



**QUALITY INDICATORS
FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EDUCATION PROGRAMS**
**An Instrument to Assist Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) Programs
in Program Planning and Self-Evaluation
Revised 2001**

The attached instrument has been developed to assist local Early Childhood Family Education program staff in program planning and self-evaluation for the purpose of program improvement. The quality indicators listed in this instrument reflect observable characteristics of successful programs and indicate compliance with current Minnesota statutes. They are based on the guiding principles, mission, and goals of Early Childhood Family Education. Completely achieving these indicators of program quality in all categories is an ideal situation toward which local programs can strive. The indicators listed are by no means meant to be all inclusive of indicators of quality for ECFE. Others will continue to be added as the instrument is used over time

The quality indicators are listed in five program component areas:

- A. Community Outreach, Community Input, and Linkages
- B. Parent Education
- C. Early Childhood Education and Parent-Child Interaction
- D. Home Visiting
- E. Program Operations

The program is to be judged as to whether each quality indicator is to be achieved or has been achieved at one of the following five levels:

- Implemented with ongoing reassessment
- Partially implemented
- Planning stage
- Needs to be done
- Not applicable or need more information to respond

The rating selected for each indicator may not be as important as the staff discussion that is likely to result from the use of this instrument. While the instrument may seem long and its use time-consuming, it reflects the complexity of Early Childhood Family Education programming and the roles staff need to play to provide an effective ECFE program.

It is recognized that different Early Childhood Family Education programs will be at different places in relation to these indicators depending on a number of factors including the age of a program, the local community, and the needs and interests of the eligible population. These indicators are useful in identifying program strengths as well as areas needing improvement. The instrument has been affirming and reinforcing to many staff members.

Suggested Uses for Quality Indicators for Early Childhood Family Education Programs

The following suggested uses of the indicators are based on the experiences of local program staff and advisory councils. Feel free to use them in other creative ways.

Yearly program planning and goal/priority setting. Used to write goals and assign staff responsibility for accomplishment of each goal - enhances participatory management, involves coordinator, community education director, professional and support staff, and parents as equals.

Program self-evaluation by staff and/or advisory council members. Some programs do this in-depth over a series of staff meetings over several weeks or months, some go over it quickly at a single staff meeting to "screen" the program and identify particular items to work on in more depth, and some select one of the four program component areas to work on for a particular period of time, e.g., one component per year over an ongoing four year cycle. In some cases, staff have completed the instrument individually and anonymously, and then it is tallied to identify areas where there is greatest consensus as to indicators in need of most improvement. Skilled facilitators are needed who encourage openness and are comfortable with expression of diverse ideas. Some of this work has been done in small groups of staff members and some done with the entire group; programs with multiple sites have done it by site. Advisory council members have been found to be less familiar with some of the indicators than staff members, so the items are informative as well as useful for self-evaluation. Advisory council members have been observed to be empowered in their roles when they better understand the important role they play in ECFE programs.

Program reassessment after several years of operation or when moving to a new facility. Built into ongoing program review - a continuous process; fully implemented indicators continue to need monitoring.

Orientation of new and ongoing staff, including paraprofessionals and other support staff, to the program and to each other's roles.

Individual staff self-evaluation (including identification of strengths) and goal setting; have been used to develop an evaluation tool for staff use in doing this.

Staff performance reviews by program coordinators/administrators; also useful for developing job descriptions.

As part of curriculum writing and identification of program outcomes. For this purpose it would be most helpful to use this document in conjunction with the resource "Curriculum in Early Childhood Family Education: Philosophy and Implementation."

As a tool for developing end-of-session and end-of-year parent satisfaction and program evaluation questionnaires.

As a screening tool as part of the PER evaluation process and to prepare for North Central accreditation.

Information to help other educators and administrators, programs, agencies, and others better understand program purposes and qualities.

