

This ebook, "SK Quality Tool: The Emergence of a New Early Childhood Program Quality Tool/Scale," by Dr. Richard Fiene, introduces a new instrument for assessing the quality of Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs in Saskatchewan, Canada¹. The SK Quality Tool, also known as the Early Childhood Education Quality Indicators Scale (ECEQIS), is presented as an alternative to the long-standing ERSs and CLASS assessment tools².

The SK Quality Tool is a 10-indicator scale developed through a combination of statistical analysis of key predictor rules and expert opinion³. It is designed to be a time-efficient (completed within two hours) and effective means of evaluating ECE programs across various settings, including infant, toddler, and preschool classrooms⁴. The tool has undergone pilot testing and validation for reliability and validity in the province of Saskatchewan⁵⁵⁵⁵.

The 10 Quality Key Indicators that comprise the SK Quality Tool are:

1. Number of ECE III's (Educator Certification)⁶
2. Stimulating and Dynamic Environment⁷
3. Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum Based on Assessments of Each Child⁸
4. Relationships with Families⁹
5. Families Receive Information on Their Child's Progress Regularly¹⁰
6. Educators Encourage Children to Communicate¹¹
7. Infant/Toddler Language Observation¹²
8. Educators Use Language to Develop Reasoning Skills (Preschool)¹³
9. Educators Listen Attentively When Children Speak¹⁴
10. Educators Speak Warmly to Children¹⁵

A significant portion of the ebook is dedicated to the "Assessor's Guide to Using Saskatchewan's Early Learning and Child Care Quality Key Indicator Instrument (SK Quality Tool)"¹⁶. This guide provides detailed definitions, instructions, and scoring criteria for each of the ten indicators to ensure consistent interpretation and assessment. The ebook also provides templates and guidance for interpreting assessment results, sharing them with stakeholders, and developing action plans for program improvement.

The final sections of the ebook contain a series of research reports that form the evidence base for the SK Quality Tool. These reports cover:

- **The Saskatchewan Differential Monitoring, Key Indicator, and Risk Assessment Pilot Study:** This study validated the use of abbreviated inspection reviews for both child care centers and homes in Saskatchewan, demonstrating a high correlation with comprehensive reviews.
- **The Saskatchewan Key Indicator System Report:** This report details the statistical

methodology used to identify the key predictor rules that form the basis of the SK Quality Tool.

- **The Saskatchewan Weighted Risk Assessment Study:** This study ranked regulatory requirements based on the risk of harm to children, providing another layer of data for the differential monitoring approach.
- **Validation Studies:** The ebook includes reports on the validation of the key indicator and risk assessment methodologies, as well as a separate validation study for the SK Quality Tool itself, which was found to have a strong positive correlation with the ECERS/ITERS scales.

In essence, the ebook provides a comprehensive overview of the SK Quality Tool, from its theoretical underpinnings and research validation to its practical application in the field of early childhood education.