



**Quality Matters**

# CENTRE TEMPLATES

FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT,  
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLANS  
AND ON-SITE CONSULTATION

JANUARY • 2018

Quality Matters Centre Templates  
for Self-Assessment, Quality Improvement Plans, and On-Site Consultation  
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January 2018

ISBN: 978-1-55457-778-1

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# Overview

Quality Matters is a province-wide early childhood continuous quality improvement system. It is based on international evidence regarding the importance of quality in early childhood education and care. It is informed by international practices to support quality improvements in licensed child care centres.

The purpose of Quality Matters is to ensure that eligibility to receive provincial funding for licensed child care centres is linked to demonstrated accountability, which includes

- Compliance with provisions of Nova Scotia's Day Care Act and Day Care Regulations, policies, standards, and licensing and monitoring activities
- Accountability for financial reporting respecting any public funds received
- Program Quality: to be maintained through the implementation of the Nova Scotia Early Learning Curriculum Framework and through the development, implementation, and assessment of Quality Improvement Plans

As a licensee, your role is to focus on making a commitment to improve the level of quality in your program. This will be accomplished through a long-term approach to achieving Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI).

Please review *Quality Matters Consultant Templates for Self-Assessment, Quality Improvement Plans and On-Site Consultation* for an overview of the Early Childhood Development Consultant (ECDC) role in the CQI process.

# Self-Assessment

The first step in the Program Quality component of the Continuous Quality Improvement process is to conduct a self-assessment for your centre. Although it is not necessary (or even necessarily better) that the goals in your centre's Quality Improvement Plan address all four elements of Program Quality, each centre is required to consider all elements during the self-assessment process.

The four elements of Program Quality include

- **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

The following sections will provide you with ways to identify and document evidence to support the contribution that each of the four elements makes to the overall quality of your centre. It will suggest questions that you may wish to reflect on as you carry out your own self-assessment for CQI. Your self-assessment need not be limited to consideration of these suggested questions. You know your own centre, and you will know which questions have relevance and what other questions need to be considered.

# Evidence and Background

Quality Matters recognizes the link between the quality of a child care centre and the quality of experiences for children. Numerous researchers have documented the importance of leadership as a key element in determining the quality of the centre, as well as the provision of language-rich environments, sensitive and responsive educators, higher levels of education for staff, good child: staff ratios, and low staff turnover (Stipek and Ogana, 2000). Other studies have similarly found leadership to be a key element of the quality of early childhood programs (Mujiks et al., 2004; Goelman et al., 2000; Hayden, 1997; Rodd, 1997). The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2006) reports that staff quality is maintained by leadership that motivates and encourages teamwork, information sharing, and professional staff development. Others have identified that the quality of leaders and managers of ECDC services and their corresponding impact on outcomes for children are strongly related to their level of education and professional development (OECD, 2012a; Sylva et al., 2010). Myers (2004) notes that one of the key elements of quality was related to how early childhood programs are planned and organized. A high quality program requires continual planning, regular evaluation, and monitoring of both the program and the children; frequent supervision; opportunities for ongoing training and professional growth, and leadership that fosters communication, teamwork, information sharing and respect, and efficient administrative procedures.

## Leadership: Professional, Pedagogical and Administrative

### WHY IS LEADERSHIP IMPORTANT?

Efficient and effective leadership is essential for the success of an early childhood setting. An effective early childhood education (ECE) leader must plan, organize, lead, and monitor what happens at the centre. The leader must be a team player, policy creator, and pedagogical leader all at the same time. An effective leader is supported by a strong administrative model, whether it be a board of directors or a private owner or operator (Kivunja, 2015). Governance involves decision making and oversight. At the centre level, good governance ensures that the centre is of high quality, meets the needs of children and parents, is accountable, and that the organization is sustainable. Depending on the specific governance model, by-laws may be in place to guide such things as the composition of the board of directors, the role of the board, and decision making. In a private or single owner governance model, these decisions are the responsibility of the owner (Flanagan & Beach, 2016).

As part of a provincial system of early childhood education and care, licensed child-care centres are governed by the Nova Scotia Day Care Act and its Regulations. Centres are also bound to comply with terms and conditions of funding programs, such as those governing

provincial grants to centres, inclusion support, and parent subsidy programs. Each child care centre also has its own administrative model. In Nova Scotia, centres may be privately owned and operated; others may be incorporated as non-profit organizations and governed by a board of directors; still others may be operated within a larger organization (profit or non-profit) such as a university, a church, or community agency. Within the provincially regulated system, each centre plans and acts on its own governance structure.

