

New Orleans Early Education Network 2015-2016 Learning Year Coordinated Observation Plan

What is the plan to ensure that all observers are reliable?

There are currently 49 Toddler and PreK CLASS Observers in the Network. Six observers are independent contracted PreK CLASS Observers, 23 are Head Start/Early Head Start staff (13 PreK only; 4 Toddler only; 6 PreK and Toddler), six are school based staff (4 PreK only; 1 Toddler only; 1 PreK and Toddler) two are Early Learning Center Directors (1 PreK only; 1 PreK and Toddler), and 12 are Agenda for Children staff (10 PreK and Toddler; 1 PreK only; 1 Toddler only). Although there are 49 Certified CLASS Observers, they may not all provide observations for the Network. The Network is focused on developing a cadre of independent, contracted Certified CLASS Observers to provide observations with as little conflict of interest as possible and will continue to add contracted observers until the capacity is met that relieves all program partners from the responsibility of conducting observations in their own or other program partners programs.

All Observers agreeing to provide local observations will be required to submit a copy of their Certified CLASS Observer certificates from Teachstone to the Lead Agency before being scheduled to conduct observations. CLASS Observers will only conduct observations in the age ranges for which they have an active certification.

The Network will reimburse for initial certification of a contracted observer after their CLASS Observer Certificate has been submitted to the Lead Agency. The Network is using myTeachstone to conduct observations and provide individualized and group professional development for all toddler and preschool teachers in the Network. Because myTeachstone automatically tracks Certified CLASS Observer certifications and will flag upcoming re-certifications in the system, we will be able to easily track upcoming re-certifications and then provide funding for recertification of all Certified CLASS Observers who are actively conducting observations for the Network.

The Network will also require and reimburse for calibration of all active Certified CLASS Observers one time before the start of each observation period unless the observer has become certified or recertified within 3 months of the beginning of that observation period. If an observer does not calibrate as reliable during the first attempt at calibration, the observer or the observer's program will be required to cover the costs of any further calibration sessions required to become reliable again with Teachstone before the season begins. If an observer cannot become reliable through calibration before the season begins, she/he will be replaced. Active observers will be scheduled so that there are never more than 2 weeks between observations, which will help to reduce the potential for "drift" due to observers not using the tool frequently enough.

What is the plan to ensure that all observers maintain inter-rater reliability and fidelity?

The Lead Agency will support one "PreK Anchor" and one "Toddler Anchor", each of whom is responsible for approving all observations of the type corresponding to their purview after the CLASS Certified Observer has submitted the observation through myTeachstone. Approval includes a cursory check of the scores to ensure the Negative Climate is not reversed. Anchors will be expected to be

reliable for double coding by calibrating reliably with Teachstone two times during each season; once before the season if not recertifying within 3 months of the start of the observation period and once in mid-season.

The PreK Anchor is responsible for double coding or reviewing the double coding of 10% of Preschool classrooms (34 classrooms) and the Toddler Anchor will be responsible for double-coding or reviewing the double coding of 10% of the Toddler classrooms (20 classrooms). Double-coding will occur over the fall and spring 12-week observation period, with double coding sessions held two or three times per week. During double-coding, the Anchor is responsible for leading the consensus scoring and the observer is responsible for submitting the consensus scores for that observation. Based on the anticipated workloads, each Agenda for Children staff observer or program partner observer will receive a double-coding once each season, while newly reliable observers will engage in two to four double-coding sessions, depending on the number of observations they have contracted to complete, where they fall in the reliability checks with the Anchor during double-coding, and how closely their scores reflect the team and third party observers' averages over the observation season.

When contracted CLASS Observers are "seasoned" (have conducted a minimum of 20 observations of the type they are contracted to conduct and have been certified and then recertified at least once), they will be able to double code in a classroom together and the Anchor will conduct an observation individually on that date.

When two seasoned observers conduct a double coded observation, one of the Observers will be designated the "Lead Observer" and will be assigned to lead the consensus scoring after the observation then complete and submit the consensus observation through myteachstone where it will be evaluated for quality assurance purposes and approved by the appropriate Anchor. The designation of "Lead Observer" will be assigned on a rotating basis so the work is shared equally among seasoned Observers. The Anchor will provide feedback to Observers relative to any and all quality control issues that may arise out of double-coding observations.

What is the plan to ensure that no observer conducts an observation in a classroom in which the observer has a conflict of interest?

The Lead Agency's original plan called for the training and contracting of 8 Independent Pre-K Certified CLASS Observers and 5 Independent Toddler Certified CLASS Observers, who would each complete up to 42 observations between September 1, 2015 and December 11, 2016 and up to 42 observations between February 2, 2016 and May 8, 2016 to meet fall and spring observation targets. Agenda for Children planned to utilize 10 of the 12 AFC Toddler and/or Pre-K Certified CLASS Observers, who would each complete five observations in both the fall and the spring cycles, for a total of 50 classrooms to be assessed by Agenda for Children staff during each observation period. This would cover the 535 CLASS observations that needed to be completed for each observation period with the ability to cover for the need of substitutes or loss of observer time for any reason. In order to accommodate the two French Immersion classrooms in the Network, one Pre-K Certified CLASS Observer would be bilingual (French).

All Independent Contractors would sign an Independent Contractor Agreement that includes the language from the Bulletin 140 (503.C.1.d.iv) and a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form.

As of September 3, 2015, Agenda did not yet have the capacity to provide Independent Contractors for the majority of the observations so the following changes had to be made. 5 Independent PreK Certified CLASS Contractors will conduct 215 of the 338 PreK CLASS Observations. Agenda for Children will use 12 employees to conduct 10 observations each observation period and other Program Partners with Certified CLASS Observers were asked to provide as many Certified CLASS Observers as they could to commit to conducting 10 observations each as well. The NOEEN Steering Committee voted to limit conflict of interest and even the appearance of conflict of interest as much as possible so the plan calls for AFC staff to conduct observations in programs in which they have not provided training or technical assistance and for program partner staff to conduct observations in other program types. As more potential contracted observers become Certified CLASS Observers, both program partner and AFC staff will be relieved of the scheduled observations. The payment per observation and the possibility of raising the funds to cover the costs of observations will be evaluated in a working group over the course of this year. Reaching the full capacity of 10-11 PreK and 6-7 Toddler Certified CLASS Observers will allow the Network to conduct all CLASS observations with minimum to no conflict of interest.