



Wellington's Quality Assessment for Early Learning and Child Care

A quality assessment tool and scoring guide for early learning and child care programmes in Wellington-Guelph

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Wellington's Quality Assessment Tool for Early Learning and Child Care

Wellington's Quality Assessment for Early Learning and Child Care aims to measure quality in early learning and child care programmes.

Child care and early years programmes provide care or supervision to children birth to 12 years and there is an expectation that programming is guided by *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*.¹ Wellington's Quality Assessment for Early Learning and Child Care helps support programmes to ensure programming is rooted in the principles of Ontario's pedagogical framework.

Wellington's Quality Assessment for Early Learning and Child Care, together with the work of the Early Years Professional Resource Centre, form a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Our two-pronged approach to quality is theoretically grounded in an ecological model, recognizing that quality is influenced by the relationships between children, families, educators, and communities. The quality assessment is an opportunity for Children's Early Years Division to walk alongside programmes in the collective and ongoing journey to offer quality programmes to the Wellington-Guelph community. This is the Children Early Years Division's two-pronged approach to quality:

Wellington's Quality Assessment for Early Learning and Child Care measures quality levels and changes in quality over time

Early Years Professional Resource Centre supports quality improvement through professional learning, mentorship, and the provision of the Enhanced Support System

This document contains information about the quality assessment process and Wellington's Quality Assessment Tool, which acts as a resource for programmes in Wellington-Guelph. The front matter outlines the definition of quality and other key terms and explains the quality assessment process. Additionally, this document contains the indicators, the methodology for collecting evidence to score each indicator, and scoring notes to indicate the considerations given when scoring each indicator or section.

¹ Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*. Government of Ontario.; Ontario Ministry of Education. (2021). *Before and After School Programs Kindergarten – Grade 6*. Government of Ontario.

What is Quality in Early Learning and Child Care?

Quality can be described in many ways, and means many different things to different children, families, educators, programmes, and societies. In this sense, quality means **creating conditions for children’s belonging, engagement, expression, and well-being**.

“In a quality program, each child feels accepted, understood, supported, and respected by the adults, enjoys positive relationships with the other children and generally finds the activities interesting, engaging, and satisfying. Each family feels confident that the program promotes their child’s well-being and optimal development and experiences its relationship with the program as respectful of its culture, traditions, values and goals for its child, supportive of its parenting role and collaborative”

– Canadian Child Care Federation

There are two types of quality: **structural quality** and **process quality**. Structural quality refers to the regulated aspect of child care (e.g., ratios and group sizes, staff qualifications, wages, benefits, or programme policies), whereas process quality refers to the day-to-day experiences of children (e.g., curriculum design, interactions between children, peers, staff, & families, or the provision of experiences and materials).

While structural and process quality are separate components of quality, they work together to support children’s well-being, learning, and development. As such, Wellington’s Quality Assessment Tool assesses programmes on both structural and process quality.

The development of Wellington’s Quality Assessment for Early Learning and Child Care was guided by the four foundations of **belonging, engagement, expression, and well-being** outlined in *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years*. The individual indicators reflect critical aspects of quality, generated by referencing evidence-based early childhood education, child care quality, and child development literature. References for each of the materials used to create Wellington’s Quality Assessment Tool are included at the end of this document.

The Quality Assessment Process

Quality Child Care Visitors (Children’s Early Years Division) conduct quality assessments effectively and reliably using their knowledge of child care programming.

Indicators are grouped into sub-sections representing key areas of child care and early years programming, from pedagogy to operations, that align with the philosophy of *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years*² and address both structural and process quality.

There are 7 Sections in the assessment tool:

- **Section 1** (35 items) focuses on curriculum, pedagogy and inclusion.
- **Section 2** (17 items) focuses on staff interactions with children.
- **Section 3** (20 items) assesses the environment as the third teacher and the provision of materials.
- **Section 4** (11 items) looks at the programme’s relationship with families and the community.
- **Section 5** (21 items) assesses the conditions for staff and examines programme leadership and the role of supporting staff.
- **Section 6** (75 items) borrows indicators from across the first 5 sections to create a specialized set of indicators that address specific components of programming for children aged 4-12.
- **Section 7** (28 items) addresses components of health and safety and is only applicable for programmes that do not go through the Ministry of Education’s licensing process.

Not all sections are applicable for all programme types. The following chart indicates which sections each programme will be assessed on:

Programme Type	Section						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Centre-Based and Nursery Programmes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Licensed Programmes for Children 4-12 Years	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X
Authorized Recreation & Skill Building Programmes	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓
Camp Programmes	X	X	X	X	X	✓ except 6.1	✓
X = section is not assessed	✓ = section is assessed						

² Ontario Ministry of Education. (2014). *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years*. Government of Ontario.

The scoring of each indicator is based on a two-point system, with an option for items to be “not assessed” if they are not applicable to the programme type, or not observed during the assessment. The scoring options are as follows (also see [Appendix A](#)):

✓ = Meets Indicator

X = Does Not Meet Indicator

N/A = Not Assessed

Overall scores are calculated based on the total number of items met out of the total number of items assessed, across all sections of the tool. Programmes are not required to meet every indicator, but they should aim to meet a significant portion of the indicators to know that their programme is offering quality care and work environments.

The following scores are set as targets for programmes to meet:

- Programmes for children birth up to age 4 (including full-day centre-based child care and nursery programmes) should **aim to meet at least 70%** of the indicators (i.e., based on the number of applicable items that “*meets indicator*”) for Sections 1 to 5
 - Programmes should **aim to meet at least 80%** of Section 2
- Programmes for children 4 to 12 years (including licensed programmes for children 4-12 years, camps and authorized recreation programmes) should **aim to meet at least 70%** of the indicators (i.e., based on the number of applicable items that “*meets indicator*”) for Section 6.
 - Programmes should **aim to meet at least 80%** of Section 6.3
- Programmes for children 4 to 12 years that do **not** go through the Ministry of Education’s licensing process (including camps and authorized recreation programmes) should **aim to meet 100%** of the indicators in Section 7.

Programmes that do not meet these targets are encouraged to engage in quality improvement. This can include: connecting with the Early Years Professional Resource Centre, the Enhanced Support System, goal setting, engaging with professional learning, and more!

Programmes can request another assessment after a period of 6 months. This timeframe is based on the concept that for sustained quality improvements in challenge areas, deliberate problem solving and strategic planning is likely required, which takes time (see [Appendix B](#)).

Evidence Used to Score Wellington’s Quality Assessment Tool

Quality Child Care Visitors use a combination of strategies to gather information, including:

Observation Visits

The Quality Child Care Visitors will spend time observing the programme’s daily operations during an **unscheduled** Observation Visit. During the Observation Visit, Quality Child Care Visitors will gather evidence from observing:

- **Play/experiences:** including free-play, experiences, and guided activities; time for play/experiences must be observed to achieve a score of ‘meets’ on these items, regardless of whether the visit occurs indoors, outdoors, morning, or afternoon.
- **Physical Environment:** the indoor, outdoor, and shared spaces.
- **Documentation/Programme Plans:** can include learning stories, documentation of single experiences, long-term/project/inquiry documentation, programme planning sheets, pedagogical documentation, and other visible documentation in the environment.
- **Daily Practices:** the day-to-day flow of the programme including routines (i.e., toileting, meal times, sleep/rest time) and transitions.

Quality Assessment Package

The Quality Assessment Package is a series of documents that programmes fill out to share policies, practices, and other non-observable aspects of quality. The documents included in the package are:

- an attestation form
- requests for copies of policies, procedures, and other documentation
- a list of open-ended questions for programme leadership

The information, answers to questions, and/or materials that programmes include in the Quality Assessment Package will be used to score several indicators in the tool.

