



## **Crosswalk of *AI's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices* with the CLASS Assessment Tool**

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is an observation instrument developed to assess classroom quality.\* It measures instructional and social interactions which have been shown to contribute to students' academic achievement and social competence. The CLASS focuses on the quality of classroom interactions.

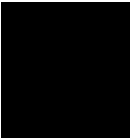
Wingspan, the developer of the internationally recognized, evidence-based program, *AI's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices*, prepared this alignment between *AI's Pals* and the CLASS domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support for preschool through early elementary. The premise of *AI's Pals* is similar to that of the CLASS – that interactions between teachers and children are critical to children's positive development and learning.

*AI's Pals* teaches young children social-emotional skills and healthy decision-making within the context of a caring adult-child relationship. The *AI's Pals* curriculum is accompanied by training which builds teacher's abilities to relate to children in positive ways and create a caring, cooperative classroom environment. The combined training and curriculum provide an effective framework for teachers to establish nurturing relationships with children while developing children's social competence, self-regulation, thinking abilities, and language skills.

For more information about *AI's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices*, please see the information on page 8 or visit [wingspanworks.com](http://wingspanworks.com).

\*Pianta, R.C., LaParo, K.M., & Hamre, B.K.(2008). Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Manual, Pre-K and CLASS Manual, K-3. Baltimore, Maryland: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

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## Crosswalk of *AI's Pals* Training & Implementation with CLASS Domain: Emotional Support

The CLASS domain of Emotional Support is defined as how teachers help children develop warm, supportive relationships with teachers and peers, enjoy learning and feel motivated to engage in learning activities, feel comfortable in the classroom, willingly accept challenges, and gain autonomy.

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Social-emotional competence is a critical component for success in school and life. Children who manage their feelings and behaviors, form positive relationships with others, and make responsible decisions have the necessary foundation to meet academic demands and make safe and healthy life choices.

A key factor in children's social-emotional development is the level of emotional support provided by adults significant in their lives. *AI's Pals* training strengthens teachers' abilities to interact with children in a warm, caring manner. By using the *AI's Pals* teaching approach, teachers become more purposeful in being present and calm, respectful and nurturing, and accepting and acknowledging children's ideas and feelings. *AI's Pals* teachers acquire strategies to create and maintain a caring, cooperative classroom environment in which children can practice and generalize social-emotional skills.

### ***AI's Pals* addresses the following CLASS Dimensions within the Emotional Support Domain:**

- Positive Climate (PC) – Reflects the emotional connection between the teacher and students and among students and the warmth, respect, and enjoyment communicated by verbal and nonverbal interactions.
- Teacher Sensitivity (TS) – Encompasses the teacher's awareness of and responsivity to students' academic and emotional needs; high levels of sensitivity facilitate students' ability to actively explore and learn because the teacher consistently provides comfort, reassurance, and encouragement.
- Regard for Student Perspectives (RSP) – Captures the degree to which the teachers' interactions with students and classroom activities place an emphasis on students' interests, motivations, and points of view and encourage student responsibility and autonomy.

**Below are examples from the *AI's Pals* training content and lessons.**

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### ***AI's Pals* training expands teachers' understanding of:**

- ◆ the most important protective factor – a caring adult. (PC) (TS) (RSP)
- ◆ teaching approaches that promote children's positive relationships. (PC) (TS)
- ◆ the importance of listening to and validating children. (PC) (TS) (RSP)
- ◆ how to support children's autonomy and promote independence. For example, teachers guide children to use a quiet place (*AI's Place*) to self-regulate, and regularly provide opportunities for children to make choices. (RSP)

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## Crosswalk of *AI's Pals* Training & Implementation with CLASS Domain: Emotional Support

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- ◆ how to create an emotionally safe environment in which children feel comfortable expressing their ideas and feelings, whether positive or negative. (TS) (RSP)
- ◆ the value of recognizing and acknowledging positive prosocial behavior such as a child asking another if he feels sad, sharing a favorite toy, or offering to help another child with a challenging task. (TS)

