



Teachstone® 

**Children with Special Needs
and the CLASS?
Hear How One Program Did It!**

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Agenda

- Setting the context
- White paper recommendations
- Video examples
- Case study: Arizona



SETTING THE CONTEXT

Background Data

- An estimated 745,336 children age 3 to 5 have disabilities or developmental delays that entitle them to receive preschool special education services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (UD DOE, 2015)
- Federal policy directs school districts to provide preschool special education services in the least restrictive environment (LRE)
- US HHS and US DOE published a joint policy statement in 2015 with to improve access to high quality inclusive preschool programs



Background Data

- 23% of children in Part B services are served in separate special education classes
- 38% of children in Part B services are served in inclusive classes
- The remainder are in mixed models with some time spent in separate classes and some time spent in inclusive classes
- These classrooms are often not included in quality systems; however, these children are often most at risk of school failure
- The children who fit this label are often the children who benefit the most from being in warm, supportive, structured environments where teachers have clear and consistent behavioral expectations

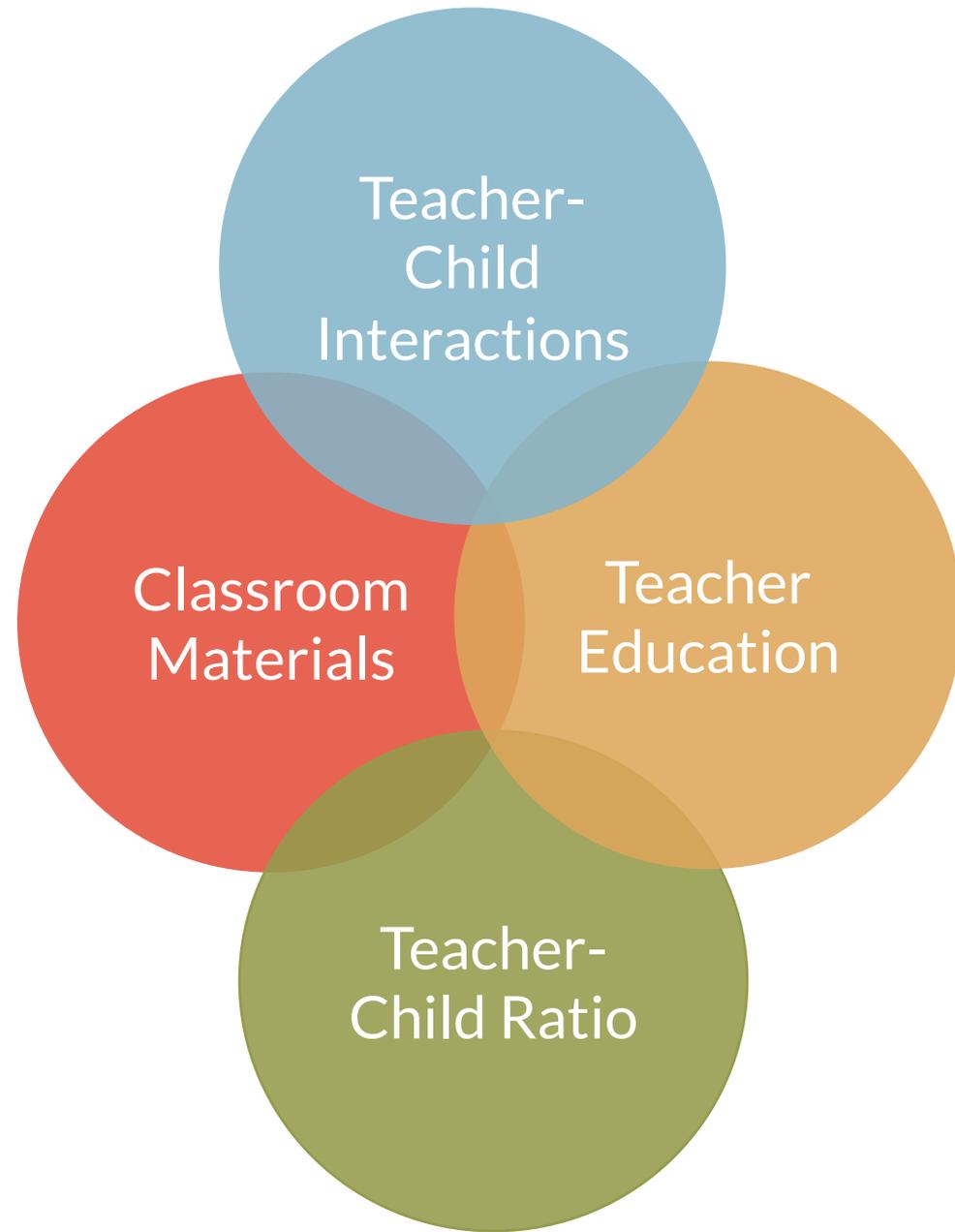


Inclusion Research

- Research has found that children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms are more likely to engage in peer interactions compared to children with disabilities in segregated settings (Edom et al, 2014, Kwon, Elicker, & Kontos, 2011).
- This finding is important as interactions with peers reduce children's social isolation and provide opportunities to acquire social, language, and academic skills.



What matters most for children?



Interrelationship of CLASS Domains



Instructional
Support



Classroom
Organization



Emotional
Support





The types of effective teacher-child interactions delineated in the CLASS are important for **all** children. Regardless of ability, **all** children benefit from being in warm, supportive environments where they can develop strong relationships with their teachers and peers. Similarly, **all** children deserve increased opportunities to learn in well managed classrooms where teachers provide interesting and engaging instruction that increases children's knowledge and skills.

WHITE PAPER RECOMMENDATIONS

Interactions Matter for All Children

The types of interactions described by the CLASS are important for all learners, regardless of ability



Consideration One

- Children who receive special education services are more like their typically developing peers than they are different from them.
- Most young children who receive special education services receive them due to speech and language delays, and many are indistinguishable from their peers who do not have disabilities.
- Typecasting children based on a disability label is not helpful as the same diagnosis may manifest in different ways in different children.



Consideration Two