Leadership Questions

To get more information about the programme, programme leaders are asked to respond to several questions. After the Observation Visit, Quality Child Care Visitors will send the Quality Assessment Package to the programme. At this time, programmes can choose to provide responses to these questions in either of the following ways:

- a) **Discussion Meeting:** Quality Child Care Visitors will arrange a time to speak with a supervisor/leader/owner from each programme after the Observation Visit. A list of the

questions is included in the Quality Assessment Package, which will be provided to the programme leader following the Observation Visit.

- b) Written Responses:** A list of the questions is included in the Quality Assessment Package. The programme supervisor/leader/owner can create a separate document with the responses to each question and return this document with the completed Quality Assessment Package by the date indicated by the Quality Child Care Visitor conducting the programme's assessment. If the Quality Child Care Visitor has any follow-up questions, they can call the programme to discuss these items.

Year-Round Quality Submission Form

The Children's Early Years Division recognizes that quality programming is relational and ongoing. To allow your programme to share the quality practices that occur year-round, when the Quality Child Care Visitors are not present, we have created the Quality Submission Form.

The Quality Submission Form is used to collect descriptions of practices, examples, or artifacts that speak to the quality of your child care programme. Anything you consider relevant to quality in your programme can be included here (e.g., samples of documentation, descriptions of community/family events, updated policies). Prior to your quality assessment, the submissions will be collected and shared with the Quality Child Care Visitor assessing your programme.

Completing this form is optional - your Quality Child Care Visitor can assess your programme without any submissions. However, if you wish to capture the exciting moments from your programme between assessment visits, please use this form to do so. While the Quality Submission Form is optional, programmes may want to consider completing it on a regular basis (e.g. monthly) or at times when they have made significant changes (e.g., policy updates) or achievements.

Link: https://wellington.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_b1PrqINEoEyoMKi
(or scan the QR code to open the form)



How to Prepare for a Quality Assessment

Be excited to share about what makes your programme work for the families and children you serve.

Be present with the children, families, and staff – the quality assessment visits are a vulnerable time for programmes as they open their doors to the Quality Child Care Visitors. The best way for the Quality Child Care Visitors to assess a programme is by seeing the authentic programme that children experience each day. When staff focus on being present with the children, their capabilities as educators will shine through!

Try evaluating your own programme using Wellington's Quality Assessment Tool. As a programme leader or programme team, you can walk through the programme as if you were performing the assessment visit. Use the Scoring Notes in this document to help.

Reflect on quality with your team. Some questions that may help support your preparations:

- How are children experiencing this practice?
- How are families experiencing this practice?
- How are programme staff experiencing this practice?
- In what ways does this practice support the children's belonging, engagement, expression, and well-being?
- If this was my first time at this programme, what would I notice?
- How is this practice reflected in my room?
- How is this practice reflected in our programme?
- Is this practice/aspect consistent across all areas of the programme?
- What adaptations or changes might be made to make this practice more visible in my room or my programme?
- What questions do you still have about this practice?
- How might you investigate this question?
- Who might you investigate it with?

Section 1: Practices to Support Learning and Development

Section 1 covers curriculum development, pedagogy, practices to support learning, practices to support equity and inclusion, and pedagogical documentation of children’s learning and experiences in the programme.

1.1 Processes to Support Curriculum Development

Documentation/programme plans contribute to the visibility of educators’ efforts to monitor developmental progress and how this is integrated into curriculum. The physical environment, play, and experiences make visible the way that children benefit from the effects of this thinking and planning.

“A comprehensive, age-appropriate curriculum guides teachers’ development and intentional implementation of learning opportunities that are consistent with the program’s goals and objectives for children. [...] It should also allow for adaptations and modifications to ensure access to the curriculum for all children.”^[58]

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
The programme ensures that the curriculum:		
→ curric1. Reflects the lives of the children, families, and educators that are in the programme ^[28, 29, 31, 32, 58]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, and documentation/programme plans
→ curric2. Provides for children’s safety while enabling children to take reasonable risks and gain an increasing sense of mastery ^[5, 11, 25]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, physical environment, and documentation/programme plans
→ curric3. Provides play-based <u>experiences</u> that invite exploration and expression ^[21, 29]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences → Only offering close-ended <u>experiences</u> will yield a score of <i>does not meet</i>
→ curric4. Is responsive to children’s varying abilities, dispositions, and styles of interaction ^[25, 29, 38, 72]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, physical environment, and documentation/programme plans
curric5. Staff utilize children’s ideas, knowledge, and/or interests to adapt the learning environment, materials, and/or <u>experiences</u> ^[8, 29, 32]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, physical environment, and documentation/programme plans

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
curric6. Staff use information about children’s development to design learning experiences [27, 29, 32, 46]	Questions	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>

1.2 Pedagogy & Practices to Support Learning

Programming and daily routines “offer many opportunities for learning and development. Each day, children should expect to have the time and the materials needed to select their own activities [...] staff help children follow a predictable but flexible daily routine by providing time and support for transitions” [58]

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
pedagogy1. There are opportunities and flexibility in scheduling to allow children to persist in their activity or return to an activity over time [6, 8, 29]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming), and documentation/programme plans
pedagogy2. Children are observed initiating experiences, generating ideas, and/or making meaningful choices through play [25, 29, 32, 80]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences → Only offering teacher-directed activities will yield a score of <i>does not meet</i> .
pedagogy3. Staff engage alongside children as co-learners [21]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences → Observing children’s play can be an aspect of learning alongside children. If staff are intentionally not engaging, evaluators must be made aware of this pedagogical choice, or a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided.
pedagogy4. Daily care practices (e.g., toileting, meals, rest) are unhurried and are used as an opportunity to connect, engage in conversation, and/or encourage self-help skills [4, 58, 62]	Observation	Observed through: daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming) → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided.

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
<p>pedagogy5. Children have daily opportunities to engage in active play that supports emerging skills in motor development ^[4, 58, 62]</p>	<p>Observation</p>	<p>Observed through: play/ experiences → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided. → If weather does not permit outdoor play, evaluators will look to see that there is another opportunity for active play.</p>
<p>pedagogy6. Literacy and/or language is incorporated throughout daily experiences, routines, and/or physical spaces ^[28, 58, 62, 67]</p>	<p>Observation</p>	<p>Observed through: physical environment, daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming) → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided.</p>
<p>pedagogy7. Staff help children develop narrating skills by providing opportunities for them to hear and/or tell stories ^[4]</p>	<p>Observation</p>	<p>Observed through: daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming)</p>
<p>pedagogy8. Children have varied opportunities to develop verbal and non-verbal communication by responding to questions, and communicating their needs, thoughts, and experiences ^[4, 58, 62]</p>	<p>Observation</p>	<p>Observed through: daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming)</p>
<p>pedagogy9. Staff are responsive communication partners ^[22, 23, 25]</p>	<p>Observation</p>	<p>Observed through: daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming) → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided.</p>
<p>pedagogy10. Staff link children’s spoken communication with written language ^[4, 58]</p>	<p>Observation</p>	<p>Observed through: daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming), documentation/ programme plans</p>
<p>pedagogy11. Screen technology ³ is only used in response to children’s interests, to enrich experiences, and/or to extend children’s learning. ^[78]</p>	<p>Observation</p>	<p>Observed through: daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming) → If no screen technology use is observed, a score of <i>not assessed</i> will be provided.</p>

³ **Screen technology** refers to devices (e.g., television, tablets, phones) and digital media (e.g., videos, shows, movies). Old phones, computers, keyboards, and other old, disconnected devices that are used for dramatic play are **not** considered screen technology.

