

elom

early learning measurement tools

LEARNING PROGRAMME QUALITY ASSESSMENT



DATA
DRIVE  

ABOUT THE TOOL

The ELOM LPQA tool is for use by organisations who would like to assess the quality of an Early Learning Programme. It is designed to rate the quality of ELPs in five domains aligned with the South African curriculum framework:

1. Programme environment
2. Classroom curriculum
3. Learner assessments
4. Relationships and interactions
5. Teaching strategies

The tool is for use with group learning programmes (ECD centres and playgroups) delivered directly to children aged 3 -5 years. It takes about 2 hours to administer and involves both an interview with the ECD programme operator and direct observation of the classroom, outside play areas, learning activities and teacher-child interactions.

PROJECT

Project Name: _____

Province: Eastern Cape Free State Gauteng
KwaZulu-Natal Limpopo Mpumalanga
Northern Cape North West Western Cape

ABOUT THE ECD PROGRAMME

Name of Early Learning Programme / School _____

Does the programme charge fees? Yes No Don't know

If fees are charged, how much is the monthly fee (in Rands)? _____

What languages are usually spoken at the programme?

English Afrikaans isiZulu
isiXhosa Sesotho Setswana
isiNdebele Sesotho se Leboa (Sepedi) siSwati
Xitsonga Tshivenda Other _____

How many days a week does the ECD programme operate? _____

How many hours per day does the ECD programme operate? _____

Is the chosen classroom available for observation?

Permanently unavailable (not now nor another day)
Temporarily unavailable (come back another day)
Yes

PRACTITIONER & CLASS INFORMATION

A class is a distinct group within an Early Learning Programme with their own practitioner/s and activity plan. This tool is intended for use in a class of children aged 3, 4 or 5 years. Sometimes, classes include a mix of ages. If this is the case, please focus observations on the 3-5 age group.

Practitioner's first name: _____

Practitioner's surname: _____

Practitioner's sex: Male Female

Practitioner's years of ECD experience: _____

Age range of children in the class (select all that apply)

18-35 months 3 years 4 years
5 years 6 years

Number of children enrolled in the class _____

Number of children present during observation _____

Number of teaching assistants in the class (in addition to main practitioner) _____

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Instructions for users - Please select the response option that most closely resembles the situation in the early learning programme that you are assessing. The descriptions may not match exactly, but please choose the one that represents the closest match.

1. ROOM ARRANGEMENT

During playtimes the room is divided into learning areas / interest centres.

Learning areas/interest centres refer to spaces organised with equipment for different kinds of play.

These can include:

- make-believe play (more than one make-believe activity counts as one area e.g. home and shop)
- big blocks
- sensory play (sand, water etc)
- an art area (painting, drawing, modelling, cutting and pasting, box construction etc)
- book area
- nature and science table
- educational toys and games (puzzles, small construction, sorting games, counting, threading etc)

It is important that quiet areas are separated from other, more noisy and active spaces. Quiet areas include books, educational toys and games, fine motor and art and areas.

Inadequate: There are no or fewer than 3 organised learning areas.

Basic: Three learning areas set out for children to play in (alone or with other children)

Good: There are 4 or more learning areas arranged so children can use them, quiet and active areas separate.

2. INDOOR MATERIALS

There are enough and varied materials for play and learning indoors.

Enough variety means that there is sufficient equipment for all children to have a choice of activities at all times (allowing for rotation and turn taking). Choice refers to a variety of things to do within an area e.g. several books, drawing and painting, lego and table blocks etc.

Inadequate: Insufficient materials in any or all areas. E.g. children have to wait for a toy or resource and have nothing to work with while waiting

Basic: Some materials for all learning areas. E.g. children don't have to wait but there is limited choice – only 1 activity or 1 choice.

Good: Enough and variety of materials in all learning areas - more than 2 activities in each area and enough for all children to be occupied.

3. DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE MATERIALS

Materials for play and learning are developmentally appropriate for 3 – 5 year olds.

