

ASQ Readiness Checklist

Creating the best possible experience for children and youth is a daily challenge. This checklist is designed to help you discuss your program's strengths and to identify areas where you'd like to make improvements. Striving towards excellence is a gradual, developmental process—one which is best approached in stages.

The following checklist will help you decide whether your program is ready to make the investment in taking this next step.

Administrative Support

- Our director will be able to spend at least 10 hours a month coordinating the self-study and the action plan.
- Our program's administration supports us in doing this including the supports to choose the tools, administer them, and help support the gathering and interpreting of data.
- We will have a budget to support our action plan.
- Our staff will have time (at least three hours a month) to talk about the self-study and action plan.
- We will be able to get 20 hours of EXTRA clerical help this year to do the paperwork.

Forming the Self-Assessment (ASQ) Team

- Our director wants to facilitate a self-study team with staff, family members, and others.
- At least two of our staff will be able to be on the team and attend meetings outside of the program hours.
- We have families who would be willing to spend about 15 hours this year to be on the self-study team.
- Someone from our program's administration wants to be on the self-study team.
- We will be able to ask someone from the children's school to be part of our self-study team.

Program Stability

- Our director has been working with the program for at least six months. We expect to have the same director for the next year.
- Our site coordinator and/or senior group leader has been here for at least three months. We expect to have the same site coordinator and/or senior group leader for the next year.
- We are in the same facility as last year. We will be in the same facility for the next year.
- Our enrollment increase will be less than 25% in the next year.
- We have substitutes for staff.

Staff Development

- We have an orientation for new staff.
- All of our staff have first-aid training.
- We provide at least 10 hours of in-service training for all of our staff each year.
- Our staff attend professional meetings or training conferences.
- Our director belongs to a director's support group or a professional organization, such as NAA.

Family Involvement

- We always greet family members when they drop off or pick up the children. We talk to every family about once a week.
- We have a bulletin board or a newsletter for families.
- We have family events like potluck suppers or performances by the children.
- Family members volunteer to help our program.
- We have a parent advisory group or parents on our governing board.

Program Policies

- We have a written mission statement
- We have written job descriptions and personnel policies.
- We have written staff guidelines including health and safety procedures.
- We have a parent handbook.
- Our ratios of staff to youth conform to local and state guidelines.

Shared Decision-Making

- Our director encourages staff to contribute new ideas and help make decisions.
- We ask families for their opinions and ideas.
- The children in our program help us decide on program plans.
- We are willing to have parents, other staff, and community members observe our program.
- We believe that listening to families, the children, community members, and each other will lead to better decisions about the program.

If you cannot check two or more items in each group of the statements above, here are some ways that you can seek help to increase support for your program.

- Visit another school-age childcare program. Invite other school-age care staff to visit your program. Get together with other school-age care directors and staff to discuss how to build these program supports.
- Take a resource such as the NAA National Standards to the head of your agency or the

principal of your school to get their advice on how you can get to “yes.”

- Find out who offers training in your community: for example, the local resource and referral agency, a community college, your local afterschool network, or the National Institute on Out-of-School Time.
- Attend workshops, training events, and conferences. Look for people who would be good advisors or consultants to come to your program. In the meantime, use parts of the ASQ Guide and information from the NIOST ASQ portal to start working on program improvements.