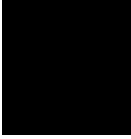
### ***AI's Pals* training enhances teachers' abilities to:**

- ◆ provide ongoing emotional support, connecting in a warm, caring way to focus on the unique needs of each child. (PC) (TS) (RSP)
- ◆ create a classroom environment of caring, cooperation, and belonging by using the *AI's Pals* teaching approaches. (PC)
- ◆ listen to, acknowledge, and validate children's feelings and ideas. (TS) (RSP)
- ◆ facilitate children's brainstorming and problem-solving. Teachers are encouraged to interact with children in an open, caring manner, allowing the children to come up with their own ideas, and guide them to solve their own problems (TS) (RSP)
- ◆ teach children to manage strong feelings by using strategies such as the Calm Down steps and *AI's Place*. This helps create a calmer, more respectful classroom climate which contributes to establishing positive relationships. (PC) (TS) (RSP)
- ◆ reinforce and role-model positive social behaviors like cooperation, kindness, respect, the use of feeling words, and social conversations. (PC) (TS) (RSP)
- ◆ respond in a caring way when children share sensitive issues, problems, or concerns using a specific framework to elicit feelings, validate them, and help children develop a coping plan. (TS) (RSP)
- ◆ involve children in meaningful ways by having them participate in decision-making and problem-solving, providing ongoing opportunities for student expression. (TS) (RSP)

### ***AI's Pals* lessons:**

- ◆ use a resilience framework focusing on nurturing children's positive relationships, social competence, problem-solving abilities, and autonomy. (PC) (RSP)
- ◆ are interactive, fun, and provide ongoing opportunities for teachers to show caring and respect, and for children to act kindly to one another. (PC) (TS) (RSP)
- ◆ include activities, discussion, and games that promote initiation, verbal expression, and decision-making. (RSP)
- ◆ regularly use engaging puppet characters that establish positive relationships with the children and promote mutual respect and caring. (PC) (TS)
- ◆ teach friendship skills, the importance of listening, and the use of kind words like please, thank you, and excuse me, helping to build positive, respectful relationships. (PC)

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## Crosswalk of *AI's Pals* Training & Implementation with CLASS Domain: Classroom Organization

The CLASS domain of Classroom Organization is defined as how teachers help children develop skills to regulate their own behavior, get the most out of each school day, and maintain interest in learning activities.

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The *AI's Pals* training and curriculum equips teachers with tools to help develop children's self-regulatory skills and problem-solving abilities. Teachers acquire positive strategies to redirect and prevent behavior issues and to communicate clear norms and behavioral expectations. The *AI's Pals* activities employ a variety of learning modalities which consistently engage the children, maximizing their learning opportunities.

### ***AI's Pals* addresses the following CLASS Dimensions within the Classroom Organization Domain:**

- Behavior Management (BM) – Encompasses the teacher's ability to provide clear behavioral expectations and use effective methods to prevent and redirect misbehavior.
- Productivity (P) – Considers how well the teacher manages instructional time and routines and provides activities for students so that they have the opportunity to be involved in learning activities.
- Instructional Learning Formats (ILF) – Focuses on the ways in which the teacher maximizes students' interest, engagement, and ability to learn from lessons and activities.

### **Below are examples from the *AI's Pals* training content and lessons.**

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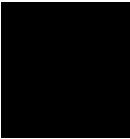
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#### ***AI's Pals* training expands teachers' understanding of:**

- ◆ the value of focusing on positive behavior, teaching children what 'to do' rather than what 'not to do.' (BM)
- ◆ the importance of reviewing lessons before delivery and paying attention to the purpose to optimize children's involvement and learning. (P) (ILF)