Developmentally appropriate means that the materials accommodate the learning needs of this age group and include some easier and more challenging materials to meet individual needs. Adaptive for special needs may include large format books for visual impairment, easy to handle puzzle pieces and communication boards.

Inadequate: Many materials are not appropriate for the developmental level and interests of the children (too difficult or too easy) for 3 – 5 year olds.

Basic: Most materials match the developmental level and interests of children 3 – 5 years (e.g. children are engaged, some easier and some more challenging materials).

Good: Materials provide for a range of developmental levels and interests including adaptive equipment for children with special needs (e.g. many interesting things to do, suitable for a range of abilities).

4. ACCESSIBLE MATERIALS

Materials are accessible for children. Accessible means that children can easily select materials for the day's activities themselves – they are not packed away so that only the practitioner can access them.

Inadequate: Few or no materials are accessible to children.

Basic: Some materials are easily accessible for children.

Good: All materials are laid out so that children can easily access them.

5. OPEN ENDED MATERIALS

There are open ended materials. Open ended materials are those that can be used in many different ways e.g. blocks, cloths, free art materials, boxes, sand and water, natural materials like stones, seed pods, sticks. These allow children to use their imagination, problem solving and creativity and create their own play experiences.

Worksheets and pre- prepared craft projects where all children do the same thing are not open ended.

Inadequate: No open ended materials.

Basic: At least 1 example of open ended materials in each of 2 learning areas

Good: At least 2 examples of open ended materials in each of 3 learning areas.

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

6. CHILD OBSERVATION

Children are observed by the practitioner, to inform planning and support needs Ask the teacher/practitioner to show you any record of observations of learner performance (e.g. observation book).

- Inadequate:** There is no observation record or the observation record / book is not in regular use.
- Basic:** There is a regular observation record/book with some written indication of remedial activities
- Good:** There are many and varied observations of children's progress and evidence of a range of activities to remediate difficulties/facilitate holistic development.

7. RECORDING PROGRESS

Each child's progress is regularly and systematically monitored in an informal and play-based way. Ask to see copies of any assessment forms, child progress or development records, child portfolios. If there are records, ask how often progress is assessed and recorded.

- Inadequate:** There is no systematic child assessment.
- Basic:** Assessments are done at least twice a year, using a standard format, and filed for reference.
- Good:** Assessments using a standard format are updated regularly, children with difficulties are assessed more often.

RELATIONSHIPS & INTERACTIONS

8. CHILD-CHILD INTERACTION

Practitioner promotes and encourages positive interaction among children. Examples of promoting positive child/child interaction include encouraging playing and working cooperatively, helping children who find it hard to join in to join a group.

- Inadequate:** Children are discouraged from interacting (e.g. not allowed to choose who to play with, focus on individual work) and there is little or no guidance for positive peer interaction.
- Basic:** Peer interaction encouraged (e.g. free choice of who to play with), negative interactions stopped.
- Good:** Staff help children develop good social behaviours, provide activities that encourage children to work together, support children who find it hard to join in.

9. STAFF-CHILD INTERACTION

Staff child interaction is warm, interested, individualised and respectful and sensitive to how children are feeling. This means that staff notice what individual children are doing and feeling and act accordingly. For example, they respond promptly to children who are upset and notice when children need assistance.

- Inadequate:** Staff are not responsive to or involved with children (ignore or just give instructions), little individual attention is provided.
- Basic:** Friendly atmosphere, some positive interactions and response to individual children, consistent response to children's needs (observed at least twice).
- Good:** Frequent positive interaction, warm contact, relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. Sensitive to non-verbal cues and respond appropriately, respectful and guide positively, supportive and comforting (observed more than twice during observation.)

10. CHILD EFFORTS ACKNOWLEDGED

Children's efforts and ideas acknowledged. Acknowledgement includes practitioner behaviours such as repeating child's ideas, comments on what children are doing, putting them in control of evaluating their own work and efforts. To get a rating of 2 there needs to be more engagement with the child than a statement such as well done, high five or good job.

Inadequate: Staff do not use encouragement to acknowledge children's efforts or ideas.

Basic: Staff sometimes use encouragement (at least 2 instances observed with 2 different children).

