



### **Introduction:**

#### **1. Introduction**

- Children's Services Mission Statement, Principles and Values
- Key Determinants of Quality

#### **2. Using the Operating Criteria**

- a) Assessment Steps
- b) Centre Score Sheet
- c) Compliance Items
- d) Operator Quality Monitoring Chart

#### **Section 1:**

Infant Program

#### **Section 2:**

Toddler Program

#### **Section 3:**

Preschool Program

#### **Section 4:**

School Age Program

#### **Section 5:**

Playground

#### **Section 6:**

Nutrition

#### **Section 7:**

Administration

#### **Section 8:**

Financial Management

#### **Section 9:**

Working Together

### **Appendix**

#### **Appendix I: The Service Contract**

- Eligibility
- Requirements
- Non-compliance
- Appeals

#### **Appendix II :**

- Fee Subsidy
- Enrolment Policies

#### **Appendix III**

- Racism Definitions

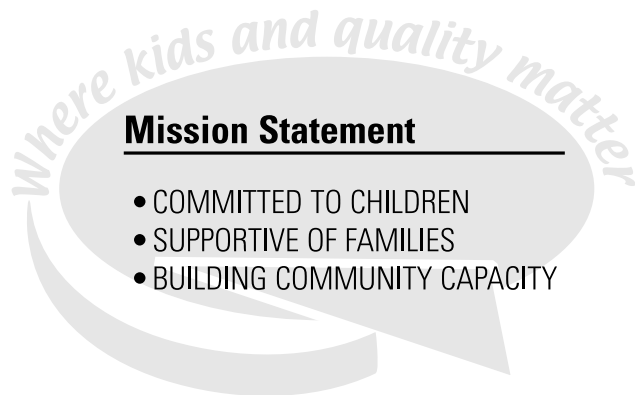
#### **Appendix IV**

- Clarification Note Glossary

# Introduction

Toronto Children's Services is the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for the City and has responsibility for planning and managing a broad range of child care services, including licensed child care. Children's Services is therefore responsible for supporting child care arrangements that meet acceptable standards of care for families.

Toronto Children's Services values quality child care experiences for children as well as stable and dependable child care operations. To this end, the Operating Criteria outlines the City's operating standards and practices as well as financial practices that programs with a Service Contract must meet.



### Mission Statement

- COMMITTED TO CHILDREN
- SUPPORTIVE OF FAMILIES
- BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY

## Principles and Values of Toronto Children's Services

In partnership with the community, the Division promotes equitable access to high quality care for children and support for families and caregivers.

An integrated approach to planning and management ensures that services to children promote early learning and development, respond to families' needs and choices, and respect the diversity of Toronto's many communities.

Toronto Children's Services believes that:

1. Children come first and the best interests of the child must always be of paramount importance in any service decision.
2. Children's individual differences must be recognized and respected, and the value of diversity needs to be celebrated.
3. Children have the right to quality child care services in a safe and healthy environment that provides opportunities to reach developmental milestones that are in line with their unique growth and development patterns.
4. Children have the right to be free from corporal punishment, isolation, physical confinement and all forms of abuse.
5. Informed parental choice about children's services is a fundamental right.
6. Eligible families have the right to equitable access to service that meets the unique needs of their children.

## Toronto Children's Services values:

1. Service quality and working in partnership with the community.
2. Community and consumer involvement in service planning.
3. Excellence in customer service and recognition that staff are pivotal in this pursuit and will be viewed as the organization's most valuable resource.
4. The strength of diversity and the inherent value of a workforce that reflects the community it serves.
5. Planning that allows resources to be used in a way that is optimally efficient and has maximum impact.
6. Its historic contribution to the field of child care and a commitment to preserving its leadership role.

### A Shared Approach to Quality Assurance

Quality child care is both a developmental and inclusive service. Principles of quality child care have traditionally been defined by a set of factors that include caregiver training and experience, program content, ratios of children to caregivers and environmental factors.

