

SCHOOL-AGE PQA

Form A - Program Offerings Children - Grades K-6

Organization name:	
Site/Program name:	
Name(s) of program offering(s) observed:	
Name of staff member(s) observed:	
Date scored:	
Name of rater (External Assessment only):	
Email for rater (External Assessment only):	



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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The School-Age Program Quality Assessment (School-Age PQA) is based on the validated Youth PQA and is designed to evaluate the quality of children's programs and identify staff training needs. It consists of a set of score-able standards for best practices in afterschool programs, community organizations, schools, summer programs and other places where children have fun, work and learn with adults. The School-Age PQA is designed to empower people and organizations to envision optimal-quality programming for children by providing a shared language for practice and decision-making and by producing scores that can be used for comparison and assessment of progress over time. The School-Age PQA measures the quality of children's experiences and promotes the creation of environments that tap the most important resource available to any child-serving organization: a young person's motivation to engage critically with the world.

THE 2012 REVISION

The School-Age PQA is an assessment tool for best practices for any child-serving program. For this edition of the tool, each scale was given a short label or name to focus the user's attention on the intent and purpose of the scale. This edition also contains some minor changes that should make the items easier to interpret and score. When an item was substantively rewritten to clarify scoring, the original intent of the item was preserved wherever possible. We added three items to Skill-Building to better assess this important scale. Minor changes were also made to increase consistency in wording across the School-Age PQA and the Youth PQA. Items that are in the School-Age PQA, but not in the Youth PQA, are identified by (SA) after the item number.

A few items moved from one scale to another. For example, items related to Child-Centered Space were designed with a particular type of program in mind, so these items were grouped into a single scale. For external assessment, if the administrator has determined the design and purpose of the program you are observing is not compatible with the Child-Centered Space scale, do not score it. Instead, mark an "X" in all of the score boxes.

BENEFITS

The School-Age PQA offers several important attributes:

- *Experience-tested approach* – The standards for best practices that make up the School-Age PQA are grounded in extensive experience working with young people. Together, the scales in the instrument represent a child development approach that works.
- *Research-based rubrics* – The School-Age PQA contains proven measurement rubrics that allow observers to differentiate programs in important and meaningful ways.
- *Opportunities to observe practice* – Staff using the School-Age PQA must spend time watching what happens in their program.
- *Flexibility* – The School-Age PQA is designed to meet a range of accountability and improvement needs, from self assessment to research and evaluation.

TERMINOLOGY

- *Form* refers to the entire group of scales used for assessment. For example: Form A – Program Offerings and Form B – Organization Practices & Policies.
- *Domain* refers to the group of scales falling under one of the sections I–VII. For example, in Form A – Program Offerings, a domain is "I. Safe Environment," which contains scales that pertain to that domain. *Domain score* is the average of scale scores for each domain I–VII. For example, the domain "I. Safe Environment" contains five scale scores to be averaged for a domain score.
- *Scale score* refers to the average of the scores (one per item) that make up a scale. For example, the Healthy Environment scale, has four items that can be scored as 1, 3 or 5 and then averaged for a scale score.
- *Item or item row* refers to a single row on the School-Age PQA for which there are descriptors for scores 1, 3 and 5. Level 5 is best practice.

DEFINITIONS

- *Organization* refers to the agency that operates services for young people. An organization may be a community-based nonprofit agency, a church or temple, a private center, a neighborhood association or a school.
- *Site* refers to the physical location of the activities being observed. For example, Middleton School or Bay Area Country Club.
- *Program offerings* refer to structured activities that are led by regular staff with the same children over time. This includes the range of scheduled services available to children at an organization, such as classes, workshops, meetings, special events, homework help or discussion groups.
- *Session* is one scheduled period of a program offering. For example, a session might be when the photography club meets from 3 to 5 p.m. on Wednesday.
- *Staff* refers to the person or persons facilitating a session. Staff may include paid workers, volunteers or peer leaders.
- *Activities* are the planned interactions led by staff within a program offering. For example, the activities in an art club might include making a collage, learning different painting techniques and making sculptures with found objects.
- *Program hours* are the normal hours that the full range of program offerings are in session.

INTRODUCTION TO ITEMS AND SCORING

The School-Age PQA items measure quality in different ways. Some items measure aspects of the environment or the way the session is structured. The bulk of these are in domain “I. Safe Environment.” Some items measure whether staff exhibit specific behaviors or best practice methods, or how frequently the staff carries out the practice. Some items distinguish between child-initiated behaviors that occur informally or spontaneously and those that have been set up intentionally by staff. Others measure *how many* children have certain opportunities. It is important to note that items generally capture either staff practices or child behaviors/opportunities, but not both. Both are indicators of a quality program, although the School-Age PQA and the continuous improvement approach focus on staff behaviors because that is where staff can directly make changes or improvements.

In observing and scoring, it is helpful to keep the following things in mind:

- Think about the intent of the item when scoring. Consult the handbook as needed.
- Follow through and pay attention to an entire sequence of events (e.g., child behavior, staff response, child response).
- If the item assesses children’s opportunity for something, score based on whether the opportunity was present or explicitly offered, even if some children do not take advantage of the opportunity.
- Score based on what you see that day, even if there were extenuating circumstances present that affected scores.
- If there are two or more staff members, score on whether any one of the staff members carry out a certain practice. Otherwise, focus on the primary staff member.
- *Structured* refers to the quality of being intentional, planned, prompted, initiated and/or named by the staff; it does not refer to children’s informal conversation or actions.

