

# **The Emergence of a New Early Childhood Program Quality Tool/Scale**

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**June 2023**

The early care and education (ECE) field has been dominated by two program quality tools/scales for the past two-three decades: ERSs and CLASS. These scales have served the field well over the years in providing excellent observation tools for Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) initiatives at the state level and for national programs, such as Head Start. These scales are based upon expert opinion and have a good deal of empirical research to back them up.

While these tools were being used in the above domains QRIS and Head Start, a parallel development was occurring at the licensing level in which specific statistical methodologies were developed to identify key predictor rule indicators that predicted overall regulatory compliance with the full set of rules for specific ECE programs. This avenue of research was equally successful in providing the early care and education field with a tool/scale that listed these key predictor rule indicators (NARA, 2023a).

In the past 20 years, these statistical methodologies were expanded upon and applied to accreditation, QRIS, and professional development quality initiatives. In each of these

applications, key predictor performance indicators were identified that predicted overall performance of an ECE program.

These key predictor rule and performance indicators were combined into a new type of scale/tool that measured an ECE program at both a licensing and quality levels. Most recently this new scale/tool: The Early Childhood Education Quality Indicators Scale (ECEQIS) was pilot tested for reliability and validity in the Province of Saskatchewan's Ministry of Education by the National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA) with resounding results (NARA, 2023b).

The new ECEQIS is unique in that in its construction it is based upon both empirical evidence and expert opinion. All 10 indicators on the tool are generated from the key predictor rule and performance indicators statistical methodology. The ECEQIS is appended to this article for the interested reader. As one will see, it consists of only 10 items but they are from the various quality ECE initiatives present in today's ECE systems: Licensing, QRIS, Accreditation, Professional Development/Training/Technical Assistance systems. The scale is ease to use and very time efficient, being able to be completed within two hours.

The ECEQIS has been tested for reliability by having independent observers collect data independent of each other. The ECEQIS has been tested for validity by having observers collect data independent of each other utilizing the ECEQIS and the ERSs: ECERS for preschool classrooms and the ITERS for infant and toddler classrooms. In all cases the validity results were significant at  $p < .0001$ . The ECEQIS is a rather robust tool and is a major addition to the

ECE measurement landscape (Please see the NARA Validation Study for the details of this study and the results).

All scoring and scaling are built into the scale and utilizes observation, record review and lastly interviewing if necessary. The scale is organized into two parts: 1) Record Review and 2) Observations. There is ample room for making recordings within the tool and specific charts for keeping track of results.

The ECEQIS is organized into the following more general areas: 1) Quality Staff and Programming, 2) Quality Curriculum and Assessment, 3) Sharing and Communication with Parents, 4) Encouraging Communication and Reasoning Skills in Children, 5) Caregivers who are Warm and Attentive to Children. Each general area has anywhere from 1-3 program quality indicators (please check out the ECEQIS appended to this article below).

The advantages with the new ECEQIS are that it measures indicators from all the major quality initiatives that exist within ECE as of this writing. From an ECE state administrator, licensing ECE administrator, or an ECE program director, this would provide a very effective and efficient means for assessing the overall quality of my program or programs in my respective jurisdiction. The other major advantage of the ECEQIS is that it can be used in infant, toddler, and preschool classrooms by selecting particular program quality indicators over other ones. This really makes it convenient to use. Obviously, the scoring will be a tad different, but everything else about the scale remains the same.

So, I encourage you to take a look and see what you think. Try it out in your classroom and see how well it works. And if you have the time, share your results with me, my contact

information is at the end of this article, I would love to see what you are finding and add it to my national data base.

### **References**

NARA (2023a). *Key Indicator Website* (<https://www.naralicensing.org/key-indicators>). National Association for Regulatory Administration: Fredricksburg, VA.

NARA (2023b). *Saskatchewan Validation of the Early Care and Education Program Quality Indicators Scale*. National Association for Regulatory Administration: Fredricksburg, VA.

### **Contact Information**

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## **Appendix**

### **Saskatchewan's Early Learning and Child Care Program Quality Key Indicator Instrument (SKECPQI)**

#### **INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND to SKECPQI**

Ten Quality Key Indicators (QKI) make up the Saskatchewan's Early Learning and Child Care Program Quality Key Indicator Instrument (SKECPQI). The details about each of the Quality Indicators and data collection instructions in order to obtain the necessary data to determine if a program meets the Key Quality Indicators are delineated below for each quality key indicator. Part 1 - Quality Key Indicators (QKI) 1 – 5 will be collected via record or document review, interviewing individuals, or observation. Part 2 - Quality Key Indicators (QKI) 6 – 10 will be collected via observations in the classrooms throughout the assessment.

