



The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development

## DEFINITIONS OF QUALITY IN ECCD

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The Consultative Group Secretariat

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### ■ EXAMPLE 1—DIMENSIONS OF ECCD PROGRAMMES THAT CAN BE ASSESSED TO DETERMINE QUALITY

Goals for children posited by Veda Prakash. 1983. "Battling Costs for Quality and Quantity: Emerging Response in early Childhood Care and Education." *Notes, Comments... (Child Family Community)*, Digest No. II. Paris: UNESCO/UNICEF, 63

- develop self-identity and self-esteem;
- learn to live with other children and to respect the rights of others as well as valuing their own;
- learn to work and play independently, be at ease about being away from home and able to accept help and directions from adults;
- be curious and seek answers to questions;
- be creative and imaginative;
- strengthen physical skills, using large and small muscles;
- widen their language skill, both in listening and in speaking;
- control aggression and destructiveness;
- channel spontaneous energies to orderly behavior and work;
- grow intellectually and emotionally.

## ■ EXAMPLE 2—STANDARDS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMME QUALITY

Identified by L. J. Schweinhart, H. V. Barnes, & D. P. Weikart. 1993. *Significant Benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 27*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.

The authors define the elements of quality derived from their own research, and that of others, as follows:

- effective programmes use explicitly stated, developmentally appropriate active-learning curricula that support children=s self-initiated learning activities;
- effective teaching staff have been trained in early childhood education and do not change jobs often;
- effective administrators provide systematic inservice training on site and supervisory support of their staff=s curriculum implementation;
- effective programmes maintain classes of fewer than twenty 3-to 5-year olds for every pair of teaching adults;
- in effective programmes, staff treat parents as partners and engage in extensive outreach to parents, such as home visits at least monthly, to learn from parents and to help them understand the curriculum and their children=s development. (17)

L. J. Schweinhart. 1981. What Makes a Quality Preschool?, Keys to Early Childhood Education, Vol 2, No. 4, April 1981.

Following are seven key elements which our research indicates are essential to a quality preschool programme. We feel many of these principles are also valid for daycare centers, kindergartens, family daycare homes and other settings where adults provide care for other people=s children.

***Programme well managed, well monitored.*** Supervisors must know what is going on in their programmes on a day-to-day basis. They should be readily available to provide support, give realistic feedback, help solve problems and reward a job well done.

***Parents involved in significant ways in educational development of the children.*** Teaching staff should work with parents as partners. Vehicles for parent involvement might include home visits, parent meetings with opportunities for parents to volunteer to help in the classroom.

***At least two adults in classroom to provide overall support and individual attention to children.*** This team approach is more important than class size (which often gets more attention); a team has much greater flexibility in dealing with situations than does a solitary adult.

***Significant amount of time spent in child/adult interaction.*** Talking, sharing ideas, playing together—these are essential, with the child initiating much of the activity. Children need adults to challenge and support them in their activities.

***Teachers trained in the curriculum, able to work together as a team and under supervision.*** It is teachers who make quality programmes work, training and support for them is crucial.

***Evaluation component in programme emphasizing day-to-day quality maintenance.***

Evaluation tells administrators when a programme is on the right track, or when it is in trouble.

Emphasizing quality will encourage teacher creativity and experimentation with new methods. It should never be equated with some narrow definition of perfection that keeps enthusiastic, competent teachers from following their creative hunches. Only through being with creative adults can young children learn to express their own creative impulses.

■ **EXAMPLE 3—"CRITERIOS DE CALIDAD"**

For our readers who read Spanish, we are including the following definition of quality from Peru (we apologize that in this version the accents are missing; for a correct version see the printed article).

FRANCISCO BASILI, "**Criterios de Calidad**". Un trabajo preparado para presentacion en el "II Simposio Latinoamericano sobre Participacion de la Familia y la Comunidad en la Atencion Integral al Nino Menor de Seis Anos," Lima, Peru, Diciembre 1994.

