

Quick Reference Guide: The Early Literacy Observation Form and CAP 2024-25 School Year

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 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. **This includes candidates who use both the 2024 CAP and those who use the 2019 CAP during their practicum in the 2024-2025 academic year.**

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:

- An overview of the core components of the early literacy block and links to informational resources
- Evidence-based Look Fors to guide the observation and feedback, differentiated by grade-span
- A template for synthesizing evidence and providing feedback to the teacher candidate

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

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

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 Essential Element.

How do I use the Early Literacy Observation Form in the CAP Online Platform?

The CAP Online Platform will be updated to reflect the 2024 CAP in July 2025. For the 2024-25 school year, sponsoring organizations using the Online Platform will need to make the following modifications when completing the Early Literacy Observation:

- Ensure that supervisors have access to the [Early Literacy Observation Form](#), as the Look Fors are not integrated into the Online Platform. Supervisors should use the Early Literacy Observation Form as guidance for their observation and feedback.
- Record evidence for I-A-1 Subject Matter Knowledge, II-A-1 High Expectations and Support (in the II-E-1 High Expectations field), and II-B-2 Safe Learning Environment in the Observation Form on the Online Platform.
- For any other bolded elements (that were formerly required), enter "N/A." Please note: Text **must** be entered into these fields, or the form will not be able to be submitted.

How can field supervisors develop their understanding of the practices included in this tool?

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.

Please reach out to educatorpreparation@mass.gov with any questions.