

LOCAL CLASS[®] OBSERVATIONS BEST PRACTICES GUIDEBOOK

For VQB5 Practice Year 1 2021-2022



To ensure more children enter school prepared for success, Virginia is measuring and strengthening teacher-child interactions and instruction across birth-to-five classrooms in family day homes, child care, Head Start and school-based classrooms.

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Purpose: The purpose of this document is to provide local PDG communities and local CLASS observers with guidance, protocols, answers to FAQs, and links to resources for conducting local CLASS observations in Virginia’s Unified Measurement and Improvement System. With the launch of Practice Year 1, the Unified Measurement and Improvement System has an official new name; *The Unified Virginia Quality Birth to Five System*. We will abbreviate the name as **VQB5**

Questions about Local Observations should be sent to kris.meyers@doe.virginia.gov.

LOCAL CLASS® OBSERVATIONS

The quality of interactions between teachers and children will be measured in Virginia’s Unified VQB5 System using the nationally recognized CLASS tool. CLASS stands for **C**lassroom **A**ssessment **S**coring **S**ystem. The CLASS is a tool for observing and assessing the quality of interactions among teachers and children in classrooms.

The CLASS tool was chosen for use in VQB5 because it provides a rigorous and consistent approach to observing and measuring teacher-child interactions during critical developmental periods, while still providing a context-specific and developmentally sensitive metric for each age group. In addition,

- Over 200 studies show that children in classrooms with more effective teacher-child interactions, as measured by CLASS®, have better academic and social outcomes. (For more information see [Why CLASS?](#) and [CLASS Outcomes Studies](#))
- Improvements in teacher-child interactions are associated with improvements in children’s outcomes.
- All children, including those from diverse settings, dual language learners (DLLs) and children with special needs, benefit socially and academically from classrooms with high quality teacher-child interactions as measured by CLASS.
- Virginia has used CLASS to measure and improve the quality of teacher-child interactions in early care and education settings for 10+ years.

VQB5 will provide multiple CLASS observations to every classroom each year.

Types of CLASS Observations in VQB5

There are two types of CLASS observations conducted in VQB5; local and external observations. These observations have different purposes and frequencies during the annual measurement and improvement cycle as described below.

VQB5	LOCAL OBSERVATIONS	EXTERNAL OBSERVATIONS
Purpose	Primary method for gathering classroom level information about the quality of teacher child interactions and providing feedback in VQB5.	Secondary method to gather information about the accuracy and consistency of local observations and to provide additional feedback in VQB5.
Definition	Coordinated and scheduled at the local level, with results recorded in Link B5. Conducted by locally identified reliable observers.	Coordinated, scheduled, and recorded by an external organization. Conducted by externally identified reliable observers.
Annual Cycle	In VQB5, all birth-to-five classrooms will get two local observations each year. One in the fall and one in the spring.	In VQB5, only some birth-to-five classrooms will get an external observation.

Benefits of Local Observations

Teachers benefit from frequent and specific feedback, along with individualized supports provided through CLASS observations conducted at the local level.

- With local observations, teachers are observed more often, and the results are more likely to be used by instructional leaders to inform ongoing professional development and assess growth in teacher-child interactions over time.
- Since local observers are typically people who work in the community and are familiar with local program norms, structures and values, they are often best suited to provide an individualized and supportive approach to the observation and feedback process.

External CLASS observations are much less frequent and provide a quality assurance check and reinforce the information gained through local observations.

Local CLASS Observations Timeline & Expectations

The annual observation cycle in VQB5 includes two local CLASS observations for every infant, toddler and preschool classroom, including family day homes, using whichever CLASS tool is age-appropriate based on VDOE guidance. For Practice Year 1, the fall and spring observation windows will occur during the following timeframes:

- The fall observation window is from August 23rd, 2021 - December 17, 2021
- The spring observation window is from January 17, 2022 - June 10, 2022

During the practice years there are no stakes or consequences for CLASS scores from local observations. CLASS scores are used to provide teachers with direct feedback about their actual classroom practices, as well as to guide professional development at the local level for ongoing quality improvement support. To assist with planning, educators can use the scoring guidance in the CLASS manuals, along with the [Practice Year 1 expectations](#) to target and prioritize improvement supports.

