**PLAY School Environment Assessment (PLAY SEA)**

# Introduction

**Purpose**

To evaluate school personnel’s overall implementation of the Teaching PLAY approach for young children with autism spectrum disorders.

**Overview**

The PLAY School Environment Assessment (PLAY SEA) is a structured observation tool designed to ***rate the extent to which school staff have implemented the Teaching PLAY principles, methods, and techniques*** into the classroom setting.

**Evaluation Design**

* Pre/Post

**Materials Needed**

PLAY School Environment Assessment (PLAY SEA) with appendices

**Preparation for Evaluation**

* Obtain all necessary approvals from school administration
* Inform all relevant school personnel about the observation
* Plan to schedule two observations of the school environment. Preferably:
  + The first observation will occur toward the beginning of the school year (October/November)
  + The second observation will occur toward the end of the school year (March/April)
* School personnel and students will be informed that the rater will be observing the classroom for 1-2 hours.
* The rater will sit in an unobtrusive area of the classroom and will not interact with the students beyond basic greetings during the period of assessment.
* The rater will identify which student is the main focus of observations.
* The rater will observe the entire session *before* filling out the scoring sheet, but may take notes during the observation period.

**Description**

The *PLAY School Environment Assessment (PLAY SEA)* is to be rated on a ***scale*** of 1 to 5, based on the criteria described below. The ***narratives*** below are provided to eliminate ambiguity and help with the accuracy of your ratings.

The classroom observation should take place over **1-2 hours and should be a composite clinical impression of the whole classroom experience of the identified child with ASD or developmental delay.** In other words, the rater’s focus should not be on the teacher alone or the staff alone but on the overall gestalt (big picture) of the classroom as experienced by the child.

Use the **SCORING SHEET (Appendix A)** to rate each category on a scale from 1 to 5. It may be the case that certain staff will interact with the child with more skill and some with less skill, making it difficult to get an overall gestalt. In that case, the rater should document the specific child/staff dyad using the ***“Individual Child/Staff Rating Form” (see Appendix 2)***. Also, note that there is room for ***Rater Comments*** **in Appendix 3**.

Contents

[Introduction 1](#_Toc440822159)

[Procedure 3](#_Toc440822160)

[A. Sensory Environment 4](#_Toc440822161)

[B. Sensitivity (Reading the Child’s Cues) 6](#_Toc440822162)

[C. Responsivity (Following the Child’s Lead) 7](#_Toc440822163)

[D. Effectiveness (Getting ‘Circles’ of Interaction) 9](#_Toc440822164)

[E. Interacting at the Right Functional Developmental Levels 11](#_Toc440822165)

[F. Peer-to-peer Interaction 13](#_Toc440822166)

[G. Fun in the Classroom 14](#_Toc440822167)

[Appendix 1: PLAY SEA SCORING SHEET 16](#_Toc440822168)

[Appendix 2: PLAY SEA Individual Child/Staff Rating Form 17](#_Toc440822169)

[Appendix 3: PLAY SEA Rater Comments 19](#_Toc440822170)

# Procedure

1. Record the rater’s name, the teacher’s name, the name of the school, the initials of the identified student, and the date of evaluation on all relevant documents (see appendices).
2. Before the observation, read the **Narratives** to get an overall understanding of the key rating components, which are *italicized*.
3. Read the **Criteria** that correlate to the score you chose to see if it accurately describes school staff performance.
   1. *First, use your clinical judgment* to rate the teacher and school staff performance. Do NOT read the criteria in order from 1 to 5 or 5 to 1. This is important, as it can create bias. Begin with what your clinical judgment suggests. If you think the staff should get a ‘3’, then read criteria for ‘3’.
   2. If the school staff’s performance does not meet all criteria for the number you chose, then read the criteria of the number immediately below to determine if a lower score is appropriate.

OR

* 1. If the school staff’s performance does meet all the criteria for the number you chose, read the criteria of the number above to determine if a higher score is appropriate.

