Note:** This would also be coded as ***Comprehension-Story*** under ***Teacher Literacy Focus***.)

## None

The Teacher is not talking to the Child or to the Child's group.



IMPORTANT NOTE: This category is recorded, by definition, whenever the Teacher is not talking to the Focus Child or Child's group at the moment of the signal. Often this happens when the Teacher and Child are not interacting at all. However, **None** also can include times when the Teacher is listening to the Child or waiting for a response from the Child. Thus, it does not necessarily mean that the Teacher and Child are not interacting. For example, the Teacher might be waiting for the Focus Child to answer a question about a story they are reading. Note that, in this case, **Literacy Involvement** would be recorded under the variable of **Teacher Literacy Focus**, even though there is no **Teacher Talk**.

### Examples:

- = The Teacher is having a conversation with another adult, and the Child is not benefitting from the conversation.
- = The Teacher is talking to her or himself (e.g., "Now where did I put those papers?")
- = The Teacher is talking on the phone.
- = The Teacher is doing paperwork and not talking to anyone.
- = The Teacher has been talking to the Child but stopped just before the interval signal.
- = The Teacher is talking to a group of children that does not include the focus Child.
- = During a Listening Center, the facilitator is listening to the story and smiling at the children.
- = The teacher is showing the classroom the ingredients in the bowl while the children are doing a group cooking project, but the Teacher is not talking at the time of the signal.
- = The Teacher is cleaning tables and is available if children have questions, but is not talking at the time of the signal.
- = The teacher gives the child a high five after the Child finished drawing a picture.

## Teacher Recipient

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This category is used to designate whether the **Teacher Talk** is directed to the Focus Child individually or to the Child's group.



By definition, when **None** is recorded for **Teacher Talk**, **None** also should be recorded for **Recipient**.

## Focus Child Only

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This category is selected when the **Teacher Talk** is directed to the Child *individually*. To determine this, the observer would use verbal cues (e.g., use of the Child's name), nonverbal cues (e.g., looking at the Focus Child while talking), and contextual cues (e.g., a logical relationship between the Teacher's response and the Child's behavior).



If the Teacher uses both the Focus Child's name and a peer's name, **Recipient** should be recorded as **Focus Child**. For example, if Mary is the Focus Child's name, **Focus Child** would be recorded if the Teacher says, "Mary and Lisa, please come help me set the table."

## Child's Group

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This category is recorded when the **Teacher Talk** is directed to a group that includes the Focus Child and the Focus Child is not named individually.

## None

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No **Teacher Talk** was recorded during the interval. This includes times when the Teacher is talking to a group of children that does not include the Focus Child.

## Teacher Literacy Focus

This variable is used to identify Teacher behaviors that may help the Child develop early literacy skills. Focus of Instruction may shift within a particular activity. For example, during a ***Small Group*** activity, the teacher may start out by simply reading a story (***Reading***), but then shift to a discussion of words that rhyme on a particular page of the book (***Phonological Awareness***).

In most cases, we are looking for verbal behavior on the part of the Teacher. However, **some types of nonverbal behavior also may be included.**

- When the teacher begins with verbal prompts and uses nonverbal prompts to encourage the children to continue responding. For example, a Teacher has asked children to name alphabet letters as she points to them one by one. At first, the Teacher began by saying “What is this letter?”, “This letter?”, but eventually shifted to simply pointing to each letter as she worked through the alphabet. At the moment of the signal, the Teacher is pointing to another letter but is not saying anything. The key ingredient is that the nonverbal prompts are an extension of specific verbal prompts. This example would be recorded as ***Alphabet and Print Concepts***.
- Non-verbal Extensions of Verbal Prompts can be coded in any one of the Teacher Literacy Focus categories with the exception of Reading that fit the definition of ***Literacy Involvement***, as described in this section of the manual (Phonological Awareness, Alphabet/Print Concepts, Comprehension-Story, Comprehension-Other, and Vocabulary).



The Child does not have to be in a pre-academic activity for these categories to be recorded.

Teachers may use strategies for promoting early literacy skills within any type of **Classroom Context**. For example, while passing out bananas during lunch, the Teacher may ask the Child to identify the sound “banana” starts with (***Phonological Awareness***) or may say, “Banana is a fruit. What other kinds of fruit do we have?” (***Comprehension – Other***).

Remember that the Literacy Focus categories are defined by the Teacher’s behavior and activities the Teacher has set up for children. Thus, **Literacy Focus** would be ***None of Those Listed*** if the Focus Child spontaneously starts rhyming words and is not involved in a literacy activity with the Teacher.

## Phonological Awareness

This category is recorded when the Teacher uses strategies that focus on the sound structure of words and phrases, independent of their meaning. This ability to detect and manipulate sounds is termed phonological awareness (Phillips, Clancy-Menchetti & Lonigan, 2008). The most common examples in preschool classrooms are:

- Sentence/word awareness – segmenting a sentence into words.
- Syllable awareness – breaking words into syllables.
- Rhyme – finding words with the same ending sound.
- Alliteration – recognizing words with the same beginning sound.
- Phonemic awareness – recognizing the individual sounds, or phonemes, in words, for example, /k/, /ai/, and /t/, (separating “cat” into three distinct phonemes).



Instruction focused on the sound a specific letter makes is recorded as *Alphabet and Print Concepts*.

### Examples:

- = The Teacher asks the Child’s group to break a Child’s name into syllables, “Let’s clap Julie’s name, ‘Ju-lie.’” Then, the Teacher claps twice, repeating the syllables with the children.
- = Before the next interval, the Teacher says, “Now let’s clap Susan’s name.” At the moment of the tone, the teacher is clapping the syllables but is just listening as the children say the syllables.
- = During book reading, the Teacher asks the Child’s group to break the title into words, “Let’s clap the title into words. *Spot Goes to the School*.” Then, Teacher claps five times, repeating each word with the children.
- = The Teacher asks, “How many words do you hear in the sentence?”
- = “What rhymes with bat?”
- = The Teacher asks the Child to point to the word that rhymes with bat.
- = The Teacher says, “Which picture starts with the same sound as cat?”, while emphasizing the /k/ sound. (*Alliteration example*)
- = The Teacher talks about compound words and asks, “What word does cup (pause) cake make?”
- = “Tell me what words you hear in baseball.”
- = “What is the first sound in barn?”
- = The Teacher has shown the Child pictures of a cookie, a car, and a cat and asked the Child to name each one. At the moment of the vibration signal, the Teacher is repeating the name of each picture, while emphasizing the /k/ sound.
- = The Teachers says, “Which of these words doesn’t sound like the others: tree, bee, cat?”
- = While reading a book with text that rhymes, the Teacher points to two different words and says, “Listen, these words sound alike: book, look.”

- = The Teacher is holding up picture flashcards, and children are asked to say the first, second and third sound in the word. The Teacher is not talking at the signal but is continuing to point to the pictures. (*Non-verbal alliteration example*)
- = A Teacher is clapping and saying children's names as children clap the syllables in their names. The Teacher is clapping but not speaking when the signal goes off, and the focus Child is part of the group. (*Non-verbal example*)
- = The Teacher asks, "What sound does /s/ make?" (*Phonemic awareness example*)

Does NOT include:

- ≠ "What is this letter?" (*Alphabet/Print Concepts*)
- ≠ "What letter makes the sound ssss?" (*Alphabet/Print Concepts*)
- ≠ "What sound does this letter make?" (*Alphabet/Print Concepts*)

## Alphabet and Print Concepts

This category is recorded when the Teacher uses strategies that focus on the Child's knowledge of letters and their function in print.

- *Concepts of print* – Concepts of print are defined as an awareness of the “form and function of print and the relationship between oral and written language” (Justice & Ezell, 2002, p17). This category includes instruction related to differences between print and picture, recognition of printed text, the organization of print information on a page and within a book, the connection between printed and spoken words, and the process of reading (e.g., moving from left to right, front to back). The Teacher helps the Child to understand that print has meaning and that some parts of a book have a particular meaning, such as the title on the front of the book.
- *Alphabet Knowledge* – Alphabet Knowledge is the ability to identify and name letters of the alphabet, to print letters, and to [identify the individual sounds of letters](#) (McBride-Chang, 1999). Preschool instruction in this category includes strategies such as asking the Child to name letters, asking the Child to point to certain letters, asking the Child about [the sounds a letter makes](#), and asking the Child to differentiate letters from other shapes and symbols (including numbers).