These ten quality key indicators were taken from previous studies conducted over the past 40 years by Dr Richard Fiene utilizing the Regulatory Compliance Key Indicator metric (RCKIm) that he developed in the late 1970's. These QKI have held up over time and have now been coupled together into this tool and being pilot tested in the Province of Saskatchewan. The original tool was reviewed by a Provincial Ministry of Education Work Group who met during 2019-2020 and made some revisions to the original tool. All these changes are reflected in this version of the SKECPQI (2023).

## **PART 1 – Record/Document Review, Interview, Observation Quality Indicators**

### **INDICATOR 1): Number of ECE III Educators (AA and BA Level ECE Educators)**

Assessors will review staff records to determine the number of staff who have these credentials in early childhood education. Record the number of ECEs with the appropriate qualifications and divide them by the total number of ECEs to come up with a percent for the center.

#### **How to Measure:**

Go to the **Staff Information Summary** form to obtain the data for this item. There are two columns that will do this. Under Certification: *Certification Date and Certification Level* (Highest ECE Level Certified). The certification date should be earlier than the date of the review and the actual level of the certification. In this case, we are interested in the number of (ECEIII's). Record the number of ECEIII working at least 65 hours/month. Then record the number of total teaching staff working at least 65 hours/month below as well. Teaching staff is defined as staff who have a responsibility for working with the children and the programming. Determine the percentage by dividing the total number of staff into the total number of ECEIII Certified teaching staff, ECEIII Certified teaching staff is the numerator, and the total number of teaching staff is the denominator (ECEIII/Total number of teaching staff x 100% = Percent).

#### **Scoring for PQI 1:**

The total number of ECEIII Certified teaching staff \_\_\_\_\_ (1.1)

The total number of teaching staff \_\_\_\_\_ (1.2)

Total ECEIII teaching staff divided by the total number of teaching staff \_\_\_\_\_ (%).

Then based on the percentage, you can find the score of 1-4 as per the chart below.

<b><i>Circle the Appropriate Level</i></b>	<b><i>1 = 0 to 25%</i></b>	<b><i>2= 26 to 50%</i></b>	<b><i>3 = 51 to 75%</i></b>	<b><i>4 = 76 to 100%</i></b>
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### **INDICATOR 2): Stimulating and Dynamic Environment**

The criteria for measuring this are drawn from **Play and Exploration Guide**. The program is child centered. Children are viewed as competent learners, and they have the freedom to access classroom materials independently without adult intervention. The children are provided with meaningful choices through activity/learning centers. There is evidence of the children's interests and their projects in the learning environment.

#### **How to Measure:**

Below is the checklist of items that should be present to assess if the environment is both stimulating and dynamic for the children. You will want to observe that the following items are occurring in the classroom first. If you do not actually observe it occurring, then check the program plan to find documentation that it normally occurs but you just did not observe today. The checklist items would be found in *Play and Exploration* foundational materials.

Quality Early Learning Environments (Please record all that you observe Y or N):

1. Co-teaching is evident. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (2.1)
2. Children are viewed as competent learners & can access materials independently. Y/N \_\_\_\_ (2.2)
3. Authentic and meaningful materials are used with children. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (2.3)
4. Children are provided with meaningful choices. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (2.4)
5. Children's work, art and photos are displayed respectfully. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (2.5)
6. Family photos are displayed in the early learning program. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (2.6)
7. Documentation of learning is displayed and discusses holistic development. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (2.7)
8. Environment reflects the culture and beliefs of the children, families and staff. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (2.8)
9. Variety of books & other print materials are available throughout the classroom Y/N \_\_\_\_ (2.9)
10. A variety of writing materials are accessible to children most of the time. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (2.10)
11. There is evidence of the children's interests & projects in the classroom. Y/N \_\_\_\_ (2.11)

**Scoring for PQI 2:**

Total up the number of items where you recorded a "Y" above that you observed (curriculum or in classrooms), divide by 11 x 100% to come up with a percent and record here \_\_\_\_\_ %. Then based on the percentage, you can find the score of 1-4 as per the chart below.

<b><i>Circle the Appropriate Level</i></b>	<b>1 = 0 to 25%</b>	<b>2 = 26 to 50%</b>	<b>3 = 51 to 75%</b>	<b>4 = 76 to 100%</b>
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**INDICATOR 3): Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum Based on Assessments of Each Child**

The key for this quality key indicator is that the program is following an individualized prescribed planning document when it comes to curriculum. It does not mean it is a canned program, in fact, it shouldn't if it is based upon the individual needs of each child's developmental assessment. The assessor will ask to see what is used to guide the curriculum. There should be a written document that clearly delineates the parameters of the philosophy, activities, guidance, and resources needed for the particular curricular approach. There should also be a developmental assessment which is clearly tied to the curriculum. The developmental assessment can be home-grown or a more standardized off-the-shelf type of assessment, the key being its ability to inform the various aspects of the curriculum. The purpose of the assessments is not to compare children but rather to compare the developmental progress of individual children as they experience the activities of the curriculum.

