

# **Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS) – FAQs**

## **Does every enrollee in Parent Aware receive a CLASS observation?**

No. Only preschool aged classrooms in child care centers will receive CLASS observation. Infant/ toddler classrooms and family child care homes will not receive CLASS observations. Infant/ toddler and family child care versions of the CLASS have not yet been developed.

## **How is the CLASS observation different than the ERS observation?**

The CLASS observation differs from the ERS observation both in specific focus and ways in which the observation is conducted.

The ERS observation focuses on a number of the structural factors that affect quality in early childhood environments, such as space and furnishings and personal care routines. The CLASS focuses on the quality of interactions between the early childhood teacher and the students in the classroom. In addition, the two scales differ in that observers view the early childhood environment through the lens of a typical child's experience for an ERS observation. For a CLASS observation, observers focus on the teacher and the teacher's interactions with the students in the classroom.

The observations also differ in how they are conducted. The ERS observation is a three to three and a half hour observation during which observers follow the child care provider and children through a typical day, recording information on all areas included in the observation scale. A CLASS observation also takes about three hours, but consists of four 30 minute cycles. These 30 minute cycles are divided into two sections. The first section is a 20 minute structured observation period, during which the observer watches the interactions in the classroom and takes detailed notes. The second section is a 10 minute recording period, during which the observer assigns scores to all of the dimensions based on the observations and notes made during the previous 20 minutes.

Moreover, the CLASS examines the quality of the early childhood setting in a global manner while the ERS focuses on specific details. For instance, when being observed with the ERS, observers will do things such as count the number of children's books available for children to access throughout the day, with strict criteria as to the number of points allotted per number of books available. CLASS observers do not go into this level of detail. Instead, CLASS observers record their general impressions based on the structured observation. Another difference is that observers will be collecting data using a tablet personal computer for the ERS, and for the CLASS they will record data with paper recording forms.

**What if one of the students in my class has a melt-down during my CLASS observation? Will this lower the score I receive?**

No. The information collected by the observer reflects the experience of the average student in the class. Thus, the experiences of any one child should not weigh too heavily on overall scores if they are not representative of the experiences of most children. This is also true for isolated incidents. Observers are trained to observe for the entire 20 minute period and make determinations based on everything that occurs within that period. Therefore, an isolated experience by one child should not have a large impact on the total score for that 20 minute cycle.