



Social-Emotional Checklist of Early Care and Education Practices For Technical Assistance Providers


As you observe the practices in the classrooms you serve, don't forget about a very important area of child development: learning social and emotional skills (or how to get along with others and how to understand and express feelings in an appropriate way). Social and emotional skills are the foundation of all learning in the early years and teachers who focus on helping children develop these skills are truly getting them ready for school!


The checklist below will help you observe classrooms in your caseload through a social-emotional lens. Spend some time in each classroom and ask yourself if you would enjoy spending your days there...how does it feel to you? Look around the physical space, notice how the day flows and observe the teachers interacting with children. Take some time to close your eyes and just listen.

This checklist will provide additional information/insights to weave into your conversations with teachers in an effort to enhance the quality of the social-emotional environment of their classrooms.

Spend some time noticing how the classroom feels. Do you notice these things?	
The classroom is a pleasant place with sounds of laughter and happy voices...teachers and children	
Teachers and children smile frequently at each other	
Teachers speak to children on the child's level and look them in the eyes	
Teachers' tone of voice is playful, affectionate and positive	
Children show interest and enthusiasm about activities	
Teachers respond to children's feelings	
Children seem to understand the schedule and routines of the day. They know what happens next and what is expected of them. (<i>*young toddlers are just beginning to learn this</i>)	
Children move between activities smoothly and without chaos (<i>*young toddlers are just beginning to learn this</i>)	
Children are not wandering around the room seeming lost and unhappy, but are engaged in activities and/or with teachers	
Teachers seem to have a positive relationship with each other	

Focus on the interactions of the teachers and children in the classroom. Do you notice these things?	
Teachers are warm and nurturing	
Teachers display affection toward the children through hugs, smiles, gentle touch, etc.	
Teachers help children recognize and respond to the feelings of others	
Teachers encourage good listening and communication skills	

Interactions, continued...	
Teachers anticipate problems and steps in to help when needed	
Teachers help children learn problem-solving skills (<i>*young toddlers are just beginning to learn this</i>)	
Teachers help children learn ways to calm and control themselves	
Teachers encourage children to share and take turns (<i>* young toddlers are just beginning to learn this</i>)	
Teachers encourage and nurture special friendships that develop between children	
Teachers respect and support a child's need for a security object (pacifier, blanket, special doll) which helps children calm themselves and feel safe and secure away from home	
Teachers encourage individuality and allow children to be creative in their play	
Teachers encourage children, once they begin to use language, to talk about their feelings	
Teachers teach child the names for emotions they are feeling	
Teachers encourage exploration and show interest in children's discoveries	
Teachers engage in pretend play with the children	
Teachers' talk to children is mainly positive, not negative (encouragement and recognition of accomplishments instead of corrections and directions) <i>Take a moment and listen to the next four things the teacher says...at least 3 should be positive and encouraging!</i>	

Look around the classroom. Can you observe these things?	
Overall the physical environment is pleasant and soothing, not over-stimulating	
Enough space for children to play (with pathways between play spaces)	
Child-sized furnishings designed to encourage children to be independent	
Enough toys, books, materials for the number of children in the room	
Toy storage that is neatly arranged and labeled	
Materials that promote children playing together such as dramatic play props, dolls, puppets, or group art projects	
Places for children to be alone or with a special friend	
Space for each child's special possessions	
Children's art work and other creations are displayed	
Family photos or other connections to the children's homes	
The environment provide visual clues to guide the children (picture schedules, picture rules, etc)	