Great Start to Quality
User Guide for
Out-of-School Time
2017

This document can be used as a companion to the Orientation webinar videos for out-of-school time only programs engaging in Great Start to Quality. The clickable table of contents allow you to jump to any section of the document.

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Getting Started

Q: What is being launched?

A: Over the last two years the Early Childhood Investment Corporation and the Michigan Department of Education-Office of Great Start, along with its partners, conducted three pilots for out-of-school time programs with the goal of integration with the current statewide Quality Rating and Improvement System; Great Start to Quality. Starting December 1st, 2017, programs licensed to serve schoolagers only (children from kindergarten entry to age 12) are eligible to participate in Great Start to Quality.

Q: What is required of my program to participate?

A: To be eligible for Great Start to Quality your program must:

- Be licensed to serve schoolagers only.
- Be in Good Standing with Licensing.

Q: What else should I know as a participant?

A: This process is driven by *you*. You set the pace, you can take as long as you like to complete the Self-Assessment Survey and upload supporting documentation. Once you are ready you must click the "Submit for Validation" button and Great Start to Quality will take the next steps.

Benefits for Participants

Q: What are the benefits of participating?

A: There are a variety of benefits, including:

- You set the pace!
- Free Program Profile on the Great Start to Quality website
- Receive a Star rating valid for two years
- Increased Reimbursement through the Child Development and Care subsidy program
- Decrease or eliminate the cost for families using the Child Development and Care subsidy program
- All programs are eligible for a no-cost Assessment

Orientation Webinar

Q: What is the Orientation webinar?

A: The Orientation webinar is split into four short videos for out-of-school time programs to use to support them to complete the self-assessment process, upload documentation and submit the program for validation.

Q: How long will the Orientation webinar last?

A: Each video about eight minutes long.

Q: What if I cannot attend the Orientation webinars when they are scheduled?

A: A recording of the webinar is always available on the Great Start to Quality website **here**.

Program Profile

This section shows how a program should complete their Program Profile. The Program Profile is meant to capture basic information about the program. The information provided in the Program Profile is the information that will be used to communicate with the program through the self-assessment and rating process.

Tips

- Be sure to use the name of the program as it is **listed on the License.** This may be different from what the program is called in other materials.
- The contact person should be the person who will be completing self-assessment survey and answering questions during the Validation call. This will be the person who Great Start to Quality contacts with any questions or concerns.
- A classroom is defined as the following:
    - A consistent group of children with consistent caregivers. It is **not** based on physical space, but looks at the grouping of children to staff.
        - *Example One*: The program has one group of children and staff who move freely through different physical spaces (rooms). This would be seen as one classroom as it maintains a consistent group of children with consistent staff.
        - *Example Two*: A program splits the children by grade (K-1, 2-3, 4-5) and has specific staff dedicated to each group there would be one classroom for each group. In this case, there would be three classrooms.
- You must use the same computer to access the in-progress Self-Assessment Survey. That is the way the website recognizes which survey to open. If you try to access the Self-Assessment Survey from a new computer you will need to start over.

- The survey will only save completed pages meaning, you must complete the full page for the survey to save your answers.

Self-Assessment Survey

Q: What is the Self-Assessment Survey (SAS)?

A: The SAS is a series of indicators that are reflective of Michigan's definition of quality in out-of-school time settings. These indicators fall into five categories:

- **Staff Qualifications and Professional Development** – Providers have a college degree, have attended and/or are taking college classes, have obtained a Child Development Associate or a Montessori or [Michigan School-Age Youth Development credential,](#) and/or have participated in trainings relevant to youth development and out-of-school time topics.
- **Family and Community Partnerships** – Program staff help families learn more about how their children learn and grow and they meet with parents to talk about their schoolagers' development. Program staff let families know about places in the community that can help them when they need assistance and support schoolagers' transitions into kindergarten and to other programs.
- **Administration and Management** – Program has written policies and procedures for staff, if applicable, and yearly staff evaluations. Staff set yearly goals for themselves and offers different types of benefits for their staff.
- **Environment** – The physical space, where care is provided, is free of safety hazards and providers offer nutritionally sound meals as well as nutrition education to families. Program keep track of schoolagers mental health and communicate with families about their schoolager's overall health.
- **Curriculum and Instruction** – Program has a mission statement for their program, follow a flexible daily schedule, and use curriculum that helps them make decisions about the daily routine.

Q: What is the basis for the quality indicators?

A: There are two documents that provide the foundation of Michigan's definition of quality for out-of-school time care and education field. These documents are reflected in the indicators in the Self-Assessment Survey and Assessment tool.

