Supporting Early Childhood Administrators
A SMORGASBORD OF RESOURCES

The following is a list of resources to help directors assess early child care and education programs. Tools used to assess different aspects of early child care and education programs are listed in several categories: director, families, program, and staff. Finally, there is an annotated bibliography of the books and videos.

DIRECTOR RESOURCES

Checklist (pp. 182–183)
Assess staff reactions to a proposed organizational change using this tool. By asking staff to anticipate if a proposed change will have a positive, negative, or zero impact their work, themselves, and their relationships with others, a director can tap into their feelings, assumptions, fears, and concerns about change.

Concerns Questionnaire (pp. 184–188)
The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine how an employee feels about using an early childhood innovation (the example given is the High/Scope curriculum, however, any innovation can be measured). Teachers are asked to rate concerns listed on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not true of me now, 5 = very true of me now) with an option for irrelevant. Concerns are then scored in six stages (awareness concerns, informational concerns, personal concerns, management concerns, consequence concerns, collaboration concerns, and refocusing concerns).

Director Self Review (pp. 33–37)
This tool is designed to be self-administered. Directors rate themselves on the following areas: program, work environment, budget and finance, public relations and community outreach, family relations, planning and administration, and professionalism.

Leadership Style (pp. 192–200)
Staff provide the director with feedback regarding his/her leadership style by checking statements that most nearly reflect their style relating to planning, work assignments and day-to-day operations, leadership philosophy, meetings, primary goals, evaluating staff performance, motivation, and role. Also found in the Leadership in Action book.

Multi-Rater Leadership Assessment (pp. 103–107)
Employees are asked to rate the director’s leadership style by rating traits demonstrated by the director on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Some traits include: accessible, collaborative, confident, ethical, fair, flexible, knowledgeable, objective, supportive, and visionary. A form summarizes multiple rater scores on each trait.

Supervisory Behavior Questionnaire (pp. 212–215)
Completed by an employee about his/her supervisor, this questionnaire provides feedback about the supervisory and evaluation processes at the center. This assessment focuses on the individual employee’s relationship with his/her immediate supervisor.
Identifying and Writing Fit Criteria (pp. 113–114)
This questionnaire is designed to get the director to think about their ideal job candidate. Directors are asked to write down criteria relating to various topics that would be useful for determining which applicants would be a good fit.

Program Administration Competencies (pp. 99–102)
This questionnaire is designed to get the director to think about their ideal job candidate. Directors are asked to write down criteria relating to various topics that would be useful for determining which applicants would be a good fit.

FAMILY RESOURCES

NAEYC Self-Assessment Family Survey
Family members provide valuable information about the quality of their children’s program. This questionnaire is used as part of the NAEYC self-study process. Family members are asked whether or not a series of statements apply to their child’s program.

Parent Feedback Survey (pp. 223–224)
Parents are an integral piece of the overall program quality equation in early childhood organizations. This assessment tool is designed as an easy-to-use survey to elicit parental feedback about center policies, procedures, and the overall quality of program services.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

Checklist for Effective Staff Meetings (pp. 99–100)
Learn about the components of an effective meeting. This tool can be used as an evaluation of meeting practices. Also found in Blueprint for Action, pp. 220–222.

Collaboration Questionnaire (pp. 108–109)
This tool measures the extent to which staff feel teaching at the center is a team effort directed toward the collaborative goal of improving center effectiveness. Staff are asked to check items which accurately reflect how they feel about staff functions. They then select three words from a list that most accurately describe other staff at the center. There is space to include suggestions for increasing collaboration and teamwork. Also found in Blueprint for Action, pp. 205–211.

Decision-Making Influence Questionnaire (pp. 77–78)
Staff are asked to assess their perceptions about their current and desired levels of decision-making influence in several areas. Also found in Blueprint for Action, pp. 207–211.

Early Childhood Work Environment Survey—short form (pp. 189–191)
Determine how staff feel about the early childhood center as a place to work related to ten dimensions of organizational climate (collegiality, professional growth, supervisor support, clarity, reward system, decision making, goal consensus, task orientation, physical setting, and innovativeness). The short form provides a global assessment of quality
Early Childhood Work Environment Survey—long form (Available from the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National Louis University, Wheeling, IL, McCormick Center.nl.edu)

The long form provides a more detailed profile of a center’s organizational climate with an accompanying interpretation of the results. The surveys are sent to the McCormick Center for processing and in approximately six weeks, the center receives a Work Environment Profile summarizing the collective perceptions of staff.

