



Continuous Quality Improvement Framework - Supported Resources and Initiatives

Early Learning programs can be supported and encouraged to engage in a continuous cycle of quality improvement focused on improving outcomes for children and families. Along with technical assistance and professional development, many supports and resources for programs can be linked together in a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) framework. Programs would review multiple sources of evidence (i.e. family-teacher-child surveys, licensing inspections, audits, child and other observational assessment data, individual and program wide professional development plans, health and safety checklists, administrative data), which may include program self-assessment using one or more tools (some examples listed below) and then work as a team on developing the annual CQI plan. Programs are encouraged to strategically select participation in initiatives based on the goals and objectives of the program improvement plan. Each state "menu" of supported programs and initiatives would be unique to the priorities and resources available within the state. Some states are tracking program participation in initiatives to try and understand better the types of supports that contribute to building quality programs and improving outcomes for children. It is important that States identify and provide specific channels, whether through professional development opportunities or technical assistance, to support programs use of the initiatives, resources and projects. Below are some examples grouped under topic headings for ease of use by programs. The first list includes national resources that can be supported in the state or used independently by programs. The second list provides examples from Pennsylvania of state developed and supported initiatives organized under the same topic headings.

This resource list was compiled by Debi Mathias, Director of the QRIS National Learning Network. If you have questions or ideas about this framework for organizing CQI within the state, or if there is another national example (a tool and/or initiative available across states) that should be included, please email dmathias@buildinitiative.org.

** Indicates a self-assessment tool that can provide evidence to inform CQI plans.*

National Tools and Initiatives That Could Be Supported Within a State/Territory or Region

ADMINISTRATIVE COMPETENCIES AND LEADERS

- **The **Program Administration Scale (PAS)** <http://cecl.nl.edu/evaluation/pas.htm> is a valid and reliable instrument designed to measure the leadership and management practices of early childhood programs. Research demonstrates that overall administrative practices in ECE programs are critical components of ensuring high quality outcomes for children. The PAS is appropriate for the full range of center-based programs—nonprofit and for-profit, part-day and full-day, publicly funded Pre-K, Head Start, faith-based, and corporate-sponsored. The PAS is used for research and program evaluation as well as technical assistance to support continuous quality improvement.*
- **The **Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care (BAS)** <http://mccormickcenter.nl.edu/program-evaluation/business-administration-scale-bas/> is a valid and reliable instrument designed to measure the business and professional practices in family child care settings. The BAS reflects the growing professional*

consensus that the quality of family child care is determined by more than a provider's nurturing heart and caring interactions with children. The BAS is used for research and program evaluation as well as technical assistance to support continuous quality improvement.

- ***Early Childhood Work Environment Survey (ECWES)** <http://mccormickcenter.nl.edu/program-evaluation/assessing-work-attitudes/early-childhood-work-environment-survey/> Program administrators often have a global impression that things are going well or not so well at their centers, but they lack specific data on just what different areas of the organization contribute to those impressions. Organizational climate assessment can help explain where things are going well, identify where changes are needed, increase staff involvement, and improve the overall morale and commitment of employees. For over 25 years, the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership has been conducting organizational climate assessments for programs using the *Early Childhood Work Environment Survey* (ECWES). Available in both English and Spanish, the ECWES is an assessment tool that measures staff perceptions about co-worker relations, opportunities for professional growth, supervisor support, clarity, reward system, decision making, goal consensus, task orientation, physical setting, and innovativeness. The ECWES is used in many technical assistance projects around the country.
- **Accreditation** (*many national models*) – States have varying reciprocity with Accreditation models in the state QRIS system in order to leverage, collaborate, and streamline monitoring and oversight. Use of national Accreditation models by programs can serve as a framework for programs interested in a comprehensive mechanism to assess, improve and acknowledge quality. Whether the program becomes accredited or not, the support materials, strategies, and resources of an Accreditation system can lend additional structure to an improvement plan and process. Throughout the country there are Accreditation projects or local networks which can serve to provide networking, peer to peer learning and sometimes financial supports to programs working to achieve Accreditation.
- ***Supportive Environmental Quality Underlying Adult Learning (SEQUAL) – Coming soon**
The SEQUAL is a multi-purpose tool for examining and improving environments in which early childhood teaching staff work and learn. The SEQUAL assesses how well the workplace supports teaching staff to learn and to continue to develop their knowledge and skills on the job. It is administered directly to teachers and assistant teachers in centers or school-based programs.
SEQUAL assesses five overarching domains of the workplace that support professional growth and high quality care and instruction. These include: 1) Teaching Supports; 2) Learning Community; 3) Job Crafting; 4) Adult Well-being; and 5) Program Leadership. Each domain examines the policies, practices, and relationships necessary for a high quality adult learning environment. Teaching staff focus groups and multi-disciplinary theory and research related to adult learning, teacher education, early childhood quality, and organizational psychology informed the development of the SEQUAL. <http://www.irl.berkeley.edu/csce/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/SEQUAL-1-Page.pdf>