1.3 Practices that Support Equity and Inclusion

This section aims to ensure that “teaching practices, curriculum approaches, and classroom materials do not present stereotypes, but instead respect diversity in gender, sexual orientation, age, language, ability, race, religion, family structure (e.g., nuclear, single parent, multi-generational, same-sex, blended families), background, and culture,”^[58] and align with the Enhanced Support System. “Children need learning experiences that foster positive identity and an emerging sense of self and others within the context of their family, culture (e.g., ethnicity, religion), nationality, industry, or other groups they are a part of.”^[58]

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
socIncl1. Children have opportunities to build an understanding of the <u>diversity</u> in society ^[28, 58, 74]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, physical environment
socIncl2. Staff intervene to challenge social justice issues and/or bias shown by children or adults in the programme ^[27, 28]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming) → If no situation occurs, a score of <i>not assessed</i> will be provided
socIncl3. Children who have health care needs are not excluded from the programme due to health-related procedures (e.g., tube feeding) and families are asked to collaborate with staff on how to meet the children’s needs; however, families are not required to be present to perform related health procedures as a condition of enrollment ^[48, 50]	Documents	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i> → To provide a score of <i>meets indicator</i> , evaluators will need to see all aspects of the indicator represented in the document(s) provided
socIncl4. Children with disabilities are never asked to stay home because a particular staff member is absent ^[50]	Documents	→ Exceptions to this include children whose medical needs require a trained staff to be present at all times.
socIncl5. Waitlist and enrolment policies and practices ensure that children with disabilities, differences, and/or special health care needs have equal access to child care spaces in the programme ^[62]	Attestation	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
socIncl6. All staff have knowledge of the Enhanced Support System, including the resources available and how to access these resources ^[36]	Attestation	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
socIncl7. Programmes in receipt of Special Needs Resourcing funds are using the funding, materials, equipment, and/or extra staff person to support the children and/or room that the funding was intended for ^[36]	Attestation	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
socIncl8. Individual Support Plans (ISPs) are in place for every child receiving child-specific funding and the ISP was created in consultation with the family ^[36]	Attestation	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
socIncl9. The programme uses a relational approach to behaviour guidance (i.e., not disciplinary, punitive, or exclusionary) and there is a clear process of engaging families in problem solving, in professional supports, and exhausting all other techniques to support the child and/or adapt the programme to meet the needs of the child, prior to a decision to exclude a child from the programme ^[24, 54, 58, 64, 81, 82]	Documents	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i> → To provide a score of <i>meets indicator</i> , evaluators will need to see all aspects of the indicator represented in the document(s) provided → Regardless of the existence of a behaviour guidance policy, if an evaluator observes a prohibited practice, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided
socIncl10. Indoor spaces are <i>physically</i> accessible for all children and adults, including individuals with disability or difference; in areas that are inaccessible, adaptations and/or plans are in place to rectify the inaccessible nature of the space OR individualized adaptations have been made to ensure that all children in the programme have access to all areas ^[27, 32, 41, 47, 63]	Observation Questions	Observed through: play/ experiences, physical environment, daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming)
socIncl11. Outdoor spaces are <i>physically</i> accessible for all children and adults, including individuals with disability or difference; in areas that are inaccessible, adaptations and/or plans are in place to rectify the inaccessible nature of the space OR individualized adaptations have been made to ensure full participation of all children in outdoor activities ^[27, 32, 41, 47, 58, 63]	Observation Questions	→ If evaluators can see visible adaptations made to the environment, this item can be scored with evidence from only the observation visit → If no adaptations are required at the time of the visit, a score of <i>not assessed</i> will be provided
socIncl12. Adaptations to materials/equipment have been made to meet the individual participation needs of children in the programme ^[27, 30, 50, 74]	Observation Questions	

1.4 Documenting Children’s Learning

Staff engage in the **process** of **documentation** in thoughtful ways as they explore and make visible how children think and learn. ^[3, 62, 74] *“Moving beyond simply an objective reporting of children’s behaviour, pedagogical documentation helps to find meaning in what children do and what they experience.”*^[62]

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
Documentation processes, artifacts, and/or evidence demonstrate that the programme:		
pedDoc1. Makes children's learning, thinking, and development visible to children and families ^[29, 69, 75, 80]	Observation	Observed through: documentation/programme plans
pedDoc2. Reflects upon and supports children to revisit thoughts and ideas ^[69, 75]	Observation	→ Each indicator speaks to an aspect of what makes documentation meaningful for children’s <u>experiences</u>
pedDoc3. Staff monitor children’s development using <u>authentic assessment</u> (i.e., continuous observation, documentation, and reflection) ^[3, 4, 27, 29, 32, 38, 42]	Observation	→ It is not necessary to have all aspects in each piece of documentation, QCCVs will be looking to see that, overall, the documentation shows staff are thinking about each aspect throughout their documentation process
pedDoc4. Plans <u>curricula</u> based on children's interests ^[29, 69, 75]	Observation	
pedDoc5. Gives visibility to the many relationships that children have (i.e., with adults, other children, the community, and/or the natural world) ^[62, 69]	Observation	→ In addition to posted <u>documentation, programme plans/planning sheets and/or learning stories</u> can help contextualize what QCCVs see during their observation visits
pedDoc6. Invites the ideas and perspectives of families, children, and other staff in the process of pedagogical <u>documentation</u> ^[25, 29, 39, 62, 75]	Observation	→ If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided

Section 2: Interactions

Section 2 covers interactions between children, adults, and peers. *“Positive relationships between adults and children are essential for the development of children’s sense of personal responsibility and for fostering their capacity for self-regulation, their constructive interactions with others, and their academic functioning and mastery. Warm, sensitive, and responsive interactions with adults help children develop a secure, positive sense of self and encourage them to respect and cooperate with others.”*^[58]

2.1 Supporting Emotional Co-Regulation

Supporting children’s emotional regulation supports self-regulation, *“when children learn to manage their behavior, thoughts, and feelings, they are developing self-regulation. Children need self-regulation to successfully and actively participate in learning. To develop self-regulation, children need many opportunities to experience and practice skills with adults and peers.”*^[58]

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
emotReg1. Staff state their expectations clearly and match them to children’s developmental level ^[25]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming)
emotReg2. Staff explain consequences of children’s actions in a constructive manner so that children understand the impact on others ^[4]	Observation	
emotReg3. Staff recognize and respond to the signs of stress in children and the stressors that may impact individual children or the group ^[73]	Observation	
emotReg4. Staff help children build stress awareness by helping them to identify their emotions ^[4, 25, 32, 73]	Observation	
emotReg5. Staff help children express their own feelings and recognize others’ feelings ^[25]	Observation	
emotReg6. Staff model skills in emotional regulation by recognizing and responding appropriately to their own stress (e.g., calming strategies) ^[25, 32, 33, 58]	Observation	

2.2 Supporting Prosocial Dispositions and Positive Interactions

In quality child care programmes, “all children have varied opportunities to engage throughout the day with teaching staff who are attentive and responsive to them and who facilitate their social competence and their ability to learn through interacting with others.”^[58] Teachers play a role “in the development of friendships between children: they design opportunities that promote peer engagement, help children sustain and enhance *play*, and help children resolve conflict.”^[58]

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
proSoc1. Staff support children in negotiating their interactions with others ^[25]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming)
proSoc2. Staff engage children to resolve conflicts by helping them describe problems and try alternative solutions ^[25, 58]	Observation	
proSoc3. Staff encourage children to listen to one another ^[25]	Observation	
proSoc4. Staff recognize and acknowledge when children display empathy ^[4, 25]	Observation	
proSoc5. Children have varied opportunities to develop skills for prosocial behaviours (e.g., entering social groups, learning to help) ^[25, 32, 58]	Observation	

2.3 Practices to Support Self-Esteem and Resilience

“Children learn best when they feel respected and valued. Teachers can create a positive emotional climate in their classroom through their warm, affectionate verbal and physical interactions and consistent, predictable care.”^[58]

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
selfEst1. Staff create an environment that allows children to display a range of emotions ^[22, 25]	Observation	Observed through: daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming)
selfEst2. Staff are responsive to children in ways that make them feel safe ^[22, 25, 29, 37, 68]	Observation	Observed through: daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming)

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
selfEst3. Staff encourage and recognize each child’s efforts and accomplishments ^[20]	Observation	Observed through: daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming)
selfEst4. Staff respond positively to children’s successes, interests, strengths, and needs ^[20, 58]	Observation	
selfEst5. Staff provide children opportunities to exercise responsibility and autonomy, by making decisions for themselves and/or by learning through their mistakes as well as through their successes ^[20]	Observation	
selfEst6. Staff practices show respect and sensitivity for children’s individual identity ^[1, 49, 52]	Observation	

Section 3: Physical Environments and Materials

Section 3 covers the indoor and outdoor environments, as well as the provision of materials to support children’s exploration, learning, and play. The environment is the third teacher and therefore “*must accommodate children’s basic physical needs for movement, sensory stimulation, fresh air, rest, and nourishment. [...] It is important for teachers to organize space and choose materials so all curriculum content areas are addressed. A crucial goal of classroom arrangement is to stimulate exploration, experimentation, discovery, and conceptual learning.*”^[58]

3.1 Environments, Play-Based Material and Equipment

Play-based items/materials refer to materials that have been added to the space to enhance children’s play experiences. Play-based/open-ended materials have no intended use, meaning children are free to use the items for any purposes throughout their play.