Goal Consensus and Communication Questionnaire (pp. 201–204)

This tool assesses staff perceptions of the effectiveness of communication at a center. Staff are asked to rank order program goals according to how important they feel they are at the center. In addition, staff are asked to indicate their level of agreement with a variety of statements about the center. There is also room to write suggestions for improving communication processes at a program.

Health and Safety Considerations

This checklist identifies potential problems and describes safety measures that will reduce the chances of injuries occurring. Staff are asked if the policies and practices are in place, need fixing, and who is responsible.

Meeting Evaluation (pp. 98)

Employees are asked to evaluate the meeting they just attended. On a scale of 0 to 5 employees are asked about a variety of meeting criterion such as the agenda, participation, climate, decisions, use of time, and facilitation.

Organizational Health Checklist (pp. 269–270)

Criteria for an effective child care organization are listed under the topics of planning and evaluation, motivation and control, group functioning, staff development, decision making and problem solving, financial management, and environmental interaction. Directors, staff members, and outside parties are encouraged to rate the organization’s performance on each of the criteria.

Program Administration Scale: Measuring Early Childhood Leadership and Management

Research consistently finds that high-quality administrative practices are crucial for ensuring the beneficial outcomes for children and families. This scale is designed to reliably measure the leadership and management practices of center-based early childhood organizations. The instrument looks at 25 items grouped in 10 categories that include: human resources development, personnel cost and allocation, center operations, child assessment, fiscal management, program planning and evaluation, family partnerships, marketing and public relations, technology, and staff qualifications.

“The Way Things are Done Around Here” (pp. 216–219)

Employees are asked to think about norms that they feel are shared expectations at the center. There is space provided for norms having to do with demeanor, use of space and materials, time and task orientation, professional conduct with children and parents, collegiality, communication and decision making, and change and experimentation. Once they have listed norms in each category, employees are asked to indicate whether or not they think each norm is useful. Norms that are listed by several people indicate they are fairly established, shared norms.
STAFF RESOURCES

Beliefs and Values Questionnaire (pp. 101-102)*
This assessment asks teachers to reflect on their attitudes and beliefs about children, parents, and their own teaching role in the classroom. The information gleaned from this assessment helps directors better understand their teachers’ values and beliefs, which serve as the foundation for their teaching practices.

Learning Style -- Appreciating Individual Differences (pp. 238–243)
Looks at an individual’s preference for processing and organizing information. Also looks at the environmental, emotional, sociological, and physical elements of a person’s preferred learning style. In addition, assesses an individual’s preferred perceptual modality—visual, auditory, or kinesthetic.

Classroom Observation—Infant-Toddler (pp. 232–237)
This tool assesses the quality of teaching practices in infant and toddler classrooms. It includes indicators assessing adult-child relationships, daily experiences, the environment, health, safety, and nutrition. Items are organized into three sections: those that apply to both age groups, infants and toddlers; those applying to toddlers only; and those applying to infants only. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = little evidence, 5 = a great deal of evidence).

Classroom Observation—Preschool (pp. 225-231)
Assessing teaching practices at the classroom level provides a fresh opportunity to ask the central questions that go to the core of our work in early care and education: Is this a good place for children? Is this a place where children can thrive—an environment that is safe; an environment that fosters friendship, learning, self-esteem, and joy? This tool focuses on four areas of preschool programming: interactions among teachers and children; the curriculum; the physical environment; and health, safety, and nutrition. Items are rated on a 5 point Likert scale (1 = little evidence, 5 = a great deal of evidence).

Communication Style Audit (pp. 254–257)
This is a quick and easy-to-use instrument to promote greater self awareness and sensitivity to others’ communication styles. Individuals determine if they use a direct, spirited, considerate, or systematic communication style.

Contributing to Meeting Productivity: What Role Do I Play? (p. 100)
This assessment is designed to help employees reflect on the actions and behaviors that contribute to productive meetings. They are asked about the frequency in which they exhibit certain behaviors during meetings (e.g., initiating ideas, seeking information, clarifying and elaborating, evaluating, encouraging, etc.).

Prekindergarten Teacher Problems Checklist (Pp. 255)
This checklist includes 60 items. Teachers are asked to rate problems on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not a problem, 5 = a serious problem). Each of the 60 items on the checklist may be categorized into one of seven broad problem areas (subordinate staff relations, control and nurturance of children, remediation, relations with supervisors, parent cooperation, management of time, management of routines). Individuals may use their lists to determine if their problems seem to cluster in one particular area. Ratings for the entire staff may also be compared for further analysis and planning.