CULTURAL COMPETENCE, WELCOMING ALL FAMILIES AND SUPPORTING DIVERSITY

- ***Effective Strategies for Promoting Systematic Cultural Competence** – There are two very helpful tools that programs can use for self-assessment and then goal setting to promote Cultural & Linguistic Competency.
 - National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development, Self-Assessment Checklist for Personnel Providing Services and Supports In Early Intervention and Early Childhood Settings
<http://www11.georgetown.edu/research/gucchd/nccc/documents/Checklist.EIEC.doc.pdf>
 - NAEYC Quality Benchmarks for Cultural Competence tool – This is a guide for identifying and weaving culturally-competent practices into programs
http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/policy/state/QBCC_Tool.pdf and general discussion about cultural competence in high quality programs.
<http://www.naeyc.org/policy/statetrends/qrisculturalcompetence>

- ***Race Matters** This toolkit is designed to help decision-makers, advocates and elected officials get better results in their work by providing equitable opportunities for all. The toolkit presents a specific point of view on addressing unequal opportunities by race and offers simple, results-oriented steps to help you achieve your goals. The tools are designed to help you make the case, shape the message, and do the work. Also see the companion series, MORE Race Matters. These publications serve to complement the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Race Matters Toolkit by providing users with additional guidelines, tips and additional tools. Permission to copy, disseminate, or otherwise use information from the Race Matters Toolkit is granted as long as the following acknowledgment is included: "Reprinted with permission from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, www.aecf.org." <http://www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/PublicationsSeries/RaceMatters.aspx>
- **SpecialQuest Birth -Five** The SpecialQuest Birth-Five Approach and Multimedia Training Library supports quality inclusive practices and opportunities for children and families in early childhood and community settings. The SpecialQuest approach to professional development focuses on inclusion for young children with disabilities and their families. The approach has two components: values and design. Each component is important to successful professional development using the SpecialQuest approach. The SpecialQuest Multimedia Training contains information on the SpecialQuest approach and the contents of the SpecialQuest curriculum and is available in electronic format at no cost from www.specialquest.org. The easy-to follow training materials and videos (in English, Spanish and open-captioned) focus on the areas of: Including Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers with Disabilities, Building Relationships with Families, Collaboration and Teaming. The web-based library has additional information about the SpecialQuest approach, as well as resources for trainers and faculty at colleges and universities who desire to incorporate the SpecialQuest approach in their work.

DEVELOPING AND EXPANDING BEST PRACTICE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

- **Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL)** - Designed to increase the adoption and sustained use of evidence-based early literacy learning practices with early childhood intervention practitioners, parents and other caregivers of children, birth through five years of age, with identified disabilities, developmental delays, and those at-risk of poor outcomes. www.centerforearlyliteracylearning.org
- ***Classroom Assessment Scoring System™ (CLASS™)**: Focusing on the Teacher's Role in Effective Classroom. Site leadership and lead teachers participate in CLASS professional development. Once trained on appropriate use of the tool, a CLASS™ assessment is conducted in all preschool classrooms. Using data from the assessments, site leadership and staff from each classroom meet to share the results of the assessment and to collectively determine which of the three CLASS™ domains (Emotional Support, Classroom Organization or Organizational Support) will serve as the focus for of the CQI goals for each classroom. Leadership and classroom staff will study search existing research and resources related to identified improvement goals; determine technical assistance needs; determine what resources are needed to support goal achievement; and determine additional human and financial resources need to meet goals. Create and implement strategies, tasks and time lines for each goal. Conduct CLASS™ post assessments in six months following full implementation of all goals. <http://www.teachstone.org/>
- ***Environment Rating Scales** The ERS scales are designed to assess process quality in an early childhood or school age care group <http://www.ersi.info/>. Process quality consists of the various interactions that go on in a classroom between staff and children, staff, parents, and other adults, among the children themselves, and the interactions children have with the many materials and activities in the environment, as well as those features, such as space, schedule and materials that support these interactions. Process quality is assessed primarily through observation and has been found to be more predictive of child outcomes than structural indicators such as staff to child ratio, group size, cost of care, and even type of care, for example child care center or family child care home (Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1995). In order to provide care and education

that will permit children to experience a high quality of life while helping them develop their abilities, a quality program must provide for the three basic needs all children have:

- Protection of their health and safety
- Building positive relationships
- Opportunities for stimulation and learning from experience

All of the scales have been developed in close collaboration with realistic field-based sites. They have good inter-rater reliability and validity, thus making them suitable for research and program evaluation, as well as program improvement efforts. Each scale has a complete training program. The ECERS-R, ITERS-R and FCCERS-R training programs include an interactive videotape/DVD.

