

Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential
Parent/Community Representative Instructions



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Preface

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a Parent/Community Representative for the Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential program. You are making an important contribution to a statewide effort to assure quality services for parents and their children.

The Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential is administered by the Pennsylvania Key (PA Key). The PA Key provides statewide leadership in collaboration with the Office of Child Development in the development of an integrated coordinated system of program quality improvements and professional development supports.

Individuals or Candidates interested in pursuing the Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential document and demonstrate their abilities to meet the needs of children through an assessment process which includes the collection of resources and questionnaires, participation in coursework, and observations. The purpose of the assessment is to identify individuals who have the necessary skills and knowledge to work competently with children in school-age programs.

Parents have a very important role in the evaluation of a person who wants to achieve a Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential. You are considered a member of the Local Assessment Team (LAT). The LAT consists of the Candidate, the Advisor, the Parent/Community Representative and the School-Age Credential Assessor (SAC Assessor). Each team member is responsible for collecting specific information relevant to the Candidate's work with school-age children. Your role on this team is to represent the interests of parents and the community in the assessment process. You are responsible for conducting an observation and collecting family surveys.

The information you collect, as well as information collected by the Advisor, Candidate and the SAC Assessor will be submitted for review at the Local Assessment Review Meeting.

Thank you for your commitment to increase the quality of school-age programs.

