



Supervisor's Guide: more about the quality indicators

Supervisor

Use the Classroom Quality Indicators Checklist with the classroom teams that you supervise. The checklist helps teams determine if the foundational elements of a quality classroom are in place. With a firm foundation, teams can then individualize – plan instruction for an individual child's needs. This guide provides additional information about each of the indicators.

1. Do the children spend most of their time play and working with classroom materials and other children? Participation or engagement is related to children's learning. Children should be playing, manipulating toys and other learning materials, and interacting with other children. Children should not be wandering aimlessly, waiting, or sitting quietly for long periods of time.
2. Do children have access to various activities throughout the day? A quality classroom environment has a variety of toys and learning materials such as blocks, books, art materials, props and dress up materials, puzzles and other manipulative items. Materials should be in good shape but don't need to be expensive; homemade or found materials can be just as interesting. Children should not be expected to all be working on the same thing at the same time. Learning centers should be available to children at various times throughout the day.
3. Do teachers work with individual children, small groups, and the whole group at different times during the day? A variety of groupings allows children to get some personalized attention and allows teachers to get to know individual children's needs and interests. The children do not need to spend a lot of time in whole group activities. For some children, trying to learn in a whole group setting is very difficult.
4. Is the classroom decorated with children's original artwork, photos, their own writing, and stories they've dictated? Displays of individual children's work indicate that they have opportunities to express themselves and that their work is valued.
5. Do children learn within meaningful (i.e., relevant to their interests and experiences) contexts? Well-planned, everyday experiences like serving snack, choosing a play center, or caring for the classroom pet or plans can be used to create learning opportunities. Classroom activities should connect to children's family and cultural experiences. More academic content (like learning numbers, shapes or letters) can be incorporated into both routine and planned activities that revolve around topics of interests to the children.
6. Do children work on projects and have periods of time to play and explore. Free choice or learning center time should be planned for sufficient time for children to engage in an activity and increase their learning. Projects or themes should extend over enough time so that children have opportunities to gain, use and expand on their new knowledge. There should be a balance of child-initiated and teacher-initiated learning activities.
7. Do children have an opportunity to play and explore outside every day? Outdoor time is valuable. Children need opportunities for physical activity and exploring the natural world. Outdoor time should not be sacrificed for more indoor, teacher-led activities.

8. Do teachers read book to children individually or in small groups throughout the day? Books and other literacy materials should be readily available. Storybook reading is important for learning vocabulary as well as information about print; make sure that children are read to individually or in smaller groups, not just at circle time. There will be more time for questions and answers about the story.
9. Is the curriculum adapted for those who are ahead as well as those who need additional help? All children do not learn the same thing at the same time or in the same way. Plan the curriculum for children at different levels of experience. Sometimes this means simplifying or breaking down an activity into smaller parts, providing more time, or using different materials. Sometimes it means asking open-ended questions or creating opportunities to extend children's thinking.
10. Do children and their families feel safe and secure within their early childhood programs? Children and families should feel emotionally and physically safe in their early childhood program. Children are content and happy to attend; families are comfortable with their child's program.