

Guide to Interpreting the Assessment Report

Summary

Since 2019, the *Ministère de la Famille* (Quebec) has been gradually implementing [a strategy to evaluate and improve the educational quality of childcare](#) (ECS) in centres. The goal of the strategy is to evaluate ECS's in two areas: structural quality and process quality. After the educational quality is evaluated, [a report](#) is produced and then it's sent to each ECS under review. The report contains the evaluation results and suggestions to improve educational quality. The report highlights the dimensions that were evaluated, their importance and strategies to improve the quality of ECS's.

The objective of this summary is to gather pertinent information from the [Guide to Interpreting the Assessment report](#) to help administrators understand the link between the evaluation criteria implemented by the Ministère, the evaluation report and the [Accueillir la petite enfance](#) educational program.

Structural Quality and Related Factors

Structural quality and its related factors involve mainly variables involving regulations like the adult-child ratio, group sizes and staff training. These variables indirectly influence the process quality, because they represent the basic set of conditions implemented by an ECS to support the work of childcare workers. The impact of the structural quality is crucial and depends partly on the ECS administration team (director and associate director) and their strategies.

The evaluation report, structural quality and related factors are outlined in the *Contexte du ECS* section. It describes how the evaluation was conducted and includes administrator and educator comments during individual interviews. Structural quality is also addressed in the report's *Synthèse* section, particularly the ECS's strengths and areas to improve. This section provides an overall picture of the ECS and puts the results in context. For these reasons, there's no one size fits all solution.

Four suggestions for enhancing the quality of this dimension

1. [Apply a recognized educational program and make sure the educational staff has mastered the guiding principles of this program](#)
 - Guide the administrative team with their choices (e.g., training, team meeting content, purchase of material).
 - Work as a team to develop the pedagogical program.
 - Train educators by reviewing the educational program when they start work, and once a year afterwards.
 - Implement methods that reflect the current educational program.

2. Offer support to the educational team

- Develop the team's pedagogical knowledge and provide support for children with special needs through a special consultant or a pedagogical and technical support consultant and/or a specialized educator.
- Set aside time each week for planning.
- Hold regular team meetings.

3. Regulate the work of the educational staff on an individual and group basis

- Schedule a meeting with each staff member to discuss successful methods, employee needs and personal objectives.
- Have the educators and leadership complete a self-assessment and examine the results.
- Organize formal, systematic supervisory activities to identify team strengths and areas for improvement. The goal is to determine where the need for pedagogical support or staff training is greatest.
- Use an observation table to carry out the formal supervision activities, e.g., Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®).

4. Collaborate with external organizations and resources

- Reach out to external resources to better serve the diverse needs of families and children.
- Collaborate with external resources to equip and support educators.
- Collaborate with external organizations such as family service centres, social paediatric centres, Maison Bleue, etc.

For more details: [Page 7 to 9 - Guide to Interpreting the Assessment](#) report

Process Quality

1 – Quality of the Interactions between the Educational Staff and the Children

The quality of the interactions between educators and children is based mainly on the educators' actions, words and responses. The interactions have a direct influence on "the creation of a positive and healthy relationship with each child in the group, and on the development of their full potential." (p. 9). The interactions are fundamental in forming each child's secure attachment with educators. The educators influence positively the ability of a child to discover the world around them and actively promotes cognitive and language development.

The evaluation report contains the quality of the interaction between staff and children results using the [CLASS® tool](#), while [maintaining educator](#) anonymity. Its main goal is to obtain an overall picture of the centre's educational quality to motivate the education team. Data includes groups of infants, toddlers and children aged 3 to 5. Average scores are presented by group, according to CLASS® dimensions and domains. These scores are grouped under "domain groups" and "dimension groups".

DOMAIN GROUPS

A - Social and Emotional

B – Cognitive and Linguistic

DIMENSION GROUPS

1 – Climate, 2 – Sensitivity, 3 – Democracy, 4 – Behaviours

5 – Learning, 6 – Feedback, 7 – Language

Figure 1: Dimension and Domain Groups

Four suggestions for enhancing the quality of this dimension

1. Establish a pleasant atmosphere, take care of the children's emotions and needs, and prioritize a democratic approach

- Share activities. Speak on various subjects, laugh and smile. Demonstrate affection (verbal and physical). Address each other by first names. Look at each other when talking.
- Share decision-making power with the children and pay attention to their interests, ideas, suggestions and opinions, integrating them into the daily routine.
- Model gentleness and show respect. Allow children the freedom of expression, interpersonal communication, physicality and movement around the room.
- Listen and decipher the children's emotions to comfort and support them back to their normal activities.

