

Archived Information

The following pages contain a self-assessment tool using the quality indicator statements for the six features of high-quality early childhood programs described in Section III. For each quality indicator statement, determine how descriptive that indicator is of your program, ranging from “Not at all Descriptive of our Program” to “Very Descriptive of our Program.” Write notes to explain the ratings.

It is helpful to involve a multi-disciplinary team to determine and discuss the ratings. Use the team discussion to identify the strengths of preschool services and also determine areas for needed improvements.



A. QUALITY INDICATORS FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT:

DEVELOPMENT OF HOME-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

- 1 All parents believe that their child’s teacher respects their views and express trust in the teacher. Parents are welcome visitors to the program at any time.
- 2 A system is in place for teacher-parent communication of day-to-day happenings that may affect children. Staff regularly provides information to parents about how their children are progressing and does so formally through conferences several times a year.
- 3 The school has explicit expectations for the parent’s role. Staff provides information to all parents about their roles in family-school relationships, the schedule and school calendar, the meaning of progress reports and school forms, and so forth.
- 4 All parents have opportunities for input into program procedures and the plans for meeting their child’s needs.

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

| NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE | | VERY DESCRIPTIVE | | |
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HOME LITERACY ENVIRONMENT AND PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS

- 1 Staff routinely provides books and other literacy materials for use in the home environment. Staff encourages parent-child book reading in a variety of ways. Staff demonstrates ways to read with children.
- 2 Staff makes home visits for instructional purposes as appropriate.
- 3 During parent-teacher conferences, staff asks parents for their observations about their child’s language and literacy development. Staff uses the knowledge in ongoing assessment and planning.
- 4 The program makes available opportunities for parents to extend their own literacy learning, directly or through referrals.

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

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PROGRAM SELF-RATING

COMPETENCE IN WORKING WITH DIVERSE PARENT POPULATIONS

| | NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE | | VERY DESCRIPTIVE | | |
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| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 Staff has detailed knowledge of the social and cultural contexts in which children live. Staff understands and respects the values and traditions of culturally diverse families. | | | | | |
| 2 Staff makes appropriate accommodations for parents with special needs, e.g., oral presentations of written material, visits to the home. | | | | | |
| 3 Staff makes arrangements for communicating with parents in their preferred language. | | | | | |

B. QUALITY OF LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

CLASS SIZE AND TEACHER-STUDENT RATIOS

| | NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE | | VERY DESCRIPTIVE | | |
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| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 The number of adults in the classroom and the adult-child ratio follow state-recommended guidelines for age groups. Ratios and grouping are adequate so that each child is known well by at least one adult. | | | | | |
| 2 Staff members have assigned responsibility for a particular group of children. Programs maintain stable staff relationships, for example, keeping the same staff with children over several years. | | | | | |
| 3 Space is arranged so that children can work individually, in small groups, and as a whole group. | | | | | |

B. QUALITY OF LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS (CONTINUED)

SAFE, SECURE CLASSROOMS, SCHOOLS, AND OTHER LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE VERY DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

- 1 The space, including outdoor play areas, is clean, well-lighted and ventilated and in good repair.
- 2 Room arrangements, schedules, and daily expectations follow consistent routines that are known to children. Transitions are smooth, purposeful, and not rushed.
- 3 There is at least one adult who speaks the home language of most children.
- 4 Adults are respectful toward children.
- 5 Adults involve children in the development of clear and consistent rules. Adults encourage positive social behavior, e.g., turn taking, respecting others' feelings, and model how to solve problems and resolve differences.

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RICH LITERACY ENVIRONMENT

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE VERY DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

- 1 Arrangements and selection of materials engage children's interest in exploration. Children's work and products are displayed in the classroom.
- 2 The early childhood classroom has many and varied books, which are displayed attractively and are accessible to children. Writing materials are available in many different parts of the classroom.
- 3 The classroom contains alphabet materials, including posted letters, labels on objects in the environment, alphabet manipulatives, and alphabet books.
- 4 At least some reading materials have been selected for their connections to children's linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
- 5 Children have access to a wide range of materials useful for creative expression, e.g., art materials, dramatic play props.

