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

![Diagram showing research-based quality domains: Program administration, Family/caregiver engagement, Culture and climate, Curriculum and instruction, Youth management, 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.

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<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>SCALE</th>
<th>EVIDENCE EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 1 Each staff member accessed and completed pre-program professional development. | No | Yes | • Training attendance / completion  
• Feedback from staff |
| 2 I have communicated program goals to staff, families/caregivers, and youth. | No | Yes | • 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. | No | Yes | • 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. | No or Few Staff Members | Some Staff Members | Most or All Staff Members | • 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. | Never or Rarely | Sometimes | Usually or Always | • 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. | Never or Rarely | Sometimes | Usually or Always | • Observed instruction  
• Regularly scheduled staff meetings (one-on-one or group) |

TOTAL
Add up the number of indicators in each area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Areas for Improvement</th>
<th>Areas for Improvement</th>
<th>Areas of Strength</th>
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## Family/Caregiver Engagement

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

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</table>
| 1 Program staff directly connected with families/caregivers before the program launched through an orientation and/or individual phone calls. | No or Few Families, Some Families, Most or all Families | • Family orientation content and materials  
• Introductory call script with families  
• Family communication log  
• Feedback from staff and families |
| 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.). | Not at All, Somewhat, Very Much So | • Family communication protocols, expectations, and processes  
• Feedback from staff and families |
| 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). | Not at All, Somewhat, Very Much So | • Family orientation content and materials  
• Introductory call script with families  
• Family communication log  
• Feedback from staff and families |
| 4 Staff members are aware of the home learning environments, as well as the types and availability of technology in the homes. | Not at All, Somewhat, Very Much So | • Information on youth/family technology access  
• Introductory calls with families and/or youth  
• Staff/family conferences |
| 5 Staff members regularly provide updates to families/caregivers about youth academic progress and/or their behavior and participation. | Never or Rarely, Sometimes, Usually or Always | • 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 |

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.

| 6 Staff prioritize important topics in conversations with families/caregivers. | Never or Rarely, Sometimes, Usually or Always | • 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.

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| 1 Staff members are checking-in regularly with youth to encourage trusting and secure connections. | | • Family communication log  
• Staff/family conferences  
• Feedback from families, staff, and youth |
| 2 Staff members and leaders implement strategies that support positive youth behaviors and engagement in a remote environment. | | • Feedback from families, staff, and youth  
• Observed instruction or communication between youth and staff |
| 3 Staff members consistently implement activities to support youth social-emotional development, well-being and physical health. | | • Weekly lesson plans  
• Observed instruction or communication between youth and staff  
• Feedback from families, staff, and youth |
| 4 Staff members have established a structure and routine that enables scholars to navigate their learning independently (e.g. scholar self-efficacy). | | • Feedback from families, staff, and youth  
• Youth work and engagement  
• Weekly lesson plans |
| 5 Growth mindset language and prompts are evident in instructional planning and delivery. | | • 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

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**Curriculum and Instruction**

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

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</table>
| 1 Staff members can effectively deliver the curriculum lessons and activities in a remote learning setting. | | • 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. | | • 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). | | • 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. | | • 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. | | • 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. | | • 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

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# Youth Management

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

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</table>
| 1 The program’s youth recruitment and enrollment procedures were effective in meeting enrollment targets/goals. | No | Yes | • Met recruitment/enrollment targets  
• Completed/collected enrollment forms |
| 2 The program has a system/process to consistently track youth attendance. | Not at All | Somewhat | Very Much So | • 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. | Not at All | Somewhat | Very Much So | • 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. | Never or Rarely | Sometimes | Usually or Always | • 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.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td>Yes • Surveys developed to collect information on key program areas • Distribution and collection plan for stakeholder surveys or another feedback mechanism (phone calls, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Staff members are collecting data about youth progress to understand growth and needs in youth skills and/or academic development.</td>
<td>☐ No or Few Staff Members</td>
<td>☐ Some Staff Members • Feedback from staff • Documentation of youth progress tracking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  If youth took assessments, staff members were provided with access to data for informing instruction.</td>
<td>☐ No or Few Staff Members</td>
<td>☐ Some Staff Members • Family orientation content and materials • Introductory call script with families • Family communication log • Feedback from staff and families</td>
</tr>
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**TOTAL**

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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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 strengths to reinforce or elevate?</th>
<th>How will you communicate with staff?</th>
<th>Other steps for immediate changes?</th>
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**Areas of Improvement**
Leverage the indicator information to develop a continuous improvement plan that will strengthen your program immediately.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>3 areas identified for immediate change or improvement?</th>
<th>What specific steps are needed to make the improvements?</th>
<th>How will you engage staff in these steps?</th>
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**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.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3-5 strengths to reinforce or elevate in planning for the next program cycle?</th>
<th>What specific steps are needed to enhance these strengths?</th>
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Areas of Improvement
Leverage the indicator information to develop a continuous improvement plan that will strengthen your program in the next cycle.

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

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