There are four environment rating scales, each designed for a different segment of the early childhood field.

- (ECERS-R) The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised
 - (ITERS-R) The Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised
 - (FCCERS-R) The Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised
 - (SACERS) The School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale
- ***The Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP)**, developed by Elena Soukakou, is a structured observation rating scale designed to assess the quality of provisions and daily practices that support the developmental needs of children with disabilities in early childhood settings. It was developed in response to a lack of validated instruments designed specifically to measure the quality of inclusive practices.
<http://npdci.fpg.unc.edu/resources/inclusive-classroom-profile-handout>
 - ***Inspiring Spaces for Young Children and the companion Rating Observation Scale for Inspiring Environments (ROSIE)** The purpose of this scale is to examine and evaluate classroom environments in a new way. The classroom environment is an essential component for maximizing learning experiences for young children. Inspiring Spaces for Young Children invites teachers to enhance children's educational environment by emphasizing aesthetic environmental qualities that are often overlooked in early childhood classrooms, such as nature, color, furnishings, textures, displays, lighting, and focal points. Creating an aesthetically pleasing environment requires thoughtful planning and the support of your whole learning community. Considerations about the function, adaptability of the space and the dynamic needs and interests of those who inhabit the space are included. Inspiring Spaces for Young Children and (ROSIE) encourages the provider to create places of beauty that nurture children, families and staff.
<http://www.gryphonhouse.com/store/trans/productDetailForm.asp?BookID=10853>

ENGAGING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES TO SUPPORT POSITIVE CHILD OUTCOMES

- ***Strengthening Families Initiative** - This program self-assessment tool to analyze next steps for program improvement is located at <http://www.cssp.org/publications/neighborhood-investment/strengthening-families/top-five/strengthening-families-self-assessment.pdf>. Strengthening Families is not a curriculum or program; it is an approach to working with families to prevent child abuse and neglect that builds upon their strengths, rather than focusing on their deficits. Families will become stronger and more resilient. Children will be better prepared to succeed. Child abuse and neglect will be decreased. Service providers will be more aware of steps they can take to support parents and families in need within their programs. Strengthening Families is a framework of five research-based Protective Factors that give parents what they need to parent effectively, even under stress:
 - For adults:
 - Parental resilience
 - Social connections for families
 - Knowledge of parenting and child development
 - Concrete supports in time of need
 - For children:

- Healthy social and emotional development

The Strengthening Families Initiative focuses on sustainably weaving this strength-based framework into existing policies, programs and practice across child and family service systems and is guided by a cross-systems leadership team. Professional development is offered across the state to increase awareness of protective factors and other areas of family support so they can be incorporated into child and family service systems. The general website is: <http://www.cssp.org/publications/strengthening-families>

PROMOTING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR HEALTHY CHILDREN/FAMILIES/ PRACTITIONERS

- ***I Am Moving, I Am Learning (IMIL)*** and ***Let's Move! Child Care Initiative:*** <http://healthykidshealthyfuture.org/welcome.html> This initiative is a proactive approach for addressing childhood obesity while enhancing school readiness in young children birth to five within Early Care and Education settings. IMIL offers fun strategies to promote early brain development and targeted enhancements. The interactive and high-energy training is infused with ideas, strategies, lively music, and resources for embedding quality physical movement experiences and healthy nutrition choices within the existing curricula of Early Care and Education programs. <http://www.choosykids.com/CK2/>
- ****Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC)*** is an intervention in early learning programs aimed at improving nutrition and the physical activity environment, policies and practices through self-assessment and targeted technical assistance. Goals of the program are to improve nutritional quality of food served, amount and quality of physical activity, staff-child interactions, and center nutrition and physical activity policy <http://www.napsacc.org/>
- ****Eco-Healthy Child Care Checklist*** - Research increasingly shows that the first years of a child's life are critical to shaping their future health and development. By committing to the best practices on the Eco-Healthy Child Care Checklist, you will improve the health of the children in your care. <http://ecohealthychildcare.org/index.php?page=provider>
- ****Go Green Rating Scale for Early Childhood Settings*** - The Go Green Rating Scale and Go Green Ratings Scale Handbook are intended for all early childhood programs in any setting, from centers to home-based family child care. The rating scale can be administered by employees of the early childhood setting, such as center directors, teachers, caregivers, maintenance workers, and building managers, or by third parties. The Handbook provides steps toward environmental improvement to prevent inadvertently exposing children to hazardous chemicals and conditions. This comprehensive handbook explains the science and research behind each item in the rating scale; defines the most important elements of going green; and offers concrete measures, graduated goals, and practical guidelines. It also provides information and sample letters to inform families about the benefits of green child care settings. <http://www.gogreenratingscale.org/index.html>