Professional Activities Questionnaire (pp. 266-267)
This tool assesses the type and variety of activities an individual engages in that promote professionalism. Information elicited from this questionnaire will provide important background data on prospective candidates for employment at a center.
Observation and Evaluation: Substitutes or Prospective Staff (p. 197)
This tool evaluates substitutes or prospective staff on observable behaviors. Staff are given ratings of good, average, or poor. There is space for examples of behavior to be provided. The person completing the evaluation is also asked to indicate their conclusions about the applicant on several topics.

Staff Evaluation Form (p. 257)
Whether using this tool to evaluate staff or having staff evaluate themselves, this tool provides information on general work habits, attitudes and skills with parents, attitudes and skills with children, and attitudes and skills with class. Teachers are rated on the frequency (frequently, occasionally, or never) in which they demonstrate behaviors, attitudes, and skills. There is space provided for writing examples that substantiate the rating.

Staff Orientation Assessment (p. 122)
Staff are asked five questions relating to the orientation process. Information gleaned from this assessment will be helpful for improving staff orientation.

Team Effectiveness Rating Scale (p. 5)
Staff are asked to rate the effectiveness of their team on 10 items. Items include: clarity of goals, cohesion, sensitivity, openness, handling conflict, decision making, participation, evaluation, control, and use of member resources.

Early Childhood Job Satisfaction Survey (pp. 258–265)
This survey is designed to find out how staff feel about different facets of their job in order to understand those aspects of their work that contribute most to job satisfaction, and those which they would like to improve. Staff are asked how they feel about a variety of statements, how close their present position resembles their ideal job, what job characteristics they value the most, and what are the most satisfying and frustrating things about their present job. Also available for free download from the McCormick Center (McCormick Center.nl.edu)

Tuning In to Your Psychological Type (pp. 245-251)
This survey looks at different preferences for how individuals perceive the world and make decisions that guide everyday behavior. The tool serves as a shorter version of the Myers Briggs Type Indicator and assesses psychological type along four dimensions: extraversion/introversion, sensing/intuition, thinking/feeling, and judging/perceiving.

BOOKS

The Art of Leadership
This 350-page, two-volume set is a practical, hands-on, real-world guide for child care administrators. Included are 81 articles written by 30 recognized experts on child care administration as well as ideas from over 200 of our nation’s most successful, professional directors. A must-have resource for effective management of early childhood programs. Includes several assessment tools.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Publisher/Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of Practices in Early Elementary Classrooms (APEEC)</td>
<td>Hemmeter, M., &amp; Maxwell, K. (2001). New York, NY: Teachers College Press. [<a href="http://www.tcpress.com">www.tcpress.com</a>]</td>
<td>The APEEC is the first scale designed to evaluate the use of developmentally appropriate practices in the early elementary classroom. Developed for classrooms serving both children with and without disabilities, the APEEC can be used to evaluate the degree of developmental appropriateness in inclusive classrooms.</td>
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<td>Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)</td>
<td>Pianta, R., LaParo, K., Hamre, B. (2007). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks.</td>
<td>A reliable and valid assessment used to measure teacher-child interactions. Allows teachers to see their areas of strength as well as pinpoint specific teacher behaviors that need to be modified or changed in order to improve classroom practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEC Recommended Practices in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education</td>
<td>Sandall, S., McLean, M., &amp; Smith, B. (2000). Denver, CO: Sopris West</td>
<td>This book includes recommended practices in direct services (e.g., assessment, intervention, family-based practices) and indirect services (e.g., personnel preparation, policies, procedures, and systems change). Strategies for using the recommended practices are also included.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEC Recommended Practices Program Assessment: Improving Practices for Young Children with Special Needs and Their Families</td>
<td>DEC. (2001). Denver, CO: Sopris West</td>
<td>A supplement to DEC Recommended Practices in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education, this resource will help you assess and improve the quality of services you provide to young children with disabilities and to their families. Learn to evaluate direct services and indirect supports, determine the strengths and needs of your program, and much more.</td>
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Environment Rating Scales
The ECERS-R, ITERS-R, SACCERS, and FCCERS-R assess program quality. The tools can be used by program directors for supervision and program improvement, by teaching staff for self-assessment, by agency staff for monitoring, in teacher training programs, and by family child care providers.

