

# PQA-R Frequently Asked Questions

## General Questions

1. Does the PQA-R measure HighScope fidelity?

The PQA-R measures classroom structure and process quality regardless of the curriculum used by the classroom. It was not developed as a measure of HighScope fidelity.

2. The terms “support and scaffold” are used throughout the document. Does support still refer to meeting the children at their current level, and does scaffolding refer to extending or giving a gentle nudge?

Yes, support means meeting children at their developmental levels and scaffold means providing a variety of strategies that promote student learning such as activating prior knowledge, ensuring that the activities are engaging, providing hints or clues, showing examples, and breaking up complex tasks into smaller parts.

3. What about the three-hour minimum observation rule?

Although HighScope has set a three-hour minimum observation time with the added criteria that evidence for each row must be entered during the observation time, the agency or program you work for may set a different observation time to adhere to. For Section 3, HighScope recommends that the assessors and teachers work together to score the rows outside of the three-hour observation time.

4. The assessment and the scoring guidance document uses the following descriptors “rarely/never, sometimes, usually, and always,” but these descriptors do not fit all the contexts in which they are used within the PQA-R.

Every row in the PQA-R that uses “rarely/never, sometimes, usually, and always” has a verb that can be described by those terms such as provides or uses. Remember that “always” refers to only when you are observing,

5. “Many, some, few, and none” are also used. Is there guidance on these terms?

Your knowledge about preschool teaching and learning, knowledge gained from visiting many preschool classrooms and/or teaching in a preschool classroom, plus all of your professional experience to date should help guide your professional judgement about whether the classroom you are observing has few, some, or many of the materials you are observing. Let the examples and your profession experience and judgement guide your scoring for those descriptors.

## **Learning Environment Questions**

### **I-A The learning environment is safe and healthy.**

Row 1- The question lies within the handwashing after meals/snacks. This is not required by licensing, but does this have to be done to achieve the highest score?

**Note:** The word “**requires**” should be ignored in the scoring notes for I-A Row 1. Those are examples not requirements.

- Use your professional judgement and here is additional guidance from the Center for Disease Control. They recommend that everyone wash his or her hands as follows:
  - Before, during, and after preparing food
  - Before eating food
  - Before and after caring for someone who is sick
  - Before and after treating a cut or wound
  - After using the toilet
  - After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
  - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
  - After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
  - After handling pet food or pet treats
  - After touching garbage

Row 2- A “well-stocked first aid kit” is referenced, what is required?

- Use your professional judgement and here is additional guidance from The National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care that recommends that first-aid kits should include the following (**Note:** this is an exhaustive list of examples not requirements):
  - Disposable nonporous gloves.
  - Scissors.
  - Tweezers.
  - A thermometer (not made of glass) to measure a child’s temperature.
  - Bandage tape.
  - Sterile gauze pads.
  - Flexible roller gauze.
  - Triangular bandages.
  - Safety pins.
  - Sterile eye bandage.
  - Pen/pencil and note pad.
  - Cold pack.
  - Current American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) standard first-aid chart ([http://www.aap.org/bst/showdetl.cfm?&DID=15&Product\\_ID=2246](http://www.aap.org/bst/showdetl.cfm?&DID=15&Product_ID=2246)) . There is a fee for this document) or a similar first-aid guide.
  - Coins for use in a pay phone.

- Water.
- Small plastic or metal splints.
- Liquid soap.
- Adhesive strip bandages.
- Plastic bags for cloths, gauze, and other materials used in handling blood.
- Any emergency medication needed for a child with special needs.
- List of emergency phone numbers, parents' home and work phone numbers, and the Poison Control Center phone number (1-800-222-1222).
- Source: National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care, 1-800-598-5437, <http://nrckids.org>

**I-E There is a safe and accessible outdoor/indoor play area with ample space and materials to support many types of play.**

- Row 3 - If they don't have any materials that they take out for indoor/outdoor time and no portable materials that children have access to are present, are we counting this as a 1?

Yes, it is scored a 1.

**Teaching and Learning Routines and Adult-Child Interactions Questions**

**II-A The classroom follows a consistent sequence of events (daily routine).**

- Row 3 - The example in the notes section that refers to "Loudly announcing" is where the question lies. Is the emphasis on the warning or how attention is gained? Is a chime, flipping the lights off, rain stick, etc... okay? Is warning of 5 minutes okay?