CLASS and Equity

Using CLASS provides equitable opportunities for educators to improve their practice, regardless of background, race/ethnicity, educational preparation or setting in which they work. The CLASS has been used in classrooms and family day homes with diverse populations: Dual Language Learners (DLL), children from migrant families, tribal communities, children with special needs and children from diverse cultural backgrounds. Below is a summary of research and recommendations [from Teachstone](#) related to Virginia's population and needs. (Additional guidance documents for observers can be found in the protocol and resources sections);

- **Culturally and Linguistically diverse settings** - Researchers have found that the CLASS applies equally well across preschool classrooms with different Latinx and multilingual learner compositions. Although studies noted that there may be additional learner-specific teaching strategies that could benefit Latinx and multilingual children, findings underscored that warm, sensitive, well-organized, and cognitively stimulating interactions are a set of core practices that early childhood teachers can use to support the positive development of culturally and linguistically diverse children.

- Teachstone recommends that CLASS observers must be able to understand the languages being spoken in the classroom, in order to be able to interpret and code the interactions accurately.
- **Classrooms serving children with special needs** - The types of teacher-child interactions measured by the CLASS are critical for all children and are fundamental aspects of special education. However, the interactions may look somewhat different based on each child's individual needs and method of communicating, as well as the nature of the child's individual education plan. Because behavioral cues often differ from child to child, observers must closely watch to see how teachers interpret and respond to children.
 - Teachstone recommends that an observer who is collecting data in a classroom that serves children with special needs have a background in special education in order to understand the context in which the interactions take place.
- **Family Day Homes** - All CLASS age levels are based on the assumption that there is continuity in effective teacher child-interactions across age levels. While specific examples may vary based on children's ages, there is an underlying similarity in the kinds of interactions that promote growth and development. The dimensions used in CLASS to define and assess effective teacher-child interactions are similar across the infant, toddler, and preschool periods. This allows for the use of CLASS in mixed-age settings, such as family day homes serving infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.
 - Teachstone recommends that an observer who is collecting data in a family day home have a background in working with family day home providers in order to understand the context in which the interactions take place.

Role of the Preschool Development Grant

Programs have the opportunity to participate in Practice Year 1 of VQB5 if they are in a Preschool Development Grant Community. During Practice Year 1, [Preschool Development Grant \(PDG\) communities](#) will be responsible for the following activities related to conducting local CLASS observations to strengthen quality in VQB5:

- Ensure that all teachers and leaders who are new to CLASS are provided with foundational CLASS training.
- Assess and inventory local CLASS observers within the region.
- Create a written schedule to ensure all birth to five classrooms receive two local CLASS observations and feedback, once in the fall and once in the spring.
- Coordinate the implementation of training and coaching activities with existing professional development providers to support ongoing improvement.

Additional information about required PDG community activities can be found in the [2021-2022 PDG Assurances and Required Activities](#) document.

PREPARING FOR LOCAL CLASS OBSERVATIONS

Foundational CLASS Training for Educators

Before classroom observations are conducted, teachers and program leaders need to understand what is being measured and why. During foundational training, teachers and program leaders will view videos from real classrooms to view effective teaching practices in action in alignment with the domains and dimensions in CLASS. Foundational CLASS training also provides information about what teachers can expect when an observer comes to their classroom as well as an overview of the types of information they'll receive after an observation.

Foundational CLASS training for teachers focuses on the CLASS tool that covers the age level of the children in their classroom, including how the CLASS tool organizes interactions by domains and dimensions, for a specific age level.

Foundational CLASS training for program leaders focuses on CLASS tools for different age levels in the program. Foundational CLASS training for leaders is different from reliable observer training in that it is much shorter and accessible via online and in-person options.



[View PDG Mini-Module \(15 min\) - Planning for Effective Foundational CLASS Training in Your Virginia Community](#)

Requirements for Local CLASS Observers

In order to complete a local CLASS observation, an individual must be a Certified CLASS Observer. A Certified CLASS Observer is a person who has attended a [CLASS Observation Training](#) and who has passed a CLASS Reliability Test within the past year. A Certified CLASS Observer has demonstrated a solid understanding of the CLASS tool and is qualified to code classrooms using the CLASS observation tool.

