

INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM PROFILE

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Date of observation: _____

Name of setting: _____

Observer: _____

Teacher(s): _____

Time observation began: _____

Time observation ended: _____

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The Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP)

Rationale and Purpose

The *Inclusive Classroom Profile* (ICP) is a structured observation rating scale designed to assess the quality of provisions and daily classroom practices that support the developmental needs of children with disabilities in early childhood settings. Ratings on the measure's items indicate the extent to which "*classroom practices intentionally adapt the classroom's environment, activities and instructional support in ways that encourage access and active participation in the group, through adjustments that might differ from child to child.*" Specific examples clarify the different ways that these practices can be embedded in the classroom to support the diverse needs of children with disabilities. In the ICP, the concept of inclusive practices embodies the idea of individualization within inclusive contexts. This idea was essential in the development of items because it views quality as a reflection of the extent to which adjustments of various elements of the classroom can accommodate individual needs, while also encouraging children's active participation in the group (Soukakou in press).

This conceptualization is aligned with the joint position statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), which defines a high quality inclusive program along three key features: access to a wide range of activities and environments, participation that is enabled through various instructional approaches, and an infrastructure of system-levels supports (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). According to the joint position statement, "*the desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential*" (DEC/NAEYC, 2009).

The ICP may be used:

- To assess the quality of classroom practice in inclusive settings. As a research tool, it can allow researchers to measure and compare quality across various types of programs, as well as to investigate the relationship between classroom quality and children's developmental progress.
- To evaluate program quality as part of quality rating and improvement systems. The ICP can also be used as a self-assessment tool by program administrators and practitioners for assessing and improving the quality of inclusive practices.
- To inform models of professional development that can support those involved in meeting the individualized needs of children with disabilities in inclusive settings.

The ICP is designed to be used in conjunction with other early childhood environment rating scales and measures, such as the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised* (ECERS-R; Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2005).

Structure of the ICP

The ICP is a 7 point Likert-type rating scale which rates the quality of daily classroom practices ranging from 1 (practices considered highly inadequate for promoting children's active participation in the group and meeting their individual needs) to 7 (practices that promote to the highest degree children's active participation in the group through individualized strategies and accommodations). The measure includes 11 items, each comprised of quality indicators under the form of qualitative descriptions of various practices. These are:

1. Adaptations of space and materials/equipment
2. Adult involvement in peer interactions
3. Adults' guidance of children's play
4. Conflict resolution
5. Membership
6. Relationships between adults and children
7. Support for communication
8. Adaptation of group activities
9. Transitions between activities
10. Feedback
11. Family-professional partnerships
12. Monitoring children's learning

Observation Focus

The scale uses the inclusive classroom as the primary unit of assessment. Ratings are made by observing **all children with identified disabilities in the classroom** (children 2 -5 years old). Scores on each item represent the quality of observed practices implemented to support the active participation of children with disabilities in the classroom. As the focus of the ICP is on practices that support high-quality inclusion, practices are always being observed in the context of peer interactions, activities, and daily routines that take place with all children in the classroom.¹

¹ In cases where the ICP is used as a self-assessment tool by program administrators and/or practitioners to assess the experiences of an individual child with a disability, the scale might be scored by observing a particular child and giving for each item (and its indicators) a score that best represents the quality of practices that were implemented with that particular child.

Administration Time and Procedures

An ICP assessment requires approximately 2- 2 ½ hours of observation. To administer the rating scale appropriately, observers need to be familiar with the scale's items, administration and scoring procedures. It is recommended that users receive appropriate training prior to using the measure formally. Information on training can be obtained by contacting the author of the rating scale.

-Before Starting the Assessment

Before starting the assessment, observers will need to ask the head teacher to point out the child or children with identified disabilities who will be observed.

In addition, users of the ICP might want to gather additional classroom information, such as number of adults present in the classroom during the assessment, if any of the children will be receiving any specific interventions on the day of the observation (i.e., a particular behavior intervention), or if any of the children will be receiving in-class supports from therapists (i.e. speech therapist) or other professionals (i.e., hearing specialist) on the day of the observation. Such contextual information might assist users of the ICP, such as program administrators and staff in reflecting upon assessment results and guiding professional development activities for improving classroom practice.

