

# PARENT AWARE

## Environmental Self-Assessment Checklist

### Preschool Classrooms

Center Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Preschool Classroom Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Classroom Enrollment: \_\_\_\_\_

Lead Teacher Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Ages: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of the Environmental Self-Assessment is for teachers to evaluate the resources, practices, and learning environment in their preschool classrooms. Teachers are encouraged to use this self-assessment to critically evaluate and celebrate their strengths, as well as identify areas for growth.

#### BEFORE YOU BEGIN THIS SELF-ASSESSMENT, THERE ARE A FEW THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

1. This survey is **NOT A TEST**. There are no right or wrong responses. The goal is to help you identify your own strengths and areas for growth.
2. You must complete all the questions in this assessment and create goals to earn a 2 Star Rating or higher. Your responses to individual items will not be used in the calculation of your Rating.
3. We hope the questions are interesting to you, and that you choose to answer all of the questions **HONESTLY**.

#### DIRECTIONS

There are three parts to the Environmental Self-Assessment. First, complete the self-assessment by responding to each item honestly. Second, review your responses to identify your strengths and areas for potential growth. Third, write goals and identify concrete action steps to accomplish these goals.

#### DEFINITIONS

**Always or A lot:** 90% of the time this holds true.

**Sometimes or Somewhat:** At least 50% of the time this holds true.

**Rarely or Not at All:** Less than 20% of the time or NEVER holds true.



# Foundational Quality

Supervision	Yes	No
Program has supervision policies and procedures.		
Licensing ratios are met and children are within sight and hearing at all times, consistent with licensing regulations.		
Extra supervision is provided to children who are physically aggressive (such as children who push, hit, or bite) to reduce the possibility of injuries.		
Safety	Yes	No
Equipment and materials are in good repair.		
Precautions to protect against indoor and outdoor hazards have been taken (e.g., electrical outlets covered, no easy access to busy roads).		
A well-stocked First Aid kit and manual are quickly accessible.		
On a monthly basis, provider checks for information about the recall of products that are in use in the classroom.		
Program uses infant bottles, plastic containers and toys that do not contain polyvinyl chloride (PVC), bisphenol A (BPA), phthalates or lead.		
There are special storage bins to put toys that have been in a child's mouth in, for cleaning.		
Infection Control	Yes	No
Appropriate supplies are accessible for maintaining cleanliness.		
Children are taught to use age-appropriate health practices (e.g., washing hands, brushing teeth, using tissues to blow noses, covering sneezes).		
Staff uses appropriate procedures to stop the spread of germs (e.g., MN Department of Health hand-washing, diapering, exclusion of sick children).		
Floors, tables, and toys are cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected on a regular basis.		
Furnishings for Play and Learning	Yes	No
Furnishings are child-sized.		
There is a cozy area where one to two can rest or play quietly.		
Toys are within reach of children (except when eating, sleeping, or on a field trip).		
Arrangement of Child Care Space	Yes	No
The child care space is arranged to direct movement around, rather than through, activity areas.		

## Social-Emotional Development and Environment

How much are the following like you?	Not at all	Somewhat	A lot
I respect children's varying developmental stages, abilities, and needs.			
I am sensitive to children's cultural, family, and socioeconomic backgrounds.			
I use positive guidance and redirection when children misbehave.			
I set limits to help children manage their emotions and behavior, rather than use harsh actions or language.			
In our classroom, we talk about the importance of respecting all people - even people who are different from us.			
I am warm and calm when I speak and interact with children.			
I show children I'm interested in what they are saying by making eye contact, getting down to their level, and using appropriate physical contact.			
I help children name their feelings and offer ideas for how to appropriately express them.			
I encourage children to listen to one another and solve their own conflicts.			

## Language Development

How much are the following like you?	Not at all	Somewhat	A lot
I try to expand children's language by introducing them to new words and ideas.			
I ask open-ended questions that challenge children to express their ideas.			
I give children simple directions that consist of three or four steps.			
I listen and respond to children's attempts to communicate both verbally and non-verbally.			
I encourage and create opportunities for children to talk to one another.			
I communicate with children in a variety of ways (e.g., ask questions, give answers, make statements, share ideas, play).			