The majority of preschool children are not ready for spelling, other than a few simple words such as their own name. Given that, we probably will not see teachers spelling words often for children. When they do, we believe it would serve primarily to show children that words are made up of letters, which would fit this category. Thus, we do not have a separate category for spelling.

### Examples:

- = Before reading a book, the Teacher holds it up for the children to see and points to the title, author, and illustrator while reading them aloud.
- = The Teacher says, “This is the author’s name; it says Janet Stevens.”
- = “Show me where the title is.”
- = “I am going to start reading right here, at the top of the page.”
- = “This is a word and that is a picture.”
- = Holding a story book for the children to see, the Teacher reads the words on a page and points to each word as she reads.
- = While reading words from a story book, the Teacher points to the beginning of the sentence and then moves her finger in a sweeping motion from left to right.
- = “This is the letter A.”
- = “What letter is this?”
- = “What is the letter of this week?”
- = “Point to the letter C.”

- = Teacher points to the letter F and asks, “What sound does this letter make?”
- = “Can you spell your name?”
- = The Teacher asks the Child to find his/her name from several name cards.
- = The Teacher asks the child to find the letter ‘K’ in the classroom.
- = During an opening circle activity, the Teacher holds a poster that has a picture and a corresponding word to describe each part of the daily schedule. The Teacher asks the Child what the first thing is on the schedule, while pointing to the appropriate picture and word.
- = The Teacher is holding a flash card that has a picture of an apple and the letter A. He draws attention to the fact that apple begins with A.
- = “What letter makes the /kkk/ sound?”
- = The Teacher holds up a card with letters and numbers asks the Child to point the letters. (*Non-verbal example*)
- = A Teacher asks children to name alphabet letters as she points to them one by one. At first, the Teacher begins by saying “What is this letter?”, “This letter?”, but eventually shifts to simply pointing to each letter as she works through the alphabet. At the moment of the signal, the Teacher is pointing to another letter but is not saying anything. (*Non-verbal example*)

Does NOT include:

- ≠ Reading a story without pointing to the words (*Reading*)
- ≠ The Teacher is holding a flash card that has a picture of an apple and the letter A. He points to the apple and says, “What is this?” (*Vocabulary*)
- ≠ Before the interval signal, the Teacher said, “Look, the title of this book is *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.” At the moment of the signal, she is holding the book out toward the children, moving it slowly so all children can see the cover. (*Literacy Involvement*)
- ≠ The Teacher asks “What number is this?” while pointing at a number. (*Comprehension Other*)
- ≠ The Teacher asks the Child’s group to count dots with numbers on puzzle pieces. (*Comprehension – Other*)



## Comprehension – Story/Book

Comprehension is the process of deriving meaning from action, speech, and text by connecting what is being learned to what is already known (Debruin-Parecki, 2007; McKeown & Beck, 2006; Paris & Paris, 2003). This category refers to Teacher behavior focused on children's comprehension of a book or story being presented in the classroom. **Comprehension – Story** includes Teacher behavior that may help the Child understand the content of a story, such as:

- Connecting ideas from the story to prior knowledge
- Predicting what will happen next in the story
- Retelling story sequences
- Linking new words in the book to known concepts and experiences
- Helping the Child connect stories to real-life experiences
- Talking about the setting, main character(s), or theme
- Asking questions about or explaining features of characters, events in a sequence, or problems and solutions

**Comprehension - Story** includes, but is not limited to, the Teacher making comments about pictures and asking the Child open-ended questions during storybook reading.



The book or story may be either fiction or non-fiction.

### Examples:

- = During book reading, the Teacher makes a comment about a picture, “The bear is really sad because he is alone.”
- = The Teacher asks, “What does ‘alone’ mean?”
- = “This is a story about the three Billy goats who want to cross the bridge to get some food.”
- = “Why did the little Billy goat cross the bridge first?”
- = “Who can tell me what this story is about?”
- = “What do you think will happen next in the story?”
- = While book reading, Teacher asks, “What do mice eat?”
- = While reading a book about animals, the Teacher asks, “Do you remember that we saw this animal when we went to the Zoo?”
- = While the Teacher is reading a book about a girl and her pet dog, she asks the Child, “What kinds of things to you like to do with your dog at home?”
- = While pointing at a picture of an apple in the storybook, the Teacher says, “What kind of fruit is this?” (Note: This is comprehension because the Teacher is helping the Child link apples to the more general category of fruit.)
- = The Teacher is discussing a book with the class and says, “And what did she see when she looked in the kitchen?”, and then points to the corresponding picture that answers the question. The Teacher is pointing, but not speaking when the signal goes off. (**Non-verbal example**)

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ Pointing to a flash card, saying, “What kind of fruit is this?” (**Comprehension - Other**)

## Comprehension – Other

This category refers to Teacher behavior focused on children’s understanding of *pre-academic* facts and concepts that are not part of a book or story that is being presented in the classroom. A variety of comments or questions to support the Child’s understanding of the meaning of pre-academic concepts would be recorded as **Comprehension – Other**. Examples include, but are not limited to, asking the Child to categorize objects by size, shape, color, etc.; asking the Child what a word means, asking the Child an open-ended question, or asking the Child to suggest a solution for a problem.

Comprehension - Other includes:

- Language and early literacy, including the meaning of words
- Early numeracy (e.g., numbers, counting, measurement, sequencing, geometric shapes, and relative sizes)
- Science and nature (e.g., nutrition, health, seasons, weather, animals, rocks, plants)
- Social studies (e.g., different culture and countries)

### Examples:

- = During circle time, Teacher asks the Child “What do you need to come to school?” When the Child doesn’t answer, the Teacher says, “We need a backpack to come to school.”
- = Teacher asks the Child to complete a sentence, “The elephant is big and the ant is \_\_\_\_.”
- = During a science activity, the Teacher shows the Child a magnifying glass, and asks, “What do we use this for?”
- = In the kitchen, the Teacher shows the Child how to measure 1 cup of water.
- = During **Large Group**, the Teacher says, “Did you know that this is the first day of spring?”
- = During play with blocks, the Teacher asks, “How many blocks do you have in your tower? Let’s count them.”
- = During story time, there is a clap of thunder outside, and the children look at the window. The Teacher says, “Oh what was that? Do you think that means it will rain soon?”
- = The Teacher says, “These are the same size, aren’t they?”
- = “These two blocks are different, aren’t they? How are they different?”
- = The Teacher holds up a crayon and says, “What color is this?”
- = The Teacher holds up a number card and asks “What number is this?”
- = The Teacher’s Aide asks, “How many inches tall do you think your tower is?”
- = During Large Group, the Teacher says, “Yesterday it was cloudy, but today it is \_\_\_\_?”
- = The Teacher says, “What shape do we see on Valentine’s Day?”
- = The Teacher is drawing shapes on a white board, asking children to name them. Eventually the teacher does not ask and simply draws shapes, points, and waits for children’s response. Teacher is pointing, but not speaking when the signal goes off. (**Non-verbal example**)

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ The teacher points to a picture of ‘hammer’ and asks a Child, “What is this?” (Note: Simply asking the Child to label something is recorded as **Vocabulary**.)

## Vocabulary

**Vocabulary** is defined as “words an individual knows and can use” (Roskos & Vukelich, 2008). This category is recorded when the Teacher’s behavior focuses on helping the child learn vocabulary words, either receptively or expressively. To distinguish this category from general conversation, **Vocabulary** includes:

- Explicitly telling the Child the name of something (“This is an apple.”)
- Asking the Child to give the name of something (“What is this?”)
- Supporting vocabulary through **Expansion, Extension, Repetition** (“Yes, that’s an apple, isn’t it?”)
- Labeling the Child’s current actions or something the Child is engaged with (“Oh, you’re making a tower.”)



In this category, **Vocabulary** is distinguished from **Comprehension** by its focus on single words or on very short word combinations that function as single words (e.g., Big Bird).

### Examples:

- = Using picture cards, the Teacher asks the Child to point to a truck.
- = The Teacher points to a picture of a bulldozer and says, “This is a bulldozer.”
- = The Teacher shows children pictures that represent vocabulary words for the week by simply pointing to the pictures and saying the words. There are no words by the pictures, and the Teacher does not provide any additional information about what the words mean.
- = The Teacher points to a picture of a bicycle and asks, “What is this?”
- = During circle time, the Teacher shows a picture of a vegetable and says, “Broccoli,” and asks “What is this?”
- = During storybook reading, the Teacher points to a picture of alligator and asks, “What is this?”