Regardless of the specific type of governance model, good governance involves

- knowledge of provincial and relevant municipal regulations, with centre-monitoring practices to ensure compliance
- recruitment and retention of staff
- personnel policies, including wages, benefits, leave provisions, contracts, and opportunities for advancement
- principles to guide decision making
- sound financial accounting practices
- management of risk and liabilities
- organizational structure
- succession planning and organizational sustainability

## **QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION LEADERSHIP: PROFESSIONAL, PEDAGOGICAL, & ADMINISTRATIVE**

The following questions are not prescriptive but intended to inspire dialogue and reflection during your centre's self-assessment process.

### **As director of this centre:**

- What personal values do I bring to my work? Are my personal values consistent with the stated (or unstated) values of this centre?
- Do I understand the full scope of my job responsibilities? Do I have the support of the board or owner to make decisions when I need to? Can I count on the board, owner, or sponsoring organization to be balanced in their decisions and to support me and the educators on staff? What level of engagement do I have with the board/owner/operator?
- What do I think is working well at our centre? What are our biggest challenges when it comes to working together as a team?
- Do I inspire the educators at this centre? How would I know? Do I ask them? Can I think of a few times when I have inspired someone?
- Would I be able to articulate our centre's vision, values, and beliefs about children for parents? For the board? A community organization?
- Do I regularly share and promote our centre's vision?
- Do I have enough time to engage in pedagogical leadership with our educators? What do I do to support inclusive practice?

- If someone asked what my approach was to pedagogical leadership, how would I respond?
- What is the worst day I've had in the past month? What made it so difficult? What have I learned from that? What is the best day I've had in the past month? Why was it so good?
- Am I comfortable—and effective—in dealing with conflict with staff, parents, or board members? What challenges me with respect to conflict, and how can I improve that? Where are my strengths when it comes to conflict resolution?
- Do I understand the requirements of the NS Day Care Act & Regulations, and is the centre always in compliance?
- Do I understand the terms and conditions of provincial funding, and do I submit required accountability documents (e.g., Annual Report) complete, accurate, and on time?

**As an educator at this centre:**

- Are my personal values and beliefs about children and early learning reflected in messages I hear from those in leadership positions?
- Do I feel supported in my role as an educator? If not, what is missing? Have I voiced this? Is there an opportunity to voice something like this?
- Am I ever asked my opinion about policy or program decisions? Do my suggestions get considered in a fair and balanced way?
- Am I supported to pursue professional development that I believe I need in order to improve my pedagogical practice?
- How does the director support me and other educators in our practice? Does the director observe us with children?
- Do the director and others in leadership roles support me to grow in my professional practice? Am I given opportunities to try new things?
- Have I ever been in a situation of conflict with my director? How did that turn out? What did I learn from that?
- If I could share one idea about leadership with the director at this centre, what would it be?
- Do those in positions of leadership at this centre foster a sense of collegiality and trust among the staff?
- Do those in positions of leadership at this centre foster a sense of respect for staff, parents, and children?
- Do I understand the requirements of the NS Day Care Act & Regulations?
- Do I understand the terms and conditions of the provincial funding received by the centre?
- Is the centre always in compliance with the NS Day Care Act & Regulations? If not, why not?

**As an director/owner/board of directors at this centre:**

- Do I submit accountability documents to EECD by the deadlines? Is the information complete and accurate?
- Do we follow the Terms and Conditions of provincial funding?
- What is the governance model for our centre? Would all staff and parents be fully aware of this?
- Who makes the decisions regarding pedagogical direction for our centre?
- Who is legally responsible for this centre? Is it an individual, a board, an organization? What are the limits of liability?
- Who is responsible for human resources? Do we monitor job satisfaction, professional development, or personal/professional goals for staff?
- Are there likely to be retirements coming up in the next five years? How are we planning for them?
- Are our wages and benefits for staff competitive with other centres in this region?
- Is there any benefit in collaborating with other centres or organizations in order to be able to offer staff group benefits, such as medical, dental, life insurance, and pension plans?
- How much responsibility has been delegated to the director? Is this enough, or too much?
- When was the last time we reviewed our insurance coverage? Is it adequate?
- Is this centre financially stable? How often do we review financial stability, and according to what principles?
- Do we have access to professional legal and accounting advice, either through volunteer membership on the board or through professional affiliations?
- What type of professional development is available to our board, to our committee, or to me as an individual?
- What type of training do I need in order to be more effective and efficient in managing governance issues?
- Do we have a crisis management plan in place?
- Does our current governance structure work for us? Are there challenges that could be resolved with a different structure?
- Who is responsible for communication with parents? Is there a division of responsibilities for this—e.g., program updates by one person, policy changes by another?
- How do we establish the daily rates for child?
- Do we have agreed upon principles to guide ethical decision making?
- How do we ensure privacy and confidentiality for staff, parents, and children?