- Children who require an additional level of support may differ from their typically developing peers in how they communicate with the teacher or respond to stimuli. Therefore it is imperative that the observer attend to subtle cues and nuances in the child's behavior and watch to see how the teacher responds.
- Observing children's reactions to teachers' actions is key to determining the effectiveness of the interactions in some cases
- Remember to watch for Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence



Coding Guidelines

1. Observers should have a background in special education.
2. Observers should follow the CLASS protocol as described in the manual; do not make exceptions because the children have IEPs or IFSPs.
3. Observers should use the CLASS tool that corresponds to the chronological age of the majority of the children in the classroom; not the developmental levels. This is because observers are not privy to developmental levels due to confidentiality and due to variances across developmental domains.



Coding Guidelines

4. Observers should briefly talk with the teacher or administrator to learn about any special circumstances they should take into account when coding (communication systems in place, behavior intervention plans in place). These circumstances should not alter codes, but rather should provide context to help the observer understand the nuance of the behaviors they observe.
5. Observers should spend several minutes in the room prior to the formal start of the observation to allow the children to get used to their presence.



Coding Guidelines

6. An observer who knows that the classroom includes children who receive special education services may not decide to skip certain dimensions or indicators because he feels those dimensions or indicators “do not pertain to the classroom”.
7. Regardless of the student’s development levels, the observer simply observes and records the interactions that relate to the indicators and behavioral markers in the CLASS



Challenging Behaviors

- Some teachers are concerned that behaviors of students with IEPs, IFSPs, or BIPs may bring down CLASS scores. However, in most cases these behaviors will not impact the score because the CLASS measures the average experience of the average child in the classroom. If one or two children act out or are defiant, it is unlikely to influence the score.
- On the other hand, if the behavior disrupts the classroom activities and upsets the other children, it may influence the score. If the teacher takes a great deal of time away from instruction to address these behaviors, it will impact the codes for Behavior Management, Instructional Learning Formats, and Productivity.
- It is important to recognize that typically developing children and children who are at-risk for school failure may also engage in disruptive behavior.



VIDEO EXAMPLES

Letters and Book Review-PreK



Letters and Book Review-PreK

- *Positive Climate:* How does the teacher create (or not) a warm, supportive learning environment for all children?
- *Teacher Sensitivity:* How was the teacher aware and responsive (or not) of the children's individualized learning needs?



Chapel Hill-Prek



Chapel Hill-PreK

- *Teacher Sensitivity*: How was the teacher aware and responsive (or not) of the children's individualized learning needs?
- *Quality of Feedback*: How did the teacher scaffold (or not) within feedback loops for children?



