

KINDERGARTEN & EARLY GRADE OBSERVATION SCREENING CHECKLIST

A two-page classroom observation checklist across four developmental areas, a tally and summary page, a team-conversation planning page, a classroom strategy quick-reference, a family letter and log, a roster, a cycle tracker, a notes log, and a filled example. Fillable PDF.

CHECKLIST Classroom Observation Checklist – Phonological Awareness and Motor Skills

Twelve observable items in two areas. Mark what you actually saw this week, in the classroom, in your own words where a row adds for one.

STUDENT SETTING OBSERVER DATE(S)

AREA	ITEM	OBSERVED (Y / N / NOT OBSERVED)	NOTES
Phonological Awareness	Does not yet identify the first sound in a spoken word during a whole-group activity		
Phonological Awareness	Does not yet produce a rhyming word when given one, during a group rhyming game		
Phonological Awareness	Does not yet clap or count the syllables in their own name		
Phonological Awareness	Does not yet blend two or three spoken sounds into a word during a group game		
Phonological Awareness	Appears not to notice when a rhyme is broken in a familiar song or poem		
Phonological Awareness	Substitutes or leaves out sounds in multisyllabic classroom words (for example, "animal" for "animal")		
Motor Skills	Has difficulty holding a pencil, crayon, or scissors with a tripod (three-finger) grasp		
Motor Skills	Has difficulty staying within the lines when coloring a simple shape		
Motor Skills	Has difficulty cutting along a straight or curved line with scissors		
Motor Skills	Loses balance or falls more often than classmates during outdoor or gym play		
Motor Skills	Has difficulty catching or throwing a ball during a group game		

CHECKLIST Classroom Observation Checklist – Social-Emotional and Pre-Reading/Pre-Academic Readiness

The same rate as page 5: observable behavior, described plainly, never a name for why it happened.

STUDENT SETTING OBSERVER DATE(S)

AREA	ITEM	OBSERVED (Y / N / NOT OBSERVED)	NOTES
Social-Emotional	Has difficulty separating from a caregiver at drop-off compared with classmates		
Social-Emotional	Has difficulty taking turns or sharing materials during a group activity		
Social-Emotional	Reacts with a large or prolonged response to a small change in routine		
Social-Emotional	Has difficulty naming their own feelings when asked in the moment		
Social-Emotional	Plays alongside peers but rarely joins their play		
Social-Emotional	Has difficulty calming down after an upset without significant adult support		
Pre-Reading / Pre-Academic Readiness	Does not yet recognize their own written name		
Pre-Reading / Pre-Academic Readiness	Does not yet identify some upper-case or lower-case letters by name		
Pre-Reading / Pre-Academic Readiness	Does not yet attempt letter-like marks when asked to "write"		
Pre-Reading / Pre-Academic Readiness	Does not yet count a small set of objects (five or fewer) while pointing to each one		
Pre-Reading / Pre-Academic Readiness	Has difficulty following a two-step direction given without a visual cue		
Pre-Reading / Pre-Academic Readiness	Does not yet retell a simple, familiar story in the right		

SUMMARY Observation Tally and Summary

This page counts marks so the picture is easy to see at a glance. It does not set a number that means anything on its own — that judgment stays with you.

STUDENT OBSERVATION WINDOW COMPLETED BY

Which areas were actually watched this window (check any that apply)

- ☐ Phonological Awareness
☐ Motor Skills
☐ Social-Emotional
☐ Pre-Reading / Pre-Academic Readiness

AREA (8 ITEMS EACH)	MARKED Y (OBSERVED)	MARKED N (NOT OBSERVED)	NOTES / PATTERN NOTICED
Phonological Awareness			
Motor Skills			
Social-Emotional			
Pre-Reading / Pre-Academic Readiness			
Total (out of 24 items)			

This page counts marks; it does not decide anything.
Add up what you marked on pages 5 and 6 by area.
A count here is a way to see the whole picture at a glance.

If you are unsure what to do next
Talk to a colleague, a mentor teacher, or your building support team informally first. If it still seems worth a closer look together, page 8 plans

PLANNING Requesting a Team Conversation

A conversation, not a decision. This page plans who to talk to and when; it does not request a formal evaluation and it sets no criteria of its own.