Individual observers must obtain certification for each version of the tool they observe with (Infant, Toddler and PreK).

Certifications must be kept up-to-date by taking an online recertification test each year. If more than a year has lapsed, observers need to take the CLASS Observer Training and certification again.

Coordinating and Scheduling Local Observations

During Practice Year 1, PDG communities are responsible for coordinating and scheduling all local CLASS observations. PDG communities must create a written schedule to ensure all classrooms will be observed at least twice a year within the fall and spring observation windows.

- Fall CLASS observations should not be scheduled during the first two weeks of school, to give teachers and children an opportunity to adjust to the classroom setting.

- If a new lead teacher is assigned to a classroom during the fall or spring observation window, they should not be observed for at least 2 weeks to give them time to adjust to their new teaching assignment.

When building a plan to train and schedule local CLASS observations, PDG communities are expected to keep the following assurances in mind:

- Develop a deep bench of CLASS trainers and observers, with emphasis on building a racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse group of trainers and observers across all three relevant age groups: infant, toddler, and Pre-K.
- Be mindful of experience needed to observe certain program environments, such as inclusive settings or children with special needs and Family Child Care.
- Ensure that observers speak the language(s) of both children and teachers in order to fully understand interactions and conversations.

PROTOCOLS FOR LOCAL CLASS OBSERVATIONS

The following procedures are to be followed for all local CLASS observations.

BEFORE THE OBSERVATION	
Determining Which Tool to Use	<p>Local observations will be conducted in all infant, toddler and preschool classrooms in programs participating in PDG using the following developmentally appropriate tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Infant CLASS should be used to observe classrooms/programs that serve birth-18 months ● Toddler CLASS should be used to observe classrooms/programs that serve 15-36 months ● Pre-K CLASS should be used to observe classrooms/programs that serve 3-5 year olds. <p>For observations in mixed-age classrooms and family day homes, the following guidelines are to be used to determine the appropriate age-group tool.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If the classroom contains a mix of infants, toddlers, and Pre-K aged children, use the tool that matches the majority of the children. (For instance, if a classroom includes 1 infant, 1 toddler, and 5 Pre-K children, use the Pre-K CLASS tool). ● If there are an equal number of children across age groups, use the Toddler tool. For instance, if a classroom includes 3 toddlers and 3 Pre-K children, use the Toddler CLASS tool.

<p>Guidance for Diverse Settings</p>	<p>In addition to selecting the appropriate age-level CLASS manual, observers should review guidance provided by Teachstone for conducting observations in the following settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Family Day Homes - Guidance for Observing in Family Day Homes ● Early Childhood Special Education - Recommendations for Using the CLASS in Inclusive Early Childhood Programs, Birth-Age 8 ● Classrooms with Dual Language Learners - The CLASS Tool and Dual Language Learners
<p>Notifying Teachers</p>	<p>PDG communities may provide teachers with a predetermined window of time during which unannounced observations may take place (or) they may decide to tell teachers the exact date. (PDG communities are not required to notify teachers when local observations are taking place).</p>
<p>Health & Safety Procedures</p>	<p>Local setting (e.g., school-based, community-based) procedures and requirements for volunteers and visitors should always be followed (e.g., health & safety; background check, identification presented). Observers should ask about these procedures prior to the observation.</p> <p>Additional health and safety guidance during COVID-19.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observers need to verify the date and time of the observation and learn what procedures the program has in place to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. ● Observers need to understand additional health and safety COVID-19 requirements for being onsite and obtain appropriate personal protective equipment. ● Observers need to follow the required mask-wearing and sanitizing procedures upon entering the classroom and maintain the suggested or required physical distance from others, both adults and children, at all times.
<p>DURING THE OBSERVATION</p>	
<p>Length of Observations</p>	<p>Pre-K and Toddler Observations must include four 20-minute observation cycles with a 10-minute coding session following each cycle (approximately 2 hours total).</p> <p>Infant CLASS observations include four 15-minute cycles with a 10-minute coding session following each cycle.</p>