Family-Friendly Communication for Early Childhood Programs
Partnering with families is a must. This book provides clear, readable messages for parents on everyday topics ranging from biting to the role of play that can be easily incorporated into newsletters and bulletin boards.

Go Green Rating Scale
This research-based rating scale helps early childhood professionals determine the level of environmental health and safety in their early childhood settings and explains why particular scores are earned.

A Great Place to Work—Creating a Healthy Organizational Climate
This book helps directors define more precisely how different dimensions of the center contribute to the quality of work life for staff. Looks at the program in terms of collegiality, opportunities for professional growth, supervisor support, clarity, reward system, decision making, goal consensus, task orientation, physical setting, and innovativeness. Provides practical ideas for how administrators can improve the quality of their centers.

Leadership in Action: How Effective Directors Get Things Done
Another book in the Director’s Toolbox management series for directors, this book focuses on the management and leadership. Leaders are encouraged to examine themselves by developing an awareness of their values, ideals, behaviors, and talents.

Making the Most of Meetings: A Practical Guide
Part of the Director’s Toolbox management series for directors, this book focuses on developing the skills necessary to conduct effective meetings. Many different aspects of meetings are addressed including methods for different meetings, steps for preparing an agenda, roles of those involved in meetings, and strategies for managing discussions.

Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools: A Quick Reference Guide
Promoting healthy behaviors and preventing the spread of infectious diseases are common goals of parents, caregivers, teachers, and health professionals. Filled with helpful fact sheets, charts, and sample forms, this quick reference guide provides information you need to know—fast—about the introduction and spread of infectious diseases in group settings.

Managing Quality in Young Children’s Programs: The Leader’s Role
Addresses the role of previous and current administrators of early childhood programs. Issues such as professionalism, career development, and leadership are discussed and linked to current policy and practice.

Preschool Program Quality Assessment (PQA): Form A—Classroom Items
A rating instrument designed to evaluate the quality of early childhood programs and identify staff training needs. Assesses key aspects of program quality, including adult-child interaction, learning environment, daily routine, curriculum planning and assessment, parent involvement and family services, staff qualifications and development, and program management.
Program Administration Scale: Measuring Early Childhood Leadership and Management
Research consistently finds that high-quality administrative practices are crucial for ensuring the beneficial outcomes for children and families. This scale is designed to reliably measure the leadership and management practices of center-based early childhood organizations—the only instrument of its kind to focus exclusively on organization-wide administrative issues. The instrument looks at 25 items grouped in 10 categories that include: human resources development, personnel cost and allocation, center operations, child assessment, fiscal management, program planning and evaluation, family partnerships, marketing and public relations, technology, and staff qualifications.

Quick Quality Check for Infant and Toddler Programs
This is a quick, practical and easy-to-use method for measuring and improving care in infant and toddler classrooms. Helps directors evaluate both the quality and consistency of care provided in their infant and toddler programs. This book also measures aspects of quality care that licensure requirements typically don’t cover.

Need information on early childhood and early intervention? This guide is an excellent source of resources that are good, readily available, and inexpensive. The guide is divided into two sections: materials on instructional content and materials on instructional process. Topics include: assistive technology, diversity, early care and development, evaluation/assessment, family-professional collaboration, IFSP/IEP, inclusion, and interagency collaboration.

The Right Fit: Recruiting, Selecting, and Orienting New Staff
Breaks down the recruitment, selection, and orientation processes into manageable components and suggests practical and effective techniques to help you find teachers with the right fit for your program’s particular needs.

Seeing Child Care: A Guide for Assessing the Effectiveness of Child Care Programs
This book provides fundamental information for evaluating the effectiveness of early childhood programs. Developmentally appropriate practices are discussed. Also included are a variety of observational tools.

Solutions for Early Childhood Directors: Real Answers to Everyday Challenges
This book provides answers to the real world challenges that early childhood directors face. Training staff, discipline, building partnerships with parents, and becoming part of the community are addressed. Sample forms are provided.

Supervision in Early Childhood Education: A Developmental Perspective
Written for practitioners who supervise staff from a wide variety of educational and cultural backgrounds, this volume addresses issues of diversity, evaluation practices, career ladders and lattices, and collaboration, to name a few.

Workshop Essentials: Planning and Presenting Dynamic Workshops
Learn essential tools for designing presentations that encourage learning. Discusses how to accommodate the needs of participants with different learning styles. Details the planning process and explores presentation style. Includes examples of effective visual aids, forms and checklists for planning, and book and Internet resources.