The following key elements should be present when assessing this quality indicator.

- 1) The program practices emergent curriculum, allowing the interests of the children to determine the learning content. The curriculum is informed by individual developmental assessments of each child in the respective classrooms.
- 2) The children and educators are co-learners in the exploration of projects.
- 3) Learning activities of the children are documented, displayed in the learning environment and used to plan further learning activities. This can be assessed developmentally.

**How to Measure:**

Take a sample of 10 individual children's records and consider the above three elements for EACH record. You should be asking yourself if there is a clear link between an assessment and the developmentally appropriate curriculum so that an individualized learning approach is being undertaken and each child's developmental needs are taken into consideration. These records could be formal, such as portfolios kept for each child or a more informal, anecdotal type of record keeping. The key is that there is a record that can be looked at. It is not adequate if the teacher says they do it from memory – it needs to be written down and documented.

Cross check the child's record to the actual curriculum. Record all the instances (Y's) in which this occurs. All three blocks need to be checked for each record (1-10).

**Emergent Curriculum is Practiced (3.1)**

1 Y/N	2 Y/N	3 Y/N	4 Y/N	5 Y/N	6 Y/N	7 Y/N	8 Y/N	9 Y/N	10 Y/N
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**Key Element 1 +**

**Children and Educators are Co-learners (3.2)**

1 Y/N	2 Y/N	3 Y/N	4 Y/N	5 Y/N	6 Y/N	7 Y/N	8 Y/N	9 Y/N	10 Y/N
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**Key Element 2 +**

**Learning Activities are Documented and Displayed and Used to Plan Future Learning (3.3)**

1 Y/N	2 Y/N	3 Y/N	4 Y/N	5 Y/N	6 Y/N	7 Y/N	8 Y/N	9 Y/N	10 Y/N
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**Key Element 3 +**

All three key elements must have a Y to get an overall score of Y. If all three key elements have a Y for that individual record, then record Y in the corresponding block in the overall score.

1 Ys =	2 Ys =	3 Ys =	4 Ys =	5 Ys =	6 Ys =	7 Ys =	8 Ys =	9 Ys =	10 Ys =
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**= Total of All Three Key Elements (3.4)**

**Scoring for PQI 3:**

The number of positive records (all Ys for all three elements) where there is a crosswalk from developmental assessment to curriculum \_\_\_\_\_

Percent of positive records (all Ys) (divide the number of positive records by 10 x 100%) \_\_\_\_\_ %. Then based on the percentage, you can find the score of 1-4 as per the chart below.



<b><i>Circle the Appropriate Level</i></b>	<b>1 = 0 to 25%</b>	<b>2= 26 to 50%</b>	<b>3 = 51 to 75%</b>	<b>4 = 76 to 100%</b>
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**INDICATOR 4): Opportunities for Staff and Families to Get to Know Each Other**

There should be activities both within the center as well as off site where staff and parents have opportunities to meet and greet each other. Communication with family members is documented and enables early childhood providers to assess the need for follow-up. Early childhood providers hold regular office hours when they are available to talk with family members either in person or by phone. Family members are encouraged to lead the conversation and to raise any questions or concerns.

**How to Measure:**

Look for the following 3 examples in policies developed by the program and determine if they have been carried out with families. It will be necessary to interview staff to complete this indicator if you do not find the three examples in policies:

1. The program provides communication, education, and informational materials & opportunities for families that are delivered in a way that meets their diverse needs. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (4.1)
2. The program communicates with families using different modes of communication, and at least one mode promotes two-way communication. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (4.2)
3. The program demonstrates respect and engages in ongoing two-way communication. The program respects each family’s strengths, choices, & goals for their children. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (4.3)

**Scoring for PQI 4:**

Record the number of Yes’s (Y’s): \_\_\_\_\_ (Range: 0 – 3) (Divide by 3 x 100% = \_\_\_\_\_ %). Then based on the percentage, you can find the score of 1-4 as per the chart below.

<b><i>Circle the Appropriate Level</i></b>	<b>1 = 0 to 25%</b>	<b>2= 26 to 50%</b>	<b>3 = 51 to 75%</b>	<b>4 = 76 to 100%</b>
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**INDICATOR 5): Families Receive Information on Their Child’s Progress Regularly Using a Formal Mechanism**

Based upon Indicator #3 above, the information gleaned from the developmental assessments should be the focus of the report or parent conference. Parental feedback about the assessment and how it compares to their experiences at home would be an excellent comparison point. All these interactions should be done in a culturally and linguistically appropriate way representing the parents being served.

**How to Measure:**

Look for the following four examples in policies developed by the program and determine if they have been carried out with families. Record the number of reports completed or parent conferences over the past year. It will be necessary to interview staff to complete this indicator if you cannot determine from records that the conferences or reports were completed.

