Great Start to Quality

Infant-Toddler Program Quality Assessment (PQA)

On-Site Assessment Support Document

June 2020



## HOW TO USE THE ON-SITE ASSESSMENT SUPPORT DOCUMENT

The following questions can help support program administrators and staff as they reflect on program practices while preparing for the on-site assessment portion of Great Start to Quality. These questions will help programs identify best practices and how to best support the children in care. There are questions for each domain in the Program Quality Assessment (PQA), where staff can think about program practices and how the program can meet, or is meeting, the indicators. Using this document will help with understanding how to include these practices into the program to improve quality but does not guarantee credit on the items in the PQA during the on-site assessment.

This document is intended to support programs as they either prepare for their on-site assessment or for help in creating their program’s Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). Programs can work on one section at a time or complete only those sections that have been identified as opportunities for improvement from a previous on-site assessment. *This is not a required document.* Programs can choose to complete as much as they feel is necessary to prepare for their on-site assessment or to help complete their program’s QIP.

At the end of the worksheet, there is a section for reflection on the program’s previous on-site assessment results, areas staff may want to focus on for quality improvement, questions program staff may have for Resource Center staff, and an area to list topics of interest that programs may want to learn more about via trainings or professional development.

## PROGRAM QUALITY ASSESSMENT (PQA) TOOL

The PQA was developed by [HighScope Education Research Foundation](https://highscope.org/our-practice/child-assessment/pqa/) as a tool to measure program quality, not specific to the HighScope curriculum. Within the Infant-Toddler PQA tool there are four domains, which include the learning environment, schedules and routines, adult-child interaction, and curriculum planning and child observation. Providers will learn why each domain in the PQA tool is important and will be provided guiding questions to help staff reflect on the program and best practice in meeting the indicators for each domain.

## LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Age-appropriate early childhood learning environments are created with the knowledge of how children learn and develop. Much of a young child’s development and learning takes place through their senses. The environment and materials in the classroom play a critical role in their development.

The **Program Quality Assessment (PQA)** tool provides information about the learning environment domain. Please see pages 1-25.

Michigan Department of Education’s (MDE) [Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Infant and Toddler Programs](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/ECSQ_IT_approved_422341_7.pdf) explain more about best practices regarding environment and materials. Please see pages 89-90.

[Michigan Core Knowledge and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Workforce (CKCC)](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/MI_CKCC_6-19-14_Revisions_461813_7.pdf) Competency Area: Interactions and Guidance, Competency Statement D: Demonstrates ability to establish an environment that supports social and emotional development. Please see page 27.

### Learning Environment Guiding Questions:

* *What routines are in place to stop the spread of germs?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How would someone in the classroom know where to find a first aid kit, apply emergency first aid, or how to exit the building safely if there was an emergency?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How has an area been created for children to sleep on demand?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How have sociable mealtimes been included in the children’s schedule each day?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How has the learning environment been designed so that staff are always able to view the children, including food prep and diaper changing times?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How have soft spaces, freedom of movement, and climbing opportunities been included in the care space for the children?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How have the interest areas been arranged in a way that would be helpful, such as placing certain areas next to each other based on how children play and use materials?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How is the classroom separated into interest areas? How do current and new children and visitors know what those interest areas are?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *What materials are included in the classroom so that children utilize all their senses? How have multiple types of materials and textures been included in the classroom?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How is the children’s interest maintained with materials in the classroom?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How has the learning environment been set up so the children are able to access all materials on their own?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are multiple cultures, ethnicities, races, and genders included throughout the classroom? How are children of all cultures, ethnicities, races, and genders encouraged to do or be anything they would like?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *What has been included in the classroom that makes children feel safe and connected to their families while they are away from them?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How is the children’s artwork displayed, so it is at children’s level? How did the children complete the work that is on display, so parents and visitors know that it was created solely by the children?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How has the outdoor space been made safe and easily accessible? How have materials for various types of play, that are of interest to children, been included in the outdoor space?* Click or tap here to enter text.

## SCHEDULES AND ROUTINES

Daily routines should provide a predictable, yet flexible routine and have transitions between activities that are smooth and kept to a minimum. A consistent routine creates a feeling of safety, builds trusting relationships, lowers negative child behaviors, and helps children learn classroom activities through repetition. A valuable routine will include a variety of learning experiences and activities.

The **Program Quality Assessment (PQA)** tool provides information about the daily routine domain. Please see pages 26-48.

MDE’s [Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Infant and Toddler Programs](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/ECSQ_IT_approved_422341_7.pdf) explain more about best practices regarding daily routine. Please see pages 91-94.

