

Durham Region Quality Measures for Home Child Care

Developed by The Regional Municipality of Durham, Child Care and Early Years Division, 2025

Section one: Health and safety

In this section:

- Fire prevention practices
- Safety practices
- Environment and play equipment
- Educator and children's hand hygiene
- Toileting and diapering



Health and safety: Fire prevention practices

Intent: Educators ensure that their home is set up to maximize safety in a preventative manner. This includes a current fire evacuation plan that is practiced and accessible, as well as fire safety equipment that is maintained and in good working order.

Considerations: How can I change my environment to ensure fire evacuations can be successful?

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Educator does not have a fire evacuation plan** • Educator does not have a plan in the event of an emergency and/or evacuation. ❑ **No evidence that monthly fire drills are completed** • Educator is not consistently documenting fire drills each month. ❑ **Fire extinguisher(s) is accessible to children** • Children can access the fire extinguisher. ❑ **Smoke detector is not available** • Educator does not have smoke detector(s) in the home or the smoke detector(s) is not in working order. ❑ **Carbon monoxide detector is not available** • Educator does not have a carbon monoxide detector in the home or the carbon monoxide detector is not in working order.	❑ **Fire evacuation plan is accessible** • Educator can refer to the fire evacuation plan while offering care to children. ❑ **Fire extinguisher(s) is in working order** • Fire extinguisher(s) is operating in working order, e.g., it has been tagged and inspected, etc. ❑ **Fire extinguisher(s) is stored safely** • Fire extinguisher(s) is stored in an area that is not accessible to the children.	❑ **Fire evacuation plan is posted and accessible to families** • Educator has the fire evacuation plan posted in an area that is visible to families when they drop off and pick up their children from care. ❑ **Monthly fire drills are conducted at different times of the day** • Educator is documenting fire drills that are completed throughout the span of the full day, e.g., in one month the fire drill is completed in the morning and the next month it is completed in the afternoon. ❑ **Two or more fire extinguishers are located in provider's home** • Educator has a fire extinguisher on different levels of the home or in multiple areas of the home. ❑ **Evidence that the smoke detector(s) is tested monthly** • Educator has documented each month that the smoke detector(s) is in working order.

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
		❑ **Evidence that carbon monoxide detector(s) is tested monthly** • Educator documented each month that the carbon monoxide detector(s) is in working order.

Health and safety: Safety practices

Intent: Educators can set up their environment so that the children are able to explore safely through their own curiosity. This includes having access to a stocked first aid kit, covered electrical outlets and barriers to stairways as needed.

Making connections: "A safe environment that offers consistency and continuity as well as graduated support for children's growing independence and capacity for self-care enables children to tackle challenges, learn to persevere, and explore ways to cope with manageable levels of positive stress," (HDLH, pg. 30).

Considerations: How should I set up the environment so that uncovered electrical outlets are minimized?

Additional information: The Government of Canada suggests that safety gates are intended for use with children from six months through 24 months of age. (2021).

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **First aid kit is not available** • Educator does not have a first aid kit. ❑ **Safety gates are not secured** • Safety gates are not secure. Educator has safety gates that can fall or be knocked down. Educator has not placed safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs. The gates at the top of the stairs are not securely mounted, gates at the bottom of the stairs are not securely/ pressure mounted. (This sub-item may be N/A) ❑ **Electrical outlets are uncovered** • The electrical outlets located in the provider's home are uncovered and/or accessible to children.	❑ **Stocked first aid kit is accessible** • Educator has a first aid kit within the play space, that includes at least bandages and gloves. Supplies are checked and restocked as needed. ❑ **Safety gates are in good condition** • Safety gates are in a state of good repair, with working latches that are locked in place. (This sub-item may be N/A) ❑ **Safety gates are utilized in the intended manner** • Educator is opening and closing the gates to access stairs, e.g., Educator is not stepping over the gates to get past them or lifting children over the gates. (This sub-item may be N/A)	❑ **First aid kits are taken with educators when they are outdoors** • Educator takes a first aid kit when outside. This includes when going out to the backyard as well as going into the community. ❑ **Electrical outlets have child-safety covers or are tamper resistant** • Electrical outlets located in areas used by the children are all covered with child safety covers or are tamper resistant and are in good working order.

