



Self-Assessment 2015

Guidance & Checklist for Governing Boards & Program Administrators

Division of Early Care and Education
Program Development

Self-Assessment Guidance & Checklist

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COMMISSIONER

Gladys Carrión, Esq.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

Lorelei A. Vargas, MPP, MA

AUTHORSHIP

Celeste Garcia-Sanchez, MA

Ayleen Guzman, MA

Maria Cordero, EdD

Sherone Smith-Sanchez, EdD

Taniesha A. Woods, PhD

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The Self-Assessment process is part of a broader program quality improvement system that includes the development of program improvement plans and the provision of training and technical assistance (TA).

This self-assessment package was designed for you -- ACS EarlyLearnNYC Governing Boards¹, program/site² administrators, and FCC program³ coordinators and directors -- and consists of the following assessment instruments. These instruments align to specific contractual and regulatory EarlyLearnNYC and Head Start requirements and will help you to maintain and enhance quality in areas that are strong and improve in others.

THE SELF-ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

- Environment Rating Scales (ERS)** (Harms, Clifford & Cryer; 2006): Consists of four scales, three of which will be used for this self-assessment process (see below). The scales are designed to assess process quality in an early childhood group. Process quality consists of various interactions that go on in a classroom between: staff and children; staff, parents, and other adults; among the children themselves, and the interactions children have with the many materials and activities in the environment. The scales have items to evaluate the following areas: Physical Environment; Basic Care; Curriculum; Interaction; Schedule and Program Structure; and Parent and Staff Education. The scales are also suitable for use in evaluating inclusive and culturally diverse programs and have proven reliability and validity. The first two scales are used in center-based settings while the third one is used in home settings.

- The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R)** is a thorough revision of the ECERS, designed to assess group programs for preschool-kindergarten aged children from 2 through 5 years of age. The total scale consists of 43 items. EarlyLearnNYC programs will administer the ECERS-R in classrooms where most children are 3 years old and above.

- The Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R)** is also a revision of the ITERS, designed to assess center based programs for children from birth to 2½ years of age. The total scale consists of 39 items.

¹ “Governing Board” and “Agency” are used interchangeably in this document.

² “Program” and “site” are used interchangeably in this document.

³ “FCC programs” are often referred to as “networks.”

EarlyLearnNYC programs will assess using the ITERS-R in classrooms for children who are 2 years old and below. That is, there are no children above 2.11 years old regularly served in that room.

The Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS-R) is designed to assess family care programs conducted in a provider's home. The total scale consists of 40 items, including 8 supplementary items for programs enrolling children with disabilities.

New York City Program Quality Assessment Scale (PQAS). The NYC-PQAS is used by center-based and Family Child Care Network administrations. It assesses the level of compliance with New York State's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QUALITYstarsNY); Specific New York City EarlyLearnNYC and Head Start requirements; and the NYC Department of Education's Quality Review Framework (QR). It measures compliance within the scope of the following content areas:

- Program Design and Management (PDM)
- Health, Mental Health, and Nutrition
- Education and Disabilities
- Family and Community Engagement

NOTE: One (1) PQAS score is required per site. Further, if the agency has a FCC Network a separate PQAS must be completed for the FCC Network.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System - CLASS (University of Virginia and Teachstone). The CLASS assesses classroom interactions. It is organized using a 7 point scale. It must be administered by a Teachstone CLASS certified observer at least twice annually. For SA 2015, each site must submit a set of CLASS scores for two UPK classrooms. If the Department of Education or ACS staff have evaluated a classroom in a site using the CLASS, please submit this score. Self-Assessment submissions that do not contain a CLASS score are considered incomplete.

Below is a Checklist to guide you through the Self-Assessment process. Please check off each item as you complete it.

STEP 1: PLANNING THE SELF-ASSESSMENT (SA): GOVERNING BOARD REPRESENTATIVES/DESIGNEES

- The Governing Board/designee identifies a **Self-Assessment (SA) Committee**. The SA Committee is comprised of Governing Board members/designees, SA Committee Coordinator⁴, program managers, staff, parents and community stakeholders. If the agency has a Family Child Care Network, the Family Child Care director/coordinator must also participate as part of the SA Committee.