NOTE: The examples are mutually exclusive and are not additive; the first example is the highest scored, the third example the least scored. After 1-3 are determined, then do the last example.

- 1) The program does have regularly scheduled (at least 2xs/year) parent conferences in which the children’s developmental progress is discussed AND provides the family with a report of their child’s developmental progress. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (5.1) (Score 3 points). If “Yes” then go to Number 4. If “No”, then go to numbers 2 and 3.
- 2) The program has regularly scheduled (at least 2xs/year) parent conferences in which the children's developmental progress is discussed, but it does not provide a report to the parents on their child’s developmental progress. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (5.2) (Score 2 points).
- 3) If the program does not have regularly scheduled (at least 2xs/year) parent conferences, does it provide the family with a report of their child's developmental progress. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (5.3) (Score 1 point). Go to Number 4.
- 4) All these interactions are done in a culturally and linguistically appropriate way representing the parents being served. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (5.4) (Score 1 point)

**Scoring for PQI5:**

Add up the total points based on the Ys; this will range from “0” to “4”. The only way a program can receive a “4”, is if a program has regularly scheduled parent conferences at least 2xs/year and provides the family with a report of their child’s progress; and it is done in a culturally and linguistically appropriate way.

Record the number of points: \_\_\_\_\_ (Range: 0 - 4)

Total Score for Part 1 = \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 2 - OBSERVATIONS:**

*For quality key indicators 6, 7 and 8, it is recommended that the licensing consultant refer to the appropriate Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) tool as a reference tool because these indicators are taken directly from these tools. It is also recommended that these be assessed/observed throughout the assessment and not just during key activity times. Please follow the specific instructions and examples as delineated below and in the appropriate ERS tool: ECERS (Items 12 and 13) or ITERS (Item 12). These specific instructions and examples are provided within this tool for ease of administration and data collection. If there are several preschool aged classrooms randomly select one to do your observations.*

**INDICATOR 6): Educators Encourage Children to Communicate (Preschool Class)**

Assessors will need to observe this item when they do their classroom observations. Initially you can ask educators or the director how children are encouraged to communicate but in order to gather reliable and valid information regarding this question/standard, it needs to be observed in the various interactions between staff and children. Things to look for would be more back and forth conversations rather than one-way conversations where educators are telling children what to do. Look for opportunities where children can describe what they are doing, how they feel about what they are doing, and why they are doing particular activities. Educators expand upon children’s conversations.

These opportunities can occur anywhere in the classroom or outside, such as in dramatic play, tabletop activities or on the playground. Materials should be present that encourage communication such as toy telephones, puppets, flannel boards, dolls and dramatic play props, small barns, fire stations, or dollhouses. These create a lot of conversation among children as they assume many different roles. Children also talk when there is an interested person who listens to them. The staff in a high-quality early childhood classroom will use both activities and materials to encourage growth in communication skills.

**How to Measure:**

Observe the classroom for a minimum of 15 minutes. Once completed, consider where the classroom falls based on the following scale;

Score the classroom a 1 if the following occur:

- No activities used by staff with children to encourage them to communicate, for example: nontalking about drawings, dictating stories, sharing ideas at circle time, finger plays, singing songs. Y/N \_\_\_\_ (6.1)
- Very few materials accessible that encourage children to communicate. Y/N \_\_\_\_ (6.2)

Score the classroom a 2 if the following occur (If the classroom does not have all 3 indicators but has 2 of the indicators then score this item 1+):

- Some activities are used by staff w/children to encourage them to communicate. Y/N \_\_\_\_ (6.3)
- Some materials are accessible to encourage children to communicate. Y/N \_\_\_\_ (6.4)
- Communication activities are generally appropriate for the children in the group. Y/N \_\_\_\_ (6.5)

Score the classroom a 3 if the following occur (If the classroom does not have both indicators but has one of the indicators then score this item 2+):

- Communication activities take place during both free play and group times, for example: child dictates story about painting; small group discusses trip to store. Y/N \_\_\_\_ (6.6)
- Materials that encourage children to communicate are accessible in a variety of interest centers, for example: small figures and animals in block area; puppets and flannel board pieces in book area; toys for dramatic play outdoors or indoors. Y/N \_\_\_\_ (6.7)

Score the classroom a 4 if the following occur (If the classroom does not have both indicators but has one of the indicators then score this item 3+):

- Staff balance listening and talking appropriately for age and abilities of children during communication activities, for example: leave time for children to respond; verbalize for child with limited communication skills. Y/N \_\_\_\_ (6.9)
- Staff link children’s spoken communication with written language, for example: write down what children dictate & read it back to them; help them write notes to parents. Y/N \_\_\_\_ (6.10)