STUDENT REQUESTED BY DATE GRADE

Which areas raised a question (check any that apply)

- ☐ Phonological Awareness
☐ Motor Skills
☐ Social-Emotional
☐ Pre-Reading / Pre-Academic Readiness

What was noticed, in your own words (two or three specific, observable examples)

WHO ELSE SHOULD BE PART OF THE CONVERSATION HAS THE FAMILY ALREADY BEEN CONTACTED? (Y/N, AND HOW)

Our school's next step (write it here, and where the team conversation is scheduled)

What this row is, and is not

HOME Family Communication Letter Template

A letter that invites a conversation and shares what was observed, in plain words, with blanks for the specifics.

Family letter (type the blanks, print, send home)

Dear family of _____,

I wanted to share a few things I have noticed in the classroom and hear your thoughts too. This is not about labeling how your child is doing — it is simply part of how I get to know every child at the start of the year, and it is common for me to write to several families this way.

What I've noticed.

What I'd like to do next, I would like to set up a short conversation with you to share what I am seeing in the classroom and hear how things look at home. A team conversation just means the two of us talking together, and where it helps, another member of our school's support team — it does not mean anything has been decided, and it is not by itself the start of any formal process.

Would _____ work for you, at _____? If not, let me know a few times that do.

Who to contact, _____, at _____, Thank you for being part of this.

TEACHER SIGNATURE GRADE / ROOM DATE

CUT HERE: REPLY SLIP FAMILY MEMBER

Best times and ways to reach me for this conversation

One thing you think I should know before we talk

EXAMPLE Filled Example

An invented student, so the format is clear. Every number below is checked against its own table; no real student's information is shown.

The student below, "Owen R. kindergarten", is an invented example so the format is clear. It is not a real student, and no health data is pre-filled anywhere in this file — every number here is a made-up illustration, checked against its own count.

Observation checklist (page 5) — 4 of 5 items shown here were marked observed

ITEM (PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS)	OBSERVED?	WHAT WAS OBSERVED
Does not yet produce a rhyming word when given one, during a group rhyming game	Y	Repeated the word back instead of a rhyme, twice, during circle time rhyming game
Does not yet clap or count the syllables in their own name	Y	Clapped three times for a two-syllable name on both tries observed
Does not yet identify the first sound in a spoken word during a whole-group activity	N	—

ITEM (MOTOR SKILLS)	OBSERVED?	WHAT WAS OBSERVED
Has difficulty holding a pencil, crayon, or scissors with a tripod (three-finger) grasp	Y	Uses a fist grip on crayon and pencil during both writing tasks observed
Has difficulty cutting along a straight or curved line with scissors	Y	Cut well outside the line on a curved-line cutting activity

Phonological awareness: 2 of 3 shown were observed. Motor skills: 2 of 2 shown were observed. 2 + 2 = 4 of 5 total. Every mark describes a behavior; none of them names a condition.

Observation tally and summary (page 7)

AREA	MARKED Y (OBSERVED)	MARKED N (NOT OBSERVED)	NOTES / PATTERN NOTICED
Phonological Awareness	2	1	Rhyming and syllable counting not yet consistent
Motor Skills	2	—	Fist grip and off-line cutting, both tasks watched
Social-Emotional	—	—	Not yet observed this window
Pre-Reading / Pre-Academic Readiness	—	—	Not yet observed this window
Total (out of 24 items)	4	1	5 of 24 items observed this window

This page counts marks only; it does not decide anything on its own. Owen's teacher used the pattern in two areas, not a

Which Page for Which Need

Every item on this file is an observable classroom behavior. No page scores a student, names a condition, or decides that a formal evaluation is needed.

IF YOU NEED TO	USE	WHERE
You want to watch the class and note phonological awareness or motor skills	Observation Checklist — Phonological Awareness and Motor Skills	Page 5
You want to watch the class and note social-emotional behavior or pre-reading readiness	Observation Checklist — Social-Emotional and Pre-Reading Readiness	Page 6
You have a completed checklist and want to see the whole picture at a glance	Observation Tally and Summary	Page 7
You think a team conversation is worth setting up	Requesting a Team Conversation	Page 8
You want ideas to try in the classroom while a conversation is being scheduled	Classroom Strategy Ideas Quick-Reference	Page 9
You want to write home about what you are noticing	Family Communication Letter Template	Page 10
You need the whole class or caseload on one page, or the year's counts	Classroom Roster and Screening Cycle Tracker	Pages 12–13

The rule every page in this file follows

Every checklist item is something a second adult could watch for and mark the same way — what materials looked like held, what a game looked like played, what a page looked like colored. No page sets a passing score, names a condition, or states that a formal evaluation is needed. The most this file does is help you plan a TEAM CONVERSATION.