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ Just before the interval signal, the Teacher points to a picture of a bulldozer in the story book and says, “This is a bulldozer.” At the signal, the Teacher says, “People use it to move big, big piles of dirt.” (**Comprehension – Story**)
- ≠ The Teacher shows children pictures that represent vocabulary words for the week, with printed words beside the pictures. The teacher points to and reads each word aloud.” (**Alphabet and Print Concepts**)
- ≠ The Teacher points to a square and says, “What color is this?” (**Comprehension – Other** because the Teacher is referring to the broader concept of colors.)
- ≠ The Teacher, holding a picture of a bird, is talking about birds and says, “This is a bird because it has \_\_\_” and then stops talking and points to wings. The Teacher is pointing to the wing, but not speaking when the signal goes off. (**Non-verbal example -Literacy Involvement**)

## Reading

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The Teacher reads a book or other printed material to the Child or the Child's group and the Teacher's behavior does not fit any of the preceding categories. The Teacher must be reading at the time of the signal.

### Examples:

- = During storybook reading, the Teacher simply reads the text without pointing to words.
- = The Teacher reads a sentence on the bulletin board without pointing and without any additional information.
- = The Teacher reads a poem on a large poster without pointing to the words.

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ The Teacher has been reading a book to the children during Story Time. At the moment of the signal, the Teacher is not actually reading. (*Literacy Involvement*)

## Literacy Involvement

The Teacher is involved in the Child's literacy-related activity and previous categories do not apply:

- During activities that qualify as **Language/Literacy** under **Pre-academic Content** – The Teacher is participating in the same activity as the Child. The Teacher's participation may be active (e.g., moving pieces in a letter board game or holding up a book for children to see) or passive (e.g., watching children who are participating or waiting for children to respond). This category does not include times when the teacher is nearby but not involved in the activity.
- During other activities – The Teacher is interacting with the Child while the **Child Engagement** is related explicitly to literacy, including:
  - **Writing**
  - **Reading Words or Letters Aloud**
  - Literacy-related **Academic Manipulation**
  - Literacy-related **Academic Verbal Response or Gesture**
  - Literacy-related **Academic Attention**
- Non-verbal extensions of verbal prompt can be coded as Literacy Involvement when the Teacher is not talking but is waiting for a response. This occurs when, at the signal, the teacher is providing opportunities for children to respond to literacy/academic questions or providing space children to take in information the teacher has presented. (For example, the Teacher is showing a picture after reading a page in a book, and his/her action is not directly supporting one of the other explicit literacy focus behaviors (Phonological Awareness, Alphabet/Print Concepts, Comprehension-Story, Comprehension-Other, or Vocabulary).
- Literacy Involvement can be coded in any of the academic or non-academic content areas (e.g., Science and Nature, Numeracy, Social Studies, Language and Literacy, or None of Those Listed, when the Teacher is participating in the same activity as the Child, and the activity supports literacy development.



This category is meant to capture those times when a teacher is supporting literacy development by his/her participation with the Child, but is not engaged in the explicit verbal **Literacy Focus** behaviors (Phonological Awareness, Alphabet/Print Concepts, Comprehension-Story, Comprehension-Other, Vocabulary, and Reading) at the moment of the signal.

### Examples:

- = The Teacher is holding out a book for the Child's group to see during story time but is not saying anything at the moment of the signal.

- = The Teacher has just asked the Child's group, "What do you think will happen next?" and is waiting for children to respond at the moment of the signal."
- = During story time with the Child's group, the Teacher is asking another child a question about the story.
- = The Teacher gives the Child a crayon during a center where children are supposed to circle words that start with a /t/ sound.
- = During an art activity, the Child said, "Look, I'm going to write my name." At the moment of the signal, the Teacher is watching while the child writes.
- = Teacher is reading a book with repetitive phrases and stops talking to let the children complete the phrase, such as, "Little Pig, Little Pig," and then points to the class to complete the phrase. Teacher is not speaking when the signal goes off. (*Non-verbal example*)
- = The teacher is holding up pictures with words for children to match the pictures on their Bingo cards, but is not talking at the time of the signal. (*Non-verbal example*)

Does NOT include:

- ≠ The Teacher is standing near a writing center and looking at the children, but is not directly involved in the center. (*None of Those Listed*)
- ≠ During gross motor play, the Child is saying the alphabet. The Teacher is supervising the play but is not interacting directly with the Child. (*None of Those Listed*)
- ≠ The Teacher is standing near a writing center and looking at the children, but is not directly involved in the center. (*None of Those Listed*)
- ≠ During gross motor play, the Child is saying the alphabet. The Teacher is supervising the play but is not interacting directly with the Child. (*None of Those Listed*)

## None of Those Listed

The Teacher (a) is not talking to the Child or the Child's group, or (b) the Teacher's behavior does not fit any of the preceding categories.

### Examples:

- = During ***Clean Up/Set Up/Transition***, the Teacher says, "It's time to clean up. Please put your toys away."
- = While waiting in line for outside play, the Teacher says to the Child, "Please stand behind David."
- = During circle time, the Teacher says to the Child, "I need you to sit still on your mat."
- = "Use your words if you want to say something to your friend."
- = The Teacher praises or compliments the Child's behavior by saying, "You did great job."
- = "Can you say, 'Please, stop'?"
- = The teacher gives the art materials to the Child without any instruction.
- = The teacher describes activities available during ***Centers***, "You can play with the Corduroy puppet in the library area, or you can make a card for your mom and dad in the art center."
- = During a ***Small Group*** art activity, the Teacher gives directions for the activity, "Choose a color of paper that you want."
- = The Teacher talks about the schedule for the day, "It's time to go outside. We will play outside for 20 minutes, and then, we'll come back in for center time."
- = The Teacher is not talking to the Child or the Child's group.
- = During ***Centers*** in the block area, the Teacher asks, "Do you want to have some cars to play with too?"
- = The Teacher says, "Where are your cars going to go?"
- = In the dramatic play center, the Child is engaged in pretend play and the Teacher asks, "Ice cream. What flavor is your ice cream?"
- = During transition to ***Centers***, the Teacher asks the Child, "Which center do you want to go to? "What do you want to do today?"
- = The Teacher asks the Child, "What did you do last weekend?"
- = The Teacher says, "Oh, that sounds like so much fun" when the Child talks about his trip to the zoo.
- = During a Listening Center, the facilitator says, "Listen to the story."

## Teacher Involvement

---

This variable describes the level of the Teacher's engagement or involvement in the Focus Child's activity.

Like other variables, the observer should record the level of involvement that exists at the moment the interval signal begins. To identify **Involvement**, though, the observer sometimes must consider the behavioral context (i.e., the general pattern of behavior leading up to the signal). This is especially true for distinguishing between *Sharing* and *Close Involvement*. For example, if the Teacher is sitting near the Focus Child who is playing a board game, the observer may need to consider the behavior leading up to the interval signal to know whether the Teacher is playing the game with the Child (*Sharing*) or just watching the Child play (*Close Proximity*).



Unlike **Verbal Response** and **Focus of Instruction**, the *Involvement* categories apply only to Teacher behavior toward the Focus Child (i.e., they do not include the Child's group).



## Sharing Child's Activity

During shared activities, the Teacher and Child are co-participants or partners in an activity that involves more than just social interaction and conversation. The Teacher participates with the Child, in a fairly comparable way, rather than just overseeing and directing the Child's participation. The Teacher and Child must be mutually involved with shared physical activities (e.g., exercising to a record) or with shared materials (e.g., playing a board game).



Often, an observer may need to switch back and forth between this category and another, as the Teacher's involvement may vary from interval to interval. For example, the Teacher may be helping the Child and a peer build a Lego town in one interval (**Sharing**). In the subsequent interval, the Teacher may stop building, but stay close and continue to talk to the children as they play (**Close Proximity**).

### Examples:

- = Before the interval signal, the Teacher walks up to the Child, who is playing with a kitchen set, and the Child pretends to offer the Teacher a cup of coffee. At the signal, the Teacher pretends to drink from the cup.
- = A Teacher and the Child are looking at a book together. Both are participating in handling and talking about the book.
- = The Teacher is playing a board game with the Child and a peer.
- = The Teacher and Child are rolling a ball back and forth.
- = Before the signal, the Teacher walks up to the Child, who is pretending to cook in the kitchen area; and the Teacher says, "Oh, that looks good. Can I have some?" At the signal, the Teacher accepts a pretend plate of food from the Child.
- = The Teacher is leading a group music activity and is performing the same actions as the children.