**Scoring for PQI 6:**

*Total up the number of “Y’s” and record the appropriate level. In order for a classroom to receive a particular score, all “Y’s” must be checked for the appropriate level (1 - 4) from above or partial credit given in order to obtain a “+”. If there is a “+” please also mark it in the box.*

<b>Circle the Appropriate Level</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
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## **INDICATOR 7): Infant Toddler Observation (if applicable) (Infant Classroom)**

*NOTE: If there is an infant, toddler or combined infant/toddler classroom that needs to be assessed, then use the following ITERS item directly from the ITERS Tool (Item 12), if there is not an infant toddler classroom, then skip to Indicator 8.*

Conversations and questions should be used with all children, even young infants. Conversations using verbal and nonverbal turn-taking should be considered when scoring. Most conversations and questions initiated by infants will be nonverbal, such as widening of baby's eyes or waving arms and legs. Observe staff response to such nonverbal communication. For infants and toddlers, the responsibility for starting most conversations and asking questions belongs to the staff. As children become more able to initiate communication, staff should modify their approach in order to allow children to take on a greater role in initiating conversations and asking questions. Staff should provide answers to questions used by children if children cannot answer, and as children become more able to respond, questions should start to include those that the child can answer. If there was not an infant classroom, skip this Indicator and please note that here and on the summary score sheet by marking N/A: \_\_\_\_\_

### **How to Measure:**

Observe the classroom for a minimum of 15 minutes. Once completed, consider where the classroom falls based on the following scale;

Score the classroom a 1 if the following occurs:

- Staff never initiate turn-taking conversations with children, for example: rarely encourage baby to babble back; simple back and forth exchanges with verbal children never observed. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (7.1)
- Staff questions are often not appropriate for children, or no questions are asked, for example: too difficult to answer; carry a negative message. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (7.2)
- Staff respond negatively when children can't answer questions, for example: "You should know this"; "You did not listen". Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (7.3)

Score the classroom a 2 if the following occurs (If the classroom does not have all 3 indicators but has 2 of the indicators then score this item 1+):

- Staff sometimes initiate conversations with children, for example: babble back and forth with baby; copy baby's sounds; respond to baby's crying with verbal response; have short back and forth toddler interactions. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (7.4)
- Staff sometimes ask children appropriate questions and wait for the child to respond, for example: ask baby if she likes toy and pay attention as baby smiles; ask toddler what he is eating and wait for him to think of word. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (7.5)
- Staff respond neutrally or positively to children who can't answer questions. Questions asked are sometimes meaningful to children, for example: child responds with interest; does not ignore staff questions. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (7.6)

Score the classroom a 3 if the following occurs (If the classroom does not have all 4 indicators but has 2 or more of the indicators then score this item 2+):

- Staff initiate engaging conversations with children throughout the observation, for example: show enthusiasm; use tone that attracts child's attention. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (7.7)
- Staff often personalize questions and/or conversations for individual children, for example: talk about children's families, preferences, interests; what they are playing with; what they did over weekend; child's mood; use child's name. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (7.8)

- Staff often pay attention to children’s questions, verbal or nonverbal, and answer in a satisfying manner for the child. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (7.9)
- Staff ask questions in which children show interest in answering, for example: make the questions funny or mysterious; use attractive tone; meaningful and not too difficult to answer. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (7.10)

Score the classroom a 4 if the following occurs (If the classroom does not have both indicators but has one of the indicators then score this item 3+):

- Staff frequently have turn taking conversations with children throughout the observations. Many appropriate questions are used throughout the observation, during both play and routines. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (7.11)
- Staff ask children appropriate questions, wait a reasonable time for child response, and then answer if needed, for example: “Are you hungry? . . . Yes, you are!”; “Where’s the ball? . . . There it is! You found the ball”. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (7.12)

**Scoring for PQI 7:**

*Total up the number of “Y’s” and record the appropriate level. For a classroom to receive a particular score, all “Y’s” must be checked for the appropriate level (1 - 4) from above or partial credit given in order to obtain a “+”.*

<b>Circle the Appropriate Level</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
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**INDICATOR 8): Educators Use Language to Develop Reasoning Skills (Preschool)**

Assessors will need to observe very carefully as this standard can be difficult to determine because it is tying language and cognition together. Again, this opportunity can occur in any setting in or out of the classroom because it is the basis for problem solving through the use of language. Also look for educators redirecting children’s conversations when appropriate. Staff should use language to talk about logical relationships using materials that stimulate reasoning. Through the use of materials, staff can demonstrate concepts such as same/different, classifying, sequencing, one-to-one correspondence, spatial relationships, and cause and effect.

