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## PROVE IT ACTIVITY #1

Are You Ready?

Question	Yes	No	Unsure
Have you determined the primary reasons you are pursuing a third-party quality endorsement?			
Do you have specific outcomes in mind?			
Do you believe your staff and families will support and contribute to the effort?			
Are you willing to honestly assess your program and make necessary changes?			
Are you able to commit the time and finances necessary to succeed?			

Question	Yes	No	Unsure
Is the turnover rate for your administrators and staff relatively stable?			
Is the family-satisfaction rating consistently high?			
Does your program have defined policies and procedures?			
Does your program have an educational philosophy and offer learning opportunities in all domains of early childhood development?			
Does your program consider a high level of health and safety a priority?			
Is your program in good standing with licensing?			
Are your staff members committed to their own professional development, even if it may mean returning to school?			

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**PROVE IT ACTIVITY #2**

**Reasons for Pursuing a Third-Party Quality Endorsement**

- We know we have a high-quality program for children, their families, and our staff, and we want third-party recognition for it.
  - We want to use a researched set of standards in our effort to increase and maintain quality.
  - It's a great marketing tool and will increase our enrollment.
  - It's the next step in our state's quality rating system.
  - This program can earn additional revenue from the state.
  - Many families are asking for it.
  - Many staff members are asking for it.
  - The governing board/parent forum/executive committee/other senior leadership has decided to pursue a third-party quality endorsement.
  - It's the next logical step in the growth of quality in this program.
  - Third-party quality endorsement keeps us on our toes and will ensure we maintain our high standards.
  - It's good for the children.
  - It's a personal goal of mine.
  - Other:
  - Other:
  - Other:
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### PROVE IT ACTIVITY #3

#### Top Five Reasons for Pursuing a Third-Party Quality Endorsement

Summary of reasons for pursuing a third-party quality endorsement:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Keep this list handy because you will use it in step 3 when matching your program to an endorsement system.

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## PROVE IT ACTIVITY #4

### Additional Revenue Reasons for Pursuing a Third-Party Quality Endorsement

If one of your reasons for pursuing endorsement is that you are interested in earning additional revenue from the state as part of their quality rating system, you will need to contact the state agency managing the QRS (sometimes licensing) and ask a few important questions.

- What are the components and requirements of the state's program?

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- Does your program qualify for participation in the state's program?

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- What, if any, paperwork do you need to be complete to participate in the state's program?

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- Does the state specify which third-party quality endorsements it recognizes in its program?

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- Are there any other county or city programs you may qualify for?

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- Is there a public awareness piece attached to the state's program? A Web site with ratings? A certificate to hang at your program's location(s)?

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 **PROVE IT ACTIVITY #5****Marketing and Enrollment Reasons for Pursuing Third-Party Quality Endorsement**

If you identified marketing and enrollment needs as one of your reasons, it is a good idea to find out what other programs in your area are doing. Plot out a twenty-mile radius around your program, and list any programs in this area that you know are similar to yours. If you are a home-based program, look for other home-based programs. If you are a school-age-only program, look for those, and so on. Go to the phone book or Internet and find who is listed and where they are located. Write your findings in the accompanying table.

<b>Center/Program Name</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>	<b>Contact Name</b>	<b>Endorsement</b>
<i>(Example) XYZ Academy</i>	<i>297-555-0098</i>	<i>Anne Brown</i>	<i>NAEYC</i>

<b>Center/Program Name</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>	<b>Contact Name</b>	<b>Endorsement</b>

Call each center or program and speak with the director or administrator to obtain specific information about why they chose the endorsement system they have. Here are some questions to guide you through the conversation:

- How long have you had this endorsement?
  - Why did you pick this endorsement system?
  - What benefits do you see within your program from having this endorsement?
  - What do your families say about this endorsement?
  - What does your staff say about this endorsement?
  - Would you choose to use this endorsement system again? Why or why not?
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## PROVE IT ACTIVITY #6

### Quality Reasons for Pursuing a Third-Party Quality Endorsement

If your reasons for pursuing third-party quality endorsement primarily relate to attaining quality, quality improvement, and/or recognition of quality, you need to decide which areas in your program you feel most need to improve or be recognized. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

1. Health and safety
2. Curriculum
3. Interactions
4. Family connections
5. Community connections
6. Teaching staff
7. Administration and general operations
8. The facility or building
9. Relationships/communication
10. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

To help focus on your program's strengths and opportunities, organize the items in the above list in order with #1 being the strongest, most successful aspect of your program, and #10 being the weakest.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

You will use this list in step 3 to help you *make a match*.