-Administration Process

During the observation period, assessors place themselves at an area in the classroom where they can clearly observe the classroom routines and social interactions that take place. To ensure valid and reliable assessment, evaluators are encouraged to conduct a non-participant observation, and, as such, interactions with children ought to be minimized. During their observation, assessors **watch all adults** in the room who interact with the children under observation, and **give a score that best represents the overall quality of inclusive practices that were implemented with the children.**

Scoring Instructions

The vast majority of items are assessed through direct, structured observation. A few indicators throughout the items require review of documentation and a teacher interview. Next to items and indicators, the symbols (O) for observation, (I) for interview and (DR) for document review are used to tell the observer how to collect the necessary information. Within each item, a section of clarification notes is set aside to facilitate scoring. Each item is rated on a 1 (Inadequate) to 7 (Excellent) point Likert-type scale and can receive a score of 1 to 7. Scores for each item are given based on the guidelines provided below. For each item on the rating scale, the assessor reads each qualitative indicator listed under each column and marks it with a “YES” if the classroom practice/indicator was manifested during the assessment period or “No” if the described practice/indicator was not manifested during the assessment. After rating all qualitative indicators within an item with a YES, NO, or Not Applicable (NA), the item can be scored according to the following instructions:

- A rating of 1 is given if any one indicator under (column) 1 is scored YES
- A rating of 2 is given when all indicators under 1 are scored NO and at least half of the indicators under 3 are scored YES
- A rating of 3 is given when all indicators under 1 are scored NO and all indicators under 3 are scored YES
- A rating of 4 is given when all indicators under 3 are met and at least half of the indicators under 5 are scored YES
- A rating of 5 is given when all indicators under 5 are met
- A rating of 6 is given when all indicators under 5 are scored YES and at least half of the indicators under 7 are scored YES
- A rating of 7 is given when all indicators under 7 are met
- A score of NA Permitted: Not Applicable is given when indicated. Indicators assessed *NA permitted* are not counted when determining the rating for an item.

A **composite score** for the ICP rating scale is computed by taking the average of the individual item ratings, once each item on the scale is given a score from 1 to 7.

Terminology

ADULTS: Refers to all individuals responsible for the education of the children in the classroom (e.g., teachers, teacher assistants, specialists, therapists)

IEP: Individual Education Plan

IFSP: Individual Family Service Plan

Psychometric Properties of the ICP

The ICP has been field tested in 45 inclusive pre-k classrooms. Inter-rater reliability was established in a separate set of classrooms ($n=10$), and results suggested that independent observers were highly consistent in their ratings of individual items. The mean weighted kappa score for the scale's items was 0.79. Cronbach's Alpha analysis was conducted on the scale's items and assessed the measure's internal consistency ($\alpha=0.79$). The factor structure of the Inclusive Classroom Profile was tested through confirmatory factor analysis. The one factor model filled the assumptions and showed good values for model fit. Model fit indices were: $\chi^2= 35.164$, $df= 35$, $p=.460$, $CMIN/df = 1.005$, $RMSEA= .010$, $NNFI = .998$, and $CFI= .998$. To assess construct validity the ICP was compared with other measures of classroom quality. The total score of the ICP showed a .626 ($p<0.001$) moderately high correlation with the ECERS-R, suggesting the two instruments are measuring similar but not identical constructs (Soukakou & Sylva, 2010).

