

QUALITY ASSESSMENT SERVICES

October 2021

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 4

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



View From the Road: Mountains near Guanella Pass. Photo by Alia McRorie, Lead Quality Assessment Associate

CONTENT

Announcements and Resources

Reflections From the Field

Staff Feature: Alia

What Makes a Great Quality Assessment Associate?

Announcements & Resources

Happy Fall! This is one of the most beautiful times of year in Colorado! Our department has been preparing for the return to fieldwork for Colorado Shines Ratings and some of our in-person training offerings and external services. We have been working closely with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) to develop health protocols for our staff to follow when they visit programs. To see a summary of these protocols, [visit our website](#).

The refreshed QRIS Framework for Colorado Shines Ratings is launching in January 2022. Information sessions begin in November. Please check [Clayton's training schedule](#) to register for your session and note that the sessions are focused on the framework for centers or family child care homes - be sure you register for the correct one.

In addition to the launch of the refreshed framework, we will also be launching the Third Editions of the Environment Rating Scales. There is still time to attend our free half-day training to learn more about these scales, check [Clayton's training schedule](#) to register.



Glimpse inside an assessment associate's observation bag

Reflections From the Field

By the Quality Advancement and Quality Assessment Teams

As the Quality Advancement and the Quality Assessment teams have returned to classrooms and homes this summer and fall to become reliable (or re-reliable) in ECERS-3, ITERS-3, and FCCERS-3, there have been some themes that have emerged. After not observing in-person for more than a year, many of us found ourselves rusty when it came to observing again. Whether it be from the beginning stages of preparation, like packing your observation bag and remembering to wear a watch (!), or building endurance to observe for three hours, we relearned how to be observers.

What has helped all of us prepare for going back to the programs is simple: studying the scale. There is no shortcut to learning a new scale other than training and studying the indicators, notes for clarification, and the scoresheet. Assessors have found the resources created by the Quality Advancement Team to be incredibly useful, including the modules used for virtual coach certifications, completing full-day training on the scales, and completing the PDIS courses on the ERS Third Editions.

We want to extend a huge thank you to community providers who volunteered to open their doors to the Quality Advancement and Assessment teams to complete practice observations (not Colorado Shines related) for the Third Editions over the past few months and the months to come. The overwhelming sentiment from all observers is that we are so happy to be back in programs. We love seeing providers and children in-person again and observing continuous quality improvement. We look forward to seeing you all in January!

Staff Feature



Alia McRorie

Lead Quality Assessment Associate

How long have you been on the team:

Since January 2019

Favorite college class you ever took:

Policy and Advocacy

Hardest part about the job:

Driving during rush hour

Best part of the job:

Seeing the children and hearing the funny things they say

Fun fact about yourself:

I was a collegiate athlete in soccer

Your motto:

"Let it be" or "Lead from the heart, ain't that the only way"

Why do you work in ECE?

I want to ensure every child in Colorado has access to high-quality early childhood education

Favorite children's book:

Dr. Seuss's Sleep Book

What Makes a Great Quality Assessment Associate?

By Jenai Volesky, Quality Assessment Associate

Whether you're in the field of early childhood education or not, there is a natural curiosity about the role of a Quality Assessment Associate. While there is no perfect mold for what makes a great assessor, there are characteristics, work habits, and personality traits that I believe lend themselves to succeeding in this job.

- Attention to detail and accuracy. Having only 3 hours in a classroom/home to capture so much data requires excellent observation skills and quick decision-making. Assessors are encouraged to score within the classroom, meaning we make decisions about quality as it is observed. For example, in the ECERS-3 scale, there are ~462 indicators that are scored during an observation. That's at least 462 decisions made in 3 hours!
- Flexibility. The name of the game in this job is flexibility. Measuring classroom quality is not always black and white, which is why assessors have ongoing training and clarification meetings with the Quality Advancement Team to ensure consistent scoring. Beyond the flexibility required of being a reliable assessor, the job itself demands flexibility from you. Things can change last minute! You may be on your way to do an observation but discover it's snowing too heavily to get on the highway (been there!) or a program may drop out late from the rating and you lose those observations from your caseload, but then gain another observation in its place (which we call a "Whiteboard shuffle" since all of our scheduling is done on the beloved "Whiteboard.")
- Ability to accept and share feedback. This job provides a never-ending loop of feedback. Assessors do a reliability observation every 10-12 observations with a member of the Quality Advancement Team in an effort to prevent rater drift and ensure accurate scoring, which typically equates to one reliability observation every six weeks. Our scores have to be 85% the same as the Advancement team members in order to maintain reliability. Not everyone wants to have a job where they have to "pass a test" every 6 weeks! We also have to be experts at sharing feedback with programs after rating results are released.
- Excellent customer service and communication. The job is not entirely observing and report writing. A huge portion of what we do is customer service and communication with providers. Each assessor works closely as a lead contact for 2-5 programs per month and answers all questions from that program.
- Having fun! This job gives you so much variety on a day-to-day basis. Being able to see programs with a variety of philosophies keeps things fun and your observation skills sharp. As assessors, we are in constant communication with each other (thank you, Slack) and can share stories, lessons learned, or ask and answer each other's questions about any (and every) part of the job. We have a great team culture and all really love working with one another!

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