

# EQuIPS: Early Childhood Quality Improvement Pathway System

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# Intent of the New Measure

A review **system** of early childhood program performance and quality that provides a **program portrait** based on information from observations, document review, and interviews. This portrait can be used in varying ways within a QRIS and help identify **pathways** for programs to **improve experiences** for children and families.



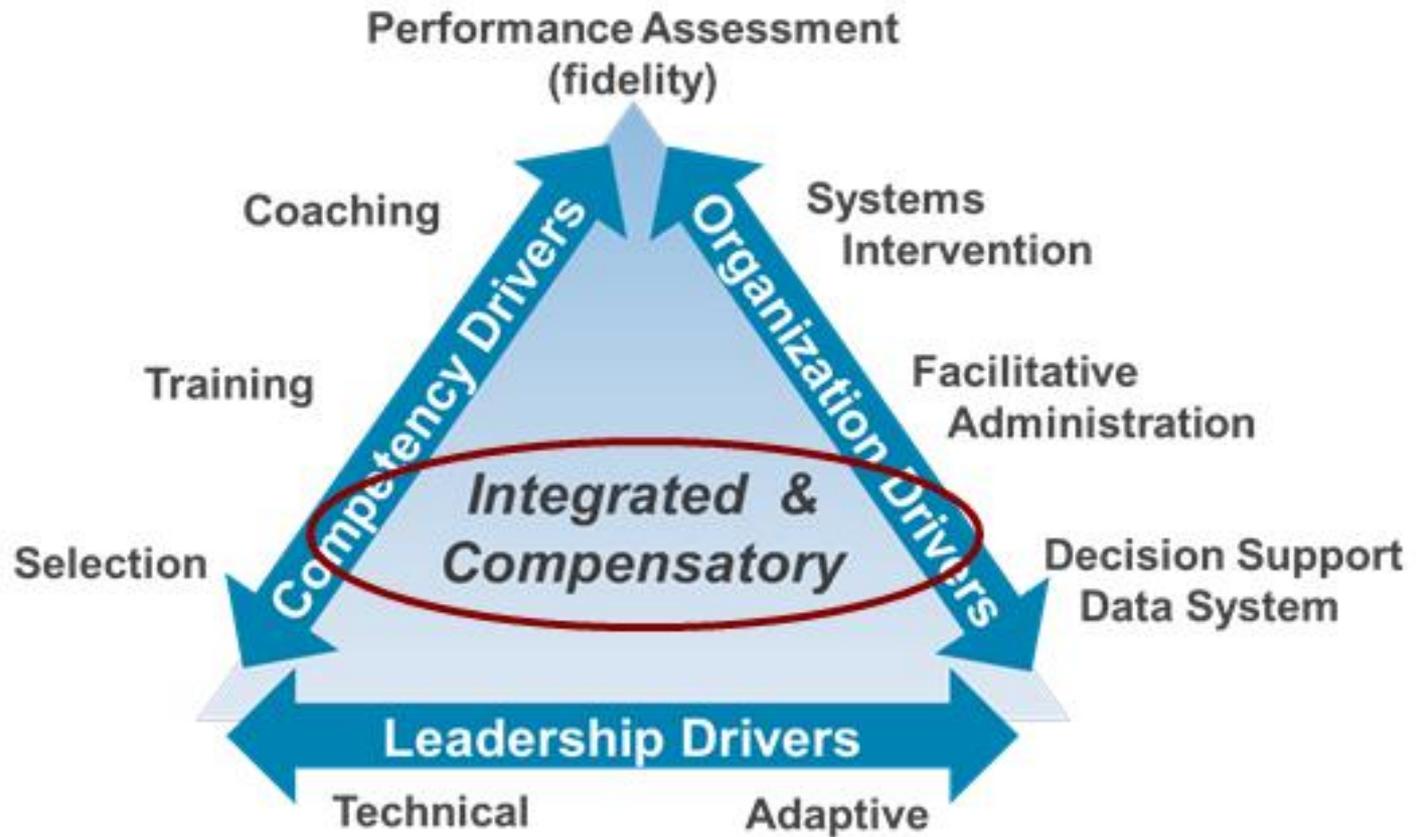
# Conceptual Framework

- Child Experiences as the Central Focus
  - Where I spend my time
  - How I spend my time
  - How this relates to the rest of my life
- Factors that Affect Child Experiences
  - Environmental Settings
  - Relationships & Continuity
  - Teaching Practices
- Program Administration & Organizational Climate

# High Quality Implementation



# Implementation Science



Fixsen & Blase (2008)

