



QUALITY ASSESSMENT SERVICES

CLAYTON EARLY LEARNING

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NEWSLETTER

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We evaluate and offer feedback for early childhood programs across Colorado to provide high-quality opportunities for children and families.

CONTENT

Announcements and Resources

Funny Stories from the Field

Staff Feature: Thierry

Virtual Certification

Inter-Rater Reliability Team: Cultural Awareness



View From the Road: Mountains near Vail. Photo by Colleen Hennessy, Assessment Associate

Announcements & Resources

Happy Spring! In March, we had our one-year anniversary of working remotely. As we reflect on this past year, there were numerous challenges for our field and our communities, but there were also many successes. For our teams, we dove headfirst into technology: trying new software, finding new ways to connect, and transitioning our work to virtual options.

As many counties are moving to safer COVID-19 risk levels, we are offering on-site Certified Safety Playground Inspections (CPSI) again. This outdoor service requires minimal contact and our staff follow extensive health and safety protocols. You can request this service and others we are currently offering by completing a Service Request Form on our [External QI Services](#) webpage. Service options will be updated as we continue to offer more to the community.

Do you have Colorado Shines L3-5 indicator (documentation uploads from the evidence guides) questions? Our Colorado Shines Quality Data Team can help, contact them at COSindicators@claytonearlylearning.org.



Funny Stories from the Field

By Colleen Hennessy, Assessment Associate

I celebrate over 12 years as an assessor, which has been a great adventure for me, especially when I have the opportunity to visit remote Colorado towns. The mountains are as diverse as the programs and classrooms I have visited. No matter the weather, traveling with colleagues, sharing meals, stories, and laughter has filled my memory as well as my journals.

When I complete a classroom visit, often a teacher has thanked me for putting them at ease. This is one of my goals as an observer. I do not want the teachers to be nervous. Their anxiety and wanting to do well on their rating is understandable. Participation requires preparation, and we show up unannounced during their rating window. When there are multiple classrooms to observe while traveling, the teachers know on the first day of our arrival that we will return on subsequent days.

On one occasion, a colleague and dear friend traveled with me to the San Luis Valley during a chilly winter season. Often, we wait until recess is over before checking the playground for safety, measuring the depth of the cushioning under the gross motor equipment, and noting the distance between the swings, to name a few things. At one point, we noticed some people watching us from inside the building as we evaluated the playground. The next day, we were quite surprised to find that the swings we measured on the playground had been removed! Years later, my colleague and I still share a chuckle about the "disappearing swings."

Staff Feature



Thierry Godette, Data Associate

Place you grew up: Verdun, France. 150 miles east of Paris

Years of ECE experience: 20 years. I was a child care licensing specialist for 18 years

Favorite food: Escargot, French, and German food

Fun fact about yourself: I love traveling to different countries

Talent you would most like to have: Eating whatever you'd like and staying thin and healthy all the time

Favorite children's book: I loved reading "Chicka Chicka Boom Boom" to my daughter

Best part about the job: Working with wonderful people

If you were stranded on a deserted island, what would you take? Fishing equipment, hunting knife, a flint for fire, good books, and my dog, Sebastian!

Featured Service

Virtual ERS-3 Recertification Experience From a Coach

"While my annual ERS recertification is always one of the best forms of professional development I have access to each year, I was unsure how the virtual recertification process would support my continued growth as a coach. I was delighted to discover that not only did it give me as much support as previous in-person ERS recertifications, it also encouraged me to dig deeper into the tools and increased my knowledge extensively. As always, Laura was an incredible support and helped me brainstorm ways to support programs in the future."

Lessons Learned

By QAS IRR Team

The three lessons the IRR team learned through the process of updating our Cultural Competency (now named Cultural Awareness) training:

Lesson 1: We cannot be culturally competent.

Merriam-Webster defines the word "competence" as "having sufficient knowledge, judgment, skill, or strength (as for a particular duty or in a particular respect)." When we think of "cultural competence" we can't have sufficient knowledge for all cultures, but we can be "aware" of our place in relation to another person's culture. We can be aware that we know "nothing" or that we have a certain preference for someone else's culture. That's why we decided to rename our training, "Cultural Awareness."

Lesson 2: All the participants are in a different space in their journey to cultural awareness.

As we launched our prototype for this training, we realized that there are topics that are going to require hard conversations and we needed to build a safe space for those conversations to happen.

Lesson 3: We must be flexible and go with the flow.

COVID-19 has taught us so much about adapting. As we were getting ready for this new training, we never thought that our launch was going to be in the virtual world. After months of preparation, we did it! We want to thank the coaches and community members who supported us through the early stages of planning to bring this training to life.



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