CONDUCTING A PROGRAM SELF ASSESSMENT

Team-based program self assessment using the School-Age PQA is a highly effective, low stakes strategy for building a quality-focused culture. Program self assessment can help managers and staff co-create meaningful improvement objectives for the quality of their programming and ultimately the outcomes for their young participants.

Throughout the process, keep in mind these three aspects of a constructive program self assessment process:

- work as a team
- base scores on observational evidence
- focus on conversations about quality

1. SELECT AND TRAIN A SELF ASSESSMENT TEAM

The program self assessment team should consist of the site leader and at least two program staff, volunteers or parents. The site leader attends PQA Basics training. Team members can prepare to be a part of the program self assessment process by completing the PQA Basics training online. The site lead should also conduct a meeting or mini-training for team members using the materials shared at PQA Basics.

2. PREPARE FOR DATA COLLECTION

Team members collect data by taking turns observing their programs in action. Sometimes, schedules need to be rearranged, or a program manager needs to arrange coverage in order to provide the opportunity for staff to observe each other. Plan time as soon as possible following the observations for discussion and scoring.

The site teams should observe *program offerings*: structured activities that are led by regular staff with the same children over time. Enrichment classes or afterschool clubs that get together at the same time each week for the entire school semester are a great example. Avoid homework help, open gym, unstructured computer lab time, drop-in, etc. Always notify program staff of scheduled observations ahead of time. This is not a test!

If timing and staff schedules do not allow for full observations, then try to observe at least one hour of programming, divided among self assessment team members (e.g., three people each observe for 20 minutes, four people each observe for 15 minutes). Vary observation times so that your observations include the beginning, middle and end of different sessions.

3. OBSERVE AND TAKE NOTES

When conducting an observation, find a place to sit that allows you to see and hear as much as possible without getting in the way. Take notes by hand or using a laptop. Bring a copy of the back page of the School-Age PQA. You can bring the full School-Age PQA to your observation, but do not write notes onto the form or try to score the form while observing.

Take notes throughout the offering on factual information; include quotes, actions, etc. As a general rule, expect to take 3–4 or more handwritten pages (1–2 typed) of notes per 30 minutes of observation.

Your notes should be:

- Factual and objective (rather than judgmental, evaluative or impressionistic)
- Specific and detailed (rather than general)
- Accessible (language should make sense six months from now)
- Chronological (include time markers)

Your notes should include:

- Anecdotal descriptions of interactions
- Quotes of what children and/or staff say when interacting
- Actions and language of the children involved
- Materials lists
- Sequences of daily events and routines

At the end of the session, ask the session leader(s) any follow-up questions, as listed on the back of the PQA. After the observation, you will not score the PQA, but save your notes to use during the scoring meeting.

4. HOLD A TEAM-BASED SCORING MEETING

After all data has been collected, the site leader guides the team in scoring a single, program-wide School-Age PQA Form A. This scoring process can last three hours or more and may be divided among several shorter meetings. During the scoring meetings, the team will pool and review all anecdotal records and go through the School-Age PQA item by item, selecting an anecdote and agreeing on a score for each. It is important that the team rely on the anecdotes rather than their memories to produce scores.

The most important outcome of the scoring meeting is the conversation that occurs while discussing scores and arriving at agreement. The scores can provide a reliable indication of the quality of staff interactions with children, so it is important to be accurate.

5. Enter Scores

The School-Age PQA produces scores at the item, scale and domain level. All scores beyond the item level are created using mathematical means, or averages. Scales are averages of items, and domains are averages of scales.

After scoring the items in Form A of the School-Age PQA, you can enter the scores into the online Scores Reporter. You can access the online Scores Reporter through the Weikart Center website at www.cypq.org. The staff at the Weikart Center is available to offer technical assistance as needed.

CONDUCTING AN EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

For an external assessment, a trained, reliable external assessor visits a site to observe a single program offering and score a PQA based on the observation.

1. ATTEND AN EXTERNAL ASSESSOR RELIABILITY TRAINING

External assessors attend an External Assessment Reliability Training to practice skills and complete a reliability check. All assessors must pass the reliability check to be endorsed as external assessors prior to conducting any site visits.

2. PREPARE FOR DATA COLLECTION

The network leader will often coordinate schedules and assign assessors to sites. External assessors should confirm the date and time of observation with the site leader and ask him or her to inform the relevant staff that they will be visiting to conduct an observation.

3. OBSERVE AND TAKE NOTES

When travelling to the assigned children's program, assessors should arrive at least 15 minutes before the scheduled observation time. Assessors will view program offerings in their entirety (usually 45-90 minutes long).

Assessors take objective observational notes which describe only observable behaviors, language and materials. They focus on the behaviors of the staff and children with whom the staff is interacting and record as many quotations as possible.

Notes should be:

- Factual and objective (rather than judgmental, evaluative or impressionistic)
- Specific and detailed (rather than general)
- Accessible (language should make sense six months from now)
- Chronological (include time markers)

Notes should include:

- Anecdotal descriptions of interactions
- Quotes of what children and/or staff say when interacting
- Actions and language of the children involved
- Materials lists
- Sequences of daily events and routines

At the end of the session, the assessor asks the session leader(s) any follow-up questions, as listed on the back of the PQA. Also at the end of the session, the assessor should ask the staff who led the session the questions on the Staff Information page.