# CENTRE TEMPLATE 1

## SELF-ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

### Leadership: Professional, Pedagogical, and Administrative

**Who was involved?**

- Educators     Director     Board/Owner     Parents     Community reps     Children
- Other? Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**How did you gather information?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Key findings and lessons learned**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Strengths — What are we doing well?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Where can we improve?**

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**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# Staffing: Qualifications, Professional Development, Human Resources, and Compensation

## WHY IS STAFFING IMPORTANT?

Research shows that low wages and lack of benefits lead to low quality child care, as well as high staff turnover. These facts have a negative impact on children and families. When staff are paid according to training levels, there is a positive impact on staff and lower staff turnover, as well as better quality in early childhood settings (Torquati et al., 2007; Drouin et al., 2004; Ghazvini & Mullis, 2002; Goelman et al., 2000; Helburn, 1995; Tougas, 2002; Whitebook & Sakai, 2003).

In Canada, researchers have studied quality measures in centre-based care to identify factors most important for predicting and maintaining high-quality child care. They found that direct predictors of quality (in order of strength) were wages, use of centre as practicum site, job satisfaction, and good child:adult ratios (Goelman et al., 2000). Recent Canadian research (Flanagan, Beach, & Varmuza, 2013) found that wages for both directors and educators have improved across Canada since 2000, but access to benefits is low, except for those working in unionized environments. Rates of job satisfaction and participation in professional development are higher than was determined by similar research in 2000. And, finally, the average age of directors and educators is significantly older than in 2000, pointing to the need for succession planning and ongoing recruitment.

The scope of practice for early childhood educators has broadened in recent years, with increased expectations for educators beyond the public perception of someone who plays with children all day. Educators may be involved in matters pertaining to curriculum, assessment, referrals, child protection issues, inclusion for children with developmental needs, cultural and linguistic diversity, newcomers, refugees, trauma victims, mental health, abuse (physical, sexual, mental), collaboration with other professionals, counselling children during family crises (divorce, death, incarceration), compliance with privacy legislation, and confidentiality issues—just to cite some subject areas. Ongoing professional development supports educators in their expansive role in the lives of children and families. Professional development may include (1) formal education; (2) credentialing; (3) specialized, on-the-job, in-service training; (4) coaching and/or consultative interactions; and (5) communities of practice or collegial study groups (Zaslow & Martinez-Beck, 2006 in Sheridan, 2009, p. 3). Ryan, Whitebook, Kipnis, and Sakai (2011) suggest that the professional development needs of directors of child care programs are unique and should be considered differently from the needs of educators. They suggest that directors often bring varied backgrounds to their positions and often have experience in either teaching or administration. They suggest that directors need guidance in their interactions with colleagues in other child care centres, and that a needs assessment should be completed to determine what might provide the most relevant professional development experiences for directors.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

### STAFFING: QUALIFICATIONS, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, HUMAN RESOURCES, AND COMPENSATION

#### For directors, owners, boards, sponsoring organizations:

- Do we have a wage scale for ECEs at the child care centre? If so, what is it based on, and when was it last reviewed? Is it competitive, enabling us to attract and retain qualified staff?
- Are the benefits we provide for ECEs realistic? Have we ever asked ECEs what types of benefits they want to have? Can we afford what they want?
- How do our costs for wages/benefits compare to our costs for recruitment (advertising, time spent in interviews) of new ECEs?
- Do we have a challenge with ECE turnover? Do we have any ECEs who are close to retirement age? Do we have a succession plan in place?
- Do we have a plan in place to encourage ECEs to participate in post-secondary ECE studies that will improve their credentials?
- What is our approach to professional development? Are there professional development plans in place for ECEs? Does our centre subsidize the cost of registration for conferences, workshops, or courses? Does our centre provide time off to attend professional development sessions? If sessions are held on a weekend or evening, do we give all or a percentage of the time off in lieu?
- Does our centre ever organize and provide professional development that is specifically designed for our own ECEs? Have we ever considered partnering with another centre to do this?
- Have we ever conducted a job satisfaction survey among our ECEs? Should we? Do we have the resources to address issues that may be identified?
- Do we conduct regular performance appraisals for our ECEs? Do all ECEs have up-to-date job descriptions?
- Do we support our ECEs in maintaining a work/life balance? What kind of evidence would show that we do that?