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 **PROVE IT ACTIVITY #7****Key Stakeholders' Requests as Reasons for Pursuing a Third-Party Quality Endorsement**

If stakeholders, families, and/or staff have asked for a third-party quality endorsement, find out why. We recommend you use the list of reasons in Activity #2 to help you make this determination. Typically you will hear one or more reasons such as seeking additional state revenue, marketing and enrollment, or service and operational quality. If this is the case, go back to the previous pages and complete Activities #4, #5, or #6.

## **PROVE IT ACTIVITY #8**

### Other Reasons for Pursuing a Third-Party Quality Endorsement

If you are seeking a third-party quality endorsement for any other reasons, it is important that you and the key stakeholders examine these reasons. We recommend you use the list of reasons in Activity #2 to help you make this examination.

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 **PROVE IT ACTIVITY #9****Hints and Tips for Getting Ready**

If your program answered mostly *no* to questions in the Activity #1 assessment, but you are still eager and motivated to start the process toward quality improvement and endorsement, then follow along for some helpful hints and tips to help you get ready.

Refer back to your answers to Activity #1. You will use them to complete the table that follows. Next to each question are suggestions on how to drive your program closer to being able to answer *yes* to all the questions in the quiz.

**No Answers to the Are You Ready? Quiz**

Check all the questions to which you answered *no* in the Are You Ready? assessment: ment:

No	Assessment Question	Improvement Suggestion
	Have you determined the primary reasons you are pursuing a third-party quality endorsement?	You and your key stakeholders need to examine these reasons. To help you do so, we recommend using the list of questions in Activity #2: Reasons for Pursuing a Third-Party Quality Endorsement.
	Do you have specific outcomes in mind?	Meet with your key stakeholders and discuss what the program wants to achieve by pursuing a third-party quality endorsement, for example, assurance of quality for parents or a higher rating in the state QRS. After determining these outcomes, program management should put a plan of action in place to align the program with these outcomes.
	Do you believe your staff and families will support and contribute to the effort?	Any third-party quality endorsement will require the full participation of your program's staff and enrolled families. It is essential to find out what level of commitment you can expect. A good way to do this is to review other projects your program has undertaken in the past; examine what you did to ensure participation, and whether these things can be duplicated.

No	Assessment Question	Improvement Suggestion
	Are you willing to honestly assess your program and make necessary changes?	The most important first step toward program improvement is to examine and honestly review areas of opportunity. It can be a difficult process because you will need to recognize where your program falls short. But ultimately, an honest and in-depth look will make for a more successful self-study.
	Are you able to commit the time and finances necessary to succeed?	Ideally, third-party quality endorsement should be built into an annual budget, not decided upon on the spur of the moment. Costs involved not only include the endorsement materials and tools, but also the overall investment the program must make in its facilities, resources, and staff training. Just like finances, you'll need to allocate (and budget) time for the self-study to be done correctly. Money and time must be considered in tandem with the other reasons your program is pursuing this endorsement.
	Is the turnover rate for your administrators and staff relatively stable?	High turnover of teaching staff and management will not positively contribute to the overall success of your program, and definitely not to a third-party quality endorsement project. Before starting the endorsement process, a center director should ideally be in place for a minimum of six months. This is a minimum time frame that could also be applied to the program's lead teaching staff. Although these time frames are not currently mandatory for all third-party quality endorsement systems, they are strongly and increasingly recommended.
	Is the family-satisfaction rating consistently high?	Although most third-party quality endorsements require a survey of the families, it is a good idea to ensure you have achieved a high rate of family satisfaction before submitting for endorsement. As a general rule, seeking third-party quality endorsement should be motivated by the fact that you <i>already</i> have a moderate to high level of quality in your program. If you do not, this should be a priority as you work on improvements throughout the self-study or before you even begin. Go back to chapter 1 and review the section What Is a Third-Party Quality Endorsement System? that talks about the three levels of quality within a program.

