



INTERNATIONAL  
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ASSOCIATION

# Instrument for Assessing Quality Practices in Early Childhood Education Services for Children from 3 to 10 Years Old

# INTRODUCTION

## WHAT IS THE *INSTRUMENT*?

The *Instrument for Assessing Quality Practices* is a shorter version of *The Professional Development Tool for Improving Quality of Practices in Kindergarten* and the *Professional Development Tool for Improving Quality of Practices in Primary School* which are based on the *ISSA Principles of Quality Pedagogy*. It is comprised of a subset of 36 key Indicators that are mostly observable in a classroom setting and are identified as predictive of quality practice captured by and linked to the larger set of 85 Indicators in the *ISSA Principles of Quality Pedagogy* and *the Professional Development Tools*.

The *Instrument* was developed through a process that indentified **36 Indicators** that highly correlated with other Indicators within each Principle of Quality and that distinguished excellent teaching in terms of being **more challenging indicators for educators to meet**. The large majority of these indicators are easily observable, with the exception of five indicators in the Focus Areas on Family and Community and Assessment and Planning, which require documentation and/or an interview to score. The Indicators presented in the *Instrument* **provide a snapshot profile of teacher quality**; however, they do not assess the entire range of indicators that define quality.

## HOW CAN THE *INSTRUMENT* BE USED?

The short length of the *Instrument* and protocol for collecting data makes it ideal for situations where **assessment of multiple educators** in a short period of time is required, such as in **pre-and post-intervention assessments of programs** and/or for **research purposes** to provide data to inform the effectiveness of professional development activities.

As the intention is to use the *Instrument* for program/project evaluation/assessment and for research purposes, it is required that the raters who administer the *Instrument* have deep understanding and profound knowledge of the *Professional Development Tools* as well as the other resources in the *ISSA Quality Resource Pack*, are trained in how to score the Indicators in the *Instrument*, and have achieved reliability at a minimum level of 85% with one of the ISSA Reliability Coordinators.

The *Instrument* is not intended to be a substitute for the entire set of indicators in the *ISSA Principles of Quality Pedagogy* when working with individual or groups of educators who are engaging in professional development activities.

Since the *Instrument* does not provide adequately comprehensive information about teaching practice that would be visible only in the educator's documentation, nor does it provide adequate opportunity for educators to explain their point of view or to talk about additional examples where they may meet certain indicators of quality practice, **it should not be used for assessing the practice of individual educators**. Referencing the full set of Indicators in the *Professional Development Tools for Improving Quality of Practices in Kindergarten and in Primary School* is needed to provide depth and additional examples of quality practice in individual educator assessment and in professional development interventions.

Professional development interventions and educator assessment should not be just about measurement but about dialogue around the goals of the Indicators in the *ISSA Principles of Quality Pedagogy*. In order to meet the requirements of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there must be a shift away from the idea that definitions of quality are fixed, to a new idea that the quality is being defined on an ongoing basis through a process of co-construction among the many different stakeholders who are concerned with quality.

### HOW THE *INSTRUMENT* IS PRESENTED

The *Instrument* consists of 36 Indicators. Each Indicator is described through examples or descriptions of practice as it would look in a continuum towards child-centered practice in preschool and primary school. The examples listed in the continuums are **just** examples of actions that describe practice at different levels. The *Instrument* is intended to be used and scored by professionals that have been trained in its use and who will also identify other examples or actions which can be taken by educators in preschools and primary schools to demonstrate a particular level of practice in the document.

Practice will be rated by an observer on a 3 point scale as:

- ▶ **LEVEL 0** describes practice that is **INADEQUATE** to be considered a child-centered approach
- ▶ **LEVEL 1 – GOOD START** describes practice that shows movement in becoming more child-centered, but may still lack consistency, intentionality, or depth, especially in terms of working with the agency of the child.
- ▶ **LEVEL 2 – QUALITY PRACTICE** describes what is evidence for engaging in quality practice. Child-centered practice at this level is internalized by the educator in terms of consistently demonstrating his/her belief that young children have the right to realize and expand their own potential and

to express their voice in the development of their own identities and abilities, relationships, and interactions with others, with ideas, with objects, and real and imaginary events

Scores of individual educators are expected to be aggregated with others' to determine how well a project, a program, a school, etc., is doing in terms of meeting quality or how successful a professional development intervention was in terms of increasing the level of quality of educators' practice.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ISSA expresses its sincere gratitude to the Open Society Foundation for its generous support over many years for ISSA's work in promoting quality pedagogy in the early years as the ultimate foundation for each child's development and learning. This support has enabled ISSA to develop a Resource Pack on Quality Pedagogy which includes: *Competent Educators of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: ISSA's Definition of Quality Pedagogy*, *Putting Knowledge into Practice: A Guidebook for Educators*, two *Professional Development Tools for Improving the Quality of Practices in Kindergarten and Primary School*, the *Instrument for Assessing Quality Practices*, an *Online Course for Kindergarten Teachers*, and an *Online Video Library*.

ISSA recognizes and appreciates the input of many professionals within and outside the ISSA network who contributed to the development of ISSA's Resource Pack on Quality Pedagogy. Special thanks go to all of ISSA's members, including the members of the ISSA Program Committee and the experts from the Reliability team, who have been instrumental in the development of these resources, as well as their dissemination and application within the ISSA network.