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ACCOMMODATION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- 1 Staff includes all children in activities and events, e.g., games and sports. Adaptations are made in activities to facilitate participation by all children, and interventions for children with disabilities or other special needs maximize their participation and membership in the group.
- 2 Physical space and materials are adapted to promote engagement, interaction, play and learning. Adaptations encourage children to initiate learning and do not always depend on adults.

| PROGRAM SELF-RATING | | | | |
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C. QUALITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PEDAGOGY

VARIETY OF DOMAINS AND STRUCTURES

- 1 The early childhood program has the explicit goal of supporting all domains of development for all children.
- 2 Children’s daily schedules include a mix of whole class, small group, and individual interaction with teachers.

| PROGRAM SELF-RATING | | | | |
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| NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE | | VERY DESCRIPTIVE | | |
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INDIVIDUALIZATION

- 1 Staff spends time each day observing children, including during play. Staff records observations for use in planning, and discusses observations of progress to match activities to the child’s level of development.
- 2 Each day includes some opportunities for child-initiated learning activities along with teacher-structured activities.

| PROGRAM SELF-RATING | | | | |
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C. QUALITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PEDAGOGY (CONTINUED)

| | PROGRAM SELF-RATING | | | | |
|--|------------------------|---|------------------|---|---|
| | NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE | | VERY DESCRIPTIVE | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| LEARNING HOW TO THINK | | | | | |
| 1 During all types of activities, staff frequently uses open-ended questions with all children to develop children’s thinking. | | | | | |
| 2 Staff conducts and facilitates conversations among children on a daily basis, ensuring that all children have the opportunity to participate in taking turns during conversations. | | | | | |
| 3 Each day staff provides opportunities for children to ask questions and explore responses, reason and problem-solve, and use both deliberate and trial and error approaches for investigations. Staff encourages all children to participate in hands-on activities and interact with peers and adults about their observations. | | | | | |

D. QUALITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULA

| | PROGRAM SELF-RATING | | | | |
|--|------------------------|---|------------------|---|---|
| | NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE | | VERY DESCRIPTIVE | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| PLANNING | | | | | |
| 1 Staff members in the early childhood program are able to describe the theoretical base from which the program operates. | | | | | |
| 2 The early childhood program has identified foundational concepts and specific skills that all children should learn. Curriculum content is designed to achieve long range goals for children. The early childhood curricular expectations are linked to elementary school standards. | | | | | |
| 3 The curriculum allows for children to work at different levels on different activities. Children are not expected to all do the same thing at the same time. | | | | | |
| 4 The curriculum is organized within conceptual frameworks such as projects, units, and themes in order to provide context for abstract concepts. | | | | | |

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

LANGUAGE FOUNDATIONS

| NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE | | | | | VERY DESCRIPTIVE |
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| <p>1 Adults engage throughout the day in meaningful conversations with children, including conversations initiated by children. Adult speech is pleasant in tone, varied in complexity, and understood by children.</p> | | | | | |
| <p>2 Vocabulary development is part of all learning activities. Staff takes advantage of routines, informal daily activities, and play opportunities to point out new words in context, and adults expand upon children’s speech.</p> | | | | | |
| <p>3 Staff members exhibit respect for the home language of children. Staff may use the the language in some daily conversations and include stories and materials in the home language.</p> | | | | | |

EMERGENT LITERACY FOUNDATIONS FOR READING

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

| NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE | | | | | VERY DESCRIPTIVE |
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| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| <p>1 Staff explicitly teaches phonological awareness skills through rhyming, categorization of sounds, and identification of syllables. On a daily basis, staff uses rhyming, poetry, music, and word play with sound clusters to build sensitivity to sounds and awareness of phonemic patterns.</p> | | | | | |
| <p>2 Staff frequently makes explicit connections between speech and print, e.g., pointing out letters of the alphabet associated with sounds and speech units and taking dictation from children.</p> | | | | | |
| <p>3 Staff explicitly teaches skills associated with conventions of print and literacy, e.g., book handling, following print on a page.</p> | | | | | |
| <p>4 Adult-child shared book reading of quality children’s literature occurs every day. During story reading and telling, instructional approaches are used frequently to engage children in dialogue about the story and telling the story.</p> | | | | | |
| <p>5 Teachers encourage children every day to talk about their experiences and to represent their ideas in stories and pictures.</p> | | | | | |
| <p>6 Children are encouraged to write using their own spellings of words to link sounds with letters.</p> | | | | | |

D. QUALITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULA (CONTINUED)

| | PROGRAM SELF-RATING | | | | |
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| | NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE | | | VERY DESCRIPTIVE | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE FOUNDATIONS FOR PROBLEM-SOLVING | | | | | |
| 1 Staff encourages direct, first hand, interactive experiences with natural and manipulative materials. The real world is the subject of learning activities. Children have the opportunity to develop concepts about the natural world, including the basic needs of living things, the differences and similarities among objects and organisms, the materials things are made of, and cycles and patterns of change. | | | | | |
| 2 Staff develops children’s understanding of key vocabulary associated with sequencing, comparisons and sorting, spatial relationships, and temporal relationships. | | | | | |
| 3 Children have the opportunities to learn the functions and properties of objects, and classify and group materials. | | | | | |
| 4 Staff provides instruction and practice in recognizing numerals, counting objects, describing and naming shapes, reproducing and extending simple patterns, using basic measurement tools, and collecting and organizing information. | | | | | |
| 5 Staff helps children develop simple investigations that involve asking questions, making observations, gathering information, drawing conclusions, and communicating findings. | | | | | |

E. QUALITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD STAFF

BACKGROUND OF STAFF

- 1 Early childhood teachers have at least baccalaureate degrees, ideally with specialization in early childhood education. At a minimum, early childhood instructional assistants are high school graduates or have equivalent credentials and have been trained in early childhood education.
- 2 Early childhood teachers and instructional assistants have or are working towards appropriate state certification for early childhood.
- 3 At least some members of the staff speak the home language of the majority of the children.

| | | PROGRAM SELF-RATING | | | | | |
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| | | NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE | | | VERY DESCRIPTIVE | | |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
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| | 2 | | | | | | Early childhood teachers and instructional assistants have or are working towards appropriate state certification for early childhood. |
| | 3 | | | | | | At least some members of the staff speak the home language of the majority of the children. |

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 1 All early childhood staff members (teachers and instructional assistants) have training in child development; child observation and assessment; early literacy and language acquisition, including second language acquisition; curricula, environments and materials for young children; parental involvement; cultural diversity and special needs; and working with other staff.
- 2 At least weekly, staff has an opportunity to discuss their observations of children's development and seek guidance for instructional approaches.

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E. QUALITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD STAFF

| PROFESSIONAL WORKING CONDITIONS | PROGRAM SELF-RATING | | | | |
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| | NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE | | | VERY DESCRIPTIVE | |
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| 1 During the school day, staff spends little time on tasks that do not involve children's learning. | | | | | |
| 2 Early childhood staff members receive supervision from an early childhood specialist with at least a Masters degree in early childhood education. | | | | | |

F. QUALITY OF ASSESSMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

| GUIDANCE FOR INSTRUCTION | PROGRAM SELF-RATING | | | | |
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| | NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE | | | VERY DESCRIPTIVE | |
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| 1 Teachers use a variety of assessment procedures that are embedded in instruction on an ongoing basis, including observation, performance assessment, work samples and interviews. | | | | | |
| 2 Records of assessments document what children know as well as what they do not yet know. Teacher records show which children are not making adequate progress in order to ensure that attention is paid to skill development. | | | | | |

IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS FOR SPECIAL SERVICES AND INTERVENTIONS

- 1 The program has a process in place for screening and referring children for special education and other services. The process includes provisions for informing parents of the referral in advance, along with their associated rights. Parents may remain with the child during assessments.
- 2 Teachers know the signs of children who may be having difficulty acquiring language skills. Assessments take into account a child’s ability in English and his or her stage of native and English language acquisition.
- 3 Results of screening tests are not used as the sole criterion for placement into special programs.

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PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

- 1 Staff and parents meet to develop instructional and other goals for children.
- 2 Staff and parents participate in a formal annual review to determine the program’s effectiveness in meeting the needs of children and families.
- 3 The annual review includes an assessment of the overall context, including staff turnover, and parental satisfaction.
- 4 The annual review of the program includes performance data about children collected by teachers. Multiple indicators of progress are included to assess program effectiveness in meeting instructional goals.
- 5 Staff make recommendations for program improvement based upon findings in the annual review.

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