[Michigan Core Knowledge and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Workforce (CKCC)](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/MI_CKCC_6-19-14_Revisions_461813_7.pdf), Competency Area: Teaching and Learning, Competency Statements D, J and K. Please see pages 39, and 49-51.

### Schedules and Routines Guiding Questions:

* *How has a consistent routine been included in the classroom that allows flexibility for the children?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How would the children and parents in the program know when the parts of the day take place?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are children that have problems separating from families or family members supported?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are families or family members supported when they become upset during separation or reunion with their children?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How is time provided in the daily schedule where the older toddlers (ages 24 months and up) make and share their plans? After the children carry out their plans, how has an opportunity been created for children to reflect on and share their experiences?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How is participation and allowing children to make choices during bodily care routines encouraged?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are transitions planned to flow smoothly from one part of the day to the next? How are children’s bodies and independence during transitions respected?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are infants fed bottles in a way that helps build a strong caregiver-interaction bond?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are choices and allowing for independence included at mealtimes?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How has a time for children to build on their interests and development been included in the schedule?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How is child-directed learning at group times encouraged?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How has a variety of activities been included during outside time?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are children’s individual needs for sleep and rest time supported?* Click or tap here to enter text.

## ADULT-CHILD INTERACTION

A quality program is designed to improve children’s feelings of comfort, security, self-esteem, and development of positive relationships with adults and other children. A quality program demonstrates the value of play throughout all aspects of the program. A quality program has activities that are designed so that concepts and skills are presented using a variety of methods.

The **Program Quality Assessment (PQA)** tool provides information about the adult-child interaction domain. Please see pages 49-66.

MDE’s [Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Infant and Toddler Programs](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/ECSQ_IT_approved_422341_7.pdf) explain more about best practices regarding interactions with the children in your care. Please see pages 86-88.

[Michigan Core Knowledge and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Workforce (CKCC)](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/MI_CKCC_6-19-14_Revisions_461813_7.pdf), Competency Area: Teaching and Learning, Competency L; pages 52-53 and Competency Area: Interactions and Guidance, Competencies A-E. Please see pages 24-29.

### Adult-Child Interaction Guiding Questions:

* *How has a learning environment been created where children feel connected to their caregivers and their preferences for caregivers are acknowledged?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How do caregivers form a trusted relationship with children in the classroom through caregiver actions and words?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *What methods are used for respecting a child’s pace and choices throughout the day?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are children interacted with in the classroom? What kind of questions are asked, and comments are made, to encourage child reflection, thought processes, and growth?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are children’s accomplishments authentically acknowledged in the classroom?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are children encouraged in the classroom to do things for themselves?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are children encouraged to interact with one another and what routines been established in the classroom to support child relationships?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are conflicts resolved when they arise?* Click or tap here to enter text.

## CURRICULUM PLANNING AND CHILD OBSERVATION

The curriculum should be based on the predictable order of growth and development of infants and toddler aged children. An effective curriculum gives children a clear and planned set of experiences and activities in the natural environment. Experiences and activities should build on the child’s interests and should support children’s development across all domains.

The **Program Quality Assessment (PQA)** tool provides information about the curriculum planning and assessment domain. Please see pages 67-73.

MDE’s [Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Infant and Toddler Programs](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/ECSQ_IT_approved_422341_7.pdf) explain more about best practices regarding curriculum planning and assessment. Please see pages 95-99.

[Michigan Core Knowledge and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Workforce (CKCC)](file:///C:/Users/nkretzschmer/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/B2YG8RLR/Michigan%20Core%20Knowledge%20and%20Core%20Competencies%20for%20Early%20Care%20and%20Education%20Workforce%20(CKCC)), Competency Area: Teaching and Learning, Competency Statement M; page 54, and Competency Area: Observation, Documentation and Assessment, Competency Statements A-E. Please see pages 61-66.

### Curriculum Planning and Child Observation Guiding Questions:

* *How does the curriculum help guide decisions about teaching and learning in the program?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are observations used to understand the development that is seen in the children every day? What kind of information is written down when observing the children? How is the information that is written down shared with families?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How is responsibility shared for planning and teaching the activities in the program? How is communication with other caregivers about what is seen or heard communicated?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How is the children’s growth assessed? How is this information shared with families or other caregivers?* Click or tap here to enter text.

## QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is the tool the Provider and Quality Improvement Consultant (QIC) can use to track goals and growth in Great Start to Quality.

*Previous PQA Score (if applicable):* Click or tap here to enter text.

*Areas of Focus for Quality Improvement:*Click or tap here to enter text.

*Questions for Quality Improvement Specialist (QIS)/Quality Improvement Consultant (QIC):* Click or tap here to enter text.

*List of Possible Training/Professional Development Ideas related to Areas of Focus in the QIP:* Click or tap here to enter text.