

YOUTH PQA

Form A Program Offerings
Youth – Grades 4-12

Full Youth PQA available for download at <http://cypq.org/downloadPQA>



SAMPLE ITEMS

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CONDUCTING A PROGRAM SELF ASSESSMENT

Team-based program self assessment using the Youth PQA is a highly effective, low stakes strategy for building a quality-focused culture. Program self assessment can help managers and staff co-create meaningful improvement objectives for the quality of their programming and ultimately the outcomes for their young participants.

Throughout the process, keep in mind these three aspects of a constructive program self assessment process:

- work as a team
- base scores on observational evidence
- focus on conversations about quality

1. SELECT AND TRAIN A SELF ASSESSMENT TEAM

The program self assessment team should consist of the site leader and at least two program staff, volunteers or parents. The site leader attends PQA Basics training. Team members can prepare to be a part of the program self assessment process by completing the PQA Basics training online. The site leader should also conduct a meeting or mini-training for team members using the materials shared at PQA Basics.

2. PREPARE FOR DATA COLLECTIONS

Team members collect data by taking turns observing their programs in action. Sometimes, schedules need to be rearranged, or a program manager needs to arrange coverage in order to provide the opportunity for staff to observe each other. Plan time as soon as possible following the observations for discussion and scoring.

The site teams should observe *program offerings*: structured activities that are led by regular staff with the same youth over time. Enrichment classes or afterschool clubs that get together at the same time each week for the entire school semester are a great example. Avoid homework help, open gym, unstructured computer lab time, drop-in, etc. Always notify program staff of scheduled observation ahead of time. This is not a test!

If timing and staff schedules do not allow for full observations, then try to observe at least one hour of programming, divided among self assessment team members (e.g., three people each observe for 20 minutes, four people each observe for 15 minutes). Vary observation times so that your observations include the beginning, middle and end of different sessions.

3. OBSERVE AND TAKE NOTES

When conducting an observation, find a place to sit that allows you to see and hear as much as possible without getting in the way. Take notes by hand or using a laptop. Bring a copy of the back page of the Youth PQA. You can bring the full Youth PQA to your observation, but do not write notes onto the form or try to score the form while observing.

Take notes throughout the offering on factual information (include quotes, actions, etc.). As a general rule, expect to take 3–4 or more handwritten pages (1–2 typed) of notes per 30 minutes of observation.

Your notes should be:

- Factual and objective (rather than judgmental, evaluative or impressionistic)
- Specific and detailed (rather than general)
- Accessible (language should make sense six months from now)
- Chronological (include time markers)

Your notes should include:

- Anecdotal descriptions of interactions
- Quotes of what youth and/or staff say when interacting
- Actions and language of the youth involved
- Materials lists
- Sequences of daily events and routines

At the end of the session, ask the session leader(s) any follow-up questions, as listed on the back of the PQA. After the observation, you will not score the PQA, but save your notes to use during the scoring meeting.

4. HOLD A TEAM-BASED SCORING MEETING

After all data has been collected, the site leader guides the team in scoring a single, program-wide Youth PQA Form A. This scoring process can last three hours or more and may be divided among several shorter meetings. During the scoring meetings, the team will pool and review all anecdotal records and go through the Youth PQA item by item, selecting an anecdote and agreeing on a score for each. It is important that the team rely on the anecdotes rather than their memories to produce scores.

The most important outcome of the scoring meeting is the conversation that occurs while discussing scores and arriving at agreement. The scores can provide a reliable indication of the quality of staff interactions with youth, so it is important to be accurate.

5. ENTER SCORES

The Youth PQA produces scores at the item, scale and domain level. All scores beyond the item level are created using mathematical means, or averages. Scales are averages of items, and domains are averages of scales.

After scoring the items in Form A of the Youth PQA, you can enter the scores into the online Scores Reporter. You can access the online Scores Reporter through the Weikart Center website at www.cypq.org. The staff at the Weikart Center is available to offer technical assistance as needed.

CONDUCTING AN EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

For an external assessment, a trained, reliable external assessor visits a site to observe a single program offering and score a PQA based on the observation.

1. ATTEND AN EXTERNAL ASSESSOR RELIABILITY TRAINING

External assessors attend an External Assessment Reliability Training to practice skills and complete a reliability check. All assessors must pass the reliability check to be endorsed as external assessors prior to conducting any site visits.

2. PREPARE FOR DATA COLLECTION

The network leader will often coordinate schedules and assign assessors to sites. External assessors should confirm the date and time of observation with the site leader and ask him or her to inform the relevant staff that they will be visiting to conduct an observation.

3. OBSERVE AND TAKE NOTES

When travelling to the assigned youth program, assessors should arrive at least 15 minutes before the scheduled observation time. Assessors will view program offerings in their entirety (usually 45-90 minutes long).

