
Program Quality Assessment (PQA) Documentation Notes for Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) Classrooms

The PQA was developed by the HighScope Educational Research Foundation© based on Michigan's *Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten* and is the program evaluation tool for GSRP. Findings show that the practices assessed in the PQA, regardless of the curriculum or program in which they are used, are positively and significantly associated with children's development.

These notes are a collaborative effort between HighScope and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). The notes supplement formal, online PQA training and serve as a guide for documenting information about GSRP classrooms. GSRP Early Childhood Specialists (ECS) document evidence about classroom observations and specific grant requirements in related PQA items and use this data for improvement planning, even when PQA scoring is not negatively affected, e.g., notation of a daily routine for adults that does not include descriptive detail would be documented in item II-B, 15-minute parent-teacher conferences would be documented in item IV-C, and a classroom that exceeds the cap on classroom size would be documented in item VII-B.

Refer to the ECS Section of the GSRP Implementation Manual for using the PQA throughout the year. One Form B (Agency Items) for each GSRP subrecipient or ISD operating classroom is completed between November 15 and January 15, with data due into the OnlinePQA by January 31. Between March 1 and May 15, the ECS completes the "end of year" observation of each classroom using Form A with data due into the OnlinePQA system on May 31. In the end-of-year PQA Forms A and B, all items must be scored; item III-E is completed as appropriate.

Learning Environment

When entering a classroom for an observation, first scan the room. You can see evidence of the teacher's philosophy of early childhood education in the room arrangement, materials on the shelves and posting on the walls. As you score this section, ask yourself if your evidence is capturing that sense of philosophy.

Overall for this section: First draw a diagram of the classroom, including what the interest areas are labeled, placement of furniture, and fixed elements (sink, carpet, etc.). You will find it useful to refer back to this page when documenting evidence and scoring items in this section. You may also find it useful to take photos of the environment to refer back to later on. If you want to score evidence from your photos, be sure to also document what you see in the photo as written evidence.

Item	PQA Scoring Notes	GSRP Documentation Notes
I-B	<p>Rows 1 and 2: Document when classrooms incorrectly have a large portion of the room that is not divided into interest areas, but instead have a large “learning rug” for whole group instruction and/or have a cluster of tables for group activities such as journaling, penmanship, worksheets.</p>	
I-C	<p>See above. The word “play” encompasses work and/or other activities. Focus on what is happening in the space during the daily routine. Clusters of tables tend to reduce the amount of space for interest areas, negatively effecting rows 1, 2, and 3.</p>	
I-D		<p>Remember to document the temperature and weather on this page if the class does not go outside. We expect children to go outside daily unless the weather is extreme or children’s safety is threatened.</p>
I-E	<p>Overall: If you are scoring a 3, remember to give both positive and negative evidence. For example, document in which area items are not grouped by function or type or what items or areas are not labeled.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Row 1: Look in every area for examples. • Row 2: Containers and shelving should both be labeled to score a 5. <p>Visual clutter may negatively affect some children’s learning. This item, for example, does not</p>	

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	require that chairs, tables, walls, doors, sink, etc. to have text labels. Area signs that swing from the ceiling are not easily readable to children and tend to overwhelm the classroom visually.	
I-H	This item refers to materials which children can manipulate. Commercial wall-posters do not count as evidence for rows 2 and 3.	
I-I	<p>Write down everything that is on the walls, including posters, calendar, evacuation plan, drawings by children, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Row 1: The issue is not whether the display is in the classroom or hallway, or how often children's work is changed, but whether it is located in a place where children and families can readily see and talk about it. • Items for adults should be posted at adult-eye level and are fine to have in the classroom (i.e., emergency procedures, problem solving steps, etc.). As much as possible, children's work can be displayed at children's eyelevel. 	

Daily Routine

GSRP requires each component of the daily routine detailed in this section. Programs may use different terminology for each portion of the day. Names for each portion of the day should be easily understood by children. Portions of the day must be reflected in the written schedule posted on the wall for adults, on the visual schedule for children, and reflected in the teachers' lesson plans.

Overall for this section, first copy the written schedule posted on the wall. Then, as you progress through the daily routine, write down the actual schedule (with times) as it happens.

