

Checklist of Quality Practices

In Parenting Education

It is becoming increasingly necessary in the field of parenting education to develop ways to identify characteristics of quality. High quality parenting education can be a critical resource for families, empowering parents to enhance their children's development and build strong parent-child relationships. Poor quality parenting education may have little positive effect, and may lower individual and public esteem for the field, reducing its potential impact for families.

The research on quality in parenting education is limited and focused mainly on the effectiveness of specific curricula, programs, or parenting techniques, rather than parenting education practices that may be used across curricula and programs. However, the research and professional literature provides some insights and evidence to support specific characteristics of quality in parenting education. The recommendations listed in the Parenting Research (PR) Checklist are based primarily on this literature. It is time to focus more actively as a profession on characteristics of quality in parenting education programs.

The characteristics of quality in the PR Checklist of Quality Practices in Parenting Education fall within four key domains:

- Service or program objectives or outcomes
- Quality agency or program characteristics
- Effective content or curriculum
- Quality staff interpersonal or facilitation skills

Scoring: It is not expected that any other than the most exemplary of parenting education programs will have *all* of the characteristics included in the PR Checklist. Most programs will be doing well if they score above 70%. See page 6 for scoring details.

CHECKLIST OF QUALITY PRACTICES IN PARENTING EDUCATION

A. OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES

| | <i>Level Present</i> | | | |
|---|----------------------|---------|------|-------|
| | None | Unclear | Some | Lots! |
| 1. Increased ability to meet basic family needs. | | | | |
| 2. Strengthened social ties, sources of social support for parents. | | | | |
| 3. Enhanced parental knowledge and skills in specific topic areas related to parenting. | | | | |
| 4. Strengthened parental confidence in themselves and in their children. | | | | |
| 5. Improved parenting behaviors. | | | | |
| 6. Improved parent-child or parent-youth relationships. | | | | |
| 7. Improved child or youth characteristics or behaviors. | | | | |
| 8. | | | | |
| 9. | | | | |
| 10. | | | | |

Comments, concerns, other observations:

B. QUALITY PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

Level Present

| | None | Unclear | Some | Lots! |
|--|-------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1. A wellness, rather than deficit, approach, building on family strengths. | | | | |
| 2. A focus on the importance of the parent's role as nurturer and first teacher. | | | | |
| 3. Knowledge of target population characteristics, needs, and educational preferences. | | | | |
| 4. Respect for families of all socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and structural circumstances; understanding, respecting and affirming the cultural and social characteristics of diverse communities. | | | | |
| 5. A provision for on-going parent and participant input, feedback, and decision-making in all aspects of program planning and implementation. | | | | |
| 6. The ability to connect families to needed resources and support. | | | | |
| 7. A community (ecological) orientation, cooperating and collaborating with other organizations to enhance the well-being of all families and children. | | | | |
| 8. Where possible, a comprehensive, long-term approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including direct experiences for the children • Sustained over periods of three years or more | | | | |
| 9. | | | | |
| 10. | | | | |
| 11. | | | | |

Comments, concerns, other observations:

C. EFFECTIVE CONTENT - CURRICULUM

Level Present

| | None | Unclear | Some | Lots! |
|---|-------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Importance and strategies for caring for oneself as a person with many roles, responsibilities, needs, and strengths. | | | | |
| 2. Positive behavior management strategies, including observation, cause identification, modifying the environment, extinction, modeling, positive reinforcement, natural and logical consequences. | | | | |
| 3. Child development in physical, cognitive, language, sexual, and social/emotional areas, including the wide variation between individuals in maturation rates and temperaments, age-appropriate expectations. | | | | |
| 4. Virtues of an authoritative parenting style that includes warm, supportive care; firm, age-appropriate expectations; psychological autonomy. | | | | |
| 5. Strategies for nurturing close family relationships, including focused attention, communication skills, anger management, perspective-taking, building on child strengths, enhancing sibling relationships. | | | | |
| 6. Problem solving skills, including active listening, perspective-taking, thinking creatively, brainstorming possible solutions, projecting possible consequences, planning and evaluating solutions, family meetings. | | | | |
| 7. Home as a learning environment, including the value of active play, talking, reading, limiting/guiding TV and other screen time, facilitating homework and home-school communication. | | | | |
| 8. Skills to empower parents to advocate on the behalf of their children within the community for educational, medical, social services, or other needs. | | | | |
| 9. | | | | |
| 10. | | | | |

Comments, concerns, other observations:

D. QUALITY INTERPERSONAL OR FACILITATION SKILLS

Level Present

| | None | Unclear | Some | Lots! |
|--|-------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Use of respectful language and processes that recognize the unique expertise, experiences, cultural backgrounds, strengths and challenges of each family. | | | | |
| 2. Ability to describe and model positive parenting skills and approaches, without using prescriptive language or telling parents what they must do. | | | | |
| 3. Facilitation of emotionally safe and supportive processes that enable parents to learn and exchange ideas with staff members and/or peers. | | | | |
| 4. Guidance of participants toward positive parenting approaches, offering supportive alternatives to negative ideas when recommended by others. | | | | |
| 5. Responsiveness to participant characteristics, needs, preferences, and goals for program content and processes. | | | | |
| 6. Use of a variety of teaching methods, accommodating the diverse learning styles and needs of adult learners. | | | | |
| 7. Adherence to ethical principles, including maintenance of appropriate boundaries between participants and educators, giving referrals as needed. | | | | |
| 8. | | | | |
| 9. | | | | |
| 10. | | | | |

Comments, concerns, other observations:

Scoring: None = 0, Unclear = 1, Some = 2, Lots = 3

1. Discuss with your advisory board or other advisory group whether there are additional characteristics of quality that should be added to each list. Consider carefully each possible addition: what the justification is, what the potential effects might be.
2. Evaluate each program by checking the appropriate box for each characteristic, for each of the four domains.
3. Add up the scores for each sheet to get the total score for each program. If no additional characteristics were added, the maximum possible score would be 120.
4. Please email the Parenting Research website to let us know how well this checklist worked for you, and what additional characteristics, if any, you decided were important, and why. Thank you.

-- Rachel Ozretich, M.S., Certified Family Life Educator, June 2002

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