**How to Measure:**

Observe the classroom for a minimum of 15 minutes. Once completed, consider where the classroom falls based on the following scale;

Score the classroom a 1 if the following occur:

- Staff do not talk with children about logical relationships, for example: ignore children's questions and curiosity about why things happen, do not call attention to sequence of daily events, differences and similarity in number, size, shape, cause and effect. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (8.1)
- Concepts are introduced inappropriately, for example: concepts too difficult for age and abilities of children, inappropriate teaching methods used such as worksheets without any concrete experiences; teacher gives answers w/o helping children to figure things out. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (8.2)

Score the classroom a 2 if the following occur (If the classroom does not have both indicators but has one of the indicators then score this item 1+):

- Staff sometimes talk about logical relationships or concepts, e.g.: explain that outside time comes after snacks, point out differences in sizes of blocks children use. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (8.3)

- Some concepts are introduced appropriately for ages and abilities of children in group, using words and experiences, for example: guide children with questions and words to sort big and little blocks or to figure out why ice melts. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (8.4)

Score the classroom a 3 if the following occur (If the classroom does not have both indicators but has one of the indicators then score this item 2+):

- Staff talk about logical relationships while children play with materials that stimulate reasoning, for example: sequence cards, same/different games, size and shape toys, sorting games, numbers and math games. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (8.5)
- Children are encouraged to talk through or explain their reasoning when solving problems, for example: why they sorted objects into different groups, in what way two pictures are the same or different. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (8.6)

Score the classroom a 4 if the following occur (If the classroom does not have both indicators but has one of the indicators then score this item 3+):

- Staff encourage children to reason throughout the day, using actual events and experiences as a basis for concept development, e.g.: children learn sequence by talking about their experiences in the daily routine or recalling the sequence of a cooking project. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (8.7)
- Concepts are introduced based upon children's interests or needs to solve problems, for example: talk children through balancing a tall block building, help children figure out how many spoons are needed to set a table. Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ (8.8)

**Scoring for PQI 8:**

*Total up the number of “Y’s” and record the appropriate level. In order for a classroom to receive a particular score, all “Y’s” must be checked for the appropriate level (1 - 4) from above or partial credit given in order to obtain a “+”.*

<b>Circle the Appropriate Level</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
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*For quality key indicators 9 and 10 it is recommended that these be assessed/observed throughout the observation period and not just during key activity times. These two quality key indicators should be observed in two-minute blocks over ten sequences for a total of 20 minutes. These two items should also be used with each age group you are assessing.*

**INDICATOR 9): Educators Listen Attentively When Children Speak**

This quality indicator focuses on the early childhood educator(s) looking directly at the children with nods, rephrases their comments, engages in conversations. Children should have the undivided attention of the specific educator they are addressing. Educators should not be looking away or pre-occupied with others. They should be at the child’s level making eye contact. The intent is to observe all children and educators in the room.

**How to Measure:**

Do this in timed 2-minute observations recording each time you observe this occurring. Record at least 10 different observation periods. These do not need to be consecutive in order to fully observe classrooms and educators. Please use the following scale to assess your recordings: Likert Scale (1-4) where 1 = Never/Not at All; 2 = Somewhat/Few Instances; 3 = Quite a Bit/Many Instances; 4 = Very Much/Consistently):

Make the actual recordings using the Likert Scale (1-4) above for each individual observation and record in each cell below.

10 Observations:

10.1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10.10

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**Scoring for PQI 9:**

Once all the observations are made, add up the results from the Likert Scale (1-4) and record the total number here: \_\_\_\_\_ (Range: 10 - 40)(Divide this result by 10) = \_\_\_\_\_ (1-4)(Round upward or downward to the whole number (3.7 = 4; 2.2 = 2)).

<b><i>Circle the Appropriate Level</i></b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
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**INDICATOR 10): Educators Speak Warmly to Children**

This quality indicator focuses on the early childhood educator(s) always engaging in a caring voice and body language with every child. Educators do not use harsh language or commands in speaking to children, but rather again are on the child’s level making eye contact. Think of the way Fred Rogers would engage his audience where you always felt you were the most important person in the world when he talked to the TV.

**How to Measure:**

Do this in timed 2-minute observations recording each time you observe this occurring. Record at least 10 different observation periods. Please use the following scale to make your recordings: (This item is on a Likert Scale (1-4) where 1 = Never/Not at All; 2 = Somewhat/Few Instances; 3 = Quite a Bit/Many Instances; 4 = Very Much/Consistently):

Make the actual recordings using the Likert Scale (1-4) above for each individual observation and record in each cell below.

10 Observations:

10.1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10.10

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**Scoring for PQI 10:**

Once all the observations are made, add up the results from the Likert Scale (1-4) and record the total number here: \_\_\_\_\_ (Range: 10 - 40) (Divide this result by 10) = \_\_\_\_\_ (1-4). (Round upward or downward to the whole number (3.7 = 4; 2.2 = 2)).