The National Implementation Research Network

# Sources of Evidence

## Document Review

- Content
  - Administrative Practices
    - Staff hiring, Supervision, Support, & Communication
    - Family Communications, Involvement, Outreach
    - Support for Teaching & Learning
    - Operational Policies
  - Classroom Practices
    - Curriculum
    - Lesson/Activity Planning
    - Assessment
- Process
  - Documents evaluated using checklists
  - Informs rubric ratings: exceptional, expected, emerging, or not here yet



## Interview

- Content: Includes aspects not observed and verification of practices
  - Directors
    - Quality Improvement Priorities
    - Staff Hiring, Supervision, Support, & Communication
    - Teaching & Learning
    - Families and Communities
  - Teachers
    - Planning & Curriculum
    - Assessment & Individualizing
    - Classroom Community
    - Communication with Families
    - Professional Development
- Process
  - 30-45 minute interview
  - Informs rubric ratings



## Observation

- Content
  - Teachers and Children
    - Quality of Interactions
    - Quality of Conversations
    - Supporting Persistence and Learning in Activities and Routines
    - Peer Interactions
    - Curriculum & Pedagogy
  - Classroom/FCCH
    - Usability of Materials
    - Availability of Space
    - Outside space and materials
- Process
  - Time Sampling (presence/absence)
  - Global Ratings
  - Red Flag Items





# Key Practice Area 1: Organizational Climate and Program Operations

## Focal Areas

- Staff hiring, retention, and supervision
- Communication with staff
- Professional development, supervision, and evaluation

## Sources of Evidence



- Administrative Documents
  - Staff Handbook
  - Program Policies
  - Communication Notifications



- Director Interview
- Teacher Interview



# Organizational Climate and Program Operations



## Possible Documents:

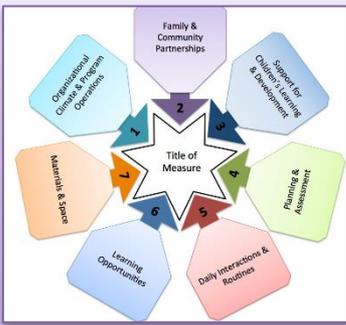
- Staff Meetings



## Teacher:

- How do teachers let program administration know about their needs/challenges?
- When you have ideas and feedback for program administration how do you share this?

Topic area	Not Here Yet	Emerging	Expected	Exceptional
<b>Communication Systems between staff and administration</b>	Little or no evidence of communication systems in place between staff and administration.	Communication is inconsistent or primarily uni-directional from administration to staff. May also include some bi-directional.	A consistent system of frequent communication is in place between staff and administration. This system includes a formal structure for ongoing communication (e.g., staff meetings) as well as strategies for informal communication (e.g., emails). Bi-directional communication is primarily used.	A consistent system of frequent communication is in place between staff and administration that includes formal and informal structures (e.g., social events, peer networking, electronic communication systems, small group meetings, etc.). Communication systems also include multiple opportunities for individual staff to share concerns, needs, and ideas for program improvement.



# Key Practice Area 2: Family and Community Partnerships

## Focal Areas

- Communication with families
- Building relationships with families
- Connecting families to community resources
- Community partnerships

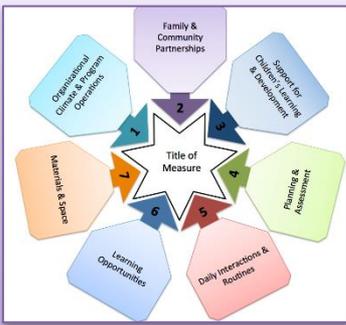
## Sources of Evidence



- Administrative Documents



- Director Interview
- Teacher Interview



# Family and Community Partnerships



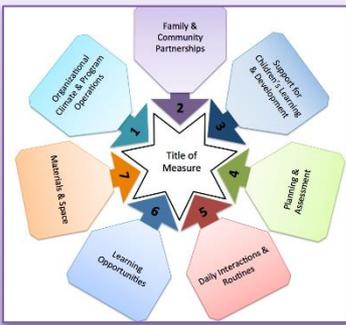
Daily sheets, conferences, enrollment forms, newsletters, policies, procedures, or programs regarding communication with families



## Director

- Tell me about how you build relationships with families and support their engagement in your program.
- How do staff in your program communicate with families? What types of information do you share?
- How do families communicate with teachers and other staff?

Area	Not Here Yet	Emerging	Expected	Exceptional
<b>Family Involvement</b>	No opportunities provided for families to share input and feedback about or otherwise be involved in the program.	Program encourages families to share input and feedback about the program and provides opportunities for involvement.	There is a process in place for families to provide feedback to the program. The program has a process in place for involving families in the program in a variety of ways.	There are multiple methods used to encourage all families to provide feedback and input into the program throughout the year. The program uses multiple methods to encourage and support family involvement in the program. These methods are responsive to family needs, interests, diversity, and strengths.