No	Assessment Question	Improvement Suggestion
	Does your program have defined policies and procedures?	This is an important part of showing evidence to the third-party quality endorser. Having written policies available for review by the families and staff in your program ensures equity and consistency for all families and staff. Some endorsement systems make exceptions in specific situations. If there are any questions, contact them directly. See Developing Policies and Procedures in appendix C for more tips.
	Does your program have an educational philosophy and offer learning opportunities in all domains of early childhood development?	This is an integral part of any program as part of showing evidence to the third-party quality endorsement system. The program philosophy should to be written, evident in your classrooms, and available for review by the families and the staff in your program.
	Does your program consider a high level of health and safety a priority?	All states have minimum licensing standards for child care programs. Review your licensing records to determine your program's history of meeting these standards, particularly those involving health and safety. A program should have a clean licensing record, especially in this area, before attempting third-party quality endorsement.
	Is your program in good standing with licensing?	All third-party endorsements require this. Programs having a temporary, suspended, or probationary license need to be relicensed before pursuing third-party quality endorsement.
	Are your staff members committed to their own professional development, even if it may mean returning to school?	An essential part of achieving a third-party quality endorsement involves professional development for your teaching staff. You need to work with your staff to create appropriate professional development plans that meet both their needs as well as those of your program.

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 **PROVE IT ACTIVITY #10**

**My Attitude toward Change**

Evaluate your attitude toward change by placing a check mark in the appropriate column to indicate your gut reaction to each situation (all Activity pages can be downloaded from the [Web Components tab at the Prove It! page](#) on the Redleaf Press website).

Situation	Bring it on 5	Okay 4	So-so 3	A little nervous 2	Sweaty palms 1
You and a good friend have plans for the weekend. You have had these plans for two weeks. She calls Friday afternoon and suggests a change to the plans.					
You have hired a new teacher for the infant classroom but the day before she is supposed to start she asks to work in the preschool classroom where you have an opening as well.					
Your boss tells you that for training purposes, your assistant director is trading places with an assistant director at a nearby program for two weeks.					
You go to a salon or barbershop. Your normal stylist is out sick, and a brand-new stylist is assigned to cut your hair. She suggests a shorter length.					
You go to your favorite restaurant only to notice the menu has changed. A brand-new, talented chef is now in charge, but all your favorites have been replaced.					
You have been managing a program for three years. You have worked hard daily to ensure that children, families, and staff have good experiences in your program. At a board meeting, you are informed that you are expected to pursue a third-party quality endorsement system.					

Total your points for all situations.

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 **PROVE IT ACTIVITY #11****Time Planning for the Self-Study**

Write the answers in a notebook.

1. Do you currently have a third-party quality endorsement?  
(If no, continue with question 3)
  2. If yes, what is the expiration date?  
(Many third-party quality endorsement systems require a program to submit paperwork for renewal, like reaccreditation, several months before the actual expiration date to ensure there is sufficient time to schedule a visit and review the results of the visit. This time frame for submitting could be anywhere from three to six months before the expiration date. Please check with your third-party quality endorsement organization to ensure you do not miss any deadlines.)
  3. When are you planning to submit your paperwork to request an on-site visit or review?
  4. How many months do you have to complete your self-study?  
(Many third-party quality endorsement organizations prescribe a minimum amount of time for the self-study before submitting for an on-site visit or review. Please check with your third-party quality endorsement organization to make sure you know what this minimum time frame is.)
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## PROVE IT ACTIVITY #12