Good: Staff regularly use encouragement to acknowledge individual children's efforts and ideas.

11. POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

Positive discipline. There should be no physical punishment, yelling, shaming, withholding food or time out/naughty corner longer than 4 – 5 minutes. Positive discipline involves, setting clear expectations, praising good behaviour. When a child misbehaves, staff remind them of rules, explain and redirect unsuitable behaviour, discuss behaviours with children etc.

Inadequate: No positive discipline observed or expectations may not be age appropriate.

Basic: No harsh methods used, control maintained, expectations age appropriate.

Good: Effective use of non-punitive methods, staff apply rules consistently, children supported to solve conflicts for themselves, express how they are feeling.

Not seen: There were no instances requiring behaviour management during the observation period

CURRICULUM

12. USE OF NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK (NCF) AND EARLY LEARNING DEVELOPMENT AREAS (ELDAS)

Learning programme is guided by the NCF ELDAs and aim and phase specific developmental guidelines.

1. Well- being (health and motor development)
2. Identity and belonging (social and emotional)
3. Communication
4. Exploring mathematics
5. Knowledge of the world
6. Creativity

Check the practitioner's planning book for the day and the activities on offer to assess alignment with ELDAs

Inadequate: No evidence that programme supports NCF aims.

Basic: Learning programme focuses on some of the ELDAs and is mostly developmentally appropriate (3 – 5 years).

Good: Learning programme used covers all the ELDAs and activities are developmentally appropriate catering for different children's individual needs.

13. PROGRAMME PLANNING

Practitioner organises activities according to an integrated weekly and daily plan.

An integrated plan will have a focus/ theme/topic shown across learning areas and times of the day).

E.g. If family is the topic, it will be discussed as part of morning ring, children may draw or paint family members, there may be songs and a story about different families. Ask to see planning book/file/notes.

Inadequate: There is no evidence of planning used to organise learning activities (that a specific plan is being followed for the day though there may be a regular schedule).

Basic: Planning books and the playroom reflect a planned and integrated approach across different learning areas and parts of the daily programme.

Good: Plans are applied and there is evidence of taking into account children's interests and developmental appropriateness in planned activities that are implemented.

14. DAILY PROGRAMME

Programme includes a balance of free play, small group, and whole group activities.

Review daily schedule – this is usually displayed on the wall. Free play where children have choices can be indoors and outdoors. Small groups are organized times for a few children with the practitioner. Whole groups include all children in activities such as the morning ring, story, music and group games.

Inadequate: Either free play or whole group activities (where children all do the same thing) predominate.

Basic: Both free play and whole group activities are provided each day and there are some small group times.

Good: There is a substantial free play indoors and outdoors, at least one story, music and ring time daily and regular small group teaching opportunities which all children are exposed at least once a week.

15. NUMERACY AND MATHEMATICS

Programme includes numeracy and mathematics activities. Numeracy and mathematics activities and materials include numbers, shapes, measurement, grouping and sorting. There should be a mix of activities especially with concrete materials and reference to maths concepts in all parts of the programme including story, music, serving snack, etc.

Inadequate: Few or no appropriate maths activities, staff do not show children how to use them or participate and practitioner does not use math words when talking to children in daily events, group times.

Basic: Some practitioner initiated and directed maths activities including number songs and rhymes linked to an intended purpose and some use of maths words in daily events and routines.

Good: Frequent number songs, rhymes, games. Children encouraged to count objects, name shapes, sort and match. Maths learning also integrated as part of daily routine, how many cups for dolls, plates for children, number wearing red.

16. LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Programme includes language and literacy activities. Language activities include daily story time, books and reading to children, talking and listening, encouraging conversation, a print rich environment, opportunities for drawing/writing. Check the environment for labelled objects and children's work, availability of writing materials and children's portfolios.

Inadequate: Few appropriate language activities. E.g. Practitioner rarely reads to children, few accessible books, little encouragement for children to talk to practitioner, no labelled pictures or print other than books, limited access to writing implements.