#### For educators, directors, support staff:

Review questions above from your perspective as an employee.

- Am I supported to do my job? What other resources might I need?
- Am I frequently asked to do things that are not included in my job description, or that may be outside my area of responsibility?
- Am I required to work overtime? How am I compensated for that?
- What are the biggest challenges I face in doing my work? Am I able to discuss these with my supervisor? If I do, does anything change?
- If I could, would I go back to school for a diploma, degree, etc.? Do I think I will be employed at this centre in five years? If not, where might I be? Does my employer know I might leave? Is there anything the centre could do to change my mind about this?
- What are the best HR policies at this centre?
- Are the educators at this centre supported to work as a team?
- Are we given time and resources for planning, documentation?

## CENTRE TEMPLATE 2

### SELF-ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

# Staffing: Qualifications, Professional Development, Human Resources, and Compensation

#### Who was involved?

- Educators     Director     Board/Owner     Parents     Community reps     Children
- Other? Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

#### How did you gather information?

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#### Key findings and lessons learned

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#### Strengths – What are we doing well?

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#### Where can we improve?

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# Learning Environments: High Quality and Inclusive

## WHY ARE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS IMPORTANT?

In 2012, the OECD's international efforts to develop a "quality toolbox" for early childhood educators identified the design and implementation of early learning curriculum frameworks as one of five levers to improve quality in early childhood services.

Curriculum frameworks and standards can reinforce positive impact on children's learning and development. They can i) ensure even quality across different settings, ii) give guidance to staff on how to enhance children's learning and well-being, and iii) inform parents of their children's learning and development (OECD, 2012b, p. 81).

The Nova Scotia Early Learning Curriculum Framework (in press) notes that "indoor and outdoor environments support all aspects of children's learning and invite conversations between children, educators, families and the broader community. They promote opportunities for sustained shared thinking and collaborative learning" (p. 37).

We know that young children learn best in environments where they have secure relationships with caring and responsive adults, where the program is designed to meet the needs of all children and families, and where they feel welcome and safe to explore and learn. Key elements of the learning environment include the design of the physical environment, both indoors and outdoors, the materials available for children within those spaces, and the time allowed for children to freely explore, extend their play, and sustain their learning activities.

Attention to nature, furnishings, materials, texture, and displays is essential in early learning programs because each influences children's conversations, their level of interest in wanting to explore in new ways, and their desire to embrace their space. Open-ended materials encourage children's active participation in their learning. Children use open-ended materials with no specific set of directions, whether materials are used on their own or combined with other materials, and they display more creativity and problem-solving abilities than when engaging with pre-determined materials (Daly & Beloglovsky, 2015; Nicholson, 1971). Educators can ensure that natural and synthetic loose parts and open-ended materials are widely available in sufficient quantities for children's exploration and discoveries.

Outdoor learning spaces are an important feature of children's learning environments. Outdoor learning environments that include natural space can contribute to more complex and imaginative child-led, inquiry-based play than indoor environments (Louv, 2013). Educators can consider how much of the available outdoor space offers a natural environment for children and whether more could be added.

Time for uninterrupted blocks of child-directed play and for small-group learning experiences is essential. Children's learning is best supported during focused small-group times, guided by educators, when they are more likely to benefit from intentional teaching strategies. Small

groups guided by the educator for an extended period of time is a key characteristic related to program quality and children's language and thinking skills (Mitchell, Wylie, & Carr, 2008; Schweinhart, Weikart, & Lamer, 1986; Siraj-Blatchford, 2010). Small-group, planned learning experiences can be a regular part of the daily schedule. Educators can encourage children to take part in the planning of small-group experiences.

