



Expanding Access to Quality Preschool

Provider Manual – Quality Improvement

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Section 1. Preschool Promise and Quality Improvement Overview

This Provider Handbook for Quality Improvement (the “Manual”) is an integral part of the Provider Quality Improvement Agreement (the “Agreement”) between CPP, LLC, an Ohio non-profit limited liability company (“CPP”, or “Preschool Promise”), and the Provider identified in the Agreement. Provider shall be solely responsible for ensuring that Provider’s employees, officers, and contractors comply with all requirements in the Agreement and this Manual. In the event of a conflict between this Manual and the Agreement, the terms of the Agreement shall control. Undefined capitalized terms used in this Manual shall have the meaning set forth in the Agreement.

CPP (CPP) is designed to expand access to two years of quality preschool and to build the supply of quality rated preschool programs in Cincinnati – with the goal of helping every child enter kindergarten ready to learn.

CPP will expand access to quality preschool for children in Cincinnati by helping preschool Providers achieve and maintain high quality ratings. This manual sets forth the requirements Providers must follow to receive such assistance.

Research shows that early childhood education is key to laying a foundation for success throughout life, and that quality is critical for preschool to be successful. A major component of the CPP is therefore to expand the number of quality rated programs and seats that are available to preschool eligible children in Cincinnati, with the bold goal of adding 1,000 new quality rated preschool seats by August 1st, 2021.

The CPP will award quality improvement (“QI”) grants and services (collectively, “QI Support”) to help Providers currently unrated or not quality rated to achieve a high-quality rating – 3, 4, or 5 stars as defined by CPP – on Ohio’s Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) scale [See the attached **Appendix A** for an overview of SUTQ]. Providers that are awarded the QI Support will receive comprehensive support from highly qualified coaches that includes development of an action plan to achieve a quality rating, training on curriculum that aligns to Ohio’s early childhood standards, help resolving any non-compliance issues, and support with the SUTQ application process.

Section 2. Provider Eligibility, Application, and Selection

To be eligible to receive QI Support, Provider must comply with all of the following:

1. Meet general program and compliance requirements:
 - Be located in the Cincinnati Public School District boundary;
 - Be licensed and in good standing with all applicable governing agencies, including without limitation, the Ohio Department of Education or the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services;
 - Serve preschool eligible children – two years prior to starting kindergarten as defined by CPP; and
 - Be currently unrated or hold a 1 or 2 star SUTQ rating.
2. Believe in CPP’s mission and goal to give all children and their families access to high quality preschool education:
 - Be committed to pursuing a continuous improvement mindset and apply for the next highest SUTQ star rating within 12 months of receiving a QI Support award;
 - Be willing to cooperate fully with CPP’s coaching team to develop and implement an action plan to achieve this quality rating;

- Be committed to serving and educating all children, regardless of race, culture, or socio-economic background; and
- Demonstrate long-standing commitment to the Cincinnati community and early childhood education.

Providers can indicate their interest through the Provider application form available during Provider information sessions and on the CPP website. Materials required at the time of submission of the application include:

1. General program information and compliance documentation:
 - Signed Provider Application for Quality Improvement Assessment
 - Copy of ODE or ODJFS license and latest inspection report
 - Copy of current SUTQ certificate (if applicable)
 - Copies of Provider’s preschool classroom teachers’ credentials
 - Proof of the insurance identified in Section 8 of this Manual

Once Providers submit their applications, an assessment of their preschool program will be conducted by CPP QI coaches, using standardized assessments such as CLASS, PAS, ERS, etc. Using assessment data, QI Support award recipients will then be determined by the QI council, composed of the CPP Executive Director, QI manager, master coach, and program evaluator [See the attached **Appendix B** for an overview of the QI council.] The QI council will prioritize QI Support awards based on two key criteria:

- **Time required to achieve quality:** Providers that require less than 12 months of coaching and other support to achieve a quality rating – 3 stars or above – will be prioritized; Providers that require longer term and more intensive support (e.g. significant number of staff needing CDA or other teaching credentials, issues with compliance) will still be eligible to receive QI Support awards, but may receive funding at a later date depending on coaching capacity
- **Location in “quality deserts”:** Providers located in neighborhoods that currently have a limited number of STUQ quality rated preschool seats compared to the number of preschool eligible children will be also prioritized. Data on preschool deserts will be tracked and maintained by CPP [See the attached **Appendix C** for a preliminary list of “quality preschool deserts”]

For Providers that do not receive a QI Support award, the QI council will provide feedback detailing reasons for not being approved. Providers that are not offered a QI Support award or put on a waitlist due to prioritization reasons and lack of coaching capacity from CPP will be able to apply for reconsideration after a three-month period. Providers that disagree with the application result will be able to appeal the decision. Appeals must be submitted to the executive committee of the CPP board within two weeks of the decision, and will be addressed by the board within two months of the appeal submission depending on the Executive Committee’s meeting schedule.

