

Getting Ready Checklist

Child Care Center

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 programs 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 your program 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 programs 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> if no, contact the local CCR&R agency or the MN 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 within the past year or 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 received any negative actions within the past six months your program is 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 or negative action. The Parent Aware program has a list of qualified consultants available.</p>	

Accreditation

Questions	Action needed
<p>Is your program accredited through any of the following accrediting bodies? Becoming accredited is one way to obtain a 4-star rating.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the National Association for the Education for Young Children (NAEYC) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the Council on Accreditation (COA) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the American Montessori Society (AMS) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the Association of Montessori International (AMI) <input type="checkbox"/> No, but I would like to pursue the following type of accreditation: _____ <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> to learn more about 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 improvement 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 parents 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 classrooms and 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 by an expert observer 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 Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) <input type="checkbox"/> Infant and Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) <input type="checkbox"/> The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) <input type="checkbox"/> No, none of these <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"> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <p>Have you worked with mentors or consultants to observe your classrooms and the way your teachers work with the children using any of these on-site observation tools in order to provide feedback for improvement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> attend a Parent Aware orientation and receive background about each observation tool. Consider sending your staff to training on the tools or bringing a trainer on the tools into your program. You could also hire consultants or work with your local CCR&R to give you suggestions for ways to boost your score.</p>	

Tracking learning

Questions	Actions needed (if any)
<p><u>Infants and toddlers (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 your lead teachers 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, 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. Provide training for your staff on the assessment tool 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>Preschoolers (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 your lead teachers 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. Provide training to your staff 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>Does your program's Director hold a Director's Credential or equivalent?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> obtain a Director's Credential from a local college or University.</p>	
<p>Does your program's Educational Coordinator (the Director may serve as the Educational Coordinator) how a Bachelor's (BA) degree in early childhood education or related field?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p>Do your lead teachers have any of the following certificates or credentials in early childhood education or related field?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree (BA) <input type="checkbox"/> Associate in Arts or Associate in Science degree (AA or AS) <input type="checkbox"/> National Child Development Associate (CDA) credential <input type="checkbox"/> Montessori certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Minnesota Teaching License in Pre-k <input type="checkbox"/> No, but our lead teachers are 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 your lead teachers attended any specialized trainings of at least eight hours (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> arrange for your lead teachers to receive series trainings that are at least eight hours in length, such as the Program for Infant and Toddler Care (PITC), or SEEDs to Early Literacy. 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 your lead teachers have a professional portfolio?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> If your lead teachers do not have professional portfolios, support their efforts in creating them. If your teachers have a CDA or CBTA credential, they will already have professional portfolios. One way teachers can get started creating professional portfolios is to begin working toward their CDA. You might also consider arranging for the lead teachers to obtain training on creating a professional portfolio or hiring a consultant to help them put portfolios together.</p>	
<p>Is your way of tracking your teachers' training aligned the Minnesota Core Competencies?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> if no, consider attending training on the Minnesota Core Competencies, 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 training by area and tracking training in a way that will help you and your staff develop professional development plans.</p>	
<p>Do your teachers have professional development plans?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><i>Getting ready suggestion:</i> if no, work with them to create plans. Professional development plans are a way to set professional development goals and document the steps teachers need to take to meet their goals. You will receive a template for creating professional development plans at the Parent Aware orientation.</p>	