Great Start to Quality

Preschool Program Quality Assessment (PQA)

On-Site Assessment Support Document

June 2020

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## 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 Preschool PQA tool, there are four domains, which include the learning environment, daily routine, adult-child interaction, and curriculum planning and assessment. Providers will learn why each domain in the PQA tool is important and will be provided 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 planned with the knowledge of how children learn and develop. Young children are concrete learners. Much of their development and learning takes place through their senses. The physical environment and materials in the classroom play an important role in their development.

The **Program Quality Assessment (PQA)** tool provides information about the learning environment domain and its indicators. Please see pages 5-14.

Michigan Department of Education’s (MDE) [Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/ECSQ_OK_Approved_422339_7.pdf) explain best practices about the environment and materials. Please see pages 129-132.

[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:

* *How would someone in the classroom know where to find a first aid kit? How would someone in the classroom know how to exit the building safely if there were an emergency?* 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.
* *How are the interest areas placed in the classroom so there is good traffic flow and good use of things like sinks, doorways, carpet vs tile, etc.?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are the interest areas 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.
* *Where have the materials been placed in the classroom so that it makes sense to the children? How are children encouraged, current and new, in knowing where to find and put away materials on their own?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are the materials arranged so they are easy for children to access by themselves?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *What materials have been included that represent all the senses? How have different types of materials and textures been included in the classroom?* 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 is included in the classroom that makes children feel connected to their families while at the program?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How is the children’s artwork displayed so children can view it? How does the children’s artwork display their creativity and individualism?* Click or tap here to enter text.

## DAILY ROUTINE

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 daily routine will include a variety of learning experiences and activities.

The **Program Quality Assessment (PQA)** tool provides information about the daily routine domain and its indicators. Please see pages 15-27.

MDE’s [Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/ECSQ_OK_Approved_422339_7.pdf) explain more about best practices regarding daily routine. Please see pages 121-128.

[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.

### Daily Routine Guiding Questions:

* *How has a consistent, yet flexible, routine been included in the classroom for the children?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How would children and parents know when the parts of the day take place?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How has time been offered in the daily schedule where the children make and share their plans? After the children carry out their plans, how has an opportunity been created for children to share their experiences?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How have opportunities been included for children to expand on their interests and development?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How have small group times been created in a way that allow children to form relationships? How have small group times created a time for children to explore and be creative?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are transitions planned so that they are helpful, varied, and allow children choices?* 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 are a variety of physical activities included during outside time?*Click or tap here to enter text.

## ADULT-CHILD INTERACTION

A quality program is designed to increase children’s feelings of comfort, safety, confidence, and development of positive relationships with adults and other children. A quality program demonstrates the value of play throughout all parts of the program. A quality program has activities that are planned so that ideas and skills are taught using many different methods and techniques.

The **Program Quality Assessment (PQA)** tool provides information about the adult-child interaction domain and its indicators. Please see pages 28-41.

MDE’s [Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/ECSQ_OK_Approved_422339_7.pdf) explain best practices about interactions with the children in your care. Please see pages 116-120.

[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 do staff members know what to do if a child were to get hurt or become sick?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are the children who do not sleep at rest time supported?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are the children that have issues separating from families or family members supported?*Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are children talked to in the classroom? What kind of questions are asked, and comments are made, to children to encourage child reflection, thought processes, and expansion? How are children shown that their conversations are valuable?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are plans made to support or extend children’s learning?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are staff members joining in children’s play?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How is child-leadership and child-directed learning supported at large and small group times?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are children’s accomplishments acknowledged in the classroom in an authentic way?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are children encouraged to interact with one another and what routines are included in the classroom to support child relationships?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are English Language Learners supported, both in classroom learning and procedures as well as establishing peer relationships?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are children in the classroom encouraged to do things for themselves?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are children supported when managing conflict?* Click or tap here to enter text.

## CURRICULUM PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

The curriculum should be based on the predictable sequences of growth and development of three- and four-year-old children. An effective curriculum offers a clear and intentional 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 and its indicators. Please see pages 42-46.

MDE’s [Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/ECSQ_OK_Approved_422339_7.pdf) explain best practices about curriculum planning and assessment. Please see pages 109 and 133-135.

[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 Statement M; page 54, and Competency Area: Observation, Documentation and Assessment, Competency Statements A-E. Please see pages 61-66.

### Curriculum Planning and Assessment Guiding Questions:

* *How does the curriculum help guide decisions about teaching and learning?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How does the program curriculum guide program practices and child development goals? How is this shared with families?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How is the responsibility shared for planning and teaching the activities in the program?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are child information records kept of children and their families?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How are the anecdotal notes recorded for the children in the classroom? How are the anecdotal notes talked about and used?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How is the information written in anecdotal notes shared with families?* Click or tap here to enter text.
* *How is the children’s developmental growth measured?*Click or tap here to enter text.

## QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is a 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.