## **QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS: HIGH QUALITY AND INCLUSIVE**

**For directors, eces, boards of directors, owners, operators, and sponsoring organizations:**

- What is the philosophy of early learning that our centre has adopted? Do we explain this to parents, professionals, and the community? Are all staff able to articulate this philosophy?
- Do we follow a specific pedagogical approach? What is it? What defines that approach? Are we able to explain it to parents?
- How is our learning environment constructed? What is the rationale for our physical layout? How do we determine what materials to provide for the children? How do we structure time?
- Does our philosophy statement identify values and benefits of outdoor environments? Does it speak to the importance of planning for the outdoors and of linking indoor and outdoor learning?
- Is the outdoor environment inviting and interesting for children? How can we extend our learning activities to the outdoor environment?
- How are the perspectives of children, educators, and families considered when making decisions about the outdoor space, about materials, and about how children use the environment?
- Do we have mixed-age groups or single-age groups? Do the age groups change throughout the day? What is our rationale for the decisions we make about how to form such groups?
- What is our philosophy regarding inclusion?
- How do we reflect the cultures of the children in our centre? How do we reflect the community we live and work in?
- How do we engage with parents and families in the centre? Do we provide opportunities for parents to have input into the program?
- If we live in a homogenous community, how can I introduce children to the concept of diversity?
- What are our goals for children's learning and development? In what ways does our program respond to the individual capabilities of the children in the program?
- How do we communicate with parents regarding their own child's development and learning? Do we document each child's learning and development through portfolios, learning stories, pictures, or other types of documentation?

- Does our staff regularly reflect on their practice, on children's behaviours and activities, on the learning environment itself?
- Is the language I use respectful of all children?
- How do we assess whether our program is consistent with our stated beliefs and values about children?
- How do we handle transitions, either from one activity to another, from one age group to another (e.g., infant/toddler to preschool group), or from the school to the centre (for school-age children)?
- How are plans made for snacks and meals at our centre? Do parents have an opportunity to contribute ideas regarding our menu plans?

# CENTRE TEMPLATE 3

## SELF-ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

### Learning Environments: High Quality and Inclusive

**Who was involved?**

- Educators     Director     Board/Owner     Parents     Community reps     Children
- Other? Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**How did you gather information?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Key findings and lessons learned**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Strengths — What are we doing well?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Where can we improve?**

\_\_\_\_\_

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# **Relationships: Interactions and Partnerships with Children, Parents and Families, Staff and Other Professionals, and the Community**

## **WHY ARE RELATIONSHIPS IMPORTANT?**

From the birth of children, “parents and other regular caregivers in children’s lives are ‘active ingredients’ of environmental influence.... Children grow and thrive in the context of close and dependable relationships that provide love and nurturance, security, responsive interaction, and encouragement for exploration” (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000, p. 389). The ability to form relationships is a key indicator of children’s emotional and social well-being. From birth, children begin to internalize the understanding that if someone attends to their needs and provides a secure and predictable environment, then the world is a safe place, and that they can expect to find that others will also be caring and responsive. This type of secure attachment sets the stage for healthy emotional development and the ability to form relationships throughout life. Alternatively, children who are insecurely attached to their caregivers—who are not able to count on being fed, or changed, or soothed—are often set on a trajectory that makes it more difficult to form relationships with others.

An international UNICEF report card noted that the available research is consistent in finding that the quality of early childhood education and care depends above all else on the ability of the caregiver to build relationships with children and to help provide a secure, consistent, sensitive, stimulating, and rewarding environment (UNICEF, 2008, p. 23). Pianta et al. (2009) find that responsive interactions (i.e., process elements of quality) are inherently dynamic and depend not only on the adult’s responsiveness to the child, but on the child’s responsiveness to the educator.

The professional relationships established between educators and their colleagues, consultants, and other professionals may involve mentoring, coaching, or collaboration. Such relationships are built on mutual respect and a shared purpose. They contribute to greater understanding of early childhood development, facilitate shared decision making, and allow for collaborative problem solving.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

### RELATIONSHIPS: INTERACTIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH CHILDREN, PARENTS AND FAMILIES, STAFF, OTHER PROFESSIONALS, AND THE COMMUNITY

