



Quality Matters
FUNDING
ELIGIBILITY
FOR LICENSED CHILD
CARE CENTRES

FEBRUARY • 2024

Quality Matters
Funding Eligibility for Licensed Child Care Centres
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
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Revised February 2024

ISBN: 978-1-55457-777-4

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What is Quality Matters?

Quality Matters (QM) is a province-wide initiative that will be used to assess and improve quality in licensed child-care centres. It is based on international evidence regarding the importance of quality in early childhood education and care. It is also based on the concept of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), whereby quality improvements are made over time through a reflective and meaningful engagement process. This process involves licensees, centre directors, early childhood educators, families, and other key partners, as appropriate.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) will ensure that eligibility for provincial funding for licensed child care centres is directly linked to quality improvement and participation in QM.

All licensed child care centres that receive provincial funding must participate in QM. Participation is voluntary for centres that do not receive provincial funding.

A licensed child care centre that does not participate in QM must still meet all requirements of the province's *Early Learning and Child Care Act and Regulations*.

QM assesses a centre's success in meeting specific goals with respect to the following components:

- **Compliance** with provisions of Nova Scotia's *Early Learning and Child Care Act, Regulations*, policies, and standards.
- **Accountability** for provincial funding, including compliance with the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement. The child care centre must comply with the terms and conditions documents for all grants received. In addition, the child care centre must satisfy financial reporting and monitoring requirements of the Department of EECD.
- **Program Quality**, which includes:
 - implementation of the Early Learning Curriculum Framework
 - commitment to improving quality through a CQI process. This requires the completion of a self-assessment tool, which will be used as a basis for developing goals for quality improvement in four key areas:
 - **Leadership**: professional, pedagogical, and administrative
 - **Staffing**: qualifications, professional development, human resources, and compensation
 - **Learning Environments**: high quality and inclusive
 - **Relationships**: interactions and partnerships with children, parents and families, staff, other professionals, and the community

FIGURE 1: QUALITY MATTERS



How will my centre be assessed and monitored?

As part of the grant eligibility review process, centres will be required to submit a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) that identifies their goals for quality improvement, as well as the timelines and steps to be taken in meeting their goals. Centres will measure their success in meeting their goals for improvement through a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process.

Indicators for Quality Matters Components

Compliance: The centre's licensing history from the previous fiscal year will be reviewed, including inspection results and recorded violations, serious incidents, and substantiated complaints.

The following indicators will be used to determine success in Compliance:

- ✓ The licensee has not received chronic non-compliance status.
- ✓ The license of the licensee has not been cancelled or suspended due to a breach of any provision of the act or regulations or because of failure to comply with the terms and conditions attached to the license.

Accountability: Information for the previous year regarding the centre's adherence to the funding terms and conditions, as well as reporting history, will be reviewed. The review will include funding applications and annual and bi-weekly reports. Operational issues and financial reports will also be assessed.

The following indicators will be used to determine success in Accountability:

Application Process and Reporting Requirements:

- ✓ The licensee submitted applications and the required documentation for funding by the established deadlines.
- ✓ The licensee submitted accurate and complete staffing reports and Annual Reports, with required supporting documentation, by established deadlines.

Grant Terms and Conditions and Funding Agreement:

The licensee has demonstrated adherence to the terms and conditions of all provincial grant funding:

- ✓ Engaged in the QM program and CQI process
- ✓ Met requirements for parent fee reductions per the Quality Investment Grant Terms and Conditions.
- ✓ No Requirement to Pay notice from the Canada Revenue Agency received by EECD with respect to the centre

Centre Operations:

- ✓ The licensee demonstrated an effective fiscal management structure (e.g., set out clear roles and responsibilities for the centre director, licensee, board members, etc.).
- ✓ The licensee participated in random and financial monitoring as determined by EECD.
- ✓ The licensee signed a subsidy agreement and accommodates families in receipt of a subsidy.
- ✓ The licensee maintained active status with the Registry of Joint Stocks and provides EECD with up-to-date organizational charts and contact information.

Program Quality

The centre successfully implements the Early Learning Curriculum Framework and works toward meeting established goals for improving quality. These goals are based on the results of the self assessment as documented in the QIP.

The following indicators will be used to determine a centre's commitment to CQI:

- ✓ The licensee supports staff to engage in training and professional development opportunities (e.g., Early Learning Curriculum Framework).
- ✓ The licensee completes the program quality self-assessment and develops a QIP.
- ✓ The licensee implements the QIP, submitting evidence of successful implementation, and demonstrates a commitment to the CQI process.

Monitoring Process

All funded centres will make a commitment to improve the level of quality in their programs by implementing the Quality Matters program. This will be accomplished through a long-term approach to achieving Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). The Quality Improvement Grant (QIG) and Inclusion Support Grant (ISG) funding agreements require that centres receiving funding engage in the Quality Matters process and implement Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework: Capable, Confident, and Curious. If centres do not engage in the Quality Matters program process, they will be at risk of losing their funding.

Centres will be required to complete a self-assessment at least every three years and submit a QIP at least annually. At this point, the EECD will determine whether or not the goals set in the original QIP have been met and the centre is successfully engaging in the QM process.

If the centre has not shown a commitment to quality improvement through their engagement in the QM process, the following steps will be taken:

- The Early Childhood Development Consultant (ECDC) will work with the licensee to develop an Action Plan. This plan will outline the steps the licensee will take to meet the indicators.
- The ECDC will arrange follow-up visits with the licensee to ensure the Action Plan has been implemented and that progress is being made.

Six months after the licensee has implemented their Action Plan the ECDC will re-assess the licensee's progress. If the licensee has not taken steps to implement the Action Plan, the following additional steps will be taken:

- The ECDC will work with the licensee to revise the Action Plan. The ECDC will set regular follow up meetings with the licensee (bi-weekly or as mutually agreed) to monitor the licensee's progress.
- A Quality Improvement Team, with representatives from the Early Learning and Child Care Branch of EECD, will be formed to support the centre in addressing the issues.

The following steps may be taken if the centre fails to make progress to implement their revised Action Plan:

- Licensees will be notified in writing that their funding will be cancelled due to unsatisfactory performance in Quality Matters. Licensees must advise families and staff of the cancellation.
- Licensees will receive monthly funding for six months from the date on which the determination was made to allow time to prepare for the discontinuation of funding.

Licensees that have their funding terminated due to failure to meet and sustain the expectations for Quality Matters may reapply upon the recommendation of the Quality Improvement Team that the centre has successfully implemented and sustained the goals of their Action Plan and the QM CQI process for at least one year.