# Learning – Classroom Arrangement

	Yes	No
The classroom is arranged to direct movement around, rather than through, activity areas.		
There is a defined, well-organized area in the classroom dedicated to fine motor activities.		
There is a defined, well-organized area in the classroom dedicated to math-related activities.		
There is a defined, well-organized area in the classroom dedicated to science-related activities.		

# Learning – Blocks and Dramatic Play

RESOURCES: Take a moment to think about your preschool classroom, are the following available and within reach of children?	Yes	No	
<b>BLOCKS</b>			
Two or more block sets (with 20 blocks each) that are different in weight, size, or shape?			
Block accessories such as toy people, cars/trucks, animals, road signs, and/or garages?			
<b>DRAMATIC PLAY</b>			
Play furniture (e.g., woodworking bench, kitchen and/or doll furnishings)?			
Prop boxes?			
Puppets or dolls?			
Play telephone?			
Toy cars/trucks, common animals, and/or sets of people of different races, genders, and ages?			
Dress-up clothes or accessories (e.g., hats, purses, ties) that support a variety of occupations without regard to gender?			
Play kitchen/housekeeping materials (e.g., pots, pans, dishes, food)?			
Play materials representing a diversity of cultural and ethnic groups?			
Is your supply of available dramatic play materials appropriate in the amount (e.g., allowing 3+ children to use the materials simultaneously) and offer sufficient variety?			
PRACTICES: How often do you do the following?	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
I add or exchange from storage: blocks, block accessories, and dramatic play items.			
I change dramatic play themes based on the ages and interests of children.			
I plan activities to add to dramatic play experiences (e.g., role-play, prop boxes, field trips, books, guests).			
I create opportunities for children and their families to share experiences through storytelling, puppets, or other props			

# Learning – Literacy

RESOURCES: Take a moment to think about your preschool classroom, are the following available and within reach of children?	Yes	No	
<b>BOOKS</b>			
A book for each child?			
A variety of developmentally appropriate books in good condition?			
Pictures and books that reflect the different cultures and backgrounds of children and families served in the program?			
Concept books that teach opposites (e.g., up-down, in-out, same-different, cause-effect)?			
Does the classroom have AT LEAST FIVE other books representing a mix of the following? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Multicultural books reflecting diverse races and cultures</li> <li>- Bilingual books</li> <li>- Books reflecting diverse abilities</li> <li>- Fantasy (i.e., pretend) stories</li> <li>- Books with rhymes and repetition of phrases</li> <li>- Concept books (e.g., literacy, math, nature, science)</li> <li>- Books about problem-solving or sharing</li> <li>- Books with familiar objects used at home or at child care</li> </ul>			
<b>WRITING MATERIALS</b>			
At least three boards (e.g., magnetic, chalk, wipe, flannel, chart paper)?			
At least three lined/unlined paper, writing tools?			
At least three literacy games/activities?			
At least three templates, stamps, letter/word cards, and/or activity books?			
At least three writing props in dramatic play, block, or other area?			
<b>PRACTICES: How often do you do the following?</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Always</b>
I engage preschoolers when reading books by asking questions about the characters and the story.			
I help children learn about sequences through books (e.g., beginning, middle, end).			
I repeatedly read children's favorite books to give them the opportunity to notice the same sound patterns.			
I use games and books to help children make the connection between words and pictures.			
I display writing examples in the classroom.			
I encourage children's interests and attempts to copy or write letters, including their own name.			
I offer opportunities for children to draw and print using markers, crayons, and pencils.			

## Learning – Fine Motor Skills

Learning – Fine Motor Skills				
<b>RESOURCES:</b> Take a moment to think about your preschool classroom, are AT LEAST THREE of EACH of the following available and within reach of children?		Yes	No	
Manipulative toys (e.g., beads/strings, pegs with peg boards, nuts and bolts, Mr. Potato Head, toy train tracks)?				
Puzzles with different numbers and sizes of pieces?				
Interlocking blocks/fit-together toys (e.g., Lincoln Logs, bristle blocks, magnetic blocks)?				
Shape sorters?				
<b>PRACTICES:</b> How often do you do the following?		Rarely	Sometimes	Always
I help children develop an understanding of space (e.g., filling and emptying, building, observing from different viewpoints).				
I present new concepts in different ways, such as learning shapes through books, blocks, puzzles, and dramatic play.				
I provide adequate time and appropriate materials for small motor, drawing, cutting, and handwriting development.				