<b><i>Circle the Appropriate Level</i></b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
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## SKECPQI Scoring Protocol

LEVEL	Standardized Scores	Actual Scores
<b>High Quality</b>	<b>Mixed Age: 36+</b> <b>Preschool: 32+</b> <b>Infant-Toddler: 28+</b>	Mixed Age: _____ Preschool: _____ Infant-Toddler: _____
<b>High - Mid Quality</b>	<b>Mixed Age: 30 – 35</b> <b>Preschool: 26 - 31</b> <b>Infant-Toddler: 22 - 27</b>	Mixed Age: _____ Preschool: _____ Infant-Toddler: _____
<b>Mid – Low Quality</b>	<b>Mixed Age: 20 – 29</b> <b>Preschool: 16 - 25</b> <b>Infant-Toddler: 12 - 21</b>	Mixed Age: _____ Preschool: _____ Infant-Toddler: _____
<b>Low Quality</b>	<b>Mixed Ages: 19 or less</b> <b>Preschool: 15 or less</b> <b>Infant-Toddler: 11 or less</b>	Mixed Age: _____ Preschool: _____ Infant-Toddler: _____

**Note:**

**Members of the Original Saskatchewan Program Quality Work Group are the following:**

**Ministry of Education: Kim Taylor, Derek Parady, Cindy Jeanes, Tanya Mengel, Samantha Ecarnot, Karen Heinrichs, Michelle Vellenoweth, Kristin Jarvis, and NARA Consultant: Rick Fiene.**

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Additional Information contact: Derek Parady, Government of Saskatchewan, Senior Policy Analyst, Early Years, Ministry of Education, 2-2220 College Ave, Regina, SK, Canada S4P 4V9.

Additional Information regarding the psychometrics of the tool contact: Richard Fiene, Ph.D., Research Psychologist, Research Institute for Key Indicators & Penn State University. [RFiene@RIKInstitute.com](mailto:RFiene@RIKInstitute.com) or [RFiene@NARALicensing.org](mailto:RFiene@NARALicensing.org)

10/2020; 4/2021; 1/2023; 2/2023; 3/2023 versions



After completing your observations, reviewing all documentation, and interviewing staff, when necessary, please transfer all your results to the Summary Table below. If there was not an infant classroom, please note here, no infant classroom: \_\_\_\_\_. If there was not a toddler classroom, please note here, no toddler classroom: \_\_\_\_\_. If there was not a preschool classroom, please note here, no preschool classroom: \_\_\_\_\_.

<u>Key Q Indicator</u>	<u>Quality Indicator Content</u>	<u>Scale Source</u>	<u>Potential Score</u>	<u>Actual Score</u>
QKI 1	Professional Development	NAEYC	1-4	1, 2, 3, 4
QKI 2	The Environment	Saskatchewan	1-4	1, 2, 3, 4
QKI 3	Curriculum and Assessment	NAEYC	1-4	1, 2, 3, 4
QKI 4	Family Engagement I	QRIS	1-4	1, 2, 3, 4
QKI 5	Family Engagement II	QRIS	1-4	1, 2, 3, 4
QKI 6	Communication (Preschool)	ECERS	1-4 or NA	1, 2, 3, 4, +, NA
QKI 7	<i>Infant Classroom</i>	<i>ITERS</i>	<i>1-4 or NA</i>	1, 2, 3, 4, +, NA
QKI 8	Reasoning Skills (Preschool)	ECERS	1-4 or NA	1, 2, 3, 4, +, NA
QKI 9	Listen Attentively	CIS	1-4	1, 2, 3, 4
QKI 10	Speak Warmly	CIS	1-4	1, 2, 3, 4

**Notes:**

Use *ITERS* if: (Infants) (B-1yr)

Use *ITERS* if: (Toddlers) (1yr-2yr)

Use *ECERS* if: (Preschoolers) (3yr+)

SKECPQI/Infant (administer QKI items 1-5, 7, 9-10) (Scores 8-32)

SKECPQI/Toddler or Preschool (administer QKI items 1-5, 7, 9-10) (Scores 8-32) or (administer QKI items 1-6, 8-10) (Scores 9-36). Mixed age group (administer QKI items 1-10) (Scores 10-40)

SKECPQI/Preschool (administer QKI items 1-6, 8-10) (Scores 9-36)