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ The Teacher and Child are sitting next to each other and are having a mutual conversation about their favorite books. (**Close Proximity**)
- ≠ The Teacher is standing behind the Child and a peer, watching them play a board game. She is suggesting moves to the children. (**Close Proximity**)
- ≠ The Teacher, who is several feet away, is watching the Child's group play in the kitchen. She laughs and says, "Oh, it looks like you're having a good dinner." (**General Supervision**)

## Close Proximity

---

The Teacher is physically close to the Child (within arm's length), but is not sharing the child's activity. Physical proximity is the primary criterion for this category. The Teacher does NOT have to be interacting directly with the Child.



In general, a teacher who is sitting across a small table from the Child is considered to meet the “arm’s length” criterion, if the Teacher and Child are close enough to touch one another if they try.

### Examples:

- = A Teacher is sitting beside a Child who is working on a puzzle. The Teacher watches and makes occasional comments to the Child.
- = The Teacher, who is standing beside the Child's chair, says, "Nice job, Nikki."
- = An occupational therapist is conducting therapy with the Child.
- = A Teacher, sitting across a small table, is directing and pacing the Child's behavior during individual testing.
- = A Teacher, who is sitting beside the Child, says, “No, you cannot take the books from the shelf.”
- = The Teacher and the Child are sitting next to each other at the art table but are not interacting with one another.

## General Supervision

---

This category is recorded when the Teacher is in the same room as the Child, but farther than an arm's length away; the Teacher is available for interaction; AND none of the preceding categories apply.

### Examples:

- = The Child is sitting at the snack table while the Teacher gets snacks ready.
- = A Teacher is moving around the classroom while the children work on learning activities. The Child may raise her hand if help is needed.
- = The Teacher is sitting at the end of a large table, watching the Children eat their snacks. The Child is at the other end of the large table.
- = The Child is playing on a swing while the Teacher helps another child down the slide. They are 3 feet away from one another.
- = From a distance of 4 feet, the Teacher tells the Child she is doing a nice job.
- = The Teacher, who is not close to the Child, asks the Child's group to get ready for lunch.

## Not Involved

---

This category is recorded when either of following conditions is met:

- No teacher is present (i.e., in the same room as the Child) OR
- The only teacher(s) present explicitly communicated or gestured to the children that they are not available for social interaction (i.e., gave explicit instructions not to be disturbed).

### Examples:

- = The Teacher asks the children to be quiet while she talks to one of the parents.
- = The Child is told to work alone while the Teacher works with another child. The Teacher has asked the Child not to interrupt him.
- = The Child is placed in time-out with instructions that she cannot talk to anyone until time-out is over.
- = The Child is told to go sit in the chair and not to talk.



## Classroom CIRCLE

# Child Variables

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Negative Social Behavior - 73 Words – English - 74 Words – Other - 76 Communicative Gesture, Vocal - 77 Nonverbal Positive Initiation - 79 Singing - 80 Laughing - 80 Social Attention - 81 None - 82	Teacher - 83 Other Professional - 83 Other Adult - 84 Individual Child - 84 Group - 84 None - 85	Competing Behavior - 87 Writing - 89 Reading Words or Letters Aloud - 90 Academic Manipulation - 91 Academic Verbal Response, Gesture - 92 Academic Attention - 93 Pretend Play - 94 Music, Recitation - 96 Non-Academic Manipulation - 97 Gross Motor - 98 Eating, Drinking - 99 Non-Academic Attention to Materials - 100 None of Those Listed – 101

ClassCircle (Version 1.3)

Observe CHILD #1 now!

14:16

SOCIAL

(Please SELECT)

SOCIAL PARTNER

(Please SELECT)

ENGAGEMENT

(Please SELECT)

SAME AS PREVIOUS



## Child Variables

---

### Child Social Child Partner Child Engagement

These variables describe the behavior of the Focus Child.

#### Important note about timing

As described previously for the Teacher Variables, Child Variables are recorded by a momentary time sampling method. Thus, the observer records child behaviors that are occurring exactly at the beginning of the interval signal. To do this, the observer must already be focusing on the Child when the signal occurs. As soon as the observer finishes recording Teacher data, he/she should look at the Child, focus, and be ready to record the behavior that occurs at the exact moment of the signal.

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## Child Social Behavior

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This variable describes the Child's behavior with other people in the classroom. As with other variables, when a Child's behavior fits more than one category, the observer would record the code that is first in the list.

Some categories of Social Behavior may be recorded whether or not they appear to be directed to a social partner (i.e., another person or group):

- Words – English
- Words – Other
- Singing
- Laughter

Other Social Behavior categories are recorded only when they appear to be directed to a social partner (i.e., another person or group):

- Negative Social Behavior
- Communicative Gesture, Vocalization
- Nonverbal Positive Social Initiation
- Social Attention



## Negative Social Behavior

The Child directs angry, distressed, or aggressive social behavior (vocal or physical) *toward a social partner*. The negative behavior may occur in response to another person's behavior (e.g., hitting a peer who tries to take a toy away) or may occur spontaneously.

- *Vocal social negatives* – include such behaviors as crying and fussing at a social partner, using profanity, calling the partner by a “bad name,” threatening the partner, and vocal communications that are angry in tone or content, like screaming.
- *Physical social negatives* – include aggressive physical contact that could potentially hurt a social partner (e.g., pushing, kicking, hitting, biting) and forcefully taking something from another person.



With this category, our intent is to capture child behavior that is inappropriate (e.g., taking a peer's toy) and/or is intense enough to interfere with positive social interaction (e.g., crying out loud). Thus, facial expressions alone, such as frowning, would not be included.

Some **Negative Social Behaviors**, such as hitting another child, also fit the definition of **Competing Behavior** under **Child Engagement**. However, some **Negative Social Behaviors**, such as speaking angrily to another person, do not qualify as **Competing Behavior**.

Note that this category does not include aggression that is directed only toward toys, materials, or other inanimate things.

### Examples:

- = The Child cries when the Teacher takes away a toy.
- = The Child says, “I don’t like you,” to another child.
- = The Child hits another child with a toy.
- = The Child attempts to take a toy away from a classmate.
- = The Child grabs the coat of another child and jerks the coat forcefully.
- = The child forcefully grabs a toy from someone.
- = The Child, who has been exhibiting challenging behavior during a song activity, is participating, but is screaming the words to the song.

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ The Child frowns at a peer who is interfering in her play. (**Social Attention**)
- ≠ The Child quietly asks the Teacher for help when another child takes a toy. (**Words – English** with **Teacher** as the **Social Partner**)

## Words – English

The Child uses conventional English words. Any Child words are recorded, even if they do not appear to be directed to a particular person. Both single words and multi-word utterances, would be recorded here. Naming alphabet sounds and letters in English is also included.



Young children often do not articulate clearly. Thus, their early words may be difficult to understand. **Words** can be recorded if the Child uses an *approximation of a real word in a meaningful way*. For example, a child might say “sketti” to request a helping of spaghetti. To recognize the approximation, the observer should use contextual cues and/or evidence that someone understands the Child’s approximation (e.g., if the Teacher responds, “Oh, you want some more spaghetti?”). Similarly, after spending time in a classroom, the observer may know that the Child always says “sketti” for spaghetti. If not sure whether something is an approximation of a word, the observer should be conservative and record it as a vocalization instead of as a word.

Animal noises can be included if they are in the Merriam-Webster on-line dictionary (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/>).

Here are some of the common animal noises that are considered words:

Baa	Cluck	Oink
Bark	Hee-haw	Peep
Buzz	Meow	Quack
Cheep	Moo	Roar
Chirp	Neigh	Woof

Common animal noises that are not in the dictionary:

Arf  
Cock-a-doodle-doo  
Grrr

### Examples:

- = The Child says, “Help,” when having trouble with a toy.
- = The Child asks for a toy that is not in the play area.
- = The Child is having a conversation with a peer during pretend play.
- = The Child asks an older sibling to share a toy.
- = The Child says /Sss/ when the teacher asks what’s the first sound in her name.
- = The Child tells a peer to move out of her way.
- = The Child says, “Come on,” and motions for another child to join her in the kitchen.
- = While playing by herself, the Child says to her doll, “Now I’m going to dress you, Baby.” (Note: In this example, **Social Partner** would be **None**.)
- = The Child is reciting a poem or reading aloud to herself.