<p>Activities to Observe</p>	<p>Observers should ask about the typical classroom schedule prior to the observation to ensure that both structured and unstructured times of the day can be observed.</p> <p>Activities, transitions and routines in the morning or afternoon may be observed (mornings are typically preferred).</p> <p>Time periods that should not be observed include: when the whole group leaves the classroom for “specials” (such as PE, music, art instruction led by different teachers), or when the whole group visits the restroom.</p> <p>Observation of outdoor activities varies by age-level. Observers should follow the guidance in each age-level manual to determine whether or not outdoor activities should be included in the observation cycle.</p>
<p>Note-taking</p>	<p>All notes and scores should be recorded on the official Teachstone CLASS score sheets. Notes must be taken for each dimension during every observation cycle.</p>
<p>Teacher and Assistants (Classrooms with more than one adult)</p>	<p>The lead teacher should be present. Short-term substitutes for the lead teacher should not be observed. Long-term substitutes may be observed (e.g., typically any lead teacher present in the classroom for at least two weeks).</p> <p>CLASS observations provide a classroom-level score that includes overall teacher-child interactions including children’s interactions with the lead teacher and any other adults (e.g., instructional assistant). Observers should follow the CLASS manual, which states that observers watch children’s interactions with all teachers/adults in the room/area.</p>
<p>Observer Interactions</p>	<p>Observers should use a gaze that appears to float over the teacher, child or group rather than directly staring at individuals for long periods of time.</p> <p>If children approach the observer, observers should only acknowledge their presence with a warm smile or a nod. More engagement than this may cause the observer to distract from classroom processes being observed, and potentially disrupt the classroom and observation results.</p>
<p>Scoring Cycles</p>	<p>For the 10-minute coding sessions following each 20-minute observation cycle, observers may select to remain in the classroom or leave the classroom to complete coding.</p> <p>Observers do not conduct observations during the 10-minute coding sessions. Observers do not conduct more than four cycles of observations.</p>

AFTER THE OBSERVATION	
Calculating Scores	When calculating CLASS scores, observers follow the guidelines on the CLASS Scoring Summary Sheet and appropriate pages of the CLASS manual.
Submitting Scores	Local observation scores are entered into the LinkB5 data portal following the CLASS observer procedures outlined in the LinkB5 User Manual.
Record Keeping	After the observation and feedback form has been completed, observers send their CLASS score sheets to the PDG community lead agency. PDG lead agencies should keep score sheets on file as back-up documentation for at least 2 years.
Feedback	<p>The observer (or assigned feedback provider, in the case that a local observer is not in a position to provide the teacher feedback) should schedule a time to meet with each teacher or teaching team within 2 weeks of the observation.</p> <p>Observers should use either the feedback template provided by VDOE or another chosen template to share not only scores/ranges, but notes on what was observed (including positive examples).</p> <p><i>See additional guidance for providing effective feedback in the Supporting Improvement and Resources sections.</i></p>

ENSURING OBSERVER ACCURACY

Reliable CLASS observers must participate in routine practice to maintain accuracy in their scoring. PDG communities are responsible for assisting the selected local CLASS observers in maintaining accuracy. There are several important strategies that may be employed to maintain accuracy:

- Annual recertification through Teachstone helps ensure continued accurate use of the CLASS observational measure.
- Double coding, also referred to as shadow scoring, occurs when two reliable CLASS observers conduct a CLASS observation at the same time to compare scores and practice their skills. (Observations conducted for double-coding practice would not be used for the official fall or spring Practice Year 1 observations.)
 - Double-coding can also be a powerful tool for challenging implicit bias and promoting observer growth. Guidance for [using double-coding to address implicit bias](#) is available from Teachstone.
- Teachstone’s online CLASS calibrations provide an avenue for observers to check themselves between annual recertification tests. Participants practice coding classroom videos online and receive immediate feedback on their scoring.

The practice of double coding or calibrations are encouraged for new observers, as well as for more practiced observers, at least once every six months to remain consistent.

In addition to the strategies mentioned above, it is also important for local observers to engage in professional development on [implicit bias in early childhood education](#) to learn how to avoid misinterpreting behaviors which can affect scoring, along with ongoing training that promotes the understanding of how the cultural context of the classroom shapes the learning experience for young children.