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II-A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Row 1: If a part of the day is missing, be sure to note what is not done. Row 2: If you hear examples from only the adults, or only from children, score it 1. If you hear from one example from a child and one example from an adult, score it 3. If you hear 3 or more examples from a combination of adults and children, record your evidence and score it a 5. 	<p>Names for the portions of the day should be consistently documented in paperwork and consistently used by adults. For example, <i>Outside Time</i> should not have multiple names such as <i>Gross Motor</i> and <i>PE Time</i>.</p>
II-B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Row 1: A classroom may not score a 5 if there are not discrete times for planning time, choice time, recall time, small group, large group, snack/meal, clean-up, outdoor play, and for school day programs, time for rest. Row 2: To score a 5, small group must be a discreet portion of the day (not combined with choice time). 	<p>For GSRP classrooms, the written schedule posted in the classroom must include descriptive language announcing what children and adults do for each portion of the day. This schedule must also be part of the Parent Handbook. See example in the GSRP Implementation Manual. Be sure to document whether these features are in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Row 2: In GSRP school-day classrooms, small-group time must occur each morning. Row 2: For GSRP classrooms, planning time, choice time/clean-up, and recall time must occur as a three-part sequence with each choice time. Be sure to document whether or not this sequence occurs. <p>Many GSRP teachers work with consistent small groups for planning</p>

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		<p>time, recall time, small-group time and home visiting. This tends to strengthen relationships and home-school partnering for child development. It also boosts quality for other PQA items (like II-G).</p>
II-C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Row 1: You may refer to the actual schedule (that you document) as evidence. • Row 1: A classroom should not score a level 5 if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are excessive large-group experiences throughout the day (i.e., 3 large-group times for a part-day sessions, 4 large-group times for a school-day session). • Row 2: Be as specific as possible when documenting times spent on activities that seem too long or short. Document, for example, what children were doing or saying at these times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Row 1: For GSRP classrooms, also document if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The time for meals does not allow children to participate in serving themselves and cleaning up their eating space. • Choice Time is less than one hour. • For a school-day program, rest time is less than 45 minutes. • The amount of time for outdoor play is insufficient to allow children to dress themselves and also have about 30 minutes for gross-motor.
II-D	<p>This item documents the practice of child planning. Note: If there is no time set aside each day for this portion of the daily routine, enter all supporting evidence in the OnlinePQA Row 1 textbox and score it at Level 1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Row 2: To score a 5, you may ask the teacher for other lesson plans to find evidence of a “range” of strategies used for planning or you may learn this from interviewing the teacher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Row 1: For GSRP classrooms, this discrete portion of the day should be reflected in the lesson plan, the posted (written) schedule/Parent Handbook, and the visual schedule for children. Be sure to document whether these features are in place.

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II-E	<p>This item documents the practice of child-initiated activities.</p> <p>If there is no time set aside each day for this portion of the daily routine, enter all supporting evidence in the OnlinePQA Row 1 textbox and score it at Level 1.</p>	<p>Small-group time is not to be scheduled concurrently with choice time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Row 1: For GSRP classrooms, this discrete portion of the day should be reflected in the lesson plan, the posted (written) schedule/Parent Handbook, and the visual schedule for children. Be sure to document whether these features are in place.
II-F	<p>This item documents the practice of child recall.</p> <p>If there is no time set aside each day for this portion of the daily routine, enter all supporting evidence in the OnlinePQA Row 1 textbox and score it at Level 1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Row 1: For GSRP classrooms, this discrete portion of the day should be reflected in the lesson plan, the posted (written) schedule/Parent Handbook, and the visual schedule for children. Be sure to document whether these features are in place.
II-G	<p>This item documents the practice of small group activities.</p> <p>If there is no time set aside each day for this portion of the daily routine, enter all supporting evidence in the OnlinePQA Row 1 textbox and score it at Level 1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When there are multiple small-group times, evidence should reflect the children's experience in each small group (not the "best" experience). If small-group time is held concurrently with the primary choice time, the following items and rows will be negatively affected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> II-A, rows 2 and 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Row 1: For GSRP classrooms, this discrete portion of the day should be reflected in the lesson plan, the posted (written) schedule/Parent Handbook, and the visual schedule for children. Be sure to document whether these features are in place.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • II-E, row 2 will be affected, row 3 may be affected • II-G, row 1 will be affected, row 3 may be affected • Depending on the class size and the number of adults in the classroom, many other items in the Adult-Child Interaction section will be lower (i.e., they may score 3s rather than 5s because children are “sometimes” supported. When one adult is running a small-group time, that may only leave one other adult to support all the children at work time). 	
II-H	<p>This item documents the practice of large group activities.</p> <p>If there is no time set aside each day for this portion of the daily routine, enter all supporting evidence in the OnlinePQA Row 1 textbox and score it at Level 1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Row 1: For GSRP classrooms, this discrete portion of the day should be reflected in the lesson plan, the posted (written) schedule/Parent Handbook, and the visual schedule for children. Please document this evidence in this row.
II-I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you see long waits, this should be reflected by the times on your documented actual daily routine. 	<p>GSRP staff must plan for transitions throughout the daily routine that engage children and support child development.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note specific examples of choices available to children during transitions as well as specific examples of times when children could/could not finish one activity before moving to another. • Look on the lesson plan for documentation of planned ways for children to transition/or ask the teacher how he/she plans for transitions. • Row 2: If you hear this 3 or more times, score it a 5. If you hear this between 1-3 times, score it a 3. If you don't hear it at all, score it a 1. • Row 4: If you see 1 transition strategy (i.e., they sing a song as they walk down the hall), score it a 3. If you see a variety of transition strategies used, score it a 5. 	
II-J	<p>This item documents the practice of clean-up activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean-up can occur throughout play or work time. • If there is no time set aside each day for this portion of the daily routine, enter all supporting evidence in the OnlinePQA Row 1 textbox and score it at Level 1. 	
II-K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This item documents the practice of snack/meal service. • Having an open snack would only effect the first row as long as adults were available to 	<p>If children eat in the cafeteria, determine if this space has been approved for use by children (inspected and approved by the Department of Human Services [DHS] Child Care Licensing</p>

