

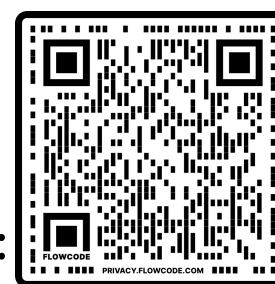
## Introduction

- **Social Participation (SP):** activities and situations that involve interacting with another person [1]
  - Often occurs for enjoyment as activity in and of itself [2]
  - Core aspects include involvement and engagement in interaction [5]
  - Develops during early education years through play with others, becoming increasingly social as children age [6, 7, 9, 10]
  - Qualities and skills needed include: respect, warmth, social cues, tolerance [12]
- Positive SP: warmth and affection in interactions with peers [4, 11]
  - Leads to well-rounded play and communication skills [4, 11]
- SP during ages 3-5 provides informal learning about sociocultural norms and expectations [9]
- SP correlated with readiness for school, later academic achievement, better emotional adjustment, increased self-efficacy [6, 9, 13]
- SP with peers allows children to practice emotional regulation, which helps develop sense of self [9]

- **Social Competence:** using distinct social skills to interact effectively with others [3, 8]
  - Understanding others' thoughts, taking on others' perspectives [3, 8]
  - Depends on context of social activity; child must adapt to situation [6]

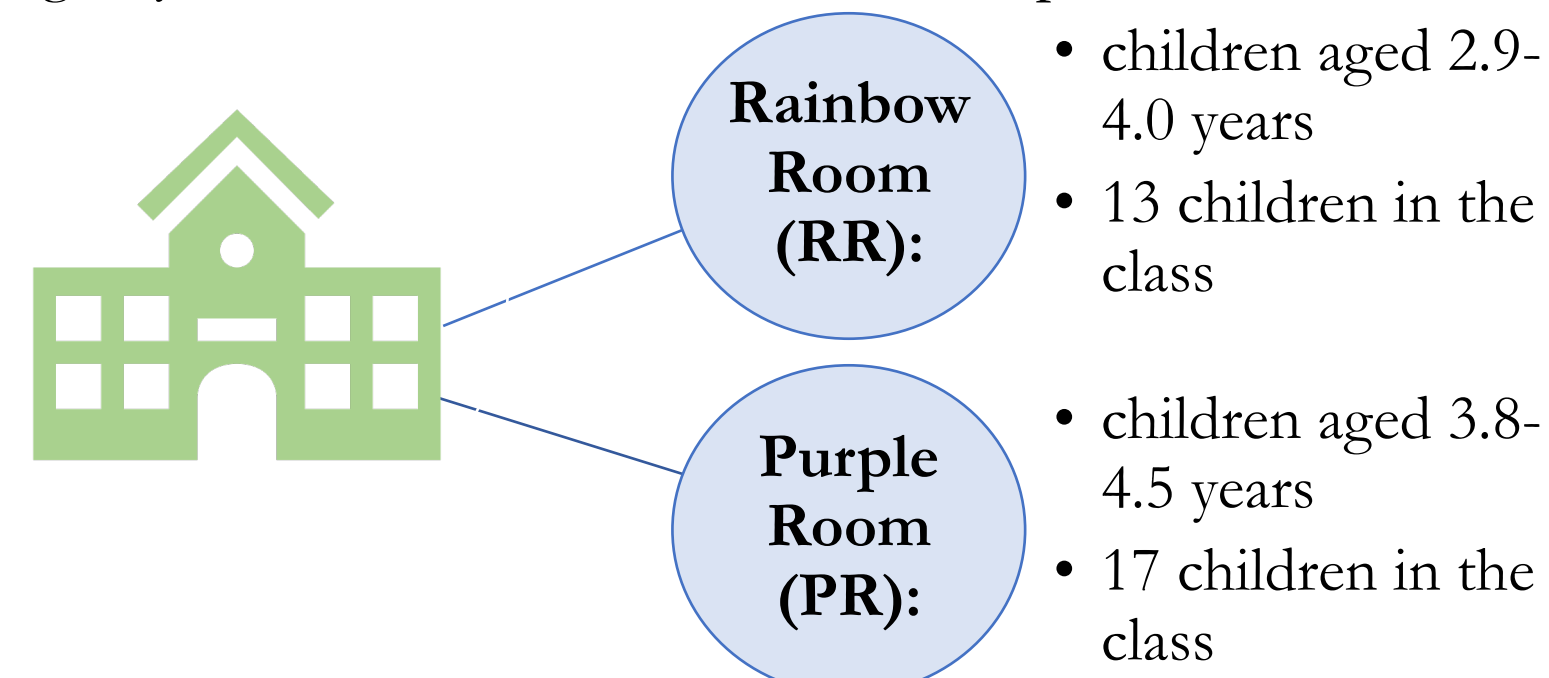
- Toolkit informed by occupational therapy participation measures:
  - Young Children's Participation and Environment Measure (YC-PEM)
  - Preschool Activity Card Sort (PACS)
  - Structured Preschool Observation (SPO)
  - Child Participation Questionnaire (CPQ)

More information:



## Setting

- **Eliot-Pearson Children's School (EPCS):** laboratory and demonstration school of the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study and Human Development at Tufts University
  - Maintaining connection is core value of programming
  - Seeking way to better understand Social Participation within classrooms



## Aims

Develop toolkit for teachers to identify barriers/supports to Social Participation in the classroom with additional complementary resources

Demonstrate to teachers how a Social Participation tool (part of toolkit) can be used (with examples from observations conducted in classroom) to develop strategies for increasing SP

