School-Age Program Quality Assessment (SPQA©)

What is the SPQA?

The SPQA focuses on staff practices and experiences of children by using an assess- plan-improve sequence. The approach is based on interconnected domains to support children's experiences with intentional planning in the following areas:

- Physical safety, emotional safety, and inclusive practices
- Supportive environment through welcoming, conflict resolution, active learning, encouragement, and skill-building
- Interaction through cooperative learning and leadership opportunities
- Higher order engagement through choice, planning and reflection

Which program(s) could use the SPQA?

SPQA can be used in center or school-based settings including full day out of school time and before and after school sites serving children in grades K-6.

SPQA assessment process

External SPQA assessments are conducted by a reliable SPQA assessor from the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) team. Assessments can range from one to three hours.

SPQA assessments include observation, teacher questions, and may include a tour of the space used by school-aged children.

Internal SPQA assessments are conducted by the program's internal assessment (IA) team. The program's IA team partners with the Quality Coach and SPQA Assessor when planning for and conducting internal assessment and when analyzing the information collected during the internal assessment process. A team leader observes and takes notes, including anecdotal records, to gather classroom data. The assessment process includes a minimum of one-hour classroom observation. Please see How to Conduct an Internal Assessment Using the SPQA for detailed information on using SPQA for internal assessment.

How does the SPQA support continuous quality improvement (CQI)?

Information gathered during a SPQA assessment can be used by the program to help identify safe and supportive environments, interactions and engagement, as well as areas for growth. The information gathered can also be used to help create the program's continuous quality improvement plan.

Additional Information/Training

- The Forum for Youth Investment (forumfyi.org)
  SPQA form can be downloaded free of charge.
- How to Conduct an Internal Assessment Using SPQA (pakeys.org/how-to-spqa)
- Facilitated Program Observation Instrument Orientation Request (FPO) (pakeys.org)
- Program Quality Assessment Professional Development (pakeys.org/pqa/professional-development)