SUPPORTING SOCIAL EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE AND ADDRESSING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

- ***Pyramid Model of Positive Behavior Support*** is an evidence based process that is referenced in a growing number of best practice and regulatory documents as an essential component of effective instruction and care. Challenging behavior is a common reason given for early childhood programs' concern about serving children with disabilities. Research shows that children with challenging behavior are asked to leave early care settings at three times the rate of expulsion in grades K-12. Developing the skills of early care providers in managing challenging behavior and helping children develop socially and emotionally has been shown to decrease the rate of expulsion of young children and enhance learning for all children. Programs that implement the pyramid model with fidelity typically report higher rates of staff satisfaction and lower rates of staff turnover. www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel www.challengingbehavior.org www.papbs.org
- ***Mind in the Making*** - The purpose of Mind in the Making is to bring research on child development to early learning programs in a very accessible manner. The modules complement existing ECE curricula by focusing on

what research says about early learning and demonstrates how to use this information in every day practice. Participants learn about the importance of establishing learning communities and are motivated to create positive relationships within their programs between staff and children, with parents and among staff members. Directors learn to support their staff in unique ways so they are better prepared to support children and families. As a result, practitioners become more intentional teachers who recognize that social, emotional and intellectual learning are inextricably linked.

<http://familiesandwork.org/site/work/earlychildhood/main.html>

Pennsylvania-Specific Examples

States have been working diligently creating materials, resources and networks of support to build the quality of early learning. These resources combine with national supports to create the CQI support available within the state. Articulating the vision of CQI surrounding the implementation of the QRIS standards is a critical step in supporting programs to evaluate sources of evidence and strategically select resources and initiatives that will help the program address weaknesses and build the quality of the program. The initiatives, projects and supports below, combined with supported national initiatives serve as an example from one state working to construct and articulate the CQI possibilities.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMPETENCIES AND LEADERS

- ***Early Childhood Executive Leadership Institute*** - The Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) Program is a statewide, standards-based continuing professional education program for school and ECE system leaders. The comprehensive, cohort-based program is focused on developing the capacity of leaders to improve student achievement. The program is offered by the Department of Education in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Intermediate Units and other partners at eight regional sites. The Early Childhood Executive Leadership (ECEL) Institute focuses on what early childhood leaders and educators need to know and be able to do in order to understand and connect the variety of systems serving children (Birth to Grade 3) and to ensure instructional improvements that will lead to student growth in cognitive, social, emotional, and attentional areas. The five-day ECEL Institute has been designed primarily for superintendents and assistant superintendents, principals and assistant principals, and early childhood development center/facility directors, administrators or leadership teams. Learning Objectives include:
 - Become familiar with advances in the science of early childhood growth and early brain development
 - Develop an awareness of the important influence of early childhood educational experiences on the production of a sturdy foundation for future cognitive, social, and emotional development
 - Identify the multiple contexts within which children develop, and summarize the best research, policies, and practices to apply in a given context
 - Acquire leadership strategies for effectively coordinating early childhood and K-3 learning environments, including the transitions from preschool to kindergarten and on to the primary grades.The five-day Institute consists of an initial three consecutive days of professional development, followed by a break in which participants complete an action project focused on their particular school or program. The action project is a major component of the Institute that allows participants to immediately apply what they have learned. Completion of the project requires time beyond the Institute sessions. Some three or four months later, participants return for the final two days of the Institute. The Institute is a professional development activity that meets the requirements for Act 48, Act 45, PQAS and the Pennsylvania Director Credential renewal credit for early childhood and school-age directors.
http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Career_Degrees
- ***Community Education and Outreach*** Local public awareness and support is critical to providing Pennsylvania's young children with access to quality early education. When communities value early education, more families become aware of available services and decision makers recognize quality early education is a priority for public investment. When early childhood programs educate their families and their community about the

importance of quality early learning programs, parents can make educated choices for their children; school leaders can recognize the value of and become partners with early education programs; and community leaders and policymakers can continue to invest in quality early education. A community education calendar and monthly listserv message are available to all programs with suggested monthly themes and activities for community education throughout the year. Additional toolkits and resources are also available such as:

- Building relationships with legislators toolkit
- Media relations toolkit
- Tips on writing your elevator speech
- Short talking points
- Tools to use the Reach and Risk Report in your community

Community Outreach Tools & Resources (PA Key): www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Community_Tools
STARS Outreach Tools (PA Key): www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=STARS_outreach

Expand the Brand - is a professional communications training and development series for early childhood educators to improve their skills for branding, or positioning, themselves as leaders in their communities. Nine modules give participants tips, tools, and training for effectively presenting their messages and engaging families, schools, businesses, and other community leaders. <http://paprom.convio.net/etb>

Pennsylvania's Promise for Children Campaign - is a statewide campaign to raise awareness of the importance of quality early learning opportunities for Pennsylvania's children. The website provides information, stories, videos, and other materials that show why quality early learning matters. Pennsylvania's Promise for Children: www.papromiseforchildren.com

- **Keystone STARS Technical Assistance (STARS TA)**

STARS Technical Assistance is an intensive, one-on-one service provided to early learning and school-age facilities to help the facility achieve specific Keystone STARS quality performance standards and improve quality as identified in the CQI plan with the goal of improving outcomes for children. It is administered through six Regional Keys in partnership with consultants who have the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to guide programs in the Keystone STARS content areas of Staff Qualifications and Professional Development, Leadership and Management, Early Learning (and School-Age) Program, and Partnerships with Family and Community. The goals of TA include:

- Assist eligible STARS facilities to achieve specific quality performance standards and achievement of higher quality levels using an established action plan.
- Enhance, but not duplicate, the services provided by other parts of the early childhood education system including the STARS management process, professional development, and the initiatives of the Department of Welfare and the Department of Education.
- In conjunction with the STARS manager and other partners, promote a team approach to addressing the needs of practitioners and programs.

http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_Tech

CULTURAL COMPETENCE, WELCOMING ALL FAMILIES AND SUPPORTING DIVERSITY

- ***Supporting English Language Learners (ELLs) and Dual Language Learners (DLLs) in Early Childhood Classrooms*** The purpose of the ELL/DLL initiative is to present current research and best practices for teaching young English language learners in early childhood settings. Aimed at achievement of positive outcomes for children and their families, the content targets the supports, resources, instructional competencies and partnerships necessary for building a repertoire of curricular tools and practical tips for program implementation. The ELL/DLL initiative is a 15 hour (5, 3 hour modules) curriculum highlighting the critical knowledge base, competencies, skills and dispositions required by early childhood practitioners to effectively address the needs and challenges of children developing a second language. The modules provide the insights necessary for culturally responsive teaching in partnership with families and the community. Each module

addresses the roles of the practitioner relative to facilitating gains in receptive and expressive language
<http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=ELLToolkit>

- ***Race Matters: Exploring Program Policies and Practices** – PA developed resources supporting implementation of the Race Matters content. http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_Other
The module uses selected components of the Race Matters Toolkit designed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation to examine program policies and practices. To improve program policies and practices to ensure equal opportunities for all and specifically to reduce racial disparities or disproportionately. Program leadership participates in the Race Matters Orientation to learn about the tools in the toolkit and practice how to use tools. Program leaders decide which tools they wish to use in their process. Tools include: What’s Race Got to Do with It; Racial Equity Impact Analysis; How to Talk About Race Organizational Self-Assessment.
- ***Race Matters: Classroom Practices to Support Conversations about Race and Culture in Early Childhood Settings** http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_Other . A PA developed resource to examine program and classroom practices that support racial equity and tolerance in the early childhood education classroom. To identify specific strategies to address race and culture and impact classroom behaviors and environment through the development of an action plan that engages all stakeholders. Activity includes participating in a 12 hour professional development series, “Support Conversations about Race and Culture in Early Childhood Settings”, and examining through reflection, dialogue, checklists and action plans how individual programs and classrooms address issues of race and culture.

