

How to Recognize a High Quality Classroom

Checklist based on the PEEC (Practices in Early Elementary Classrooms, Hemmeter, M.L., Maxwell, K.L., Ault, M.J., Schuster, J.W., 1998), an observation scale developed for use in inclusive K–3rd grade classrooms. The scale emphasizes individualized and developmentally appropriate practices.

- The room is well-organized with areas for work and areas for relaxation (e.g., big cushions, rug area).
- Children's work is displayed in the room at their eye level and children choose some of their work to be displayed.
- The tables and chairs that children use are the right size for them to work comfortably.
- Children use hands-on learning materials (e.g., art supplies, games, scales) to help them learn in at least two different subject areas (e.g., math, science).
- Children use computers to help them research their ideas (e.g., use the Internet, use a CD-ROM encyclopedia).
- Children make many choices each day.
- When children with disabilities are in the regular classroom, they do the same kinds of activities as the other children—with appropriate modifications.
- Teachers in the regular education classroom work on some of the IEP goals for children with disabilities.
- Teachers use information they gather about each child's progress to help make teaching decisions (e.g., spend an extra day on a skill).
- Teachers frequently encourage children to elaborate on what they say (e.g., "Tell me why you think that.").
- Children talk often among themselves about their work.
- Teachers adapt activities and materials to meet the needs of individual children.
- Math, language arts, science, and social studies are covered at least once a week.
- Children use their gross motor skills every day (e.g., run, jump, throw).
- Teachers encourage children to work and play well with other children, and teachers help children work out problems with each other.
- Children have many opportunities to learn about people from different cultures by reading books, playing games, participating in teacher-directed activities.
- Children are allowed to work at their own pace (e.g., they can take more time to finish a project or move onto another activity when they have finished).
- Teachers communicate frequently with families about their child's progress (including accomplishments).