



BrightStars Program Self-Assessment Guide

A program self-assessment is a comprehensive evaluation of a program's strengths and weaknesses as observed by those working within or in partnership with the program.

A school-age program self-assessment typically involves gathering information about different aspects of the program's environment and pedagogical practice. BrightStars requires programs to self-assess six different areas: indoor and outdoor space, health and safety practices, learning context and curriculum, family communication and involvement, cultural and linguistic competence and respect for diversity.

At Level 2 and continuing on at Level 3, Level 4 and Level 5, BrightStars requires that School-Age Child Care programs use The *RIPQA-Younger Youth Version*, a standardized tool, to complete the program self assessment. The *RIPQA-Younger Youth Version* is composed of two separate tools: the *School Age Program Quality Assessment (SAPQA)*, developed by the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, and an administrative component, (Form B), developed locally in Rhode Island. BrightStars has included both Form A and Form B in the BrightStars application packet.

How Does a Program Self-Assessment Relate to Other Documents Required by BrightStars?

The goal of BrightStars is to help child care providers learn about best practices in early learning and apply them to the care children receive. All programs applying for a BrightStars rating of 2 Stars or higher – regardless of child care setting – are required to submit a self-assessment summary. In this manner programs are able to independently gather information they need in order to consider possible improvements to their program. A comprehensive self-assessment is one of the first steps in program quality improvement. The information gathered through a self-assessment helps inform the program's Quality Improvement Plan, which is submitted three months after a program receives a star rating. The Quality Improvement Plan is monitored and updated annually.

The Rhode Island Program Quality Assessment (RIPQA)

Form A

Form A is the *School Age Program Quality Assessment (SAPQA)* tool developed by the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality and published by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. The SAPQA is a validated instrument designed to evaluate the quality of youth programs and identify staff training needs. It consists of a set of measurable standards for best practices in settings such as after-school programs, community organizations, schools, and summer programs. The SAPQA is designed to empower people and organizations by helping them to envision optimal quality youth programming, by providing a shared language for practice and decision-making, and by producing scores that can be used for comparison and assessment of progress over time. The School Age Program Quality Assessment measures the quality of youth experiences and promotes the creation of environments that tap the most important resources available to any youth-serving organization: a young person's motivation to attend and engage.

The *School Age Program Quality Assessment* has several important attributes:

- *Experience-tested approach* -The standards for best practices that make up the School Age PQA are grounded in extensive experience working with young people. Together the items in the instrument represent a youth development approach that works.
- *Research-based rubrics* -The School Age PQA contains proven measurement rubrics that allow observers to differentiate programs in important and meaningful ways.
- *Opportunities to observe practice* - Staff using the School Age PQA must spend time watching what happens in their program.
- *Flexibility* - The School Age PQA was designed to meet a range of accountability and improvement needs, from self-assessment to research and evaluation.

Form B

Form B was developed by the Providence After School Alliance (PASA) in conjunction with community partners and the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, to encompass the quality after-school standards that are not included in Form A. Form B specifically covers the areas of **Family and Civic Engagement, Staffing and Professional Development, and Administration.**

Programs interested in applying to BrightStars may obtain a copy of the RIPQA-*Younger Youth Version* by contacting BrightStars at (401) 398-7605 or emailing info@BrightStars.org. Programs may also request a copy from the [Providence After School Alliance \(PASA\)](#) by calling (401) 490-9599.