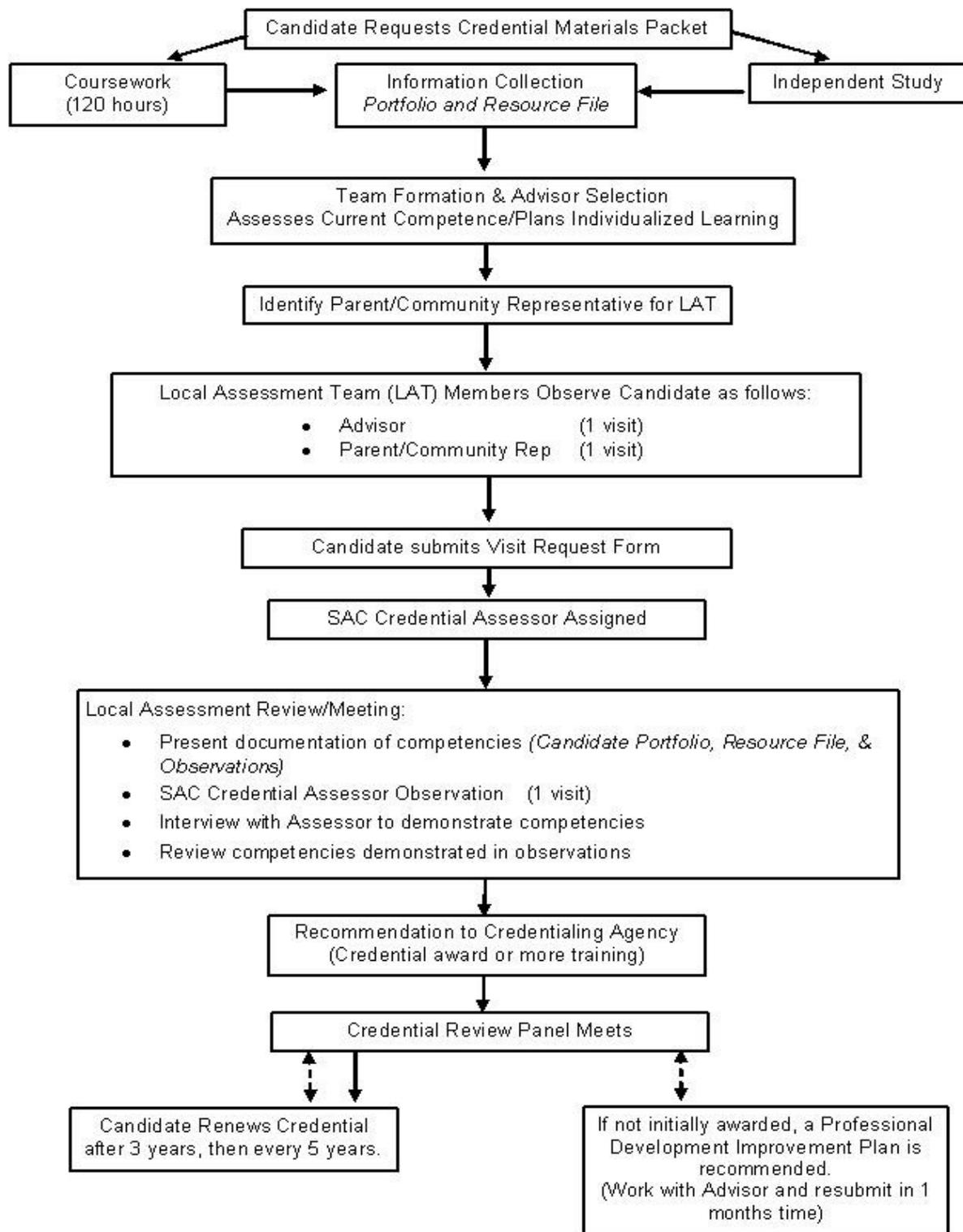
Introduction

The Parent/Community Representative's materials consist of the following information:

- 1. PA School-Age Credential Assessment Process and Competencies**
Contains an overview of the PA School-Age Credentialing Program, a description of the credentialing process, the eligibility requirements and responsibilities for members of the LAT. Be sure to review the eligibility requirements for the Parent/Community Representative to be sure you meet the stated eligibility requirements. PA School-Age Care Competency Standards give a listing of the skills and competencies which a school-age practitioner needs.
- 2. Parent/Community Representative Instructions**
This document describes your role as a member of the Local Assessment Team. It describes your role as it relates to the collection of and tallying of Family Questionnaires, and your observation of the Candidate. These instructions include a form letter to be used when sending out the Family Questionnaire as well as the Family Questionnaire form.
- 3. Parent/Community Representative Observation Instrument**
This tool is meant to help you identify what to look for when you observe the Candidate on the job. Because you'll be looking for many different things, you'll want to become familiar with the Observation Instrument before you make your observation. As you prepare to observe the Candidate, consider what you're looking for and why it's important, and ask the Candidate or Advisor to explain any issues that remain unclear to you.

Please be sure to read all the materials in your packet. Then discuss your responsibilities and any questions you have with the Candidate. If you need additional assistance you should contact the Candidate's Advisor

Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential Process



Stages in the Process

1. Application

Any interested individual meeting all the eligibility requirements may apply by requesting application materials from the PA Key. The application packet includes the instructions and forms required for this process.

2. SAC Credential Preparation Program

Because the Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential is based on competence that is observed and documented, there is flexibility as to how a Candidate develops the necessary competence. The individual may choose to join an organized school-age professional development program (offered by an approved host agency), apply college coursework, do independent study, or a combination of all of these. The Candidate must document 120 hours of instruction covering the thirteen Functional Areas.

3. Information Collection

Information collection includes observations by LAT members, parent/family questionnaires and the preparation of a Portfolio and Resource File.

- Portfolio – Contains an autobiographical statement, a program description, and one written example of his/her competence in each of 13 Functional Areas.
- Resource Collection File - A file or collection of thirty-three (33) resource items. These items are not to duplicate items in the Portfolio.
- Observations and Surveys - In addition to the Portfolio and Resource File, the Advisor conducts one (1) formal observation of the Candidate at work. The observation documents the Candidate's behavior and effectiveness in each of the 13 Functional Areas and based on the observation the Advisor can make recommendations for further growth and development.

The Parent Community/Representative also conducts one (1) observation of the Candidate at work. The Candidate must also distribute and collect family questionnaires and ensure that the Parent/Community Representative tallies the family questionnaires.

4. Team Formation

Formation of the Local Assessment Team will occur while the Candidate participates in coursework and is collecting their documentation. In addition to the Candidate, three people serve on the Local Assessment Team (LAT). They are the Advisor, Parent/Community Representative, and the SAC Credential Assessor. Each team member must meet the eligibility requirements and has specific responsibilities for collecting information about the Candidate's work with school-age children.