2. Give clear instructions, ensure effective monitoring, emphasize desired behaviours, and avoid making the children wait

- Maintain expectations adapted to each child.
- Give instructions the children understand.
- Provide different activities, simple routines and brief transitions that incorporate learning opportunities.
- Be proactive and redirect behaviours effectively, indicating positively the desired ones.
- Organize routines and schedules.
- Maintain constant supervision.

3. Be actively involved with the children, provide them with opportunities to explore and learn, invite them to think, provide feedback on their actions and comments, and use language throughout the day

- Provide feedback with lots of back-and-forth exchanges.
- Allow children to handle the material, explore and participate in their learning.
- Suggest diverse modes (e.g., auditory, visual, motor) and make the material available to children.
- Clarify and add information during exchanges and encourage perseverance.

4. Support the educational staff in its interactions with the children

- Complement teaching with pedagogical release
- Establish policies to support the integration of new children into the ECS.
- Implement daily strategies to ensure the stability of the staff working with the children.
- Initiate mentoring between colleagues.
- Allocate a budget for continuing education.
- Introduce initiatives to encourage a work-study balance.
- Prioritize well-established work schedules with regular breaks to re-charge.

For more details: [Page 10 to 16 of the Guide to Interpreting the Assessment](#) report.

Dimension 2 – Quality of Premises Layout

The quality of the premises layout includes the furniture, equipment and aesthetic appeal of the ECS's physical environment. It involves the availability of suitable, stimulating materials in the proper degree for children. A quality setting encourages active learning and a variety of experiences. The quality of the premise layout (e.g., setting, common areas and yard, if applicable) is one of the factors evaluated in the evaluation report. The report contains results conducted with groups of children, broken down by age.

Four suggestions for enhancing the quality of this dimension

1. Divide the premises up into separate and complementary areas of activity

- Set up symbolic play and construction set areas close to each other. Create an art area near a sink.
- Ensure that the reading and quiet spaces are far from high traffic or very loud activity areas.
- Provide a quiet corner filled with pillows and stuffed toys for example.
- Arrange the premises with distinct activity areas (e.g., art area, construction set area, board game area, tactile game area, symbolic play area, reading area).

2. Make sure the room meets the diverse needs and interests of the children

- Define a clear, safely divided area for new walkers to practise their new walking and running abilities.
- Provide child-sized furniture (e.g., chairs, tables, etc.).
- Ensure the child can access a transitional object at all times.
- Ensure the premises have a specific area to store the children's personal belongings (e.g., blankets, transitional objects) and another place to store their projects.
- Display materials at children's eye level (e.g., children's projects, family photos, decorative work).
- Provide partitions for crawling and exploring on the floor.

3. Meet the needs of the educational staff

- Ergonomic furniture that enables children to reach the changing table with minimal assistance from educators.
- Install mirrors around the room to make every area observable.
- Provide a well-designed area for staff, including a telephone and a resource room with early childcare education reference tools.
- Provide access, for example, to a secure locker for personal belongings, a shoulder-height storage space for heavy objects, a comfortable place to write and a rocking chair.
- Provide an ergonomic stroller for walks.

4. Support the educational staff in laying out their classroom

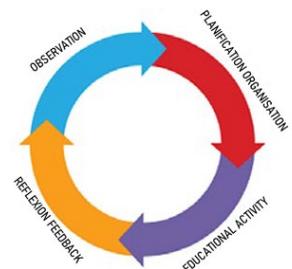
- Give educators the opportunity to select the most appropriate play material for the group of children.
- Take charge of material purchases and make choices that enhance the premises layout (e.g., purchasing specific furniture or prioritizing specific design modifications).
- Provide individual support for each member of the educational staff to enhance their setting's layout.
- Review the educational program's pedagogy directly related to the centre's design, and share it with educators.

For more details: [Pages 17 to 20 -Guide to Interpreting the Assessment report](#)

Dimension 3 – Quality of Child Observation and Planning Practices

Child observation and planning have an essential role in educational activities. **Observation enables educators to gather valuable information about the children, which can be used to plan according to their needs and interests.** Planning can be adjusted and directed toward suitable educational activities through daily observation.

