



Q What is Great Start to Quality?

Great Start to Quality is Michigan's system, which sets the quality standards and evaluates the quality of early care and education programs. It is funded by the Department of Education. Great Start to Quality includes 10 Resource Centers across the state that work with programs to take steps to improve their quality. Great Start to Quality also shares information about programs with families and helps families select the right program for their needs.

Q Why was Great Start to Quality created?

The Great Start to Quality System (GSQ) was created in 2011 to increase the quality of Michigan's early care and education programs during the important early years. Research suggests that 90% of a child's brain development happens by age 5.

Q How do Great Start to Quality programs participate?

Programs participate in Great Start to Quality's improvement process and achieve a quality level. Through this, programs review their program against the GSQ quality indicators, and work with Resource Center staff to set goals, achieve goals, and make improvements to their programs. Programs meet state health and safety standards and often participate in extra professional development, training, and one-on-one coaching with quality improvement coaches as part of the process.

Q What programs can participate in Great Start to Quality?

All licensed early care and education programs that serve children from birth to 12 years can participate. This includes child care, preschool, and before and after school programs.

Q Are programs required to participate in Great Start to Quality?

All licensed programs that meet licensing requirements set by the state begin at the Maintaining Health and Safety level. However, programs can choose to achieve different quality levels at their own pace.

Q What does each Quality Level mean?

There are five levels in the quality improvement process:

Maintaining health & Safety - Programs have met important health and safety standards set by the state.

Reflecting on Quality - Programs evaluate their practices using research-based standards.

Enhancing Quality - Programs can work with Quality Improvement Coaches at their local Great Start to Quality Resource Center to take steps to reach their goals.

Enhancing Quality - Validated - A state Validator reviews documentation to verify the program has proof of meeting high-quality practices. This information is shared with families on the GSQ website.

Demonstrating Quality - Programs have had a GSQ Assessor observe the program and they have met quality scores set by the state. The Assessor uses assessment tools to measure high-quality environments, practices, and how adults interact with children.

Q How long does a program remain at a Quality Level?

A program's Quality Level is valid for 2 years. After that time, they need to reapply.

Q What should I look for in a high quality program?

High quality programs reflect on their practices, align with research-based best practices, make improvements based on the needs of the children, and partner with families to help each child learn and thrive.

Q What are the benefits of my child attending a Great Start to Quality participating program?

Programs that participate in Great Start to Quality are implementing quality practices recognized by the State of Michigan. Families can use the Quality Levels and information on the Great Start to Quality website to select the right program.

Visit www.greatstarttoquality.org and search by zip code to learn about the different options available.