Identifying an Advisor

The Candidate is responsible for identifying an Advisor who can guide them through the Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential process and who serves as a part of the Local Assessment Team. The Advisor works closely with the Candidate to assess current competence, identify professional development needs, and suggests continued professional growth.

Identifying a Parent/Community Representative

The Candidate is responsible for identifying a Parent/Community Representative who works with the Candidate to collect Family surveys. This individual is also responsible for conducting one observation of the Candidate at their work site.

The Parent/Community Representative's role is to represent the interests of parents and the community in the assessment process.

Identifying the SAC Assessor

The Credentialing Agency is responsible for assigning the SAC Assessor when the Candidate has submitted a request for an assessment visit. This individual is responsible for facilitating the Local Assessment Review Meeting described below.

5. Advisor/Candidate Review Meeting

Prior to submitting the Assessment Visit Request Form, the Advisor and the Candidate may meet to review information that should be collected prior to submitting the request form and to assess the Candidate's readiness to request a Local Assessment Review Meeting. At this time the Advisor will ensure that the Candidate has also gotten the Parent/Community Representative to sign-off on the Assessment Request Form.

6. Assessment Visit Request

When the Candidate has collected all of the required documentation s/he is ready to request an Assessment Visit by submitting the Assessment Request Form. Once the assessment visit request is received, the credentialing agency will assign a SAC Credential Assessor.

7. Local Assessment Review Meeting

The Candidate and the SAC Credential Assessor meet to review and discuss the information collected about the Candidate. The SAC Credential Assessor will conduct an observation of and interview with the Candidate. Information reviewed includes observations, questionnaires/surveys, Portfolio and Resource File. The Candidate has an opportunity to orally present his/her learning as demonstrated in their Portfolio and Resource File through an interview process. The SAC Credential Assessor will follow a standard procedure which will include an interview with the Candidate including eighteen questions addressing each of the Functional Areas.

At the conclusion of the meeting a recommendation is made to the Credentialing Agency to award the credential or not. If a recommendation is made not to award the credential, then the recommendation will be for the Candidate to pursue additional professional development in specific areas and reapply for the Credential at a later date.

8. **Credential Review Panel**

The SAC Credential Review Panel meets four (4) times per year/ or as needed to review the recommendations to award the Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential. At this time procedures of the Local Assessment Team and SAC Credential Assessor are reviewed. The Review Panel ensures that the Local Assessment Team followed appropriate procedures and that the Local Assessment Review Meeting was conducted according to procedure. If documentation shows that all procedures were followed, they accept the recommendation.

If a recommendation is made not to award the Credential, then a Professional Development Improvement Plan and timeline for completing the process will be sent to the Candidate. The Candidate should work with their Advisor to make the suggested improvements. Upon completion of this process the Candidate may resubmit to the Credential Review Panel.

9. **Renewal**

The Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential is valid for three (3) years from award, after which it may be renewed for five (5) years.

Roles and Responsibilities

This section will provide guidance to you in fulfilling your responsibilities as a Parent/Community Representative.

Eligibility Requirements

The Parent/Community representative must meet the following requirements:

- A. Personal
 - Possess communication skills to fulfill the responsibilities of the parent/community representative.
 - Be able to observe the Candidate in order to prepare a written report of the observation, tally information collected from the parents of the children in the program and provide feedback and clarification to the SAC Assessor as necessary.
- B. Involvement with Program
 - Have been involved as a volunteer or parent with a school-age program.
- C. Conflict of Interest
 - Must not be currently employed by the school-age program or program's parent agency.
 - It is preferred that the representative not have a child in the Candidates care during the period of observation.
 - Must not be a relative by blood or marriage of the Candidate.

Information Collection Responsibilities

- A. Family surveys:
 - Within six (6) months prior to the final assessment, confers with the Candidate about the Family Questionnaire. Collects (at least 50%) of the family questionnaires distributed.
 - Tallies all Family Questionnaires on the tally form.
- B. Observation:
 - Within six (6) months prior of the final assessment, conducts an observation of the Candidate using the Parent/Community Representative Observation Form.