For further information about the use of this instrument contact:

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EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EDUCATION QUALITY INDICATORS

PROGRAM COMPONENT A: Community Outreach, Community Input, and Linkages <i>(For each indicator, check appropriate column.)</i>	DEGREE OF IMPLEMENTATION					COMMENTS
	Needs to be done	Planning stage	Partially imple- mented	Imple- mented w/ongoing reassess- ment	Not applicable or need more info. to respond	
COMMUNITY OUTREACH:						
1. Staff work with school district staff and other community resources to develop and maintain a system to identify eligible families (all school district families with young children from birth to kindergarten enrollment).						
2. Staff identify and continually update information regarding specific characteristics, strengths, and needs of eligible families.						
3. Staff design programming to meet the specific characteristics, strengths, and needs of eligible families.						
4. Staff work together to develop outreach plans and review and revise their plans periodically.						
5. Program brochures, newsletters, and other media inform eligible families and the community about the program and its goals and activities.						
6. Program brochures, newsletters, and other media are sensitive to issues of culture, literacy, family styles, income levels, and other characteristics of eligible families.						
7. Staff use personal contact such as phone calls and home visits with families as needed to encourage involvement.						
8. The program offers flexible hours, programming options (including evening and/or weekend options), transportation assistance, convenient sites, etc., to reduce barriers to participation						
9. Fees, if charged, are reasonable and easily reduced or waived for families unable to pay full or reduced fees.						
10. Program brochures, newsletters, and other media inform eligible families about fee reduction and/or waiver policies.						
11. Staff offer special events for family fun and community building and to inform eligible families about ECFE.						

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH: (Cont.) 12. Staff balance special events with ongoing classes, recognizing the benefits of ongoing family involvement.						
13. Staff contact families who have left the program to identify potential gaps or weaknesses in the program.						
14. Staff actively try to reach hard-to-reach and/or non-participating families through cooperation with other community programs and services.						
15. Staff introduce new participants to the program in personalized ways so they feel welcomed and at ease.						
16. With the goal of having program participation represent a cross-section of all eligible families, staff regularly compare participant demographics to community demographics and make plans to reach underserved populations.						
17. Staff develop outreach information that informs other service providers of program services and times and registration and fee information that will be relevant to their clients.						
18. Staff work with district transportation services to assist families with transportation as needed.						
COMMUNITY INPUT: 19. Advisory council membership includes a variety of community representatives.						
20. Parents comprise more than half of the advisory council membership.						
21. Parent advisory council members reflect the characteristics of families with young children in the community.						
22. Advisory council parents represent the eligible population.						
23. The advisory council members understand the parameters of their advisory functions.						
24. The advisory council plays an active role in making recommendations for program development, planning, and monitoring.						

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	Needs to be done	Planning stage	Partially implemented	Implemented w/ongoing reassessment	Not applicable or need more info. to respond	
COMMUNITY INPUT: (Cont.) 25. The advisory council participates in determining program spending priorities.						
26. The advisory council plays an active role in program publicity, outreach, and community relations.						
27. The advisory council plays an active role in resource development as needed.						
28. The advisory council advocates for Early Childhood Family Education in the community and with policy makers.						
29. The advisory council works with staff to assess program effectiveness and determine how well the program meets its goals.						
LINKAGES: 30. Staff work with other school district staff to integrate ECFE into the school district and facilitate the transition of parents and children to elementary school.						
31. Staff disseminate information about ECFE services to other groups, programs, and agencies in the community serving young children and their families.						
32. Staff are knowledgeable about school and community resources for young children and their families and make this information readily available to parents.						
33. Staff are knowledgeable about effective coordination and collaboration functions and strategies.						
34. Staff encourage referrals from other groups, programs, and agencies for enrollment in ECFE activities						
35. Staff make referrals of both parents and children to other community resources serving families.						
36. Staff follow-up on referrals of both parents and children to other community resources serving families.						
37. Staff support health and developmental screening of children to determine if special services are needed and work with appropriate individuals and groups to assure provision of needed services.						