# Family and Community Partnerships



Policies, procedures, or programs designed to connect families to other needed or relevant community resources

## Director:



- Tell me about how your program connects families to community resources.
- Are there other community organizations you work with? How did these partnerships develop?

Area	Not Here Yet	Emerging	Expected	Exceptional
<b>Connecting families with community resources</b>	Little or no evidence of connecting families with community resources	Program makes written materials available to parents (lobby or resource room) about local resources	A system is in place to provide each family with individualized information about a variety of community resources and to help families connect to these resources.	The program uses multiple strategies to learn about family needs and to link families to available resources (such as those related to housing, education, employment, parenting, child development, etc.)



# Key Practice Area 3: Programmatic Support for Children's Learning and Development

## Focal Areas

- Staff scheduling
- Transition
- Continuity

## Sources of Evidence



- Administrative Documents
  - Professional Development Plans
  - Scheduling charts



- Director Interview
- Teacher Interview

# Programmatic Support for Children's Learning and Development



- Scheduling, staffing, or other program documents that evidence stable classroom staffing
- Scheduling, staffing, or other program documents that evidence additional staffing when needed (e.g. floaters, substitutes, etc.)



**Director:**

Tell me how you handle staff scheduling. When teachers cannot be at work, how are substitutes secured? Are they familiar with the children and the program?

Area	Not Here Yet	Emerging	Expected	Exceptional
<b>Scheduling</b>	Little or no evidence of scheduling to promote stability of children's experiences throughout the day.	A written staffing plan is in place that ensures children have a small group of familiar caregivers throughout the day.	A written staffing plan is in place that ensures children are cared for by a small group of familiar caregivers throughout the day and includes a plan for substitute staff situations.	A written staffing plan is in place assuring children are cared for by a small group of familiar caregivers throughout the day and includes a plan for familiar substitute staff. Staff schedules overlap and there is a system for effective communication between staff members working with the same group of children.

# Key Practice Area 4: Planning and Assessment



## Focus Areas

- Curriculum
- Assessment
- Developmental Screening

## Sources of Evidence



- Classroom Documents
  - Assessment Documents & policies
  - Daily Schedule
  - Lesson Plans



- Teacher Interview



- Observation

# Planning and Assessment



## Assessment



Topic Area	Not here yet	Emerging	Expected	Exceptional
<b>Child Assessments</b>	No evidence of child assessment processes in place in the program.	An inconsistent set of assessment practices are in place where some classrooms conduct child assessments and others do not.	A child assessment system is in place that ensures all children are assessed at least twice a year or on an on-going basis with an appropriate assessment tool with needed referrals provided. Procedures for conducting child assessments include: 1) assessments are conducted by someone familiar to the child, 2) assessments occur in child's natural environment, and 3) decisions regarding assessments consider children's home language.	A child assessment system is in place that includes multiple data sources (e.g., teacher observations, portfolios, family observations, checklists, etc.). Program procedures for conducting child assessments include: 1) integrating assessments into planned activities with minimal disruptions to the children's typical daily routines and experiences, and 2) accommodations are made regarding children's primary language or ability level.



**Teacher:** Tell me how you gather information about your children's learning and development. What do you do with the information you collect? How were you trained on the assessment you are using?

# Planning and Assessment



- Policies, procedures, and other evidence of curriculum selection and use
- Classroom activity/lesson plans; planning time
- Professional development policies – initial training and ongoing support



**Teacher:** Tell me about how you plan for children’s individual interests and needs in your classroom? Can you provide an example of this? Thinking about how you plan for individual children, have you made changes to the environment or materials or schedule?

Area	Emerging	Expected	Exceptional	Current Level
Activity/Lesson planning is individualized	No evidence of individualizing reflected in lesson planning	Planning shows evidence of individualization based on groups of children.	Planning shows evidence of individualized goals/experiences for some children. Modifications are present for children with identified disabilities.	Planning shows individualized goals/experiences for most children in the classroom.

# Planning and Assessment



## Curriculum



### **Math**

The environment affords rich, developmentally appropriate math experiences

### **Literacy**

The environment affords rich, developmentally appropriate literacy experiences

### **Science**

The environment affords rich, developmentally appropriate science experiences

### **Pretend play**

The environment affords rich, developmentally appropriate pretend play experiences

### **Physical activity**

The environment affords opportunities for rich, developmentally appropriate gross motor experiences

### **Music**

The environment affords rich, developmentally appropriate music experiences



# Key Practice Area 5: Daily Interactions and Routines

## Focus Areas

- Teacher-child Interactions
- Behavior Guidance
- Routines and Transitions

## Sources of Evidence



- Teacher Interview



- Observation



# Daily Interactions and Routines

## Teacher-Child Interactions **Supporting persistence and learning**



Are almost all children engaged in classroom activities and/or routines?		
Is a teacher providing general encouragement?		
Is a teacher providing specific and authentic feedback?		
Is a teacher actively participating with child(ren) in their play?		
Is a teacher providing physical support or environmental facilitation?		