- Core Knowledge and Core Competencies for Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals
- Michigan Out-of-School Time Standards of Quality

Q: What is the format of the Self-Assessment Survey in SurveyMonkey®?

A: There are two types of indicators in the SAS. Most indicators fall into the first type shown below.

Figure 1 Indicator Type One

The second format you will see is in the Staff Qualifications and Professional Development section of the SAS. These indicators are made up of a series of statements. Select which statement **best** describes your staff.

**Great Start to Quality
Self-Assessment Survey for Out-of-School Time Programs**

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

* 58. Out-of-school time program director or site Supervisor has:

○ 60 semester hours with 12 semester hours in a child-related field and 1,200 hours of experience with schoolagers

   OR

   A valid Child Development Associate (CDA) or Montessori credential with 12 semester hours in a child-related field AND 960 hours of experience with schoolagers.

○ A valid Michigan School Age Youth Development Credential or equivalent with 12 semester hours in a child-related field AND 960 hours of experience with schoolagers.

○ An Associate's degree in a child-related field with 960 hours of experience with schoolagers

   OR

   60 semester hours in a program leading to a Bachelor's degree in a child-related field with at least 24 of those semester hours in a child-related field AND 960 hours of experience with schoolagers

   OR

   Has a Bachelor's degree or higher in a child-related field.

○ Out-of-school time program director or site supervisor has a Bachelor's degree or higher in a child-related field AND one of the following:

   A valid Michigan School Age Youth Development Credential

   OR

   960 hours of experience.

Figure 2 Indicator Type Two

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Q: How do I complete the Self-Assessment Survey?

A: It is recommended that programs take the following steps to complete the self-assessment process:

1) Complete the basic program information about the staff and program structure.
2) Review the Program Quality Indicator Guidance Document. Note the indicators you believe are true for your program and consider what documentation you may have to show that your program is meeting the indicator.
3) Complete the Self-Assessment Survey on SurveyMonkey by selecting a response for each indicator.
4) Upload supporting documentation using Dropbox.
5) Share the Dropbox folder with OutOfSchoolTime@ecic4kids.org
6) Submit for validation.

A few reminders:

- If you select '*Yes'* for an indicator you must upload supporting documentation.
- You will have an opportunity to upload additional documentation after your validation call, but it is highly recommended you upload as much documentation as possible during your initial submission.

You have the option to complete the self-assessment process all at once or work on it over time. We recommend completing a full page before you exit out of the survey. SurveyMonkey will only save your progress up to the last completed page. To re-enter your survey use this link.

Q: What if I am not sure what an indicator is asking?

A: Begin by reviewing the Program Quality Indicator Guidance document. Focus on the *Intent of Indicator* and the documents linked in the *Learn More* section. If more support is needed, contact us by email or call your Great Start to Quality Resource Center at 1-877-614-7328.

Q: What if I'm not sure if the document I have is proof my program meets the indicator?

A: Using the Program Quality Indicators for Out-of-School Time review the Suggested Documentation section for list of examples. During the validation call, Validators will ask questions and request additional documentation for indicators that were selected and do not yet meet the indicator.

Q: How will I get a copy of my Self-Assessment Survey?

A: A copy of your Self-Assessment Survey will be uploaded to the program's Dropbox folder within a week of submission.

Q: How do I provide my documentation for each of the indicators I selected?

A: Programs provide documentation for review by creating a Dropbox account and sharing a folder where the documentation has been uploaded with the validation team at ECIC. Guidance on how to create a Dropbox, create a folder, upload into the folder and how to share that folder are available at: http://greatstarttoquality.org/out-school-time.

Validation

Q: What is validation?

A: Validation is an in-depth review of all uploaded documentation to verify that the program quality indicators selected by the program, in their Self-Assessment Survey, are currently in practice. It includes a call between the Validator and the program contact person to discuss selected indicators and supporting documentation.

Q: What is the validation process?

A: The process starts when the Validator receives the completed SAS and supporting documents.

1. Next the Validator will review SAS selections and supporting documentation. If an indicator does not have any supporting documentation, credit cannot be earned.
2. Once the validator has completed the initial review of the program's SAS and supporting documentation they will contact the program to schedule a validation call.
3. During the validation call, the Validator will ask clarifying questions and programs may identify additional documentation that they would like to submit.
4. After the additional documentation is uploaded the Validator will review and finalize the validation report.
5. This report will be uploaded into the program's Dropbox.

Q: How long will I wait for the validation call?

