

Getting Ready Checklist

Family Child Care

Why complete this checklist?

Parent Aware ratings are new. You may be curious how it works and whether or not there are things you can do before getting rated. Many providers are surprised to learn that they are already doing more of the things needed to receive a high rating than they realized. Some have been surprised that the steps for improving are more doable than they had guessed. This checklist will help you plan the actions needed to achieve the best possible rating, and provides suggestions for helping you get there.

Directions

Ask yourself the questions below and answer them honestly. Below each question is an example of something you could do to get ready. Use the "Action planned" column to write down what you would like to do to get ready in each area. It is not necessary to write an action planned for every item in the checklist. This is simply a place for you to write your ideas for getting ready that were sparked by completing the checklist.

Child safety

Questions	Action planned
<p>Is your program licensed? Child care providers must be licensed before participating in Parent Aware.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> contact the local CCR&R agency or your county's licensing unit for help with the licensing application.</p>	
<p>If your program is licensed, have you received a maltreatment determination within the past year or received any of the following negative actions in the past six months? Negative actions include: Temporary Immediate Suspension, Conditional License, Suspension, Revocation and Fines. If you have had a maltreatment determination within the past year, or operated under a conditional license or received any of these negative actions within the past six months you are only eligible to receive 1 star.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> if you answered yes, consider using a consultant to address the issues that caused your program to receive the maltreatment determination, conditional license or negative action. The Parent Aware program has a list of qualified consultants available to choose from.</p>	

Accreditation

Questions	Action needed
<p>Is your program accredited through the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)? Becoming accredited is one way to obtain a 4-star rating.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> to learn more about NAFCC Accreditation and supports available for programs to achieve accreditation contact the Minnesota Accreditation Facilitation Project at http://www.mnaeyc.org/Accreditation.htm or call 651-646-4514, ext 38.</p>	

Family partnerships

Questions	Actions needed (if any)
<p>Do you regularly ask your client families for their opinions and ideas for improving your program?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (examples: survey, parent advisory council, etc) <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> if you answered “no” ask a trusted colleague or the local CCR&R for ideas for getting feedback from client families. You might also consider hiring a consultant to set up a process that you can continue to use.</p>	
<p>Does your program have a written plan for improving your program based on the ideas presented to you from your client families?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> if no, ask a trusted colleague or the local CCR&R for an example of a plan that you can use to get ideas for your own plan. You might also consider hiring a consultant to help you write this plan the first time.</p>	
<p>How do you communicate with families about your program and things they can do at home to extend children’s learning? (Programs need four or more strategies to receive full points.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletters/letters to parents <input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> Family fun nights <input type="checkbox"/> Provide written suggestions to parent about activities that can be done at home <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> if you answered “none,” ask a trusted colleague or the local CCR&R for examples of strategies to get ideas before writing your own. You could also begin using a curriculum that includes strategies for engaging families. Most early childhood curricula include sample letters explaining the activities you are doing and suggested activities to send home with parents.</p>	
<p>Do you have an intake process that helps you learn the needs and preferences of the child’s family, including those related to culture?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> if no, ask a trusted colleague or the local CCR&R for examples of intake forms to get ideas before writing your own. You might also consider hiring a consultant to help you develop an intake form.</p>	

Family partnerships, continued

Questions	Actions needed (if any)
<p>Does your program share information with parents about preschool screening?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> if you answered "no" ask your school district for a flyer you can give families to make sure they know how and when to sign up for preschool screening.</p>	
<p>Does your program provide plans for children transitioning between major developmental milestones such as toilet training and moving to kindergarten?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> if no, ask a trusted colleague or the local CCR&R for an example of a plan that you can use to get ideas for your own plans. You might also consider hiring a consultant to help you develop this the first time.</p>	
<p>Does your program have a formal process for communicating about transitions with client families?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> if no, ask a trusted colleague or the local CCR&R for examples of processes. You might also consider hiring a consultant to write the first few plans for you to get you started.</p>	