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
In the indoor and outdoor environment:		
enviro1. There is variety and adequate supply of play-based materials that reflect the interests and abilities of the children in the group and are in good condition ^[25, 29, 70]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, physical environment → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided
enviro2. Play-based items are <u>accessible and available</u> throughout the day. This means that play-based items are within reach and accessible to the children to foster their own choice and independence ^[10]	Observation	
enviro3. Play-based items extend learning between the indoor and outdoor environment ^[9, 70]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, physical environment
enviro4. Staff are responsive to children’s exploration by changing or enhancing play-based materials and equipment ^[11, 29, 32]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, physical environment, documentation/programme plans
enviro5. Staff encourage children to make connections and extend learning using different materials across different areas of the play space ^[9, 25, 29, 32, 70]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, physical environment → Children not being permitted to use items in multiple areas in the play space will yield a score of <i>does not meet</i> .

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
enviro6. There is enough space that allows for freedom of movement, for all children, when all the children in the group are present ^[32]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, physical environment → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided
enviro7. The space is designed to support children’s abilities and to promote exploration and engagement ^[2, 10, 12, 27, 79]	Observation	
In the outdoor environment:		
enviro8. Play-based items that promote complex <u>play</u> and that support holistic development are available ^[7, 10]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, physical environment → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided → A score of <i>not assessed</i> will be provided to nursery programmes
enviro9. The outdoor space has a variety of natural elements that children can explore with their bodies, minds, and senses ^[15, 25, 32, 62]	Observation	
In the indoor environment:		
enviro10. There is individual space for each child’s belongings ^[58, 63]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, physical environment, daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming) → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided
enviro11. The space is attuned to children’s varied sensitivities, arousal states and need for maintaining calm, focused, and alert state ^[7, 27, 32, 73]	Observation	
enviro12. There are elements in the room to promote comfort, security, and relaxation ^[63]	Observation	
enviro13. The space is designed and arranged to support children’s <u>play</u> through individual, small group, and whole group <u>experiences</u> ^[10, 58, 71]	Observation	
enviro14. Materials are displayed at a variety of heights, including children’s eye level ^[6, 8]	Observation	Observed through: physical environment → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
<p>enviro15. Play-based items that promote complex <u>play</u> that supports holistic development of children are available [7, 10]</p>	<p>Observation</p>	<p>Observed through: play/ experiences, physical environment → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided</p>
<p>enviro16. A selection of books and literacy materials are provided and in good condition.</p>	<p>Observation</p>	<p>Observed through: physical environment → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided → Additional literacy materials are needed for this item. If books are the only literacy material provided, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided.</p>
<p>enviro17. Open ended building materials are accessible to children and there is floor space to allow for children to <u>play</u> with these materials in groups.</p>	<p>Observation</p>	<p>Observed through: physical environment → Access to materials for these items do not need to be concentrated to an “area” or “centre” → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided</p>
<p>enviro18. Children have access to materials that promote sensory exploration.</p>	<p>Observation</p>	
<p>enviro19. Children have access to materials that promote creativity and artistic expression.</p>	<p>Observation</p>	
<p>enviro20. Children have access to space and materials that invites dramatic play/role play.</p>	<p>Observation</p>	

Section 4: Family and Community Relationships

Section 4 recognizes the importance of children’s families and communities in their healthy growth, development, and overall well-being.

4.1 Family Relationships

“Young children’s learning and development are integrally connected to their families.

Consequently, to support and promote children’s optimal learning and development, programs need to recognize the primacy of children’s families, establish relationships with families based on mutual trust and respect, support and involve families in their children’s educational growth, and invite families to fully participate in the program.” [58]

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
family1. Greeting and departing is used as an opportunity to share information between staff and families (e.g., children’s daily <u>experiences</u>) [4, 13]	Observation	Observed through: daily practices (i.e., greeting and/or departure routines) → If this routine is not observed, a score of <i>not assessed</i> will be provided
family2. Resources, pamphlets, and/or information to support families in caring for their children are available [31]	Observation	Observed through: physical environment → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided
family3. Families are encouraged to become engaged with the programme, and they can choose the level of involvement they are comfortable with [14, 25, 31, 62]	Questions	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
family4. There are opportunities for families to provide ongoing ideas, suggestions, and feedback to the programme [4, 13]	Questions	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
family5. The programme communicates continuously with families in ways that work best for each family [14, 31, 58]	Questions	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
family6. The programme ensures that staff are able to have sensitive and confidential conversations with families in a way that respects privacy and meets individual families’ needs [31]	Questions	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
family7. The supervisor works with families to ensure that the programme will successfully meet the needs of the child and family ^[76]	Questions	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
family8. The programme ensures that there are no language or literacy barriers to families accessing and/or understanding information provided by the programme ^[31]	Questions	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>

4.2 Community Relationships

“As part of the fabric of children’s communities, an effective program establishes and maintains reciprocal relationships with agencies and institutions that can support it in achieving its goals for the curriculum, health promotion, children’s transitions, inclusion, and diversity.”^[58]

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
comRelat1. Families are directed to where they can find information about community events related to early years services and programmes, children and families ^[24]	Questions	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
comRelat2. The programme engages with other community organizations and groups to enrich the <u>experiences</u> of children and families in the programme ^[24, 58]	Questions	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
comRelat3. Programmes have a process for connecting with families and other organizations/institutions (e.g., schools) to support children’s transition to school ^[66]	Questions	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>

Section 5: Staff Supports, Leadership, and Management

Section 5 covers the working conditions and leadership supports that are necessary to sustain a highly-qualified, passionate early learning and child care workforce.

5.1 Professional Needs of Staff

“Opportunities for teaching and administrative staff to receive supportive supervision and to participate in ongoing professional development ensure that their knowledge and skills reflect the profession’s everchanging knowledge base.”^[58]

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
staffProf1. There is convenient, safe, and separate space available for staff to store their personal belongings and take breaks ^[58, 63]	Observation	Observed through: physical environment → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided
staffProf2. Staff are observed engaging in collaborative and respectful relationships with coworkers ^[58]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming)
staffProf3. Staff have adequate paid sick time (i.e., at minimum , 6 days or 6 shifts per year), and for longer periods, sick leave arrangements ^[49]	Documents	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i> → To provide a score of <i>meets indicator</i> , evaluators will need to see all aspects of the indicator represented in the document(s) provided
staffProf4. Written job descriptions and contracts exist for each position in the programme ^[49, 55]	Attestation	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
staffProf5. Staff in the programme receive written notification of their wages and benefits and any changes to their wages and benefits ^[49]	Attestation	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
staffProf6. Staff have paid planning time, which is scheduled into their regular work week ^[49, 56]	Attestation	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
staffProf7. Staff are compensated for the time spent at staff meetings with pay or lieu time ^[57]	Attestation	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
staffProf8. Staff who work together in a programme team (or who share a programming room) have regularly scheduled time to meet, engage in critical reflection and plan together ^[49, 56]	Attestation	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
staffProf9. Staff receive paid release time and/or financial assistance to attend professional learning opportunities ^[26, 49, 56]	Attestation	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
staffProf10. Staff have access to professional materials and resources that can enhance their thinking and practice at the programme ^[83]	Questions	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
staffProf11. The programme regularly recognizes and celebrates staff contributions in ways that are meaningful to the staff in the programme ^[76, 83]	Questions	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>