A: Validators will work as quickly and thoroughly as possible to complete initial validations. Programs should expect to be contacted within 14 business days to schedule their call. Programs should mark the time of the call on their calendar and prepare to have about an hour of time to talk. If you miss the

scheduling call, a voicemail will be left with the validator's contact information for you to return the call. The program will need to make contact with the Validator within three business days to schedule the validation, or the program will be declined due to no contact.

Q: What can I expect during my validation call?

A: The call will take about an hour with the validator asking any questions they have about the program. You also have the opportunity to ask clarifying questions. Together you will identify any additional documents that should be uploaded to support the program's validation.

Q: What do I need for my validation call?

A: To be prepared for your call it is recommend to have the following materials at hand:

- The Great Star to Quality Program Quality Indicator Guidance Document
- The completed Self-Assessment Survey (this will be provided to you in Dropbox)
- Access to your uploaded documents
- A list of all staff (director/site supervisor, leads, assistants) with qualifications and hire dates

Q: What if I miss the phone call for my Validation?

A: The Validator will leave a message with a number to call to reschedule. You have three business days to contact the Validator and reschedule your validation. If you do not, you will need to complete Step 4, submitting the program for validation, again.

Q: How do I submit additional documents?

A: If additional documents are identified, an email will be sent that lists the documents you identified. To upload them, simply return to your Dropbox folder and add the documents. Please **do not remove** any documents from your Dropbox folder; just add the additional pieces.

Q: When will we be able to see the difference between our published rating and our self-assessed rating, if there is one?

A: This information will be made available inside of the program's Validation Report. Programs could also use the Out-of-School Time Self-Assessment Survey Tracking Sheet to tally their own score, as they respond to each indicator.

Q: When will the validated rating be available?

A: Great Start to Quality is committed to moving programs through the validation process in a timely manner and will contact participants as quickly as possible after their validation is complete. You will receive an email alerting you that the validation report is available in Dropbox. This email will also have next steps for publishing the rating.

Q: My rating is lower than what the program self-assessed at, why is that?

A: The validation of one or more of the indicators was different from what you marked on your Self-Assessment Survey based on the review of the evidence provided, resulting in a lower overall rating. Review your Validation Report to understand where there is a difference between your self-assessment rating and your final validated rating.

Q: When is a program's rating published?

A: A rating is posted after a program completes the rating process. Depending on your program, this may be after validation or after assessment has been completed. If you wish to decline the program's rating email outofschooltime@ecic4kids.org with the subject line: Decline Our Rating.

Q: I have some questions about my final score and rating, who is the best person to contact?

A: The primary program contact should email Great Start to Quality at outofschooltime@ecic4kids.org.

Assessment

Q: What is Assessment?

A: Assessment is an opportunity to have an external valid and reliable Assessors visit your program and administer the *School Age Program Quality Assessment Plus Extension* which is owned by the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality.

All programs are eligible to participate in an Assessment. However only 4 and 5 Star programs have assessment scores figured into their final rating. A program that rates at a 1, 2 or 3 star will receive the detailed assessment report but the score will not impact the final rating.

During the process, programs will receive the assessment window after completing the validation. The assessment day should be a regular program day, when most children are typically in attendance.

It is <u>required</u> that the main staff person (sometimes called the site supervisors) is present. Assessors cannot complete an assessment if the main staff is absent.

Please note: For a program to have a 4 Star rating the SA-PQA score must be a 3.5 or higher. For a program to have a 5 Star rating the SA-PQA score must be 4.5 or higher.

Q: What should be expected during an Assessment visit?

A: Programs can expect one Assessor to visit them during the assessment timeframe. The amount of time an Assessor will spend observing the program will be determined by the amount of time needed to observe each of the SA-PQA items. For example, if the Assessor arrives in the morning and outdoor time is not scheduled until later in the day, the Assessor will remain until this can be observed.

The Assessor will be happy to introduce themselves to the staff and children and explain their purpose for visiting the program. If this would be helpful to put the children in your program at ease, please ask the Assessor to do so. After this point, however they will focus on observation and avoid engaging directly with staff or schoolagers.

Q: How many assessments will need to be completed during the Assessment visit?

A: One.

Q: How should I prepare for Assessment?

A: First, you should communicate with the families whose schoolagers are in your care that an Assessor will be visiting the program to observe. It is recommended that staff be made aware of the possibility that they will be observed and should be encouraged to try to continue with business as usual. Please do not alter anything about the program in preparation for the assessment; the observation is meant to capture a

typical day. This includes something as small as offering the Assessor a chair or a snack; they are there to observe the program and should not be accommodated in a way that changes the environment.

Q: Can I see the Assessment tool?

A: The SA-PQA Plus Extension is available to the public on the Weikart Center for Program Quality website.