1. Complete the ratings for the observation using the *PLAY School Environment Assessment (PLAY SEA)* SCORING SHEET (Appendix 1)
2. Keep on file the completed forms to be turned in at the end of the program:
   1. PLAY SEA rater comments (Appendix 3)
   2. PLAY SEA SCORING SHEET (Appendix 1)
   3. (as needed) Individual Child/Staff Rating Form (Appendix 2)

**PLAY School Environment Assessment (PLAY SEA)**

# A. Sensory Environment

**Narrative:** *Sensory environment* is the degree to which the classroom and staff is sensory friendly to the child with ASD. A stable sensory environment is a basic need of children with ASD. The PLAY Project emphasizes being aware of the child’s sensory-motor profile so that the child can be available for interaction and learning. Thus, sensory environment is the first item on the assessment. Chaotic, noisy, demanding, and/or unpredictable environments can easily over stimulate children with autism causing them to either shut down (the under-reactive child) or misbehave (the over-reactive child). Also, children with autism often have particular sensory-motor needs (i.e. a ‘sensory diet’). These children seek touch, squeezing, jumping, running, etc. Sensory environment ratings include those actions on the part of the staff that demonstrate awareness of the sensory profile of the child in the class and the degree to which they address that profile.

(Note: Please rate how the *identified student* appears to experience the environment*.*)

**Rating of [1]:** **Poor sensory environment**. In this type of environment, the classroom is experienced as *frequently* overwhelming by the child. Structure—like schedules, verbal reminders, and/or the ready availability of an adult to mediate the environment—is *limited*. Gym, lunchtime, recess, and/or crying/screaming children can all cause the child with ASD to shutdown or get over-excited and misbehave. In poor sensory environments this *reactivity is not acknowledged* and the *child appears stressed* *often* throughout the session.

**Rating of [2]:** **Fair sensory environment**. In this type of environment, the classroom is experienced as *often* overwhelming. Structure—like schedules, verbal reminders, and/or the ready availability of an adult to mediate the environment—is *used inconsistently*. In fair sensory environments a child’s *reactivity to the environment is addressed some of the time.* The child may be stressed *intermittently* throughout the session.

**Rating of [3]:** **Good sensory environment.** In this type of environment, the classroom is experienced as *generally supportive*. Structure—like schedules, verbal reminders, and/or the ready availability of an adult to mediate the environment—is *used routinely*. While stressful events can cause the child with ASD to react, this *reactivity is addressed* and the *child calms down with minimal stress.* There are opportunities within the classroom setting for sensory modulating activities (swings, tents, etc.) that are used when needed. Sensory environment accommodations may be a part of the child’s IEP.

**Rating of [4]:** **Very good sensory environment.** In this type of environment, the classroom is experienced as *very supportive by the child*. Structure—like schedules, verbal reminders, and/or the ready availability of an adult to mediate the environment—is *used routinely*. When the child experiences environmental stress, it is recognized quickly, the child’s feelings are addressed, and positive sensory modalities are used to help the child regulate him/herself. These modalities may include using sensory breaks, giving the child opportunities for deep pressure, swinging, etc.There are many opportunities within the classroom setting for sensory modulating activities (swings, tents, etc.) that are used often. *The child enjoys the sensory environment.* Sensory environment accommodations may be a part of the child’s IEP.

**Rating of [5]:** **Excellent sensory environment.** In this type of environment, the classroom is experienced as *very supportive the child*. Structure—like schedules, verbal reminders, and/or the ready availability of an adult to mediate the environment—is *designed for the child based on his/her individual sensory profile*. Stress it is recognized quickly, the child’s feelings are addressed, and positive sensory modalities are used to help the child regulate him/herself. These modalities may include using sensory breaks, giving the child opportunities for deep pressure, swinging, etc. There are many opportunities within the classroom setting for sensory modulating activities (swings, tents, etc.) that are used often. *The child loves the sensory environment.* Sensory environment accommodations may be a part of the child’s IEP.