Assessors take objective observational notes which describe only observable behaviors, language and materials. They focus on the behaviors of the staff and students with whom the staff is interacting and record as many quotations as possible.

Notes should be:

- Factual and objective (rather than judgmental, evaluative, or impressionistic)
- Specific and detailed (rather than general)
- Accessible (language should make sense six months from now)
- Chronological (include time markers)

Notes should include:

- Anecdotal descriptions of interactions
- Quotes of what youth and/or staff say when interacting
- Actions and language of the youth involved
- Materials lists
- Sequences of daily events and routines

At the end of the session, the assessor asks the session leader(s) any follow-up questions, as listed on the back of the PQA. Also at the end of the session, the assessor should ask the staff who led the session the questions on the Staff Information page.

4. SCORING THE PQA

After the visit, assessors fit and score using their notes, making sure to fill out all evidence boxes and program description information. The assessor uses the answers to the follow-up questions as evidence to score the items as applicable.

Some evidence can be cross-referenced against multiple items. In fact, items with a score of 5 may provide a full listing of relevant evidence. If an item is not applicable, assessors should place an "X" in the box for that item.

5. ENTER SCORES

The Youth PQA produces scores at the item, scale, and domain level. All scores beyond the item level are created using mathematical means, or averages. Scales are averages of items, and domains are averages of scales.

After scoring the items in the Youth PQA, the assessor can enter the scores into the online Scores Reporter. The online Scores Reporter can be accessed through the Weikart Center website at www.cypq.org. The staff at the Weikart Center is available to offer technical assistance as needed.

EMOTIONAL SAFETY | Psychological and emotional safety is promoted.

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES
<p>1. 1 The emotional climate of the session is predominantly negative (e.g., disrespectful, tense, exclusive, even angry or hostile); negative behaviors, such as rudeness, bragging, insults, “trash talking,” negative gestures or other such actions are not mediated by either children or staff.</p>	<p>3 The emotional climate of the session is neutral or characterized by both positive and negative behaviors.</p>	<p>5 The emotional climate of the session is predominantly positive (e.g., mutually respectful, relaxed, supportive; characterized by teamwork, camaraderie, inclusiveness, and an absence of negative behaviors). Any playful negative behaviors (not considered offensive by parties involved) are mediated (countered, curtailed, defused) by staff or youth.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. 1 Comments or slurs intended to hurt someone who is present explicitly indicate religious, ethnic, class, gender, ability, appearance or sexual orientation bias(es).</p>	<p>3 There is evidence (e.g., comments or slurs) of religious, ethnic, class, gender, ability, appearance or sexual orientation bias, but comments are not directed at anyone present.</p>	<p>5 There is no evidence of bias; rather, there is mutual respect for and inclusion of others of a different religion, ethnicity, class, gender, ability, appearance or sexual orientation.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT | Activities support active engagement.

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES	
1.	1 The activities provide no opportunities for youth to engage with either materials or ideas or to improve a skill through guided practice; activities mostly involve waiting, listening, watching and repeating.	3 The activities provide opportunities for youth to engage with materials or ideas or to improve a skill through guided practice for less than half of the time.	5 The activities involve youth in engaging with (creating, combining, reforming) materials or ideas or improving a skill through guided practice for at least half of the time.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	1 During activities, staff does not provide any youth structured opportunities to talk about (or otherwise communicate) what they are doing and what they are thinking about to others.	3 During activities, staff provides some youth a structured opportunity to talk about (or otherwise communicate) what they are doing and what they are thinking about to others (e.g. staff asks some youth to explain what they are doing or why, staff has half the youth explain their art project to someone else).	5 During activities, staff provides all youth a structured opportunity to talk about (or otherwise communicate) what they are doing and what they are thinking about to others (e.g., each youth explains the reasoning behind his or her design to staff; staff assigns youth to small groups to work on a shared task).	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	1 The activities focus almost exclusively on abstract learning or concepts, providing limited or no related concrete experiences (activities almost exclusively consist of learning about a topic; lecture format).	3 The activities focus almost exclusively on concrete experiences, providing limited or no opportunities to engage with related abstract learning or concepts (activities almost entirely consist of youth doing, practicing, or experiencing, without learning about or discussing the how, what, or why).	5 The activities balance concrete experiences involving materials, people and projects (e.g., field trips, experiments, interviews, practicing dance routines, creative writing) with abstract learning or concepts (e.g., learning, talking about a topic; lectures; staff providing diagrams, formulas).	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	1 The activities do not (will not) lead to tangible products or performances.	3 The activities lead (or will lead) to tangible products or performances, but do not reflect ideas or designs of youth (e.g., youth will perform dances selected by staff, all youth make bird houses according to the design supplied by staff.)	5 The program activities lead (or will lead in future sessions) to tangible products or performances that reflect ideas or designs of youth (e.g. youth explain their projects to whole group, all create dance routines to perform later, youth create their own sculptures).	<input type="checkbox"/>

BELONGING | Youth have opportunities to develop a sense of belonging.

