

Professional Learning on Observational Assessments

This section includes an overview of why professional learning on observational assessment is important for the Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) workforce, including leadership.

Professional learning on student observational assessments is important for the UPK workforce. For example, student observational assessment is necessary for all teachers to implement in order to better understand key domains in children's development. Professional learning on observational assessments should not end with educating teachers on the implementation of these tools, but should take a step further in providing training and ongoing coaching on how to use these assessments to improve teacher practice and to communicate child progress to families and teachers in the next grade level.

One way to implement this type of professional learning is to first provide an overview of the importance of assessment for teachers, how to interpret the results of an assessment, and a detailed, hands-on training of how to implement the tool—all of which should occur outside of classroom time. This training should include not only teachers, but also UPK leadership so that everyone has a collective understanding of how assessments should be used to support children's learning. Following this training, teachers then need to be provided with ongoing coaching in the classroom to support the implementation of the tool with students and how to adjust their teaching practice and curriculum based on assessment results.

Professional learning on observational assessments is also a good opportunity to practice joint vertical collaboration with teachers across UPK, as discussed in the research section of the California PreKindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Program Guidance Document. The continuity of assessment usage across grade levels is important in order to understand children's full picture of development and meaningfully build off of their skills from one grade level to the next.

Below are assessments local educational agencies (LEAs) could consider for UPK that align with both Quality Counts California (QCC) and Head Start. All of the listed assessments have professional learning opportunities. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) tool is an observational assessment that is required as part of the Head Start system and is included in QCC. It is completed by a trained observer and gives a holistic and comprehensive view of the teacher-child relationships and interactions by focusing on instructional strategies, emotional support, and classroom organization within the classroom. This tool pairs well with coaching models to assist teachers in refining their approach to the classroom schedule and curriculum delivery. The Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) is an internationally recognized and psychometrically valid *observational child assessment* the California Department of Education (CDE) recommends in tandem with your UPK curriculum to ensure that each

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child is engaging in activities at their developmental level. The DRDP is currently required for use in California State Preschool Program (CSPP).

The domains of the DRDP align with the domains in the *California Preschool Learning Foundations* that all children can be measured on. Different DRDP versions consist of the Comprehensive View, the Fundamental View, and the Essential View. Currently, the DRDP data is used for two purposes: one is to inform instruction, and the other is to provide data to the CDE, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) federal reporting requirement for states to report on children with disabilities. The CDE's reporting of child outcome data for OSEP is conducted by the DR (Desired Results) Access project. DRDP data fulfills CDE's requirements to measure child outcomes and progress from entry to exit of children from early education programs. Additionally, the DR Access project provides data to OSEP for preschool children in least restrictive environments, which measures the extent that children with disabilities are enrolled in early education programs. All data reported to OSEP is public information and provides comparisons between state performance on the child outcome and least restrictive environment indicators located on the OSEP website.

Assessment	Description	Link
CLASS	A 20-minute observational assessment of the whole classroom, which uses a trained outside observer to provide feedback on teacher-child interactions within the learning environment. Professional learning for teachers is available through the company Teachstone, or an LEA can have internal observers trained on the tool and coaching methods.	For more information, see https://teachstone.com/professional-development/#teachers .
DRDP (2015)	A 15- to 60-minute observational assessment (depending on if using the Fundamental, Essential or Comprehensive version) of children's development in key skills. The preschool version(s) of the DRDP are recommended for use in UPK (for example, required in CSPP and recommended in Transitional Kindergarten classrooms). Free professional learning opportunities are available in asynchronous courses.	For more information, see https://www.desiredresults.us/scheduled-training .
DR Access	Children must begin special education services before November 1 for the fall assessment and before April 1 for the spring assessment.	For more information, see https://www.draccess.org/timeline .

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Assessment	Description	Link
	Complete the DRDP (2015) for each eligible child (with an Individualized Education Program or Individualized Family Service Plan) in the six-week period before your Special Education Local Plan Area's fall and spring deadlines, and enter results into the DR Access Reports system.	