5.2 Supervising, Supporting, and Evaluating Staff

“The work experience is made pleasant and productive when staff are stable, supported, and well-prepared. [...] Policies and practices should promote a collaborative, inclusive organizational climate.” ^[58]

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
support1. Formal staff evaluations occur annually ^[30, 49]	Attestation	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
support2. Informal information and feedback on individual staff performance is provided to the staff on a frequent and regular basis ^[30, 49]	Questions	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
support3. There are mechanisms in place for staff to express their opinions and inform decisions that impact their workplace ^[59, 60, 83]	Questions	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
support4. Participation in professional learning is an expectation for all programme staff that is reviewed during regular staff evaluations ^[26, 28, 49]	Documents	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
support5. There is a thorough and consistent orientation process that is implemented for each new or returning employee, student, and/or volunteer ^[49]	Questions	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
support6. Supervisor/Director supports staff in identifying challenges having an impact on their performance and well-being; and offers support in getting assistance and resources for the staff member ^[56, 83]	Questions	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i> → Supporting staff to get assistance with challenges does not have to be a paid, external service. A score of <i>meets indicator</i> can be achieved if programmes have a plan in place to support staff (e.g., workplace accommodations, leaves of absence, Employee Assistance Programmes)

5.3 Leadership

In quality child care programmes, “knowledgeable leaders have a vision for quality programming that is grounded in research-based practices and creates an environment for high-quality care and excellent education.” ^[58]

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
lead1. The supervisor/director seeks out and participates in a range of professional learning opportunities to specifically support the role of managing and supervising ^[43]	Documents	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
<p>lead2. The supervisor/director undergoes a performance evaluation annually; performed by a sub-committee of the board of directors; or by the owner/operator ^[30, 49]</p>	Documents	<p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i> → For-profit programmes where the supervisor/director is the owner of the programme, a score of <i>not assessed</i> will be provided for this item</p>
<p>lead3. There is a procedure followed to support orientation of new members of the Board of Directors ^[35]</p>	Questions	
<p>lead4. The supervisor/director has a solid understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Board of Directors and supports their understanding of programming and of child care and early years programmes and services in general ^[24, 55]</p>	Questions	<p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i> → For-profit programmes will receive a score of <i>not assessed</i> for this item</p>

Section 6: Programming for Children 4 to 12 Years

Section 6 takes indicators from sections 1 through 5 and tailors them to measure quality in early learning and child care programmes that serve children 4 to 12 years of age.

6.1 Physical Spaces and Materials

A quality child care programme’s “*design and maintenance of its physical environment support high-quality program[me] activities and services and allow for optimal use and operation. Well-organized, equipped, and maintained environments support program[me] quality by facilitating the learning, comfort, health, and safety of those who use the program[me].*”^[58]

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
space1. Children are allowed similar “freedom of movement” within the programme environment as would be permitted when in school ^[18]	Observation	Observed through: daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming) → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided
space2. There is variety and adequate supply of materials that reflect the interests and abilities of the children in the group and are in good condition ^[25, 29, 70]	Observation	
space3. Materials are <u>accessible and available</u> throughout the day. This means that items are within reach and accessible to the children to foster their own choice and independence ^[10]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, physical environment → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided
space4. Staff are responsive to children’s interests by changing or enhancing activities, materials, and/or equipment ^[11, 29, 32]	Observation	
space5. Materials that promote complex <u>play</u> that supports holistic development of children are available ^[7, 10]	Observation	
space6. Children are not discouraged from using materials across different areas of the play space to make connections and extend their learning ^[9, 25, 29, 32, 70]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, physical environment → Children not being permitted to use items in multiple areas in the play space will yield a score of <i>does not meet</i> .

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
space7. There is individual space for each child’s belongings ^[58, 63]	Observation	Observed through: physical environment → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided
space8. A selection of books and literacy materials are provided and in good condition	Observation	Observed through: physical environment → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided → Additional literacy materials are needed for this item. If books are the only literacy material provided, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided.
space9. Open ended building materials are accessible to children and there is floor space to allow for children to <u>play</u> with these materials in groups	Observation	Observed through: physical environment → Access to materials for these items do not need to be concentrated to an “area” or “centre” → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided
space10. Children have access to materials that promote sensory exploration	Observation	
space11. Children have access to materials that promote creativity and artistic expression	Observation	
space12. Children have access to space and materials that invites dramatic play/role play	Observation	

6.2 Programming Content and Delivery

Early learning and child care programmes “*play an important role in supporting children’s developing sense of self, autonomy, and competence*” and provide “*a safe environment that offers consistency as well as graduated support for children’s growing independence and capacity for self-care*” ^[62]

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
prog1. Programming provides for children’s safety while enabling children to take reasonable risks and gain an increasing sense of mastery ^[5, 11, 25]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, physical environment, documentation/programme plans

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
<p>prog2. The programme ensures that the <u>curriculum</u> is responsive to children’s varying abilities, dispositions, and styles of interaction ^[25, 29, 38, 72]</p>	Observation	<p>Observed through: play/ experiences, physical environment, documentation/programme plans</p>
<p>prog3. There are opportunities and flexibility in scheduling to allow children to persist in their activity or return to an activity over time ^[6, 8, 29]</p>	Observation	<p>Not applicable for Camps. Observed through: play/ experiences, daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming), documentation/ programme plans</p>
<p>prog4. Children are observed generating ideas and making meaningful choices about their participation in <u>experiences</u> ^[25, 29, 32, 80]</p>	Observation	<p>Observed through: play/ experiences → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided</p>
<p>prog5. Staff actively engage in activities alongside children to support participation and engagement ^[21]</p>	Observation	<p>Observed through: play/ experiences</p>
<p>prog6. Children have daily opportunities to engage in active <u>play</u> that supports motor development ^[4, 58, 62]</p>	Observation	<p>Observed through: play/ experiences → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided. → If weather does not permit outdoor play, evaluators will need to observe another way that children have the opportunity for active play</p>
<p>prog7. Literacy and/or language is incorporated into daily <u>experiences</u> and physical spaces ^[28, 58, 62, 67]</p>	Observation	<p>Not applicable for Camps. Observed through: play/ experiences, physical environment → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided</p>

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
prog8. Staff are responsive communication partners ^[22, 23, 25]	Observation	Observed through: daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming) → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided
prog9. <u>Experiences</u> provide opportunities for children to develop responsibility, autonomy, and leadership skills ^[40]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences
prog10. Screen technology ⁴ is only used in response to children’s interests, to enrich <u>experiences</u> , and/or to extend children’s learning ^[78]	Observation	Not applicable for Camps. Observed through: daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming) → If no screen technology use is observed, a score of <i>not assessed</i> will be provided
prog11. <u>Programme plans/ documentation</u> are up to date and demonstrate that staff are engaging in planning and recording of the programme’s activities and that programming is based on children’s interests ^[29, 69, 75]	Observation	Not applicable for Camps. Observed through: documentation/programme plans → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided
prog12. Homework is not the core activity; in situations where homework is part of the <u>experiences</u> taking place on a regular basis, programme staff/supervisors are engaged in dialogue with families regarding the length of time devoted to homework given the context of group care ^[17, 29, 34, 65]	Questions	Not applicable for Camps. See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>

⁴ **Screen technology** refers to devices (e.g., television, tablets, phones) and digital media (e.g., videos, shows, movies). Old phones, computers, keyboards, and other old, disconnected devices that are used for dramatic play are **not** considered screen technology.