Health and safety: Environment and play equipment

Intent: Children can explore in an environment that is clean, sanitary and safe. Educators are aware of and document routine sanitary practices.

Considerations: How do I continue to reflect on the safety of the environment to support the health and well-being of the children? How do I document evidence of required cleaning? Consider tools and templates that could support this process.

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Furniture is unsafe in children's play space** • Furniture in the children's play space has broken pieces, sharp edges, and/or is unstable, etc. ❑ **Floors and/or carpets are not in good condition** • Floors and/or carpets are not in good condition. This may include broken tiles or fraying carpets. ❑ **High-touch surfaces are visibly soiled** • High-touch surfaces in the provider's home are visibly dirty. This may include items such as: railings, backs of chairs, doorknobs, light switches, etc. ❑ **Furniture is visibly soiled in children's play space** • Furniture that is in the children's play space has visible stains and/or debris.	❑ **Furniture is organized and in good repair** • Furniture is set up to support children to freely explore through their own interests. Furniture is in a state of good repair, free of holes, rips, etc. ❑ **Floors and carpets are clean** • Floors and carpets are visibly clean of dirt and debris. ❑ **Evidence that high-touch surfaces are cleaned and sanitized** • Educator includes high-touch surfaces when documenting the cleaning. ❑ **Evidence that soft surfaces and furniture in children's play space are deep-cleaned a minimum of two times per year** • Educator has documentation to show that all furniture in the children's play space has been deep cleaned at least two times each year. This could include sofas, chairs, cushions, etc. (This sub-item may be N/A)	❑ **Furniture is child sized** • Children have access to at least two pieces of furniture that is smaller than regular furniture within the play space. This supports independence and exploration, as the child can safely get on and off the furniture by themselves. ❑ **Evidence that floors and carpets are cleaned daily** • Educator includes floors and/or carpets when documenting cleaning. ❑ **Evidence that soft surfaces and furniture in children's play space are deep-cleaned a minimum of four times per year** • Educator has documentation to show that all furniture in the children's play space has been deep-cleaned at least four times each year. This could include sofa, chairs, cushions, etc. (This sub-item may be N/A)

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Children can access unsafe or dangerous material** • Children can access hazardous materials while they are engaging in play. This may include chemicals, tools, sharp objects, firearms, cleaning materials, etc. ❑ **Evidence that bed linens are washed weekly and/or when soiled are not available** • Educator does not document when linens have been cleaned. This includes if linen becomes soiled and is changed more often. ❑ **Toys and play equipment are visibly soiled** • Dirt and debris are visible on toys and play equipment.	❑ **The physical environment is adapted during rest time** • The environment is adapted during rest time, e.g., turning off lights, closing curtains, offering soft music, etc. ❑ **Extra bedding is available** • Educator has extra bedding available if bedding becomes soiled. ❑ **Evidence that toys and play equipment are cleaned as per current public health requirements** • Educator documents toy washing as per current public health requirements. Educator has a designated location for mouthed toys and play materials that is out of the children's reach.	❑ **Hazardous materials are stored separately from food and perishables** • Hazardous materials are stored in a cupboard or location separate from where food is being stored. ❑ **Evidence outdoor play equipment is washed two times per year** • Educator documents that outdoor toys/ play equipment are washed at least two times each year.

Health and safety: Educator and children's hand hygiene

Intent: Educators create a positive environment that supports hand hygiene to build the foundation for sanitary practices.

Making connections: "Educators regularly use protocols to guide them through day-to-day practices. Whether it is for hand washing, diaper changing, reporting accidents, or keeping us safe, protocols offer a systematic way to perform a task," (Think, Feel, Act: Lessons from research about young children, pg. 17).