Teaching materials and strategies

Questions	Actions needed (if any)
<p><u>Infants and toddlers (ages 0 – 3)</u></p> <p>Do you use and have training on any of the following approved curricula for infants and toddlers?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Creative Curriculum <input type="checkbox"/> High/Scope <input type="checkbox"/> Program for Infant and Toddler Caregivers (PITC) <input type="checkbox"/> High Reach <input type="checkbox"/> No, I use none of these, but I would like to start using: _____</p> <p>If no, do you have a bundle of curricula or a set of activities and resources that you have put together on your own that meet the approval criteria? (See curriculum approval process for the list of approval criteria.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p>If no, do you use activities aligned with the <i>Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIP)</i> for children ages 0 - 3? (See the 0-3 ECIP alignment chart form.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> if no, consider going to a library, such as the Debra S. Fish library at Resources for Child Caring, to see copies of the manuals for the curricula on the approved list. You could also consider going to a workshop or training on selecting curricula to obtain guidance on picking one that meets your program's philosophy. Attend training on the curriculum you choose. If you prefer to develop your own bundle of curricula or activities you develop yourself, or use an approach such as Montessori or Project Approach, look for a book or hire a consultant who can provide tips to help you make sure that the materials you plan to submit for approval by the Curriculum Review Committee are covered.</p>	

Teaching materials and strategies, continued

Questions	Actions needed (if any)
<p><u>Preschoolers (ages 3 – 5)</u></p> <p>Do you use and have training on any of the following approved curricula for preschool-age children?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Curriculum <input type="checkbox"/> High/Scope <input type="checkbox"/> Opening the World of Learning (OWL) <input type="checkbox"/> High Reach <input type="checkbox"/> Sprouts, by Funshine Express <input type="checkbox"/> Core Knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> No, I use none of these, but I would like to start using: _____ <p>If no, do you have a bundle of curricula or a set of activities and resources that you have put together on your own that meet the approval criteria? (See curriculum approval process for the list of approval criteria.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <p>If no, do you use activities aligned with the <i>Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIP)</i> for children ages 3 - 5? (See the 3-5 ECIP alignment chart form.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> if no, consider going to a library, such as the Debra S. Fish library at Resources for Child Caring, to see copies of the manuals for the curricula on the approved list. You could also consider going to a workshop or training on selecting curricula. Attend training on the curriculum you choose. If you prefer to use a published curriculum that is not on the approved list, nominate it for review by the Curriculum Review Committee. If you prefer to develop your own bundle of curricula or activities you develop yourself, or use an approach such as Montessori or Project Approach, look for a book or hire a consultant who can provide tips to help you make sure that the materials you plan to submit for approval by the Curriculum Review Committee are covered.</p>	
<p>One important part of Parent Aware is on-site observation using the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS) by an expert observer from the University of Minnesota. Ask yourself these questions to see if you are ready for this visit.</p> <p>Are you familiar with the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <p>Have you walked through your program making note of things you could change that would improve your score?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <p>Have you asked a colleague, mentor, or consultant to observe the way you work with the children using the tool and give you feedback for improvement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> there are several things you can do to make yourself more familiar with the FCCERS and/or improve your readiness in this area. For example, you could attend a Parent Aware orientation and receive a copy of the FCCERS and some background about it. Another good step is to attend training on the FCCERS. Also consider working with a consultant through your local CCR&R or hire a consultant to score you on this tool and give you suggestions for ways to boost your score.</p>	