DEVELOPING AND EXPANDING BEST PRACTICE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

- ***Environment Rating Scale (ERS), A CQI Tool – Digging Deeper** - The purpose of this professional development and technical assistance is to use existing and new ERS scores from all classrooms in the facility (whether done as part of the rating or completed as a self-assessment) as part of a continuous quality improvement plan. Goals are: teaching staff research on the components of and models for best practice related to defined aspects of the environment (such as teacher/child interactions, room arrangement); teaching staff to participate in professional development targeted to selected areas; and teaching teams to develop facility wide practices and behaviors that assure continuity of best practice throughout the facility. Outcomes are optimal environments that encourage child health and well-being, support cognitive development and/or employ developmentally appropriate practice.
http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_STARS_ERS
- **Transitioning Across the Continuum of Early Learning (TACEL)** The purpose of TACEL is to “tackle” issues of school readiness, family engagement, and child outcomes. TACEL is important to program quality because intentional focus on providing effective transitions positively impacts continuing student achievement. Another goal of positive transitions is to maintain positive outcomes of high quality settings over time. The transition tool kit includes research briefs of best transition practices, research-based materials, professional development and resources to support best transition practices across the early learning continuum. (States could tailor this section to resources on transition that are available or supported within the state).
<http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=TransitionToolkit>
- **Learning Standards for Early Childhood Professional Development** – (how are the learning standards supported within the state?) These are research based standards that identify key learning areas of development for children and are reflected in the Core Body of Knowledge competencies. Learning Standards guide practitioners to intentionally integrate developmental knowledge with the attitudes, skills, and concepts children need to make progress in all learning areas. The Learning Standards provide foundational information for what children should know and be able to do and build on information learned previously, creating a continuum of learning that assures consistent and linked learning that begins in infancy, gradually increasing in difficulty, and extends through high school. There are numerous professional development opportunities on

the training calendar that practitioners can access to improve practice in the use of the learning standards.
<http://websites.pdesas.org/ocdel/2010/4/30/47302/page.aspx>

- **Standards Aligned System (SAS)** This is a collaborative product of research and good practice that identifies six distinct elements which, when utilized together, will provide programs with a common framework for continuous enhancement and improvement. Research supports the notion that programs with strong child outcomes tend to have these six common elements that ensure Student Achievement: Standards, Assessments, Curriculum Framework, Instruction, Materials & Resources and Safe and Supportive Schools. The Standards Aligned System includes all six key elements.
 1. Professional Development is available to support practitioners in all areas of implementing: Integrating Standards, Curriculum and Assessment - 6 hour training. Participants will better understand the Standards Aligned System and its connection to the Learning Standards for Early Childhood.
 2. Introduction to the Standards Aligned System through the Early Education Lens (PART 1) is a two-hour webinar that introduces the elements of the Standards Aligned System. Introduction to the Standards Aligned System through the Early Childhood Lens (PART 2) is a two-hour webinar that focuses on the integration of the six elements of the Standards Aligned System with a focus on intentional instructional planning.
 3. The Introduction to the Standards Aligned System through the Early Childhood Lens sessions can also be offered in live sessions or as one three-hour live session upon request. <http://www.pdesas.org/ocdel>
- **SACC Specific Resources and Supports:** http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_SchoolAge
 1. School-age care professional development & technical assistance (SACC-PD/TA) SACC PD/TA employ research-based methods for improving program quality, and impacting positive outcomes for children. Regional SACC-PD/TA also facilitate partnerships with community stakeholders to promote the development and expansion of out-of-school programming.
 2. School-Age New Staff Orientation is available through Better Kid Care's On-Demand online learning system at www.betterkidcare.psu.edu and select *On Demand Distance Education*. On-line completion requires a copy of "Kid's Time: A School-Age Care Program Guide." A mail-based version is also available. The School-Age Orientation Professional Development Kit includes all materials needed to complete the School-Age New Staff Orientation. Materials included in the kit are: Kid's Time book and DVD, SAC Orientation Instructions, SAC Orientation Workbook, SAC Orientation PD Record. The kit is limited to one per site. (call 800-284-6031 to place an order).
 3. Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential - was developed to promote quality services for children and families by providing specific standards, professional development and evaluation of school-age practitioners. Individuals interested in acquiring the SAPC must meet specific eligibility requirements, complete 120 hours of coursework addressing the thirteen (13) Functional Areas and complete a collection of information including a Portfolio, Resource File, Observations and Family Questionnaires. The final step in the process is an on-site assessment review with a SAPC Assessor. This credential is recognized in the Keystone STARS Continuous Quality Improvement System as meeting Level III on the Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality Career Lattice.
 4. *Links to Learning: Complementary Learning Afterschool and Links to Learning: Building Partnerships with Schools and Families. Links to Learning: A Curriculum Planning Guide for After-School Programs* by National Institute on Out of School Time and Wellesley Centers for Women (Jan 1, 2005) was turned into a series of professional development modules and is supported in Pennsylvania. *Links to Learning: Complementary Learning Afterschool* Professional development opportunities on complementary learning supports and linking afterschool to Learning Standards: *Links to Learning Foundations* consists of the following module content: 1) Introduction & 2) Theoretical Framework (these are to be done together), 3) Curriculum Planning, 4) Linking Activities to Benchmarks and Learning Standards, 5) Theme- and Project-based Learning. Objective include:
 - To explore the role of afterschool in providing complementary supports to ensure developmental progress
 - To learn how to guide curriculum planning in afterschool