#### ***AI's Pals* training enhances teachers' abilities to:**

- ◆ communicate clear norms and expectations for prosocial behavior – two protective factors for children's positive development. These norms include positive social behaviors such as expressing feelings appropriately, using kind words, including peers in play, and accepting differences. (BM) (P)
- ◆ promote a caring environment of cooperation, respect, and responsibility which optimizes learning and prevents many problem behaviors from developing. (BM) (ILF)
- ◆ teach children to regulate their own feelings and behavior through use of the Calm Down steps, the Stop! Think! method, and choosing to go to *AI's Place*. As behavior improves, there is less need for discipline and more time for creative instruction. (BM) (ILF)



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## Crosswalk of *AI's Pals* Training & Implementation with CLASS Domain: Classroom Organization

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### ***AI's Pals* lessons:**

- ◆ use a step-by-step format with clearly written instructions and straightforward activities, resulting in efficient lesson delivery. The curriculum kit contains easy-to-use materials requiring minimal preparation time. (P)
- ◆ engage children through a variety of modalities including music, discussion, movement, role-play, puppetry, and interactive activities. Open-ended process questions encourage children's active participation. (ILF)
- ◆ each have a clearly stated purpose which is discussed at the beginning of the lesson and reinforced again at the end. This helps teachers keep children focused on the learning objectives. (ILF)
- ◆ use a variety of materials such as puppets, color photos, and posters that effectively hold children's interest as they participate in the hands-on activities. (ILF)
- ◆ include message pads to recognize and reinforce positive behavior. When positive behavior is spotlighted, children continue to exhibit those prosocial skills and learning is maximized. (BM) (ILF)

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## Crosswalk of *AI's Pals* Training & Implementation with CLASS Domain: Instructional Support

The CLASS domain of Instructional Support is defined as how teachers use feedback to expand and deepen children's skills and knowledge, help children learn to solve problems, reason and think, and help children develop more complex language skills.

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The *AI's Pals* lessons are intentionally formatted so that teachers share information in an interactive manner, followed by discussion and processing of the concepts presented, which promote higher order learning and language development. The process questions in the lessons provide a built-in mechanism for teachers to extend the children's learning through their responses to the children's ideas. The puppet-led discussions, role plays, and brainstorming offer opportunities for children to gain usable knowledge that they can apply to their daily lives.

### ***AI's Pals* addresses the following CLASS Dimensions within the Instructional Support Domain:**

- Concept Development (CD) – Measures the teacher's use of instructional discussions and activities to promote students' higher-order thinking skills and cognition and the teacher's focus on understanding rather than on rote instruction.
- Quality of Feedback (QF) – Assesses the degree to which the teacher provides feedback that expands learning and understanding and encourages continued participation.
- Language Modeling (LM) – Captures the quality and amount of the teacher's use of language-stimulation and language-facilitation techniques.

### **Below are examples from the *AI's Pals* training content and lessons.**

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#### ***AI's Pals* training expands teachers' understanding of:**

- ◆ how to foster resilience by regularly recognizing children's efforts and persistence, involving them in meaningful ways, and encouraging them to try new strategies. (QF)
- ◆ the importance of integrating concepts taught in the lessons into the daily classroom routine. Teachers learn to guide children to think for themselves by asking questions like "*What do you think you could do?*" or "*What do you think will happen if you try that?*" or "*How do you think that will make your friend feel?*" (CD) (LM)
- ◆ how to use the *AI's Pals* teaching approaches to guide children to solve problems, refraining from fixing the problems for them. Teachers are encouraged to intentionally provide opportunities for children to make decisions and problem-solve. (CD)

#### ***AI's Pals* training enhances teachers' abilities to:**

- ◆ facilitate children's brainstorming by asking open-ended questions and accepting children's ideas, which promotes their creativity and ability to generate new ideas. (CD)
- ◆ use a variety of processes to verbally respond to children and to ask them to explain their thinking and actions. For example, teachers are encouraged to have back and forth exchanges with children, asking them how their actions might impact others or when discussing how to handle a problem situation. (CD) (QF) (LM)