En el trabajo, Basili propone los siguientes criterios de calidad:

1. "La Actividad: incluye la exploracion libre, el juego, la oferta de repertorios sensoriales, las ceremonias, ocupaciones, pasatiempos no reglamentados, produccion artistica, las rutinas, la eleccion libre de proyectos. Juzgamos que se favorece la actividad si el ambiente contiene elementos estimuladores, si el agente educativo combina la permision con la induccion de actividades, si los ninos y ninas complementan la accion fisica con el enfrentamiento de problemas que ejerciten las capacidades de discriminacion, asociacion, relacionamiento. Hemos asociado a la actividad las nociones de disfrute, descubrimiento, desarrollo y disciplina. Hemos considerado que no basta que el servicio mismo propicie las actividades, porque hace falta que las induzca en el hogar. Hablamos de control de actividades y de actividades de control, cuya finalidad es explicitar competencias o deficit de performance. Hablamos de programacion de actividades y de tiempos de improvisacion donde los propios ninos y ninas escogen ocupacion, determinan el ritmo y atribuyen valor a las actividades. Hablamos de recuperacion de actividades ordinarias de la vida familiar y comunal y de actividades del servicio como distanciamientos para que la familia y la comunidad reflexionen sobre sus propias practicas de crianza."
2. "La Integralidad: implica la atencion del conjunto de aspectos relacionados con el desarrollo y el bienestar del nino y la nina. Someramente, la salud, la nutricion, la seguridad, el desarrollo psicosocial. El campo de la salud se ha ampliado considerablemente. Hemos pasado de una preocupacion basica por la supervivencia, frecuentemente circunscrita a la inmunizacion, el manejo de diarreas y enfermedades respiratorias y la higiene de las personas, el agua y los alimentos, a incluir aspectos como la salud mental, el desarrollo de los sentidos, el despistaje temprano de lesiones organicas de consecuencias conductuales. De modo similar,

en nutrición nos preocupamos no solo por la dieta adecuada, incluimos cuestiones como costoefectividad en el manejo almacenamiento, preparación y distribución de los alimentos, palatabilidad, relación entre hábitos alimentarios de las familias y comunidades, y, seguridad alimentaria...En cuanto al desarrollo psicosocial, el campo se ha ampliado extraordinariamente. Quizá los conceptos más promisorios de esta ampliación sean el de talentos y el de desarrollo emocional, que han llevado a revalorar la capacidad de los agentes de los servicios para establecer relaciones personalizadas con cada uno de los niños y niñas. Ambos conceptos parecen sugerir una pedagogía del cariño para la cual las meras calificaciones profesionales podrían resultar insuficientes. Aun cuando sentimos que ya es bastante amplio este concepto, falta añadir que hoy integralidad incluye cuestiones de desarrollo familiar y comunitario, y cuestiones ambientales.”

3. "La Participación: Hoy, la participación desde la definición de políticas sobre infancia y desarrollo social, el diseño de los proyectos y, de allí en adelante, la participación en la gestión, en la programación y el desarrollo de las actividades, la evaluación, el control de recursos propios y la búsqueda de financiamiento nuevo. La participación incluye a los niños y niñas, sus familias, las organizaciones de la comunidad, las instancias municipales. Implica al conjunto de los agentes que brindan el servicio y de los usuarios que pueden calificarlo. Participación evoca la idea de una pedagogía del poder, es decir de un aprendizaje sobre las posibilidades que tenemos para involucrarnos en la producción de realidad, en la ejecución de proyectos elegidos. Por eso los servicios deben ser instancias en las que se refuerza y realiza la democracia.”

4. "La Pertinencia: Hoy los servicios deben atender al enraizamiento en la realidad de las familias y comunidades, pero deben abrir a la diversidad de los hallazgos y tensiones de la modernidad. Hablamos de pertinencia de las actividades respecto al desarrollo individual de los niños y niñas, de pertinencia de los diseños respecto a las competencias de los agentes de los servicios, de pertinencia de los propósitos y de los usos respecto a las expectativas de las comunidades, de pertinencia ambiental.”

