

## **What is the Early Literacy Observation Form?**

The [Early Literacy Observation Form](#) supports educator preparation field supervisors to observe and provide high-quality feedback to teacher candidates on their practice in evidence-based early literacy as outlined in the [Mass Literacy Guide](#) and in alignment with the [Early Literacy Program Approval Criteria](#). This tool is a key component of Massachusetts' mission to ensure that all teacher candidates in Elementary, Early Childhood, and Moderate Disabilities programs are well-prepared in early literacy instruction and an important source of data for programs' continuous improvement.

## **When should the Early Literacy Observation Form be used?**

All candidates in Early Childhood, Elementary, and Moderate Disabilities PK-2/PK-8 programs must be provided support and feedback using the Early Literacy Observation Form as part of the CAP process.

Designed to be used during an entire literacy block, the Early Literacy Observation Form may be completed across more than one observation to allow field supervisors to see all components of a literacy block. Whether conducted in a single observation or across multiple visits, completion of the Early Literacy Observation Form may be used as one Announced Observation; it may not replace any additional required observations.

It is recommended, but not required, that the Early Literacy Observation occur near the end of the practicum as the expectation is that candidates are observed while assuming full responsibility for instruction during a literacy block.

## **What are the components of the form?**

The form includes:

- Overview of core components of the early literacy block and links to resources
- Look Fors to guide the observation and feedback, differentiated by grade-span
- Template for synthesizing evidence and providing feedback to the candidate

## **What are the Look Fors and how should they be used?**

The Early Literacy Observation Form features Look Fors that represent evidence-based, culturally and linguistically sustaining practices across a core literacy block, including foundational skills (as appropriate based on grade-level and student need), engaging with complex text, and writing, with oral language developed throughout. Depending on the licensure role, these skills may be demonstrated during whole-group instruction, small-group instruction, and/or co-teaching.

The field supervisor(s) will identify evidence of the Look Fors during the observation and then use the Look Fors to frame focused feedback to the candidate. While they provide a comprehensive picture of effective early literacy instruction and are all important components of readiness to teach, the Look Fors are not a checklist. Supervisors will use their professional judgment to identify and prioritize evidence and feedback to candidates aligned to the Look Fors and based on candidates' individual needs in development of their early literacy practice.

The Look Fors are aligned to the Essential Elements that are required to be observed during CAP: I-A-1 Subject Matter Knowledge, II-A-1 High Expectations and Support, and II-B-2 Safe Learning Environment. The Early Literacy Observation will be one source of evidence that is used to establish a comprehensive and informed assessment of candidate readiness in each of these elements.

The Look Fors are differentiated by grade-span to accommodate differing placements:

- Early Childhood PK-2 candidates will use the Grades PK-3 Look Fors.
- Elementary 1-6 candidates will use the Grades PK-3, 4-5, or 6-8 Look Fors depending on the grade-level of their practicum placement.
- Moderate Disabilities PK-2 candidates will use the Grades PK-3 Look Fors.
- Moderate Disabilities PK-8 candidates will use the Grades PK-3, 4-5, or 6-8 Look Fors depending on the grade-level of their practicum placement.

## **How can I develop my understanding of the practices?**

The [Mass Literacy Guide](#) and [Mass Literacy Guide Online Course](#) are two resources currently available to build understanding of evidence-based early literacy practices. Visit [Early Literacy in Educator Preparation](#) for more information.

## **How do I use the form in the CAP Online Platform?**

The Early Literacy Look-Fors are automatically embedded at the top of Announced Observation 2 on the CAP Online Platform for Early Childhood, Elementary, and Moderate Disabilities PK-2/PK-8 candidates.

While DESE recommends that the Early Literacy Observation Form be completed as part of Announced Observation 2, there may be circumstances where a triad prefers to complete the observation during Announced Observation 1.

- In this case, the triad should complete the Announced Observation 2 Form with the Early Literacy Observation Form *first* and Announced Observation Form 1 without the Early Literacy Observation Form *second*.
- The platform does not prevent these forms from being completed out of order.

During the observation, supervisors will:

- Select the Look-For grade band that aligns with the candidate's practicum placement grade level (PK-3, 4-5, or 6-8).
- Record notes for the Look Fors at the top of the form.
- Use these notes to inform evidence for I-A-1 Subject Matter Knowledge, II-A-1 High Expectations and Support, and II-B-2 Safe Learning Environment.
- Include early literacy within the overarching Area(s) of Strength and Area(s) for Growth for the observation as relevant.

While there is a space to record notes specific to the Look Fors, only the synthesized Evidence sections will show up in the Formative and Summative Assessment Forms. It is crucial that supervisors embed Look-For evidence in the synthesized feedback.

Please reach out to [EducatorPreparation@mass.gov](mailto:EducatorPreparation@mass.gov) with any questions.