- = The Child points to Big Bird and says, “lello.” The Child consistently uses “lello” for “yellow.”
- = The Child points to a pig and says, “Oink, oink.”
- = During a Listening Center, the Child responds to instructions on the audio by saying a word out loud.
- = The Child is reciting letters in the alphabet.
- = The Child and others in the group say “E” after the Teacher holds up a card with the letter E.
- = The Child says “two” when the Teacher points to two and asks the child to name the number.

Does NOT include:

- ≠ Ecolalia (i.e., repetition or echoing of what another person says in a manner that appears to be compulsive) (*None*)
- ≠ Vocalizations that the Teacher seems to understand, but that do not sound at all like the appropriate word. (*Communicative Gesture, Vocalization*)
- ≠ Vocalizations that sound like a word approximation but are not used in a meaningful context and are not an actual word. (*Communicative Gesture, Vocalization*)
- ≠ The Child points to a pig and makes snorting noises. (*Communicative Gesture, Vocalization*)

## Words – Other

---

The Child uses conventional words in a language other than English or uses conventional signs (e.g., ASL). This category is used if any part of the Child's utterance is in another language or is signed. Naming alphabet sounds and letters in a language other than English or signing alphabet letters is also included.

### Examples:

- = The Child signs to his Teacher, asking for a cookie.
- = The Child signs a request for a drink of water and says "Drink" at the same time.
- = The Child speaks entirely in Spanish.
- = The Child speaks entirely in Japanese.
- = The Child uses a mix of languages, such as, "See you mañana."
- = The Child is signing the alphabet song while watching the Teacher.
- = The Child is reciting the alphabet in Spanish with the teacher.
- = The Child's group is saying the sounds of letters in another language.

## Communicative Gesture, Vocalization

The Child is communicating with another person through gestures and/or nonverbal vocalizations and the Child's communication does not contain words:

*Gestures* – The Child uses non-vocal behaviors that have conventional meaning and that appear to have a clear communicative intent and function, such as:

- To engage another person's attention
- To express a choice or desire
- To provide information
- To request information

Gestures have communicative function because, in general, they have commonly understood conventional meanings in the culture (e.g., nodding for “yes,” pointing to draw attention, raising one's hand to request help or to respond to a Teacher's question). The communicative intent of gestures typically is conveyed by the Child looking at the social partner. Intent may also be inferred if the Child's gesture is a clear response to a question or comment from another person (e.g., the Child shakes her head when asked to put toys away).

*Vocalizations* – The Child uses vocalizations that are not conventional words. An unfamiliar adult would not be able to understand them without clear contextual cues. As with gestures, vocalizations are recorded only when they appear to be directed to another person and to have communicative function and intent.

### Examples:

- = The Child points to a picture in the book and looks up at the Teacher. (She appears to be attempting to draw the Teacher's attention to the picture by pointing to it.)
- = The Child shakes her head no, after the Teacher asks if she wants some juice.
- = When the Teacher asks the Child where her shoes are, she shrugs her shoulders and holds up her hands (a conventional gesture that indicates she doesn't know).
- = The Child waves goodbye and throws a kiss.
- = The Child pats the chair beside him and looks at a peer, indicating a desire for the peer to sit next to him.
- = The Child requests a drink with an idiosyncratic sound such as “la-la.”
- = The Child touches the Teacher's back to draw attention and points to her neck area that is red.
- = When children are having a tea party, a friend asks the Child if she would like more tea, and the Child nods her head yes.
- = At the request of the teacher, the Child is reenacting a scene from a story read earlier in the day.
- = The Child raises his hand in response to a teacher's question.

**Does NOT include:**

- ≠ Standard gestures made as part of a song or recitation (*None*)
- ≠ Crying and fussing (*None* or *Negative Social Behavior*, depending on whether it is directed to a **Child Partner**)
- ≠ Giggling with a peer (*Laughing*)
- ≠ Involuntary noises, such as hiccups or burps (*None*)
- ≠ Making a “grrrrrr” noise while playing alone with a toy tiger (i.e., the vocalization is not directed to another person. (*None*))

## Nonverbal Positive Initiation

---

The Child initiates positive social contact with another person, without using words, gestures, or vocalizations. This may include:

- Initiating contact with another person by offering/giving a toy or other materials.
- Touching another person in a non-aggressive manner. A specific communicative message need not be apparent; however, touching that is aggressive or that seems purely accidental would not be included. The primary purpose of this category is to record *initiation* of social contact by the Child. Thus, if the touch continues into the next interval without a break in contact, this category would only be recorded during the first interval following the initiation.

### Examples:

- = The Child, who is seated by a friend, puts her hand on the friend's arm.
- = The Child, who is walking on a balance board, reaches out and steadies himself by touching the Teacher.
- = The Child gently pushes a peer's hand away from a desired toy (in a non-aggressive manner).
- = The Child offers food to a peer by holding it out.
- = The Child gives a hug to a peer sitting beside her.
- = During center time, the Child is playing with puppets and gives one of the puppets to another child who is looking at the puppet.

## Singing

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The Child is singing an actual song or a made-up song. The singing does not have to be directed toward another person.

### Examples:

- = The Child is singing a song he made up about airplanes.
- = The Child is singing *Itsy Bitsy Spider* by herself.
- = The Child is singing a song with other children, as part of a group activity.
- = At the beginning of storybook reading, the Child is singing a song, “Story time, story time, it is time for a story.”
- = The Child is singing the alphabet song.

## Laughing

---

The Child is laughing or giggling out loud. As with ***Singing***, the laughter does not have to be directed toward another person.

The behavior may appear to be spontaneous (e.g., the Child laughs at a toy she is playing with) or may be a response to someone (e.g., the Teacher tickles the Child and makes her laugh).

### Examples:

- = The Child giggles during a music activity.
- = The Child laughs with other children at the lunch table.
- = The Child is laughing and acting silly to make other children laugh.
- = The Child laughs when a peer tickles her.



## Social Attention

Social Attention is recorded when the Child is looking at another person or persons, and none of the previous categories apply. This may include:

- Looking at the face or body of another person who is in proximity or interacting with the Child. A face-to-face position is not necessary.
- Looking in the direction of another person, while looking at materials that person is using to engage the Child's attention.
- Watching other people who are at a distance and are not interacting with the Child – The observer should look for evidence that the Child is definitely watching the individual(s) (e.g., when the Child looks for a sustained period (2-3 seconds) or when the Child is visually tracking the individual).



For children with severe visual impairments, the definition of ***Social Attention*** may be expanded to include physical cues that suggest attending, such as turning toward the partner's voice. The observer should obtain information about the Child's disability before the observation and discuss accommodations with the CIRCLE Team.

### Examples:

- = The Child is maintaining eye contact with her teacher during a social interaction.
- = The Child is watching a Teacher during group instruction.
- = The Child is looking at a puppet a Teacher is holding for the Child's entertainment. (Note: ***Non-Academic Attention to Materials*** also would be recorded under **Child Engagement**. In this case, the ***Teacher*** is the **Child's Partner**.)
- = The Child is watching two other children at play.
- = The Child is looking at a peer who is talking to her.
- = The Child is looking at other children participating in a Listening Center.

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ The Teacher is sitting behind the Child and talking to him. The Child appears to be listening but does not turn around to look at the Teacher. (***None***)
- ≠ The Teacher is talking about a bulletin board that is on the other side of the room. The Child is looking at the bulletin board. (***None***)
- ≠ The Child is playing next to another child at the sensory table, but they are not looking at each other. (***None***)

## None

---

The Focus Child is not engaged in any of the social behaviors described above.

### Examples:

- = The Child is playing with a toy by herself.
- = The Child is engaged in parallel play in a child care center. Other children are playing in the same area, but the children are not interacting with one another.
- = The Child is watching TV with other children and is not looking at or talking to anyone.
- = The Child is standing nearby, looking at the snacks the Teacher is preparing.
- = The Child is playing the block area with three peers. At the interval tone, the Child is looking down at her own feet and is not talking.
- = The Child is watching the computer screen while another child is playing a computer game. At the interval tone, the Child is not talking to the peer.

## Child Partner

---

When child communication or social behavior has been recorded, the observer must select a category to identify the recipient of the social behavior – the **Child Partner**. This variable is also used to identify communication or social behavior that is not directed to a specific person or group (e.g., when the Child is talking to himself). Only one partner code may be recorded within an interval.



Whenever **None** is recorded for **Child Social**, **None** also should be recorded for **Child Partner**.

