

# Youth Program Quality Assessment ® and School-Age Program Quality Assessment



The Youth Program Quality Assessment (PQA)® is a validated instrument designed to measure the quality of youth programs and identify staff training needs. It has been used in community organizations, schools, camps, and other places where youth have fun, work, and learn with adults. The Youth PQA is suitable for youth in grades 4 - 12. For children in grades K - 6, the School-Age PQA is developmentally appropriate.

The Youth and School-Age PQA evaluate the quality of youth experiences as youth attend workshops and classes, complete group projects, and participate in meetings and regular program activities. For staff, the Youth and School-Age PQA self-assessment process is a great way to see what is really happening in their programs and to build professional competencies.

## What do the Youth and School-Age PQA assess?

- Safe environment
- Supportive environment
- Interaction
- Engagement
- Youth-centered policies and practices
- High expectations for youth and staff
- Access

Each domain contains items that focus on specific elements of best practice.

## How do the Youth and School-Age PQA work?

The Youth and School-Age PQA are evidence-based assessment tools. Evidence is gathered through observation and interview. Program staff or an outside specialist observe program activities, take notes, and then conduct an interview with a program administrator. Notes, observations, and interview data are used as evidence to score items. Item scores are combined to create an overall program quality profile. The online [Scores Reporter](#) <sup>[1]</sup> is a web-based data reporting application for entering scores, producing reports, and storing data over time.

## What do I need to get started?

There are three pieces to the Youth or School-Age PQA:

- **Handbook** ? describes how to assess your program and use the data you produce. [\[see inside!\]](#) <sup>[2]</sup>
- **Form A: Program Offering Items** ? is used to evaluate the quality of the program's youth experiences through observations of actual activities. [\[view Youth PQA sample items\]](#) <sup>[3]</sup> [\[view School-Age PQA sample items\]](#) <sup>[4]</sup> [\[Download Youth or School-Age PQA\]](#) <sup>[5]</sup>