References

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- Harms, T., Clifford, R. M., & Cryer, D. (2005). *Early childhood environment rating scale* (Revised ed.). New York: Teacher's College Press.
- Soukakou, E. P., & Sylva, K. (2010). Developing observation instruments and arriving at inter-rater reliability for a range of contexts and raters: The early childhood environment rating scales. In G. Walford, E. Tucker & M. Viswanathan (Eds.), *The sage handbook of measurement*. London: Sage.
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1. Adaptations of space and materials/equipment (O)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Inadequate	Minimal		Good		Excellent	
<p>1.1 Most classroom areas are not accessible (e.g., stairs, various ground levels, toys covering large floor space preclude access) and children are not helped to access classroom's areas. (O)</p> <p>1.2 Materials/equipment are not accessible by children (e.g., most materials placed in areas that children cannot reach; equipment/materials not adapted to enable access) and children are not helped to access them. (O)</p>	<p>3.1 Some classroom areas are accessible by children and, when needed, adults usually help children access the classroom space (e.g., a ramp is available for child with physical disability; walker provided etc.). (O)</p> <p>3.2 Some materials/equipment are accessible by children and, when needed, adults usually help children access the materials they need to use (e.g., adult helps child reach a toy from shelf; adult places adaptive scissors on table close to where child is working). (O)</p> <p>3.3 There are at least a few materials/equipment that children use independently. (O) <i>NA Permitted</i></p>	<p>5.1 Most classroom areas can be independently accessed by children (e.g., children move around most areas independently; classroom areas are well defined; activity centers are labelled with pictures, words or signs depending on children's individual needs). (O) <i>NA Permitted</i></p> <p>5.2 Adults monitor how children use materials/equipment and help children who have difficulty using materials purposefully (e.g., adult helps child use scissors to cut on paper; adult offers hand-over-hand assistance to child doing a puzzle; adult models for child how to hold pencil; adult guides child how to use glue for an art project). (O)</p> <p>5.3 In most classroom areas, there are many materials/equipment that children use independently. (O) <i>NA Permitted</i></p>	<p>7.1 Adults intentionally organize the physical space and materials throughout the day to accommodate individual needs and/or to encourage peer interaction (e.g., adult repositions child on wheelchair so that she can face her peers; adult moves art materials placed on activity table closer to child to promote independent work; adult clears floor space from too many toys to support easy access for a particular child). (O)</p> <p>7.2 Children have access to a variety of toys, materials and equipment carefully selected to accommodate individual needs and to promote independent use. Throughout the day, adults encourage children to use many different materials in purposeful and creative ways.(O)</p>			

Criteria for rating indicators

Criteria for rating indicators

- 1.2** *Accessible = available at an area where a child can get it independently (e.g., on shelves where children can reach; located within view of children; labelled so that children know what they are etc.)*
- 3.3** *Score NA if: children's physical or mental ability is so impaired that they cannot use any materials independently. In all other cases, score YES if: you observe a couple of instances in which children use materials independently. If you don't see children using any materials and you don't see any materials that are adapted or placed in accessible spots, DO NOT give credit.*
- 5.1** *This indicator does not apply to children whose motor ability is so limited that they cannot access most areas independently. In this case, score NA. In all other cases, score YES if: space is organized or adapted in such way, which enables children to move around independently. You can score YES, if most children access most areas of the classroom independently.*
- 5.2** *Purposefully = in ways suitable for the activity*
- 5.3** *Score NA if: children's physical or mental ability is so impaired that they cannot use many materials independently. In all other cases, score YES if: materials are placed, organised or labelled in ways that the children you see in the room can use them independently. To make this decision, you need to observe several (two or more) instances in which the majority of the children use various materials independently.
Important note! If you don't see children using any materials and you don't see any materials that are adapted or placed in accessible spots, DO NOT give credit. It is possible that children can use materials independently but may choose not to on the day of your visit. However, many times this may be due to a lack of appropriate adaptations or accessibility of materials. Therefore, in cases where the majority of children you observe do not use most materials/equipment independently, give credit ONLY if in most classroom areas there are many materials which are adapted, suitable for their needs and easily accessible.*
- 7.2** *The required practice is that, each child included in the classroom, has access to a variety of materials that can be used in different type of activities (e.g., art, literacy, construction) independently (unless the child is significantly impaired). Children's independent use of materials might be a result of provision of professionally recommended materials, provision of specially adapted materials/equipment or careful selection of materials suitable for their individual needs (e.g., sensory toys for child with sensory disorder, specialized equipment for visually impaired; adaptive toys for children w/ physical disabilities).*