C. Submitting Paperwork

- Once the Parent/Community Representative Observation is complete and family questionnaires are tallied, they are put in a sealed envelope and given to the Candidate. The Candidate is responsible for presenting the family questionnaires and the completed observation in the sealed envelope to the SAC Assessor at the Local Assessment Review Meeting.
- Sign-off on the Candidate's Assessment Visit Request Form.

Each of these responsibilities is explained in this document. Use the checklist to keep track of the tasks you must perform. If you have questions about your responsibilities, the forms you will be completing, or any other steps along the way, check with the Candidate or Advisor.

Collecting Family Questionnaires

Although the Candidate is responsible for distributing and collecting questionnaires to families of children they serve, you are responsible for communicating with the Candidate about the coordination of this task. This is especially important since the forms to be used are part of this packet and not in the Candidate's materials.

When distributing the questionnaires, families are told that the Candidate will not see their responses. Families are also asked not to sign their names to the completed questionnaires so that responses can be kept confidential. The number system described below is only a reference for follow-up when a questionnaire is not returned. The Candidate is to prepare the questionnaires in the following way:

1. The Candidate's name will appear on each letter and questionnaire.
2. Each questionnaire should be numbered with a corresponding roster of families.
3. The Candidate will distribute a questionnaire to each family with a numbered envelope.
4. Families are instructed to return the completed questionnaire in the numbered (sealed) envelope provided. In this way the Candidate can track the questionnaires returned and follow-up with the families that have not returned their survey.
5. The date by which questionnaires are to be returned should appear on the letter and on the questionnaire.
6. The Parent/Community Representative's telephone number should appear in the space provided.
7. The Candidate will pass on all sealed envelopes containing the questionnaire to the Parent/Community Representative to be tallied.
8. A total of 50% of the questionnaires are to be returned.

Follow-up

At least one follow-up contact is to be made with families who do not initially return the questionnaire. You can coordinate this effort with the Candidate. Some families may just forget to respond; others may not be able to read the questionnaire or may not understand the wording. Therefore, it will be helpful to try different methods of contacting families. You may also be called on to record their responses – but please be sure that any record you make accurately reflects their response.

Family questionnaires provide important information about the Candidate, and your role is to present accurate and thorough information provided in the questionnaires.



How many to distribute?

Family Questionnaires are to be distributed to all families with school-age children in the Candidate's care. While the Candidate will make every attempt to encourage high return, you should expect to tally a minimum of 50% of the Family Questionnaires distributed.

Tallying the Questionnaires

Once you are satisfied that you have received all the questionnaires – or all that you can reasonably expect as a result of the follow-up efforts (minimum of 50%), follow these steps in filling out the Tally of Family Questionnaires found later in these instructions:

1. In the appropriate space on the tally form, record the total number of questionnaires distributed, the total number that were filled out and returned, and the number that were not returned.
2. Fill in the dates that questionnaires were distributed (according to the Candidate). This date must be within six (6) months prior to the date the Candidate submits the Assessment Request Form.
3. Sign your name.

Observing the Candidate and Completing the Observation Instrument

Each team member is asked to observe the Candidate at work and to record their observation in writing using the appropriate observation instrument. The observation instruments are designed around the PA School-Age Competency Standards, which define what a competent school-age professional should be able to do. The completed observation instruments will be reviewed at the Local Assessment Review Meeting.