The emphasis is on being thoughtful about how you let children know a transition will occur soon that won't obtrusively, unnecessarily, or repeatedly interrupt their conversations or play such as announcing it every minute for 5 minutes or very loudly.

**II-D Adults create a sensitive and responsive learning environment for all children.**

- Row 4- I am noticing that all of the example of encouragement are verbal, what about acknowledging, commenting, imitating, etc.?

The examples are not exhaustive.

- How do you score if you have one adult that is encouraging all of the time and one that does not?

You will have to choose either usually or sometimes depending on your professional judgement and experience.

**II-G Adults support children's mathematics development throughout the day.**

- Row 1- Where might this show up in the classroom?

Opportunities for children to count objects might show up any time in the classroom or while outdoors. All objects can be counted with one-to-one correspondence. When opportunities arise for children to tell “how many there are in all” and there are fewer than 6 objects they should be encouraged to answer without counting one-by-one or in other words subitize.

- Row 2- The counting sets is throwing me off...this is not just counting it is about naming the number in the set. Does scaffolding the process count? The examples appear to be the child doing the counting and naming of the set.

In this row, you are rating the teacher’s ability to support and scaffold cardinality. The more often the teacher supports and scaffolds the child’s understanding of cardinality the higher the score should be. The example shows a child who does not understand cardinality as the child responds by saying there are 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 swings instead of saying the cardinal number 7. The teacher supports understanding of cardinality by simply saying the cardinal number.

## **II-H Adults support children’s reasoning and problem-solving throughout the day.**

- Row 3- observe, predict and conclude on a daily basis...is this possible?

There are many opportunities throughout the day for children to observe, predict and draw conclusions. Observing, predicting, and drawing conclusions is not necessarily a linear process. We often observe and then do nothing. Sometimes we observe and draw a conclusion based on inadequate information (not enough observations) and after many more observations have to revise our conclusions. Sometimes we make predictions without even observing the action such as predicting that a child will never be able to build a five-foot tower and then watch the child build it. This row measures a teacher’s ability to support and scaffold these processes. Asking children to look closely, to watch what happens, to use their senses during explorations supports observations. Asking children to guess what will happen next or happen if...based upon observations or what they know supports predicting. Asking children why something happened and questioning their answers such as “What made you say that?” supports drawing conclusions. In addition, the teacher(s) in the classroom may have one child observe, another predict, and still another draws a conclusion during entirely different activities. It doesn’t have to be the same child doing all three and it does not have to be all three processes at the same time.

## **Curriculum, Planning, Assessment and Parent Engagement Questions**

### **III-A Adults use a comprehensive, evidence-based educational model(s)/approach(es) to guide teaching practices.**

- Row 2- When we look for modifications, are we looking for environmental, academic or both?

Both.

**III-B Adults document the developmental progress of each child using measures validated for preschool-aged children.**

- Row 3- “Assessment results,” does this refer to assessment reports or what teachers observe daily?

It refers to both formal and informal assessments.

**III-D Adults share responsibilities for planning activities connected to the comprehensive educational model(s)/approach(es) that are focused on play.**

- Row 1- The indicator states, “Adults create daily plans at least weekly.” Just to clarify, does this mean that teachers meet one time a week to develop daily plans for an entire week?

Ideally, teachers will create or modify their plans daily based on student interest. The intention of this row is to ensure that teachers are planning based on student need or interest on at least a weekly basis.

- Row 1- If ALL instructional staff does not help create the plans does this negatively affect the score?

Yes, base the score on the teacher’s response to the guiding question.

- Row 2- Does this mean we are looking at lesson plans to see if KDIs/standards are noted or is this just a conversation?

Just a conversation. You are asking the guiding questions. The teacher could answer these questions in writing as well.

**III-E Adults provide many parent engagement options, encourage two-way sharing of child information, and support families with resources about child development and program transitioning.**

- Row 1- The indicator states that this needs to include opportunities to share information about each family/child. What might be some other opportunities that would show up here?

Opportunities to share information occur frequently such as beginning and end of class, weekly reports, and electronically through parent portals. Family engagement opportunities include participating during field trips, parent nights, math night, end of year picnic, etc.

- Row 4- Are we looking for general information in newsletters or more specific information to individual families, or both?

Both, however, looking might not be the right word, you will be asking the teachers in the classroom the guiding questions to score this item.