

# Getting Ready Checklist

## Child Care Centers

### Why complete this checklist?

Parent Aware ratings are new. You may be curious how they work and whether or not there are things you can do before getting rated. Many programs are surprised to learn that they are already doing many of the things needed to receive a high rating and that the steps for improvement 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

Read the questions below and answer them honestly. Below each question is an example of something your program could do to prepare for a rating. Use the “Action planned” column to write down every idea the checklist sparked!

### Child safety

Questions	Action planned
<p>Is your program licensed? Child care programs must be licensed to be rated.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><i>Building quality suggestion:</i> If no, contact the local CCR&amp;R agency or the Minnesota Department of Human Services Licensing Division for help completing the licensing application.</p>	
<p>If your program is licensed, have you received a maltreatment determination or negative action within the past year? Negative actions include: Temporary Immediate Suspension, Conditional License, Suspension, Revocation and Fines.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p>If you have had a maltreatment determination or negative licensing action within the past year your program is only eligible to receive one star.</p> <p><i>Building quality suggestion:</i> If you answered yes, consider using a consultant to address the issues that caused the maltreatment determination or negative action.</p>	

## Accreditation

Questions	Action planned
<p>Is your program accredited through any of the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, The National Association for the Education for Young Children (NAEYC)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Council on Accreditation (COA)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, The National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, American Montessori Society (AMS)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, The Association Montessori Internationale (AMI)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No, but I would like to pursue the following type of accreditation: _____</li> </ul> <p><i>Building quality suggestion:</i> To learn more about accreditation and supports available for programs to achieve accreditation contact the Minnesota Accreditation Facilitation Project at <a href="http://www.mnaeyc-mnsaca.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&amp;subarticlenbr=10">http://www.mnaeyc-mnsaca.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&amp;subarticlenbr=10</a> or call (651) 646-4514, ext 38.</p>	

## Family partnerships

Questions	Action planned
<p>Do you regularly ask your client families for their opinions and their ideas for improving your Program (examples: survey, parent advisory council, etc.)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> </ul> <p><i>Building quality suggestion:</i> If you answered no, ask a trusted colleague or the local CCR&amp;R for ideas on 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 improvement based on the ideas your client families present to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> </ul> <p><i>Building quality suggestion:</i> if no, ask a trusted colleague or the local CCR&amp;R for an example of a plan that you can use. 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"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> None</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Newsletters/letters to parents</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Web site</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Family fun nights</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Written suggestions to parents about activities they can do with their children</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</li> </ul> <p><i>Building quality suggestion:</i> if you answered none, ask a trusted colleague or the local CCR&amp;R for ideas. You could also begin using a curriculum that includes strategies for engaging families. Most early childhood curricula include sample letters explaining your activities and suggested at-home activities.</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"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> </ul> <p><i>Building quality suggestion:</i> If no, ask a trusted colleague or the local CCR&amp;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	Action planned
<p>Does your program share information with parents about preschool screening?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><i>Building quality suggestion:</i> If no, ask your school district for a flyer you can give families so they know how and when to sign up for preschool screening.</p>	
<p>Does your program provide plans for children transitioning between classrooms and to kindergarten?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><i>Building quality suggestion:</i> If no, ask a trusted colleague or the local CCR&amp;R for 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>Building quality suggestion:</i> If no, ask a trusted colleague or the local CCR&amp;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	Action planned
<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"/> HighScope  <input type="checkbox"/> The Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC)  <input type="checkbox"/> HighReach Learning  <input type="checkbox"/> Montessori  <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 you 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 Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIP) 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>Building quality suggestion:</i> If no, consider attending a workshop or training on selecting curricula that meets your program's philosophy. If you prefer your own bundle of curricula or activities, or use an approach such as the Project Approach, use books or a consultant to help you improve your materials.</p>	