The inherent value of a shared approach to criteria assessment that includes consultants, agency supervisors, directors, operators, home child care visitors, providers and parents is seen as an important component of quality assessment.

To this end, the Operating Criteria outlines clear expectations, service standards and guidelines to child care providers with a service contract. It serves as a self-evaluation and planning tool for child care operators, supervisors and front-line staff. In addition, it is used by Children's Services Consultants to measure quality and contract compliance.

### Every Child Belongs



Children's Services shares the City of Toronto's belief that there is strength in diversity. The quality assurance measures set out in the Operating Criteria and service contract emphasize the importance of respect and sensitivity for diversity.

Toronto Children's Services is committed to an inclusive child care system that promotes positive and healthy environments for children. Inclusive child care means the provision of quality services for all children regardless of race, age, ability, language, culture, ethnicity or family structure.

There is a consensus in the child care community that access and equity must be a reality for all families. Quality assurance measures set out in the criteria and the City of Toronto's requirements for inclusion support this goal.

To this end, all child care programs with a service contract have developed anti-racist and anti-bias curriculum and policies and are expected to provide child care services to all children. Toronto Children's Services supports this

development by providing support services, ongoing training, conferences, workshops and regular communication with service providers.

### Key Determinants of Quality

Research in the area of child care indicates that there are key elements that are essential for a high-quality child care program. These elements are described within six key determinants of quality and include:

1. Sound management practices
2. Training, experience and stability of caregivers
3. Group size; ratio of children to caregivers
4. Family involvement in the program
5. Health and safety standards of the physical facility
6. Program content and development.

Philosophical differences exist in the content and development of child care programs. However, all child care programs should be viewed as developmental services, and therefore must be based on the following accepted principles of child development:

- each child's growth follows a universal developmental sequence with individual differences in rate and timing
- play is a child's natural way of learning
- children learn best through active involvement with their environment

Given these principles, high-quality programs for young children must provide:

- equal opportunities for children to participate and benefit from their experiences in ways that promote individual development and learning
- appropriate learning experiences based on the interests, strengths, abilities and needs of the individual child
- opportunities for growth in all areas — emotional, social, physical and intellectual
- a rich environment that offers continuous opportunities for exploration, discovery, choice and decision making
- a nurturing and secure environment.

### The Role of the Supervisor

It is commonly accepted, and supported in research, that the Supervisor plays a pivotal role in the quality of a child care program. In fact, the leadership abilities of the Supervisor are a **key determinant of quality** within a child care program. Therefore, a Supervisor must demonstrate:

- Knowledge of the *Day Nurseries Act*, the Children's Services Operating Criteria and all other required legislation that governs the operation of a child care program
- Evaluation skills to ensure that a high-quality program for all children is achieved and maintained
- Effective communication with children, staff, parents and the community
- Good supervision of staff
- Well-developed leadership skills
- Awareness of and the ability to use resources within the community
- Commitment to their own professional development
- Sound financial management skills
- Ongoing maintenance of accurate records
- Appropriate maintenance of the physical plant.

### Role of the Children's Services Consultant

Child care programs with a service contract will receive a detailed Operating Criteria assessment annually. This assessment will be completed by a Toronto Children's Services Consultant.

This will typically be done in consultation with the child care program to ensure the development of long and short-term program goals. The Consultant may provide additional support and consultation by visiting the program more frequently throughout the year to help child care programs meet their goals.

In addition, the Consultant conducts regular reviews of the program's operating budget to ensure that the child care service is both financially stable and cost efficient.

### Operating Criteria History

Now in its seventh edition, the essence of the document is unchanged; however, the tool has been refined and improved based on operator feedback and new research.

In 1997, the Operating Criteria developed into a checklist format that supported operator self-assessment and promoted a continuum of quality improvement .

Between 2004 and 2006, Toronto Children's Services embarked on a complete review of the Operating Criteria. A two-year comparative research project between the Operating Criteria and the Harms and Clifford Environmental Rating Scale guided the revision, and helped determine that an assessment using the revised Operating Criteria would be a reflection of the quality within a child care program.

