Language and Literacy Observation Tool

1. BUILDING ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS Does the activity help children to build oral language skills and/or vocabulary?

Indicator	1. INEFFECTIVE	2. APPROACHING DEVELOPING	3. DEVELOPING	4. PROFICIENT
1a. The teacher models complex language (a variety of words; unknown words connected to familiar words or ideas; academic vocabulary) for children, in a wide variety of activities and settings (physical development activities, changing table, centers, reading texts, transitions, etc.)	The teacher does not model complex language.	The teacher inconsistently models complex language.	The teacher consistently models complex language but only in some activities.	The teacher consistently models complex language in most activities.
1b. Children determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words. (Children use context clues, illustrations, word walls and other strategies to define new words.)	Children were exposed to no unknown words or multiple meaning words or almost no unknown or multiple meaning words.	Children were exposed to very few unknown or multiple-meaning words but the teacher provided the meaning.	Children had several opportunities to determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases with appropriate support from the teacher.	Children had many opportunities to determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases with appropriate support from the teacher.
1c. The teacher utilizes self-talk and parallel-talk in multiple settings throughout the day. (Teacher talks to the child throughout the day narrating own actions; teacher narrates child actions)	The teacher never or almost never utilizes self and parallel talk.	The teacher inconsistently utilizes self and parallel talk.	The teacher consistently utilizes self and parallel talk models but only in some settings.	The teacher consistently utilizes self and parallel talk in multiple settings.

1d. Children are developing skills involved in having conversations with others. (Teacher talks to the baby directly and face-to-face using simplified language patterns with pitch variation and a lot of repetition; baby/toddler babbles using sounds such as strings of consonant and vowel sounds and movements; teachers implement scaffolded questioning to engage children in conversations; 3 and 4 year olds engage in positive conversations that are both peer-peer and peer-adult; teachers engage in sustained conversations - 5 or more back and forth exchanges - with children that are driven by child interest, not behavioral corrections.)	The teacher does not provide children opportunity and/or very few children demonstrate this behavior.	Few children demonstrate this behavior, either because of inconsistent opportunity for conversation or because they are not yet meeting the teacher's expectation in this area.	The teacher provides consistent opportunities for conversation and some children demonstrate this behavior.	The teacher provides consistent opportunities for conversation and most children demonstrate this behavior.
1e. Play-based learning centers provide opportunities for children to build vocabulary and oral language skills (Ex: center materials are labeled with signs; centers include related texts; children are encouraged to engage in conversations, etc.) Note: Not applicable if you do not observe children in centers.	Play-based learning centers do not provide opportunities or provide very limited opportunities for children to build vocabulary and oral language skills.	Play-based learning centers provide few opportunities for children to build vocabulary and oral language skills.	Play-based learning centers provide some opportunities for children to build vocabulary and oral language skills.	Play-based learning centers provide many opportunities for children to build vocabulary and oral language skills.

1f. Children are engaged in thoughtful and developmentally appropriate open-ended questions (during read aloud, during conversations, in discussions in small group work or play based centers, etc.)	The teacher consistently asks close-ended questions and/or very few children respond to the questions.	The teacher asks a mix of closed and open-ended questions and few children respond to the questions.	The teacher consistently asks open-ended questions and some children respond to the questions.	The teacher consistently asks open-ended questions and most children respond to the questions.
1g. Overall rating for Language Development: This lesson/activity helped children build oral language skills.	No.	Not really, few children.	Yes, some children.	Yes, all children.

2. WORTHWHILE TEXTS Is the activity focused on a high-quality text(s)?

Note: This section should be used when observing teacher-directed activities such as read-aloud, circle time or small groups that involve a text-based activity; or during an activity at a center that is focused on a text. This will not be a focus of all observations.