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	Needs to be done	Planning stage	Partially implemented	Implemented w/ongoing reassessment	Not applicable or need more info. to respond	
<u>LINKAGES: (Cont.)</u> 38. Staff cooperate, coordinate, and collaborate with other programs serving young children and their families in the community to better meet the needs of families.						

PROGRAM COMPONENT B: Parent Education (These parent education indicators apply to all program staff including parent educators, early child educators, and other staff.) (For each indicator, check appropriate column.)	DEGREE OF IMPLEMENTATION					COMMENTS
	Needs to be done	Planning stage	Partially implemented	Implemented w/ongoing reassessment	Not applicable or need more info. to respond	
<u>ENVIRONMENT:</u>						
1. The physical environment is comfortable and aesthetically pleasing.						
2. The physical environment reflects cultural and ethnic diversity.						
3. The physical environment is accessible to people with disabilities.						
4. The space is neither too crowded nor too spacious for the number of participants.						
5. Furnishings and seating are arranged to facilitate interaction and effective group dynamics.						
6. Staff establish and maintain a relaxed and informal atmosphere.						
<u>RESOURCES:</u>						
7. Resources used are consistent with ECFE philosophy, mission, and goals.						
8. Resources used are multicultural, gender-fair, and sensitive to disability and socioeconomic status.						
9. Resources accurately reflect current research in the fields of child development, parent-child relations, family relations, family systems theory, early childhood education, and/or parent and adult education.						
10. Resources are evaluated and adapted to match the needs of participants as their needs and demographics change.						
11. Resource libraries are an optional ECFE service that support the parenting of community families but do not duplicate or replace encouraging family use of public libraries.						
<u>EDUCATOR ROLE:</u>						
12. Staff are knowledgeable about child development, parent-child relations, family relations, family systems theory, early childhood education, and/or parent and adult education.						
13. Staff are knowledgeable about theories of adult learning and learning styles and use a variety of teaching strategies in their work with parents and children.						

PROGRAM COMPONENT B: Parent Education <i>(For each indicator, check appropriate column.)</i>	DEGREE OF IMPLEMENTATION					COMMENTS
	Needs to be done	Planning stage	Partially implemented	Implemented w/ongoing reassessment	Not applicable or need more info. to respond	
EDUCATOR ROLE: (Cont.)						
14. Staff involve parents in setting the agenda and guiding the learning process.						
15. Staff link parents' specific experiences to general principles of child development and parent-child relations.						
16. Staff offer information about developmental expectations and characteristics of various ages of children.						
17. Staff encourage parents to examine their expectations of their own children in relation to developmentally appropriate expectations.						
18. Staff encourage parents to identify and build on individual and family strengths.						
19. Staff provide parents opportunities to examine their values, needs, and behavior.						
20. Staff encourage parents to set developmentally appropriate goals for themselves, their children, and their family life.						
21. Staff encourage parents to develop problem solving skills and support parents in addressing individual and family challenges.						
22. Staff facilitate understanding of the family-of-origin and its influence upon present family interactions.						
23. Staff set goals and plan strategies for each session based on the individual needs and interests of children and parents.						
24. Staff clearly communicate thoughts and concepts.						
25. Staff encourage parents to share experiences and concerns.						
26. Staff structure discussions so parents learn from one another.						
27. Discussions are flexible and allow opportunity for addressing immediate needs.						
28. Staff spend a significant portion of time actively listening to parents.						
29. Staff assist group members in setting expectations and guidelines for appropriate group and individual behavior.						

