Introduction

The Core Knowledge Preschool Snapshot Implementation and Observation Checklists (Preschool Snapshot Tool) are designed to assess how well the Core Knowledge Preschool Sequence is being implemented. As a tool, the checklists can be used for a variety of purposes.

First, teachers can use the tool to setup their classrooms and evaluate their implementation of the Core Knowledge Preschool Sequence. Administrators can use the tool to evaluate implementation and identify opportunities for further professional development and program improvement. The Core Knowledge Foundation will use the tool to conduct classroom visits for the purposes of designating programs with the “Official” Core Knowledge Preschool Status.

About the Tool

Conducting a complete classroom observation is a time consuming task that is typically not undertaken on a regular basis. Few programs have the leisure to spend a full day observing a classroom in action. The tool has been designed to allow for observation to take place over the course of several shorter visits.

The Preschool Environmental Observation Form (pp. 1-10) is comprised of 89 items. Each of these items has to do with the setup and provisioning of the classroom. This checklist can be completed when no children are present.

The Classroom Practices checklists (pp. 11-16) are meant to evaluate general practices used by teachers in the classroom on a daily basis. Evaluation of these practices requires that you spend several hours in the classroom to get an accurate sense of whether the practices are taking place throughout the course of the day. Each of the “practices” checklists can be completed independently, although all of the practices (planning, assessment, language support, classroom management, and behavior management) should be taking place daily.

The Planning and Assessment Practices checklist is comprised of 15 items designed to evaluate the teacher’s use of planning and assessment in the classroom. Completing these items will require classroom observation, review of lesson plans, and teacher interview.

The Language Support Practices checklist allows for evaluation of practices employed by the teacher on a daily basis to support oral language development. It includes several items specific to English Language Learners.

The Classroom and Behavior Management Practices checklist is designed to evaluate the teacher’s use of classroom management and behavior management strategies. Again, these are practices that should be employed on a daily basis.

The remaining checklists are designed to evaluate specific portions of the classroom’s daily routine. Even during a short visit, the current portion of the daily routine can be evaluated. For example, you may wish to visit a classroom for twenty minutes first thing in the morning to evaluate the arrival time activities. On another day, you may stop by in the afternoon for twenty or thirty minutes to evaluate story time. Each of the daily routine checklists can be completed in a separate visit.

Checklists have been created for the following portions of the daily routine:

The Arrival checklist is designed to evaluate the activities and practices that take place during arrival portion of the day.

The Meal Time checklist is designed to evaluate the activities and practices that take place during meal and or snack time.

The Circle Time (sometimes called, First Circle) checklist is designed to evaluate the activities and practices that take place during the circle time portion of the day.
The **Small Group** checklist is designed to evaluate the activities and practices that take place during the *small group* portion of the day.

The **Center Time** checklist is designed to evaluate the activities and practices that take place just before, during, and after *center time*.

The **Music and Movement** checklist is designed to evaluate the activities and practices that take place during *music related activities* and during *outdoor* time.

The **Review** (sometimes called, Second Circle) checklist is designed to evaluate the activities and practices that take place during the *review / second circle* portion of the day. Review is an opportunity to review specific skills that have been introduced during the course of the day.

The **Read Aloud** checklist is designed to evaluate the activities and practices that take place during both fiction and non-fiction read aloud times.

See the *Core Knowledge Preschool Sequence* for samples of full- and half-day schedules.

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## The Language of Instruction

The Core Knowledge Preschool Sequence has an explicit focus on oral language. The *Language of Instruction* lists included in the Sequence are domain specific lists of terms that knowledgeable and competent individuals generally use to talk about the particular domain subject. While not comprehensive or exhaustive, the lists provide a sampling of the precise vocabulary to which young children should be exposed.

It is important to stress that the word lists are not intended for use in isolated drill or memorization. Children should not be expected to memorize or necessarily use the words in their own speech. The aim of the *Language of Instruction* is to provide young children with exposure to these words. Children need to hear a word used repeatedly in different situations before making it their own.

The lists are included to serve as a guide for teachers and caregivers as they interact and talk with children during the course of various activities. Such vocabulary may be incorporated into adult comments that describe what the child is doing (or, what the adult is doing, especially if he or she is modeling a behavior or approach). By using language in this way, adults demonstrate that experience can be represented symbolically by language. Furthermore, restatements in the form of questions, using the same precise vocabulary, will invite children to listen actively and begin to assimilate the language being used.

The *Preschool Snapshot Tool* includes the *Language of Instruction* for each domain on pages 42-44. The lists are provided to offer observers guidance in listening for appropriate language modeling and use during the classroom visit.

For instance, if you are conducting a classroom visit with the purpose of evaluating small group activities, you will complete the **Small Group Time** checklist (p. 27). Additionally, you will review the *Language of Instruction* lists for the domain of the skills being addressed during the small group activity. That is, for a math related small group activity, you would consult the *Language of Instruction* for *mathematical reasoning* to ensure that the teaching team is modeling math related language with the purpose of exposing young children to this vocabulary.

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## Using the Preschool Snapshot and Observation Checklists

The Core Knowledge philosophy for evaluating classroom activities and performance parallels the Core Knowledge philosophy for assessing young children. Assessment and evaluation should be systematic and on-going. Accurate evaluation requires multiple opportunities to assess the same situation across time. Everyone has “off” days where things just don’t go their way. Evaluating the same situation more than once allows for a more accurate determination of whether things were “off” or whether
there is a genuine need for improvement. The Preschool Snapshot Tool includes three columns of check boxes (Figure 1) for each item, to allow for multiple observations across time.

![Figure 1](image1.png)

The facing pages include three columns of space (Figure 2) to include comments related to each section of the checklist.