Section 3. Quality Improvement Process

Provider shall comply with all of the requirements set forth in the attached **Appendix D**. Provider will work with the QI council and coaching team on the quality improvement process, including action plan development, action plan implementation, and SUTQ rating application. **Table 1** outlines the steps of the process including the assessment component described previously.

Table 1: CPP QI Process

QI process steps	Description
1. Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 1 month of submitting a complete application, Providers will receive a comprehensive program assessment from CPP quality improvement coaches using CLASS, PAS, BAS, ERS, or other standardized quality measurements selected by the master coach and QI manager
2. QI Support award recipients determined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The QI council will use assessment data to select grant recipients, using time required to achieve quality and location in preschool quality deserts as key prioritization criteria
3. Action plan development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPP QI council and quality improvement coaches will use assessment data to develop action plans for selected Providers, targeting gaps that the Provider needs to close to achieve SUTQ quality rating; the action plan will be aligned to the four SUTQ domains as well as any gaps in compliance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learning and development ○ Staff qualifications and professional development ○ Administration and leadership practices ○ Family and community partnerships • For Providers close to achieving a 3-star rating, the action plan will take a maximum of 12 months to complete and include specific milestones that the Provider will be asked to meet in order to continue receiving QI Support award support, ending with application for a minimum 3-star SUTQ rating • For Providers that require more intensive, longer term support to achieve a SUTQ rating of 3 or above, the action plan will include milestones the Provider will be asked to meet to apply for their first or next star rating. • Providers will commit to partnering with CPP and coaches to implement the action plan
4. Coach assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider will indicate preferences for a coach from the collaborative of coaches based on Provider needs and coach’s experience. • Using these preferences, CPP’s QI council will assign a coach to work with the Provider for the remainder of the QI process • For Providers that are already using a state approved SUTQ coach, CPP will try to allow the Provider to continue working with the same coach to ensure a smooth process experience
5. Action plan implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider’s assigned quality improvement coach will provide direct on-site support and work in partnership with Provider administration to address items on their action plan. Services include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Instructional coaching ○ Curriculum selection and implementation ○ Assisting staff applying for their Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or other equivalent teaching qualification ○ Developing a continuous improvement plan ○ Targeting students’ social and emotional needs ○ Improving classroom environments ○ Leadership and business practice coaching for administration

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improving family and community engagement ○ Other technical assistance (e.g. resolving non-compliance issues) ● The amount of coaching provided will depend on program need
6. SUTQ application support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Once the action plan items are sufficiently addressed, the quality improvement coach will provide support to preschools in their SUTQ rating application <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Services include helping Providers gather data and documentation for the application and preparation for site visits ● In accordance with the action plan, the SUTQ application will be submitted within 12 months of being awarded a QI Support award <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providers closest to quality will apply for a 3-star rating ○ Providers that require longer term support will apply for their first or next star rating
7. Ongoing support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If a Provider successfully achieves a quality (3, 4, or 5 star) SUTQ rating, the provider will become eligible to serve students requiring tuition assistance through CPP ● Providers that earn an additional star rating or their first star but are not yet quality rated will be considered for another action plan to continue to work with their quality improvement coach to reach a 3-star rating

Section 4. QI Grant Budgeting and Disbursement

The size of the QI Support award will be determined by CPP in its sole and absolute discretion, based on the amount and types of support each Provider needs to achieve their goal of earning a 3-star or their next star rating, and is informed by the program assessment. CPP quality improvement coaches will help Provider’s administrators prioritize needs and assist in preparing budgets for how QI Support funds will be allotted.

CPP will disburse QI Support funding as necessary to support the completion of activities described in the Provider’s action plan.