# B. Sensitivity (Reading the Child’s Cues)

**Narrative:** This item examines the extent to which the teaching staff seem aware of and understands the child's activity or play interests during both free time and academic routines. During free time, *sensitivity* is assessed by the staff engaging in the child's choice of activity, staff’s verbal comments in reference to child's interest, and staff’s visual monitoring of child's behavior or activity. During academic tasks the child may not have a choice of activity in which case sensitivity is assessed by the staff accurately reading the child’s cues and responding appropriately to the child’s intentions, feelings, statements, and/or behaviors. Teaching staff may be sensitive but not responsive - such as in situations where they describe the child's interests but do not follow or support them.

(Note: Please rate how the *identified student* appears to experience the environment*.*)

**Rating of [1]: Highly insensitive**. *More than half of the time* the teaching staff appear to ignore the child’s show of interest. Staff *only occasionally* watch or comment on the child’s behaviors and do not engage in the child's choices of activity or follow the child’s primary intentions.

**Rating of [2]: Low sensitivity**. Teaching staff show interest in the child's behaviors or activities *about half the time*. They may notice where the child is looking or what the child is touching or doing but do not monitor the child’s behavior. During free time, staff engage in *the child's choice* of activity only *inconsistently*.

**Rating of [3]: Moderate sensitivity**. Teaching staff seems to be aware of the child's interests; consistently monitor the child's behavior but ignore *or detect less than 25%* of the more subtle and hard-to-detect communications from the children.

**Rating of [4]: High sensitivity**. Teaching staff seems to be aware of the child's interests; consistently monitors the child’s behavior but are inconsistent in detecting subtler and hard-to-detect communications from the child (*i.e. detects 25-50% of the subtle and hard-to-detect communications*).

**Rating of [5]: Very high sensitivity**. Teaching staff seems to be aware of the child's interests; they often position themselves so that they can make face to face contact with the child. The staff consistently monitor the child's behaviors and follow the child’s interest indicated by subtle and hard-to-detect communications from the children (*i.e. detects 50-100% of the subtle and hard-to-detect communications*).

# C. Responsivity (Following the Child’s Lead)

**Narrative:** This item rates the frequency, consistency and supportiveness of the teaching staff's responses to the child's behaviors. Responses are supportive when they *match* the child’s actions, requests, and intentions. Responsivity is assessed in relation to child behaviors that both *demand a response* from adults as well as non-demand behaviors that may not be directed toward the adult. Child behaviors include play, academic, and social activity as well as facial expressions, vocalizations, gestures, signs of discomfort, body language, requests and intentions.

(Note: Please rate how the *identified student* appears to experience the environment*.*)

**Rating of [1]: Highly unresponsive**. Except for academic activities, teaching staff responds infrequently to the child and *primarily* to behaviors that demand a response. *Less than 10% of the tim*e the teaching staff reacts to the child's play, and social activities, facial expressions, vocalizations, gestures, body language, and intentions that do not demand a response. The teaching staffs’ responses are *often non-supportive* in that they stop the child’s activity or redirect the child to do something different than what he/she was intending to do (take into consideration the academic requirements of the situation). They may also be mismatched to the child’s behavior such as when teaching staff labels or comments on the child’s activity but do not physically react to the what the child is doing.

**Rating of [2]: Unresponsive**. Teaching staff respond to most of the child’s demand behaviors but to *less than 25% of the child’s non-demand behaviors and intentions*. The teaching staffs’ responses *may be* non-supportive in insofar as they stop the child’s activity or redirect the child to do something different than what he/she was intending to do (take into consideration the academic requirements of the situation). They may also be mismatched to the child’s behavior such as when teaching staff labels or comments on the child’s activity but do not physically react to the what the child is doing.

**Rating of [3]: Consistently responsive**. Teaching staff respond to almost all of the child’s *demand behaviors and to at 25-40% of the children’s non-demand behaviors* and intentions. Most of the teaching staff’s responses are supportive in insofar as they encourage the child’s activity. *At least one half* of the teaching staff’s responses match the child’s behavior such that the teaching staff’s responses are directly related to what the child is doing (take into consideration the academic requirements of the situation). For example, if a child is playing, the teaching staff responds with actions to the child’s play activity; if the child is vocalizing or communicating the teaching staff respond by vocalizing or communicating.