PROGRAM COMPONENT B: Parent Education <i>(For each indicator, check appropriate column.)</i>	DEGREE OF IMPLEMENTATION					COMMENTS
	Needs to be done	Planning stage	Partially implemented	Implemented w/ongoing reassessment	Not applicable or need more info. to respond	
EDUCATOR ROLE: (Cont.)						
30. Staff are knowledgeable about group dynamics and group process techniques.						
31. Staff appropriately handle challenging group issues, including conflict between group members, uncomfortable topics, disagreement about parenting behavior, and emotional discussions.						
32. Staff balance the individual needs of parents with group needs						
33. Staff maintain appropriate boundaries with families						
34. Staff clarify and summarize ideas expressed during discussions as needed, linking comments of individual participants.						
35. Staff use informed judgement and are accepting and supportive of parents; distinctions are made between parents' specific behaviors and parents as persons.						
36. Staff work to ensure a climate of mutual respect, trust, and responsibility.						
37. Staff are sensitive to the multiple demands on parents' time and energy.						
38. Staff encourage parents to interact and form support networks with other parents outside program settings						
39. Staff offer home visits as an option for parent education.						

PROGRAM COMPONENT C: Early Childhood Education and Parent-Child Interaction (These early childhood education and parent-child interaction indicators apply to all program staff including parent educators, early childhood educators, and other staff.) (For each indicator, check appropriate column.)	DEGREE OF IMPLEMENTATION					COMMENTS
	Needs to be done	Planning stage	Partially implemented	Implemented w/ongoing reassessment	Not applicable or need more info. to respond	
ENVIRONMENT:						
1. The environment is child-centered and personalized for parents and children.						
2. The environment is physically attractive.						
3. The physical environment reflects cultural and ethnic diversity.						
4. Adequate space is available to carry out child, parent-child, and parent activities.						
5. The environment meets state requirements for children's health and safety.						
6. Instructions and supplies for diapering children, sanitizing toys, and cleaning surfaces are posted and accessible.						
7. Learning materials and equipment for children are appropriate to the developmental level, needs, and interests of the children involved. They are:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At children's eye level and readily accessible to children for self-selection 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age appropriate 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Durable and easy to clean 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-sensory 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adaptable for children with disabilities 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available for group and individual use 						
8. The environment is arranged in learning centers that:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow children to make choices 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage cooperative social interaction 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalize on children's individual interests 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are appropriate for a wide range of developmental capabilities 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow for movement and exploration 						

PROGRAM COMPONENT C: Early Childhood Education and Parent-Child Interaction <i>(For each indicator, check appropriate column.)</i>	DEGREE OF IMPLEMENTATION					COMMENTS
	Needs to be done	Planning stage	Partially implemented	Implemented w/ongoing reassessment	Not applicable or need more info. to respond	
<u>ENVIRONMENT:</u> (Cont.)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance all developmental areas 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the development of competence and self-help skills 						
9. Many aspects of the environment are easily replicated at home.						
<u>RESOURCES:</u> 10. Resources used are consistent with ECFE philosophy, mission, and goals.						
11. Resources used are multicultural, gender-fair, and sensitive to disability and socio-economic status.						
12. Resources accurately reflect current research in the fields of child development, parent-child relations, family system theory, early childhood education, and/or parent and adult education.						
13. Resources are developmentally appropriate for the intended group of children.						
14. The curriculum encourages child- and parent-initiated learning.						
15. Resource libraries are an optional ECFE service that support child development and parenting but do not duplicate or replace encouraging family use of public libraries.						
<u>EDUCATOR ROLE:</u> 16. Staff are knowledgeable about child development, parent-child relations, family relations, family systems theory, early childhood education, and/or parent and adult education.						
17. Staff are knowledgeable about theories of adult learning and learning styles and use a variety of teaching strategies in their work with parents and children.						
18. Child and parent-child activities include activities easily replicated in the home environment.						
19. Activities provide concrete, experiential learning.						
20. Activities emphasize the learning process rather than the product.						

