

Science

Research has highlighted the key role classroom experience--specifically interactions with teachers--plays and what program and classroom characteristics are needed to provide children with the high-quality early learning opportunities shown to make a positive difference in their lives. Here, Dr. Jessica Francis answers questions about NIEER's classroom observation research.

Q. Why are you conducting classroom observations?

Our study is focused on children, so we need to study what is happening inside classrooms. Classroom observations are the best way for us to understand children's daily preschool experiences.

Q. How will classroom activities be affected by observations?

Observations will not interrupt your classroom activities. Trained, neutral observers will use a quiet and unobtrusive procedure, simply observing on the outskirts of each classroom for three hours in the morning.

Q. What is measured by classroom observations?

Three research-based measures will be used in each classroom, each examining something different. The [CLASS](#) focuses on the emotional and instructional interactions between teachers and children, as well as the efficiency in which the classroom is organized and facilitated.

The [EDUSNAP](#) examines the amount of time that children experience various groupings, content, and teaching and learning approaches.

The [ECERS](#) examines the overall environment and health and sanitation practices, as well as interactions that occur across different activities and content areas.

Q. What will be learned by these observations?

Classroom observations will allow us to learn what types of experiences children have on a daily basis across a variety of constructs, and how those experiences relate to their developmental outcomes.

Q. How will observation findings be used ?

Results from observations will be used to understand how quality is related to various aspects of children's development including cognitive, social and emotional, and health-related outcomes. Individual teachers and classrooms will not be identified but overall results will be used to improve practices across programs and districts.