

Approved Assessor Guidance for Head Start, Early Head Start, and NAEYC Accredited Classrooms



ALTERNATE PATH PROGRAMS

Programs with Head Start or Early Head Start classrooms and programs who are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) are considered Alternate Path programs in Great Start to Quality (GSQ) because they are monitored at a national or a state level beyond licensing.

Head Start and Early Head Start programs must select their grantee in the Status tab of the Organization Profile. NAEYC accredited programs must indicate this and upload a certificate or other proof of current accreditation under the Program Info tab of the organization profile.

Alternate Path programs that received a 5 Star validation need an on-site assessment score of 4.5 or higher to publish at 5 Star. GSQ uses the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) tools for the on-site assessment. Alternate Path programs have the option to use a GSQ Assessor or an Approved Assessor to conduct their on-site assessment.

- A [GSQ Assessor](#) is an employee of the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) which implements Great Start to Quality.
- An [Approved Assessor](#) is someone with PQA certification that the program selects to complete the on-site assessment.

BECOMING AN APPROVED ASSESSOR

Anyone wishing to serve as a GSQ Approved Assessor must have all the following:

- Training through HighScope in the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) applicable to the program or classroom (Preschool, Infant-Toddler, or Family Child Care)
- Certification from HighScope as a Reliable PQA Assessor (annually for the first two years and every two years thereafter)
- Be free of conflict of interest. A conflict of interest would include having:
 - Supervisory responsibility for the program, classroom, or staff
 - A personal relationship with the director, owner, or staff
 - Worked for the program in the past
 - An employment or contractual relationship with a Great Start Collaborative, Great Start Parent Coalition, or GSQ Resource Center to fulfill the duties of a Director/Coordinator, Parent Liaison, Quality Improvement Consultant (QIC), or Quality Improvement Specialist (QIS)
 - A relationship with the program resulting in financial benefit
- Complete the GSQ [Approved Rater Certification Process](#)

After all documentation and verification is complete, Approved Assessors will receive a certificate via email appointing them as an Approved Assessor for GSQ for one year. For more information about becoming an Approved Assessor, please visit the [Approved Assessor](#) page of the GSQ website.

CLASSROOM NAMES

For the completed results to be shared with the STARS system, the Classroom Name in OnlinePQA and the Classroom Name in STARS must match using the naming convention of **License Number-Teacher's Last Name**. For example, *DC111111111-McTesterson*. Please note, the names must match exactly this includes spelling, capitalization, and spacing.

SELECTING AN ASSESSOR

As programs verify their classroom information in the Application, they will be required to select an Assessor Type. If an Approved Assessor has completed or will complete a PQA for the classroom, select Approved Assessor. If an Approved Assessor will not be completing a PQA, select GSQ Assessor.

The Assessment Team will verify all Assessor selections during the on-site assessment scheduling process. If an incorrect selection was made or something has changed, they will change the selection as needed.

CONDUCTING THE ASSESSMENT

Great Start to Quality (GSQ) does not assign Approved Assessors. Programs who have chosen to use an Approved Assessor work directly with the Approved Assessor to coordinate the assessment. The program and Approved Assessor decide scheduling, compensation, expectations, timelines, and all other details.

Please note, GSQ uses the Preschool PQA, Infant Toddler PQA, and Family Child Care PQA and can only accept these results. PQA-R and other assessments are not accepted for GSQ.

ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Approved Assessors enter the PQA results into the Online PQA system and share a copy of the results with the program. The program then emails a copy of the PQA results to the Assessment Team and they are manually entered into STARS. Once the PQA results are in STARS, the star rating will publish and be valid for two years.

QUESTIONS

Quality Improvement staff at your local Great Start to Quality Resource Center are partners in navigating the rating process. Contact the local [Great Start to Quality Resource Center](#) or call 1-877-614-7328 with any questions.