Songs and Cereal-Toddler



Songs and Cereal-Toddler

- *Teacher Sensitivity*: How was the teacher aware and responsive (or not) of the children's individualized learning needs?
- *Facilitation of Learning and Development*: How did the teacher meet (or not) the diverse needs of the children in her classroom? How did she engage each child and allow for all children to be active members of the classroom learning community?
- *Quality of Feedback*: How did the teacher scaffold (or not) within feedback loops for children?



CASE STUDY: ARIZONA

QUALITY FIRST

 FIRST THINGS FIRST



**CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
AND THE CLASS...**

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS?



Arizona's quality improvement and rating system – Quality First

- How do we fairly & equitably rate programs?
- How do we handle classrooms with high populations of special needs kids?
- Is there data to tell us what to do?

CONNECTING WITH TEACHSTONE

Arizona:

- Reaching out initially to determine recommended practice
- Implementing practice with Quality First sites
- Analyzing data to evaluate next steps

Teachstone:

- Initial feedback on recommended practice
- Reviewing the data Arizona has collected
- Review of other state's practice and research review
- Special Needs White Paper

5 COMPONENTS OF OUR DECISION MAKING:

1. DEFINING “SELF CONTAINED”
2. HOW TO ASSESS
3. HOW TO USE THE SCORES
4. WHAT IS THE DATA TELLING US
5. CONNECTING WITH TEACHSTONE



DEFINING SELF-CONTAINED

In the State of Arizona, the Department of Education classifies a “Self- Contained” classroom as any group of children that have over 50% of the students on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)



HOW TO ASSESS

Quality First program assessment



- All classrooms included in random draw
- 1/3 of classrooms assessed with ERS
- 1/3 of classrooms assessed with CLASS
- If a “self-contained” class is drawn, another classroom will be re-drawn

HOW TO USE THE SCORES

For “self-contained” classrooms that have been assessed, the observation notes are translated into a report and used as a professional development tool for the staff and program.



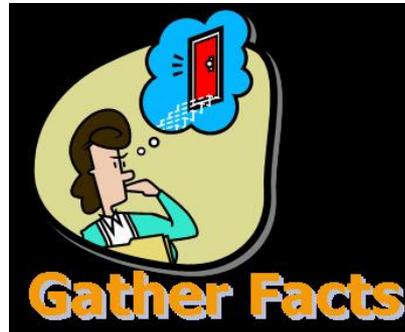
WHAT IS THE DATA TELLING ARIZONA



Self-Contained classrooms are showing similar scores to typical classrooms



Due to the high stakes nature of Quality First, our goal is to use these scores to acknowledge the quality of this instruction



CLASS Score Averages by Program Sites	Average Emotional Support	Average Classroom Organization	Average Instructional Support
Self-Contained Classrooms CLASS Averages by Program Sites	6.3	6.1	2.0
N Value (Total Number of Self-Contained Classrooms out of 41 Program Sites)	81	81	81
Non-Self-Contained Classrooms CLASS Averages by Program Sites	6.4	6.0	2.1
N Value (Total Number of Non-Self-Contained Classrooms out of 190 Program Sites)	302	302	302

CLASS Score Averages by Program Sites	Average Positive Climate	Average Negative Climate	Average Teacher Sensitivity	Average Regard For Student Perspectives
Self-Contained Classrooms CLASS Averages by Program Sites	6.3	1.1	6.4	5.7
N Value (Total Number of Self-Contained Classrooms out of 41 Program Sites)	81	81	81	81
Non-Self-Contained Classrooms CLASS Averages by Program Sites	6.3	1.1	6.4	5.9
N Value (Total Number of Non-Self-Contained Classrooms out of 190 Program Sites)	302	302	302	302

CLASS Score Averages by Program Sites	Average Behavior Management	Average Productivity	Average Instructional Learning Format
Self-Contained Classrooms CLASS Averages by Program Sites	6.4	6.4	5.5
N Value (Total Number of Self-Contained Classrooms out of 41 Program Sites)	81	81	81
Non-Self-Contained Classrooms CLASS Averages by Program Sites	6.2	6.3	5.5
N Value (Total Number of Non-Self-Contained Classrooms out of 190 Program Sites)	302	302	302

CLASS Score Averages by Program Sites	Average Concept Development	Average Quality Feedback	Average Language Modeling
Self-Contained Classrooms CLASS Averages by Program Sites	1.7	1.7	2.5
N Value (Total Number of Self-Contained Classrooms out of 41 Program Sites)	81	81	81
Non-Self-Contained Classrooms CLASS Averages by Program Sites	1.9	1.7	2.7
N Value (Total Number of Non-Self-Contained Classrooms out of 190 Program Sites)	302	302	302