**Rating of [4]: Responsive**. Teaching staff respond to almost all of the child’s *demand behaviors and to about one half of the child’s non-demand behaviors (41-60%)* and intentions (take into consideration the academic requirements of the situation). *Most* of the teaching staff’s responses are supportive in insofar as they encourage the child’s activity. *Most* of the teaching staff’s responses match the child’s behavior such that the teaching staff’s responses are directly related to what the child is doing. For example, if a child is playing, the staff would respond with an action specific to the child’s activity; if the child is vocalizing or communicating the teaching staff would respond by vocalizing or communicating.

**Rating of [5]: Highly responsive**. Teaching staff respond to *almost all* of the child’s *demand behaviors* and to *most (>60%)* of the child’s *non-demand behaviors* and intentions including subtle and hard to detect gestures, vocalizations and other behaviors. The teaching staff’s responses are almost always supportive in insofar as they encourage the children’s activity (take into consideration the academic requirements of the situation). *The majority (>75%)* of the teaching staff’s responses match the child’s behavior such that the teaching staff’s responses are directly related to what the child is doing. For example, if the child is playing, the staff would respond with actions to the child’s activity; if the child is vocalizing or communicating the staff would respond by vocalizing or communicating.

# D. Effectiveness (Getting ‘Circles’ of Interaction)

**Narrative:** This item refers to the school staff's ability to engage the child, regardless of FDL profile, *in back and forth interaction* during both academic and free play situations. Ineffective staff focus on academics and seem unaware of the importance of the ‘interactional process’. Effectiveness is closely related to ‘Responsiveness’ (see C. above) and ‘Interacting at the Appropriate Functional Developmental Level’ (see E. below) since, by responding contingently and interacting at the right level, more interactional exchanges are likely. Effectiveness determines the extent to which the school staff is able to gain the children's attention, cooperation and participation in a *reciprocal* exchange characterized ultimately by balanced turn taking.

(Note: Please rate how the *identified student* appears to experience the environment*.*)

**Rating of [1]: Very ineffective**. School staff is *only occasionally* (less than 25% of the time) engaged in any kind of joint or cooperative activity or communication with the child. The focus is almost always on academic achievement. Staff are directive most of the time. The child may be involved in an activity and may even be in close proximity to the school staff, but the school staff is *consistently* not joining in what the child is doing. Staff do not give the child time to react by interacting too fast OR do not respond in a timely manner *most of the time*. The school staff may attempt to elicit the child's cooperation, but the child either does not respond, or responds briefly and quickly disengages. School staff may give the appearance of helplessness where the child is concerned.

**Rating of [2]: Ineffective**. School staff are mostly ineffective (less than 50% of the time) in keeping the child engaged in joint or cooperative activity or communication even though the child may be involved in an activity and may even be in close proximity to the school staff. The focus is on academic achievement greater than 75% of the time. Staff are directive *most of the time*. Staff *frequently* do not give the child time to react by interacting too fast or they *frequently* do not respond in a timely manner. In the few instances when the school staff gain the child’s cooperation, the interaction tends to last little more than 1 to 3 turns (circles) before the child disengages and the staff initiate/open the large majority of circles. In such instances, the child may continue the activity without noticing or responding to the school staff.

**Rating of [3]: Moderately effective**. At least one half (50%) of the time school staff are successful in engaging the child in a joint activity or communication to their capacity (FDL must be taken into consideration). The focus of interaction is on academic achievement most of the time but staff seem to be aware of interaction even during academic tasks. Staff are still predominantly directive at least half (50%) of the time. Even with the higher functioning child, interactive sequences, however, seldom last more than *3 to 5 turns* (circles) before the child disengages, but such interactive sequences occur frequently during the observation. For the lower and medium functioning child the number of circles *possible* is not achieved some of the time. Staff pacing is better than in the ineffective category, not too fast or too slow but they still initiate most of the interactions. Interactive sequences may be dominated by either the school staff or the child and are generally not characterized by a balanced reciprocal exchange of turns.