#### For educators and directors:

- Does my practice enhance my ability to be responsive to all children, regardless of ability, age, family type, or culture? If not, what needs to change? And if I am able to do this now, is there still room for improvement?
- Am I consistently able to engage in nurturing relationships with all children? Are there some children with whom this doesn't happen? How can I address that? Whom should I talk to?
- How do we communicate with parents of children with additional needs? Does this meet parents' needs? How do I know that, or how can I find out?
- Do my values and beliefs about children, families, and early childhood development help or hinder my ability to form relationships with children? What about my ability to form relationships with parents? How do I handle any differences in core values about family structure or child development with families at our centre?
- Have I developed any useful strategies about how to strengthen relationships with parents and families that would be helpful for my colleagues at the centre? Do I see that any of my colleagues have good strategies that I could adopt? How can we help each other?
- Do I have a good working relationship with other educators at my centre? How can I build on my successes and address any areas where I see a challenge?
- What type of relationship do we as a staff have with our board of directors/owner/sponsoring organization?
- How would I describe my relationship with other professionals involved with children at our centre? Can some relationships be improved?
- How would I describe my professional relationship with other educators in Nova Scotia? Do I support our professional organizations?
- Do we share the same vision for the centre, the families, and the children? Is this relationship respectful of the educators at our centre?
- How can I further develop my relationship with our centre's early childhood development consultant?
- What types of relationships do we have with other child or family organizations in our community or in our province? Are there existing partnerships we need to work on, or new ones that we need to develop?
- How do we coordinate with other professionals, such as speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, social workers, Early Intervention Services, etc., especially those who are involved with a child's learning and development? Who makes those referrals and participates in case planning?
- How is our relationship with our government partners?

**For administrators/owners/boards of directors/sponsoring organizations:**

- Do our policies demonstrate our commitment to a professional relationship with the staff at our centre?
- How do we function as a board? Do we need training in how to work together as a board in areas such as decision making or conflict resolution?
- Are centre policies reviewed and updated, if necessary, on an annual basis?
- Is there a clear process in place to evaluate the operations of the child care centre, and does this process involve the owner/operator, administrator/director, and board members?
- What are our responsibilities in defining what our child care program will achieve and in setting the direction for the provision of quality child care services?
- Are all board members familiar with the Societies Act and bylaws that govern the organization?
- Does each person understand due diligence and the responsibilities of a board member?
- Do we assess the composition and knowledge gaps of the board in advance of recruiting new board members?
- Do we provide direction to the director by setting and reviewing policies?
- Is there a clear understanding about where the director's role ends and the owner/operator or board's role begins?
- Have we developed criteria and a process for evaluating the director?

## CENTRE TEMPLATE 4

### SELF-ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

# Relationships: Interactions and Partnerships with Children, Parents and Families, Staff, Other Professionals, and the Community

**Who was involved?**

Educators     Director     Board/Owner     Parents     Community reps     Children

Other? Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**How did you gather information?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Key findings and lessons learned**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Strengths — What are we doing well?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Where can we improve?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Prepared by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# Quality Improvement Plan

The second step of the Continuous Quality Improvement process is for your centre to develop a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). This is to be developed once the centre has completed the self-assessment process and has identified the centre's strengths and challenges in the four elements of program quality.

Please review *Quality Matters Continuous Quality Improvement: A Guide for Licensed Child Care Centres* for a thorough overview of the development of the QIP.

Below are the steps for your centre to follow in the development of the QIP.

Please specify

- 1) each of the goals for your QIP, present listing them separately as Goal 1 and Goal 2 (You must identify at least one goal but no more than two.)**
- 2) which of the four element(s) of Quality Matters you are focusing on**
- 3) strategies you will use to achieve that goal**
- 4) success indicators (What will success indicators look like?)**
- 5) how you will measure success indicators (What evidence are you using that indicates success?)**
- 6) timelines (When will you put in place each strategy?)**
- 7) to whom this is assigned**

If necessary, please attach additional pages. Each appended page should be numbered according to the numbered sections (1-7) above.

**1. Goal 1:**

---

**2. Which Quality Matters element(s) are you focusing on?**

---

3. Strategies	4. Success indicators	5. What is your evidence of success?	6. Timelines – when will you put in place each strategy?	7. Who is responsible for this particular strategy?

**Prepared by:** (If also prepared by others, please attach a separate sheet providing names and contact information.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone contact (day): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Centre name: \_\_\_\_\_

Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Board Chair/Owner/Operator: \_\_\_\_\_

**For consultant use:**

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

---

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Goal 2:**

---

**2. Which Quality Matters element(s) are you focusing on?**

---

3. Strategies	4. Success indicators	5. What is your evidence of success?	6. Timelines – when will you put in place each strategy?	7. Who is responsible for this particular strategy?