Discuss strategies already in place in classroom and offer/discuss new strategies and insights (part of the toolkit) derived from classroom observations

## Methods

### Introductions to Staff, Teachers, School

- Spent time in observation booths for all four classrooms
- Created observation guide to guide classroom observations

### Observations in Classrooms

- Observed in Rainbow Room and Purple Room
- Completed observation guide for both classrooms

### Observational Chart

- Generated observational chart for both classrooms including supports and barriers informed by observations
- Discussed observational charts with head teachers to gather feedback and input
- Created initial form of toolkit

### Initial Tool Development

- Generated initial form of toolkit, including tool and strategies
- Discussed trialing tool and strategies with head teachers
- Allowed teachers and classrooms time to trial tool and strategies
- Revised tool based on teacher feedback

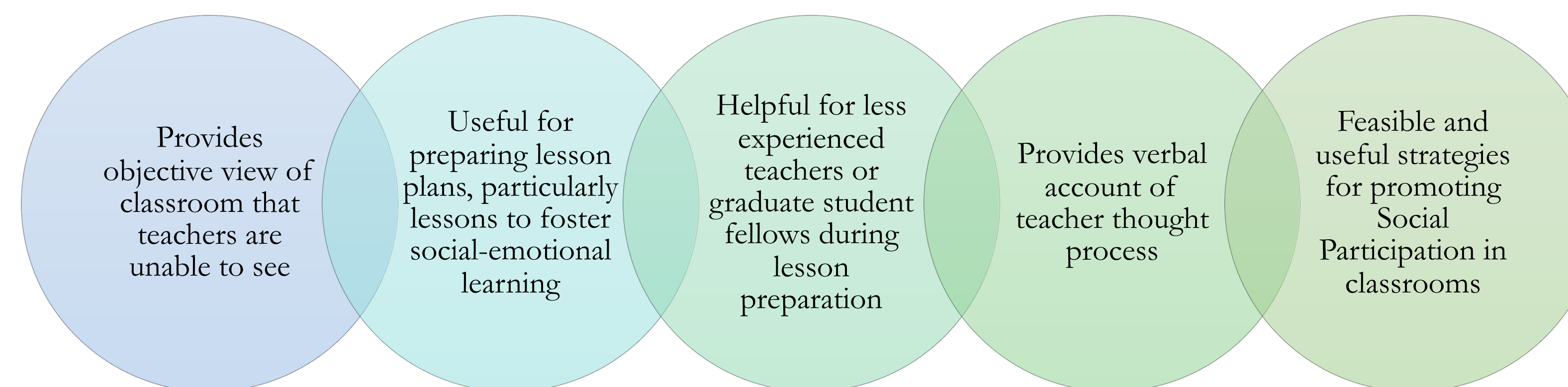
### Tool & Toolkit Refinement

- Met with head teachers & administration for tool feedback (See Key Summative Feedback below)
- Revised tool & toolkit

## Toolkit Makeup

<b>Background Information</b>	-Background information on Social Participation (SP) from Occupational Therapy and Early Childhood Education research -Occupational therapy tools that informed observational guide and tool development
<b>Directions for Tool</b>	-Directions on tool use
<b>Guidelines for Social Participation in the Preschool Classroom</b>	-Included environment, what Social Participation looks like in classroom, supports and barriers (organized by environmental, teacher-based, activity-based) -Informed by OT tools and classroom observations
<b>Strategies</b>	-Organized by environmental, teacher-based, activity-based -Include: sensory adaptations, ways to grade environment, ways to grade activity, ways to offer additional support for facilitating Social Participation
<b>Action Plan</b>	-New lens for planning classroom activities with focus on Social Participation -Questions on goals, activity planning, strategies to implement, observed supports and barriers and more
<b>Additional Resources</b>	-Books, podcasts, websites, videos, assessment tools

## Key Summative Feedback



## Discussion

- Interdisciplinary collaboration critical for robust and well-rounded understanding of preschool aged children and ways they engage in Social Participation
- Social Participation tool development process requires feedback from all stakeholders to make meaning out of what is observed, what activities are completed, and what can be changed in the classroom
- Social Participation valued part of preschool classroom and critical way through which children learn
  - Play-based activities throughout day allow for social play
  - Emphasis on social-emotional learning in classroom
- Strategies to facilitate Social Participation within classroom optimal when informed by interdisciplinary research
  - Combine staff members' expertise with Occupational Therapy perspective

### Strengths

- Full immersion in preschool allowed naturalistic observation
- Interdisciplinary collaboration produced detailed and well-informed toolkit
- Evidence-based (comprehensive literature review; tool informed by OT assessments; strategies informed by literature)
- Narrow focus of toolkit allowed in-depth guidelines and related strategies

### Limitations

- COVID-19 pandemic restrictions impacted classroom activities, Social Participation, and feasibility of recommended strategies (ex: social distancing, decreased physical touch)
- Toolkit was informed by observations conducted in mornings only, not whole school day

## Future Directions

Adapt for older student classrooms at EPCS

Assess effectiveness of strategies at supporting Social Participation within classroom

Use developed tool and proposed strategies with individual children

Evaluate strategies for effectiveness at beginning of school year when classrooms establish rules and expectations

Assess effectiveness of toolkit during Extended Day, Life Project, and/or summer programming

Evaluate effectiveness of toolkit post-pandemic as restrictions are lifted and activities change

Modify toolkit and strategies for parent use in home and community settings

Expand literature on role of Occupational Therapy Practitioners supporting Social Participation within classroom

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## Contact

Stephanie Rothman, OT/s: stephanie.rothman@tufts.edu

## References