4. SCORING THE PQA

After the visit, assessors fit and score using their notes, making sure to fill out all evidence boxes and program description information. The assessor uses the answers to the follow-up questions as evidence to score the items as applicable.

Some evidence can be cross-referenced against multiple items. In fact, items with a score of 5 may provide a full listing of relevant evidence. If an item is not applicable, assessors should place an "X" in the box for that item.

5. ENTER SCORES

The School-Age PQA produces scores at the item, scale and domain levels. All scores beyond the item level are created using mathematical means, or averages. Scales are averages of items, and domains are averages of scales.

After scoring the items in the School-Age PQA, the assessor can enter the scores into the online Scores Reporter. The online Scores Reporter can be accessed through the Weikart Center website at www.cypq.org. The staff at the Weikart Center is available to offer technical assistance as needed.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

(Complete for Program Self Assessment or External Assessment)

Organization name: _____ Site/Program name: _____

Name(s) of program offering(s) observed: _____

Name of staff member(s) observed: _____

Brief description of program offering(s): _____

Staff: Child ratio in program offering(s): _____ Date scored: _____

Age(s) of children in observed offering(s) (Circle all that apply):

K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 12+

Type of program/activities observed (Check all that apply):

- | | | | | |
|--|---|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring | <input type="checkbox"/> Tutoring | <input type="checkbox"/> Homework Help | <input type="checkbox"/> Drop-in | <input type="checkbox"/> Faith-based |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camp | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Dance | <input type="checkbox"/> Drama | <input type="checkbox"/> Math |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life skills development | <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach | <input type="checkbox"/> Prevention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports | <input type="checkbox"/> Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership development | <input type="checkbox"/> Service learning | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | |

Type of organization (Please check not more than two):

- A nationally affiliated nonprofit (e.g., YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, Camp Fire USA, Scouts, Future Farmers of America)
- Local nonprofit (e.g., local community-based or faith-based organization)
- Local school organization (e.g., public, charter, private school)
- Unit of city or county government (e.g., Department of Recreation, Health Bureau)
- State government
- Local for-profit organization (e.g., bowling alley)

STAFF INFORMATION

(Complete for External Assessment ONLY)

These questions should be addressed to the staff member leading the offering. This data is being collected for purposes of instrument validation and will not ever be linked to the identity of the staff person being observed. All responses will remain confidential and staff may decline to answer any question.

How many years have you worked in programs like this one?

Number of years

How many years have you worked in this program?

Number of years

Are you a certified school-day teacher?

Yes No

Are you a certified social worker?

Yes No

Which youth development framework training(s) have you had? (Check all that apply.)

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Search Assets | <input type="checkbox"/> Advancing Youth Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Bringing Yourself to Work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> HighScope | |

What is the highest level of education that you have completed? (Check only one.)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> GED | <input type="checkbox"/> High school diploma | <input type="checkbox"/> Some College but no degree yet/Associate's Degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate program but no degree yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Master's Degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate | <input type="checkbox"/> Other professional degree after BA | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above |

EMOTIONAL SAFETY | Psychological and emotional safety is promoted.

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES
1.	1 The emotional climate of the session is predominantly negative (e.g., disrespectful, tense, exclusive, even angry or hostile); negative behaviors, such as rudeness, bragging, insults, “trash talking,” negative gestures or other such actions are not mediated by either children or staff.	3 The emotional climate of the session is neutral or characterized by both positive and negative behaviors.	5 The emotional climate of the session is predominantly positive (e.g., mutually respectful, relaxed, supportive; characterized by teamwork, camaraderie, inclusiveness, and an absence of negative behaviors). Any playful negative behaviors (not considered offensive by parties involved) are mediated (countered, curtailed, defused) by staff or children.
2.	1 Comments or slurs intended to hurt someone who is present explicitly indicate religious, ethnic, class, gender, ability, appearance or sexual orientation bias(es).	3 There is evidence (e.g., comments or slurs) of religious, ethnic, class, gender, ability, appearance or sexual orientation bias, but comments are not directed at anyone present.	5 There is no evidence of bias; rather, there is mutual respect for and inclusion of others of a different religion, ethnicity, class, gender, ability, appearance or sexual orientation.

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT | The physical environment is safe and free of health hazards.

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES
<p>1. 1 There are major safety and health hazards (e.g., broken equipment or supplies, unmopped spills, flammable and/or toxic materials) affecting the program space.</p>	<p>3 There are minor safety and health concerns (e.g., dirty floors or furniture, wobbly furniture, program materials in disarray) affecting the program space.</p>	<p>5 The program space is free of health and safety hazards.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. 1 There are major sanitary concerns (e.g., unsanitary toilet facilities, dirty or clogged drains, open or spoiling food, overflowing trash container) affecting the program space.</p>	<p>3 There are minor sanitary concerns (e.g., unswept floor, dirty tables or chairs) affecting the program space.</p>	<p>5 The program space is clean and sanitary.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>3. 1 There are major inadequacies in either ventilation or lighting in the program space.</p>	<p>3 Ventilation or lighting is inadequate in some areas in the program space.</p>	<p>5 Ventilation and lighting are adequate in the program space.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>4. 1 The temperature is uncomfortable (e.g., it is too hot or too cold) in the program space.</p>	<p>3 The temperature is uncomfortable for some activities and/or in some areas of the program space.</p>	<p>5 The temperature is comfortable for all activities in the program space.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS | Appropriate emergency procedures and supplies are present.