**Prepared by:** If also prepared by others, please attach a separate sheet providing names and contact information.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone contact (day): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Centre name: \_\_\_\_\_

Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Board Chair/Owner/Operator: \_\_\_\_\_

**For consultant use:**

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

# On-Site Consultation

On-site consultation support for Quality Matters (and especially for the Program Quality component) is provided by the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's Early Childhood Development Consultants.

Your consultant is available to work with you throughout the Program Quality component of Quality Matters. You will be required to sign a letter of agreement with your consultant, outlining the nature and frequency of the on-site support you have agreed upon. As time goes on, you and your consultant may wish to review and revise your arrangements for on-site consultation, both in the nature of the support (e.g., face-to-face, phone calls) and in the frequency of contacts.

You and your consultant will each need to sign two original copies of the letter of agreement—one copy for your files and one for the consultant's files (Use **Template 4A: Letter of Agreement for On-Site Consultation and Support**). As you review and revise your arrangements, the date of signing will denote the most recent agreement. A revised agreement will mean that the previous agreement is no longer valid.

As well, it will be helpful to you to keep a record of each consultant visit or phone call that is relevant to your Quality Improvement Plan. Use **Template 4B: Record of On-Site Consultation** to record visits and phone calls.

## TEMPLATE 4A

# Letter of Agreement for On-Site Consultation and Support

Name of centre: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Physical address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact person for Quality Matters** (if different from Director):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Job title: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

# Letter of Agreement

This letter of agreement is made between (name of director or person with signing authority) on behalf of the (name of centre) and (name of consultant) on behalf of the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (the department).

The agreement is based on the details provided in Attachments A and B.

Centre: \_\_\_\_\_

Centre signing authority: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Early Childhood Development Consultant for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Attachment A

This agreement is relevant to the on-site consultation to be provided by the EECD to the (name of centre) with the intention of providing support for the (centre) to achieve the goals set out in the attached Quality Improvement Plan. In order to do so, the (centre) and the department agree that

- the centre will allow on-site visits from (the consultant) for purposes of consultation and support
- the centre will provide regular (frequency to be determined and outlined in Attachment B) updates to the consultant regarding implementation of strategies identified as part of the centre's Quality Improvement Plan
- the centre and the consultant will mutually agree on the nature of the consultation and support (e.g., face-to-face visits, telephone calls, email correspondence) and the frequency of visits to the centre and of reports, phone calls, etc. (dates and times to be determined depending on the schedules and circumstances of both the consultant and the centre)
- the centre agrees that on-site consultation may include face-to-face visits on site, during hours of operation, as per the details set out in Attachment B
- if the consultant has determined that the centre is not implementing strategies to support the Quality Improvement Plan, the consultant may bring the matter to the EECD Quality Improvement Team, which will consist of members of the Early Years Branch staff, for further advice and problem solving
- if the centre has determined that the consultant is not providing the necessary supports to allow the centre to achieve the goals outlined in the Quality Improvement Plan, the centre has the right to approach the Early Childhood and Community Development Specialist to request a review of the arrangement
- if the centre does not meet the criteria for meeting the expectations of the Quality Matters program, the centre is required to continue to work with the consultant, staff, parents, and management until their efforts are considered to meet the expectations
- there shall be no fees involved for the consultation and support
- the consultant will follow the On-Site Consultation Model<sup>1</sup> in working with the centre
- the time frame for this agreement is for one year from the date of signing
- this agreement may be reviewed and modified from time to time, and if both the centre and the consultant agree, a new agreement shall replace the former one
- details of the agreement are attached, and each page is initialed by both the centre and the consultant

<sup>1</sup> Buysse, V., & Wesley, P. (2005). *Consultation in Early Childhood Settings*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Company.

# Attachment B

## DETAILS OF AGREEMENT

On-site consultation and support will consist of

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On-site visits will be made according to the following schedule:

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The centre and the consultant agree that if prearranged site visits need to be rescheduled, the following protocols will be used regarding advance notice, etc.:

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Other:

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# TEMPLATE 4B

## Record of On-Site Consultation

Date	Nature of Consultation (on-site visit, telephone, email, etc.)	Summary of Results	Consultant's Initials	Centre Rep's Initials



  
**NOVA SCOTIA**