## Teaching materials and strategies, continued

Questions	Action planned
<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"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Creative Curriculum</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> HighScope</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Opening the World of Learning (OWL)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> HighReach Learning</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Montessori</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Core Knowledge</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No, I use none of these, but I would like to start using: _____</li> </ul> <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"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> </ul> <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"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> </ul> <p><i>Building quality suggestion:</i> If no, consider attending a workshop or training on selecting curricula. If you prefer to develop your own bundle of curricula or activities, or use an approach such as the Project Approach, look for a book or consultant who can help you improve your materials.</p>	
<p>One important part of being rated is onsite observation by an expert from the University of Minnesota. Ask yourself these questions to see if you are ready for your visit.</p> <p>Are you familiar with the following rating scales?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Infant /Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No, none of these</li> </ul> <p>If yes, 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"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> </ul> <p>To gain feedback, have you asked mentors or consultants to observe your classrooms and the way your teachers work with the children, using any of these onsite observation tools?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> </ul> <p><i>Building quality suggestion:</i> Consider sending your staff to training on the tools or bringing a trainer into your program. You could also hire or work with an Environment Rating Scale consultant from your local CCR&amp;R to give you suggestions for boosting your score.</p>	

## Tracking learning

Questions	Action planned
<p><u>Infants and toddlers (ages 0-3)</u></p> <p>Does your program use any of the following assessment tools to track learning for ages 0-3 at least twice per year, and have your lead teachers received training on it? (See child assessment approval process for details.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Creative Curriculum Assessment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> HighScope Preschool Child Observation Record (COR)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The Ounce Scale</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No, but I would like to start using: _____</li> </ul> <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"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> </ul> <p>Does your program share the assessment results with families of children ages 0-3?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> </ul> <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"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> </ul> <p><i>Building quality suggestion:</i> If you do not use an assessment tool, consider attending a workshop or training on selecting child assessment tools. Provide training for your staff on the assessment tool you choose.</p>	
<p><u>Preschoolers (ages 3-5)</u></p> <p>Does your program use any of the following assessment tools to track learning for ages 3-5 at least twice per year, and have your lead teachers received training on it? (See child assessment approval process for details.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Creative Curriculum Assessment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> HighScope Preschool Child Observation Record (COR)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work Sampling System®</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No, I use none of these, but I would like to start using: _____</li> </ul> <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"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> </ul> <p>Does your program share the assessment results with families of children ages 3-5?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> </ul> <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"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> </ul> <p><i>Building quality suggestion:</i> If you do not use an assessment tool, consider attending a workshop or training on selecting child assessment tools. Provide training to your staff on the assessment you choose.</p>	

## Teacher training and education

Questions	Action planned
<p>Does your program's educational coordinator (the director may serve as the educational coordinator) have a bachelor's (BA) degree in early childhood education or related field?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	
<p>Have your lead teachers recorded and documented their training and education through the Minnesota Center for Professional Development Registry? If yes, have they achieved a step in the Career Lattice (<a href="http://www.mncpd.org/career_lattice.html">www.mncpd.org/career_lattice.html</a>) and if so, what step?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Step 10 or higher (bachelor's degree (BA) or higher)  <input type="checkbox"/> Step 9 (associate in arts (AA) or associate in science (AS) degree)  <input type="checkbox"/> Steps 7-8 (Combination of semester credits and/or other credentials)  <input type="checkbox"/> Step 6 (National Child Development Associate [CDA] credential)  <input type="checkbox"/> Steps 1-5 (Combination of in-service training aligned with the Minnesota Core Competencies)  <input type="checkbox"/> No, but our lead teachers are working toward: _____</p> <p><i>Building quality suggestion:</i> Work with all the teachers in your program to help them apply and achieve steps in the Career Lattice. Also, encourage the lead teachers in your program to obtain training and/or for-credit coursework that will help them achieve one of the degrees or credentials recognized through steps in Minnesota's Career Lattice. If you need funding to help you and your teachers obtain higher education, consider applying for T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® MINNESOTA.</p>	
<p>Do your teachers have professional development plans?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><i>Building quality suggestion:</i> If no, work with them to create plans, which are a way to set professional development goals and document the steps teachers need to take to meet their goals. You can request a template for creating professional development plans from the local CCR&amp;R or your resource specialist.</p> <p>Also consider attending training on the Minnesota Core Competencies. The Minnesota Core Competencies will help you plan for your professional development and the professional development of your staff and think about the types of training and education you and your teachers need in order to reach higher steps in the Minnesota Career Lattice.</p>	