

QUALITY ASSESSMENT SERVICES

CLAYTON EARLY LEARNING

July 2021

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 3

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

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View From the Road: Mountains near Edwards. Photo by Sobia Khan, Quality Assessment Associate

Announcements & Resources

We are excited to welcome the first month of the new fiscal year! We are beginning to return to fieldwork again including Certified Playground Safety Inspections (CPSI) and plan to start CLASS training again this Fall. We also look forward to continuing many services virtually and providing a mixture of in-person and virtual offerings. We are looking for volunteers that are willing to have two assessors visit their classroom(s) for Environment Rating Scale, Third Edition observations for training and reliability purposes. This is a great way to practice the new scales and for teaching staff to earn points for Demonstrated Competencies in the Professional Development and Information System (PDIS). If you are interested in volunteering complete [this form](#).

Preschool Development Grant (PDG) funding through the federal government and our state partners has allowed us to continue offering free Environment Rating Scale, Third Edition training (ECERS-3, ITERS-3, FCCERS-3). When we return to the field for Colorado Shines Ratings, we will be using these newest editions of the scales, so do encourage as many people as possible to take advantage of these free trainings. More information and registration can be found [here](#).



Dear Director: Advice for an Upcoming Colorado Shines Rating

By Sobia Khan

I was a large center director who went through the Colorado Shines Rating process twice, and now am a Quality Data Associate who reviews and scores submitted Colorado Shines documentation. The best piece of advice I can give to you is to plan ahead. Give yourself at least three to four months before your rating window starts to prepare your documents, your classrooms, and your staff. Divide the indicators into sections and start gathering the documents slowly. Breaking up the indicators and your documentation into smaller, manageable chunks over time really helps.

The documentation piece of the Colorado Shines Rating has a lot of components. Reading the most up-to-date evidence guide will provide you with all the details you need. Be sure to remember there is a big difference between “and / or” when you are reading the evidence guide. Paying attention to the specific language for each indicator and what evidence is accepted really pays off. Communicate to your families and staff about your survey questions in terms of what they should expect and what practices your program already has in place. Make sure your handbook has the most updated policies with dates on it. Please keep in mind you have community-based resources available to you. Reach out to your council or coach for any clarifications you may need.

Be kind to yourself, it takes time to get organized but give yourself grace because you can do it!

Staff Feature



Laura Lerner, Quality Advancement Specialist

How long have you been on the team:

6 years total, but 2 years with the Advancement Team

Favorite food:

Green chili with lots of cheese and tortillas

Favorite college class you ever took:

Cognitive Neuroscience. The brain is so fascinating

Favorite place in Colorado to travel to:

This one is hard, because Colorado is so special and it really has it all, but if I had to pick, I'd say Maroon Bells

Favorite observation tool:

ECERS-3. I think all of the new updates in it are so great

Your motto:

Everything is "figureoutable"

Why do you work in ECE?

Our field is so important, but also a lot of fun

Favorite children's book:

"Harold and the Purple Crayon" and its reminder that imagination goes a long way

Upcoming Changes

By Melissa Swayne

As we begin to return to the field, there are several exciting changes coming this year!

Refreshed QRIS Framework for Colorado Shines

Since Fall 2019, the Office of Early Childhood has been partnering with the community and external Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) experts to refresh the existing framework. The main focus was to reduce provider burden related to documentation uploads (L3-5 indicators) and find new ways to collect the evidence needed. While the main components of the framework remain the same, changes to the indicators, the way evidence is provided, and scoring approaches are coming. Learn more in this [fact sheet](#).

Launch of Environment Rating Scale, Third Editions

We are very excited to launch the new editions of the scales! The third editions focus more on language and interactions and less on materials present in the classroom. They rely solely on the three-hour observation, which means there is no teacher interview after the observation and there is no need to check the full-day schedule. Did you know we will no longer be looking in drawers, in cabinets, or other closed spaces not accessed and used by the children? Learn more about the third editions on our [webpage](#).

New Services from Quality Assessment Services

We have three new training offerings: "Non-Traditional Gender Roles in Early Childhood," "The Benefits of Free Play," and "Math is Here to Help." We have also revamped many of our existing trainings and services and are continuing to explore new services we can offer. More information can be found [here](#).

Why So Serious?

Ever wondered why assessors look so serious when they visit your classroom?

The Environment Rating Scales state that assessors must "affect the environment as little as possible" and "try to keep a neutral facial expression so that children and / or staff are neither drawn to you nor concerned about your response to them (Harms, Clifford, Cryer, 2015, p. 8)." This is to ensure we disrupt you and the children as little as possible. Something as simple as a smile or laugh from the assessor could draw attention to them and the child may want to come to say hi, want a hug, ask to play, etc. Neutral facial expressions look different for everyone, some look very serious and some could even look unhappy. But, rest assured we are not unpleasant or unhappy... assessors love being in the classroom and seeing all of the amazing efforts from teachers and enjoy being around the children!



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