


# 1. Relationships – Interactions and Engagement

A quality program works with intention to build positive relationships with children/youth which are the foundation of all other quality components.

A quality program is one where:

	PERFORMANCE LEVEL				PLAN TO IMPROVE		
	1	2	3	4	RIGHT NOW	SIX MONTHS	TWELVE MONTHS
1 Adults are role models of positive and respectful relationships with both fellow staff and children/youth.							
2 Adults build a sense of community and a welcoming, positive social/emotional climate.							
3 Adults actively implement strategies to build positive relationships with each and every child/youth participant.							
4 Adults are actively engaged with the children/youth as observed through their enthusiasm, interest, and interactions.							
5 Children/youth are shown how to make responsible choices and offered opportunities to practice these skills.							
6 Children/youth are empowered to request, design, and/or select activities that follow emerging interests. 							
7 Children/youth are active participants in leadership activities that may include program planning, activity leading, evaluation, and community outreach.							
8 Both adults and children/youth promote physical and emotional safety through a culture of support, inclusion and mutual respect.							

The social and emotional skills needed for effective workforce readiness include:

- Communication Skills
- Collaboration Skills
- Cross-Cultural Skills
- Leadership Skills
- Social Skills





# Zooming In!

## Quality Indicator #6: Children/youth are empowered to request, design, and/or select activities that follow emerging interests.

### PERFORMANCE LEVELS

#### 1 = Entry

- Program materials are limited.
- Children/youth do not have choices in activities.
- The physical space does not allow for successful implementation of activities.

#### 2 = Developing

- Some materials are available but are often kept in a locked closet.
- Children/youth must ask to use stored materials.
- Staff understand the importance of providing children/youth with choices but are not consistent about doing so.

#### 3 = Proficient

- Supplies and materials are always accessible.
- Children/youth are encouraged to provide feedback.
- Staff provide opportunities for youth choice by administering monthly surveys on program options.
- The physical space is intentionally arranged to complement activities.

#### 4 = Advanced

- Supplies and materials are consistently stocked and accessible to children/youth.
- All staff provide multiple opportunities for youth choice in their groups.
- There is a youth council that participates in program decisions, design, plans, and events.
- The physical space is organized to allow positive peer interaction and promote collaboration on projects.
- Space is often used as a model for other program providers to learn from.

### IMPROVEMENT EXAMPLES

#### RIGHT NOW:

#### addressed within the first 30–60 days of assessment

- Program materials and supplies are purchased.
- Broken equipment is replaced.
- Materials are made easily accessible to children.
- Staff work with children/youth to create regular methods of incorporating youth voice in programming.

#### THIS YEAR:

#### addressed by the end of the program year

- During meetings, staff discuss how activities can offer children/youth opportunities to take initiative and explore their interests.
- Staff work with children/youth to re-organize space to meet activity needs.

#### NEXT YEAR:

#### addressed at the beginning of the new program year

- Staff meet at the beginning of the year to plan activities and reflect on the program environment.
- Staff identify opportunities for children/youth to be engaged as leaders and create intentional avenues for feedback.
- Children/youth are recruited to create a youth council.
- Staff take inventory of program supplies and place orders quarterly.
- Children/youth are acknowledged for the leadership and contributions to the program.



### Try This!

Shift from thinking as a “service provider” to becoming “a partner with children/youth” to facilitate and truly create a positive and engaging program culture. Instead of planning “for” children, plan “with” them.


#### Be open to all ideas — even the crazy ones!

Ask open-ended questions such as “What would we need to do that?” “Where can we find resources?” “Who could we talk to about it?” Listening builds relationships that enable children and youth to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Questions build critical thinking skills and improve confidence.

# 2. Family and Community Partnerships

A quality program understands that families and communities are assets and partners in building the program's learning environment.

A quality program is one where:

	PERFORMANCE LEVEL				PLAN TO IMPROVE		
	1	2	3	4	RIGHT NOW	SIX MONTHS	TWELVE MONTHS
1 Program staff acknowledge, welcome, and treat families respectfully.							
2 Program staff regularly consider the assets of families, their culture, background, values, and traditions as they relate to program activities and mission.							
3 Program staff involve families in decision making and program planning. 							
4 Program staff communicate regularly with families concerning the well-being and progress of the child.							
5 Program staff collaborate with community health and social service agencies to meet the needs of individual families and information available to families.							
6 Program staff act as liaison between school and families to increase parent knowledge about school resources, activities, and expectations.							
7 A sense of partnership is established between the school and after school program that involves frequent communication, sharing of academic resources (websites/curriculum), and aligned behavior management strategies.							
8 School building administration and the after school site leader meet regularly (at least monthly) to discuss the program and address student needs.							
9 After school staff attend 504/IEP meetings and are actively involved in the school community (committees/events/etc.).							
10 Program staff build relationships with arts, cultural and other community institutions to expand and enhance after school offerings.							
11 Program promotional materials (recruitment, handbooks, etc.) are in the language of the families and include the message that children/youth with special needs are welcome.							
12 Program engages in school and community collaborations to plan and implement intentionally designed programs based on youth needs and interests.							



# Zooming In!

## Quality Indicator #3: Program staff involve families in decision making and program planning.

### PERFORMANCE LEVELS

#### 1 = Entry

- Opportunities for parents to express thoughts on program goals and planning are limited or nonexistent.
- Families have few opportunities to meet each other.
- Program meetings where parents might attend are held at inopportune times for working family members.

#### 2 = Developing

- Program regularly distributes parent surveys.
- Program regularly hosts family night events to provide opportunities for families to meet each other.
- Meals and child care are provided at meetings to decrease barriers for families to participate.

#### 3 = Proficient

- Program invites families to help plan and participate in fundraising efforts.
- Program invites all families to be a part of a family advisory committee.
- Program uses a suggestion box to solicit ideas from families. Ideas are implemented whenever possible and authors thanked through the program newsletter.

#### 4 = Advanced

- Program establishes a family liaison position as part of the staffing structure.
- Program hosts family forums to discuss parent/guardian concerns about child rearing and other family matters and share ideas of how the program can support them.
- Program works with children/youth to plan and host a family appreciation event.

### IMPROVEMENT EXAMPLES

#### RIGHT NOW:

##### addressed within the first 30–60 days of assessment

- Hold staff trainings on family engagement.
- Create and distribute survey to families with an eye to learning more about assets parents can bring to the program. Tally and review results to determine next steps.

#### THIS YEAR:

##### addressed by the end of the program year

- Develop a yearlong calendar of workshops and educational opportunities for families.
- Create a plan to provide meaningful leadership opportunities for families which could include leading clubs, coordinating events, fundraisers, or leading workshops.

#### NEXT YEAR:

##### addressed at the beginning of the new program year

- Create a family council to assist with outreach to incoming families.
- Establish multiple means of communicating with families so that all families are familiar with how they can participate in shaping the program.



**Try This!** Examining attitudes regarding family partnerships can be a first step toward strengthening relationships and communication between program staff and families. Start a dialogue with staff exploring the following statements:

- 1) Parents/caregivers often don't seem to care about their children's developmental growth.
- 2) Parents/caregivers who do not participate in events are not actively involved in their children's lives.
- 3) Parents/caregivers of teenagers have done their job and don't need to be actively involved in program activities.

Determine if these statements are impacting program decisions and are hindering or helping improve program relationships with families.