**Rating of [4]: Highly effective**. More than one half of the time (50-74%) school staff are successful in engaging the child in a joint activity or communication to their capacity. For the higher functioning child, interactive sequences generally last *6-10* or more turns at a time. *Most* of these interactive sequences are characterized by a balanced, reciprocal exchange of interactive turns. For the lower and medium functioning child, staff are able to interact optimally most of the time getting as many exchanges as can be expected given the child’s FDL. With little prompting, the school staff are successful at encouraging the children to transition into this patterns of longer and longer interactions with progressively more initiations on the part of the children. There is a focus in the classroom on the ‘interactional process’ most of the time. Pacing is consistently good, not too fast or too slow and promotes interaction.

**Rating of [5]: Extremely effective**. School staff are able to keep the child engaged in joint activity or communication throughout the majority (>75%) of the interaction (*i.e. there is a quality of continuous flow*). For the higher functioning child, interactive sequences may last a few minutes at a time before the school staff or child disengage. Interactive sequences are almost always characterized by a balanced, reciprocal exchange of turns. For the lower and medium functioning child, interactions are optimal and last as long as possible *most* of the time. There is a focus in the classroom on the ‘interactional process’ *almost all of the time*. Pacing is excellent and promotes interaction.

# E. Interacting at the Right Functional Developmental Levels

**Narrative:** This item rates the degree to which the school staff are playing at the right functional developmental level (FDL) with the student. As an important part of Teaching PLAY, the teacher and school staff should have done an ‘Individual Profile’ on the child including Comfort Zone, Sensory-Motor Profile, and importantly Functional Developmental Level Profile. This items focuses on FDL but includes the other two elements. School staff should not be interacting at too high of a level (i.e. Zone of Potential Development) or too low (i.e. Comfort Zone) but should be interacting at the ‘just right’ developmental level (i.e. Zone of Proximal Development). This becomes especially important during academic tasks, which are often in the Zone of Potential Development for many children with ASD. It is possible for school staff to interact at both a too high and/or too low level during one observed session.

(Note: Please rate how the *identified student* appears to experience the environment*.*)

**Rating of [1]: Interaction is Frequently Inappropriate.** School staff *frequently* misinterpret the child’s FDL and *most of the time* play *much* too high, (e.g. making academic demands that are in the Zone of Potential Development and/or talking in a way that is ‘over the child’s head’) AND/OR staff may simply not challenge the child in a way that addresses the child’s capacities or potential. Rate as frequently inappropriate when the child is left alone for *more than half the time* without interaction leading them to spend time in their Comfort Zones. This rating is reserved for classrooms where inappropriate interaction is frequent (25-50% of the time).

**Rating of [2]. Interaction is Often Inappropriate.** While school staff may sometimes interact at the right FDL, they *often* misinterpret the child’s FDL and *consistently* interact in a way that is either too high, (e.g. making academic demands that are in the Zone of Potential Development and/or talking to them in a way that is ‘way over their head’) AND/OR staff may also allow the child to spend a *quarter to half their school time* alone or doing Comfort Zone activities without being challenged. This rating is reserved for classrooms where inappropriate interaction is common (up to 25% of the time).

**Rating of [3]. Interaction is Appropriate.** School staff *often* (50-75% of the time) interact at the right FDL. They *occasionally* misinterpret the child’s FDL and interact in a way that is too high, (e.g. making academic demands that are in the Zone of Potential Development and/or talking to them in a way that is ‘over their head’.) The child is consistently (50-75% of the time) engaged at the right FDL and not allowed to spend a lot of a time(more than 25% of their time) alone doing Comfort Zone activities without being challenged. There may be some combination of interacting too high or too low. Subtler more sophisticated aspects of interaction related to FDL may or may not be evident but in general this rating is reserved for classrooms where appropriate interaction is *often present* (50-75% of the time).