6.3 Interactions and Practices that Support Social-Emotional Development

Educators support “social, communication, and emotional regulation skills including helping children to use language to communicate their needs, appropriately expressing their emotions, and taking turns when speaking with each other. They continually look for opportunities to provide supports and guidance to help children build these skills. Further, they support self-regulation by helping children to problem solve and persist when they are frustrated or challenged, take turns and play cooperatively with others, control physical impulses, use language to communicate needs, express emotions in ways that do not harm others, and use problem-solving techniques.”^[58]

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
interactions1. Staff state their expectations clearly and match them to children’s developmental level ^[25]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming)
interactions2. Staff explain consequences of children’s actions in a constructive manner so that children understand the impact on others ^[4]	Observation	
interactions3. Staff recognize and respond to the signs of stress in children and the stressors that may impact individual children or the group ^[73]	Observation	
interactions4. Staff help children build stress awareness by helping them to identify their emotions ^[4, 25, 32, 73]	Observation	
interactions5. Staff help children express their own feelings and recognize others’ feelings ^[25]	Observation	
interactions6. Staff model skills in emotional regulation by recognizing and responding appropriately to their own stress (e.g., calming strategies) ^[25, 32, 33, 58]	Observation	
interactions7. Staff engage children to resolve conflicts by helping them describe problems and try alternative solutions ^[25, 58]	Observation	
interactions8. Staff encourage children to listen to one another ^[25]	Observation	
interactions9. Children have varied opportunities to develop skills for prosocial behaviours (e.g., entering social groups) ^[25, 32, 58]	Observation	

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
interactions10. Staff are responsive to children in ways that make them feel safe [22, 25, 29, 37, 68]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming)
interactions11. Staff encourage and recognize each child’s efforts and accomplishments [20]	Observation	

6.4 Equitable and Inclusive Relationships with Children and Families

Inclusive practices are “based on the belief that all individuals have equal worth and rights, and which actively promotes acceptance and participation of all children and families in their programs, providing differential and appropriate learning support according to individual strengths, needs and background” [62]

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
eq&incl1. Staff practices show respect and sensitivity for children’s individual identity [1, 49, 52]	Observation	Observed through: daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming) → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided
eq&incl2. Staff intervene to challenge social justice issues and/or <u>bias</u> shown by children or adults in the programme [27, 28]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming) → If no situation occurs, a score of <i>not assessed</i> will be provided
eq&incl3. Children who have health care needs are not excluded from the programme due to health-related procedures (e.g., tube feeding or catheterization) and families are asked to collaborate with staff on how to meet the children’s needs; however, families are not required to be present to perform related health procedures as a condition of enrollment [48, 50]	Documents	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i> → To provide a score of <i>meets indicator</i> , evaluators will need to see all aspects of the indicator represented in the document(s) provided.

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
<p>eq&incl4. Children with disabilities are never asked to stay home because a particular staff member is absent ^[50]</p>	Documents	<p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p> <p>→ Exceptions to this include children whose medical needs require a trained staff to be present at all times.</p> <p>→ To provide a score of <i>meets indicator</i>, evaluators will need to see all aspects of the indicator represented in the document(s) provided.</p>
<p>eq&incl5. Waitlist and enrolment policies and practices ensure that children with disabilities, differences, and/or special health care needs have equal access to child care spaces in the programme ^[62]</p>	Attestation	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
<p>eq&incl6. All staff have knowledge of the Enhanced Support System, including the resources available and how to access these resources ^[36]</p>	Attestation	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
<p>eq&incl7. Programmes receiving Special Needs Resourcing funds are using the funding, materials/equipment, and/or extra staff to support the children and/or activity room that the funding was intended for ^[36]</p>	Attestation	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
<p>eq&incl8. Individual Support Plans (ISPs) are in place for every child receiving child-specific funding and the ISP was created in consultation with the family ^[36]</p>	Attestation	<p>Not applicable for Camps.</p> <p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p>
<p>eq&incl9. The programme uses an embedded relational approach to behaviour guidance, and is not disciplinary, punitive, or exclusionary and there is a clear process of engaging families in problem solving, in professional supports, and exhausting all other techniques to support the child in the programme and/or adapt the programme to meet the needs of the child, prior to a decision to exclude a child from the programme ^[24, 54, 58, 64, 81, 82]</p>	Documents	<p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p> <p>→ To provide a score of <i>meets indicator</i>, evaluators will need to see all aspects of the indicator represented in the document(s) provided.</p> <p>→ Regardless of the existence of a behaviour guidance policy, if an evaluator observes a prohibited practice, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided.</p>

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
<p>eq&incl10. Adaptations to the physical space and/or materials/equipment/<u>experiences</u> have been made to meet the individual participation needs of children in the programme ^[27, 30, 50, 74]</p>	<p>Observation Questions</p>	<p>Observed through: play/ experiences, physical environment, daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming)</p> <p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p> <p>→ If evaluators can see visible adaptations made to the environment, this item can be scored with evidence from only the observation visit.</p> <p>→ If no adaptations are required at the time of the visit, a score of <i>not assessed</i> will be provided.</p>
<p>eq&incl11. Families are encouraged to become engaged with the programme, and they can choose the level of involvement they are comfortable with ^[14, 25, 31, 62]</p>	<p>Questions</p>	<p>Not applicable for Camps.</p> <p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p>
<p>eq&incl12. The programme communicates continuously with families in ways that work best for each family ^[14, 31, 58]</p>	<p>Questions</p>	<p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p>
<p>eq&incl13. Greeting and departing is used as an opportunity to share information between staff and families (e.g., children's daily <u>experiences</u>) ^[4, 13]</p>	<p>Observation</p>	<p>Observed through: daily practices (i.e., greeting and/or departure routines)</p> <p>→ If this routine is not observed, a score of <i>not assessed</i> will be provided</p>
<p>eq&incl14. There are opportunities for families to provide ongoing ideas, suggestions, and feedback to the programme ^[4, 13]</p>	<p>Questions</p>	<p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p>
<p>eq&incl15. The programme ensures that staff are able to have sensitive and confidential conversations with families in a way that respects privacy and meets individual families' needs ^[31]</p>	<p>Questions</p>	<p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p>
<p>eq&incl16. The supervisor works with families to ensure that the programme will successfully meet the needs of the child and family ^[76]</p>	<p>Questions</p>	<p>Not applicable for Camps.</p> <p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p>

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
eq&incl17. The programme ensures that there are no language or literacy barriers to families accessing and understanding information provided by the programme [31]	Questions	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>
eq&incl18. The programme engages with other community organizations and groups to enrich the <u>experiences</u> of children and families in the programme [24, 58]	Questions	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>

6.5 Supervision, Staff Supports, and Leadership

A quality child care programme “employs and supports a teaching and administrative staff that have the qualifications, knowledge, and professional commitment necessary to promote children’s learning and development and to support families’ diverse needs and interests.”^[58] Programmes “should have policies and procedures that support staff well-being, empowerment, and overall quality of work life.”^[58]

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
staffing1. Each location has an adult on site who meets one of the following: (a) is a member in Good Standing with the College of Early Childhood Educators or the Ontario College of Teachers; (b) has a diploma or degree in child and youth care or recreation and leisure; (c) has a diploma or degree in psychology, sociology, or kinesiology with a focus on working with children 4-12 years of age; or (d) is a student enrolled in any of the fields above	Attestation	See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i> → Only applicable for Authorized Recreation programmes and Camps. A score of <i>not assessed</i> will be provided for licensed programmes for children 4-12 years
staffing2. If the programme is the sole occupant of the premises, there must be a minimum of two adults on site at all times	Attestation	