- The SA Committee should identify the SA Committee Coordinator as soon as possible, but no later than March 13, 2015. The SA Committee Coordinator will be responsible for submitting the agency's SA package by April 24th and s/he will serve as the point of contact between the ACS PDU Team Leader and the SA Committee. The SA Committee Coordinator should contact their ACS PDU Team Leader by March 13 to ensure effective communication about self-assessment.

- The SA Committee carefully reviews the instructions for the instruments that will be used to conduct the self-assessment process: the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) corresponding to your program model; a CLASS evaluation for two Pre-K classrooms conducted by a certified observer; the NYC PQAS for center-based, and if applicable, a separate PQAS for the FCC Network.

NOTE: If DOE has conducted a CLASS observation in the 2014-15 school year, please submit this score. The CLASS is not used for Family Child Care settings.

- The SA Committee also establishes firm timelines for SA completion, training, check-ins with directors and submission to ACS.

- The SA Committee should note the following about the sample to be included in the self-assessment:

Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R)

- 1 to 4 classrooms at a site: 1 classroom is assessed
- 5 to 7 classrooms at a site: 2 classrooms are assessed
- 8 or more classrooms at a site: 3 classrooms assessed

Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R)

- In addition to preschool classrooms, if there is an infant/toddler classroom at a site, it should also be assessed. For example, if there is one infant/toddler classroom and six preschool classrooms, a total of 3 classrooms must be assessed—that is, one infant/toddler classroom and two preschool classrooms with the ITERS-R and

⁴ The SA Committee Coordinator is a leadership position on the Committee and should be held by an individual with expertise in early childhood care and education programming who has experience managing and coordinating projects.

ECERS-R, respectively, and the relevant self-assessment data will be submitted.

Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R)

- Should be completed for 25% of providers' homes—with a maximum of 20 homes. For example, if there are one to four homes in a network, one home will be assessed; if there are five to seven homes in the network, 2 homes will be assessed. The sample of homes assessed should include no more than 20 homes and it should be representative of all age groups served.

All Environmental Rating Scale samples should be selected randomly; in the case of the DOE ECERS reported data, a random selection has already been conducted.

Websites that assist in the selection of a random sample are:

<http://www.random.org/lists/>
<http://www.randomizer.org/form.htm>
<http://stattrek.com/Tables/Random.aspx>

NYC Program Quality Assessment Scale (NYC-PQAS)

- The NYC-PQAS is completed for each site. Once each site has completed their NYC-PQAS administration, the self-assessment committee produces an average/agency-level score that is submitted to ACS.
- The NYC-PQAS review of documentation should include all of the children served in each site. And, if a separate NYC-PQAS is required for a FCC Network, it should also include all of the children served through the home-based modality.
- The NYC-PQAS review of documentation should include all staff.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

- CLASS observations should be performed by a certified observer twice a year in two UPK classrooms per site.

THE CENTER-BASED AND FAMILY CHILD CARE DIRECTORS WILL:

- Meet with the key management/personnel to plan and organize the SA timeline, the formation of SA Teams, and the assignment of a Team Leader to each SA Team. Team Leaders will be responsible for gathering and safeguarding the information collected by the SA Team, who will administer the instruments. Four self-assessment teams (including Family Child Care members, if applicable) are convened for the following areas:
- Team 1:** Environment Rating Scale. This team completes the ERS assessment of each classroom/home and the NYC-PQAS subscale entitled *Education and Disabilities*.
- Team 2:** Health, Mental Health, & Nutrition. This Team completes the NYC-PQAS subscale in

Health, Mental Health, and Nutrition.

- Team 3:** Family & Community Engagement. This team completes the NYC-PQAS subscale in Family and Community Engagement.
- Team 4:** Program Design and Management (PDM). This team completes the NYC-PQAS subscale in PDM which includes ERSEA among other topics. A CLASS reliable observer conducts the CLASS evaluation.
- Center-based and Family Child Care Directors should provide training and guidance for SA Teams and Team Leaders on the tools and the strategies for conducting the SA. The training should include methods for observing, interviewing, reviewing documents, and identifying strengths & challenges for each program area.
- In order to ensure that all information on the SA is organized and easily accessible, the Director(s) should provide a binder to collect and “house” the documentation required for the NYC-PQAS and copies of the ERS submissions.
- Plan an informational meeting with staff, parents, and Governing Board members to discuss and provide an overview of the SA process and report-writing.

