

**MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
DIVISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

**Continuous Quality Improvement Project  
for Child Care Center Directors Using  
The Program Administration Scale (PAS)**

**PURPOSE:** To improve the overall quality of care and education provided to children in child care facilities by implementing a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) program using the Program Administration Scale (PAS).

**BACKGROUND:** What is the Program Administration Scale? The PAS is a valid and reliable assessment tool designed to measure the quality of management and leadership practices in early childhood group settings. It is a nationally acclaimed management assessment tool developed by the McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership, in partnership with the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The instrument measures management and leadership practices in early childhood settings and identifies best practices in 25 key administrative areas such as human resources development, program planning and evaluation, financial management, and family partnerships.

The PAS is a key component in Maryland's efforts to create high quality early learning environments for young children. The project links continuous quality improvement with the Child Care Credentialing program, the Early Childhood Accreditation Project, and the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), with a focus on improving administrative support for the classroom. Through this project:

- Child care center directors and owners receive training,
- The quality of administrative processes in centers is assessed,
- Improvement plans are developed and implemented, and
- Participants have the option to continue to receive training and technical assistance after completing the initial 2-day training session.

Maryland is one of fifteen states, including California, New York, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina that use the PAS to train directors and assess the quality of administrative processes in child care facilities.

**PROJECT:** PAS is the cornerstone of the Maryland's CQI project for child care centers begun in fall 2007. The Continuous Quality Improvement Project is a voluntary program for directors and owners who want to implement best practices that will enable their centers to perform at a higher level and provide a good foundation to support what happens in the classroom. There are three phases.

- Initial Training and Implementation
- Skill Development
- Sharing Best Practices

Participation in the PAS is extended to directors and owners of centers that are accredited or seeking accreditation and centers that have 60% or more lead staff participating in the MSDE Credentialing Program.

Phase I – The initial phase is a 1-year commitment designed to enable directors and owners to implement a validated research-based continuous quality improvement program independently. Directors and owners attend a 2-day training which includes an overview of the assessment tool, how to manage change, and how to develop an implementation plan. A certified PAS assessor completes an initial assessment of the administrative processes and a detailed functional report is provided to the director. The director and/or owner uses the assessment results to determine administrative areas to focus on improving in the short and long-term based upon the center’s needs, available manpower, resources, and income. At the end of the year the assessor completes a follow-up assessment to measure improvement. Technical assistance is provided throughout the year.

The initiative began in 2007 with two training sessions. The sessions were open to center directors and owners, MSDE staff, and 1 staff person from each resource and referral center. Directors and owners received an overview of the PAS and training in how to management change on the first day. Staff from the resource centers and MSDE received two additional days of training so that they could refer participants to the project and provide technical assistance.

The response to the initial training and program assessments was very good. Based on feedback from the participants, training for center owners and directors was expanded from one to two days and more specific training in using the PAS assessment tool and a new segment on developing quality improvement plans were added to the initial training agenda. The chart below shows participant data for all Phase I sessions held to date.

Sessions	Total Participants	Owners/Directors/	MSDE Staff	Resource Center Staff
2007	284	31	164	3
2008	41	41	-	-
2009	45	45	-	-
2010	35	35		
Totals	405	152	164	3

Of the 152 directors and owners who participated in the training sessions only , 4.6%, did not have an initial PAS assessment completed for their centers, 5 centers withdrew from the project and 2 directors have left centers prior to assessment. Of the 134 director and owners whose centers have had an initial assessment, 122, or 90%, are still participating in the PAS project. There has also been turnover in directors: 1 retired, 3 lost their jobs when the center closed, and 11 are no longer with their centers. Of the 11 participating center with new directors, 5 are currently participating in the PAS program. After the initial assessment, 1 additional center withdrew from the CQI project and 1 merged with another PAS participating center.

Phase II – Based upon the PAS assessment scores for centers that participated in 2007, six areas with the lowest scores were identified. A series of six 6-hour training sessions were developed in partnership with Anne Arundel Community College (AACC) to assist directors and owners in improving center performance. Training sessions are held semi-annually. Each sessions is repeated every 2-years.

Session	Description	Date	# Participants
<b>Risk Management</b>	Includes defining the terms risk management and emergency management, identifying the major threats to child care centers, and developing strategies to avoid or minimize impact.	11/4/2008	18
		4/29/2010	12
<b>Program Planning &amp; Evaluation</b>	Focuses on developing and implementing formal short and long term improvement plans based on collecting hard data.	4/30/2009	28
<b>Financial Management</b>	Focuses on implementation of best financial practices as identified in the PAS.	11/13/2009	21
<b>Staff Hiring, Evaluation, &amp; Training</b>	Emphasizes the importance of quality classroom staff. Discussion includes all phases of the hiring process, orientation of new staff, and effective methods to supervise, appraise, motivate, and train staff.	4/9/2010	12
<b>Staff Qualifications</b>	Focuses on the preferred qualifications for each position within the child care center including teaching and administrative staff. Discussion will include the role of credentialing, accreditation and staff qualifications.	TBD	
<b>Center Operations</b>	Key topics include use of space, maintaining open lines of communication, and the formal development, implementation, and distribution of standard policies and procedures.	TBD	

Currently, AACC is in the process of preparing a certificate to be awarded to participants who complete all of the training sessions in addition to the initial training. The long-term goal is to award three credits to every director or owner who completes the entire series and passes an exam. Throughout their participation, Phase II participants will have access to ongoing technical assistance and re-assessment by certified assessors every three years.

In addition, a 6-hour administrators' training session was held September 22, 2010 for 17 child care personnel who have supervisory responsibility for child care programs.

Phase III – Establish regional PAS director groups to share best practices and strategies and mutual support as they maintain a continuous quality improvement program. The Phase III sessions are held on best practice developed by another participant. Currently, two jurisdictions are in the process of organizing, Montgomery County and the Lower Shore.

A statewide best practice session was held to share a teacher planning guide. A director shared a detailed planning guide provided to teaching staff for the year covering all responsibilities documentation, parent interaction, curriculum, lesson planning, classroom set-up, etc. Twenty-seven (27) participants attended.

**PARTICIPANT DATA:**

The PAS Continuous Quality Improvement Project is an integral part of the Division of Early Childhood Development’s effort to improve the quality of care and education provided to children throughout Maryland. Applicants for the project are required to be accredited or actively engaged in the accreditation process or at least 60% of lead staff must participate in the Credentialing Program.

Participating centers are located throughout the State. Of the 23 counties and Baltimore City, participating child care centers are located in every jurisdiction. Center capacity ranges from 8 to 286 with an average capacity of 79.

Allegany	3	Carroll	5	Harford	3	St. Mary’s	4
Anne Arundel	9	Cecil	2	Howard	2	Somerset	1
Baltimore City	26	Charles	2	Kent	0	Talbot	4
Baltimore	19	Dorchester	2	Montgomery	27	Washington	2
Calvert	3	Frederick	10	Prince George’s	15	Wicomico	2
Caroline	2	Garrett	2	Queen Anne’s	1	Worcester	2

Participant facilities include private and non-profit child care centers, Head Start programs, Nursery Schools, Montessori Schools, and Judith P. Hoyer affiliated centers. The centers are a diverse group including privately owner and operated businesses, corporate centers, and units within larger organizations, such as community colleges, hospitals, or government agencies.

**OUTCOMES:** Data in the charts below contain the average initial and final scores for the participating centers for quality rating are 1 – inadequate, 3 – minimum, 5 – good, and 7 – excellent quality. Data shown below demonstrates that participation in the PAS project significantly improved administrative process for those scoring at or below minimum levels.

Initial Scores	<2	2.0-2.99	3.0-3.99	4.0-4.99	5.0-5.99	6.0-6.99	7.0
134	2	34	56	19	18	4	0
	1.5%	25.4%	42.5%	14.2%	13.4%	3.0%	0.0%

Final Scores	<2	2.0-2.99	3.0-3.99	4.0-4.99	5.0-5.99	6.0-6.99	7.0
98	3	14	32	23	18	8	0
	3.1%	14.3%	32.7%	23.5%	18.1%	8.2%	0.0%

Centers are assessed initially to establish a baseline. The assessor will inform the director about assessment results and share samples of needed tools and processes. The baseline scores are used by the director or owner to make decisions on the PAS areas he or she and staff will work to improve by the end of the year. At the end of the year, an assessor returns to the center to complete a final assessment to measure improvement.

Sessions	# Participants	Initial Score	Final Score	Improvement
2007	31	4.41	4.86	.45
2008	41	3.41	3.71	.30
2009	45	3.52	3.97	.45
2010	35	3.47	TBD	TBD
Totals	152	3.66	4.11	.40