- To learn how to link activities to learning standards and quality standards
- To explore theme- and project-based learning and how they are beneficial to children in afterschool programs

Links to Learning: Building Partnerships with Schools and Families

Critical components to successful afterschool programs are the connections that afterschool programs have with schools and families. This initiative could focus on partnerships with one or both essential partners.

- To explore linkages between school and afterschool through relationships & communication, coordinating systems, curricular connections, and system level strategies
- To understand importance of family engagement afterschool with regard to children’s learning and development
- To explore practical ways to engage families and develop a plan for engagement
- The purpose is to help after school programs become more effective in their efforts to engage families and schools in after school in benefit of children’s social development, informal learning, and academic growth.

Professional development opportunities:

Coordinating and Collaborating with Schools - a two hour session that will explore ways to increase linkage between school and afterschool, focusing on specific strategies to build relationships, to increase communication and coordination between the program and the school, and work on curriculum together. *Family Engagement*– the two hour session will focus on the importance of family engagement in afterschool with regard to children’s learning and development. Participants explore practical ways to engage families and develop a plan for better family engagement. Goal is to develop and implement a family engagement plan.

- **Infant Toddler Technical Assistance and Program Supports** – Providers enrolled in Keystone STARS may request on-site technical assistance to support their work with families and children as well as the development of responsive classroom environments and programming. The specialists have been trained and use a framework of support that is based on the Program for Infant and Toddler Caregivers (PITC), the Center for Social Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (CSEFEL), Mind in the Making, and Center for Early Learning Literacy (CELL). Their efforts focus on helping build strong relationships and the understanding of the impact of positive social emotional development on children’s life-long learning and success. There are many professional development opportunities on the PA Key on-line calendar specific to working with families or improving practice with infants and toddlers. <http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=InfantToddler>

ENGAGING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES TO SUPPORT POSITIVE CHILD OUTCOMES

- **PA Promise for Children** – This is an example from PA and would look different in each state. It is a parent portal website. Pennsylvania’s Promise for Children is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Build Initiative, The Heinz Endowments, William Penn Foundation, The Grable Foundation, and the Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality, in partnership with the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL). It is a site that provides information for parents, communities and stakeholders about how the first five years matter, supporting your child’s development, choosing a program (with a focus on STARS), financial supports (making ends meet), and about becoming a children’s champion (advocacy). Example website: <http://paprom.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=index>

PROMOTING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR HEALTHY CHILDREN/FAMILIES/ PRACTITIONERS

- **Keystone Kids Go!** is an initiative in Pennsylvania focused on improving nutrition and physical activity among young children and their families. Keystone Kids Go! was created by the Pennsylvania Departments of Health, Education, and Public Welfare, and is in partnership with several different organizations. Pennsylvania has had the Keystone Kids Go! Program in place for since 2005. <http://panen.org/keystone-kids-go>

Keystone Kids Go! has four parts:

(1) *Go Colorful!* The Go Colorful! component of Keystone Kids Go! is also known as Keystone Color Me Healthy (KCMH). KCMH is based on the original Color Me Healthy program developed in North Carolina. KCMH provides early childhood practitioners with resources and materials to teach preschoolers that healthy eating and movement are fun! <http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/page11d.html>

(2) *Go Active!* is a physical activity toolkit created to show early childhood practitioners how to increase instant, integrative, and imaginative movement in their classroom or center. The toolkit also incorporates principles from Head Start's I Am Moving, I Am Learning initiative (IMIL).

(3) *Go Learn!* is a special section of Keystone Kids Go! made especially to showcase the efforts of dedicated Keystone Kids Go! early childhood practitioners in Pennsylvania. Visit this section to learn about fun ways other practitioners have made Keystone Kids Go! a part of their centers or classrooms.