Note: Local fire codes govern the number and location of fire extinguishers.

ITEMS				SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES
1. 1 There are no written emergency procedures (e.g., fire escape route, lost swimmer drill, severe weather instructions), or staff are unable to locate procedures.	3 Written emergency procedures are not posted, but staff is able to locate them.	5 Written emergency procedures are posted in plain view.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Where are the emergency procedures posted?
2. 1 There is no charged fire extinguisher accessible from the program space.	3 At least one charged fire extinguisher is accessible (but not plainly visible) from the program space.	5 At least one charged fire extinguisher is accessible and visible from the program space.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there an accessible fire extinguisher?
3. 1 A complete first-aid kit is not accessible from the program space.	3 At least one complete first-aid kit is accessible (but not plainly visible) from the program space.	5 At least one complete first-aid kit is accessible and visible from the program space.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there an accessible first-aid kit?
4. 1 Other safety or emergency equipment appropriate to the activities is not available to the program offering.	3 Other safety and/or emergency equipment appropriate for the program offering is in poor condition, and/or staff cannot locate it.	5 Other appropriate safety and emergency equipment (e.g., for water or vehicle safety, sports or repairs) is available to the program offering as needed, can be located by staff and is maintained in full-service condition.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the site have any special safety or emergency equipment? If other equipment is not needed, do not rate. Write an "X" in the box at the left.
5. 1 Entrances to the indoor program space are unsupervised during program hours.	3 At least one entrance to the indoor program space is supervised for security during program hours but others are not, or entrance(s) are sometimes supervised and sometimes not.	5 All entrances to the indoor program space are supervised for security during program hours. (Can include electronic security system.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are entrances to the indoor program space supervised?
6. 1 Access to outdoor program space is unsupervised during program hours.	3 Access to outdoor program space is sometimes supervised during program hours.	5 Access to outdoor program space is supervised during program hours.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is access to the outdoor program space supervised? If there is no outdoor program space, do not rate. Write an "X" in the box at the left.

ACCOMMODATING ENVIRONMENT | Program space and furniture accommodate the activities.

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES
<p>1. 1 Program space is crowded, without sufficient room to move freely.</p>	<p>3 Program space is crowded in some areas.</p>	<p>5 Program space allows children and staff to move freely while carrying out activities (e.g., room accommodates all participants without children blocking doorways, bumping into one another and crowding).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. 1 Program space is not suitable for activities offered.</p>	<p>3 Program space is suitable for some of the activities offered.</p>	<p>5 Program space is suitable for all activities offered (e.g., furniture and room support small and large groups; if athletic activity is offered, then program space supports this).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>3. 1 Furniture is neither comfortable nor of sufficient quantity for the program offering.</p>	<p>3 Furniture is either comfortable or of sufficient quantity for the program offering (but not both).</p>	<p>5 Furniture is comfortable and of sufficient quantity for all children participating in the program offering.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <p>If there is no furniture and none required, do not rate. Write an "X" in the box at the left.</p>
<p>4. 1 The physical environment cannot be modified to meet the needs of the program offering.</p>	<p>3 The physical environment can be modified to meet the needs of the program offering, but children and/or staff are discouraged from doing so.</p>	<p>5 The physical environment can be modified to meet the needs of the program offering (e.g., furniture and/or supplies can be moved).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <p>If there is no furniture and none required, do not rate. Write an "X" in the box at the left.</p> <p>Can the furniture be moved around?</p>
<p>5. (SA) 1 There is little or no furniture appropriate to the physical size of children (e.g., small children must sit at full-size desks, the work surface is chest height).</p>	<p>3 There is some furniture appropriate to the physical size of children served, but not enough appropriately sized furniture for all children.</p>	<p>5 Furniture appropriate to children's physical size is available for all children served (e.g., small furniture for small children).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <p>If there is no furniture and none required, do not rate. Write an "X" in the box at the left.</p>

NOURISHMENT | Healthy food and drinks are provided.

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES
1. 1 Drinking water is not available.	3 Drinking water is available but not easily accessible (e.g., water is located away from program space; faucet is difficult to use).	5 Drinking water is available and easily accessible to all children.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. 1 Food or drinks are not available to children during the session.	3 Food and drinks are available at appropriate times, but there is not enough for every child to receive a serving.	5 Food and drinks are plentiful and available at appropriate times for all children during the session.	<input type="checkbox"/> If a meal or snack is not necessary because of structure of program offering, do not rate. Write an "X" in the box at the left.
3. 1 Available food or drink is not nutritious (e.g., junk food – high in fat, sugar or hydrogenated oils).	3 Some available food or drink is not nutritious and some is healthy.	5 Available food and drink is healthy (e.g., vegetables, fresh fruit, real juices).	<input type="checkbox"/> If no food or drink is served, do not rate. Write an "X" in the box at the left.

WARM WELCOME | Staff provides a welcoming atmosphere.