What this file is not

Not a screening instrument, not a scored assessment, and not a referral form. It does not set an age cutoff, an eligibility rule, or a clinical finding of any kind. Whether a student needs anything beyond a classroom conversation is a decision for your school's own team, under your district's own process — never this file.

Before you start a two-week observation window

- ☐ Pick a window — two to three weeks is plenty — and watch the student across more than one setting: circle time, centers, outdoor play.
- ☐ Set up the roster (page 12) first, so every student you are watching has a row before the first checklist is filled in.
- ☐ Watch the whole class over time, not just one student in isolation; it is easier to describe a behavior against a backdrop of typical classmates.
- ☐ Write what you saw the same day, while it is fresh — the checklist rows are built for a pen in hand during or right after the observation.

Classroom Observation Checklist – Phonological Awareness and Motor Skills

Twelve observable items in two areas. Mark what you actually saw this week, in the classroom, in your own words where a row asks for one.

STUDENT

SETTING

OBSERVER

DATE(S)

AREA	ITEM	OBSERVED? (Y / N / NOT OBSERVED)	NOTES
Phonological Awareness	Does not yet identify the first sound in a spoken word during a whole-group activity		
Phonological Awareness	Does not yet produce a rhyming word when given one, during a group rhyming game		
Phonological Awareness	Does not yet clap or count the syllables in their own name		
Phonological Awareness	Does not yet blend two or three spoken sounds into a word during a group game		
Phonological Awareness	Appears not to notice when a rhyme is broken in a familiar song or poem		
Phonological Awareness	Substitutes or leaves out sounds in multisyllabic classroom words (for example, “aminal” for “animal”)		
Motor Skills	Has difficulty holding a pencil, crayon, or scissors with a tripod (three-finger) grasp		
Motor Skills	Has difficulty staying within the lines when coloring a simple shape		
Motor Skills	Has difficulty cutting along a straight or curved line with scissors		
Motor Skills	Loses balance or falls more often than classmates during outdoor or gym play		
Motor Skills	Has difficulty catching or throwing a ball during a group game		
Motor Skills	Has difficulty buttoning, zipping, or managing fasteners without adult help		

Describe it; do not label it

“Held the marker with a fist grip on both writing tasks I watched” is a row; “has bad fine motor skills” is not. Write only what was actually seen, in words another adult could picture without having been in the room.

If several items are marked Y

A pattern across several items is worth a sentence for the team, not a conclusion on this page. Carry it to the tally page (7) and, if it still seems worth a conversation, the planning page (8).

Classroom Observation Checklist — Social-Emotional and Pre-Reading/Pre-Academic Readiness

The same rule as page 5: observable behavior, described plainly, never a name for why it happened.

STUDENT

SETTING

OBSERVER

DATE(S)

AREA	ITEM	OBSERVED? (Y / N / NOT OBSERVED)	NOTES
Social-Emotional	Has difficulty separating from a caregiver at drop-off compared with classmates		
Social-Emotional	Has difficulty taking turns or sharing materials during a group activity		
Social-Emotional	Reacts with a large or prolonged response to a small change in routine		
Social-Emotional	Has difficulty naming their own feelings when asked in the moment		
Social-Emotional	Plays alongside peers but rarely joins their play		
Social-Emotional	Has difficulty calming down after an upset without significant adult support		
Pre-Reading / Pre-Academic Readiness	Does not yet recognize their own written name		
Pre-Reading / Pre-Academic Readiness	Does not yet identify some upper-case or lower-case letters by name		
Pre-Reading / Pre-Academic Readiness	Does not yet attempt letter-like marks when asked to "write"		
Pre-Reading / Pre-Academic Readiness	Does not yet count a small set of objects (five or fewer) while pointing to each one		
Pre-Reading / Pre-Academic Readiness	Has difficulty following a two-step direction given without a visual cue		
Pre-Reading / Pre-Academic Readiness	Does not yet retell a simple, familiar story in the right order after hearing it		

Describe it; do not label it

"Held the marker with a fist grip on both writing tasks I watched" is a row; "has bad fine motor skills" is not. Write only what was actually seen, in words another adult could picture without having been in the room.