PROGRAM COMPONENT C: Early Childhood Education and Parent-Child Interaction <i>(For each indicator, check appropriate column.)</i>	DEGREE OF IMPLEMENTATION					COMMENTS
	Needs to be done	Planning stage	Partially implemented	Implemented w/ongoing reassessment	Not applicable or need more info. to respond	
EDUCATOR ROLE: (Cont.)						
21. Activities promote imagination and creativity.						
22. The parent educator and early childhood educator work as a team throughout parent-child interaction.						
23. Staff set goals for each session based on the individual needs and interests of children and parents.						
24. Staff use a variety of teaching strategies and adapt them to the learning styles of particular children and parents.						
25. Staff present activities in multisensory ways.						
26. Staff encourage growth in children's self-discipline.						
27. Staff help children verbalize their thoughts, feelings, and actions.						
28. Staff act as resource persons, helping children use and expand upon activities and solve problems.						
29. Staff reinforce appropriate parental expectations concerning what children of various ages can be expected to do.						
30. Staff reinforce appropriate parental expectations for individual children.						
31. Staff function as facilitators rather than directors of child- and parent-initiated activity.						
32. Staff verbal communication with children is respectful, contributes to language development, and provides a role model for parents.						
33. Staff non-verbal communication with children is respectful, contributes to language development, and provides a role model for parents.						
34. Staff use a variety of positive guidance techniques to enhance children's self-respect and provide a role model for parents.						
35. Staff interpret the meaning and value of activities to parents.						
36. Staff encourage parents to be involved with and enjoy their children through engaging in activities together.						
37. Staff encourage parents to be sensitive observers of their children, responding appropriately to children's cues and signals.						

PROGRAM COMPONENT C: Early Childhood Education and Parent-Child Interaction <i>(For each indicator, check appropriate column.)</i>	DEGREE OF IMPLEMENTATION					COMMENTS
	Needs to be done	Planning stage	Partially implemented	Implemented w/ongoing reassessment	Not applicable or need more info. to respond	
EDUCATOR ROLE: (Cont.) 38. Staff verbalize children's thoughts, feelings, and actions as a way of clarifying children's needs and behaviors.						
39. Staff communicate respect for parents as prime educators of their children.						
40. Staff talk with parents about their interaction with their children.						
41. Staff offer home visits as an option for early childhood education and parent-child interaction.						
42. Staff use predictable, yet flexible classroom routines that promote smooth transitions from one activity to the next.						
43. Staff interact effectively with children both individually and in groups.						
44. Staff plan and conduct circle time activities than enrich children's experience in multi-sensory ways.						
45. Staff are responsive to and plan activities for children of all ages represented when providing mixed-age classes.						
46. Staff view high quality sibling care as an essential element in successfully involving families in age-specific classes.						

PROGRAM COMPONENT D: Home Visiting <i>(For each indicator, check appropriate column.)</i>	DEGREE OF IMPLEMENTATION					COMMENTS
	Needs to be done	Planning stage	Partially implemented	Implemented w/ongoing reassessment	Not applicable or need more info. to respond	
1. Home visitors are knowledgeable about the specific purposes and goals of the program's home visiting services.						
2. Home visitors communicate, coordinate, and/or collaborate with other home visiting services in the community.						
3. Home visitors include the whole family, all members who are involved in caregiving and decision making, either directly or indirectly.						
4. Home visitors develop partnerships with families from a strength-based perspective.						
5. Home visitors seek to understand the family's culture (beliefs, values, perspectives) by gathering information from the family, from outside resources, and from community representatives.						
6. Home visitors meet families where they are, engaging parents through dialogue around dissonance between expectations and realities of parenthood, dissatisfaction with their current situation, difficulties faced in daily living, and desires for family life.						
7. Home visitors are skillful in helping families discover their own solutions through effective questioning/reflective techniques.						
8. Home visitors focus on supporting the parent-child relationship rather than directing services specifically to the parent or child.						
9. Home visitors understand programmatic and personal boundaries for relationships with family members and are skilled in assertive limit setting.						
10. Home visitors make referrals to outside resources when families require expertise beyond that of the individual home visitor or beyond the goals of the program.						
11. Home visitors expand the family's support network and connections to the community.						
12. Home visitors address immediate, practical family needs either directly or indirectly, beyond a narrow definition of early childhood or parent education.						
13. Home visitors are flexible and adjust their agenda to address family crises.						