## Teacher

---

A person identified as having a teaching role in the classroom – e.g., a lead or assistant teacher, classroom paraprofessional, or teacher's aide.

### Examples:

- = The Child is eating breakfast while the rest of the class is in circle listening to the Teacher read a book. The Child is actively paying attention and looking at the teacher while finishing breakfast.

## Other Professional

---

Other professional who works with children or teachers in the classroom (e.g., speech-language pathologist, physical therapist, teaching coach or mentor)

### Examples:

- = During large group, instruments are being passed around. At the signal, the Child is humming while playing a guitar and looking at the music teacher.

---

## Other Adult

---

Other adult who is present in the classroom – For example, this might include an adult volunteer who is helping out in the classroom.



During a research study, this includes members of the research team who are acting as facilitators or interventionists, unless they have ongoing professional roles in the classroom outside of the research. However, this would not include the CIRCLE observer.

### Examples:

- = The Child is playing with the foster grandma during Center with manipulatives. At the signal, the Child is looking at the grandma.

---

## Individual Child

---

An individual child in the Focus Child's classroom.

### Examples:

- = The Child is watching a friend put a puzzle together.
- = While playing with blocks, the Child is working with a friend to build a fort.

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## Group

---

A group of two or more people – This category is recorded when the Child's behavior is directed toward a group and does not appear to be directed to a particular person within that group. This category includes choral group responding (i.e., behaviors such as singing, dancing, and reciting in unison with other members in a group).

### Examples:

- = The Child is watching two peers play a game.
- = The Child yells, "Hey wait for me," to a small group of peers.
- = The Child is singing "The Wheels on the Bus" with her preschool class.

## None

---

This category is recorded (a) if there is no **Child Social** during the interval, or (b) if the Child's behavior is not directed toward a particular social partner.

### Examples:

- = When the Child appears to be talking or vocalizing to him/herself.
- = When the Child is responding to recorded questions in a Listening Station, but is not looking at anyone else.
- = When the Child is talking or vocalizing to an inanimate object, like a doll or toy.
- = When the observer cannot determine who the Child is talking to
- = When the Child is not engaged in any communication or social behavior
- = When the Child is looking at the person doing the CIRCLE coding.
- = The Child is in dramatic play area with two other children. At the time of the signal, the Child is sitting in a chair playing a guitar and others are watching him play, but the Child is looking at the guitar.

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## Child Engagement

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The **Engagement** variable is used to describe the Child's participation in classroom activities. Most of the **Engagement** categories refer to different forms of *appropriate* engagement – i.e., actions that are relevant to the Focus Child's classroom context and that are consistent with any rules or prompts given by the Teacher. The one clear exception is ***Competing Behavior***, which is *not appropriate* by definition.



At any point in time, the Child's behavior may fit more than one category of **Engagement**.  
*In such cases, the observer must remember to record the code that occurs first in the list.*

***None of Those Listed*** should be recorded whenever the Child's behavior does not fit any of the specific **Engagement** categories. Remember that it does not necessarily imply that the Child is not doing anything at all.

## Competing Behavior

The Child's behavior is inappropriate for the Classroom Context or could interfere with appropriate engagement. It is important to remember that these categories do not imply that the Child's behavior is *bad* or intentional. Their common feature is that they interfere with the Child's ability to appropriately engage with the environment. These categories include both:

- Voluntary behaviors (e.g., aggression, noncompliance, tantrums)
- Behaviors that may be partly, or completely involuntary (e.g., seizures, self-injury, ritualistic behavior)

Types of competing behavior:

- Seizure or severe tremor – may be brief or sustained but is strong enough to interfere with the Child's appropriate engagement.
- Self-injurious behavior – potentially injurious behavior such as head-banging or biting oneself.
- Pica – eating non-food materials, such as gravel, dirt or Play Doh.
- Ritualistic behavior – repetitive, stereotypic patterns of behavior that interfere with appropriate engagement, that are not functional within the current context, and that have an obsessive/compulsive quality.
- Aggressive or destructive behavior – destructive behavior toward objects or aggressive behavior toward other people
- Tantrum or prolonged crying – crying or screaming that lasts more than a few seconds and is strong enough to interfere with appropriate engagement.
- Noncompliance – behavior that is in conflict with the Teacher's explicit instructions or the classroom rules for the current activity (e.g., getting toys down from a shelf after the Teacher has asked all the children to start cleaning up their play areas)
- Unsafe or dangerous behavior – behavior that may be natural for a young child, but is unsafe (e.g., a child climbing on an unsteady stack of blocks)



The recognition of **Competing Behavior** often depends on the classroom context and the quality of the behavior. This is especially true for the following:

- *Ritualistic Behavior* – The behavior itself may be a common child behavior (e.g., spinning around in a circle). However, it may be considered *Ritualistic Behavior* if a Child does it repeatedly for extended periods of time, with unusual intensity of focus, and to the point that it interferes with appropriate engagement. These behaviors often seem to occur without awareness of the actions of others and are resistant to redirection by others. Ritualistic behaviors sometimes are associated with autism and obsessive/compulsive disorder and will not occur with most children. But, for children who do have such behaviors, they may occur frequently within an observation. Ritualistic behaviors may include both physical actions and vocal behaviors. Because ritualistic behaviors may be highly idiosyncratic, we encourage CIRCLE users to develop individualized examples for Focus Children who exhibit ritualistic behaviors.

- *Noncompliance* – Noncompliance sometimes involves behavior that would be appropriate in most circumstances, but that is noncompliant in the current context (e.g., continuing to play with Legos after the Teacher has said to put them away). The key to recognizing noncompliance is that the Child has disobeyed a teacher’s direction or a classroom rule.

### Examples:

- = The Child bangs his head against a table repeatedly.
- = The Child bites her arm with at least moderate force (e.g., forceful enough to leave teeth marks).
- = The Child is rapidly twirling in a circle.
- = The Child repeatedly shakes her hands and does not attend to anything else.
- = The Child is tearing pages out of a book.
- = The Child is hitting another child.
- = The Child is throwing toys across the room.
- = The Child is attempting to take toys away from another child.
- = After the Teacher puts away a toy, the Child spends several minutes crying and screaming, “I want it! Give it to me!”
- = The Child is lying on the floor, kicking the door and screaming, “I want to go home!”
- = After a peer takes a toy away, the Child cries loudly and inconsolably for several minutes.
- = The Child cries loudly after falling down.
- = The Child cries when his toy is taken away.
- = The Child cries for no identifiable reason.
- = The Child continues to ride a tricycle after the Teacher has told the children to put riding toys away.
- = The Child is running or yelling at a time when she is supposed to be quiet.
- = The Child is eating dirt on the playground.
- = During a Listening Center, the Child has taken off his headphones.
- = During a Listening Center, the Child has turned the book upside down and cannot see the pages.
- = During a Listening Center, the Child is talking to another peer who is trying to listen to the story.
- = During large group, the Teacher is leading a good morning song. The Child is not participating and is taking toys off the shelf.



## Writing

The Child uses a writing instrument (e.g., crayon, marker, chalk, pencil) to pretend to write; to make marks that approximate text, letters, or numbers; or to write conventional letters or numbers. This category includes the *emergent* writing skills that are characteristic of preschoolers and somewhat older children:

- Scribbles with some indication that the child is pretending to write
- Wavy scribbles or other mock writing that is similar to the layout of text
- Approximations of letter or number shapes
- Conventional letters, numbers, or combinations of scribbles and conventional characters
- Combinations of conventional letters with invented spelling
- Combinations of conventional letters with conventional spelling (e.g., Child's name)



Most preschool children will be at the earlier stages of emergent writing. Thus, it will be important to look carefully for children's attempts to pretend or to approximate writing. To be recorded here, the Child must be using the writing instrument at the moment of the interval signal.

### Examples:

- = The Child is scribbling with a crayon and says, "I'm writing a letter to Mommy."
- = The Child is making letter components (e.g., straight lines, circles loops) with a marker.
- = There is a marker board in the kitchen area. At the moment of the signal, the Child is making a mark on the board and talking about things to get at the grocery store.
- = The Child is pretending to work in a store and pretending to write the amount of a bill.
- = At the bottom of a picture she has drawn, the child writes the first letter of her name followed by a squiggly line.
- = At the bottom of his picture, the Child makes two shapes that look like approximations of letters in his first name.
- = The Child has just said, "I'm writing my sister's name." Then, at the moment of the signal she is writing conventional letters that don't actually spell anything.
- = The Child uses a crayon to write his first name on a box.
- = The Child writes the number 5 on a paper and says, "I'm that many."