#### ■ EXAMPLE 4—ELEMENTS OF QUALITY FOR ECD PROGRAMMES FOR CHILDREN UNDER THREE YEARS OF AGE: CRECHE PARENTALE-FRANCE.

As summarized in M. Woodhead. 1996. *In Search of the Rainbow: Pathways to Quality in Large Scale Programmes for Young Disadvantaged Children*. Final Report to Bernard van Leer Foundation, The Hague, Netherlands, 63.

- an environment full of specially-constructed physical materials, objects, tools and activities, to which children are given relatively free access;
- high levels of individualized adult attention available to children, and tuned in to their immediate concerns (for some of the time at least); a variety of different adults available to respond to child requests;
- egalitarian relationship between adults and children, founded on joint negotiation and exploration (at least for some parts of the day);

- the active involvement of fathers as well as mothers, playing with their children and carrying out routine child-care tasks including nappy-changing;
- a context of diverse experiences and opportunities for exploration, including diversity among caregivers, in terms of ethnic/cultural/religious beliefs, styles of dress and behavior;
- a shared goal of conceptual representation, a systematic generalized way of making sense of a complex physical world;
- technical mastery over activities, constructional toys, the equipment and procedures of the environment;
- a strong emphasis on verbal communication, articulation of concepts and shared understandings;
- early introduction of symbolic representations, through drawings, picture books, stories, etc.

#### ■ EXAMPLE 5—EARLY CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENT RATING SCALE (ECERS)

T. Harms & R. Clifford. 1980. New York: Teachers College Press. Cited in J. Brophy and J. Statham. 1994. "Measure for Measure: Values, Quality and Evaluation," in P. Moss & A. Pence (Eds.) *Valuing Quality in Early Childhood Services: New Approaches to Defining Quality*. New York: Teachers College Press, 67-68.

Individual Scales in the ECERS organized by main topic areas

##### PERSONAL CARE ROUTINES

–greeting/departing

–meals/snacks

–nap/rest

–diapering/toileting

##### FURNISHINGS AND DISPLAY FOR CHILDREN

–furnishings (routine)

–furnishings (learning)

–furnishings (relaxation)

–room arrangement

–child related display

## LANGUAGE-REASONING EXPERIENCES

- understanding language
- using language
- reasoning
- informal language

## FINE AND GROSS MOTOR ACTIVITIES

- fine motor
- supervision (fine motor)
- gross motor space
- gross motor equipment
- gross motor time
- supervision (gross motor)

## CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

- art
- music/movement
- blocks
- sand/water
- dramatic play
- schedule (creative)
- supervision (creative)

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- space (alone)
- free play
- group time

- cultural awareness
- tone
- exceptional provisions

ADULT NEEDS

- adult personal area
- adult opportunities
- adult meeting area
- parent provisions

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EXAMPLE OF SCALE FROM THE ECERS

<i>Item</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>
Meals/snacks	Meals/snacks served on an haphazard irregular schedule and of questionable nutritional value	Well-balanced meals/snacks on a regular schedule but strict atmosphere, stress on conformity, meals not used as a pleasant social time or to build self-help skills ( <i>e.g. pouring milk, setting table, etc.</i> )		Well-balanced meals/ snacks provided on regular schedule. Staff member(s) sit with children and provide pleasant social environment during meals and when possible at snacks. Small group size permits conversation.		Everything in 5 plus time planned as a learning experience, including: self-help skills; talking about children's interests, events of the day and aspects of foods ( <i>color, where foods come from, etc.</i> )	

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■ EXAMPLE 6—QUALITY IN SERVICES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN: EUROPEAN COMMISSION CHILDCARE NETWORK

From: European Commission Childcare Network. 1990. *Quality in Services for Young Children: A Discussion Paper*. Brussels.

We have organized our indicators of quality into 10 areas or blocks. We stress that these areas are inter-related, and that there is no hierarchy of preference or priority within them: different people may attach different priority to them and some may even reject some areas altogether and propose others. The indicators in each are expressed as questions, are by no means exhaustive, but provide some indication of the kind of issues which might be explored.

***Accessibility and usage.*** This set of criteria examines the process of entry to services and the adaptability and flexibility of the service to individual family needs.