- Payment for coaching will be transferred directly to the organization or person supplying the quality improvement coaching services. Provider acknowledges and agrees that CPP will be subcontracting such quality improvement services.
- Funds for other activities described in the action plan (e.g. professional development, purchasing of curriculum) will be transferred on behalf of the provider.

The disbursement of QI funds is contingent upon the following factors:

- Progress made on action plan milestones, based on input from the CPP quality improvement coach

Failure to meet action plan milestones or non-compliance with expense reporting will result in immediate suspension or permanent denial of QI fund disbursement, in CPP’s sole and absolute discretion. Any such suspension or denial shall be in addition to any other rights and remedies that CPP may have at law or in equity, including, without limitation, terminating the Agreement without penalty. The QI council will meet with the Provider’s administration and quality improvement coach to evaluate the situation and determine CPP’s desired course of action.

Section 5. Reporting and Data Collection

CPP will analyze the success of the QI program by measuring several key metrics, including number of children impacted by the QI Support awards, new quality seats created, and student growth in programs that receive QI funding. To effectively track these metrics and for audit purposes, Provider shall maintain and provide to CPP upon request the following data:

- Enrollment and attendance data for preschool eligible children
- Assessment data for preschool eligible children, including Kindergarten readiness numbers and results on any state standardized assessments¹
- All records related to quality improvement services provided by CPP and CPP's quality improvement coaches and steps taken toward meeting action plan milestones

Provider shall strictly maintain the confidentiality of families and children, and shall immediately notify CPP if Provider becomes aware of any breach in such confidentiality.

Section 6. Communication with Parents

Participation in CPP's QI program should reflect positively on Provider's willingness to improve and commitment to achieve a SUTQ quality rating. Providers that receive QI funding are encouraged to communicate their involvement in this process to parents. Potential topics to address include:

- As part of the QI program, CPP will provide comprehensive coaching support to improve program quality, which will benefit all students of the Provider's program
- Once the Provider is quality rated, eligible families will be eligible to receive tuition assistance for their children from CPP
- SUTQ is a recognized quality certification, and will be mandatory for all Providers by 2020

Providers are also encouraged to direct parents to CPP family information sessions, as well as to the CPP website and Facebook page, for additional information.

Section 7: Training Programs

CPP may request that Provider's employees and officers attend certain training programs, which may include, without limitation, harassment and sexual abuse identification and prevention training (the "Training Programs"). Provider shall ensure that all of its employees and officers attend such Training Programs.

Section 8: Insurance

Provider shall purchase and maintain in full force and effect the insurance outlined herein for coverages at not less than the prescribed minimum limits of liability, covering Provider's activities and those of any and all of Provider's contractors, employees, officers, and agents:

- (a) Commercial General Liability Insurance (Primary and Umbrella/Excess) with limits of not less than One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence for bodily injury, personal injury and property damage;
- (b) Workers' Compensation Insurance in compliance with statutory limits and Employer's Liability Insurance with limits of not less than One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000); and
- (c) Professional liability and errors and omissions insurance in an amount not less than \$1,000,000 per claim and in the aggregate.

¹ Pending parent consent.

All such insurance policies shall be written through companies having an A.M. Best's rating of at least A VII, or with such other companies as may reasonably be approved in writing by CPP. Provider shall furnish Certificates of Insurance evidencing such insurance coverage within five (5) business days of the Effective Date of the Agreement, and upon request of CPP thereafter.

Section 9: Indemnification

Provider shall fully indemnify, defend, and hold harmless CPP and CPP's members, managers, officers, directors, employees, affiliates, representatives, successors, and assigns (collectively, the "CPP Group") from and against any and all third-party claims, allegations, and suits, and all damages, losses, expenses, costs, including reasonable attorneys' fees, or amounts payable arising out of: (i) any act or omission of Provider or any of Provider's members, managers, shareholders, directors, officers, employees, contractors, agents, and assigns (collectively, the "Provider Group") in connection with this Agreement; (ii) the violation of any applicable law, rule, regulation, or contract by Provider or any member of the Provider Group; and (iii) any breach of the Agreement or this Manual by Provider.