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Observation Tally and Summary

This page counts marks so the picture is easy to see at a glance. It does not set a number that means anything on its own — that judgment stays with you.

STUDENT

OBSERVATION WINDOW

COMPLETED BY

Which areas were actually watched this window (check any that apply)

- ☐ Phonological Awareness
- ☐ Motor Skills
- ☐ Social-Emotional
- ☐ Pre-Reading / Pre-Academic Readiness

AREA (6 ITEMS EACH)	MARKED Y (OBSERVED)	MARKED N (NOT OBSERVED)	NOTES / PATTERN NOTICED
Phonological Awareness			
Motor Skills			
Social-Emotional			
Pre-Reading / Pre-Academic Readiness			
Total (out of 24 items)			

This page counts marks; it does not decide anything

Add up what you marked on pages 5 and 6 by area. A count here is a way to see the whole picture at once — it is not a score, it sets no cutoff, and it does not by itself mean anything is wrong. That judgment is yours, using everything you know about the student, not a number on this page.

If you are unsure what to do next

Talk to a colleague, a mentor teacher, or your building support team informally first. If it still seems worth a closer look together, page 8 plans that conversation.

Reading the pattern, not the number

A count of five and a count of five are not the same thing if one is spread across four areas and the other is concentrated in one. Look at which column has the most marks, and in which area, before you look at the total — the total alone tells you less than the pattern behind it.

Family Communication Letter Template

A letter that invites a conversation and shares what was observed, in plain words, with blanks for the specifics.

Family letter (type the blanks, print, send home)

Dear family of _____,

I wanted to share a few things I have noticed in the classroom and hear your thoughts too. This is not about labeling how your child is doing — it is simply part of how I get to know every child at the start of the year, and it is common for me to write to several families this way.

What I've noticed.

What I'd like to do next. I would like to set up a short conversation with you to share what I am seeing in the classroom and hear how things look at home. A team conversation just means the two of us talking together, and where it helps, another member of our school's support team — it does not mean anything has been decided, and it is not by itself the start of any formal process.

Would _____ work for you, at _____? If not, let me know a few times that do.

Who to contact. _____, at _____. Thank you for being part of this.

TEACHER SIGNATURE

GRADE / ROOM

DATE

----- CUT HERE: REPLY SLIP -----

STUDENT

FAMILY MEMBER

Best times and ways to reach me for this conversation

One thing you think I should know before we talk

FAMILY SIGNATURE

DATE

ROSTER

Classroom Roster / Caseload Observation Tracker

Every student on this cycle’s watch list, one row each, updated as you go.

TEACHER / ROOM

SCHOOL YEAR

UPDATED

STUDENT	GR	OBSERVATION WINDOW	CHECKLIST COMPLETED? (Y/N)	TEAM CONVERSATION REQUESTED? (Y/N)	FAMILY CONTACTED? (Y/N)	NOTES

One row per student on this cycle’s watch list

This roster is a directory, not a data page. It shows at a glance who has been observed, who has a conversation moving, and who a family has heard from.

EXAMPLE

Filled Example

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Does not yet identify the first sound in a spoken word during a whole-group activity	N	–
ITEM (MOTOR SKILLS)	OBSERVED?	WHAT WAS OBSERVED
Has difficulty holding a pencil, crayon, or scissors with a tripod (three-finger) grasp	Y	Uses a fist grip on crayon and pencil during both writing tasks observed
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Requesting a team conversation (page 8) — excerpt

AREAS CHECKED	WHAT WAS NOTICED	OUR SCHOOL'S NEXT STEP
Phonological Awareness, Motor Skills	Repeats instead of rhyming; fist grip on pencil and crayon; cuts outside the line	Meeting set with the kindergarten team and the building reading specialist, 10/14 (invented; write your own school's process here)

The next-step line is filled in with an invented date and team for this example; it is not this file deciding what should happen — it is Owen's own (invented) school writing in its own process.