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	<p>converse with children while they did eat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there is no time set aside each day for this portion of the daily routine, enter all supporting evidence in the OnlinePQA Row 1 textbox and score it at Level 1. Row 4: If the classroom has an "open snack" where children are free to eat snack during choice time and a teacher does not sit down and converse or eat with the children present, score this row a 1. If the teacher does sit down and eat and converse with the children present during open snack, other items in the Adult-Child Interaction section may be negatively affected (i.e., children are "sometimes" supported because one adult is at the snack table, leaving the other adult to support all the children at work time. 	<p>Consultant) and whether the cafeteria has furniture sized for preschool children. Document these findings on this page.</p>
II-L	<p>This item documents the practice of outside activities.</p> <p>If there is no time set aside each day for this portion of the daily routine, enter all supporting evidence in the OnlinePQA Row 1 textbox and score it at Level 1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Row 1: For GSRP School-Day and GSRP/Head Start Blend classrooms, outside time must occur each morning and an additional gross motor opportunity should also occur each afternoon. Be sure to document whether these features are in place. Row 1: For GSRP classrooms, this discrete portion of the day should be reflected in the lesson plan, the posted (written) schedule/Parent Handbook, and the visual schedule for children. Be sure to document whether these features are in place.

Adult-Child Interaction

This section reflects the “heart and soul” of the classroom. For this section, it’s especially important that you capture a range of interactions (or lack thereof) that happens. Don’t focus on just the “best” example. You should be writing down what teachers are doing and saying (or not doing or saying) throughout the day. Evidence for these items can often be used to cross-reference to other items in this section. When you’ve done your first pass at this section, look it over again. If evidence and scores from one item seems to contradict evidence and scores from another item, it’s possible you need to go back and add some cross-referencing. This is the first section which includes bulleted lists for item descriptors. Remember that where there are bulleted lists, each item must be present to gain the highest score. Some items include examples (e.g.), which are good examples of what to look for, but not all examples are required to gain the highest score.

The rule of thumb for scoring for specific interactions: You should have more than three examples positively illustrating the indicator (and none of the negative indicators) to score a 5. If you have less than 3 examples, score the row a 3.

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III-A	If you don’t see examples of any of these indicators, ask the teacher what he/she would do in that situation. Record your evidence as “teacher reports” and score the responses.	
III-B	For this item and the rest of the items, be sure to get examples from all staff in the classroom. If Teacher A has appropriate interactions consistently and Teacher B does not, you may be looking at scores of a 3, rather than a 5.	
III-D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Row 4: Include specific examples of the types of questions the adults ask. Include examples of times where the teacher made a comment instead of asking a question. 	
III-F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If row 1 is scored a 1, then row 2, should also be scored a 1, and row 3 would be marked NA. You would then score this item based on rows 1 and 2 (which would be an overall score of a 1). 	