**Rating of [4]. Interaction is Very Good** School staff *consistently* (75% of the time) interact in the right way for the child’s FDL profile. They may *occasionally* misinterpret the child’s FDL interacting in a way that is too high, (e.g. making academic demands that are in the Zone of Potential Development and/or talking in a way that is ‘over the child’s head’). The child is not allowed to spend much of his/her time(less than 25%) alone doing Comfort Zone activities without being challenged. Staff *often* (75% of the time) interact in a way that addresses the subtler aspects of the child’s FDL profile (e.g. focusing on getting ‘circles’ for a FDL 3-4 child; doing one thematic pretend play or joking for a FDL 5 child). This rating is reserved for classrooms where appropriate interaction is *consistently* (75%) evident.

**Rating of [5]. Interaction is Excellent** School staff *almost always* (75-100% of the time) interact at the right FDL profile. They may *rarely* misinterpret the child’s FDL interacting in a way that is too high, (e.g. making academic demands that are in the Zone of Potential Development and/or talking in a way that is ‘over the child’s head’.) The child is not allowed to spend much of their time(less than 25% of their time) alone doing Comfort Zone activities without being challenged. Staff *frequently* (75-100% of the time) interact in a way that addresses the subtler aspects of the child’s FDL profile (i.e. focusing on getting ‘circles’ for a FDL 3-4 child; doing one thematic pretend play or joking for a FDL 5 child). This rating is reserved for classrooms where appropriate interaction is *almost always* (75-100%) evident.

# F. Peer-to-peer Interaction

**Narrative:** In addition to adult-child interactions, Teaching PLAY aims to help those children with ASD who have reached a FDL 4 capacity or above to interact with their peers. This item evaluates the extent to which school staff are aware of the child’s capacity to interact with peers and the degree to which they promote peer-to-peer interaction.

(Note: Please rate how the *identified student* appears to experience the environment*.* **If the child does not have at least FDL 4 capacities and it is not yet appropriate to facilitate peer interaction, give a rating of ‘3’ and note N/A.**)

**Rating of [1]. Peer-to-peer Interaction is Seldom Promoted.** School staff are seldom focused on peer-to-peer interaction for the child even when the child shows capacities at FDL 4. School routines dominate and almost all the time the child is helped to follow the school curriculum with a focus on academic activities. Even during free time, the child is often allowed to go off on his/her own and peer-to-peer interaction is *seldom* encouraged.

**Rating of [2]. Peer-to-peer Interaction is Occasionally Promoted.** School staff seem to be *somewhat* aware of the importance of peer-to-peer interaction for the child but school routines still dominate most of the time. The child is helped to follow the school curriculum with a focus on academic activities. Even during free time the child is allowed to go off on his/her own with peer-to-peer interaction only *occasionally* encouraged.

**Rating of [3]. Peer-to-peer Interaction is Often Promoted.** School staff are *often but not consistently* aware of the importance of peer-to-peer interaction for the child. While school routines may still dominate most of the time, staff *often* promote peer interaction during academics (e.g. encourage one child to give something to another child). During free time the child is *often* encouraged to engage in peer-to-peer interaction with some adult facilitation.

**Rating of [4]. Peer-to-peer Interaction is Consistently** **Promoted.** School staff are *consistently* aware of the importance of peer-to-peer interaction for the child. During school routines and academic tasks, staff *consistently* promote peer interaction (e.g. encourage one child to give something to another child). During free time the child is *consistently* encouraged to engage in peer-to-peer interaction with some adult facilitation.

**Rating of [5]. Peer-to-peer Interaction is Frequently** **Promoted.** School staff *frequently emphasize and actively promote* peer-to-peer interaction for the child. During school routines and academic tasks, staff *frequently* promote peer interaction (e.g. encourage one child to give something to another child). During free time the child is *frequently* encouraged to engage in peer-to-peer interaction with consistent adult facilitation.

# G. Fun in the Classroom

**Narrative: ‘**Fun in the classroom’ is characterized by the experience of enjoyment and positive mood by the child. When the classroom is fun, the child looks forward to going to school every day. They look forward to the routine, they like the staff, the environment is not too stressful for them, and for the most part their needs based on their Comfort Zone, Sensory-Motor Profile and FDL Profile are met. In a fun environment, the school staff are warm, nurturing, and know how to be inventive in little ways that are fun and funny. *Fun in the classroom* does not mean that the classroom lacks structure and order. The most fun classrooms combine structure and nurture in equal amounts.