The resulting 2007 edition of the Operating Criteria is a streamlined document based on a 1 – 4 progressive measurement scale. Sections related to health and safety, human resources, interactions, parent involvement and inclusion have been embedded within the core components that have been expanded to include financial management and community partnerships.

# INTRO

## Toronto Children's Services Operating Criteria

# Using the Operating Criteria

There are nine core components included in the Operating Criteria:

1. Infant Program
2. Toddler Program
3. Preschool Program
4. School Age Program
5. Playground
6. Nutrition
7. Administration
8. Financial Management
9. Working Together.

Each item is measured on a progressive 1 – 4 measurement scale:

1 = Does Not Meet Expectations

2 = Needs Improvement

3 = Meets All Expectations

4 = Exceeds Expectations

☞ = Indicates a respectful question may be required to score the item.

The assessment of a child care program using the Operating Criteria is a “snap-shot” of the environment and events that children are experiencing on the day and time of the assessment.

An Assessor must be able to observe or confirm by enquiry, each individual descriptor. If they are unable to do so, they cannot score the item.

### Assessment Steps

The Assessor reads the expectations of the item and then moves across the measurement scale starting at 1 by checking the boxes when the descriptors are observed or confirmed by staff.

#### Measurement Scale #1:

- The Assessor must be able to observe or confirm all of the descriptors in the measurement scale to score
- When the Assessor has observed or confirmed each descriptor, they place a check in the individual box(es) in each of the measurement scale
- If the Assessor is able to check the box(es) in measurement scale #1, the item does not meet Expectations (Criteria) and the assessment stops

Section 8	1	2	3	4	Score
<b>Playground</b>	Does Not Meet Expectations	Needs Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	
<b>2. Playground Surfaces</b>  <small>(**Notes 2.1: Due to a child's disability they are not able to participate because of the surface for example: if there are wood chips a wheel chair could not navigate etc.)</small>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playground surfaces do not provide for the participation of all children*	<input type="checkbox"/> One playground surface available*	<input type="checkbox"/> Two different playground surfaces available that provide for the participation of all children and allow for a variety of activities*	<input type="checkbox"/> Playground includes seating area	<span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">1</span> 2

- The Assessor circles a score of 1 on the far right.
- If the Assessor is not able to check the box(es) in measurement scale #1, the Assessor can move on to Measurement Scale 2.

#### Measurement Scale #2:

- The Assessor must be able to observe or confirm all of the descriptors in the measurement scale to score
- When the Assessor has observed or confirmed each descriptor, they place a check in the individual box(es) in each of the measurement scale

- If the Assessor is not able to check all of the box(es) in Measurement Scale #2, the assessment stops
- The Assessor circles the score of the last measurement scale where all the descriptors were achieved (all the boxes are checked). In this example the score would be a 1
- If none of the boxes are checked in Measurement Scale #1 and all of the boxes are checked in Measurement Scale #2, the Assessor can move on to Measurement Scale #3.

#### Measurement Scale #3:

- The Assessor must be able to observe or confirm all of the descriptors in the measurement scale to score
- When the Assessor has observed or confirmed each descriptor, they place a check in the individual box(es) in each of the measurement scale
- If the Assessor is not able to check all of the box(es) in Measurement Scale #3, the assessment stops
- The Assessor circles the score of the last measurement scale where all the descriptors were achieved (all the boxes are checked). In this example the score would be a 2

