

Climate of Healthy Interactions for Learning & Development (CHILD©)

What is the CHILD?

The CHILD is a program observation instrument that measures the quality of the social and emotional (mental health) climate in early childhood care and education settings. The social emotional climate is characterized by authentic warmth and friendship, developmentally appropriate and child-centered pedagogy, equitable treatment of children, and a genuine interest to foster children’s psychosocial well-being and holistic development. The CHILD gathers information on discrete behavioral indicators that assess all social interactions including staff-child, child-child, and staff-staff interactions; verbal and nonverbal behaviors and overt and subtle cues; and issues of equity and inclusion.

CHILD dimensions include:

- Transitions
- Directions and Rules
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Staff Awareness
- Staff Affect
- Staff Cooperation
- Staff-Child Interactions
- Individualized and Developmentally Appropriate Pedagogy
- Child Behaviors

Which program(s) could use the CHILD?

Center based programs that enroll children in preschool classrooms where the majority of the children enrolled are ages three to five years old.

CHILD assessment process

The CHILD is available only to trained and reliable CHILD assessors from the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) team; however, programs may request an external assessment to fulfill the internal assessment expectation for Keystone STARS.

External CHILD assessments are conducted by a reliable CHILD assessor from the PQA team.

Assessments occur in four 20-minute coding blocks.

The program’s internal assessment team partners with a Quality Coach and CHILD Assessor when planning for and conducting internal assessments and when analyzing the information collected during the internal assessment process. Please see [How to Conduct an Internal Assessment Using the CHILD](#) for additional information.

How does the CHILD support continuous quality improvement (CQI)?

Information gathered during a CHILD assessment can be used by the program to help identify social and emotional climate strengths and areas for growth. The information gathered can also be used to help create the program’s continuous quality improvement plan.

Additional information/training

- [The CHILD Observation Tool \(socialemotionalchild.org\)](https://socialemotionalchild.org)
- [How To Conduct an Assessment Using Child \(CHILD\) \(pakeys.org/how-to-class\)](https://pakeys.org/how-to-class)