

Interpreting SK Quality Tool Scores

The Saskatchewan's Early Learning and Child Care Quality Key Indicator Instrument (SK Quality Tool) has 10 quality indicators. Research has identified these indicators as an effective way to measure current program quality levels. The indicators are:

1. Staff education levels
2. Environment (as per Play and Exploration: Early Learning Program Guide)
3. Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum Based on Assessments of Each Child
4. Relationships with Families
5. Regular Progress Updates to Families about their Children
6. Encouraging Children to Communicate (Preschool Groups)
7. Language Development for Infants and Toddlers (Infant and Toddler Groups)
8. Use of Language to Develop Reasoning Skills (Preschool Groups)
9. Active Listening to Children by Educators
10. Warm Communication Style of Educators towards Children

Each indicator receives a score between 1 and 4 with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest possible score.

The SK Quality Tool provides a total centre score. Some of the items will have multiple scores recorded as each group at the centre will be observed and receive their own score. These scores are then averaged to determine the centre score for the indicator.

Individual group scores can be examined by leadership and staff to identify individual learning goals where appropriate.

Depending on the ages of the children, the number of indicators that are scored may vary. This will impact the possible total score that a centre could receive. For example:

- Indicator 7 is specific to infants and toddlers. If the centre does not have children in the infant and toddler categories, this indicator will not be scored. (Max score is 36 with 9 indicators scored)
- Indicators 6 and 8 are specific to preschool aged children. If the centre does not have children in the preschool age category, then these indicators will not be scored. (Max score is 32 with 8 indicators scored)
- Centres that have both toddler and preschool aged children will have all indicators scored. (Max score is 40)

The total score (with acknowledgement of the number of indicators assessed) determines the Program Quality Level as identified in the table below:

Quality Level	Infant/Toddler (No Preschool) 8 indicators assessed	Preschool (No Infant/Toddler) 9 indicators assessed	Infant/Toddler and Preschool 10 indicators assessed
High	Score of 28 or higher	Score of 32 or higher	Score of 36 or higher
Medium-High	Score of 22-27	Score of 26-31	Score of 30-35
Medium-Low	Score of 12-21	Score of 16-25	Score of 20-29
Low	Score of 11 or less	Score of 15 or less	Score of 19 or less

Every centre's journey is unique. There are different contexts and factors that influence the progress or barriers that are faced by the program and/or the staff. Quality levels are defined as follows:

Low - Starting the Quality Journey

- Centres at this level need to focus on the basics and build a strong foundation. They may have experienced a lot of change/disruption or other significant barriers. It is important to create a clear and simple plan to improve quality- set achievable goals, closely monitor progress and not avoid overwhelming with too much too fast. It is important to achieve a safe, secure and predictable space for children, staff and families.

Medium-Low - Exploring Quality

- Centres at this level have built a foundation of quality. There may however be some gaps or areas to reinforce in the foundation as they continue to build higher level practices including reflection and intention into all aspects of the child care program and decision making. Programs at this level are often trying out some quality practices but may not be implementing them consistently.

Medium-High - Realizing Quality

- Centres at this level have built a strong program and may only need to make some slight adjustments in their program, reflecting deeply to examine the intention behind their practices and how to elevate them to next level to maximize the learning potential for children and staff.

High - Achieving Quality

- Centres at this level have achieved high quality. The centre has qualified staff who work as a team to provide quality learning experiences, prioritize relationships, and inspire curiosity and co-learning in the program. Educators consider themselves to be life-long learners. They can clearly articulate what they do in their work with children as well as *why* they do it and what they are wondering, considering, and observing to support where the learning may go next.