External CLASS Observations

External classroom observations are conducted by a certified CLASS observer who is not employed by the program and has no relationship to the school or classroom. This reduces the risk of actual or perceived observer bias. In addition, external observers participate in regular training to maintain their observation skills. These requirements ensure external classroom observations are standardized and conducted with the utmost data integrity.

For Practice Year 1, the VDOE will work with [Advancing Effective Interactions and Instruction \(AEII\)](#) to conduct external observations on a random selection of birth to five classrooms that are participating in PDG.

- Some classrooms will receive an *external CLASS observation*, coordinated through AEII. These are in addition to the two local observations.
- External observations will be used to analyze the local observation scores, instances of particularly high or low local scores may be prioritized for an external observation.
- External observations will provide additional feedback to teachers.

The information from external CLASS observations during Practice Year 1 will help ensure local observation accuracy and will be used to guide the development of future guidelines and protocols for local CLASS observation quality. Scores from external CLASS observations will be shared with program site leaders for informational purposes only, and will not count towards Practice Year 1 ratings.

SUPPORTING IMPROVEMENT

Results from local observations administered twice a year will be used by instructional leaders to inform ongoing professional development and assess growth in teacher-child interactions over time. Increasing capacity and knowledge of quality interactions at the local level promotes shared understandings of the strong principles of high-quality teaching in early childhood settings that are highlighted in the CLASS tool. Having program or school leaders trained to reliability in CLASS enables them to bring the CLASS lens to every aspect of their work.

Providing Effective Feedback

Providing teachers with quality feedback regarding their local CLASS observation is a critical component of the improvement practice. One of the largest benefits of local CLASS observations is that teachers can receive more frequent feedback on their practice, often from a local individual who already supports their practice (such as when the observer is a site leader or coach).

The following guidance should be used to prepare for and guide effective feedback sessions, which include:

- Starting with a general conversation and work to make the teachers feel comfortable.
- Orienting the teachers to the structure of the local feedback form.
- Reviewing domain level scores, calling attention to general trends.
- Highlighting areas of strength (focus on the positive) and then one area for growth by domain, unpacking specific examples.
- Working with the teachers to determine a dimension or one aspect of a dimension to be an area of focus.
- Discussing how the teachers can focus on this area of interactions in the coming weeks in his/her daily classroom interactions with children.
- Identifying specific strategies or action steps so that the teachers can practice teacher interactions in a targeted manner.



[View PDG Mini-Module \(20 min\) - Providing Effective Feedback for Local CLASS Observations in Your Virginia Community](#)

Ongoing Support

Feedback providers and other professional development providers must ensure that teachers receive ongoing support to grow in areas of need through individualized professional

development. The following features of [effective professional development](#) are important to keep in mind when planning PD:

- **Practice-focused** professional development actively engages teachers in the PD process and intentionally builds on their skills in order to improve their practice. This involves teachers *seeing, thinking, and doing*, and can be incorporated in PD through a variety of formats:
 - Role playing with peers (in pairs during a group PD session)
 - Watching/analyzing videos of themselves or others (in group sessions, coaching, or independent study)
 - Action planning (in coaching, peer-learning communities, or group sessions)
 - Feedback and analysis loops with colleagues (coach/admin/peer teachers)
 - Reflecting on and analyzing practices (independently, with a colleague or group): what was tried, what worked, and how to incrementally improve.
- **Data-Driven** professional development involves using data to plan relevant PD to each teacher's/classroom's needs and then tracking intended outcomes of PD. Two key approaches to try:
 - Use CLASS data alongside other data sources (curriculum use, environment, and/or child assessments) to identify common needs. Research suggests that children benefit the most when interactions and instruction, guided by a strong curriculum, are maximized.
 - Provide teachers [informal](#) “walk-throughs” or “focused observations” targeted to specific action plan areas (e.g., one CLASS dimension) so that teachers can focus on improving one practice at a time and receive frequent feedback on that practice.

Targeted Supports for Interactions

All programs in the Unified VQB5 system will benefit from support related to teacher-child interactions. Training on the behaviors reflected in the CLASS tool will be an essential focus of professional development. This includes both foundational training on the importance of teacher-child interactions as well as ongoing targeted professional development and coaching to improve teacher practice in specific domains and/or dimensions of the CLASS tools.