# INSTRUMENT FOR ASSESSING QUALITY PRACTICES

## in Early childhood Education services for Children from 3 to 10 Years Old

No.	Indicator	Description	Observation	Interview/ Documentation
<b>1. INTERACTIONS</b>				
1.	1.1.4	The educator's interactions are responsive to each child's emotional, social, physical, and cognitive strengths and needs.	x	
2.	1.1.5	The educator provides opportunities for children to make choices and to have those choices realized and respected by others.	x	
3.	1.1.6	The educator's interactions with children develop their initiative, autonomy, self-sufficiency, and leadership.	x	
4.	1.2.2	The educator offers activities that help children learn to distinguish feelings, to recognize them in themselves and their peers, and to communicate about them.	x	
5.	1.2.3	The educator promotes democratic values by encouraging every child to express his/her opinion in an appropriate way and to participate in decision making.	x	
<b>2. FAMILY AND COMMUNITIES</b>				
6.	2.1.2	The educator involves family members in shared decision making about their children's learning, development, and social life in the classroom.		x
7.	2.1.3	The educator involves family members in decision-making concerning children's learning environments.		x
8.	2.2.3	The educator promotes opportunities for families to learn from one another and to support each other.		x
9.	2.3.3	The educator uses knowledge of children's communities and families as an integral part of the curriculum and their learning experiences.		x

No.	Indicator	Description	Observation	Interview/ Documentation
<b>3. INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND VALUES OF DEMOCRACY</b>				
10.	3.1.2	The educator treats each child with respect, dignity, and consideration and provides equal opportunities to engage in the life of the school.	x	
11.	3.1.4	The educator uses language and activities that avoid gender and other stereotypes.	x	x
12.	3.1.5	The educator makes adaptations to the environment and to learning activities so that children with different capabilities, educational needs, and social backgrounds can participate in most activities.	x	x
13.	3.2.1	The educator appreciates and incorporates into his/her teaching the diversity that exists among the children, families, and within the community.	x	
14.	3.3.1	The educator strengthens children's appreciation and respect for different preferences and points of view, and helps children develop skills to express their views appropriately.	x	
15.	3.3.3	The educator encourages children to treat others with equity, fairness, respect, and dignity and to expect the same from others.	x	
<b>4. ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING</b>				
16.	4.1.1.	The educator uses systematic observation and other diverse and developmentally appropriate formative assessment tools that reflect on the process and outcomes of learning and development.		x
17.	4.1.2	The educator assesses the level of children's involvement necessary for meaningful learning and participation and makes adjustments in activities accordingly.	x	
18.	4.2.	The educator plans activities that are based on the developmental levels and interests of the children to enable them to acquire relevant competences.	x	x
19.	4.2.2	The educator balances planned activities with child-initiated activities and choices, including finding ways to support children's individual leaning styles and paces.	x	
20.	4.2.5	The educator's plans and actions are flexible enough to acknowledge and incorporate changing conditions and children's needs and interests.	x	
21.	4.3.1	The educator assists children in becoming skilful at self-assessment and making decisions about their own learning and behaviour based on clear and consistent criteria.	x	x
22.	4.3.2	The educator guides children on how to evaluate others' behaviours and work.	x	

No.	Indicator	Description	Observation	Interview/ Documentation
<b>5. TEACHING STRATEGIES</b>				
23.	5.1.3	The educator uses strategies to promote higher-order thinking and problem solving.	x	
24.	5.1.6	The educator encourages children to use available, developmentally appropriate technologies to support their learning and to develop skills required for active participation in an information society.	x	x
25.	5.2.1	The educator offers activities that foster children's sense of individuality and identity.	x	x
26.	5.2.3	The educator uses strategies that promote children's self-regulation.	x	
27.	5.3.2	The educator provides an adequate amount of effective scaffolding to children according to their needs and progress.	x	
28.	5.3.3	The educator encourages children to set goals and expectations for their own work and to reflect on the results of learning.	x	
29.	5.3.4	The educator integrates learning experiences so that children can see the interrelations among learning concepts and everyday experiences and can apply them in real situations.	x	
30.	5.4.2	The educator uses strategies that promote children's participation and understanding of responsibility and its consequences.	x	
31.	5.4.3	The educator uses strategies that help children learn about boundaries, rules, and limits, and learn to respect the rights of others in a democratic society.	x	
32.	5.4.4	The educator offers opportunities for children to make choices both in the learning process and other situations and helps to develop an understanding of the consequences of choices made.	x	
<b>6. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</b>				
33.	6.1.4	The educator creates an environment that stimulates children to take appropriate risks for development and learning.	x	
34.	6.2.4	The educator incorporates varied, plentiful, accessible, and developmentally appropriate materials that stimulate children to explore, play, and learn.	x	
35.	6.3.1	The educator communicates clear expectations for behaviour and involves children in creating rules when appropriate.	x	x
36.	6.3.3	The educator uses consistent routines to promote children's self-regulation and independence.	x	





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**ISSA—An innovative network of early childhood development professionals and organizations primarily in Europe and Central Asia, working to make quality early childhood education accessible to all children**