# Learning – Math and Science

RESOURCES: Take a moment to think about your preschool classroom, are AT LEAST THREE of EACH of the following available and within reach of children?	Yes	No	
<b>MATH</b>			
Collections of objects to count/sort (e.g., play money, pegboards)?			
Comparisons activity materials (e.g., nested cups, abacus, dominoes, playing cards)?			
Number recognition games/activities (e.g., clocks, calendar, number puzzles)?			
Shape recognition activities (e.g., matching cards, magnetic shapes)?			
Tools for measuring (e.g., balance, tape measure, ruler, scale, measuring cups)?			
<b>SCIENCE</b>			
Collections of natural objects (e.g., leaves, rocks)?			
Living things (e.g., plants, animals)?			
Nature/science activities (e.g., sink/float, sand/water, gardening, cooking)?			
Nature/science books or games (e.g., fact books, weather chart)?			
Tools for investigating the environment (e.g., magnets, magnifying glasses, binoculars, maps)?			
PRACTICES: How often do you do the following?	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
I ask children questions that involve the measurement of height, weight, length, and/or time.			
I offer opportunities for children to explore numbers, measurements, and patterns.			
I ask children questions that require them to make observations			
I encourage children to observe nature and make predictions (e.g., growing seeds, caring for animals, watching weather).			
I ask questions and have conversations with children that encourage them to describe space, location, shape, and object size in their own words.			

## Learning – Music, Movement and Art

RESOURCES: Take a moment to think about your preschool classroom, are AT LEAST THREE of EACH of the following available to children?	Yes	No	
<b>ART</b>			
Collage materials (e.g., yarn, felt, sticky tape, buttons, assorted paper, glitter, feathers)?			
Construction materials (e.g., clay, Play Doh, popsicle sticks, pipe cleaners, glue sticks)?			
Drawing materials (e.g., markers, crayons, colored pencils, chalk)?			
Painting materials (e.g., easel, watercolors, brushes, sponges)?			
<b>MUSIC AND MOVEMENT</b>			
CDs, records, or tapes with different music genres (e.g., classical, jazz, rock)?			
Movement toys (e.g., scarves, ribbons, parachutes)?			
Musical instruments?			
PRACTICES: How often do you do the following?	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
I give children opportunities to use a variety of art materials to express their ideas and creativity.			
I focus on the artistic process rather than the product when introducing art projects.			
I plan activities to extend children's understanding of art (e.g., artistic guests, field trips, art appreciation discussions, books on fine art).			
I encourage children to use scribbles, shapes, or pictures to represent their thoughts or ideas.			
I avoid playing loud background music that interferes with conversations.			
I expose children to a variety of music and introduce musical instruments from many cultures.			
I introduce children to a variety of musical experiences every day through singing during transitions or routines, playing different types of music, and dancing.			



## Learning – Physical Activity and Development

RESOURCES: Take a moment to think about your preschool classroom, are the following available for children?	Yes	No	
A variety of equipment in good repair?			
Playground equipment/structures?			
Portable (i.e., moveable) equipment?			
Ride-on toys?			
A designated space for indoor active play when weather prohibits going outside?			
PRACTICES: How often do you do the following?	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
I provide opportunities for physical activity each day (i.e., 60-90 minutes for toddlers, 90-120 minutes for preschoolers).			
I provide opportunities to engage in at least 60 minutes — and up to several hours — of unstructured physical activity each day.			
I provide parents/guardians with information about the importance of physical activity to their children's overall growth, development, and learning.			
I regularly join in children's active play and/or suggest ways the children can extend their active play.			
I regularly lead activities that promote the development of motor skills (e.g., two or more active games a day).			
I plan large-motor activities that encourage balancing, climbing, jumping, and pedaling daily.			

## Learning – Screen Time

How much are the following like you?	Not at all	Somewhat	A lot
I limit total screen time for children ages 2 and older to no more than 30 minutes/week.			
I limit children's use of computers to periods of 15 minutes or less/week.			
I do not use TV, DVDs, or computers with children under age 2.			
I do not use television/video viewing as a reward.			
	Yes	No	I don't know if we have a screen time policy
The program has and follows a written policy on screen time in preschool classrooms that includes staff behaviors, education and screen time use.			