### Checking Compliance Requirements

Name of Document

Compliance Requirement

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



## PROVE IT ACTIVITY #13

### Administrative Standards Checklist

#### SECURITY MEASURES

- There is a system in place to restrict facility access to staff, families, and other approved persons.
- The program has written details and permissions for all adults authorized to pick up children.
- A policy is in place and training is provided to ensure that staff members identify any person picking up a child.
- Program staff members routinely check the identity of any person unfamiliar to them wishing to pick up a child.
- Program staff members are trained to handle situations where they cannot positively identify a person wishing to pick up a child.
- The program has immediate access to community assistance (police, ambulance, and so on) in the event of any emergency.
- The program has procedures in place to handle environmental emergencies such as floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, fires, lock downs, and so on.
- The program staff members keep written records of a child's attendance and location throughout each day.
- Family members are required to sign in and out daily to record their child's attendance.
- Outdoor areas are secure.

#### LICENSING COMPLIANCE

- The program is licensed by the appropriate state agency for its size and level of service.
- The program is in good standing with its state licensing agency and other applicable regulatory bodies.
- All required inspections are current and in compliance.
- The program maintains current written records for each child as required by the licensing agency and other regulatory bodies (for example, health department).
- The program requires a background check on all employees to be completed before they begin work, as required by its state licensing agency.
- The program maintains current records for each employee as required by its licensing agency and other regulatory bodies.
- The program maintains state-regulated adult-child ratios and group sizes at all times.

- The program has a developmental program in place that reflects its educational philosophy.
- The program has clear, written policies in place that describe the following:
  - nondiscrimination in all its practices
  - child guidance
  - employees' training and education
  - medication dispensing
  - emergency plans and medical emergency procedures
  - provision of transportation and driver compliance
  - training for prevention of child abuse and neglect

### **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES**

- Written information is available for families that describes the program's health and safety policies and procedures.
- Families have the opportunity to visit the program before making an enrollment decision.
- The program has the ability to include children with special needs, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- The program requires families to provide written information that includes these details:
  - child's full name
  - child's full address
  - name and identification of the child's primary and secondary caregivers in the home environment
  - medical information for the child that is necessary for their safety in the program (for example, allergies, special dietary or physical needs)
  - child's immunization record
  - child's developmental abilities
  - name and contact details of the child's health care provider

### **EMPLOYMENT PROCESS**

- The program has a clearly described employment process.
- The program has minimum age and education requirements for the employment of staff.
- The program interviews all applicants prior to employment.
- The program requires that any new employee undergo a background check, as required by state licensing requirements.
- The program checks references on each applicant prior to employment.
- The program requires a documented health assessment (for example, TB test) of all new employees, as required by state licensing requirements.
- The program has a clearly written orientation and training program, which includes health and safety topics, in place for all new employees.



## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- The program has a clearly written emergency and medical plan that is available to both staff and families.
- The program describes and practices emergency disaster drills on a regular basis.
- The program has written evacuation instructions and plans posted at all exits.
- The program has an off-site gathering area in the event of an emergency evacuation.
- The program has emergency telephone numbers posted at each telephone.
- The program has access to community resources that provide additional assistance in maintaining the children's health and safety (for example, local health department, D.A.R.E program, and so on).
- The program has clearly written procedures for handling emergency situations (for example, a dangerous person, severe weather, threats, and so on).
- The program has sufficient supplies in emergency kits to weather loss of contact with the outside world for twenty-four hours.
- The program has well-stocked first aid kits that are easily accessible in the event of an incident or accident and a plan to ensure they are replenished as needed.
- Staff members have current pediatric first aid and CPR training.
- The program facility has sufficient fire extinguishers, smoke alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors for its size.
- The staff is trained in the use of fire extinguishers and other emergency equipment.