(Note: Please rate how the *identified student* appears to experience the environment*.*)

**Rating of [1]. Seldom Fun.** In this setting, the classroom is highly structured, routinized, and academically oriented. While the usual play of children is tolerated and the staff are generally supportive and kind, the primary focus of the class is on the schedule, academics, and following the rules. When the child does not follow the rules, he/she is *almost always* reminded of the rules and re-directed to the tasks at hand. The staff tend to be task-oriented *almost all the time* which limits their tendency to be warm, playful, and animated. They *seldom* promote playfulness for it’s own sake. They stay within the structure of the class and *seldom* show a large repertoire of innovative approaches that might interest the child (e.g. use different ways of using toys/materials or inventing a new or creative way to get information across). The child *often* show stress (i.e. through misbehavior) due to the demands placed on them.

**Rating of [2]. Occasionally Fun.** In this setting, the classroom is highly structured, routinized and academically oriented. The usual play of children is allowed. The staff are generally supportive and kind, but the primary focus of the class is still on the schedule, academics, and following the rules. If the child does not follow the rules, he/she is *often* reminded of the rules and re-directed to the tasks at hand. The staff tends to be *task oriented most of the time* but show evidence of warmth, playfulness, and animated expressiveness. Throughout the school day, they *occasionally* promote playfulness for it’s own sake. They *usually* stay within the structure of the class but *occasionally* may show a larger repertoire of innovative approaches that might interest the child (e.g. use different ways of using toys/materials or inventing a new or creative way to get information across). The child *occasionally* shows stress (i.e. through misbehavior) due to the demands placed on them.

**Rating of [3]. Often** **Fun.** In this setting, the classroom is less highly structured, routinized and academically oriented. The usual play of children is allowed and sometimes encouraged. The staff are supportive and kind and some are fun. Even though the primary focus of the class is still on the schedule, academics, and following the rules, there is a *moderate degree* of tolerance and flexibility. If the child does not follow the rules, he/she is *often* reminded of the rules and gently re-directed to the tasks at hand perhaps with a sense of humor. The staff tends to be *child centered* *and task oriented in equal proportions* and show consistent warmth, playfulness, and animated expressiveness. Throughout the school day, they *often* promote playfulness for its own sake. While they *usually* stay within the structure of the class they *often* demonstrate a larger repertoire of innovative approaches that might interest the child (e.g. use different ways of using toys/materials or inventing a new or creative way to get information across). The child *sometimes* show stress (i.e. through misbehavior) due to the demands placed on them.

**Rating of [4]. Consistently** **Fun.** In this setting, the classroom may range from somewhat unstructured to moderately structured, with established routines and an academic orientation. The usual play of children is allowed and *consistently* encouraged. Most of the staff are supportive, kind, and consistently fun. While the schedule, academics, and following the rules are still important for creating a predictable environment, there is a *moderate degree* of tolerance for deviation from the structure and a *moderate* degree of flexibility toward the rules. If the child does not follow the rules, he/she is *consistently* reminded of the rules and gently re-directed to the tasks at hand with a sense of humor. The staff tends to be *slightly more child-centered* than *task-oriented* and show consistent warmth, playfulness, and animated expressiveness. Throughout the school day, they *consistently* promote playfulness for it’s own sake. While they *usually* stay within the structure of the class they *consistently* demonstrate a larger repertoire of innovative approaches that might interest the child (e.g. use different ways of using toys/materials or inventing a new or creative way to get information across). The child *seldom* shows stress (i.e. through misbehavior) due to the demands placed on them.