(4) *Go Healthy!* This section of Keystone Kids Go! is also known as *Go Healthy! It all Begins with You* and is designed to show early childhood practitioners how to be the best role models they can be. Look here for healthy tips and information on personal wellness. Click here to learn more about the Cook and Chefs Pilot Project! Early Childhood Resource Manual. <http://www.panen.org/keystone-kids-current-activities>
The final part is the Pilot project using the NAP SACC tool. <http://www.panen.org/nap-sacc-intervention>

- ***Pennsylvania Early Childhood Education Healthy & Green Initiative***
 - [Environmental Health](#)
 - [Environment and Ecology](#)
 - [Environmental Efficiency](#)
 - [Mini-grants program - list of grantees](#)

The mission of the PA ECE Healthy & Green Initiative is to promote environmental health improvements in Pennsylvania early learning programs, making facilities and programs healthier and less likely to negatively affect the health of children and early learning program staff. [Find out more about the initiative.](#)

- ***Strengthening Health & Safety Policy and Practice*** – Health and safety are key components of quality early learning programs to ensure school readiness. Health and safety improves with professional development, technical assistance and an ongoing relationship with a Child Care Health Consultant. Initiatives accessible to programs in PA include:
 1. Better Kid Care, a division of Penn State Better Kid Care Program, provides educational materials, learning experiences and programs to child care providers, parents, and employers throughout the state of Pennsylvania. The goal of the Better Kid Care Program is to improve the availability, accessibility and quality of child care. This is accomplished in several ways, including this web site, DVD workshops, distance education units, and a toll-free telephone mentoring line. www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/
 2. ECELS Health and Safety Services, Technical Assistance, Health Link Online/Health Capsules/Email Alert, Self-Learning Modules, Workshops, Website, Safety Checklist and Reference Document: www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org
ECELS helps practitioners manage child health records, sharing strategies to document preventive health services. See WellCareTracker™ for more information. <http://www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org/>
 3. Child Care Health Advocate Course at Northampton Community College is a 3 credit course available either On-Campus or Online. A Child Care Health Advocate is a designated staff member who makes sure that best practice in health, safety, and nutrition are integrated into program policies and procedures. A Child Care Health Advocate coordinates a program's operations with external sources of health expertise such as a Child Care Health Consultant and other health professionals. ECELS developed the Child Care Health Advocate Course and a Pediatric Advisor works closely with the Northampton faculty to deliver the course.
 4. Child Care Health Consultation, Arranging for ongoing consultation from a Child Care Health Consultant will promote health and safety of children, families and caregivers in child care. Both the Caring for Our Children

Standards and NAEYC Accreditation Standards recommend ongoing Child Care Health Consultant visits. To learn more about reasons and rationale for arranging for the services of a Child Care Health Consultant, request the ECELS Self-Learning Module: *How to Choose and Use A Child Care Health Consultant*. A Child Care Health Consultant can assess the program using the ECELS Health and Safety Checklist and Reference Document. The Child Care Health Consultant, director and staff collaborate to make improvement plans. The Checklist is a 167 item observational tool for health professionals who provide child care health consultation. It was developed to: 1) assess health and safety in the facilities and practices of early care and education (ECE) programs based on compliance with key National Health and Safety Performance Standards and 2) help users develop indicated interventions. The References document guides the user to the appropriate health and safety standard(s) and other references that are related to each Checklist item. To access the Checklist on the ECELS website, select "Health Consultant Role" and then select "Health and Safety Checklist and Reference Document." www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org

SUPPORTING SOCIAL EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE AND ADDRESSING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

- ***Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Supports*** - Early childhood mental health is defined as the developing capacity of the young child to experience, regulate and express emotions, form close and secure interpersonal relationships and explore the environment and learn – all in the context of family, community, and cultural expectations for young children. Early childhood mental health is synonymous with healthy social and emotional development which is influenced by: biological/genetic factors, quality of adult relationships, care-giving environments, community context. The program goals are:
 - Reduce the number of children expelled from child care due to behavior issues,
 - Increase the understanding of social and emotional development and its impact on educational success, and
 - Link and bridge systems and services on behalf of a child, family and program.

As a result, practitioners become intentional teachers who recognize that social, emotional, and intellectual learning are inextricably linked. ECMH consultants are available to support providers enrolled in Keystone STARS by contacting the Regional Key. http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_ECMH
<http://www.parecovery.org/>