## FAMILY COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT

- Upon enrollment, the program collects information from the family about the child's dietary, physical, emotional, and developmental needs.
  - The family is invited to participate in the program's daily activities in ways that would support the health and well-being of their child.
  - The program has an open-door policy for families to build a relationship of trust and inclusion.
  - The family is provided with daily information regarding their child's health and well-being.
  - The program provides verbal and written reports to families in the event that illnesses or accidents occur.
  - The program provides families with information and opportunities for training in topics related to the health and well-being of their children.
  - The program partners with the school district or health department to offer health screenings.
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 **PROVE IT ACTIVITY #14****Facilities Maintenance Checklist**

- The program has a written maintenance program and schedule in place that includes daily, weekly, monthly, and annual tasks.
- The program includes facilities maintenance in its annual budget.
- The program maintains current records regarding the maintenance of its facilities.
- The facility is in good repair in the following areas:
  - The building is structurally safe.
  - All window and doors are secure and can be easily opened and closed.
  - There is no chipped or peeling paint on walls, doors, window frames, furniture and equipment, fences, or play structures.
  - All fixtures are secure and in good working order.
  - Emergency lighting is regularly inspected and in working order at all times.
  - Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are regularly inspected and in good working order at all times.
  - Furniture and equipment are appropriately sized for each age group and in good repair.
  - Large pieces of furniture and shelves are secured or bolted to walls.
  - All surfaces are splinter free.
  - Bathrooms are in good repair and working order.
  - Floor coverings are regularly maintained and free of defects.
  - Kitchen equipment and appliances are clean, regularly maintained, and in good working order.
  - Air conditioning and heating equipment is safe, regularly maintained, and in good working order.
  - Children's toys are in good condition and free of sharp edges, cracks, splinters, and choking hazards.
  - Safe storage is available.
- The program maintains a pest control program using safe chemicals.
- The program has a regular garbage removal schedule.
- Garbage containers within the facility are safe and sanitary and hands free for diapers.
- The garbage dumpster is inaccessible to children and has a cover to prevent animals from accessing and spreading the garbage.
- The program has accessible running water for drinking, food preparation, hand washing, and cleaning purposes.
- Hot water that is available to children is maintained at a safe temperature to prevent burns.
- The program regularly has the water tested for safety.
- The playground is free of hazards:

- Play structures meet minimum state licensing requirements for safety.
  - Fall zones around climbing equipment meet minimum state licensing requirements for safety.
  - The playground is checked daily before use to ensure no hazards are present.
- All riding equipment is in good repair and working order.
  - There are no dangerous or toxic plants in the play areas.
  - Gardens are well maintained, attractive, and safe for children.
  - Program staff participate in daily checks of the facility and outside areas to identify and correct dangers to children.
  - Children always have access to drinking water.

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 **PROVE IT ACTIVITY #15****Classroom Health and Safety Checklist**

- Each classroom maintains a regular and consistent daily, weekly, and monthly cleaning and sanitation schedule.
- Required hand washing procedures are practiced by children and staff.
- Required diaper changing procedures are practiced by staff.
- The classroom environment is clutter free.
- All cleaning solutions and other chemicals are inaccessible to children and are stored in a locked cabinet.
- Children have access to running water for hand washing and drinking.
- Hand washing and drinking faucets are separated.
- Food preparation and diaper changing surfaces are at least six feet apart or separated by a permanent nonporous divider that prevents cross-contamination.
- Diapering and toileting areas are separated from play areas by at least three feet.
- Staff uses food service gloves when handling and serving children's food.
- The program practices family-style dining.
- Good nutrition is discussed with children at each meal and at snacktime.
- Food is not stored in classrooms.
- Medications (other than emergency medication) are not stored in classrooms.
- All illness, accidents, and incidents are documented and shared with families.
- Sick children are separated from other children while waiting for pick up.
- The staff provides daily visual health and well-being checks for all children upon arrival.
- Children are provided with a rest time.
- The program provides clean and sanitary napping cots or mats for children.
- There is a regular laundry schedule in place for sheets, blankets, pillows, soft toys, and other washable classroom items (whether at the center or at home).
- The arrangement of the classroom furniture allows for appropriate supervision of children at all times.