In Practice Year 1, some possible examples of targeted supports related to interactions may include:

- Training aligned with the CLASS tool, including foundational CLASS and other specific training on identified domains and dimensions (as available for free through the [Head Start In-Service Suite](#))
- Financial assistance in obtaining CLASS materials, such as Dimension Guides, CLASS manuals, online courses in multiple languages where needed
- Coaching on CLASS domains and dimensions (using Practice Based Coaching or similar coaching model) through new and existing coaching programs
- Tools to support self-assessment and action planning based on feedback from CLASS observations, facilitated by local supports
- Expanded local observer training, calibrations and support for recertification
- Professional Learning Communities on CLASS

During Practice Year 1, PDG communities will work with existing improvement partners, such as Virginia Quality, AEI, Infant Toddler Specialist Network, Head Start Technical Assistance Centers and Virginia’s Training and Technical Assistance Centers, among others, to coordinate the implementation of interactions support activities.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQs - Selecting and Training Local Observers

1. How many reliable CLASS® observers should a locality have in place per classroom?
 - This is a local decision based on the roles and responsibilities of staff selected to be observers. To make this decision you will want to consider a few different factors:
 - Consider the number and age-level of the classrooms that need to be observed in your area. Teachstone has provided [guidance](#) on which category children fall into based on their age.
 - Consider equity and diversity needs, such as race, culture, dual language learners, family childcare and inclusive settings. Observers assigned to classrooms should have experience working with and/or observing in these types of settings.
 - Consider the availability local observers have to conduct CLASS observations, along with the location of the participating programs. For context, the estimated time per observation is
 - 2 hours observing in a classroom
 - 30 minutes for feedback report development
 - 30 minutes for sharing feedback with the teacher
 - Additional travel time to/from observations may also need to be considered.
2. Will VDOE provide the training for local CLASS observers to become trained and reliable for local observations?
 - During Practice Year 1, VDOE is offering monthly observer training opportunities in partnership with Teachstone. Details and registration information can be found [here](#).
 - As a general practice, localities should consider using existing professional development funds to support ongoing CLASS training, both to train reliable observers and to provide foundational CLASS knowledge to teachers.
 - The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) maintains a list of qualified Certified Affiliate CLASS trainers who are able to conduct Introduction and Observer training for PDG and quality initiative participants. For a list of current VECF Affiliate CLASS trainers in your locality, please email gris@vecf.org
 - The VDOE will continue to seek opportunities to support local communities and school divisions in building capacity with the CLASS® tool.

3. Where can we find a list of certified CLASS observers in Virginia?
 - To find certified CLASS observers in your area, you can check Teachstone’s CLASS Observer Directory for Organizations. There are two types of Observer Directories available:
 - The [Public Directory](#) includes a list of Certified CLASS Observers that are interested in being hired by organizations. (CLASS observers have to opt-in to be listed in the public directory.)
 - The [Private Directory](#) is available to anyone who has a Teachstone website account, and lists all certified observers within the online community forum.
 - Both directories provide an opportunity to search for certified observers by location, age level tool, and language.

FAQs - Other Program CLASS Observation requirements

1. What are the local CLASS observation requirements for VPI programs?
 - All VPI Programs must provide two local CLASS observations in 2021-2022.
 - For VPI Programs participating in Practice Year 1 of VQB5: The two local CLASS observations coordinated through PDG satisfy the requirement for local CLASS observations for VPI Classrooms. Scores are entered in Link B5
 - For VPI Programs not participating in Practice Year 1 of VQB5: Local observations should follow the same basic procedures as recommended in this guidebook, including providing feedback for teachers based on their scores and areas for improvement. Divisions must keep a record of the local observations completed.
 - Please refer to the [VPI Guidelines 2021-2022](#) for additional information about VPI and CLASS observation requirements.
2. Can CLASS observations conducted as a part of the Federal Office of Head Start (OHS) Monitoring Protocol be used for the VQB5 local observation requirement?
 - No. [OHS CLASS reviews](#) are conducted for the purpose of obtaining a **grantee-level** score rather than classroom or site-level score, and follow different protocols and procedures.
 - Head Start grantees are encouraged to use the results from VQB5 Local CLASS observations to identify classroom level strengths and needs. This information will help HS grantees prepare for OHS CLASS reviews.
 - HS grantees should notify their PDG community lead ahead of time if they are scheduled for an OHS review in the fall or the spring to assist with the coordination and scheduling of local CLASS observations in HS classrooms.
3. Can a CLASS observation conducted for a Virginia Quality Level 4 or 5 rating be used for the VQB5 local CLASS observation requirement?
 - Yes. For Practice Year 1, CLASS observations conducted for Virginia Quality level 4-5 ratings may be used in VQB5 for either the fall or spring local observation requirement as long as the observation is scheduled in coordination with the local PDG Community and Virginia Quality Regional lead agency.
 - CLASS scores would be entered in LinkB5 and the Virginia Quality Access website.