Section 8	1	2	3	4	Score
<b>Playground</b>	Does Not Meet Expectations	Needs Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	
<b>5. Small Toys and Equipment</b>  <small>(**Notes 5.1, 5.2: More than one type of equipment offered)                      (5.1: enough toys and equipment for the number of children who want to use them)                      (5.2: 25% of the equipment)                      (5.3: seasonally adjusted means to baggins, shovels, rakes, wading pool, etc., are offered during the correct season)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> No variety of equipment. Not a sufficient amount of toys and equipment for the amount of children*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Some equipment is in good condition. Some equipment is seasonally adjusted*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Variety of small toys, in good condition available, e.g., balls, pails and shovels, sports equipment, etc."  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equipment is suitable for the age, ability and number of children  <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment is seasonally adjusted	<input type="checkbox"/> Each age group has their own area, toys and equipment.	<span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">1</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">2</span> 3 4

- If none of the boxes are checked in Measurement Scale #1 and all of the boxes are checked in Measurement Scale #2 and Measurement Scale #3, the Assessor can move on to Measurement Scale #4.

### Measurement Scale #4:

- When the Assessor has observed or confirmed each descriptor, they place a check in the individual box(es) in each of the measurement scale
- If the Assessor is not able to check all of the box(es) in Measurement Scale #4, the assessment stops
- The Assessor circles the score of the last measurement scale where all the descriptors were achieved (all the boxes are checked). In this example the score would be a 3

Section 8	1 Does Not Meet Expectations	2 Needs Improvement	3 Meets Expectations	4 Exceeds Expectations	Score
<b>Playground</b>  <b>2. Playground Surfaces</b>  <small>(Notes 2.1: Due to a child's disability they are not able to participate because of the surface for example: if there are wood chips a wheel chair could not navigate etc.)</small> <small>(2.2 and 2.3: Surfaces can include grass, slip into sand bins, tarmac, concrete, soft surface, etc.)</small> <small>(2.3: More than one activity is offered)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> Playground surfaces do not provide for the participation of all children*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One playground surface available*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Two different playground surfaces available that provide for the participation of all children and allow for a variety of activities*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playground includes seating area	1 2 3 <b>4</b>

- If none of the boxes are checked in Measurement Scale #1 and all of the boxes are checked in Measurement Scale #2, #3 and #4, the item has achieved a maximum score of 4.

At the end of each sub-section the Assessor will add up the total score of the assessed items. Once the section is complete, these scores are transferred to the score sheet at the end of the section.

Once each section of the Operating Criteria has been assessed, the Assessor will calculate an overall rating for the child care program by adding the score of each and dividing by the total number completed.

Playground Score Chart			
Section: <b>Playground</b>	A Number of items scored from (1-7)	B Total Score (sum of total indicators scored)	C Average Score: B Divided By A =
	7	21	<b>3</b>

Included in the 2007 Operating Criteria is a three-year planning tool to monitor your Criteria Assessments and to help with Goal Setting. This tool can be found after the Overall Centre Score Sheet.

### Minimum Requirements:

Measurement Scale 3 – Meets All Expectations is the minimum requirement for child care operators with a City of Toronto service contract.

Child care programs with a rating of 1 or 2 in any item will be required to address the deficiency by a targeted compliance date determined by the Consultant.

Child Care programs are encouraged to focus on program improvement and may find the area of Exceeds Expectations (4) helpful in goal setting, long-range planning and program development.

Note: The Financial Management section is designed on a progressive 1 – 2 measurement scale

1 = Does Not Meet Expectations

2 = Meets Expectations.

# Toronto Operating Criteria: Centre Score Sheet

1. Input the scores from each section into the corresponding box below.
2. Add all scores together for the total score.
3. Divide the total score by the number of sections scored for your centre's overall average score.



## Toronto Operating Criteria Section Score Sheet:

Criteria Sections:	Date Section Assessed	Score
1. Infant		
2. Toddler		
3. Preschool		
4. School Age		
5. Playground		
6. Nutrition		
7. Administration		
8. Financial		
9. Working Together		
<b>Total</b> (All sections added together)		
<b>Average Score</b> (Total divided by number of sections scored)		

Time taken to complete Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Consultant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor/  
Designate Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Toronto Children's Services Operating Criteria: Non-Compliance Items

The minimum requirement for child care operators with a service contract with Toronto Children's Services is a 3 (Meets Expectations).