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ The Child is using a crayon to draw a picture of a house. (*Non-Academic Manipulation*)
- ≠ The Child is looking at a pretend grocery list she made before the interval signal. (*Non-Academic Attention to Materials*)

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## Reading Words or Letters Aloud

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The Child is doing one of the following:

- Naming printed letters.
- Pretending to read something aloud, as when a child holds a book and pretends to read from it.
- Reading a word or words aloud – The child may simply recognize the word by sight, such as *Stop* on a stop sign. It does not necessarily mean that the child knows how to decode printed material.
- Reading numbers that are part of printed text.
- Trying to read a word or words, even if the Child makes a mistake.



This category is meant to reflect a Child's developing knowledge that there is a relationship between written and spoken words. Thus it does not require that a Child actually know how to read words accurately.

### Examples:

- = The Child is naming letters that are printed on flash cards.
- = The Child is holding a book and pretending to read it to a peer.
- = The Child is saying the title of a book while the Teacher points to each separate word.
- = The Child finds her name on a list and says it aloud.
- = The Child says, "One fish, two fish, red fish, blue fish," while looking at the appropriate pages in a Doctor Seuss book. The observer does not know whether the Child knows how to read the words or has memorized them.
- = The Child says, "Dog?" after the Teacher points to the word *cat* on a poster and says, "Who can tell me what this word is?"
- = The Child is touching each letter on the alphabet card as she reads them aloud.
- = The Child sings the alphabet with the Teacher as she points to each letter on the board.

## Academic Manipulation

The Child is engaged in fine motor manipulation of materials that are related to pre-academic topics (i.e., early literacy, early numeracy, science and nature, social studies), and the Child's behavior does not qualify as ***Writing*** or ***Reading Aloud***. The manipulation must be appropriate within the Child's current context.



With this category, we are looking for functional manipulation of materials in a way that is consistent with their intended use. Thus, simply holding, carrying, or fingering an object would not necessarily be manipulation.

### Examples:

- = The Child is arranging picture cards into a logical sequence.
- = The Child is putting pieces into a puzzle, or moving pieces around to find the one that fits.
- = As part of a lesson about weather, the Child is drawing a picture of lightening.
- = The Child is using measuring cups to compare amounts of water.
- = The Child is looking at a book and turning pages.
- = The Child is moving a block toward the tower after the Teacher asks the Child to make a tower with three blocks.
- = The Child is moving or clicking a mouse while playing with computer game that is about matching words with pictures.
- = The Child is coloring on a sheet of paper that has letters and corresponding pictures.
- = The Child is turning pages of the book, as instructed during a Listening Center.
- = During a Listening Center, the child is opening the book or putting on headphones.
- = The child is moving a game piece to the matching letter.

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ The Child is drawing a picture of a house at the art table. The drawing is not related to an pre-academic activity. (***Non-Academic Manipulation***)
- ≠ The Child is pretending to wash dishes in the pretend play area. (***Pretend Play***)
- ≠ The Child is playing with blocks and putting them together in a line. The blocks have letters printed on them but the Child is not paying attention to the letters. (***Non-Academic Manipulation***)

## Academic Verbal Response or Gesture

The Child is engaged in verbal or gestural behavior related to pre-academic topics (early literacy, early numeracy, science and nature, social studies). The Child may be communicating with a Teacher, a peer, or a group of people. Also, the Child may be responding individually or as part of a group. Responses may include answering questions, asking questions, making comments, gesturing in response to an instructional prompt, and engaging in a discussion about a pre-academic topic.



If the Child is manipulating materials as he talks, *Academic Manipulation* would be recorded.

### Examples:

- = The Child responds by saying the number of apples printed on a card.
- = The Child responds to an instructional prompt by pointing to a picture.
- = In a **Large Group** activity, the Teacher asks whether it is rainy outside. The Child and several other children say, “Yes.”
- = The Child nods in response after the Teacher asks the child if a word starts with ‘A.’
- = The Child asks the Teacher the name of an animal in a book the Teacher is reading.
- = The Child asks the Teacher for help on a numeracy activity.
- = The Child says, “That looks like a kitty” when the Teacher holds up a book with a Tiger on the cover.
- = The Child is counting from 1 to 10 out loud.
- = The Child is counting from 1 to 10 by extending one finger at a time. (Note: It must be clear from contextual cues than the child is actually counting.)
- = During a Listening Center, the child is making a hugging gesture, as instructed by the Story Lady.
- = The Child is rubbing his tummy while saying /m/.
- = The Child is reenacting a scene from a story at the Teacher’s request.

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ During lunch, the Child answers questions about what she did during the winter break. The Child is not manipulating or looking at any materials at the time. (*None of Those Listed*)
- ≠ The Teacher has just told the children it’s time to pick materials from Centers, and the Child says, “Can we please play longer?” (*None of Those Listed*)

## Academic Attention

The Child is attending visually either: (a) to materials related to *pre-academic topics*, (b) to a teacher who is focused on *pre-academic topics* with the children, or (c) to a peer who is engaged in an *pre-academic activity*. For visually impaired children, the definition of Attention can be adapted to include postural orientation, or other clear evidence of attention.



The Child must be looking *at the moment of the signal* unless adapted scoring has been approved for that specific Child.

### Examples:

- = The Child's group is looking at a map of Kansas, and the Teacher is helping them identify features on the map.
- = The Child is watching as a Teacher reads a book.
- = The Child is watching a peer answer a Teacher's question about the book.
- = The Child is looking at a group of books, trying to decide what she wants to read.
- = The Child is watching a Teacher demonstrate how to use a cup to measure water.
- = The Child is watching a computer game that is about numbers and shapes.
- = The Child is looking at one of balls that a teacher rolls from one side to the other side to see which ball is going further.
- = The Child is looking at word cards when a teacher shows different picture cards that starts with 'L.'
- = The Child is watching a Teacher when she is writing a title of a story on a white board.
- = The Child is looking at her 'Bingo card' to see if she has the matching shape on her card.
- = The Child is looking at the computer screen (with an pre-academic topic) and is not moving the mouse.
- = The Child is looking at intervention materials while the interventionist shows her the activity for the day.
- = The Child is looking at a Tier 3 game board, trying to decide which picture starts with the focus letter.
- = The Child is listening to the teacher talk about instruments during large group.

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ The Child is looking at a Teacher who is asking the Child's group to make a line during transition. (***None of Those Listed***)
- ≠ The Child (who does not have a visual impairment) has been watching the Teacher read a story. At the moment of the signal, the Child is looking at the floor but appears to be listening to the story. (***None of Those Listed***)
- ≠ During a Listening Center, the Child is listening to the audio, but not looking at the book. (***None of Those Listed***)

## Pretend Play

The Child's play involves at least one of the following:

- Pretend sequences of at least two different pretense acts or of the same repeated act with minor variations (e.g., pretending to pour tea from a teapot into a cup, and then pretending to drink the tea)
- Creative or unusual use of an object, such as substituting one object for another (e.g., using a wooden peg for a baby bottle)
- Talking to an inanimate object or treating that object as a person (e.g., telling a stuffed animal to go to sleep)
- Pretending to take the role of another person, animal, or object, as evidenced by a sequence of pretend actions or by verbal comments (e.g., saying "I'm the Mommy and this is my baby.")
- Engaging in social interaction that involves pretending (e.g., talking to a peer talk about the pretend dinner they're making).



We are looking for an action or comment that makes the ***Pretend Play*** observable. Sometimes, during interactive play with peers, children may assume passive roles that appear to involve pretending, but without a clear action or comment (e.g., sitting in the “audience” and watching a pretend graduation ceremony, waiting at a table for the “mother” to put pretend food on the table, wearing a firefighter’s hat). ***Pretend Play*** is *not* recorded if the Child’s behavior is passive, even if the behavior is consistent with the Child’s role.

Remember that a single nonverbal action (such as the Child holding a telephone up to her ear) does *not* meet our definition of ***Pretend Play***. A *sequence* of at least two pretend actions must occur together (such as holding the telephone to one's ear *and* talking into it). The reason for this criterion is to minimize the chance of assuming pretend play in error.