**Rating of [5]. Frequently Fun.** In this setting, the classroom may range from more unstructured to moderately structured with consistent routines and an academic orientation. The usual play of children is allowed and *frequently* encouraged. Most of the staff are supportive, kind, and *frequently* fun. While the schedule, academics, and following the rules are valued to create a predictable environment, there is a *high degree* of tolerance for deviation from the structure and a high degree of flexibility toward the rules. The classroom may border on chaotic but is still fun for the child. If the child does not follow the rules, he/she is *consistently* reminded of the rules and gently re-directed to the tasks at hand with a sense of humor. The staff tends to be *consistently more child-centered* than *task-oriented* and show from moderate to high degrees of warmth, playfulness, and animated expressiveness. Throughout the school day, they *frequently* promote playfulness for it’s own sake. While they *often* stay within the structure of the class they *frequently* demonstrate a larger repertoire of innovative approaches that might interest the child (e.g. use different ways of using toys/materials or inventing a new or creative way to get information across). The child *seldom* shows stress (i.e. through misbehavior) due to the demands placed on them.

# Appendix 1: PLAY SEA SCORING SHEET

**PLAY School Environment Assessment (PLAY SEA)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Rater Name: | Date: |
| Lead Teacher Name: | Child initials: |
| School Name | Pre/Post: |

Use this SCORING SHEET to rate each the following categories on a scale from 1 to 5

**Ratings:**

5: Excellent

4: Very good

3: Good

2: Fair

1: Poor

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Category | Score (1-5) |
| A | Sensory Environment |  |
| B | Sensitivity (Reading the Child’s Cues) |  |
| C | Responsivity (Following the Child’s Lead) |  |
| D | Effective Interaction (Getting Circles of Interaction) |  |
| E | Interacting at the Right Functional Developmental Levels |  |
| F | Peer-to-peer Interaction |  |
| G | Fun in the Classroom |  |

# Appendix 2: PLAY SEA Individual Child/Staff Rating Form

**Instructions:**

There may be instances in a classroom where an overall rating of the classroom is affected by one individual who stands out in their approach to the child. This child/staff ratings grid allows the Teaching PLAY rater to individualize scoring across categories using the rating scale. Write the staff name in the column on the left and place the ratings from 1 to 5 in the boxes under each of the categories.

**Category**

1. Sensory approach
2. Sensitivity (Reading the Children’s Cues)
3. Responsivity (Following the Children’s Lead)
4. Effective Interaction (Getting Circles)
5. Interaction at the right FDL
6. Peer-to-peer interaction
7. Overall ‘fun with people’ in the classroom

**Ratings:**

5: Excellent

4: Very good

3: Good

2: Fair

1: Poor

**Example:**

For example: If the child and Sally Smith (teacher) are to be rated separately and Sally is good in all categories she would receive a ‘3’ in the row across from her name and the child’s name. If the child and Margaret Miller (paraprofessional) need to be rated separately their scores would be listed as below.

**EXAMPLE:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **A** | **B** | **C** | **D** | **E** | **F** | **G** |
| Staff  Name |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sarah M. | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Max L. | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**PLAY SEA Individual Child/Staff Rating Form**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Rater Name: | Date: |
| Lead Teacher Name: | Child initials: |
| School Name | Pre/Post: |

**Category**

1. Sensory approach
2. Sensitivity (Reading the Children’s Cues)
3. Responsivity (Following the Children’s Lead)
4. Effective Interaction (Getting Circles)
5. Interaction at the right FDL
6. Peer-to-peer interaction
7. Overall ‘fun with people’ in the classroom

**Ratings:**

5: Excellent

4: Very good

3: Good

2: Fair

1: Poor

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **A** | **B** | **C** | **D** | **E** | **F** | **G** |
| Staff  Name |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# Appendix 3: PLAY SEA Rater Comments

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Rater Name: | Date: |
| Lead Teacher Name: | Child initials: |
| School Name | Pre/Post: |

1. Sensory Environment
2. Sensitivity (Reading the Child’s Cues)
3. Responsivity (Following the Child’s Lead)

**PLAY SEA Rater Comments, cont.**

1. Effective Interaction (Getting Circles of Interaction)
2. Interacting at the Right Functional Developmental Levels
3. Peer-to-peer Interaction
4. Fun in the Classroom