Basic: Some of the following language/literacy activities – daily story, some appropriate books and reading to children, access to writing implements and paper, some practitioner and child conversations and some labelled pictures and printed words displayed, especially children's names.

Good: Daily story with active child participation and discussion. E.g. children asked to recall parts of story); access to many appropriate books and are read to regularly. Practitioner records children's sayings, labels items in drawings (check portfolios), displays their emergent writing (on the wall). Children encouraged to answer questions in extended way, individual adult / child conversations and activities planned to stimulate conversation. Many labelled pictures and materials on view.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

17. FREE CHOICE

During free choice times children have a high level of choice about what to play and what materials to use.

Practitioners do not give instructions to children concerning their choice of activities or playmates.

Inadequate: Staff direct how children use materials and carry out activities (e.g. all make same things, respond with same words and actions).

Basic: Children make at least 2 choices independent of practitioner direction about where and how to carry out activities, but some materials choices and activities are practitioner directed.

Good: Children make 3 or more choices during playtime (independent of practitioner direction) about where and how to use materials and carry out activities.

18. STAFF CHILD ENGAGEMENT

Staff move around and engage with children during playtime and use a range of techniques to support and extend children's learning. Techniques to extend learning may include conversation in which children talk and practitioners listen, adding information, questioning, modelling how to do something, joining in play, allowing children to try things out, simplifying a task or suggesting a more advanced activity.

Inadequate: Staff do not engage to support and extend children's learning. Interaction is largely supervisory.

Basic: Staff engage with one or two children to extend their learning using one or two different techniques (3 instances observed).

Good: Staff regularly engage to extend children's learning using a variety of techniques (more than 3 instances observed).

19. GROUP TIMES

Group times which are practitioner directed allow for child participation. Group times are times when all children are engaged in an activity organised by the practitioner – ring time, music, story etc.

Inadequate: In large group activities staff do not ask children to offer ideas or participate according to their developmental levels.

Basic: Children sometimes contribute or participate at own developmental levels at large group time.

Good: Children contribute their own ideas and participate at own developmental levels throughout large group times.

20. QUESTIONING TO EXTEND LEARNING

Staff ask open ended questions to extend children's thinking. Open ended questions are those that go beyond a question to which there is only one answer. e.g. What colour is this? They encourage further thinking e.g. 'What do you think', 'Do you agree with ...?', 'Why?', 'Would you have done it differently? How?'

Inadequate: No open ended questions to extend children's thinking (only one word answers required e.g. what is this?)

Basic: Some questions to encourage children to reflect on an activity or idea. E.g. questions such as 'What do you think', 'Do you agree with ...?', 'Why?', 'Would you have done it differently? How?' (2 instances observed).

Good: Many questions to encourage children to reflect on actions and ideas in multiple ways (3 or more instances observed).

21. EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Staff support children's emotional development: opportunities for autonomy.

Examples of helping children to be independent would be encouraging them to dress themselves, pour juice, fetch paper, help tidy up, and take initiative (trying things in different ways, suggest a game etc).

Inadequate: Staff do not support children to do things for themselves or encourage children to take initiative.

Basic: Practitioner sometimes supports children to do things for themselves and take initiative (2 instances observed).

Good: Practitioner regularly supports children to do things for themselves and take initiative (3 or more instances observed).

GROSS MOTOR MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES

22. GROSS MOTOR MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT TO ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT OF DIFFERENT MOTOR SKILLS.

Motor skills include running, balancing, swinging, hopping, skipping, climbing, throwing and catching, managing wheel toys etc). Equipment to encourage Gross Motor Development includes e.g. any of the following: small equipment such as skittles, beanbags, ropes, balls, tyres, large fixed equipment such as climbing frames or swings, commando nets. This will mostly be outside but may be in a space where children can move freely.

Inadequate: Few or no outdoor equipment/opportunities.

Basic: Some outdoor equipment to promote different kinds of movement.

Good: A variety of small and large equipment to promote different kinds of movement.

ASSESSOR

Assessor name: _____

Do you have any additional comments or observations? Please note any unusual or special observations here. If none, leave blank.