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III-J	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Row 1: If you don't hear any praise, it's acceptable to write "Adults did not give praise." Row 2: It's acceptable to write "Adults did not give rewards." 	
III-L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Row 1: Some examples of things children can do for themselves might include: open milk cartons, pour their own juice, serve themselves from a meal dish, put on coats, hats, and boots, use scissors, tape, do their own art project, hang up their own art project, write their name in their own way, brush their teeth, put on their own dress-up clothes, get their own paint. 	
III-M		This conflict resolution process is required in all GSRP classrooms. Be sure to cross-reference with VII-E.

Curriculum Planning and Assessment

It is important to review files and also complete all interview questions before scoring these items.

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IV-A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Row 1: "Use" is the key word in this item; having curriculum resources "available" is insufficient to score a level 5. Cross-reference with V-D. Row 2: Look for the curriculum to be visible in the room arrangement, words for the areas of the room, portions of the daily routine, lesson plan/daily activities, Parent Handbook, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Row 2: Worksheets/workbooks are prohibited for GSRP classroom and home use. Document if these are observed in the classroom or child files.

Item	POA Scoring Notes	GSRP Documentation Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Row 4: Record the title of the document where the curriculum statement exists. 	
IV-B	<p>In high quality team teaching, an observer would have difficulty discerning the Lead Teacher from the Associate Teacher.</p>	<p>Team Teaching is a GSRP requirement. Lead and associate teachers must have sufficient time to plan and implement curriculum.</p>
IV-C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Row 1: It is important to have a systematic approach to file-review. Document planned and completed home visits/conferences. Cross-reference with item V-G. Row 1: Do child files include documentation of follow-up/conclusion to child and family referrals? Cross-reference with V-H and V-I. 	<p>Review documentation for appropriate timeframes. Each family receives minimally 4 contacts. Two home visits and two conferences are recommended.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home visits are planned for 60 minutes, notwithstanding travel time, and conferences are planned for 45 minutes. Row 1: Do child files include documentation of GSRP eligibility? Cross-reference with VII-D.
IV-D	<p>Review all child assessment information. If a portfolio exists, does it include child-initiated works?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Row 1: Are anecdotes predominately gathered on child-initiated activities? Row 2: When examining anecdotal notes, consider whether you can fully visualize the behavior: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the portion of the daily routine identified? Is the area of the room identified? Are peers or other adults included in the anecdote? 	<p>Lead and associate teachers must have sufficient time to record and discuss child assessment anecdotes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Row 4: Are there sufficient anecdotes to complete each child assessment item, across all developmental domains? In the fall, each assessment item should have at least one anecdote and by the end of the year, each assessment item should have multiple anecdotes. Row 4: For a child with an IEP, is there assessment information from the specialist(s)? Is there documentation of collaborative planning to meet the child's needs?

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are materials identified? • Is child-language included in the anecdote? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Row 5: A high quality program will be able to provide specific examples of staff partnering with parents on developmental goals for home and school. May cross-reference with items in Section V.
IV-E		<p>Child assessment data must be coupled with program evaluation data for analysis and a systematic approach to continuous improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Row 1: Are child assessment data aggregated by classroom and by program three times each year?

Parent Involvement

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V-G		A high quality program provides sufficient time for lead and associate teachers to plan and participate in home visits and conferences.

Staff Qualifications

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VI-A		Score this item based on the person who has responsibility for day-to-day administrative decisions for GSRP, e.g., hiring staff/performance reviews, determining the school calendar and/or transportation contracts. This might not be the "Director" as identified on DHS license/approval, but may be an

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		<p>elementary principal or other staff supervisor.</p>
VI-C		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Row 3: For School-Day and GSRP/Head Start Blend sessions, be sure to document whether “lunch aides” or “break relief” staff have been oriented and trained in program procedures relevant to their roles, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family style meals • Support for child communication • Encouragement of child initiative • Acknowledgement of child efforts • Encouragement of peer interaction • Independent problem solving • Conflict resolution • Row 4: For school-day sessions, document how “lunch aides” or “break relief” staff receive ongoing supervision.
VI-D		<p>A high quality program provides sufficient time for lead and associate teachers to participate in professional development activities related to classroom and program goals.</p>
VI-F		<p>Three observation/feedback/coaching sessions per year are required. A high quality program provides sufficient time for the teaching team to participate in feedback sessions and goal-setting.</p>

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VI-G		<p>The premier early childhood organization is NAEYC.</p> <p>NAEYC memberships are approvable GSRP expenditures.</p>

Program Management

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VII-B		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Row 1: GSRP class size is capped at 18 children. • Row 2: GSRP grant ratio requirements are 1:8 and a third adult with the 17th child.