

# CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM PLAN STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

## OVERVIEW

The purpose of a continuous quality improvement program plan (CQIP) is to assist early childhood administrators in identifying and achieving improvements to strengthen their programs. This is done by gathering sources of evidence, analyzing the data, and creating measurable objectives to systematically develop a plan to carry out the steps required for making changes.

While there may be several improvements needed in a program, it is important to prioritize these so that your plan is achievable. Additional improvements can be made on a future CQIP. Best practice is to have three to five objectives on a CQIP summary form at a time. These objectives can be classroom specific, age group specific, administrative, or related to supporting families and staff. Please note these objectives will be verified as evidence of sustained change at the Silver and Gold Circles of Quality.

A CQIP needs to be revisited regularly to monitor the progress of each objective. Each objective should have a lead person responsible for ensuring that progress is being made. Each of these individuals then reports back to an administrator on their progress and makes adjustments as necessary to meet their timelines. Timelines are not carved in stone; they can be adjusted. The goal is to achieve the objectives. Sometimes additional time may be required to do this. Accountability is important to achieve the objectives; however there may be circumstances that could not have been foreseen. For example, materials ordered may have been on back order creating the need for a time extension.

Below is a step-by-step guide on how to write a plan. There are two documents you will use:

- The ***Continuous Quality Improvement Program Plan Summary***: This will be the master document that gets submitted as evidence to meet standards criteria in ExceleRate Illinois. On this document you will list your top 3-5 objectives that illustrate progress in making improvements.
- The ***Continuous Quality Improvement Planning Worksheet***: Your program will have multiple copies of the worksheet being used throughout the program. There will be only one objective per worksheet.

Contact your CCR&R Specialists/Consultants if you have any questions as you are creating or modifying your plan. They are there to support you in your continuous quality improvement journey.

## STEP 1 – BEGIN THE CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

### PROGRAM PLAN SUMMARY

The ***Continuous Quality Improvement Program Plan Summary*** is the master record for your program's CQIP. Your program's self-assessment data as well as verification reports (once available) will be used to ensure a comprehensive plan was created and implemented. Submitting a copy of this document is required when applying for specific ExceleRate Illinois Circles of Quality.

- A. Write your program's name, program ID (if one has been assigned through ExceleRate Illinois), address, city, state, zip code, and county in the appropriate place on the CQIP Summary.
- B. If your program already has an ExceleRate Illinois Circle of Quality, write it in the space provided. If not, leave this space blank.
- C. Enter the date on which you last completed a self-assessment of your program.
- D. If your program had a verified assessment by a CCR&R specialist, write in the date and name of the individual who conducted the assessment. If your program had a verified assessment by a state-approved assessor, write in the date and initials of the assessor located on the summary report.

## STEP 2 – ESTABLISH AN OVERALL PROGRAMMATIC GOAL

Establish your overall programmatic goal. Your goal is the desired state you hope to achieve. This could be your vision for your program or a self-created goal, such as *"The program will provide developmentally appropriate care and learning experiences for children while their parents work or attend school"* OR *"Children will gain a love of learning in a safe, nurturing environment so they can be successful throughout their lives."* Each of the objectives you then develop in the following step will tie back to this overarching goal. Thus your goal will remain the same regardless of the number of objectives included in your plan.

Write the overall programmatic goal on the ***Continuous Quality Improvement Program Plan Summary***.

## STEP 3 – DEVELOP OBJECTIVES AND ACTION STEPS

For this step, you will use the ***Continuous Quality Improvement Program Planning Worksheet*** to develop objectives and a plan of action for achieving those objectives. You will need one worksheet for each objective you develop in support of your overall programmatic goal. Make copies of the worksheet as needed.

- A. Write your objective in the space provided. Objectives should start with the word "to" and should be measurable. The intent is to consider change in small, incremental steps, so only address 2-3 objectives per any standard not being met in each CQI cycle. You may repeat the cycle as many times as you feel is necessary to meet your programmatic goals, however be intentional and focused.

- B. Identify the time frame for the objective (i.e. immediate, short term, long term). Immediate benchmarks would be for any identified improvement that needs to be changed immediately, such as a licensing issue.
- C. Identify the staff that will be responsible for this objective. This could be a team or individual.
- D. Set a projected completion date for the objective. You will go back after the objective is met to put in the actual completion date.
- E. Identify the ExceleRate Illinois standard number (e.g., 1A) or name (e.g., Learning Environment) that relates to your objective. These will change depending upon the objective written.
- F. Check the Circle of Quality that relates to the standard you just identified. You may have objectives at different Circles of Quality, depending on whether you are working to maintain an existing Circle of Quality or moving to a new Circle of Quality.
- G. List each action step required to successfully achieve the objective. The more detail the better so it is clear exactly what needs to occur, when, and by whom. List a projected completion date for each step of the action plan. As each step is accomplished, go back in and add the actual completion date.
- H. List the sources of evidence (reports, surveys, research, licensing summaries, self-assessments, etc.) that were used to support the need for this objective. If you know the dates these were completed, include that information to help establish the timeliness and relevance of the objective. If updated versions are completed during this plan, add this information in.
- I. Identify the resources or supports needed to complete the task(s).
  - 1. List any anticipated challenges such as time, materials, staff issues, board concerns, or financial limitations so that proactive steps can be taken to address these matters.
  - 2. List any professional development or technical assistance that may be required and any associated cost involved.
  - 3. Detail any changes that occurred because of using a resource.
- J. Use the additional space provided to reflect on why this objective matters for children in a high-quality program. The reflection section is also designed to capture any “lessons learned” or adjustments that may need to be made. It may be necessary to rewrite an objective if major shifts are required to be successful. The revised objective may have to go onto the next CQI cycle depending upon your timelines.

## STEP 4 – TRANSFER OBJECTIVES TO THE CQIP SUMMARY

After you have fully developed your objectives and action steps in support of your overall programmatic goal, transfer the objectives that illustrate progress in making improvements and related information to the ***Continuous Quality Improvement Program Plan Summary***.

- A. On the CQIP Summary, write in the first objective that you developed using the CQIP Worksheet. (Remember best practice is to address only 3-5 objectives within a CQI cycle on the CQIP Summary form).
- B. Enter the projected date of completion for the objective. Remember, as you complete each objective, be sure to update the worksheet and summary with the actual date it was completed.
- C. Write in the name(s) of the staff responsible for the objective.
- D. Identify the ExceleRate Illinois standard and the Circle of Quality that relates to that standard.
- E. Repeat for each objective identified.
- F. There are several ExceleRate Illinois standards that require a CQIP (see Silver & Gold Circle of Quality charts). At a *minimum*, a CQIP must be developed to address these areas. The CQIP Summary Plan will be submitted with the ExceleRate Illinois application (as needed) once all standards are met. For ExceleRate Illinois renewal, a CQIP would need to show that progress is being made towards achieving the Objective.

## Step 5 – Carry Out and Update the Plan

Remember, the CQIP is a living document and needs to be revisited regularly to determine the progress of each objective. Action steps or timelines may need to be adjusted. As objectives are completed, actual completion dates should be noted on both the ***Continuous Quality Improvement Program Plan Summary*** and ***Continuous Quality Improvement Program Plan Worksheet***.

Contact your CCR&R Specialists/Consultants if you have any questions as you are creating or modifying your plan. They are there to support you in your continuous quality improvement journey.