- Teachers regularly track and record children's attendance and location throughout the day.
  - Teachers incorporate practice fire and disaster drills into their teaching plans.
  - When age appropriate, teachers encourage children to participate in creating safety rules for themselves and others.
  - Teachers never use physical punishment as a form of discipline.
  - Teachers use the appropriate techniques and practices to prevent and handle situations where children are hurting themselves or others.
  - Staff checks daily for safety hazards like hanging cords, frayed carpets, overused outlets, uncovered outlets, broken toys, and so on.
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**PROVE IT ACTIVITY #16**

**Medication Checklist**

- The program has a clearly written policy regarding the dispensing of emergency, prescription, over-the-counter, and topical medications.
  - The written policy complies with licensing regulations.
  - The program designates specific staff members to dispense medications.
  - All staff members are trained in the program's medication policy.
  - All staff members are trained in the administration of emergency and topical medications.
  - All staff members are trained in emergency procedures regarding poisoning.
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**PROVE IT ACTIVITY #17**

**Food Safety and Nutrition Checklist**

- The program has a clearly written policy regarding food service and food supplied by families.
  - When the program provides meals and snacks to the children, a menu is made available for families.
  - The program maintains current records regarding children's food allergies and dietary needs.
  - All staff members serving food to children have access to information regarding children's food allergies and dietary needs.
  - There is a procedure in place for ensuring substitute teachers understand allergies or food restrictions.
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**PROVE IT ACTIVITY #18**
**Quality Standards Side-by-Side Comparison**

Review your state's licensing standards and regulations regarding health and safety and list them in the left column of the chart below. Then review the third-party quality endorsement system's standards and criteria regarding health and safety and list them in the right column (all Activity pages can be downloaded from the [Web Components tab at the Prove It! page](#) on the Redleaf Press website).

Licensing Regulations	Third-Party Quality Endorsement Standards
Administrative standards for health and safety	Administrative standards for health and safety
Facilities maintenance	Facilities maintenance
Health and safety training for staff	Health and safety training for staff
Health and safety in the classroom (indoors and outdoors)	Health and safety in the classroom (indoors and outdoors)

Licensing Regulations	Third-Party Quality Endorsement Standards
Medication	Medication
Food safety and nutrition	Food safety and nutrition





## PROVE IT ACTIVITY #19

### Quick Quiz—When Is a Teacher Teaching?

Answer *yes* or *no* to the following questions:

Is a teacher teaching in this situation?	Yes	No
When she is sitting with the children at group time		
When she is chatting with a coworker on the playground		
When she announces how much she doesn't like what is for lunch		
When she calls in sick three days in a row		
When she puts new painting tools out in the art center		
When she asks the children to sing the song she taught them yesterday		
When she puts the "good" books away in the closet for teachers only		
When she enthusiastically welcomes children to class in the morning		
When she responds to a crying infant		

## PROVE IT ACTIVITY #20

### Interactions Quiz

Interactions are one of your most important and effective teaching tools. There is a lot to learn about interactions and how to use them effectively in the classroom. This quiz will help you to see where you are and where you need to go.

### Interactions Self-Quiz

Statement	Yes, or most of the time	No, or rarely
I sit and talk with children at meal and snacktimes.		
I allow children to make choices.		
I read to children at least two times every day.		
I sing to children.		
I speak to children at their eye level.		
I ask children questions to find out what they are thinking.		
I ask children questions to find out what they are learning.		
I ask children questions to find out about them.		
I verbally welcome all children, parents, and visitors to my classroom.		
I have conversations with children during routine care, such as during hand washing and diapering.		
I choose my words carefully.		
I use positional words (under, before, next to).		
I use children's names more than nicknames.		
I use words to comfort and reassure.		
I use words to help children describe their thoughts, actions, and feelings, and validate them.		
I use interactions to build children's self-confidence.		
My words are positive and not biased.		

Statement	Yes, or most of the time	No, or rarely
I use open-ended questions and comments.		
When I tell children to use their words, I know they know the words they need.		
I limit my use of the word <i>no</i> .		
I explain why, even to nonverbal children.		
I use words to solve problems.		
I offer specific praise, such as "I like the choice you made," more often than generic praise, such as "Good job."		