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
staffing3. The programme is staffed appropriately and does not exceed ratios which includes one staff person for every 15 children (1:15)	Observation	Observed through: daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming) → Only applicable for Authorized Recreation and Camp programmes. A score of <i>not assessed</i> will be provided for licensed programmes for children 4-12 years
staffing4. Each group of children does not exceed a maximum of 30 children	Observation	
staffing5. There is convenient, safe, and separate space available for staff to store their personal belongings and take breaks ^[58, 63]	Observation	Observed through: physical environment → Programmes that are not required to offer breaks for staff can receive a score of <i>meets indicator</i> if all other components of the indicator are met → If this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided
staffing6. Staff are observed engaging in collaborative and respectful relationships with coworkers ^[58]	Observation	Observed through: play/ experiences, daily practices (i.e., routines, transitions, programming) → If multiple staff are present, and this is not observed, a score of <i>does not meet</i> will be provided
staffing7. Staff have adequate paid sick time (i.e., at minimum , 6 days or 6 shifts per year), and for longer periods, sick leave arrangements ^[49]	Documents	Not applicable for Camps. <i>See Quality Assessment Package</i>
staffing8. Written job descriptions and contracts exist for each position in the programme ^[49, 55]	Attestation	<i>See Quality Assessment Package</i>
staffing9. Staff in the programme receive written notification of their wages and benefits and any changes to their wages and benefits ^[49]	Attestation	<i>See Quality Assessment Package</i>
staffing10. Staff have paid planning time, which is scheduled into their regular work week ^[49, 56]	Attestation	Not applicable for Camps. <i>See Quality Assessment Package</i>

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
staffing11. Staff who work together in a programme team (or who share a programming room) have regularly scheduled time to meet, engage in critical reflection and plan together ^[49, 56]	Attestation	Not applicable for Camps. <i>See Quality Assessment Package</i>
staffing12. Staff receive paid release time and/or financial assistance to attend professional learning opportunities ^[26, 49, 56]	Attestation	Not applicable for Camps. <i>See Quality Assessment Package</i>
staffing13. Staff are compensated for the time spent at staff meetings and training either with pay or lieu time ^[57]	Attestation	<i>See Quality Assessment Package</i>
staffing14. Staff have access to professional materials and resources that can enhance their thinking and practice at the programme ^[83]	Questions	Not applicable for Camps. <i>See Quality Assessment Package</i>
staffing15. The programme regularly recognizes and celebrates staff contributions in ways that are meaningful to the staff in the programme ^[76, 83]	Questions	<i>See Quality Assessment Package</i>
staffing16. Staff evaluations or performance check-ins occur annually or once per session ^[30, 49]	Attestation	<i>See Quality Assessment Package</i>
staffing17. Informal information and feedback on individual staff performance is provided to the staff on a frequent and regular basis ^[30, 49]	Questions	<i>See Quality Assessment Package</i>
staffing18. There are mechanisms in place for staff to express their opinions and to inform decisions that impact their workplace ^[59, 60, 83]	Questions	<i>See Quality Assessment Package</i>
staffing19. Participation in professional learning is an expectation for all programme staff that is reviewed during regular staff evaluations ^[26, 28, 49]	Documents	Not applicable for Camps. <i>See Quality Assessment Package</i>
staffing20. There is a thorough and consistent orientation process for each new or returning employee, student, and/or volunteer ^[49]	Questions	<i>See Quality Assessment Package</i>

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
<p>staffing21. Supervisor/Director supports staff in identifying challenges having an impact on their performance and well-being; and offers support in getting assistance and resources for the staff member ^[56, 83]</p>	<p>Questions</p>	<p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i>. → Supporting staff to get assistance with challenges does not have to be a paid, external service. A score of <i>meets indicator</i> can be achieved if programmes have a plan in place to support staff (e.g., workplace accommodations, leaves of absence, Employee Assistance Programmes)</p>
<p>staffing22. The supervisor/director participates in a range of professional learning opportunities specific to the role of managing and supervising ^[43]</p>	<p>Documents</p>	<p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p>

Section 7: Physical Health and Well-being

For programmes that do not go through the Ministry of Education’s licensing process, Section 7 of *Wellington’s Quality Assessment Tool* includes aspects of ensuring the health and safety of all children and staff.

7.1 Practices Supporting Health and Well-being

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
H&S1. Facilities, materials, and equipment are safe and are kept in a good state of repair to protect children from injury and harm ^[17]	Observation	<p>Observed through: physical environment</p> <p>→ Evaluators may ask to see the items listed in these indicators to confirm they are always available and/or accessible</p>
H&S2. There is a schedule identified and followed for cleaning and sanitizing play materials, equipment, and surfaces ^[17, 58]	Observation	
H&S3. First aid kits are accessible to staff	Observation	
H&S4. Children always have access to drinking water and toilets	Observation	
<p>H&S5. Children’s food allergy information is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) kept accessible in locations occupied by children; and (b) all adults in the programme are aware of the information, and, when relevant, families are informed ^[17] 	Documents	<p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p> <p>→ Evaluators will ask to see the documents listed in these indicators to confirm they are always available and/or accessible</p>
<p>H&S6. Each staff/location has access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the home, work, and cell phone numbers of a guardian of each child enrolled; and (b) a telephone number of a person to be contacted if the guardian cannot be reached ^[17] 	Documents	
<p>H&S7. Children’s records are available at all times/locations and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) child’s information (name, birth date, address); (b) parent information (name, address); and (c) any special requirements (e.g., rest, exercise) 	Documents	

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
<p>H&S8. Staff records for all staff, students and volunteers working in the programme are available at all times/locations and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) staff information (name, address, contact information); and (b) emergency contact information (name, address, contact information) 	Documents	<p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p> <p>→ Evaluators will ask to see the documents listed in these indicators to confirm they are always available and/or accessible</p>
<p>H&S9. Fire drills are conducted at least once per month, or where a session is less than one month, once per session and a record of drills is present in the programme</p>	Documents	<p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p> <p>→ Evaluators will ask to see the documents listed in these indicators to confirm they are always available and/or accessible</p>
<p>H&S10. All health and safety policies and protocols are reviewed annually with all staff, volunteers, and students, where staff sign off on the policies and protocols ^[17]</p>	Attestation	<p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p>
<p>H&S11. Programmes that serve food ensure that at least one staff member present has participated in safe food handling training ^[45]</p>	Attestation	<p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p>
<p>H&S12. The programme has implemented a written staff training plan for: occupational health and safety for staff ^[61]</p>	Attestation	<p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p>
<p>H&S13. The programme has implemented a written staff training plan for: adapting physical activity opportunities to include children at all levels of abilities and integrating physical activity throughout the programme ^[36]</p>	Attestation	<p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p>
<p>H&S14. The programme has implemented a written staff training plan for: staff Standard First Aid and CPR training ^[17]</p>	Attestation	<p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p>
<p>H&S15. Vulnerable sector check: all adults in the programme working with children have valid vulnerable sector checks ^[17]</p>	Attestation	<p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p>

7.2 Policies Supporting Health and Safety

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
Please provide the most recent written policy for the following:		
<p>policy1. The management of infectious diseases and care of a sick child, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) admission and/or exclusion procedures for children showing signs of illness ^[17] 	Documents	<p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p> <p>→ Evaluators will look for the existence of each of the policies described in this section.</p> <p>→ For items with multiple components, evaluators must see all components represented in the policy to provide a score of <i>meets indicator</i>.</p>
<p>policy2. Children’s health records and immunization ^[17]</p>	Documents	
<p>policy3. Administering medication, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) written authorization from a guardian for the administration of the drug/medication; (b) instructions for administration (e.g., timing, dosage, side effects); and (c) a record of the drug/medications that have been administered ^[17] 	Documents	
<p>policy4. Accident and injury reporting, which includes procedures for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) notifying families in the event of illness/injury and emergency; (b) when to complete accident reports; and (c) providing a copy of the accident report to parents ^[17] 	Documents	
<p>policy5. Reporting suspected child abuse and/or neglect, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) duty to report; and (b) a policy for staff undergoing allegations of abuse ^[17, 19] 	Documents	
<p>policy6. Anaphylaxis, which includes strategy for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) reducing the risk of exposure to anaphylaxis causative agents; and (b) responding to exposure to anaphylaxis causative agents ^[17] 	Documents	