- How easy is it for a child to gain access to a particular service?
- What kinds of admissions procedures are involved?
- What priorities are imposed?
- Who controls admissions?
- Are appeals possible against decisions which have been made?
- Does the parent have problems about affordability of the services?
- Is it easy to travel from home to the service?
- Is negotiation possible about hours attended, or about days attended?
- How flexible or rigid are the routines of the nursery or childcare setting?

***Environment.*** This set of criteria examines different aspects of the physical environment of services and covers a wide range of factors from health and safety to aesthetics.

- Are the surroundings inside and outside safe?
- Do they promote health?
- Do they guard against obvious hazards and dangers?
- Is there access for children or adults with disabilities?
- Are the surroundings attractive and well-designed?
- Do they look aesthetically pleasing?
- Are the rooms sufficiently spacious to allow free movement but sufficiently cosy for quiet activities and relaxation?
- Are the kitchen facilities good?
- Are the children allowed any access to the kitchen?

- Is the food nutritious?
- Is the food attractively presented?
- Are mealtimes a pleasure or a chore?
- Are the cloakrooms and toilets of a good standard?
- Is there adequate storage space?
- Is there adequate space for staff?
- Is there adequate space for parents?

***Learning Activities.*** This set of criteria refers to activities which develop and enhance children's cognitive and social development...The criteria we present in this block are very general, and we recognize that they may have already been developed in much more sophisticated ways in different countries.

- Is there a comprehensive range of activities for the children?
- Are there opportunities to develop oral and written linguistic skills?
- Are there opportunities to develop bilingual skills?
- Are there opportunities to develop basic mathematical concepts?
- Are musical expression and musical skills encouraged?
- Do children have an opportunity to express themselves through play and drama, puppetry and mime?
- Is interest in biological and scientific concepts encouraged?
- Are there opportunities to develop muscular co-ordination and bodily control?
- Do children understand basic concepts of health and hygiene?
- Do children understand food purchase and food preparation?
- Do children have an understanding of their local community and the activities which go on in it?
- Is the nursery or child care setting well-equipped with a range of furnishings and activities which promote learning?
- Can children negotiate some control over the structure and pace of activities?

***Relationships.*** Relationships exist at a variety of levels and in many permutations: between adult or caregiver and child; between child and child; between the adults themselves whose own interaction and comportment inevitably set standards for the children.

-Do staff or caregivers have knowledge, understanding and experience of child development?

-Do they interact with children with warmth and kindness?

-Is there consistency of staff with children?

-Are relationships stable?

-Do individual members of staff develop relationships with particular children and know and understand their personal histories?

-How do staff treat children who behave irritably or irritatingly or who are withdrawn?

-Do staff respond to the demands, enquiries and requests of children promptly and with respect?

-Do staff cope well with special events or emergencies?

-Do the staff actively promote learning?

-Are there men as well as women as role models?

-Do staff emphasize and develop co-operative play and support relationships between children?

-Are there child-initiated activities?

-Are there adequate opportunities for play amongst children without adult interruptions?

-Are there spaces for children to play that are not constantly monitored by adults?

-Can children choose who they want to play with?

-Are there same-age peers, younger children and older children?

-Are brothers and sisters allowed to be companions?

-Are relationships between children stable?

-Are friendships supported?

-Do adults relate well to each other?

-Are the adults in hierarchial relationships to one another?

-Are there friendships among adults?

-Do the staff working with the children enjoy their work, feel pleased and confident in it?

***Parents Views.*** This set of criteria explores the nature of partnership between parents and those looking after their children.

-Are there ways of measuring parents opinions or views about the childcare setting?

-Do parents feel welcome?

-Do parents have enough time to leave their child at the beginning and greet their child at the end of a day or session?

-Do parents feel they have enough information about the progress of their child?

-Are parents able to give information about the progress of their child?

-Are parents informed about the family activities and routines and the reasons for them?-Can parents comment on or contribute to these activities and routines?

-Can parents stay or join in mealtimes or some other activity of the nursery or childcare setting?

-Are parents involved in discussing or setting the curriculum or programme for the nursery or childcare setting?