Making the Observation

1. The Candidate will notify you when s/he is ready for you to do your observation.
2. The observation must occur within six (6) months prior to the Candidate's submission of the Assessment Visit Request Form.
3. The observation must be with the same children the Candidate will be observed working with when s/he is observed by the Advisor and the SAC Assessor.
4. Arrange for a convenient time to observe the Candidate. When scheduling the observation visit, be sure that you are scheduling the visit on a "typical" day. Plan to spend at least one and a half (1.5) hours observing. If you do not see enough to complete your observation you may need to schedule another time to observe again.
5. Schedule the observation in advance so that the Candidate is prepared for your visit. Be sure to check with the Candidate at least one day prior to the visit to confirm the visit and time.
6. Dress comfortably.
7. Take the first 10-15 minutes to get comfortable with the surroundings and to find a place to position yourself to observe. Try to avoid talking to the children or the Candidate. If you are asked to participate in the activities, you might respond with, "I am sorry. Perhaps I can join you when I finish this observation. Right now I need to write everything down."
8. You will want to write down what you see and exactly what you hear.
9. Observe quietly without interruptions.
10. Read the PA School-Age Competency Standards and the Parent/Community Representative Observation Instrument before you observe so that you become familiar with these tools and what you will be looking for as you observe.
11. Follow all instructions and procedures in the Parent/Community Representative Observation Instrument.

12. Refer to the PA School-Age Competency Standards when you have questions about what you should be observing.
13. Put the completed observation in a sealed envelope and submit it to the Candidate. Your observation will be reviewed by the SAC Assessor at the Local Assessment Review Meeting.

If you see the Candidate doing anything that makes you uncomfortable – and if you would prefer that the Candidate not know that you are the LAT member reporting that behavior, please bring the issue to the attention of the Candidate’s Advisor. S/he is responsible to observe the Candidate and to help him/her improve their skills. Therefore s/he can help a Candidate correct inappropriate behavior with children.

Parent/Community Representative Checklist and Forms

Checklist

Below is a list of the major tasks you will perform as a Parent/Community Representative. Your responsibilities of collecting questionnaires and observing the Candidate can occur at the same time. You do not have to finish one task before starting another.

- Read this booklet carefully.
- Discuss your responsibilities with the Candidate.
- Collect Family Questionnaires.
- Fill out Tally of Family Questionnaires.
- Schedule your observation with the candidate.
- Review the Competency Standards.
- Observe the Candidate.
- Complete the Observation Instrument.
- Notify the Candidate when you have completed your responsibilities and sign his/her Assessment Visit Request Form.
- Submit Family Questionnaires and Tally Form in sealed envelope to Candidate.
- Submit completed observation to Candidate in a sealed envelope.

Forms

Below is a list of the forms you will need to fulfill your responsibilities as the Parent/Community Representative. These forms can be found on the following pages.

- Family Letter
- Family Questionnaire
- Tally of Family Questionnaires

Family Letter

Date:

Dear Family:

_____ (Candidate's name) is applying for the Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential. The Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential program is administered by the Pennsylvania Key. The Pennsylvania Key provides statewide leadership in collaboration with the Office of Child Development in the development of an integrated coordinated system of program quality improvements and professional development supports.

Individuals or Candidates interested in pursuing the Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential document and demonstrate their abilities to meet the needs of children through an assessment process which includes the collection of resources and questionnaires, participation in coursework, and observations. The purpose of the assessment is to identify individuals who have the necessary skills and knowledge to work competently with children in school-age programs.

Parents and families play a very important role in the assessment process for the Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential. You can make an important contribution to this process by evaluating the Candidate's work by completing the enclosed survey with your child and family.

Please take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire and support this Candidate in their professional development effort. Your answers will be confidential so please do not sign your name. Think about each question and answer it openly and honestly. Feel free to add specific comments on the back of the questionnaire. Your responses will be added together with those of other families in order to honor the confidentiality of your responses.

Please return your completed questionnaires to the Candidate in the enclosed envelope (sealed) by _____ (date). The Candidate will then give all questionnaires to me for tallying.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire and if you have any questions, please contact me at, _____.

Sincerely,

PA School-Age Professional Credential
Parent/Community Representative

Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential Family Questionnaire

Candidate's Name	
Date	

For each statement, circle the answer you think best describes the candidate.