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 **PROVE IT ACTIVITY #21****Assessment of Learning and Development Checklist****EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

- The program clearly defines its belief about how children learn.
- The educational philosophy is the basis for the design of the learning program.
- The educational philosophy includes all areas of a child's development: physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and approaches to learning.
- The educational philosophy is shared with families.
- The educational philosophy is an integral part of teacher training.

**DEFINING THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND PLAN**

- The program has a clearly written plan that describes the assessment process.
- The program has an assessment tool that is used to record the children's progress.
- The assessment tool is based on the educational objectives of children at various stages in their development.
- The assessment process includes both informal and formal components.

**CLASSROOM PRACTICES**

- The assessment process includes a step in which teachers observe children in a natural setting.
- Teachers make and keep ongoing anecdotal notes of their observations.
- Teachers collect a variety of evidence of children's progress over time.
- Teachers regularly communicate with families regarding their children's progress and developmental needs.
- Teachers interpret and use the results of their observations and progress evaluations to individualize learning to meet each child's specific learning needs.
- Teachers interpret and use the results of their observations and progress evaluations to make adjustments to the learning program to meet each child's specific learning needs.
- Teachers interpret and use the results of their observations and collected evidence of children's learning to complete the formal assessment tool.

## TEACHER TRAINING

- Teachers are provided with initial and ongoing training regarding the following:
  - observation and note-taking techniques
  - collecting meaningful evidence of children's developmental progress
  - using the program's formal written assessment tools
  - communicating assessment results with families
  - individualizing learning based on assessment results

## RECORD KEEPING

- The program maintains documentation of children's ongoing assessments.
- The program maintains documentation of ongoing communication with families regarding assessment results and the children's developmental needs.
- If a program consults with outside assessment professionals, documentation of the evaluations and assessments is maintained in the children's files.
- If a program recommends the services of outside assessment professionals to families, the program will ensure that the families' written permission is given and documented beforehand.
- The program has a system of collecting evidence, such as a portfolio system, to support a child's growth and development.

## INVOLVING AND COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES

- Family members have regular opportunities to provide information regarding their child's needs and progress.
  - Teachers and family members have regular opportunities to discuss the assessments of their child's progress.
  - Family members are given a written record of their child's progress on a regular basis.
  - The assessment process and conference is not focused on pass/fail but rather on individual development.
  - Teachers and family members work cooperatively to plan for their child's next learning experiences based on the results of the developmental assessments.
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 **PROVE IT ACTIVITY #22****Evaluating Your Assessment of Learning and Development**

Begin by evaluating your program's current practices. You can do this in one of two ways:

- use the Assessment of Learning and Development Checklist (Activity #21, page 160), or
- use the standards and criteria for assessing children's learning in your third-party quality endorsement system

Make copies of the checklist or standards and criteria for each classroom and ask teachers to evaluate themselves. Collect these individual evaluations, and then use those copies to conduct your own evaluation of what you observe and know your teachers are doing regarding assessment. After you have gathered this information, you will need to analyze it and use the results to plan your next steps.

1. Complete the following statements to define and describe in writing your desired assessment process based on the requirements of the best practices checklist or the standards and criteria of the third-party quality endorsement system.

Our educational philosophy is

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The educational goals of our program are

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To support this, our assessment process will have the following elements and considerations:

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The assessment standards and criteria required by my third-party quality endorsement system are

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2. Summarize the findings of the teachers' and your evaluations of your current assessment of children's learning practices, listing separately the areas of success and the areas of opportunity.

Areas of Success	Areas of Opportunity

3. Using the findings listed in the Areas of Opportunity column, create an action plan to implement new or improved practices around the assessment of children's learning.

