



Remote Quality Reflection Tool

Understanding the quality of remote, distance-learning programs

BellXcel's affiliate, The Sperling Center for Research and Innovation (SCRI), created the Remote Quality Reflection Tool for our partners to assess and understand program quality in a remote environment. As part of our commitment to provide actionable evidence and high-quality experiences for youth, families/caregivers, and staff, this tool is now publicly available to empower program leaders to drive improvement through research-based indicators. The use of this tool helps increase the collective knowledge base on remote learning and tests the value of this type of an assessment.

Remote, distance-learning can include virtual/online instruction, learning that is guided by a staff member using printed materials provided to youth and families, and various combinations of both.

Research-based Quality Domains¹



Program administration



Curriculum and instruction



Family/caregiver engagement



Youth management



Culture and climate



Assessment and evaluation

The quality indicators in this tool are part of six, research-based domains that contribute to high-quality, educational and enriching experiences for youth. Because a lot remains unknown related to point of service quality in the remote and distance learning space, this first release is focused primarily on program structure and factors that enable quality learning experiences. Future releases will incorporate point of service indicators shaped by the feedback and insights gained from program leaders using this tool.

Directions for Program Leaders

As a program leader, the Remote Quality Reflection Tool enables you to develop data-driven ideas and strategies for immediate and long-term program planning. Before completing your reflection, it is recommended that you interview staff, families/caregivers, and youth when possible, and/or “drop in” to observe remote learning experiences, to be able to accurately reflect on program quality.

¹ You can find more information about the research base on these quality domains by viewing the Research for Quality Framework document provided with this tool.

Opportunities to Assess Program Quality

The indicators in the Remote Quality Reflection Tool are meant to guide your observations of the program in action. Reflecting on quality in the first few weeks of programming enables you, as program leader, to take immediate action to improve the experience for all participants. If you are beyond the first few weeks, you can still complete this at any time during the program for valuable insight and information. It is estimated to take approximately 30-60 minutes to complete the tool depending on the program size and reflection time; this does not include time you spent observing or interviewing stakeholders for feedback.

Using the Remote Quality Reflection Tool

There are three central ways to gather information on the quality indicators:

- Interviews or feedback from staff, families, and youth
- Document and materials review
- Instructional or activity observation.

You will see specific instructions on the right. Examples of supporting evidence associated with each indicator are provided as guidance and suggestions. These are not required and only serve as a catalyst for your thinking and rating selection. It is important as the program leader that you use this information to understand the full picture of program quality overall.

1. Review the quality indicators
2. Assess your program across each indicator
3. Once a section is completed, tally each column
4. Consider your program's areas of strength and improvement areas
5. Engage your staff to discuss results and identify opportunities to further improve the quality of your program

Creating a Continuous Improvement Culture

Engaging staff is important to reflect on the results, as well as ideas and opportunities to further improve the quality of your program. This work with staff is critical to creating a culture of continuous improvement. As you determine your strengths and areas of improvement consider the following and use the planning guidance at the end of this tool.

Strengths: Determine ways to elevate and reinforce program strengths to enable consistency in delivery and implementation. Communicate these strengths to staff members and identify them as important for youth to have high-quality experiences.

Areas of Improvement: If your program is in the first few weeks, select and take action on the areas where you can make immediate changes and develop a plan to do so. If your program is close to the end, use these indicators to develop a continuous improvement plan that will help strengthen your program in the next cycle. Engage staff to identify obstacles and challenges to quality and opportunities to further improve in specific indicator areas or domains.



Program Administration

Planning and launching programming, as well as daily operations, including staffing, training, and scheduling.

INDICATOR	SCALE			EVIDENCE EXAMPLES
1 Each staff member accessed and completed pre-program professional development.	<input type="radio"/> No		<input type="radio"/> Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training attendance / completion • Feedback from staff
2 I have communicated program goals to staff, families/caregivers, and youth.	<input type="radio"/> No		<input type="radio"/> Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff orientation / meeting content • Recruitment/enrollment fliers • Family orientation content and materials
3 Staff members can serve and support the number of youth participants and families/caregivers enrolled in a remote environment.	<input type="radio"/> No		<input type="radio"/> Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from staff and youth participants • Communication logs • Staff to youth ratio
4 The program has a daily and weekly schedule in place for each staff member, which has been communicated to families/caregivers.	<input type="radio"/> No or Few Staff Members	<input type="radio"/> Some Staff Members	<input type="radio"/> Most or all Staff Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and family feedback • Recruitment/enrollment fliers • Family orientation content and materials
5 The program's leadership structure and roles/responsibilities enable smooth facilitation of program operations.	<input type="radio"/> Never or Rarely	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Usually or Always	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff roles / responsibilities • Staff, youth, and family engagement and feedback • Daily attendance metrics
6 Staff members are provided with ongoing opportunities to learn throughout the program through regular check-ins and feedback.	<input type="radio"/> Never or Rarely	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Usually or Always	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observed instruction • Regularly scheduled staff meetings (one-on-one or group)

TOTAL

Add up the number of indicators in each area

—————
Critical
Areas for
Improvement

—————
Areas for
Improvement

—————
Areas of
Strength



Family/Caregiver Engagement

Systems and activities that provide opportunities for families to engage regularly and provide a strong home learning environment for youth.

INDICATOR	SCALE			EVIDENCE EXAMPLES
<p>1 Program staff directly connected with families/caregivers before the program launched through an orientation and/or individual phone calls.</p>	<input type="radio"/> No or Few Families	<input type="radio"/> Some Families	<input type="radio"/> Most or all Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family orientation content and materials Introductory call script with families Family communication log Feedback from staff and families
<p>2 The program has systems in place which enable staff to reach out to families/caregivers frequently and consistently through a variety of methods (text, email, etc.).</p>	<input type="radio"/> Not at All	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat	<input type="radio"/> Very Much So	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family communication protocols, expectations, and processes Feedback from staff and families
<p>3 Families/caregivers are aware of how best to reach and communicate with staff, and when to expect a response (e.g. within 24 hours).</p>	<input type="radio"/> Not at All	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat	<input type="radio"/> Very Much So	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family orientation content and materials Introductory call script with families Family communication log Feedback from staff and families
<p>4 Staff members are aware of the home learning environments, as well as the types and availability of technology in the homes.</p>	<input type="radio"/> Not at All	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat	<input type="radio"/> Very Much So	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on youth/family technology access Introductory calls with families and/or youth Staff/family conferences
<p>5 Staff members regularly provide updates to families/caregivers about youth academic progress and/or their behavior and participation.</p>	<input type="radio"/> Never or Rarely	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Usually or Always	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family communication log Daily/weekly schedules have time built-in to connect with families Family communication protocols, expectations, and processes Feedback from families and staff
<p><i>Before reflecting on the next indicator, first consider which three to five topics you would like for staff to be discussing with families/caregivers regularly. Examples: scheduling, creating home-learning routines, structuring a home-learning environment, supporting academics in the home, supporting social-emotional learning in the home, supporting enrichment activities in the home, youth behavior, youth engagement, and motivation, etc.</i></p>				
<p>6 Staff prioritize important topics in conversations with families/caregivers.</p>	<input type="radio"/> Never or Rarely	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Usually or Always	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily/weekly schedules have time built-in to connect with families Family communication protocols, expectations, and processes Feedback from families and staff

TOTAL

Add up the number of indicators in each area

—————
Critical Areas for Improvement

—————
Areas for Improvement

—————
Areas of Strength



Culture and Climate

Evidence of social-emotional learning, positive behavior management, emotional safety, and relationship building, which together create a safe and welcoming environment for learning and engagement.

INDICATOR	SCALE			EVIDENCE EXAMPLES
<p><i>Before reflecting on the next indicators, first consider the social-emotional skills, youth behaviors, and competencies that your program is trying to develop in young people. These should serve as the framework for the next indicators.</i></p>				
<p>1 Staff members are checking-in regularly with youth to encourage trusting and secure connections.</p>	<input type="radio"/> No or Few Staff Members	<input type="radio"/> Some Staff Members	<input type="radio"/> Most or All Staff Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family communication log Staff/family conferences Feedback from families, staff, and youth
<p>2 Staff members and leaders implement strategies that support positive youth behaviors and engagement in a remote environment.</p>	<input type="radio"/> Not at All	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat	<input type="radio"/> Very Much So	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from families, staff, and youth Observed instruction or communication between youth and staff
<p>3 Staff members consistently implement activities to support youth social-emotional development, well-being and physical health.</p>	<input type="radio"/> No or Few Staff Members	<input type="radio"/> Some Staff Members	<input type="radio"/> Most or all Staff Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly lesson plans Observed instruction or communication between youth and staff Feedback from families, staff, and youth
<p>4 Staff members have established a structure and routine that enables scholars to navigate their learning independently (e.g. scholar self-efficacy).</p>	<input type="radio"/> Not at All	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat	<input type="radio"/> Very Much So	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from families, staff, and youth Youth work and engagement Weekly lesson plans
<p>5 Growth mindset language and prompts are evident in instructional planning and delivery.</p>	<input type="radio"/> Never or Rarely	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Usually or Always	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from families, staff, and youth Observed instruction or communication between youth and staff Weekly lesson plans

TOTAL

Add up the number of indicators in each area

—————
Critical Areas for Improvement

—————
Areas for Improvement

—————
Areas of Strength



Curriculum and Instruction

Evidence of planning and execution of activities and instruction that addresses remote learning needs and empowers youth's success.

INDICATOR	SCALE			EVIDENCE EXAMPLES
1 Staff members can effectively deliver the curriculum lessons and activities in a remote learning setting.	<input type="radio"/> Never or Rarely	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Usually or Always	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observed instruction or communication between youth and staff Feedback from families, staff, and youth Youth work and attendance
2 Staff members can effectively navigate technical difficulties during remote instruction.	<input type="radio"/> Never or Rarely	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Usually or Always	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observed instruction or communication between youth and staff Feedback from families, staff, and youth
3 Staff members can adapt curriculum lessons and activities to account for youth learning needs and the needs and conditions of the home learning environment (e.g. technology access).	<input type="radio"/> Not at All	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat	<input type="radio"/> Very Much So	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly lesson plans Observed instruction or communication between youth and staff Feedback from families, staff, and youth Youth work and attendance
4 Staff members have a system for reviewing youth work and providing feedback remotely.	<input type="radio"/> No or Few Staff Members	<input type="radio"/> Some Staff Members	<input type="radio"/> Most or all Staff Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly lesson plans Observed instruction or communication between youth and staff Feedback from families, staff, and youth Youth work and engagement
5 Staff members or leaders have provided guidance and support to families and caregivers on how to develop consistent learning routines and structure learning environments in the home.	<input type="radio"/> Not at All	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat	<input type="radio"/> Very Much So	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from families, staff, and youth Family communication logs Staff/family conferences
6 Youth and families/caregivers have been provided with resources and materials to support learning in the home.	<input type="radio"/> Not at All	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat	<input type="radio"/> Very Much So	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from staff and families Families received the necessary printed materials and access to any digital materials

TOTAL

Add up the number of indicators in each area

—————
Critical
Areas for
Improvement

—————
Areas for
Improvement

—————
Areas of
Strength



Youth Management

Secure and effective systems and policies for youth recruitment, attendance, and retention.

INDICATOR	SCALE			EVIDENCE EXAMPLES
1 The program's youth recruitment and enrollment procedures were effective in meeting enrollment targets/goals.	<input type="radio"/> No		<input type="radio"/> Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met recruitment/enrollment targets • Completed/collected enrollment forms
2 The program has a system/process to consistently track youth attendance.	<input type="radio"/> Not at All	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat	<input type="radio"/> Very Much So	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily attendance metrics • An attendance tracking system in place • Written attendance policies/procedures
3 Staff members and/or leaders have communicated attendance expectations to families/caregivers and youth.	<input type="radio"/> Not at All	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat	<input type="radio"/> Very Much So	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family orientation content and materials • Introductory call script with families • Family communication log • Feedback from staff and families
4 The program implements a process to address youth absences by directly contacting families/caregivers.	<input type="radio"/> Never or Rarely	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Usually or Always	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family communication log • Written attendance policies/procedures • Family communication protocols, expectations, and processes

TOTAL

Add up the number of indicators in each area

Critical Areas for Improvement

Areas for Improvement

Areas of Strength



Assessment and Evaluation

Systems for collection and use of data to inform instruction and continuous improvement.

INDICATOR	SCALE			EVIDENCE EXAMPLES
1 The program has a plan in place to collect qualitative and quantitative feedback from stakeholders (e.g. staff, families/caregivers, and youth) in a remote environment.	<input type="radio"/> No		<input type="radio"/> Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys developed to collect information on key program areas • Distribution and collection plan for stakeholder surveys or another feedback mechanism (phone calls, etc.)
2 Staff members are collecting data about youth progress to understand growth and needs in youth skills and/or academic development.	<input type="radio"/> No or Few Staff Members	<input type="radio"/> Some Staff Members	<input type="radio"/> Most or all Staff Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from staff • Documentation of youth progress tracking
3 If youth took assessments, staff members were provided with access to data for informing instruction.	<input type="radio"/> No or Few Staff Members	<input type="radio"/> Some Staff Members	<input type="radio"/> Most or all Staff Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family orientation content and materials • Introductory call script with families • Family communication log • Feedback from staff and families

TOTAL

Add up the number of indicators in each area

_____ *Critical Areas for Improvement*

_____ *Areas for Improvement*

_____ *Areas of Strength*

Taking Action on Your Quality Assessment

As a program leader, you can foster a culture of continuous improvement at any point of your program implementation. These planning questions guide your ability to seize opportunities to translate the assessment insights and information into action.

Immediate Planning - Only if you are making immediate program changes.

Strengths

Determine ways to elevate and reinforce program strengths to enable consistency in delivery and implementation.

3 strengths to reinforce or elevate?	How will you communicate with staff?	Other steps for immediate changes?

Areas of Improvement

Leverage the indicator information to develop a continuous improvement plan that will strengthen your program immediately.

3 areas identified for immediate change or improvement?	What specific steps are needed to make the improvements?	How will you engage staff in these steps?

Additional Resources and Support

Determine areas that may need additional focus and effort. Such as more interviews with staff to understand challenges, professional development, coaching, additional materials, etc.

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Taking Action on Your Quality Assessment - Continued

As a program leader, you can foster a culture of continuous improvement at any point of your program implementation. These planning questions guide your ability to seize opportunities to translate the assessment insights and information into action.

Longer-term Planning - For changes to future program cycles.

Strengths

Determine ways to elevate and reinforce program strengths to enable consistency in delivery and implementation.

3-5 strengths to reinforce or elevate in planning for the next program cycle?	What specific steps are needed to enhance these strengths?

Areas of Improvement

Leverage the indicator information to develop a continuous improvement plan that will strengthen your program in the next cycle.

3 areas identified for change or improvement in the next program cycle?	For each area, identify obstacles to quality implementation.	How will you address these obstacles?

Additional Resources and Support

Determine areas that may need additional focus and effort. Such as more interviews with staff to understand challenges, professional development, coaching, additional materials, etc.

Are there areas that need further focus and potentially require additional resources and support to ensure readiness for the next program cycle?	Identify steps to take action on these.

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