


What is the PQA?

Program Quality Assessment
for the
Great Start Readiness Program

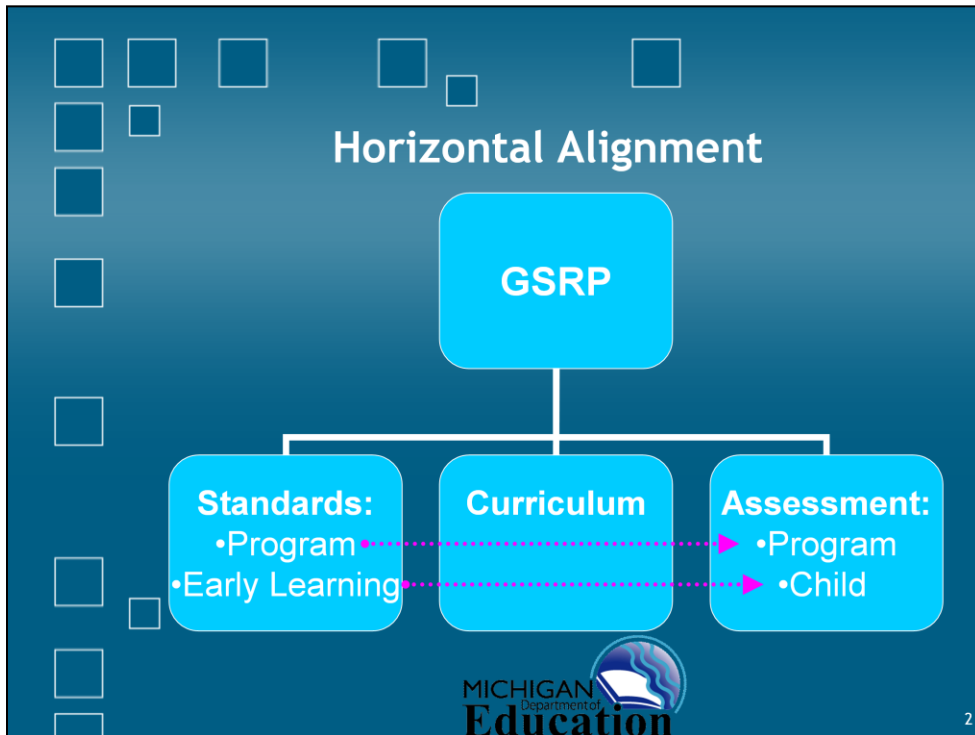


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The Preschool Program Quality Assessment (PQA) is a program evaluation tool developed by the HighScope Educational Research Foundation®, based on Michigan's *Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten*. Findings show that the practices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

This document addresses an overview and uses of the PQA within the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP).



The GSRP is Michigan’s PreK program. Programs must evaluate both their processes and their outcomes to document program effectiveness and to provide information for program improvement.

Horizontal alignment for GSRP begins with the State Board Approved *Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten (ECSQ-PK)*. That document includes both *Program Standards* and *Early Learning Expectations For Three-and Four-Year-Old Children*. Data collected from each GSRP classroom are measures of compliance with the ECSQ-PK.

Programs implement a research validated curriculum which is closely aligned with the ECSQ-PK. *Program Standards* are assessed with the PQA and programs implement a research validated child assessment tool to measure how well they are meeting the *Early Learning Expectations for Children*.

Results are submitted annually to MDE for statewide evaluation of the program. Important results of longitudinal program evaluation are that programs showing a high level of implementation of the GSRP model result in impressive gains for children as they enter elementary school and graduation on time from high school.

PQA

- Form A
- Form B

www.highscope.org

www.onlinepqa.net

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The PQA identifies best program practices in seven different areas. The tool is available in hard-copy and online.

The PQA Form A includes assessment of the preschool classroom:

1. The Learning Environment
2. The Daily Routine
3. Adult-Child Interaction, and
4. Curriculum Planning and Assessment.


Form A is the foundational tool that the GSRP Early Childhood Specialist (ECS) uses minimally three times each year, for each observation and feedback session with each unique GSRP teaching team.

The PQA Form B includes assessment of agency items including:

5. Parent Involvement and Family Services,
6. Staff Qualifications and Staff Development, and
7. Program Management.


The ECS annually completes a Form B for each GSRP subrecipient.

Implementing PQA with Validity



- Formal training is critical
- Reliable Assessor credential

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The GSRP ECS, GSRP Lead Teachers and Associate Teachers must receive training in the PQA. The ECS must be a PQA reliable assessor; this status is renewed each year.

Contact HighScope for information about PQA training and the test to become a reliable assessor.

Uses of the PQA

- Self-Assessment of quality
- Observation/Feedback/Coaching
- Research and Evaluation
- Information and Dissemination

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Self Assessment: The PQA can be an evaluation tool *and* a teaching tool! The PQA has a more powerful impact when teaching teams have the PQA in their hands and are active partners to identify areas of strength and areas in need of improvement. PQA administration is always led by the GSRP ECS and the team includes the teaching staff, parents, and administrators. Please refer to the PQA Administration Manual for additional guidance on a team approach to self-assessment.

Observation, Feedback sessions and Coaching are accomplished by the GSRP ECS, a specialist with whom staff have an ongoing relationship. Use of the PQA sets the stage for a systematic approach to meaningful, ongoing quality efforts in individual classrooms and throughout the program. See the GSRP Implementation Manual for more information on responsibilities of the ECS and using the PQA throughout the academic year.

Research and Evaluation is accomplished through MDE monitoring and longitudinal data on the program. Grantees can compare quality in different program settings or over time; for example, assess program quality before and after relevant professional development and environmental supports have been provided. Programs follow enrolled children into elementary school.

Information and Dissemination: Be proud! Brainstorm ways to announce program strengths to parents; perhaps in recruitment materials or through newsletters and the program website. Program strengths can be announced to the school board and the community through presentations and when speaking with legislators. Remember to explain developmentally appropriate practices and intentional preschool teaching each time you share program data!



- GSRP is the largest participant in Michigan's tiered rating system, *Great Start to Quality* (GSQ)
- The PQA is the research-validated tool used in GSQ.
- www.greatstarttoquality.org
- Programs and providers are awarded from one to five stars based on the number of state standards they meet.
- GSQ helps families - who are the biggest investors in child care and preschool - spend wisely



Lastly, PQA Form A is used to evaluate classroom quality in both GSRP and Michigan's Great Start to Quality (GSQ) system.

Standards set by GSQ are used to rate child care and preschool programs to ensure that Michigan's youngest children have high-quality early learning experiences. GSQ helps parents find the best child care and preschool for their child, and helps providers improve the care and education they give to children.

To learn more about the Great Start to Quality system, visit www.greatstarttoquality.org