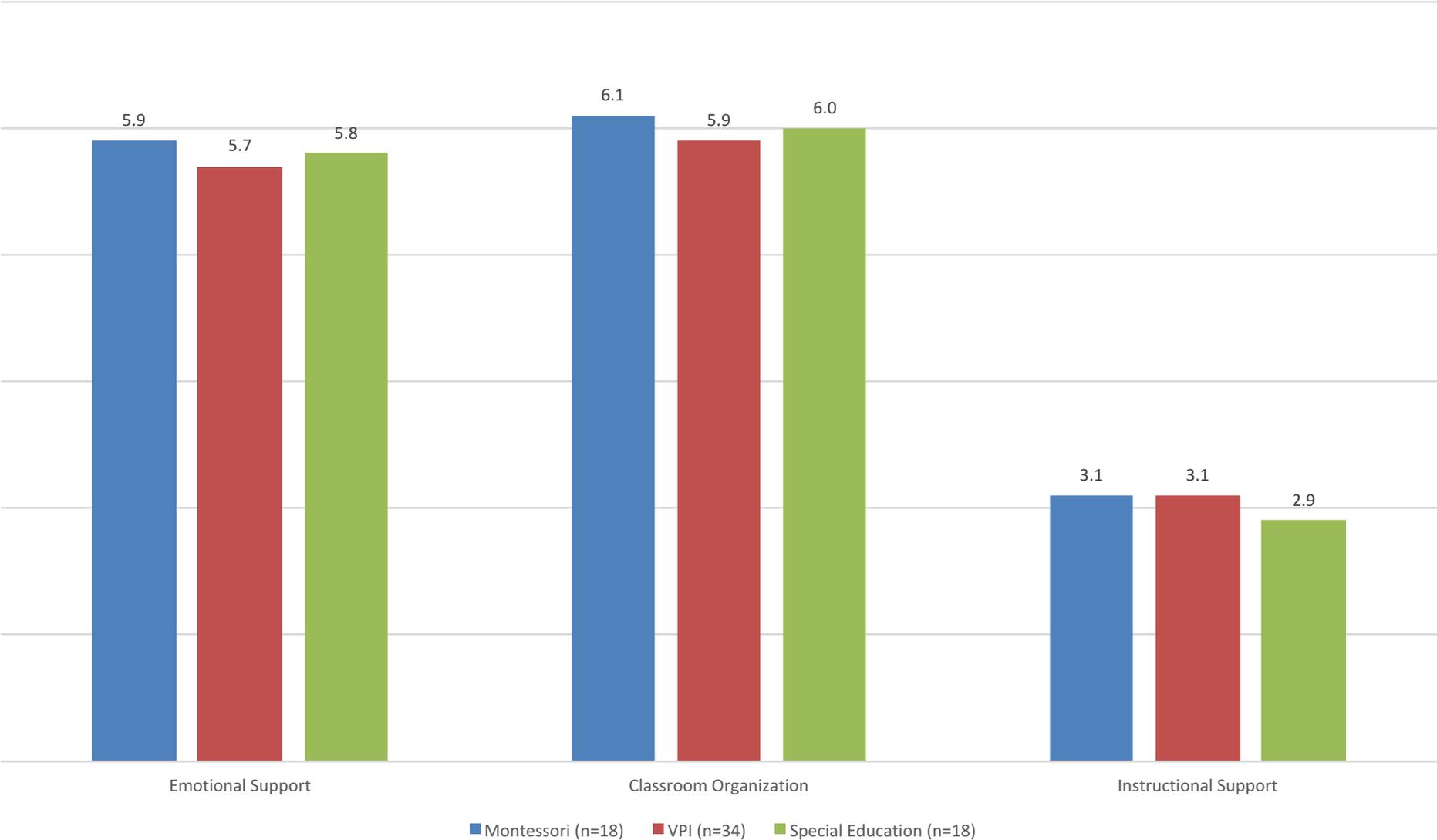
UPDATE FROM ARIZONA

Arizona made a policy decision to begin incorporating the self-contained classroom scores into a program's star rating. This will begin in July 2017 (their new fiscal year) and they are in the process of developing protocols and communicating this new practice.



ONE MORE EXAMPLE

School District Data





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