Considerations: How am I ensuring that children are following current hand washing guidelines? Consider how children are supported to build a foundation that supports hand hygiene throughout your daily routines.

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Individuals are not able to refer to current public health hand washing procedures** • Educator does not have the current public health hand washing procedures posted in the hand washing area. ❑ **Children are only able to wash hands with wipes** • Children are repeatedly not able to use running water to wash their hands. ❑ **Supplies are not accessible to complete hand washing procedures** • Supplies are not accessible, e.g., the educator does not have enough soap, paper towels, and/or towels for children to follow current public health procedures.	❑ **All steps of current public health hand washing procedures are followed** • Educator and/or children follow all steps in the current public health hand washing procedures in proper order. ❑ **Adaptive equipment available to support children using the sink independently** • Educator offers adaptive equipment to support individual children with self-help skills, e.g., offering a step stool to a child that cannot reach the sink independently. (This sub-item may be N/A)	❑ **Educator supports the current public health hand washing procedures by using verbal prompts and/or visual aids** • Educator and/or children refer to step-by-step process for hand washing. ❑ **Children can access a sink that is available on the same floor as care is offered** • Children have access to a sink that is on the same floor as the play space. ❑ **A copy of current public health hand sanitizing procedure is posted** • Educator has the current public health hand sanitizing procedures posted. (This sub-item may be N/A)

Health and safety: Toileting and diapering

Intent: Educators are demonstrating and implementing positive sanitary practices.

Making connections: "Capitalize on opportunities for one-to-one interactions during daily routines (e.g., for infants and toddlers, diaper changing, is an ideal opportunity for making connections and building relationships)," (HDLH, pg. 26).

Considerations: How am I adapting my environment to support individual needs? How am I building on self-help skills and autonomy for children in my care?

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Food preparation area is also used for diapering** • Dedicated food prep area is also used to change diapers. (This sub-item may be N/A) ❑ **Diapering surface and/or individual change pads are soiled** • Educator is using a diapering surface that is visibly soiled. (This sub-item may be N/A) ❑ **Current toileting and/or diapering public health procedures are not posted** • Educator does not have the current public health procedures for toileting and diapering posted in the dedicated area, e.g., within the washroom or in the area that diapering is completed.	❑ **Educator has a dedicated sanitary space for diapering** • Educator has a change table, wipeable change pad, or an individual change pad for each child. (This sub-item may be N/A) ❑ **Current public health procedures for toileting and/or diapering are followed** • Educator follows all steps in the current toileting and/or diapering procedures identified by local public health.	❑ **Educator has a supply of spare diaper/ toileting materials** • Educator has extra diapers, clothing, or wipes if a child runs out of their own. ❑ **Educator uses diapering and toileting as opportunities for enhanced language learning** • Educator uses toileting and diapering routines as an opportunity to connect with the child. Conversations are relaxed and meaningful to the child.

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Diapering supplies are not accessible in the area when diapering** • All supplies that are needed during the diapering routine are not accessible, e.g., diapers, wipes, disposable bag, approved creams, extra clothes. (This sub-item may be N/A) ❑ **Children use potties that have not been disinfected between use** • Educator does not clean and disinfect the potty after every child. (This sub-item may be N/A)	❑ **Toileting and diapering process is calm and relaxed** • Educator engages in conversations as they give the children the time that they need to complete individual washroom routines. ❑ **Adaptive equipment available to make toileting accessible** • Educator can adapt the environment to support children's individual needs and abilities, e.g., a step stool for the toilet, toilet seat ring, potties. (This sub-item may be N/A)	

Section two: Program

In this section:

- Daily schedule
- Programming
- Environment
- Art and sensory
- Language and literacy
- Cognitive, manipulative and science
- Blocks and construction
- Dramatic play and music
- Screen time
- Physical play



Program: Daily schedule

Intent: Educators have created a daily routine that encourages predictability for the children. The routine outlines activities and events that will occur throughout the day. The flow of the day supports children by outlining expectations of what is coming next, which prompts self-regulation and independence.

