



## Health Provider Checklist: Promoting Quality Early Learning and Development Programs in Practice

This checklist is a self-assessment to see how you are doing in promoting participation in quality early learning and development programs during everyday interactions with families.

The checklist is followed by tips with concrete next steps: **Tip Section 1: Make the Link** gives you tips on getting started. **Tip Section 2: Moving Beyond Linking to Promoting** provides tips to take steps to embrace a model of care coordination that includes quality early learning and development programs as part of the medical home.

Do you routinely:

- Ask about child care arrangements as part of anticipatory guidance?
- Discuss options and quality of child care with parents?
- Provide parents with connections to child care resource and referral centers?
- Display posters that promote access to high quality early learning?
- Link families to Local Early Head Start/Head Start?
- Encourage eligible families to access Free Pre-K in your state?
- Share handouts and resources about early learning and care with families?
- Discuss medication administration in child care with families?
- Discuss your states QRIS Child Care Quality Rating System with families?
- Work with child care settings to develop care plans for children with special health care needs?
- Incorporate a HIPAA/FERPA waiver into your practice to promote communication between the health and early learning setting?

**How did you do?**

**Check out Tip Sections 1 & 2 to advance your current practice!**



## SECTION 1: Make the LINK!

### Tips for: Anticipatory guidance, Discussing options and quality of child care with parents, making connections to child care resource and referral

To take action on the first three bullets start talking! **You don't have to have all the answers.** The key is to communicate the importance of high quality care and link families to resources.

Conversation starters include:

- What are your thoughts and plans around child care? What are your child care needs?
- Did you know that the quality of child care programs varies a lot?
- High quality programs can have a very positive impact on your child's development.

You can refer parents and caregivers to a local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (CCR&R). To find out your local Child Care Resource & Referral Agency call 1-800-424-2246 or visit <http://childcareaware.org/parents-and-guardians>, put in your zip to get your local CCR&R information.

### Tips for: Display posters that promote access to high quality early learning

[Check out this poster](#) – print and hang it in your office!

Your local CCR&R might have glossy posters that have local information and are glossy/larger.

### Tips for: Link families to Local Early Head Start/Head Start

Early Head Start/Head start offers a quality and very holistic approach to early development and is available to your patients who meet income eligibility and who need it the most. Head Start has a [web interface](#) that allows you to locate Head Starts and Early Head Starts by address and zip code. Plug in your community information and keep the information in the attached contact sheet so that it is accessible when you need to share with families.

Families will need to contact community programs to find out about enrollment and eligibility.

### Tips for: Encourage eligible families to access Free Pre-K in your state

Pre-K varies greatly state to state and even school district to school district. Unfortunately that means we can't provide you with one link to click on and get your local information! However, linking families to free pre-k is a valuable opportunity.

The best way to get started is to search your state Department of Education website and your local school district website for "pre kindergarten" or "PreK" to find about eligibility and the enrollment process for families.

The information that you may be able to obtain varies greatly by location. Here is an example of [Pre-K Directory](#) for NYC which is very detailed and a great resource to have in your office if you are a NYC provider. Here is an example of a [local school district flyer](#) from North Carolina that you could have a copies of in your office if you worked in Durham County.

Curious how you state compares to states across the nation on providing PreK?  
Check out: [State of PreK 2012 Resource](#)

### **Tips for: Share handouts and resources about early learning and care with families**

Like many areas of anticipatory guidance just starting the conversation and providing good information goes a long way. Here are some office friendly resources:

[\*AAP: Choosing Quality Child Care: What is Best for Your Family?\*](#)

[\*Child Care Aware: Is this the Right Place for My Child? 38 Research-Based Indicators of Quality Child Care\*](#)

State specific resources may be available through your states QRIS program.

## **SECTION 2: Moving Beyond Linking to Promoting!**

### **Tips for: Discuss how high quality early learning environments promote school readiness and lifelong health**

Here are some talking points to share with families about early learning:

- learning begins at birth
- quality early learning settings with nurturing and responsive caregivers set the foundation for school readiness and lifelong health
- evidence that shows that children in quality early learning settings experience many health benefits later in life including lower rates of smoking, drug use and improved mental health
- quality settings promote health behaviors like physical activity, good nutrition and social emotional development

Check these out as resources:

[CHILD TRENDS Five Things to Know about School Readiness](#)

[Center on the Developing Child at Harvard's Video: Foundations of Life Long Health](#)

### **Tips for: Discuss medication administration in child care with families**

Safe medication in child care is an important area for families to be able to assess and factor into their choices of care. It is highly relevant to ALL children, not only children with already identified special needs and chronic medications.

There is great variety between states requirements and oversight of medication administration in child care and great variety between individual child care settings' capacity to safely administer medication.

- Inform families about the importance of safe medication administration in child care
- Empower families to inquire about the experience and training designation of their child care setting to safely administer medications
- Sample question for parent to ask:
  - Are the caregivers trained in medication administration?
  - Are the medications labeled to make sure the right child gets the right amount of the right medication at the right time?
- When you prescribe medication to a child in care communicate clearly with child care settings about medications for each child if necessary

Check out the AAP's [Healthy Child Care America](#) site for medication administration curricula and to explore where your state's medication administration policy.

### **Tips for: Discuss with families your states QRIS: Child Care Quality Rating System**

QRIS is an acronym for a Quality Rating and Improvement System. It is implemented by states to help parents choose high quality child care for their children. The concept is to rate child care settings by stars to drive consumer demand while also providing the necessary support and guidance to assist child care providers in meeting the highest standards. Here is a [MAP](#) of the states that are implementing QRIS systems.

Contact [your state](#) to get resources on how to talk to families about the QRIS system in your state.

### **Tips for: Developing care plans for children with special health care needs & Incorporating HIPAA/FERPA waiver into your practice to promote communication between the health and early learning setting**

Children with chronic or special needs attending child care need a well developed care plan developed for their child care setting. The plan should including essential information aimed at ensuring that child care providers understand the information and needs of the child as well as receive the necessary training to support their ability to care for the child. To learn more about care plans check of the Pennsylvania AAP chapter's [FACTSHEET](#) on the basics of a care plan for children with special needs in child care.

Incorporate a HIPAA/FERPA waiver into your practice to promote communication between the health and child care setting. Check out this [sample form](#) and adapt it to your local practice needs and regulations. Families can share the form with their child care setting and include your contact information.