### Teacher:

What is a skill or learning goal you are currently working on with a child/children in your class?

How are you helping children learn this skill or meet this learning goal?





# Daily Interactions and Routines

## Quality of Conversation/Language



Does a teacher give a directive or instruction to a child or children?		
Does a teacher comment or talk to a child about his or her activity/experience?		
Does a teacher provide a reason or explanation for something that is happening?		
Does a teacher ask a relevant question regarding what children are doing or showing interest in?		
Is at least one open ended question asked to support children's thinking, problem solving, or understanding?		
Is at least one term or phrase defined?		
Is an instance of a teacher actively listening to a child's communication observed?		

Teachers use rich and varied language

Teacher verbalizations are relevant to children's activities and/or interests

Teachers display a balance of talking, pausing, listening or allowing time to respond /process

# Key Practice Area 6: Learning Opportunities



## Big Ideas

- Play-Based Learning
- Modifying and Adapting Activities
- Using a Variety of Teaching Strategies

## Sources of Evidence



- Classroom Documents



- Teacher Interview



- Observation



# Learning Opportunities



Small/large group time

Do teachers use appropriate strategies to support participation or provide alternatives for individual students as needed?

## Instructional Activities

Teachers vary content of activities to meet the needs of different ages and abilities

Teachers use varied instructional strategies



**Teacher:**

Tell me about how you plan for children's individual interests and needs in your classroom. Provide an example of this.

Thinking about how you plan for individual children, have you made changes to the environment or materials or schedule?



# Key Practice Area 7: Materials and Space

## Big Ideas

- Indoor Space and Materials
- Outdoor Space and Materials

## Sources of Evidence



- Observation
- Indoor Review
  - Outdoor Review

# Key Practice Area 7: Materials and Space



## Indoor Setting

Does the amount and arrangement of indoor space permit easy movement for all children and equipment?	
Do indoor traffic pathways and arrangement of learning areas minimize the interruption of activities and play in all areas?	
Are there photos of the children displayed in easy-viewing range showing activities that occurred indoors, outdoors, or on outings, etc.?	
Are children's drawings, writing, or artwork displayed in easy-viewing range in at least two places in the classroom? (N/A allowed for infants)	
Are photos of children's families or other family documents on display in easy-viewing range or in class-made books or other materials?	
Do children have the opportunity for fresh air in the classroom?	
Can the lighting be adjusted in more than one way?	
Do children have opportunities to see the outside through at least 1 window or door at their level?	

# Key Practice Area 7: Materials and Space



## Outdoor Setting

Is the physical arrangement of outdoor equipment and activity areas set up to permit easy movement and minimize the interruption of activities and play?

Is there ample space is available outdoors for running and group games for older children or active physical movement for younger or non-mobile children?

Is the impression of the outdoor space a natural environment with many different plants and types of vegetation?

Are the following elements available in the outdoor environment (must have at least 3 checked): grass trees vines shrubs flowering plants vegetables other: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the outdoor environment contain enough shade?

Is there adequate and convenient storage of outdoor materials/loose parts?

Are there sufficient natural materials for children to play with N/A for infants  
logs fallen leaves pine needles sticks rounded stones seeds flower parts pine  
cones other: \_\_\_\_\_

In the outdoor play space is there a designed garden or set of pots that grow vegetables and/or flowers? (interview if winter)

Are there solid surfaces available for wheeled toys? (N/A for non-mobile infants)

# Red Flags



A child is isolated from peers and opportunities for peer interactions for most of the observation

A teacher is disengaged or disinterested in the children for most of the observation

Children spend significant portions of the observation in transitions.

Teachers do not intervene to stop harmful peer interactions

Children are unsupervised for significant periods of time

Dangerous/harmful situations are not addressed.

Punitive discipline is observed

Teachers interact with children in a very disrespectful manner

Teacher consistently ignores or fails to notice child needs or bids

# Current Pilot Study



- Data collection in 87 centers and 43 homes in NC by June
- Research questions:
  1. How does each component of the measure relate to child outcomes?
  2. How does the whole measure relate to child outcomes?
  3. How does the whole measure relate to the comparison measures, ERS and CLASS?
  4. How does each component relate to the comparison measures, ERS and CLASS?
  5. What are the critical elements for document review? Teacher interview? Administrator interview? Observation?



# Next Steps

- Developing website to schedule assessments, enter data, and eventually to produce portrait
- Data analyses will inform next iteration of the measure as well as scoring decisions
- Final report and manuals