Tracking learning

Questions	Actions needed (if any)
<p><u>Infants and toddler classrooms (ages 0 – 3)</u></p> <p>Does your program use any of the following instructional child assessment tools to track children’s learning for ages 0 – 3 at least twice per year, and have you and any caregivers you employ received training on it? (See child assessment approval process for details.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Curriculum Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> High/Scope COR <input type="checkbox"/> Ounce Scale <input type="checkbox"/> No, I use none of these, but I would like to start using: _____ <p>If no, do you use an informal method to track the learning of children ages 0 - 3?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <p>Does your program share the assessment results with families of children ages 0 - 3?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <p>Does your program use the results from these assessments to design goals for individual children ages 0 – 3 and to guide instruction?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> if you do not use an assessment tool, consider going to a library, such as the Debra S. Fish library at Resources for Child Caring, to see copies of the manuals for the assessments on the approved list. You could also consider going to a workshop or training on selecting child assessment tools. Attend training on the assessment you choose. If you would prefer to use an assessment tool that is not on the approved list, nominate it for review by the Assessment Review Committee.</p>	
<p><u>Preschool classrooms (ages 3 – 5)</u></p> <p>Does your program use any of the following instructional child assessment tools to track children’s learning for ages 3 – 5 at least twice per year, and have you and any caregivers you employ received training on it? (See child assessment approval process for details.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Curriculum Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> High/Scope COR <input type="checkbox"/> Work Sampling <input type="checkbox"/> No, I use none of these, but I would like to start using: _____ <p>If no, do you use an informal method to track the learning of children ages 3 - 5?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <p>Does your program share the assessment results with families of children ages 3 - 5?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <p>Does your program use the results from these assessments to design goals for individual children ages 3 – 5 and to guide instruction?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> if you do not use an assessment tool, consider going to a library, such as the Debra S. Fish library at Resources for Child Caring, to see copies of the manuals for the assessments on the approved list. You could also consider going to a workshop or training on selecting child assessment tools. Attend training on the assessment you choose. If you would prefer to use an assessment tool that is not on the approved list, nominate it for review by the Assessment Review Committee.</p>	

Teacher training and education

Questions	Actions needed (if any)
<p>Do you have an Associate's (AA or AAS) degree or Bachelor's (BA) degree in early childhood education, or equivalent?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p>Do you have any of the following certificates or credentials?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Child Development Associate (CDA) credential <input type="checkbox"/> Montessori certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Minnesota Teaching License in Pre-k <input type="checkbox"/> No, I have none of these, but I am working toward: _____</p> <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> obtain training and/or for-credit coursework that will help you achieve one of the degrees or credentials listed above.</p>	
<p>Have you had 40 hours or more in-service training in the past 4 years?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> if you have less than 40 hours and you do not have a degree or credential, consider taking more in-service training up to 40 hours.</p>	
<p>Have you attended any specialized trainings of at least eight hours in length (can be on a single day or through a series of workshops that are designed to build on each other)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> if you have not attended any series trainings that are at least eight hours in length, such as the Program for Infant and Toddler Care, or SEEDs to Early Literacy, sign up for them. The trainings offered on the approved curricula and assessments are all eight hours series trainings and can help you earn points in multiple Parent Aware categories at once.</p>	
<p>Do you have a professional portfolio?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> if you do not have a professional portfolio, consider creating one. If you have a CDA or CBTA credential, you will already have a professional portfolio. One way to get help creating your professional portfolio is to begin working toward the CDA. You might also consider taking a training on creating a professional portfolio or hiring a consultant to help you put one together.</p>	
<p>Do you keep track of your training in a format that is aligned with the Minnesota Core Competencies?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> if you are not familiar with the Minnesota Core Competencies, consider attending a training on it, such as the Not by Chance Foundations training. When you attend a Parent Aware orientation you will receive a copy of this document in your packet. The Minnesota Core Competencies provides a section for listing the training you have taken by area and tracking your training in a way that will help you develop your professional development plan.</p>	
<p>Do you have a professional development plan?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> if you do not have a plan for the training you need to improve your practice, consider creating one. Professional development plans are a way to set professional development goals and document the steps you need to meet your goals. A template for creating a professional development plan is provided in the Parent Aware orientation packet.</p>	