STEP 2: CONDUCTING YOUR SELF-ASSESSMENT (SA)

THE CENTER-BASED AND FAMILY CHILD CARE DIRECTORS WILL:

- Arrange for a certified Teachstone observer to collect CLASS data on two UPK classrooms. If DOE or ACS has conducted a CLASS observation in 2014-15, please submit this score.
- Guide and facilitate the Team Leaders’ process of arranging and scheduling observations, interviews, and requests for documentation.
- Ensure that the sample for the NYC-PQAS review of documentation includes all children (including children in Family Child Care homes, if applicable).
- Make certain that the sample for the NYC-PQAS review of documentation includes all staff (including Family Child Care staff, if applicable).
- Make sure that Team Leaders gather and safeguard all information collected by the team members.
- Ideally, clerical staff will be available to support SA team members in document collection and data recording. Further, the Directors should keep all team members abreast of timelines to ensure completion of the self-assessment by April 24, 2015.

STEP 3: DATA COLLECTION AND SCORING

THE TEAM LEADERS IN CENTER-BASED PROGRAMS AND FAMILY CHILD CARE NETWORK WILL:

- Ensure that CLASS observations are completed in a timely manner and coaching agreements are reached with the observed teachers. Record/provide the information on the appropriate appendices.
- Collect all ERS-R score sheets for sampled classrooms and provider homes (if applicable), and record this information in the appropriate appendix.
- Make sure that all the NYC-PQAS information is completed. The information regarding the provider homes (if applicable) should be based on records maintained at the network office.

THE CENTER-BASED AND FAMILY CHILD CARE DIRECTORS WILL:

- Collect all CLASS scores, ERS Total and Average Scores, and the completed NYC-PQAS instrument.
- Review/check all the scores for accuracy. Work with the SA Committee Coordinator to ensure that the scores are recorded.

STEP 4: PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PIP): SA COMMITTEE

- The Governing Board, in consultation with the SA Committee, Site Directors, FCC Director/Coordinator (if applicable) and parent representative(s), reviews all submitted documentation and the Agency Self-Assessment Summary Profile.
- The Governing Board must gather signatures and submit one Attestation (Appendix A) of the Governing Board Representative, DAPC/PAC Chairperson, the SA Committee Coordinator, and FCC Director (if applicable).
- SA Committee uses Tables 1 and 2, which are provided below, to interpret the Agency Self-Assessment Summary Profile. Content areas that are Unsatisfactory, Poor, or Fair would benefit from continuous quality improvement efforts as part of the Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

Table 1. Meaning of PQAS and ERS Scores	
SCORE	CLASSIFICATION
2.99 OR BELOW	Unsatisfactory
3.00-3.99	Poor
4.00-4.99	Fair
5.00-5.99	Good
6.00-7.00	Excellent

Table 2. Meaning of CLASS Scores		
SCORE		CLASSIFICATION
LOW RANGE 1-2	2.99 OR BELOW	Unsatisfactory
	3.00-3.99	Poor
MIDDLE RANGE 3-5	4.00-4.99	Fair
	5.00-5.99	Good
	6.00-7.00	Excellent
HIGH RANGE 6-7		

Based on the ERS, PQAS, CLASS, and Head Start Review findings (as applicable) the SA Committee identifies areas in need of improvement, and these are addressed in the Program Improvement Plan (PIP). The PIP should address up to 8 goals in the content areas that are specified in Table 3. In addition to providing identifying information for sites in Section 1 and a progress report on last year's PIP goals in Section 2, the SA Committees writes the agency's current goals in Section 3, which are linked to a specific content area. The SA Committee includes specific information about the content area that is in need of improvement as well as the plan that will be implemented to bring about continuous quality improvements. Allowing the SA Committee to write up the information in the PIP allows for increased autonomy and committee members have the opportunity to more meaningfully engage in and apply their expertise to the PIP process. Only one PIP is required for the agency.