Child care programs with a rating of 1 or 2 in any item will be required to address the deficiency by a targeted compliance date determined by the Consultant.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Centre: \_\_\_\_\_

Loc #: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Visit ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Consultant signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor/designate signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Total # of Pages: \_\_\_\_\_

Sections that did not meet expectations					
Section #:	Room #:	Indicator #:	Score:	Date expected to meet expectations:	Date compliance verified
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9					
Comments:					Supervisor Initial: _____
Section #:	Room #:	Indicator #:	Score:	Date expected to meet expectations:	Date compliance verified
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9					
Comments:					Supervisor Initial: _____
Section #:	Room #:	Indicator #:	Score:	Date expected to meet expectations:	Date compliance verified
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9					
Comments:					Supervisor Initial: _____

<b>Sections that did not meet expectations</b>					
Section #:	Room #:	Indicator #:	Score:	Date expected to meet expectations:	Date compliance verified
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9					
<b>Comments:</b>					Supervisor Initial: _____
Section #:	Room #:	Indicator #:	Score:	Date expected to meet expectations:	Date compliance verified
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9					
<b>Comments:</b>					Supervisor Initial: _____
Section #:	Room #:	Indicator #:	Score:	Date expected to meet expectations:	Date compliance verified
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9					
<b>Comments:</b>					Supervisor Initial: _____
Section #:	Room #:	Indicator #:	Score:	Date expected to meet expectations:	Date compliance verified
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9					
<b>Comments:</b>					Supervisor Initial: _____
Section #:	Room #:	Indicator #:	Score:	Date expected to meet expectations:	Date compliance verified
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9					
<b>Comments:</b>					Supervisor Initial: _____
Section #:	Room #:	Indicator #:	Score:	Date expected to meet expectations:	Date compliance verified
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9					
<b>Comments:</b>					Supervisor Initial: _____

# Toronto Operating Criteria: Operator Quality Monitoring Chart

1. Input the year and month of the Criteria Assessment.
2. Input the final score from each section of the Criteria Assessment.
3. Total the scores and divide by the number of sections completed to get an overall score.

Year/Month	Score	Year/Month	Score	Year/Month	Score
1. Infant		1. Infant		1. Infant	
2. Toddler		2. Toddler		2. Toddler	
3. Preschool		3. Preschool		3. Preschool	
4. School Age		4. School Age		4. School Age	
5. Playground		5. Playground		5. Playground	
6. Nutrition		6. Nutrition		6. Nutrition	
7. Administration		7. Administration		7. Administration	
8. Financial		8. Financial		8. Financial	
9. Working Together		9. Working Together		9. Working Together	
10. Total Score:		10. Total Score:		10. Total Score:	
11. Average Score (total score divided by # of sections scored)		11. Average Score (total score divided by # of sections scored)		11. Average Score (total score divided by # of sections scored)	

# Toronto Operating Criteria: Operator Quality Monitoring Chart

4. Take the scores from each section, e.g., infant, toddler, etc., and make a dot on the graph corresponding to that number.
5. Connect all of the dots with a line.
6. Next year, repeat the above steps, use a different color pen to mark your scores and look for changes.

Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
Year/Month		Year/Month		Year/Month	
Overall Centre Score:		Overall Centre Score:		Overall Centre Score:	
Colour Used:		Colour Used:		Colour Used:	

	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School-Age	Playground	Nutrition	Administration	Financial	Working Together
4									
3.5									
3									
2.5									
2									
1.5									
1									

# Toronto Operating Criteria: Operator Quality Monitoring Chart

7. Use the changes chart to indicate what you feel made the difference in your score and use this information to set continuous improvement goals.

Year/Month	Changes (what areas, what do you attribute to the change in score, etc.)	Goals:

Year/Month	Changes (what areas, what do you attribute to the change in score, etc.)	Goals:

Year/Month	Changes (what areas, what do you attribute to the change in score, etc.)	Goals: