**Tip Sheet**

Child Care Frequently Asked Questions about QEP’s

 Q. How much information is needed on the QEP? Are there a certain number of goals that have to be identified for each standard?

A. It is important to demonstrate short term, intermediate and long term goals that will enhance your program and what you will need to do in order to meet the standards.

* Short term goals are ones met before the site visit. They would be on your immediate “to do” list in preparation of becoming accredited.
* Intermediate goals are to be met within the first year after being accredited. They will be reported within the Annual Report on your 1st anniversary date. They are goals that can take upwards of one year to complete therefore should be complete between the time you are initially accredited and your one year anniversary date.
* Long term goals are goals that will take upwards of 2 years to complete (e.g., Staff X will get their Child Development Supervisor certification). Given that Accreditation has a three year renewal window, it is important to reflect all of the above in the QEP which is essentially your programs threeyear plan.

Q. What if the program still has things to work on? Will this affect chances of becoming accredited?

A. Most programs feel vulnerable having areas reported in their QEP’s as incomplete (e.g.: needing work and/or not yet developed) as they feel it may compromise their ability in becoming accredited. It is important to remember that intermediate and long term goals actually demonstrate how programs will continue to increase standards over a 3 year period, and that there are plans during this period to support a higher level of quality they will strive for in becoming accredited. Noting areas of improvement reinforces to the Accreditation agency that programs are thinking ahead and planning long term as part of an ongoing process.

Q. How specific do programs goals have to be?

A. QEP’s need to be specific enough for information to be clearly understood by Validators who have no prior knowledge or familiarity of your program. If in doubt, err on the side of more than less. Most programs are modest about what they do well, and/or vague assuming it’s obvious to everyone else. Remember what may be common knowledge to those who work in programs may not be outwardly apparent to those visiting.

Q. How do I get support in writing my QEP?

 A. Those eligible for sponsored service support by meeting eligibility requirements, can now attend free 2 hour regional workshops created and delivered by ARCQE at no cost to the program. For more information please visit the ARCQE website.

TIPS FOR QEP

* It is recommended that programs review agency policies and handbooks before completing QEP’s to ensure consistency with wording in all related documents.
* Remember when writing the QEP not to get sidetracked with addressing items identified as “to do’s”. Continue working on writing a plan that affects short term (what needs to be done prior to the site visit) and intermediate and long term (what is part of the 3 year plan after the site visit) then return to follow up required to support short term goals.
* Remember the QEP is a living document intended to support a 3 year process.
* It is very important to use the information gathered during the accreditation workbook such as parent and staff surveys and other established program documents to inform and complete the QEP. This ensures programs do not miss important information obtained as they work through the accreditation process.
* QEP’s are a good source of staff meeting agenda items. One way to expand team knowledge and understanding is to focus on one area of the QEP as a review at staff meetings to determine where the program is at with respect to meeting goals and objectives. This also ensures that new staff becomes familiar with the programs plan and work supportively as part of the team in achieving the goals.
* Provide copies of the QEP to staff so they continue to feel “ownership” in addressing goals and actions identified in the work plan. The QEP is also an excellent document to make available to new staff as part of the program Orientation Process to provide them with information of the programs strategic plan over the next few years.
* Once a QEP is developed, programs should plan formally for annual reviews with mid-way checks every few months to ensure the program’s progress is maintained. Staff turnover and change within programs occurs frequently reinforcing the need to expand and/or revise goals to align with new directions these bring. Quality Enhancement Plans should never be considered written in stone and should always reflect change whenever change is in the best interest of all involved.