PROGRAM COMPONENT D: Home Visiting <i>(For each indicator, check appropriate column.)</i>	DEGREE OF IMPLEMENTATION					COMMENTS
	Needs to be done	Planning stage	Partially implemented	Implemented w/ongoing reassessment	Not applicable or need more info. to respond	
14. Home visitors incorporate materials found in the home and turn routine family experiences into learning activities						
15. The program offers home visiting as one option for service delivery, preferably in combination with center-based programming and a comprehensive array of family support services.						
16. The program offers both short-term (outreach) and ongoing (educational) home visit options.						
17. The program provides regular supervision for home visitors that include case management assistance, opportunities for professional development and skill-building, performance evaluation, and support.						
18. The program provides staff training that clearly defines mandated reporting procedures and program policies.						
19. The program develops working relationships and a system for sharing information with other agencies/programs in the community working with mutual families.						
20. The program regularly evaluates home visiting services, assessing fidelity to program goals and utilization of services available.						
21. The program regularly celebrates small accomplishments achieved through home visiting services with staff and families.						
22. The program documents outcomes for families receiving home visiting services.						

PROGRAM COMPONENT E: Program Operations <i>(For each indicator, check appropriate column.)</i>	DEGREE OF IMPLEMENTATION					COMMENTS
	Needs to be done	Planning stage	Partially implemented	Implemented w/ongoing reassessment	Not applicable or need more info. to respond	
<u>PHILOSOPHY:</u> 1. Parents, staff, and community representatives cooperatively develop and periodically update a statement of the program's philosophy and mission.						
2. The program has clearly defined goals and objectives which are updated as needed.						
3. The philosophy, mission, goals, and objectives of the program are consistent with the state ECFE philosophy, mission, and goals.						
<u>STAFF:</u> 4. All staff members are well qualified for their positions. All teachers and program coordinators should be appropriately licensed.						
5. Wages and personnel policies are comparable to those of other school district professional staff.						
6. The program provides orientation for new staff.						
7. Both professional and paraprofessional staff have access to appropriate staff development opportunities.						
8. Individual staff members take responsibility for their personal and professional development.						
9. Staff meetings are regularly scheduled to provide for effective communication and integrated planning among all staff.						
10. Parent educators, early childhood educators, and other staff coordinate their planning and implementing efforts.						
11. Staff give each other feedback and support about their work with families.						
12. Staff understand the procedures to be used in performance reviews.						
13. Staff practice and promote appropriate confidentiality throughout the program.						
14. Staff act in a professional and ethical manner at all times.						
15. Staff understand their role as mandated reporters in cases of suspected child abuse and neglect.						
16. Staff work well together, forming a congruent and integrated team in delivery of all program services.						

PROGRAM COMPONENT E: Program Operations <i>(For each indicator, check appropriate column.)</i>	DEGREE OF IMPLEMENTATION					COMMENTS
	Needs to be done	Planning stage	Partially implemented	Implemented w/ongoing reassessment	Not applicable or need more info. to respond	
<u>MONITORING AND EVALUATION:</u> 17. Staff develop and implement plans for monitoring and assessing the program.						
18. The program follows all laws and policies mandated by state statutes and guidelines and by the school district.						
19. The program insures that all data are maintained according to state statutes, school district policy, and data privacy laws.						
20. The program budget accounts for all ECFE aid, levy, and other funds and is on file with both the program coordinator and the district administrator.						
21. The program budget is fiscally responsible, supports the state ECFE mission and goals, and aligns program resources with community need.						
22. The program maintains clear and complete records to document participant characteristics, program participation, referrals, and service delivery data for local program use and state record keeping.						
23. The program gathers and uses participant satisfaction data for program development and improvement.						
24. The program participates in studies of program outcomes.						
25. The program conducts periodic self-assessment of program components by using this document.						