- NOTE - The 2021-2022 year is the last year for current Virginia Quality programs to apply for Level 4 and 5. (As of July 2022 all Virginia Quality ratings will be ‘frozen’ in preparation for the [transition](#) to the new Unified VQB5 system).
 - All Virginia Quality levels awarded as of July 2022 will remain valid and publicly available, until the new VQB5 ratings are released in the fall of 2024.
- Please email gris@vecf.org for additional information about Virginia Quality CLASS observation procedures and requirements.

FAQs - Unexpected Issues During the Observation

1. What happens if the observer has to end the CLASS cycle early?
 - There may be times when the observer will need to terminate a CLASS observation due to an uncontrollable disruption such as a fire drill or other emergency. Please note a disruption, such as a child displaying challenging behavior, would not prevent continuing an observation cycle.
 - If the observer is in the middle of a CLASS cycle, and a cycle needs to be stopped, ratings may be assigned to the CLASS codes, based on what was observed up to that point, as long as at least 10 minutes of the observation have been completed. The ratings will be based upon what was observed during that 10-minute observation time. Note the end time of the cycle on the protocol.
 - All four observation cycles must occur on the same day. If for some reason that is not possible, then a new observation should be started at the next scheduled possibility. The data collected for the incomplete observation needs to be discarded.
2. What if an observer suspects abuse or neglect while conducting an observation?
 - In the unusual circumstance of any suspected abuse or neglect, the observer must report the observed behaviors as mandated by law.

RESOURCE LINKS TO SUPPORT LOCAL CLASS OBSERVATIONS

Using CLASS in VQB5:

- VDOE Building a Unified Early Childhood System Website - [LINK](#)
- Preschool Development Grant (PDG) Information - [LINK](#)
- LinkB5 User Login - [LINK](#)
- Teachstone's Virginia Support Page - [LINK](#)

General Info about CLASS:

- Why CLASS? (e-book) - [LINK](#)
- CLASS Outcome Studies - [LINK](#)
- Tips & Resources for Teachers - [LINK](#)

Using CLASS in Diverse Environments:

- Family Child Care & CLASS - [LINK](#)
- CLASS Spanish Suite - [LINK](#)
- Using CLASS in Inclusive Early Childhood Programs - [LINK](#)
- Using CLASS with Dual Language Learners - [LINK](#)

Observer Resources:

- Tips to Prepare for Conducting Observations - [LINK](#)
- Note-taking Tips and Strategies - [LINK](#)
- Coding Reflective Questions - [LINK](#)
- Observer FAQ's - [LINK](#)

Tools for Feedback:

- Sample Feedback Template from VDOE - [LINK](#)
- AEII Providing Observation Feedback - [LINK](#)
- CLASS Feedback - Teachstone Webinar - [LINK](#)

Coaching Resources:

- Coaching Fundamentals (e-book) - [LINK](#)
- Informal Observation Form for Coaches - [LINK](#)
- Practice Based Coaching - [LINK](#)

COVID Related Guidance:

- Teachstone's COVID Resources for Educators and Parents - [LINK](#)
- Guidance for Observing Virtual PreK Instruction - [LINK](#)

Professional Development Tools:

- AEII Tools and Resources Page - [LINK](#)
- Teachstone Resource Library - [LINK](#)
- Use of CLASS in Head Start - [LINK](#)
- Curriculum & Accreditation CLASS Crosswalks - [LINK](#)
- GetReadyVA Resources & Tools - [LINK](#)

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