Section 10: Limitation of Liability

(a) IN NO EVENT SHALL EITHER PARTY BE LIABLE TO THE OTHER FOR SPECIAL, EXEMPLARY, INDIRECT, INCIDENTAL, CONSEQUENTIAL, OR PUNITIVE DAMAGES ARISING OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE AGREEMENT, THE MANUAL, OR ANY TUITION ASSISTANCE PAYMENT, WHETHER OR NOT THE PARTY HAS BEEN ADVISED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGES.

(b) Without limiting the foregoing, the total aggregate liability of CPP to Provider in connection with this Agreement shall be limited to the amount of QI funds actually received by Provider from CPP during the one (1) month period immediately prior to the occurrence of the action or omission giving rise to such claim.

Section 11: Disputes; Governing Law

The parties shall first submit any dispute, controversy, or claim (other than claims for indemnification arising out of Section 9 of this Manual) arising out of or relating to the Agreement, this Manual, or any QI Support funds or services, to mediation in Hamilton County, Ohio, using a trained, experienced mediator selected by mutual agreement of the parties, the cost of which shall be shared equally by the parties. If such dispute is not resolved within 60 days to the satisfaction of both parties by such mediation, such dispute, controversy, or claim shall then be settled by final and binding arbitration in conformance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association. The place of arbitration shall be Hamilton County, Ohio or any other place as mutually agreed upon by the parties in writing. Cost of such arbitration shall be shared equally by the parties; provided that each party shall be responsible for its own attorney fees. The Agreement and this Manual shall be interpreted and construed in accordance with the laws and procedures of the State of Ohio, without giving effect to the principles of conflicts of law of those jurisdictions.

Section 12. Questions and Further Information

Additional information for on the Quality Improvement process can be found in CPP's website: www.askpreschoolpromise.org or by calling (513) 763-7832.

Appendix A. Step Up to Quality Summary

SUTQ is a five-star quality rating and improvement system administered by the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. SUTQ recognizes and promotes early learning and development programs that meet quality standards exceeding basic licensing requirements. The program standards are based on national research identifying program components and practices that lead to improved outcomes for children, and are organized into four domains:

- Learning and Development – quality rated programs are expected to implement curriculum aligned to early childhood standards, administer state required assessments, and complete annual self-assessments
- Administrative and Leadership Practices – quality rated programs will complete annual continuous improvement plans, offer staff and administration state approved professional development, and conduct formal observations of their teachers
- Staff Qualifications and Professional Development – administrators and the majority of lead teachers of quality rated programs are required to have appropriate qualifications (e.g. AA, CDA)
- Family and Community Partnerships – quality rated programs are expected to effectively communicate with and engage family and community groups

Additional information on Step Up To Quality, including the full list of standards under each domain, can be found at www.earlychildohio.org

Appendix B. CPP Quality Improvement Council Structure

The Quality Improvement council will be responsible for overseeing the QI process. The council may consist of the following members:

- QI manager
- Master coach
- CPP Executive Director
- Evaluator

The council is responsible for managing relations with Providers and helping them through the QI application process, assessing and selecting Providers to receive QI Support awards, overseeing quality improvement coaches in the development and implementation of action plans to achieve a quality rating, and tracking and measuring the impact of the QI program.

Appendix C. Cincinnati Preschool Quality Deserts

Displayed below is a list of the Cincinnati neighborhoods that have a gap of greater than 100 preschool eligible children relative to the number of quality preschool seats available. These neighborhoods represent “preschool quality deserts.”

Figure 1: List of “preschool quality deserts”

1. EAST WESTWOOD/WESTWOOD
2. WEST PRICE HILL
3. EAST PRICE HILL
4. EVANSTON/EAST WALNUT HILLS/NORTH AVONDALE/PADDOCK
5. MOUNT AIRY
6. MOUNT WASHINGTON
7. MILLVALE/SOUTH CUMMINSVILLE
8. WALNUT HILLS
9. WINTON HILLS
10. CLIFTON
11. VILLAGES AT ROLL HILL
12. CARTHAGE
13. NORTHSIDE

Appendix D. Provider Requirements

In addition to the requirements set forth in the Manual and Agreement, Providers shall adhere to the following requirements:

1. **Documentation, data sharing, and records:** Provider shall:
 - (a) Comply with all reporting and documentation requirements in the Master Agreement for Preschool Expansion Services, entered into in March 2017, by the Board of Education of the Cincinnati City School District, United Way of Greater Cincinnati, and CPP (the “Master Agreement”);
 - (b) Obtain and retain copies of parent consent forms, and provide to CPP upon request;
 - (c) Submit monthly attendance and enrollment reports to CPP;
 - (d) Promptly notify CPP of any enrollment or staffing changes within 5 days;
 - (e) Provide CPP with documentation related in any way to QI improvement steps;
 - (f) Submit renewed documentation during the year as requested by CPP to remain in compliance;
 - (g) Share audit records with CPP upon request to demonstrate financial responsibility;
 - (h) Share child assessment data with CPP, the CPP evaluation team, and (if applicable) quality improvement coaches to assist in making program improvements; and
 - (i) Maintain and make available to CPP upon request any other records for program review, evaluation, and audit or for any other purposes deemed necessary by CPP.

2. **Licensure and compliance:** Provider shall:
 - (a) Perform all actions necessary to ensure that it maintains all licenses required by any governmental authority, including, without limitation, performing background checks on employees;
 - (b) Upon request, provide CPP with a copy of forms and documents required by the ODFJS or ODE as proof of any licensure required by the Agreement or applicable law;
 - (c) Inform the CPP Executive Director of any risk of material licensure non-compliance within 5 business days after Provider becomes aware of such risk;
 - (d) Notify the CPP Executive Director in writing within 48 hours of any licensing complaint investigations and provide reports of this visit within 10 business days to the CPP Executive Director;
 - (e) Maintain all required licenses in good standing either through the ODFJS or the ODE;
 - (f) Inform the CPP Executive Director in writing of any change in star rating within 5 business days;
 - (g) Inform the CPP Executive Director of any change to the Provider administration or CPP classroom staff within 5 business days (this would include a change in Director, teacher, or other staff);
 - (h) Allow independent evaluators to assess children with consent given; and
 - (i) Notify CPP when a child is suspended or expelled from the Provider within 2 weeks of disciplinary action.

3. Enrollment targets: Provider must make a good faith effort to assist CPP in its organizational mission and be dedicated to the CPP effort to enroll students from the target audience. Provider must have a written strategy to enroll and serve children from low- and moderate-income families. This strategy includes either a contract to enroll children via state or federal subsidy, a tuition-reduction mechanism, such as funded scholarships, and/or a sliding fee tuition scale based on family income.

4. Quality: Provider must:

- (a) At all times during the Term, remain compliant in Ohio's Step Up To Quality program ("SUTQ") requirements, and ensure that its operations are centered on maintaining and improving quality;
- (b) Commit to a continuous improvement mindset and understand that CPP does not equate high quality as simply being star-rated but also as pursuing the essential five aspects of quality:
 - Implementing a comprehensive curriculum
 - Engaging families in systematic and intentional ways
 - Implementing an effective social-emotional framework
 - Embracing policies and practices that reduce the achievement gap and foster equity
 - Empowering children to develop the 21st-century skills that are essential for creating a competitive workforce;
- (c) Respect each child's family structure, cultural background, language and customs, and support parents and families as leaders and partners in their child's preschool education;
- (d) Have and implement a developmentally appropriate discipline policy and commit to using the requirements set forth in the Manual when assisting children with challenging behaviors before suspending or expelling a child;
- (e) Provide teaching staff with joint/collaborative planning time;
- (f) Attend CPP Provider meetings throughout the year; provided that each Provider administrator or teacher may miss a maximum of 2 of such meetings;
- (g) Staff each classroom with qualified staff as defined by the corresponding SUTQ rating; and
- (h) Follow CPP's requirements for curriculum and planning, child screening and assessment, and family and community engagement;
- (i) Allow independent assessors access to the program to complete provider evaluations (e.g., CLASS, PAS, BAS, ERS) with awareness that program data will be shared with the CPP program, CPS, and any other partners;
- (j) Commit to earning a minimum of a 3-star rating according to the following timelines:
 - Unrated programs must commit to apply for a 1-star rating within one year of being part of CPP, a 2-star rating within two years, and a 3-star within three years
 - 1-star rated programs must commit to apply for a 2-star rating within one year and 3-star within two years
 - 2-star rated programs must commit to apply for a 3-star rating within one year of joining the CPP initiative; and
- (k) Meet with an assigned CPP coach during agreed-upon times and reschedule these meetings only when absolutely necessary.
- (l) Support CPP marketing and communication requests as reasonably requested by CPP