### Examples:

- = Pretending to pour something into a cup, then into a plate
- = Putting a doll in a cradle, then kissing it goodnight
- = Pretending to stir in a cup, then to drink from it
- = Talking into a toy telephone
- = Combing one's hair with a toy bowling pin
- = Holding a puppet and pretending to talk as the puppet
- = Walking and making noises like an elephant
- = Trying on hats and engaging in actions related to the character the hat suggests (e.g., putting on a firefighter hat and pretending to spray water out of a hose or saying, “There’s a big fire over there – hurry!”)
- = Pretending to serve food to a group of children waiting at a table
- = Flying toy airplanes with the Teacher and imitating the sound of airplane noises

- = Engaging in coordinated role play, such as housekeeping or super hero, with a peer
- = Pretending to be part of the audience for a “graduation ceremony” and clapping for the graduates
- = In the housekeeping area, the Child opens a microwave door and puts a plate inside.
- = In the housekeeping area, the Child turns the water tap on the sink and places a toy pot under the tap.
- = Holding a toy horse, pointing the horse’s head toward the floor, and saying, “Look, my horse is eating grass.”
- = The Child, who is pretending to be the “baby” in the family, is lying on the floor with a blanket and is making fake crying sounds.

Does NOT include:

- ≠ The Child is sitting as part of the audience during a “graduation ceremony” and is watching the graduates, without doing anything else. (*None of Those Listed* for **Engagement; Social Attention** for **Child Social**)
- ≠ The Child is wearing a dress in dramatic play center and is listening to a peer who is talking about the Mexico trip that is part of pretend play. (*None of Those Listed* for **Engagement; Social Attention** for **Child Social**)
- ≠ The Child, who is pretending to be the “baby” in the family, is lying on the floor with a blanket, but is not doing anything else. (*None of Those Listed*)
- ≠ The Child is moving a toy airplane through the air but is not making airplane noises and is not engaged in any other behavior related to pretending. (*Non-Academic Manipulation*)
- ≠ The Child, who had been flying an airplane and making noises, stops briefly and is only holding the airplane at the moment of the signal. (*None of Those Listed*)

## Music and Recitation

The Child is engaged in singing, playing musical instruments, moving to music, or reciting. The Child's engagement is part of an activity and is not simply spontaneous behavior.

### Examples:

- = The Child is singing *I'm a Little Teapot* with a group of children.
- = The Child is singing and making motions for *Wheels on the Bus*.
- = The Child playing a tambourine as part of an activity.
- = The Child is reciting the *Pledge of Allegiance* with the group.
- = The Child is clapping to music.
- = The class is brushing their teeth while listening to the tooth brushing song. The Child is moving his head to the music while brushing his teeth.
- = The class is dancing to the "Hokey Pokey", and the Child is doing the movements.

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ The Child is listening to music on an iPad. (***None of Those Listed***)
- ≠ The Child is looking at a computer screen that is playing music. (***Non-Academic Attention to Materials***)
- ≠ The Child is selecting a song on the iPad. (***Non-Academic Manipulation***)
- ≠ Music is playing while children get are getting ready for naptime. (***None of Those Listed***)
- ≠ During center time, there is music playing in the classroom. It is not part of an organized music activity. The Child is dancing to the music by herself. (***Gross Motor because it is not part of an activity***)



## Non-Academic Manipulation

The Child is engaged in appropriate fine motor manipulation of materials, the manipulation does not fit any of the preceding categories, and the behavior is not part of ***Eating and Drinking***. The actions must be appropriate within the Child's current context.



With this category, we are looking for functional manipulation of materials in a way that is consistent with their intended use. Thus, simply holding, carrying, or fingering an object would not necessarily be manipulation.

### Examples from play and learning activities:

- = Using cookie-cutters or similar tools when playing with Play-Doh
- = Forming shapes with Play-Doh
- = Rolling cookie dough while making cookies with the Teacher and peers
- = Rolling a toy truck across the floor
- = Using a scoop to shovel sand into a container
- = Cutting colored paper and pasting it to a collage
- = Drawing a picture with crayons
- = Selecting crayons from a box during an art activity
- = Putting toys back in the box where they belong

### Examples from self-care activities:

- = Putting on a jacket
- = Pulling up pants
- = Putting on or taking off shoes
- = Wiping one's nose with a Kleenex
- = Washing hands
- = Untangling a shoe lace
- = Turning a jacket to see why one's arm won't go in the sleeve
- = Brushing teeth

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ Activities such as riding a tricycle, sliding down a slide, or throwing a ball do not meet the criterion of being *fine motor* activities. (***Gross Motor Behavior***.)
- ≠ Manipulation of food and utensils during Meals and Snacks. (***Eating and Drinking***)
- ≠ Walking to the other center area while holding a toy (***Gross Motor Behavior***)

## Gross Motor Behavior

The Child is engaged in gross motor behavior (movement of large muscles of arms or legs) that does not fit any of the previous categories. Includes:

- Locomotion (e.g., walking, crawling, scooting)
- Gross motor activity with materials or equipment (e.g., riding a tricycle)
- Participating in activities focused on gross motor movements (e.g., exercising or dancing that is not part of *Music and Recitation*).

### Examples:

- = The Child bends and hops during exercises.
- = The Child walks up to a magnetic board to place an object on the board. (NOTE: **Gross Motor** occurs only when the Child is walking. *Pre-academic Manipulation* would be coded when the Child places the pattern on the board.)
- = The Child is throwing a ball into a basket.
- = The Child is carrying a doll while walking across the room.
- = The Child is swatting at bubbles.
- = The Child is moving his body when a Teacher says, “Simon says, wiggle your arms.”
- = The Child is walking on large wood blocks.
- = The Child is dancing to the music by herself during center time. (Note: This would be coded as Music/Recitation only if it were part of an activity and not simply a spontaneous behavior.)

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ Random, nonspecific movements and actions that are not relevant to the activity (e.g., fidgeting or swinging one's legs) (*None of Those Listed*)
- ≠ While waiting on a line, the child is moving her upper body in place (*None of Those Listed*)

## Eating and Drinking

This category includes the following:

- Manipulating food, utensils, or other materials involved in eating (e.g., bottle, cup, plate)
- Accepting, chewing, and swallowing food
- Self-care during meals

### Examples:

- = Chewing a cookie.
- = Scooping up food with a spoon.
- = Picking up a cup or eating utensil and bringing it to one's mouth.
- = Holding an eating utensil or cup while taking food from it.
- = Setting a utensil or cup back on the table.
- = Picking up food with fingers and bringing it to one's mouth.
- = Passing food to another person.
- = Wiping hands on a napkin.
- = Opening a ketchup packet during lunch.
- = Attempting to open a milk carton to drink
- = Throwing a napkin into the trash can after eating

### Does NOT include:

- ≠ Manipulating materials that do not have anything to do with eating a snack (e.g., if the Child is playing with a toy car while seated at the table) (***Competing Behavior*** or ***Non-Academic Manipulation***, depending on whether the Teacher has allowed the children to play with toys during the snack)
- ≠ The Child is sitting and looking at the food but not eating it. (***None of Those Listed***)

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## Non-Academic Attention to Materials

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The Child is visually attending to materials that are relevant to the Child's classroom context and none of the preceding categories apply. That is, the Child is looking at materials that he or she is using or that are being used by another person taking part in the Child's activity. When the Child is watching another person manipulate materials for the Child's benefit, this category would be recorded in addition to the ***Social Attention*** category under Social Behavior.

### Examples:

- = The Child is looking at pictures of classmates on a bulletin board
- = The Child is looking at a puppet that is lying on the floor.
- = The Child is watching a Teacher move the puppet. (***Note:*** This would also be coded as ***Social Attention*** under ***Child Social Behavior.***)
- = The Child is watching a non-academic video.
- = The Child is looking at a toy another child is playing with.
- = The Child is looking at the picture a peer is drawing during center time.
- = The Child is looking at a dinosaur that he is holding.
- = Instruments are being passed around large group. The child is watching a peer play the instrument.

## None of Those Listed

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The Child is not demonstrating any of the Engagement behaviors described above.



This category does not necessarily mean that the Child is being inappropriate or unproductive. For example, the Child may be engaged in positive social interaction.

### Examples:

- = Staring into space
- = Resting in a comfortable chair
- = Sitting beside the Teacher, without anything else happening
- = Talking to a Teacher about her family's plans for the weekend
- = Talking to a peer during a free play period
- = Watching a gardener working outside the window
- = Looking at a teacher while waiting on a line during transition
- = Standing quietly in line
- = The Child is looking down at his own hands while sitting in a circle for large group
- = Listening to a Teacher read a book, but not looking directly at the Teacher.
- = During a Listening Center, the Child is looking into space while listening to the audio.