Indicator	Method of Assessment	Scoring Notes
<p>policy7. Safe arrival and dismissal, which includes procedures for recording:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) arrival/dismissal time; (b) attendance; (c) the written permission signed by a parent/guardian regarding child release; and (d) for when a child does not arrive with no advance notice regarding their absence ^[17] 	Documents	<p>See <i>Quality Assessment Package</i></p> <p>→ Evaluators will look for the existence of each of the policies described in this section.</p> <p>→ For items with multiple components, evaluators must see all components represented in the policy to provide a score of <i>meets indicator</i>.</p>
<p>policy8. The supervision for volunteers and students ^[30]</p>	Documents	
<p>policy9. The supervision of children (e.g., can children transition through the programme without an adult present, and if so, what strategies are implemented to ensure safety?)</p>	Documents	
<p>policy10. Serious occurrences, which includes the serious occurrence notification form requirement, which provides increased transparency for families about serious occurrences that occur in the programme ^[17]</p>	Documents	
<p>policy11. Fire safety and emergency, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) an evacuation plan; (b) a designated off-site location in the event of an emergency that requires evacuation; (c) information about staff and volunteer responsibilities; and (d) procedures for emergency notifications ^[17] 	Documents	
<p>policy12. The provision of food/snacks ^[17, 32]</p>	Documents	
<p>policy13. Ensuring the health and safety of children with medical needs in the programme ^[17]</p>	Documents	

Glossary

Note: Glossary words are underlined throughout the document. When viewing the document electronically, click any of the underlined words to navigate to this glossary.

Accessible and Available refers to the principle that all areas and items in the room should be available to all children at all times.

Bias refers to “*a subjective opinion, preference, prejudice, or inclination, often formed without reasonable justification, which influences the ability of an individuals or group to evaluate a particular situation objectively or accurately.*”^[84]

Curriculum refers to the “*experiences, activities, and events that occur within an inclusive environment designed to foster children’s well-being, learning, and development and ensure meaningful participation for every child. [...] Through play and inquiry, young children [practice] ways of learning and interacting with the world around them that they will apply throughout their lives*”^[62]

Documentation/Programme Plans can include learning stories, documentation of single experiences, long-term/project/inquiry documentation, programme planning sheets, pedagogical documentation, and other visible documentation in the early learning and child care environment. Programme plans and documentation contribute to the visibility of educators’ use of authentic assessment to monitor developmental progress and how this is integrated into curriculum.

→ **Authentic Assessment** refers to the continuous observation, documentation, and reflection on children’s learning, development, and experiences.

→ **Learning stories** are “*a means of documenting children’s learning and development in action, through descriptions of actual unique experiences. Learning stories depict early childhood practice and the active involvement of adults and children in learning, showing how development and learning are integrated in programs and how content is meaningful to children, and reflecting community and individual cultural, and linguistic diversity.*”^[4]

Diversity refers to “*differences and uniqueness that each child brings to the early learning setting including values and beliefs, culture and ethnicity, language, ability, education, life experiences, socio-economic status, spirituality, gender, age, and sexual orientation*”^[4]

Experiences are “*what children actually do with the provisions professionals make for them. Traditionally called activities, but experiences are broader. They are occasions for learning*”^[4] For the purposes of Wellington’s Quality Assessment Tool, the term ‘*experience*’ encompasses experiences (e.g., play invitations and provocations) and planned activities (e.g., games).

Pedagogy, under Ontario’s curriculum framework, is defined as “*the understanding of how learning happens and the philosophy and practice that support that understanding of learning.*”^[4, 62]

Play is when children can freely choose to engage in an experience that is intrinsically motivating for them. There is no structure, the children have the freedom to choose what they want to do, what materials to use, and how to use the materials, it is developed from the children's natural curiosities, and there are minimal interruptions, or adult impositions (e.g., objectives, agendas, requirements, directives). Children have wonderful ideas and theories; educators play a valuable role in free play by supporting these curiosities to flourish.

During this type of play, *"millions of neuro-pathways are readily forming and connecting within the child's brain. These connections will support children throughout their entire lives."*^[86]

Play-based learning is *"a holistic approach that respects children's natural curiosity and interests and builds competence and self-confidence. Learning through play has been widely researched and the benefits for children's social, emotional and cognitive development have been identified by numerous researchers and the scientific community broadly."*^[85]

Educators *"implement play-based learning across a spectrum and use their professional knowledge and judgement to determine the best approach for specific children or groups of children, areas of development and activities."*

- **Free Play:** *Play that is child-directed, voluntary, internally motivated and pleasurable.*
- **Guided Play:** *Play activities with some level of adult involvement to embed or extend additional learning opportunities within play itself."*^[85]

Educators *"facilitate play-based learning in a variety of ways as outlined below:*

- *Establish caring and responsive relationships so children feel safe to engage, explore, express themselves and take risks in the learning environment.*
- *Engage with children in their play to extend their thinking and learning opportunities.*
- *Create inclusive indoor and outdoor environments that are designed to inspire and invite children's play and exploration with a variety of intentionally selected materials.*
- *Design schedules that allow for uninterrupted and extended periods of play.*
- *Observe children's play to determine their interests and co-plan experiences that invite and extend future learning with materials, opportunities and guided activities.*
- *Document and interpret children's play to make learning visible to children, families and colleagues.*
- *Communicate the value and importance of play-based learning within a variety of early learning environments."*^[85]

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Appendix A: Definition of Scores

Meets indicator: the activity described in the indicator must be observed in each of the programme areas, performed consistently by all staff. For indicators that refer to specific equipment and materials, they need to be available, in excellent condition, and in adequate numbers to address the activities described in the indicator. For indicators that refer to written materials, such as policies and documentation, the information involved must be in sufficient detail, be current, be accurate, and address all aspects of the indicator.

Does not meet indicator: the activity described in the indicator was not observed; or if the activity is observed, it is at a frequency rate that implies it is not a deliberate practice sustained over time, across all programme areas, by all staff. For indicators that refer to specific equipment and materials, a score of “*does not meet indicator*” is given if the materials are not present, are not available to the children, or are in a state of disrepair. For indicators that refer to written materials and documentation, a score of “*does not meet indicator*” is given if the materials or documentation do not exist, are incomplete, contain major inaccuracies, or are not observed in practice.

Not assessed: For some programmes, some indicators may not be relevant. Additionally, from time to time, the activities listed in the indicators simply don’t occur during the *Observation Visit*. In these situations, a score of “*not assessed*” is given, and the indicator is not included in the final calculations of how many indicators were met by the programme. For items that will be *not assessed*, please see the scoring notes throughout.

Appendix B: Continuous Quality Improvement

Quality is an evolving concept that changes to reflect the children, families, educators, and programmes in a community. Those delivering child care programmes, and those measuring quality must both be committed to continuous quality improvement.

Quality Improvement for Programmes: The Early Years Professional Resource Centre provides support for improving quality through side-by-side mentorship, networking supports, professional learning opportunities, and professional resources. All programmes are encouraged to connect with the range of supports and resources available through the Early Years Professional Resource Centre. Community-wide scores on individual areas of Wellington’s Quality Assessment Tool (e.g., pedagogical documentation) are analyzed and offered as feedback to the Early Years Professional Resource Centre to inform professional learning opportunities available to child care and early years programmes across Wellington-Guelph.

Quality Improvement for Wellington’s Quality Assessment Tool: Our quality improvement process focuses on the reliability and the validity of Wellington’s Quality Assessment Tool. Each year, Children’s Early Years Division staff analyze the scores and processes of the quality assessments. This includes measures such as the length of time that the assessment process takes from beginning to end, and the clarity of our communications with programmes regarding their individual assessment and feedback.



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