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES
<p>1. 1 No children are greeted by staff as they arrive or at the start of the session.</p>	<p>3 Some children are greeted by staff as they arrive or at the start of the session.</p>	<p>5 All children are greeted by staff as they arrive or at the start of the session.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. 1 Staff mainly uses a negative tone of voice and disrespectful language.</p>	<p>3 Staff sometimes uses a negative tone of voice and disrespectful language and sometimes uses a warm tone of voice and respectful language.</p>	<p>5 Staff mainly uses a warm tone of voice and respectful language.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>3. 1 Staff generally frowns or scowls, uses unfriendly gestures and avoids eye contact.</p>	<p>3 Staff sometimes exhibits unfriendly behaviors and sometimes uses a friendly approach.</p>	<p>5 Staff generally smiles, uses friendly gestures and makes eye contact.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SESSION FLOW | Session flow is planned, presented and paced for children.

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES
1. 1 Staff does not start or end session within 10 minutes of scheduled time.	3 Staff either starts or ends session within 10 minutes of scheduled time (but not both).	5 Staff starts and ends session within 10 minutes of scheduled time.	<input type="checkbox"/> Record the following: Scheduled starting time _____ Actual starting time _____ Scheduled end time _____ Actual end time _____
2. 1 Staff does not have materials and supplies ready to begin activities.	3 Staff has some materials and supplies ready to begin activities, or staff has materials and supplies ready to begin only some activities.	5 Staff has all materials and supplies ready to begin all activities (e.g., materials are gathered, set up).	<input type="checkbox"/> If no materials/supplies are required, do not rate. Write an "X" in the box at the left.
3. 1 There are only enough materials and supplies prepared for less than half of the children to begin activities.	3 There are enough materials and supplies prepared for more than half, but not all, of the children to begin activities.	5 There are enough materials and supplies prepared for all children to begin activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> If no materials/supplies are required, do not rate. Write an "X" in the box at the left.
4. 1 Staff does not explain any activities clearly.	3 Staff explains some activities clearly.	5 Staff explains all activities clearly (e.g., children appear to understand directions; sequence of events and purpose are clear).	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. 1 There is not an appropriate amount of time for more than one activity.	3 There is an appropriate amount of time for all but one activity (e.g., for one activity, most children either do not finish or finish early with nothing to do).	5 There is an appropriate amount of time for all of the activities (e.g., children do not appear rushed; most children who are generally on task finish activities; most children do not finish significantly early with nothing planned to do).	<input type="checkbox"/>

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT | Activities support active engagement.

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES
<p>1. 1 The activities provide no opportunities for children to engage with materials or ideas; activities mostly involve waiting, listening, watching and repeating.</p>	<p>3 The activities provide opportunities for children to engage with materials or ideas for less than half of the time.</p>	<p>5 The activities involve children in engaging with (creating, combining, reforming) materials or ideas (e.g., role play, projects, experiments, writing and illustrating stories, outside exploration) for at least half of the time.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. 1 Staff does not provide any children structured opportunities to talk about (or otherwise communicate) what they are doing and what they are thinking about to others.</p>	<p>3 During activities, staff provides some children a structured opportunity to talk about (or otherwise communicate) what they are doing and what they are thinking about to others (e.g., staff asks some children to explain what they are doing or why, staff has half the children explain their art project to another child).</p>	<p>5 During activities, staff provides all children a structured opportunity to talk about (or otherwise communicate) what they are doing and what they are thinking about to others (e.g., each child explains the reasoning behind his or her design to staff; staff assigns children to small groups to work on a shared task).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>3. 1 (SA) Staff does not provide explicit opportunities for children to make connections between current activities and prior experiences and/or knowledge.</p>	<p>3 Staff tells children about a connection between the current activity and children's prior knowledge or experience (e.g., staff says, "This is a follow up to the experiment we did last week").</p>	<p>5 Staff has children make a connection between the current activity and the children's prior knowledge or experience (e.g., staff asks children what they learned in a related experiment, staff asks children what similar tools they have at home, staff has children draw a picture of their favorite fruit or vegetable).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SKILL-BUILDING | Staff supports children in building skills.

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES	
1.	1 Staff never mentions a specific learning or skill-building focus for the session or activity (e.g., objective, learning target, goal).	3 Staff tells children a specific learning or skill-building focus for the session or activity (e.g., objective, learning target, goal) but the focus is not clearly linked to the activity.	5 Staff tells children a specific learning or skill-building focus for the session or activity (e.g., objective, learning target, goal) and the focus is clearly linked to the activity (e.g., students do activity related to focus, language from focus is described in activity).	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	1 Staff does not encourage children to try skills or attempt higher levels of performance.	3 Staff encourages some children to try skills or attempt higher levels of performance.	5 Staff encourages all children to try skills or attempt higher levels of performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	1 Staff does not model skills.	3 Staff models skills for some children.	5 Staff models skills for all children.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	1 Staff does not break difficult task(s) into smaller, simpler steps for any children or there are no tasks of sufficient difficulty to warrant explaining steps.	3 Staff breaks difficult task(s) into smaller, simpler steps for some children.	5 Staff breaks difficult task(s) into smaller, simpler steps for all children (e.g., steps are explained in sequence; instructions are provided for specific steps; examples of completed steps are shared).	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	1 When children struggle (with errors, imperfect results or failure), staff, even once, responds with sarcasm, condescension, criticism, punishment or making fun of the child.	3 When children struggle (with errors, imperfect results or failure), staff sometimes does not respond with learning supports or encouragement (e.g., numerous children are raising their hands for help, but the staff does not get around to responding to all of them; staff ignores struggling children).	5 When children struggle (with errors, imperfect results or failure), staff always provides learning supports or encouragement (e.g., children are helped to problem solve, encouraged to try another approach, told why an error was made, encouraged to keep trying, given guidance or explanation when needed).	<input type="checkbox"/> If no children struggle with imperfect results, do not score. Write an "X" in the box at the left. Expect to score this item if item 2 above scores a 3 or 5.