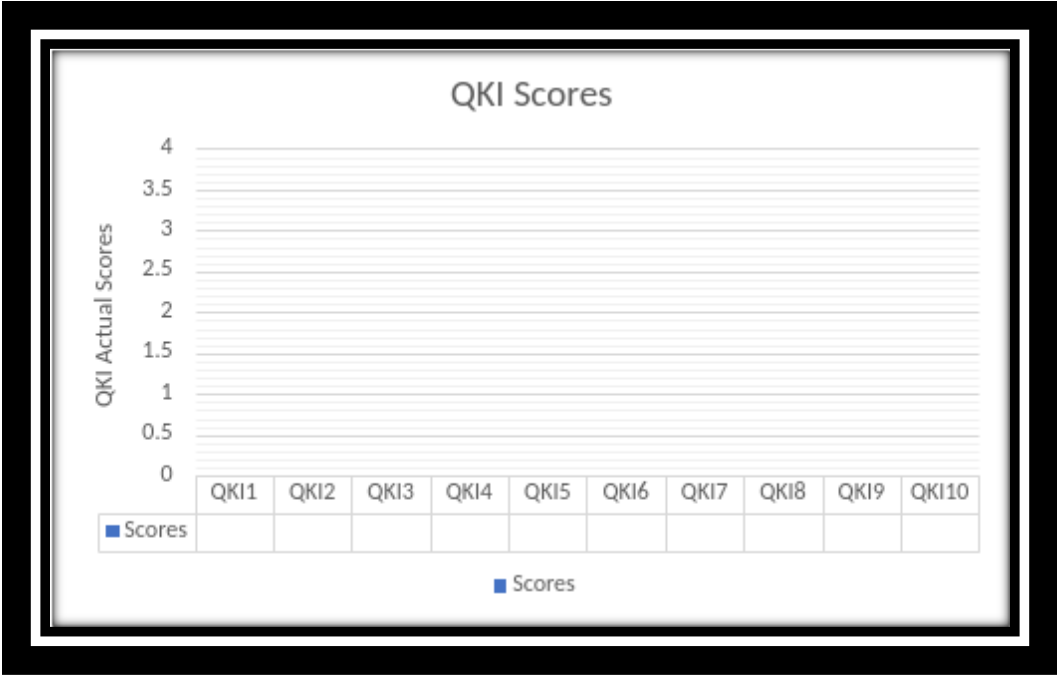
**All the above 10 quality indicators (SKECPQI) have been taken from other sources having been identified in Quality Indicator Studies conducted by Dr Richard Fiene from 1980 – 2020. Please refer to the source documents for details on their creation: *ECERS, ITERS, QRIS/INQUIRE, CIS/Arnett, NAEYC, SASKATCHEWAN PLAY & EXPLORATION*. For additional information, reports, and publications related to these studies, please go to <https://www.naralicensing.org/key-indicators> Or <https://rikinstitute.com/publications/>**

**SKECPQI: SASKATCHEWAN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM QUALITY INDICATORS**

**CHART/GRAPH**

**Scores**

<b>QKI1</b>	
<b>QKI2</b>	
<b>QKI3</b>	
<b>QKI4</b>	
<b>QKI5</b>	
<b>QKI6</b>	
<b>QKI7</b>	
<b>QKI8</b>	
<b>QKI9</b>	
<b>QKI10</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	



**QKI and key elements/sub items and comments Scoresheet:**

QKI1 \_\_\_\_\_ 1.1 \_\_\_\_\_ 1.2 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

QKI2 \_\_\_\_\_ %

2.1 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

2.2 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

2.3 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

2.4 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

2.5 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

2.6 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

2.7 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

2.8 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

2.9 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

2.10 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

2.11 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

QKI3 \_\_\_\_\_ %

3.1 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

3.2 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

3.3 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

3.4 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

QKI4 \_\_\_\_\_ %

4.1 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

4.2 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

4.3 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

QKI5 \_\_\_\_\_ Points

5.1 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

5.2 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

5.3 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

5.4 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

QKI6 \_\_\_\_\_ Level

6.1 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

6.2 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

6.3 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

6.4 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

6.5 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

6.6 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

6.7 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

6.8 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

6.9 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

QKI7 \_\_\_\_\_ Level

7.1 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

7.2 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

7.3 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

7.4 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

7.5 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

7.6 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

7.7 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

7.8 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

7.9 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

7.10 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

7.11 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

7.12 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

QKI 8 \_\_\_\_\_ Level

8.1 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

8.2 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

8.3 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

8.4 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

8.5 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

8.6 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

8.7 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

8.8 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

QKI9 \_\_\_\_\_ Level

9.1 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

9.2 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

9.3 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

9.4 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

9.5 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

9.6 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

9.7 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

9.8 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

9.9 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

9.10 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

QKI10 \_\_\_\_\_ Level

10.1 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

10.2 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

10.3 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

10.4 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

10.5 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

10.6 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

10.7 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

10.8 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

10.9 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

10.10 \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Quality Key Indicators (QKI)	Elements/Items	Data Collection
1	1.	Record Review
2	11 . . . . .	Policy, Records, Interviews
3	4 . . . .	Policy, Records, Interviews
4	3 . . .	Policy, Records, Interviews
5	4 . . . .	Policy, Records, Interviews
6	9 . . . . .	Observation
7	12 . . . . .	Observation
8	8 . . . . .	Observation
9	10 . . . . .	Observation
10	10 . . . . .	Observation
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Potential Score = 78</b>	<b>Actual Score Obtained = _____</b>