R= Candidate does this rarely

O= Candidate does this often

S= Candidate does this sometimes

NA=Do not know, or does not apply

R	S	O	NA	1. Reports accidents or any first aid given to my child.
R	S	O	NA	2. Requires my written permission to give any medication to my child.
R	S	O	NA	3. Tells me about my child and their day.
R	S	O	NA	4. Follows special instructions for my child with allergies.
R	S	O	NA	5. Allows my child to be picked up only by the people I have named or allows self-release following my specific instructions.
R	S	O	NA	6. Reports to me about my child's activities and interests.
R	S	O	NA	7. Organizes equipment and materials so my child can access them easily.
R	S	O	NA	8. Provides a place for my child to store his or her belongings.
R	S	O	NA	9. Has enough equipment and materials so children do not fight over popular items.
R	S	O	NA	10. My child has opportunities to go outdoors to play every day except in bad weather.
R	S	O	NA	11. Talks with my child frequently.
R	S	O	NA	12. Listens with interest when my child talks and encourages my child to talk.
R	S	O	NA	13. Helps my child learn to control his or her own behavior without resorting to physical or other harsh punishment.
R	S	O	NA	14. Reads to my child and encourages my child to read.
R	S	O	NA	15. Provides many music, art, drama and physical activities that my child can do in his or her own way.
R	S	O	NA	16. Helps my child feel proud of what he or she can do.
R	S	O	NA	17. Encourages children to enjoy getting along with each other.
R	S	O	NA	18. Gives me the feeling that she is truly interested in my child and me.
R	S	O	NA	19. Is pleasant and friendly with me.
R	S	O	NA	20. Is available to discuss my concerns.
R	S	O	NA	21. Asks me and my child for ideas to use in the program.
R	S	O	NA	22. Talks with me about any fears and concerns my child has.
R	S	O	NA	23. Maintains confidentiality; does not freely discuss my child or family in the presence of others.
R	S	O	NA	24. Encourages me to visit any time.
R	S	O	NA	25. Lets me know of parent meetings and other ways I can become involved in the program.
R	S	O	NA	26. Schedules necessary conferences at times that are convenient to me.

Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential: Family Questionnaire (page 2)

Please have child answer the following questions

What do you like best about your program?

If you could change something about your program, what would it be?

How do you enjoy your time spent with _____?
(Candidate's name)

Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential: Tally of Family Questionnaires

Please complete all parts of this tally and include all completed questionnaires with this form.

Name of Candidate					
Program/Center Name:					
Date Distributed:		# Distributed:			
Date Tally Completed		# Returned:		# not Returned:	

Please provide the total number of responses for each question.

	# Rarely	#Sometimes	# Often	# NA
1. Reports accidents or any first aid given to my child.				
2. Requires my written permission to give any medication to my child.				
3. Tells me about my child and their day.				
4. Follows special instructions for my child with allergies.				
5. Allows my child to be picked up only by the people I have named or allows self-release following my specific instructions.				
6. Reports to me about my child's activities and interests.				
7. Organizes equipment and materials so my child can access them easily.				
8. Provides a place for my child to store his or her belongings.				
9. Has enough equipment and materials so children do not fight over popular items.				
10. My child has opportunities to go outdoors to play every day except in bad weather.				
11. Talks with my child frequently.				
12. Listens with interest when my child talks and encourages my child to talk.				
13. Helps my child learn to control his or her own behavior without resorting to physical or other harsh punishment.				

Tally of Family Questionnaires

	# Rarely	# Sometimes	# Often	# NA
14. Reads to my child and encourages my child to read.				
15. Provides many music, art, drama and physical activities that my child can do in his or her own way.				
16. Helps my child feel proud of what he or she can do.				
17. Encourages children to enjoy getting along with each other.				
18. Gives me the feeling that she is truly interested in my child and me.				
19. Is pleasant and friendly with me.				
20. Is available to discuss my concerns.				
21. Asks me and my child for ideas to use in the program.				
22. Talks with me about any fears and concerns my child has.				
23. Maintains confidentiality; does not freely discuss my child or family in the presence of others.				
24. Encourages me to visit any time.				
25. Lets me know of parent meetings and other ways I can become involved in the program.				
26. Schedules necessary conferences at times that are convenient to me.				
TOTALS (total each column)				

Signature of Parent/Community Representative