ENCOURAGEMENT | Staff supports children with encouragement.

Note: Open-ended questions do not have predetermined, correct answers; they seek the opinions, thoughts and ideas of children.

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES
1. 1 Staff does not support contributions or accomplishments of children in either of the ways described for a score of 3 or 5, or simply doesn't support children at all.	3 Staff supports contributions or accomplishments of children but uses subjective or evaluative comments, such as "Good job!", "I like it!" or "You're so smart!"	5 Staff supports at least some contributions or accomplishments of children by acknowledging what they've said or done with specific, non-evaluative language (e.g., "Yes, the cleanup project you suggested is a way to give back to the community," "It looks like you put a lot of time into choosing the colors for your painting").	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. 1 Staff rarely or never asks open-ended questions.	3 Staff makes limited use of open-ended questions (e.g., only uses them during certain parts of the activity or repeats the same questions).	5 Staff makes frequent use of open-ended questions (e.g., staff asks open-ended questions throughout the activity and questions are related to the context; most children have opportunities to answer questions that seek opinions or require thoughtful answers).	<input type="checkbox"/>

II. SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT SUPPLEMENT

CHILD-CENTERED SPACE | The physical environment is flexible and child-centered.

Note: If not compatible with the design and purpose of the program, do not score this scale. Mark all items with an "X".

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES
1. (SA) 1 There are no interest areas in or accessible to the program space.	3 There are interest areas in or accessible to the program space, but they are not well-defined.	5 There are well-defined interest areas in or accessible to the program space (e.g., materials in areas match purpose; spaces are clearly marked and/or labeled).	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. (SA) 1 There are no interest areas or none contain sufficient materials so that several children can work with the materials simultaneously.	3 Some, but not all, interest areas contain sufficient materials so that several children can work with the materials simultaneously.	5 Each interest area contains sufficient materials so that several children can work with the materials simultaneously.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. (SA) 1 Ready-made commercial items or adult-made items dominate the learning environment (bulletin boards and wall displays).	3 Some children's work is on display in the classroom.	5 Children's individual work and projects make up most of wall, bulletin board, and other displays.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. (SA) 1 Children do not participate in selecting items for display or deciding how to arrange them.	3 Children participate in selecting some items for display and sometimes in deciding how to arrange them.	5 Children frequently participate in selecting items for display or deciding how to arrange them.	<input type="checkbox"/> Who made and/or selected what is displayed on the walls?
5. (SA) 1 Most materials lead to prescribed outcomes (e.g., art cutouts, lotto games, worksheets, coloring books, commercial toys).	3 Some open-ended materials are available.	5 Most of the available materials are open-ended (e.g., boxes, paper, beads, paints, blocks, books, sand, water, corks, scarves, paints, musical instruments, microscopes, dress-up clothes).	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. (SA) 1 Learning materials cannot easily be reached by children or are typically brought out by staff.	3 Some learning materials are accessible to children.	5 Most learning materials are easily accessible to children (e.g., placed on low shelves, in easy-to-handle containers).	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. (SA) 1 No time is provided for activities based on children's interests.	3 Some time is provided for activities based on children's interests, but it is not regularly scheduled or it is less than thirty minutes.	5 Thirty minutes or more are provided in a session for children to be involved in activities based on their interests.	<input type="checkbox"/>

MANAGING FEELINGS | Staff encourages children to manage feelings and resolve conflicts appropriately.

Note: A conflict is an interaction between children that involves strong feelings or serious negative behaviors. Strong feelings are any emotions that interrupt the learning of an individual or group of children. If there is not a conflict or incident involving strong feelings, do not score. Mark all items with an "X".

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES
1. (SA) 1 More than once, staff does not ask about or acknowledge the feelings of child(ren) involved.	3 Once, staff does not ask about or acknowledge the feelings of child(ren) involved.	5 Staff always asks about and/or acknowledges the feelings of all child(ren) involved.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. (SA) 1 Staff does not ask child(ren) to explain or confirm the situation; rather, staff states the problem without input from child(ren), or does not state the problem at all.	3 Staff does not ask child(ren) to explain the situation; rather, staff at least once states the problem with some confirmation from child(ren) (e.g., "Did you take that from her?", "You're upset because she took your toy, right?").	5 Staff at least once asks child(ren) to explain the situation (e.g., "Why are you upset?", "What happened?").	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. (SA) 1 Even once, staff shames, scolds, or punishes child(ren).	3 Staff does not help child(ren) respond appropriately, but does not shame, scold, or punish child(ren).	5 Staff at least once helps child(ren) respond appropriately (e.g., staff encourages children to make a list of solutions, take time out to "cool off," find an appropriate physical outlet).	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. (SA) 1 Staff does not ask child(ren) for possible solutions or present solutions with rationale; rather, staff solves problems for children.	3 Staff does not ask child(ren) for possible solutions; rather, staff at least once presents a solution and gives rationale behind it or gives idea(s) for preventing problems in the future.	5 At least once, staff asks child(ren) for possible solutions and encourages them to choose one.	<input type="checkbox"/>

BELONGING | Children have opportunities to develop a sense of belonging.

