



Program Observation Instruments (POI) Overview

What are they? Program Observation Instruments (POI) are tools you can use to review your program's practices to see what you are doing well and identify areas of growth. POIs examine a range of practices including child-teacher interactions, classroom environments, and business practices. Many programs use more than one POI in their continuous quality improvement (CQI) work.

Why do we use them? It is helpful to look at your program's practices while using a tool to guide you through the process. POIs give you a framework for your observation and a place to record the information. POIs are also a common way for the early childhood education field to discuss progress, best practice, and challenges.

The following is a list of several POI Instruments used in Pennsylvania for various purposes:

Business Administration Scale (BAS)

One tool for use in family child care programs.

Purpose: Used to gather information about business and professional practices in family child care settings. A BAS assessment provides feedback to family child care providers including current strengths and areas where improvements can be made.

<http://mccormickcenter.nl.edu/program-evaluation/business-administration-scale-bas/>

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

There are four separate tools for use in observing different age groups including infants (Infant CLASS), toddlers (Toddler CLASS), preschoolers (Pre-K CLASS) and school-agers (K-3 CLASS).

Purpose: Used to gather information about teacher interactions, behaviors and responses. A CLASS assessment provides feedback to classroom teachers including current strengths and areas where improvements can be made.

<http://store.teachstone.com/>

Environment Rating Scales (ERS)

Five separate tools for use in observing different age groups, including infants/toddlers (ITERS-R), preschoolers (ECERS-R and ECERS-3), school-age children (SACERS-U), and family child care (FCCERS-R).

Purpose: To gather information about the early learning environment, health and safety practices, learning and play activities, and teacher interactions. An ERS assessment provides feedback to classroom teachers including current strengths and areas where improvements can be made.

<http://www.ersi.info/>

Parenting Interactions with Children: Checklist of Observations Linked to Outcomes (PICCOLO)

One tool, originally designed for parents and also used in family child care settings.

Purpose: Used to review positive behaviors and interactions that support better outcomes for children's early development. PICCOLO can be scored from a 10-minute live observation or from a video.

<http://www.brookespublishing.com/resource-center/screening-and-assessment/piccolo/>

Program Administration Scale (PAS)

One tool designed for use in center-based programs.

Purpose: Used to gather information about administrative practices, management practices, and leadership of early childhood programs. A PAS assessment provides feedback to programs including current strengths and areas where improvements can be made.

<http://mccormickcenter.nl.edu/program-evaluation/program-administration-scale-pas/>

Program for Infant/Toddler Care Program Assessment Rating Scale (PITC-PARS)

One tool used in programs offering group care for infants and toddlers (Birth to 3).

Purpose: Used to measure program policies, administration, caregiving interactions, and environments essential to infant and toddler care. Assessments are conducted through observation, interview, and review of materials and provide feedback on areas of strength and areas for improvement.

<http://www.pitcpars.org/content/en/instrument>

****Please note, this is not a comprehensive list and other tools will be added as information becomes available.***