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES
1. 1 Staff does not provide opportunities for youth to get to know each other (e.g., the entire session is structured so youth have no time where talking among themselves is allowed or encouraged).	3 Staff provides informal opportunities for youth to get to know each other (e.g., youth engage in informal conversations, youth get to know each other as a by-product of an activity).	5 Staff provides structured opportunities with the purpose of helping youth get to know each other (e.g., there are team-building activities, introductions, personal updates, welcomes of new group members, icebreakers).	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. 1 Youth exhibit evidence of excluding peers (e.g., youth are avoided or ostracized by other youth, "I don't want to sit with her – she's not my friend") and staff does not explicitly promote more inclusive relationships (e.g., suggest ways to include others, introduce excluded youth, say, "Remember, being inclusive is one of our ideals").	3 Youth exhibit some evidence of excluding peers and staff intervenes, but not sufficiently to end exclusion (e.g., staff introduces a newcomer to other youth, but the newcomer is treated coolly and avoided or ignored; staff intervenes in some instances of exclusionary behavior but not others).	5 Youth do not exhibit any exclusion or staff successfully intervenes if exclusive behavior occurs (e.g., staff introduces newcomer to other youth and they then include her, staff successfully suggests including a lone youth in a game).	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. 1 Youth do not identify with the program offering (e.g., many youth complain about or express dislike of the program offering or activities).	3 Youth do not strongly identify with the program offering but do not complain or express dislike.	5 Youth strongly identify with the program offering (e.g., hold one another to established guidelines, use ownership language, such as "our program," engage in shared traditions such as shared jokes, songs, gestures).	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. 1 Staff does not provide (Y) opportunities to acknowledge the achievements, work, or contributions of youth.	3 Staff provides opportunities to acknowledge the achievements, work, or contributions of some youth, but opportunities are unscheduled or impromptu (e.g. staff spontaneously asks two youth show off their dance moves to the group).	5 Staff provides structured opportunities (e.g., group presentations, sharing times, upcoming recognition celebrations, exhibitions, performances) to publicly acknowledge the achievements, work, or contributions of at least some youth.	<input type="checkbox"/>

REFLECTION | Youth have opportunities to reflect.

Note: Reflect means to review, summarize and/or evaluate recent events or activities. Reflections are usually expressed by talking with others and/or in writing (a journal or report, for example).

ITEMS			SUPPORTING EVIDENCE/ANECDOTES
<p>1. 1 Staff does not engage youth in an intentional process of reflecting on what they have done.</p>	<p>3 Staff engages some youth in an intentional process of reflecting on what they have done.</p>	<p>5 Staff engages all youth in an intentional process of reflecting on what they have done (e.g., writing in journals; reviewing minutes; sharing progress, accomplishments or feelings about the experience).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. 1 Staff does not encourage youth to share what they have done with others or to reflect on their experiences.</p>	<p>3 Staff uses at least one identifiable strategy to help youth to share what they have done and reflect on their experiences (e.g., staff asks youth, "What did you do today?").</p>	<p>5 Staff uses two or more strategies to encourage youth to share what they have done and reflect on their experiences (e.g., writing, role playing, using media or technology, drawing, using props).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>3. 1 Staff dismisses feedback from youth who initiate it, or youth have no opportunities to provide feedback on the activities.</p>	<p>3 Staff is receptive to feedback initiated by youth on the activities but does not solicit it.</p>	<p>5 Staff initiates structured opportunities for youth to give feedback on the activities (e.g., staff asks feedback questions, provides session evaluations).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>4. 1 In the course of the program offering, staff does not provide structured opportunities for youth to make presentations to the whole group.</p>	<p>3 In the course of the program offering, staff provides some youth opportunities to make presentations to the whole group.</p>	<p>5 In the course of the program offering, staff provides all youth opportunities to make presentations to the whole group.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<p>In the course of the program offering, do youth make presentations?</p>

YOUTH PQA OBSERVATION GUIDE

Program Offerings Youth – Grades 4-12

Summary of Scales

I. Safe Environment

- Emotional Safety
- Healthy Environment
- Emergency Preparedness
- Accommodating Environment
- Nourishment

II. Supportive Environment

- Warm Welcome
- Session Flow
- Active Engagement
- Skill-Building
- Encouragement
- Reframing Conflict

III. Interaction

- Belonging
- Collaboration
- Leadership
- Adult Partners

IV. Engagement

- Planning
- Choice
- Reflection