ITEMS		SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES		
1.	1 Staff does not provide opportunities for children to get to know each other (e.g., the entire session is structured so children have no time where talking among themselves is allowed or encouraged).	3 Staff provides informal opportunities for children to get to know each other (e.g., children engage in informal conversations, children get to know each other as a by-product of an activity).	5 Staff provides structured opportunities with the purpose of helping children get to know each other (e.g., there are team-building activities, introductions, personal updates, welcomes of new group members, icebreakers).	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	1 Children exhibit evidence of excluding peers (e.g., children are avoided or ostracized by other children, “I don’t want to sit with her – she’s not my friend”) and staff does not explicitly promote more inclusive relationships (e.g., suggest ways to include others in play, introduce excluded child to other children, say, “Remember, ‘Be Kind’ is one of our rules”).	3 Children exhibit some evidence of excluding peers and staff intervenes, but not sufficiently to end exclusion (e.g., staff introduces an excluded child to other children, but the newcomer is treated coolly and avoided or ignored; staff intervenes in some instances of exclusionary behavior but not others).	5 Children do not exhibit any exclusion or staff successfully intervenes if exclusive behavior occurs (e.g., staff introduces excluded child to other children and they then include her, staff successfully suggests a way to include a lone boy in children’s play).	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	1 Children do not identify with the program offering (e.g., many children complain about or express dislike of the program offering or activities).	3 Children do not strongly identify with the program offering but do not complain or express dislike.	5 Children strongly identify with the program offering (e.g., hold one another to established guidelines, use ownership language, such as “our program,” engage in shared traditions such as shared jokes, songs, gestures).	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	(SA) 1 Staff does not create opportunities for children to work or play in small groups and children spend all or nearly all of their time working alone or in the full group.	3 Staff does not set up small group activities as part of the program routine; rather, children work or play in small groups that develop informally (e.g., two or three children play a game together).	5 Staff provides structured small group activities as part of the program routine.	<input type="checkbox"/> If there are five or fewer children, do not score. Write an “X” in the box at the left.

SCHOOL-AGE LEADERSHIP | Children have opportunities to practice leadership skills.

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES
<p>1. 1 Staff does not provide (SA) opportunities for children to practice group-process skills.</p>	<p>3 Staff provides a limited opportunity for children to practice group-process skills (e.g., all children are paired off or grouped briefly to talk about a topic, but this is the only opportunity for group process skills).</p>	<p>5 Staff provides multiple or extended opportunities for children to practice group-process skills (e.g., contribute ideas or actions to the group, do a task with others, take responsibility for a part).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. 1 Staff does not provide (SA) opportunities for a child to help another child.</p>	<p>3 Staff provides informal or child-initiated opportunities for a child to help another child by demonstrating or explaining a task or part of a task (e.g., without being asked by a staff member, a child explains to another how to do a homework assignment, play a game, do something on the computer).</p>	<p>5 Staff provides one or more opportunities for a child to help another child by demonstrating or explaining a task or part of a task (e.g., each child explains to a partner how take over her role in a group project; every child gets to explain the rules to his favorite game).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>3. 1 Staff does not provide (SA) opportunities for children to lead a group or exercise leadership.</p>	<p>3 Staff provides opportunities for one or more children to informally or spontaneously exercise leadership (e.g., during free time a child organizes a group game; a child spontaneously volunteers to demonstrate something to whole group).</p>	<p>5 Staff provides structured opportunities for one or more children to lead a group (e.g., facilitate a discussion, lead a song, project, event or other activity).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

INTERACTION WITH ADULTS | Staff engages with children in positive ways.

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES
<p>1. (SA) 1 Staff never lowers their bodies so their eyes are at children's eye level.</p>	<p>3 Staff once or twice lowers their bodies so their eyes are at children's eye level.</p>	<p>5 Staff often lowers their bodies so their eyes are at children's eye level (squatting, bending over when talking to children much shorter than they are).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. (SA) 1 Staff does not work side by side with children.</p>	<p>3 Staff sometimes, or intermittently, works side by side with children.</p>	<p>5 Staff consistently works side by side with children.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>3. (SA) 1 Staff does not circulate to interact with children.</p>	<p>3 Staff circulates and interacts with some (but not all) children.</p>	<p>5 Staff circulates and interacts with every child at some point during the program session.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>4. (SA) 1 Interaction is primarily limited to managing behaviors and responding to problems (e.g., staff states rules but provides no explanation, tells children what to do or how to do it, spends significant time disciplining behaviors).</p>	<p>3 Staff sometimes interacts with children in positive ways.</p>	<p>5 Staff consistently interacts with children in positive ways (e.g., discusses or explains rules and limits, models positive affect, follows children's leads).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SCHOOL-AGE PLANNING | Children have opportunities to make plans.