-Can parents be involved in the management of the nursery or in the selections of staff or in the financial control of resources?

***The Community.*** This set of criteria refers to the community...The extent to which the nursery or childcare setting is sensitive to these external influences is also a useful criteria of quality.

-Is the nursery or childcare setting part of its local community?

-Do any of the staff live locally?

-Are the interests and priorities of the local environment reflected in daily activities?

-Do children visit local facilities?

-Do local people who are not parents and staff have an opportunity to visit the nursery or childcare setting?

-Are there other activities which go on in the place where the children are being cared for and educated?

-Can the children take part in community events or festivals?

***Valuing Diversity.*** This set of criteria refers to diversity, the extent to which the concept of normality is explored and extended and heterogeneity accepted.

- How are issues of gender recognized and accommodated?
- How do staff and children deal with race, even if there are not black children or staff/caregivers immediately present?
- How are the needs of children, staff or parents with disabilities identified and met?
- How sensitive and tolerant are staff and children to individual differences?
- Is there a conscious attempt to understand and challenge stereotypes, and to represent and allow for cultural and physical diversity in the materials and equipment which are used in daily activities?
- Are extra resources and support available if necessary?

***Assessment and Outcome Measures.*** These criteria refer to measures of children's progress and the extent to which specific problems or specific talents are recognized and accommodated.

- Are children observed regularly?
- Is the progress and development of individual children monitored, recorded and discussed?
- Is the autonomy and privacy of individual children respected?
- Is confidentiality respected?
- Are the records available to parents?
- Are parents observations and comments used in the assessment?
- Is specialist help available when necessary, either for special medical or psychological problems or for enabling the development of particular skills such as music or art or swimming?

***Cost Benefits.*** This set of criteria refers to value for money.

- How are the costs of the nursery or childcare setting calculated?
- How are the benefits to parents and children weighed?
- Once capital costs are met, are calculations made for rent, rates, insurance, heating and lighting?
- Are administrative and maintenance costs included?
- How are the salaries or payment of those looking after children calculated?

- Do costs include adequate resources and replacement of consumable items?
- Is there regular coverage for staff illness or staff training?
- Is staff recruitment included?
- Is the food budget adequate for a balanced, varied and attractive diet?
- Are costs included for visits and travel of staff and children?
- Who meets these costs?
- Do parents contribute?
- Are some staff unpaid because they are working as volunteers?
- Are these costs examined in relation to user satisfaction?
- Are costs examined in relation to absentee rates and staff turnover?
- Are costs examined in relation to child turnover?
- Are costs examined in relation to outcome measures for children?

***Ethos.*** The ethos and regime of the nursery or childcare setting is the balance of all these quality indicators, the extent to which they are integrated and used in a coherent fashion. The more positive and coherent the programme or organization, the more it is related to the value base, the more likely it is that good quality will be achieved. We restate those value here.

- Does the nursery or childcare setting promote good health?
- Does the nursery or childcare setting encourage children to be spontaneous and express themselves freely?
- Does the nursery or childcare setting ensure that children are respected as individuals?
- Does the nursery or childcare setting promote self-confidence and zest for learning?
- Does the nursery or childcare setting encourage a stable learning and caring environment?
- Does the nursery or childcare setting encourage sociability, friendship and co-operation with others?
- Does the nursery or childcare setting recognize equal opportunities irrespective of gender, race or disability?
- Is cultural diversity fully expressed?

- Is the nursery or childcare setting fully sensitive to family and community influences?
- Are the children happy?
- Does the nursery or childcare setting have a statement of aims and objectives which supports these values?
- Do all the staff agree with and support these objectives?
- Are there clear strategies for putting these aims and objectives into practice?
- Does the organization, routine and programme of activities reflect the aims, objectives and strategies?
- Are there factors which work against achieving these aims and objectives?
- How accountable is the nursery or childcare setting, and to whom?
- What are the criteria?

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*Early Childhood Counts: Programming Resources for Early Childhood Care and Development.*  
CD-ROM. The Consultative Group on ECCD. Washington D.C.: World Bank, 1999.