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## Crosswalk of *AI's Pals* Training & Implementation with CLASS Domain: Instructional Support

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- ◆ model aloud the processes they teach the children such as the problem-solving method and expressing their own feelings. The teacher's self-talk expands the children's language while helping them incorporate social-emotional skills into their own behavior repertoire. (LM)

### ***AI's Pals* lessons:**

- ◆ are sequenced so that the concepts build on each other. For example, higher order thinking skills like problem-solving incorporate concepts such as identifying feelings and brainstorming that are learned in earlier lessons. Teachers help children make links between new concepts and ideas they have previously learned. (CD)
- ◆ utilize scaffolded learning. Concepts are introduced and then expanded on in later lessons. Children have opportunities to share what they already know and then build on that base by responding to questions with more complex ideas that promote reasoning and analysis. (CD) (QF)
- ◆ tap into the developmental needs of young children to be active, use their imagination, and have fun. (CD)
- ◆ incorporate open-ended process questions which invite elaborate responses. (LM)
- ◆ allow time for practice and generalization of the concepts to the real world. Photographs, for example, are used to extend the learning as children respond to questions like "*What might have happened here?*" or "*What do you think they could do?*" Lessons include stories that help children relate concepts to their actual lives. Follow-up activities use role-play, games, and art to reinforce concepts and provide opportunities for children to incorporate them into their lives. (CD)
- ◆ teach children words for feelings, a 3-step process to calm down, and a 5-step process to solve problems. Original songs and posters reinforce these topics. Teachers intentionally elaborate on this social-emotional vocabulary through the use of descriptive language, providing a rich connection between new and familiar words. (LM)



## ***AI's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices***

### **Overview**

*AI's Pals* is a resiliency-based curriculum and teacher training program that develops social-emotional skills, self-control, problem-solving abilities, and healthy decision-making in children 3-8 years old. *AI's Pals* teaches children how to express feelings appropriately, use kind words, care about others, self-regulate, think independently, accept differences, solve problems peacefully, cope, make safe and healthy choices, and understand that tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs are not for children.

### **How It Works**

The Wingspan-trained preschool, kindergarten, or first-grade teacher conducts two *AI's Pals* lessons a week, each lasting 10 to 15 minutes. Designed specifically for early childhood, the lessons use guided creative play, brainstorming, puppetry, original music, role plays, and movement to develop children's social-emotional competence and life skills. Using the *AI's Pals* teaching approaches, educators reinforce and model the *AI's Pals* concepts throughout the day, providing the children with opportunities to practice and generalize their newly acquired skills.

### **Curriculum Kit**

Each *AI's Pals* classroom uses the materials from its own curriculum kit both within and between lessons to infuse prosocial concepts into daily classroom life. The developmentally appropriate materials — puppets, posters, photographs, music, books, "Alagram" school-to-home positive notes, and parent letters — help build a classroom environment that promotes caring, cooperation, respect, and healthy decision-making.

### **AI's Pals Training**

The core training that accompanies the *AI's Pals* curriculum is integral to the program's success. The trainers' expertise in social-emotional development, positive guidance of young children's behavior, and adult-child relationships is incorporated into the training experience. Early childhood educators who attend *AI's Pals* training strengthen their abilities to interact with children in a warm, caring manner, validate children's feelings and experiences, communicate clear norms, respond to sensitive issues, and guide problem-solving.

### **Proven Results**

- Children who participate in *AI's Pals* are 2 to 5 times more likely to improve their use of positive social behaviors like sharing, taking turns, using self-control, and solving problems than children who do not participate.
- Children who do not participate in *AI's Pals* are 2 to 6 times more likely to increase their use of antisocial and aggressive behaviors like hitting, name-calling, bullying, and destroying others' belongings than children in *AI's Pals*.

Due to extensive positive research findings, *AI's Pals* has been nationally recognized as a program that works. *AI's Pals* has been designated an effective prevention program by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, U.S. Dept. of Education, and U.S. Dept. of Justice.