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES
<p>1. (SA) 1 Staff does not create an opportunity for any children (individual or group) to make plans (e.g., children plan how to spend their time, how to do something, or who to do it with).</p>	<p>3 Staff creates an opportunity for some children (individual or group) to make plans (e.g., children plan how to spend their time, how to do something, or who to do it with).</p>	<p>5 Staff creates an opportunity for all children (individual or group) to make plans (e.g., children plan how to spend their time, how to do something, or who to do it with).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. (SA) 1 Staff does not use an identifiable planning strategy to support children's planning.</p>	<p>3 Staff uses at least one identifiable planning strategy to support children's planning (e.g., children always verbalize their plans).</p>	<p>5 Staff uses two or more strategies to support children's planning (e.g., area signs; idea webbing; planning in pairs; planning journals or forms; props such as puppets, hula hoops and maps).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>3. (SA) Staff does not encourage children to share plans.</p>	<p>3 Staff encourages children to share plans, but only verbally.</p>	<p>5 Staff encourages children to share plans and represent their plans in a tangible way (e.g., a small group draws a diagram before building; staff helps full group make a large idea web to plan an event).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SCHOOL-AGE CHOICE | Children have opportunities to make choices based on their interests.

Note: **Authentic choices** refer to real, meaningful choices, as opposed to token or false choices.

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES
<p>1. (SA) 1 Staff does not provide opportunities for children to make choices within activities, or choices given are false, token ones (e.g., staff says, “You can choose to be here or not”; children are allowed to choose only the color of marker to use, but all draw an owl).</p>	<p>3 Staff provides opportunities for some children to make authentic choices within activities (e.g., one small group gets to decorate the outside of invitations in any way they’d like, while another group has to copy invitation wording verbatim).</p>	<p>5 Staff provides opportunities for all children to make authentic choices within activities (e.g., all children choose what to build; all children can choose whether to paint, draw, or use markers; all children get to act out an animal of their choice).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. (SA) 1 Staff does not provide opportunities for children to make choices within activities.</p>	<p>3 Staff provides opportunities for children to make discrete choices between set options within activities (e.g., children choose between three movies to watch, draw an owl, penguin or ostrich).</p>	<p>5 Staff provides opportunities for children to make open-ended choices within activities rather than choosing from limited options provided to them (e.g., they choose what to draw, how to use costumes, how to carry out an activity).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REFLECTION | Children have opportunities to reflect.

Note: **Reflect** means to review, summarize and/or evaluate recent events or activities. **Reflections** are usually expressed by talking with others and/or in writing (a journal or report, for example).

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES
1.	1 Staff does not engage children in an intentional process of reflecting on what they have done during the program session.	3 Staff engages some children in an intentional process of reflecting on what they have done during the program session.	5 Staff engages all children in an intentional process of reflecting on what they have done during the program session (e.g., writing in journals; reviewing minutes; sharing progress, accomplishments, or feelings about the experience).
2.	1 Staff does not encourage children to share what they have done with others or to reflect on their experiences.	3 Staff uses at least one identifiable strategy to help children to share what they have done and reflect on their experiences (e.g., staff asks children, "What did you do today?").	5 Staff uses two or more strategies to encourage children to share what they have done and reflect on their experiences (e.g., writing, role playing, using media or technology, drawing, using props such as puppets, hula hoops and maps).
3.	1 Staff dismisses feedback from children who initiate it, or children have no opportunities to provide feedback on the activities.	3 Staff is receptive to feedback initiated by children on the activities but does not solicit it.	5 Staff initiates structured opportunities for children to give feedback on the activities (e.g., staff asks feedback questions, provides session evaluations).

RESPONSIBILITY | Children are encouraged to exercise independence and take on responsibilities.

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES
<p>1. 1 Staff does not create (SA) opportunities for or encourage children to take care of practical needs and accomplish routine tasks.</p>	<p>3 Once or twice, staff creates opportunities for or encourages children to take care of practical needs and accomplish routine tasks.</p>	<p>5 Three or more times, staff creates opportunities for children to take care of practical needs and accomplish routine tasks or encourages them to do so (e.g., clean up, get supplies, run errands in building, pass out materials or snacks, wipe dry erase boards, put up chairs, feed pets, get themselves a new box of tissues or needed supply from the closet).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. 1. More than once, staff takes (SA) over or intervenes intrusively in activities or tasks assigned to a child.</p>	<p>3. Only once, staff takes over or intervenes intrusively in activities or tasks assigned to a child.</p>	<p>5. Staff does not take over or intervene intrusively in activities or a task assigned to a child, even if the child takes a long time or does not employ the methods staff had in mind.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <p>If item above is scored a 1, do not score this item. Write an "X" in the box at the left.</p>

SCHOOL-AGE PQA OBSERVATION GUIDE

Program Offerings Children – Grades K-6

Summary of Scales

I. Safe Environment

- Emotional Safety
- Healthy Environment
- Emergency Preparedness
- Accommodating Environment
- Nourishment

II. Supportive Environment

- Warm Welcome
- Session Flow
- Active Engagement
- Skill-Building
- Encouragement
- Child-Centered Space

III. Interaction

- Managing Feelings
- Belonging
- School-Age Leadership
- Interaction with Adults

IV. Engagement

- School-Age Planning
- School-Age Choice
- Reflection
- Responsibility

Follow-Up Questions

- Where are the emergency procedures posted?
- Is there an accessible fire extinguisher?
- Is there an accessible first-aid kit?
- Do you have any special safety or emergency equipment?
- Are entrances to the indoor program space supervised?
- Is access to the outdoor program space supervised?
- Can the furniture be moved around?
- Who made and/or selected what is displayed on the walls? (Ask only if scoring the Child-Centered Space scale.)

Scheduled starting time: _____ Actual starting time: _____

Scheduled end time: _____ Actual end time: _____

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