Table 3. Content Areas to be Addressed by the Program Improvement Plan (PIP)	
GOAL	CONTENT AREA
1	ERS/classroom environment/site or home environment
2	CLASS/teacher-child interactions
3	PQAS/overall administration of the program
4	How compliance is being sustained per findings from the Head Start response to review ⁵ (HS and DE programs)
5-9	Up to 4 additional content areas per the SA Committee's expertise and discretion (child care only agencies may provide up to 5 additional content areas because they are not required to include a goal on maintaining compliance as a result of the HS response to review)

⁵ If your Head Start or Dual Eligible Agency had no findings describe how the Agency will continue to maintain compliance; if your Agency had LSCs only describe how the Agency will address the LSCs and continue to maintain compliance.

- SA Committee uses the Self-Assessment findings to inform training plan development.
- SA Committee also completes the Program Year Calendar, which should reflect trainings and professional development that are linked to the Program Improvement Plan. More specifically, trainings should address low-scoring content areas so that the agency puts training and technical assistance (T/A) in place that build capacity and strengthen quality. The Program Year Calendar should make clear that trainings and T/A have been developed to address content areas that are in need of improvement.
- The Governing Board submits the Self-Assessment Report to the ACS PDU Team Leader via email for review. It should include:
 - The Attestation Cover Page with all signatures, Appendix A
 - ITERS-R Center-Based Profile form, Appendix B.1 – B.3
 - ECERS-R Center-Based Profile form, Appendix C.1 – C.8
 - FCCERS Network Profile form, Appendix D
 - NYC PQAS Profile form, Appendix E.1 – E.5
 - CLASS Program Profile form, Appendix F.1 – F.6
 - The Agency Self-Assessment Summary Profile, Appendix G
 - The Program Improvement Plan including the original signatures, Appendix H
 - Program Year Calendar, Appendix I.1
 - Instructions for Program Year Calendar, Appendix I.2
 - Description of Professional Development Activities that are Identified in the Calendar, I.3

Note: Upon receiving the submission, ACS staff conducts a quality control and reliability process comparing submitted scores against ACS monitoring findings and those from internal case management review. If ACS deems that a non-compliance exists, the EL agency will then be asked to provide documentation indicating compliance. If this documentation is not received within five (5) business days, the score will be lowered to reflect the non-compliance.

STAGE 5: SELF-ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE - PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT UNIT (PDU), GOVERNING BOARD REPRESENTATIVE, PARENT REPRESENTATIVE(S), AND SITE DIRECTORS

- A Governing Board representative, an Agency Director/Executive Director, Site/Education Directors, FCC Directors/Coordinators, a parent representative(s), and other key management staff will participate in the SA conference with an assigned ACS PDU Team Leader. This meeting will occur in June.
- The Governing Board, Site Directors, and FCC Coordinator agree to implement the revised agency plans and goals for improvement at the end of the SA conference by signing off on the revised PIP (Appendix H).

CHECKLIST OF WHAT TO SUBMIT BY APRIL 24, 2015.

The Agency Self-Assessment Report includes:

- The Attestation Cover Page with all signatures – Appendix A
- ITERS-R Center-Based Profile form, Appendices B.1 – B.3
- ECERS-R Center-Based Profile form, Appendices C.1 – C.8
- FCCERS Network Profile form, Appendix D
- NYC PQAS Profile form, Appendix E.1 – E.5
- CLASS Program Profile form, Appendix F.1 – F.6
- The Agency Self-Assessment Summary Profile, Appendix G
- The Program Improvement Plan including the original signatures – Appendix H
- Program Year Calendar, Appendix I.1
- Program Year Calendar Instructions, Appendix I.2
- Professional Development Activities, Appendix I.3

Submit the above-mentioned forms by email to your ACS PDU Team Leader no later than April 24, 2015. Please ensure that the subject line of your email and the name of your Excel Workbook refer to Self-Assessment 2015 and includes your agency name (e.g., “Self-Assessment 2015 Wonderful Children Inc.”) If your agency needs to re-submit your Excel Workbook because scores need to be updated, please indicate that the re-submission by using the following naming convention in the subject line of your email and for the name of your document, agency name, Self-Assessment 2015, and re-submission. For example, use the following-- “Wonderful Children Inc., Self-Assessment 2015, re-submission.” Contact your Team Leader with questions or for technical assistance. Thank you!