## Healthy Eating – Eating Environment

Do the following describe the eating environment at your program?		Yes	No
Children are provided adequate time to eat meals and snacks.			
Children can predict when they will eat next and learn to regulate their eating accordingly.			
Dining furniture and eating utensils are developmentally appropriate.			
Family-style meal service is provided so young children have some choice in the types and amounts of food selected.			
Staff support and model healthy eating behaviors.			
How much are the following like you?	Not at all	Somewhat	A lot
I promote and maintain a pleasant mealtime environment, encouraging conversation and healthy eating.			
I never use food as a reward or punishment; children are encouraged but not forced to eat. (The two-bite rule is an example of forcing children to eat.)			
I sit with the children and eat the same foods.			

## Healthy Eating – Menus

Do the following describe your child care menus?	Yes	No
Accommodate cultural and ethnic diversity?		
Provide access to healthy beverages (e.g., water, 100% fruit juice, low-fat milk)?		
Accommodate food allergies and other special dietary needs?		
Limit (or avoid) foods that are high in sugar, saturated fat, and salt?		
Make drinking water available and accessible to children at all times?		
Follow the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans for meals and snacks?		
Follow Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or US Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines regarding milk (i.e., 12-23 months served only whole milk, 24+ months serve low-fat or fat-free milk)?		

## Healthy Eating – Parent Nutrition Education

Do the following describe your program?	Yes	No
Parents/guardians are encouraged to provide feedback to staff on the children's menus.		
Parents/guardians receive information about healthy eating, including information on nutrition when they first enroll their children.		
Snack and lunch menus are posted in a place convenient for parents/guardians to review.		

# Promoting Acceptance and Diversity

Do the following describe the curricula, program materials, and/or environment in your classroom?		Yes	No	
Children learn about different cultures?				
Images of people in non-traditional roles are shown?				
Materials reflect a variety of cultures, languages, abilities and talents, including those of families served by the program?				
Materials acknowledge traditional holidays celebrated by the majority culture, as well as those holidays that are unique to the culturally diverse children and families in the program?				
		Yes	No	
The program has and follows anti-bias policies and procedures which are written in families' home languages.				
I don't know if we have an anti-bias policy				
How much are the following like you?		Not at all	Somewhat	A lot
I expose children to languages other than their own.				
I communicate with children using the child's home language for common objects or people.				
I have received training on how to promote a multicultural classroom community.				
I highlight the diverse abilities and talents of children through books, posters, or materials.				
I make appropriate adjustments to meet the needs of children with different abilities.				
I communicate positive and supportive messages that challenge male/female roles, while also showing respect for the traditional role of men and women in other cultures.				
I model, through my attitudes, actions, and speech, respect for a variety of cultures, languages, abilities, and talents.				

## Provisions for Children with Special Needs

How much are the following like you?	Not at all	Somewhat	A lot
I follow Individual Education Plans (IEP), 504 Plans, or Individual Family Services Plans (IFSP) for children with a disability, as requested by parents.			
I am trained on how to meet the needs of the children with special needs.			
When special adaptive furnishings are required, I use them as directed by IEP, 504 Plan, IFSP or agreed upon by parents and staff.			
I seek health consultation on issues such as environmental adaptation, care provision, plan development, and training for preschool children with special needs.			
I make adjustments, as needed, to allow children of all abilities and skill levels to participate.			
I work with families and other professionals to promote child development and independence.			

## Environmental Self-Assessment Goals

**Review items from the Environment Self-assessment (ESA) for which you answered “No,” “Sometimes,” “Somewhat,” “Rarely” or “Not at all.”**

**Identify at least three of these and establish a goal for each one. These goals will be a part of your improvement plan.**

**If you marked items in the Foundational Quality Section as “No,” “Sometimes,” “Somewhat,” “Rarely” or “Not at all,” you must include these items in the three goals that you set.**

## Here is an example of how to develop a goal.

ESA Area	Goal	Steps to Accomplish Goal	Date Started	Date for Goal to be Accomplished
Healthy Eating	Use family-style meal service	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Buy plastic serving bowls and easy-grip slide-on spoon holders that allow for easy gripping and holding.</li> <li>2. Consider children’s ages and family cultural practices when deciding which foods they can serve themselves.</li> <li>3. For the first week, all children to serve themselves one food, then two foods the second week, and so on.</li> </ol>	9/1/2015	10/1/2015

# Your goals

ESA Area	Goal	Steps to Accomplish Goal	Date Started	Date for Goal to be Accomplished



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