

ASSESSING SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS AND INCLUSION READINESS

Certain features of early childhood classrooms have been shown to support children's social and emotional development (Diamond, Hong, & Baroody, 2007).

Step 1: Use these questions to observe the social climate in a target classroom.

Step 2: As you observe, consider the implications of these characteristics and how they might facilitate or hinder learning, social interaction, and development for a child with a disability. List both positive and negative implications.

| | Yes | Somewhat | No | Potential implications for a young child with a disability |
|---|-----|----------|----|--|
| Teachers greet children as they arrive. | | | | 1. 2. |
| The classroom follows a schedule or routine. | | | | 1. 2. |
| The schedule or routine is visible to children. | | | | 1. 2. |
| The group size is ____ and seems appropriate for the age group. | | | | 1. 2. |
| The ratio of adults to children is _____ and aligns with licensing regulations. | | | | 1. 2. |

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| | Yes | Somewhat | No | Potential implications for a young child with a disability |
|--|-----|----------|----|--|
| Teachers are observing children as they work and play. | | | | 1. 2. |
| Activities and areas support cognitive development. | | | | 1. 2. |
| Opportunities for creative and pretend play are available. | | | | 1. 2. |
| Teachers are engaged with children during work and play. | | | | 1. 2. |
| Teachers are responding to child requests. | | | | 1. 2. |
| Teachers are initiating activities. | | | | 1. 2. |

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| | Yes | Somewhat | No | Potential implications for a young child with a disability |
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| Children are initiating activities. | | | | 1. 2. |
| Children are engaged with materials in the classroom. | | | | 1. 2. |
| Children are engaged with peers in the classroom. | | | | 1. 2. |
| Teachers seem aware of children's special needs and abilities. | | | | 1. 2. |
| Teachers regard all children positively | | | | 1. 2. |
| Teachers seem to anticipate child behaviors and emotions | | | | 1. 2. |

SAMPLE FILLED-IN FORM

Is My Program Ready for Inclusion?

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Certain features of early childhood classrooms have been shown to support children's social and emotional development (Diamond, Hong, & Baroody, 2007).

Step 1: Use these questions to observe the social climate in a target classroom.

Step 2: As you observe, consider the implications of these characteristics and how they might facilitate or hinder learning, social interaction, and development for a child with a disability. List both positive and negative implications.

| | Yes | Somewhat | No | Potential implications for a young child with a disability |
|--|-----|----------|----|---|
| Teachers greet children as they arrive. | | X | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive— Teachers greet each child verbally at their eye level at morning arrival and wait for a verbal response. Children have also started to greet each other verbally, following the teacher's modeling. 2. Negative— Consider the child with language delay. Though present with peers, is he communicating actively and engaged with peers as they greet each other? Maybe provide a series of visuals with emotions so that he can identify and share how he is feeling that day. |
| The classroom follows a schedule or routine. | X | | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive— Children expect a consistent daily routine. Teachers refer to the schedule at each transition. 2. Negative—None. |
| The schedule or routine is visible to children. | | X | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive— The written schedule is posted at children's eye level but behind the door. 2. Negative— A written schedule may not be appropriate for all children. Consider including visuals, expanding the print, and moving to a more central location in the classroom so that it is more visible and accessible for children. |
| The group size is <u>18</u> and seems appropriate for the age group. | X | | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive— Group size is appropriate given licensing guidelines. Negative— A larger group size may meet licensing guidelines. Consider planning 2. activities that encourage small group interactions so that children have opportunities to participate and interact with peers and teachers. |
| The ratio of adults to children is <u>1:5</u> and aligns with licensing regulations. | X | | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive— Ratio size is appropriate given licensing guidelines. 2. Negative— None. Consider utilizing adults to facilitate small group interactions so that children have opportunities to participate and interact with one another and adults |

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Critical Considerations for Inclusion

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| | Yes | Somewhat | No | Potential implications for a young child with a disability |
|--|-----|----------|----|---|
| Teachers are observing children as they work and play. | X | | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive—Teachers can gather informal or anecdotal information to learn about children's interests and abilities. 2. Negative—None. |
| Activities and areas support cognitive development. | | X | | <p>Positive—Many centers offer children</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. choices 2. choice. Consider adding another color and a brush with a different size handle to accommodate children's decision making and to provide varied opportunities for fine motor skills |
| Opportunities for creative and pretend play are available. | | X | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive— Dramatic play area is in the classroom (though closed some days). 2. Negative— Consider keeping this area open daily as a choice. |
| Teachers are engaged with children during work and play. | | X | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive—Some teachers sit with children as they play. 2. Negative—Teachers that are seated in close physical proximity to children are not always guiding or scaffolding learning and play. |
| Teachers are responding to child requests. | | X | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive—Some teachers sit in close proximity to children at the snack table and facilitate conversations, respond to children's questions, and encourage interactions between children as they request items. 2. Negative—Teachers sit on the perimeter of the classroom during free play, often missing vocal or gestural requests for assistance with play or peers. |
| Teachers are initiating activities. | X | | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive—Teachers set up several choices for children and then sit beside materials, encouraging children to join them. 2. Negative—None. |

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| | Yes | Somewhat | No | Potential implications for a young child with a disability |
|--|-----|----------|----|---|
| Children are initiating activities. | | X | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive—Children are provided materials that will help them build fine motor and cognitive skills, such as Unifix cubes. 2. Negative—Requiring children to use Unifix cubes for patterning may be too limiting. Encouraging children to build towers, modeling patterning of other objects, or praising children's matching of objects throughout the classroom are ways to individualize feedback and scaffold children's learning. |
| Children are engaged with materials in the classroom. | | X | | See "Children are initiating activities" section. |
| Children are engaged with peers in the classroom. | | X | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive—Mostly yes; however, at the manipulatives table, children are working independently. 2. Negative—Although independent exploration should be encouraged, teachers might also encourage peer interactions by modeling how to request items from their peers rather than from the teacher. |
| Teachers seem aware of children's special needs and abilities. | | X | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive—Teachers check in repeatedly with children in the class with physical disabilities and offer them individualized adult support. 2. Negative—Although the individualized support and care is positive, it may be shaping peers' perspective of the child as always needing adult assistance. |
| Teachers regard all children positively. | X | | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive—Teachers interact with children at their eye level, use a positive and enthusiastic tone, and invite children to join in play or activities. 2. Negative—None. |
| Teachers seem to anticipate child behaviors and emotions | | X | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive—Teachers signal transitions using an aural cue (e.g., magic wand, bell). 2. Negative—One child, when engaged in play, consistently does not hear the cue over the sounds of her peers. Peers tell her to clean up suddenly and quickly, which leads her to grow frustrated and then push peers away from her toys. Supplementing the aural cue with a visual cue (e.g., musical wand + lights off) is one way to prevent any agitation and frustration. Alternatively, offering children who need more time with transitions an advance 2-minute warning may be helpful and may prevent potential challenging behaviors. |