Areas of Opportunity	Improvement Activities	People Responsible	Completion Date

Areas of Opportunity	Improvement Activities	People Responsible	Completion Date

4. Put your plan into action. Decide which action items require some teacher training before implementing the change. Be prepared with all the materials and resources your teachers will need before assigning tasks and deadlines. As with all areas of opportunity, add relevant tasks to your master plan and be sure to give your teachers written action plans with clear and reasonable deadlines.
5. Follow up and monitor progress. Provide your teachers with regular and meaningful feedback as they make the changes in their classrooms. Be firm about the deadlines—expect your teachers to complete the tasks set for them by the established date. This will maintain the momentum of the change and ensure that your teachers achieve tangible success.



## PROVE IT ACTIVITY #23

### Contact Information

Take the time to find the following information.

Name of the organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Contact person(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address(es): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Best way to communicate with the contact(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

After determining who to talk to, decide what still needs clarification. Your self-study materials may contain a wealth of information regarding the on-site visit, and your first task is to read all of it. If you're still unsure about a few things, make a note of them below.

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Check in with your contact person and ask your questions. Write down the answers you receive, along with the name of the person you spoke to, and the date of your conversation. If you send an e-mail, save the response e-mail for your reference and as proof of your communication.

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 **PROVE IT ACTIVITY #24****Get Organized Checklist**

Look around your office and ask yourself these questions:

- Is your filing up to date?
- Can you locate any document within thirty seconds?
- Have you collected all the documents that the third-party quality endorsement system's representative will need to review?
- Are these organized in a logical way?
- Are staff members' and children's files complete?
- Do you have a "Plan B" should any teacher be ill on the day of the visit?
- Do you know for certain that each teacher is prepared for the visit? Are they prepared for an interview with the representative of the third-party quality endorsement system?
- Are you ready for an exit interview, should the third-party quality endorsement system require one?

If you answered *no* to any of these questions, you know where to focus your energies. Don't panic! Take one situation at a time, make a plan to get it done, and then do it. At this point you are a master of creating and executing plans, so don't abandon that well-practiced skill now.

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## PROVE IT ACTIVITY #25

### Post-Endorsement Quiz

Take this quiz to help you figure out how well you've been doing since achieving your third-party quality endorsement.

Observations	Yes	No	Don't Know
1. I still have the same staff as during the on-site visit.			
2. My teachers are showing further progress with their professional development toward meeting the educational qualifications.			
3. My assistant teachers/aides are showing further progress with their professional development toward meeting the educational qualifications.			
Observations	Yes	No	Don't Know
4. The classrooms are developmentally appropriate and include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• real-life pictures and props;</li> <li>• an interesting and diverse selection of children's books;</li> <li>• items depicting multiculturalism and diversity, as appropriate for the age of the children;</li> <li>• displays of children's work at their eye level;</li> <li>• information for parents about classroom events, the curriculum, and their child's progress;</li> <li>• interesting, fun, and appropriate learning centers for the children;</li> <li>• a learning environment that is sufficiently enriched by the classroom teacher;</li> <li>• a balance of child- and teacher-initiated activities.</li> </ul>			
5. We continue to display high levels of cleanliness in the center.			
6. Our safety practices are still consistent with the standards and criteria.			
7. My teaching staff responds to both the children's and families' needs.			
8. Teacher-child interactions are caring, courteous, and encourage open-ended dialogue at the child's level.			
9. Classroom teachers regularly observe and assess children in a natural setting.			
10. Daily evidence shows that the educational goals of my program are being met in each classroom. The teaching staff visibly provide many opportunities for the children to investigate, question, discover, problem solve, and take initiative.			
11. Children are happy, engaged, and interact with their learning environment, other children, and adults in the center. Teaching staff clearly guide and assist children in reaching this goal.			



## PROVE IT ACTIVITY #26

### Post-Endorsement Paperwork Requirements

Name of third-party quality endorsement system: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Contact details: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date of endorsement: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual paperwork required: \_\_\_\_\_ Due date: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual paperwork required: \_\_\_\_\_ Due date: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual paperwork required: \_\_\_\_\_ Due date: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual paperwork required: \_\_\_\_\_ Due date: \_\_\_\_\_

When to start the self-study for reendorsement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

When to submit the paperwork for reendorsement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_