It might be helpful for the teaching team to use one column for an implementation and self assessment observation. Another column may be used to complete checklists during the first months of the school year, and the remaining column may be used to complete checklists during the latter months of the school year.

It is entirely up to your program’s preference as to how and when each of the checklist columns should be used. As mentioned above, not all checklists need to be completed in a single visit. However, to get an accurate sense of your program’s Core Knowledge implementation it is important to complete each checklist at least once over the course of time. For the most accurate sense of your program’s implementation, it is recommended that each of the three columns for each checklist be completed across the course of the school year.

When completing each checklist, if evidence exists indicating that the item has been addressed simply put a ✓ or x in the checkbox for that item. If there is no evidence that an item has been addressed in the classroom, simply leave the checkbox blank. On the facing pages, you may make comments regarding your observation. Comments will be particularly helpful if you plan to review or discuss the checklist at a later time.

Any items with the star logo ★ next to them are practices specific to Core Knowledge and are weighted on the score sheet.

### Scoring

Three sets of score sheets are provided with the Preschool Snapshot Tool. Each checklist has its own section on the scoring sheet. Using the appropriate section on the scoring sheet, a performance percentage can be calculated for each checklist. It is important to note that:

- The Preschool Environmental Observation Form is a single checklist and should be completed in a single visit.
- The Planning and Assessment Practices checklist is comprised of several sections that are intended to be completed during a single visit.
- The Language Support Practices checklist is comprised of several sections that are intended to be completed during a single visit.
- The Classroom and Behavior Management Practices checklist is comprised of several sections that are intended to be completed during a single visit.
• The checklists for each of the elements of the daily routine (arrival, meal time, circle time, etc.) contain multiple sections that are intended to be completed during a single visit, although the individual checklists (arrival, meal time, small group, etc.) need not be completed in a single visit.

Items on each checklist are given a score of “0” or “NA” as indicated on the scoring sheet if a ✓ or x DOES NOT appear in the checkbox for that item.

Items on each checklist are given a score of “1” or “2” as indicated on the scoring sheet if a ✓ or x DOES appear in the checkbox for that item.

After scoring each item in a particular section, use the formula at the bottom of the section to compute the performance percentage for that section.

For instance, in the following example (Figure 3), the performance percentage is 80 %, because the score total of “4” is divided by 6 minus the number of “NA” (i.e., “5”) and then multiplied by “100:”

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<th>Item</th>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0,1,NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Total: 4  Total _4_ / (6 - _1_ #NA)*100 = _80_ %

Figure 3

Gap Analysis

Gap Analysis is a technique used to evaluate the whether or not a “gap” exists between two individuals’ understandings of a situation. For administrators and teachers, a gap analysis can be a useful tool for performance improvement. The Preschool Snapshot Tool can be used to conduct a gap analysis of classroom and teaching practices in your program. To conduct a gap analysis:

1. Have the teaching team complete the Preschool Snapshot Implementation and Observation Checklist(s) using one column of check boxes.
2. Have a supervisor or administrator complete the Preschool Snapshot Implementation and Observation Checklist(s) using another column of check boxes.
3. Review each checklist item looking for areas where there is disagreement between how the teaching team completed the checklist and how the supervisor or administrator completed the checklist. These items constitute a “gap.”
4. The supervisor or administrator and the teaching team should discuss these items to determine why the gap exists. In some cases, one party or the other may have misinterpreted the manner in which an item is meant to be implemented. A gap may also indicate an opportunity where professional development can be used to improve performance.
5. The supervisor or administrator and the teaching team should also discuss items that were scored low by both parties. In this case, both parties recognize the need for improvement, and further conversation can facilitate plans to remediate the low score and improve performance.

Official School Status

Instructions for becoming an Official Core Knowledge Preschool are available on our website at www.coreknowledge.org. Candidates for official school status will be required to achieve a 90% overall rating (for each classroom) with ratings not less than 75% in any one area.
## Core Knowledge®
### Planning & Assessment Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visit 1 Date</th>
<th>Visit 2 Date</th>
<th>Visit 3 Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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### Planning and Adherence to Lesson Plan

1. There is a written month-by-month plan that identifies when the individual goals and content/topics of the *Preschool Sequence* will be addressed.

2. There is a written lesson plan (daily or weekly) that aligns with the month-by-month plan and demonstrates a balance of experiences and activities from each domain of the *Preschool Sequence*.

3. Written lesson plans clearly indicate accommodations and extensions for specific children based on individual needs.

4. Both teacher and assistant are aware of the plan for the day.

5. Materials are prepared and available for the day's activities.

6. A minimum of 2.5 hours are spent in productively engaged activities (excluding toileting, nap, meals, etc.).

7. There is a predictable, posted routine and the teaching team notifies children of any changes to routine due to field trip, classroom visitor, etc.

8. The teaching team assumes a highly interactive role in guiding and presenting experiences in the classroom. Even during child-initiated activities, the teaching team is actively involved (using direct observation as a means of assessment, conversing with children, scaffolding concepts, facilitating language, etc.).

### Ongoing Assessment of Children

9. Teaching team uses all parts of the day to perform formal and informal assessments.

10. Teaching team is knowledgeable about each child's skill level (and age).

11. Each child's portfolio is current with student work samples and assessment response / record sheets.

12. Portfolio contents are dated and clearly indicate the goal, objective or skill being assessed.

13. Portfolio contents demonstrate a variety of assessment strategies (e.g., direct observation, work products, activity probes).

14. Portfolio contents demonstrate children’s progress across a variety of skills from within each of the *Preschool Sequence* domains.

15. The CK-PAT is used to monitor individual and class progress and to communicate results to individual parents.
### Core Knowledge®
#### Planning & Assessment Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Comments</th>
<th>Visit 1 Observer:</th>
<th>Visit 2 Observer:</th>
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