1. A majority of the activity is spent listening to, reading, speaking, writing and/or drawing about **text(s).**   **Yes   No**
2. Text sets for the unit include a carefully selected balance of informational and literary texts worth reading to build content knowledge and children's knowledge of the world.   **Yes   No**

Indicator	1. INEFFECTIVE	2. APPROACHING DEVELOPING	3. DEVELOPING	4. PROFICIENT
2a. The text(s) are at or above the **complexity** level expected for the grade and time in the school year (based on qualitative measures and reader-task considerations).	The text(s) are below the complexity expected for the age and time in the school year.	Some text(s) are at or above the complexity level expected for the age and time in the school year.	Most texts are at or above the complexity level expected for the age and time in the school.	All text(s) are at or above the complexity level expected for the age and time in the school year.
2b. The text(s) exhibit **exceptional craft** and thought; where appropriate the texts are richly illustrated.	The quality of the text(s) is low – they are poorly written and do not provide useful information.	The quality of the text(s) is low – they are poorly written though they may provide some useful information.	Texts provide some useful information and are well-written.	All text(s) exhibit exceptional craft and thought and/or provide useful information; where appropriate the texts are richly illustrated. The lesson was focused on developing deep content knowledge through reading.

| 2c. The texts provide students with useful information about themselves or the world around them. | Children did not gain useful information from this text or lesson. | Children may have gained at least some knowledge through this text and lesson. | Children built some knowledge through this text and lesson. | The lesson was focused on developing deep content knowledge through reading. |

3. BUILDING KNOWLEDGE BY ENGAGING WITH TEXTS Does the lesson employ questions and tasks, both oral and written, which helps children understand the content and meaning of the content in the text?

Note: This section should be used when observing teacher-directed activities such as read-aloud, circle time or small groups that involve a text-based activity; or during an activity at a center that is focused on a text. This will not be a focus of all observations.

Indicator	1. INEFFECTIVE	2. APPROACHING DEVELOPING	3. DEVELOPING	4. PROFICIENT
3a. The activity includes opportunities for children to **discuss, write and/or draw** about complex texts.	The activity does not include opportunities for children to discuss, write and/or draw about complex texts.	The activity includes few opportunities for children to discuss, write and/or draw about complex texts.	The activity includes some opportunities for children to discuss, write and/or draw about complex texts.	The activity includes many opportunities for all children to discuss, write and/or draw about complex texts.
3b. The teacher asks text-based questions that attend to its **particular structure, concepts, ideas, events and details** in order to build understanding of the content in the text.	Questions and tasks do not refer to the text and/or illustrations to build understanding of the content in the text.	Few questions and tasks return children to the text and/or illustrations to build understanding of the content in the text.	Many questions and tasks return children to the text and/or illustrations to build understanding of the content in the text.	Most questions and tasks return children to the text and/or illustrations to build understanding of the content in the text.
3c. The teacher poses questions to children that require them to use evidence from the text and/or illustrations in their response (when developmentally appropriate).	Questions and tasks can be answered without evidence from the text and/or illustrations.	Few questions or tasks require children to cite evidence from the text and/or illustrations	Many questions and tasks require children to cite evidence from the text and/or illustrations.	Most questions and tasks require children to cite evidence from the text and/or illustrations.

3d. With prompting and support, children respond to questions **using evidence** from the text and/or illustrations in their response (when developmentally appropriate).	Very few or no children respond to questions using evidence from the text.	Few children respond to questions using evidence from the text.	Some children respond to questions using evidence from the text.	Most children respond to questions using evidence from the text.
3e. Questions and tasks attend to the **words, phrases and sentences** within the text to build understanding of the content in the text.	Questions and tasks do not focus children on the words, phrases, and sentences that matter most and how they are used in the text.	Questions and tasks rarely focus children on the words, phrases, and sentences that matter most and how they are used in the text.	Questions and tasks mostly focus children on the words, phrases, and sentences that matter most and how they are used in the text.	Questions and tasks consistently focus children on the words, phrases, and sentences that matter most and how they are used in the text.
3f. The activity includes a combination of **hands-on** and **child-driven activities** that connect back to the text(s). (For example, children read a book about patterns and then create patterns with manipulatives to further their understanding of the content in the book.)	The activity does not include any activities that are connected to the text(s).	The activity includes few hands-on and child-driven activities that connect back to the text(s).	The activity includes some hands-on and child-driven activities that connect back to the text(s).	The activity includes multiple hands-on and/or child-driven activities that connect back to the text(s).