The evaluation report examines and outlines aspects of child observation and planning, both in nurseries and in groups of children over 18 months. The data comes from interviews with educators and it's anonymous.



The Educational Process

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Four suggestions for enhancing the quality of this dimension

1. Observe the children every day, using a variety of methods, in order to collect all the relevant information

- Observe children daily using tools (e.g., notebook, anecdotal record, logbook, daily report, observation table, rhythm sheet).
- Photograph and video candid moments or even better the children's projects to help interpret the observations (with the family's permission).
- Gather relevant information for each child: physiological needs, interests, current development level, mood, strengths and challenges, activities performed, behaviours, interactions, special events and children's vocabulary.
- Stand strategically in the room to observe the children.

2. Regularly and frequently plan situations to offer the children and be flexible in applying the plan

- Plan employing the educational method and avoid basing it on themes or lesson plans recycled year to year.
- Plan educational activities primarily on the basis of observation.
- Be flexible in how the daily lesson plan meets children's needs.
- Adapt to the pace of the children, adjusting and revising the lesson plan according to observations.

3. Make sure the plan takes every child into account, and that it is based on a recognized educational program or educational approach adapted to the children.

- Consider each child when planning.
- Use individual observations and ask for the children's opinions.
- Rely on your knowledge of childhood development.
- Rely on your educational program or an educational philosophy that meets the legal requirements applicable to the group.

4. Support the educational staff in the educational response process

- Consider the time and thought required to implement the educational process and effectively organize the educators' tasks.
- Clarify expectations for educators regarding child observation and planning methods, to ensure consistent and effective delivery of educational method.
- Be creative in finding solutions and adapting tasks to give educators time for planning.
- To find time for planning, review task organization and put the children together certain time periods.

For more details: [Page 21 to 25 - Guide to Interpreting the Assessment report](#)

Dimension 4 – Quality of Interaction between the childcare Establishment staff (Educators and Manager) and the Parents

Maintaining good relationships between ECS staff and parents is a crucial factor in childhood development. This partnership is based on mutual respect and leads to positive outcomes for the child. **Parental trust in the ECS encourages the development of meaningful relationships with educators. Also, two-way communication between them helps to improve the quality of interactions with the child within the ECS.**

The evaluation report considers the results of the two themes related to the dimension: communication and collaboration. The two themes describe both the ECS staff's perception and the parent's, if they responded in sufficient numbers. Parents are not obligated to complete the questionnaire. For these reasons, there's no minimum threshold.

Four suggestions for enhancing the quality of this dimension

1. Initiate the sharing of information, find out more about each family, and provide relevant information about the educational program

- Communicate with parents according to their needs, either collectively or individually, and on a regular basis (e.g., emails, notices on the bulletin board meetings, etc.).
- Promote cooperation between educators and parents to exchange information on the children, recognizing that parents are experts on their children.
- Share the educational program and the range of learning experiences at the ECS to strengthen collaboration between the school and parents.

2. Demonstrate an attitude of respect and openness, and recognize expertise

- Respect and recognize the particularities of each family; showing interest in the various challenges each family faces, their culture and values.
- Act as a partner in the child's education by being sensitive to families' decisions and displaying openness, interest, respect, honesty and empathy.
- Consider the unique characteristics of each family in order to adapt educational methods and encourage the overall development of each child.
- Valuing parents' experiences, expertise and decisions, while integrating their perspective into the educational process.

3. Invite the parents to participate in their child's life at the educational childcare establishment

- Encourage the parents' involvement in the ECS community by organizing special events or by animating group activities for the children.
- Create an environment conducive to closeness and collaboration.
- Use surveys to get parents' opinions while leaving room for power-sharing in joint decisions.

4. Support the welcoming of parents to the educational childcare establishment

- Ensure that the administrative staff offers parents opportunities to attend meetings, events and parent committees.
- Encourage parents to contribute to daily activities by providing materials, lending books and by participating in field trips.
- Welcome parents to the ECS and make them a part of the values, policies and daily operations. Insist that they have very important role the ECS's daily life.
- Create a welcoming and collaborative environment for parents through the leadership of the administrative team, while ensuring the implementation of the educational program.

For more details: [Page 26 to 29 - Guide to Interpreting the Assessment report](#)