Making connections: “Planning daily routines (the flow of the day) with limited interruptions and transitions to maintain a sense of calm and simplicity for infant and toddlers and providing ample opportunities through large blocks of time for older children to engage in sustained, complex play and inquiry,” (HDLH, pg. 37).

Considerations: How am I ensuring the families are aware of my daily schedule? What considerations are made when planning how a day looks in my home? “How does the flow of the day (e.g., daily schedule, routines, transitions) allow children to make choices?” (HDLH, pg. 39). “Would you enjoy your program more if you had more time for connecting with individual children or very small groups in play? Think about how you can change your daily schedule to do so." (Think, Feel, Act: Lessons from research about young children, pg. 9).

Additional information:

Individual infant daily schedule: A child-specific schedule created in partnership with the family to meet the individual needs of the child, e.g., sleep routines, eating routines, toileting and diapering, preferences, comfort strategies.

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Daily schedule is not available** • Educator does not have a schedule in place for the full day-to-day operations of the program. ❑ **Educator is not able to reference individual infant daily schedule** • Educator does not have an individual infant daily schedule available for children 18 months and younger. (This sub-item may be N/A)	❑ **Daily schedule is available** • Educator has created a daily schedule that includes opportunities for the following: ▪ Balance between child exploration and educator-guided experiences. ▪ Outdoor experiences. ▪ Transitions and routines. ▪ Adaptations for non-instructional days. ❑ **Educator can adapt daily schedule** • Daily schedule is meeting the individual needs and cues of the children currently in care, e.g., younger infants can sleep when they are tired, eat when they are hungry, etc.	❑ **Daily schedule is offered as a visual schedule accessible to children** • Educator has created a visual schedule that includes the main routines of the day and is accessible to the children. Children can refer to the visual schedule as they transition through their day. ❑ **Daily schedule is accessible to families** • Educator has the daily schedule located in an area that is accessible to the families so that they are aware of the opportunities that are offered to their child.

Program: Programming

Intent: Children have access to a variety of developmentally appropriate play materials and learning experiences to engage with in a meaningful way. Documentation of programming is accessible to the families, to support sharing of information and communication of what is happening during the day. Learning experiences are offered in different learning areas throughout the week to spark curiosity and interests. Educators share observations with the families to promote engagement and relationship-building. Educators use early years pedagogy to guide their learning through relationships with children and families.

Making connections: Programs “provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration, play and inquiry," (HDLH, pg. 35).

Considerations: How is my program focused on active learning through exploration, play and inquiry? Are the children able to initiate their own experiences? How is my view of the children reflected in the program plan?

Additional information:

Learning experiences: A description of activities, both planned and spontaneous, that children have or will be engaging in throughout the day. Learning areas could include art, sensory, science, music, blocks, language and literacy, dramatic play, cognitive and manipulative.

Observations: May be documented in a variety of formats that can include photos with a written description, audio recordings, notes, children’s own work.

Pedagogy: “The understanding of how learning takes place and the philosophy and practice that support that understanding of learning” (Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT), pg. 90).

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Weekly programming is not available** • Educator does not have documentation of the learning experiences and activities that are offered throughout the week. ❑ **Less than two learning experiences are documented daily** • Educator has documented less than two learning experiences offered to the children each day. ❑ **Less than two learning areas are documented weekly** • Educator has documented less than two different learning areas each week. This does not include physical play experiences. ❑ **Learning experiences are not adapted to ensure all children can participate** • Educator does not adapt opportunities to support individual needs and interests of all children, e.g., offering a variety of sizes of drawing tools to meet individual developmental needs.	❑ **Two or more learning experiences are documented daily** • Educator has documented two or more learning experiences offered to the children each day. Emergent programs would be documented by the end of each day. This is in addition to physical play experiences that are documented. ❑ **Four or more learning areas are documented weekly** • Over the course of the week, documentation of programming includes at least four different learning areas. This does not include physical play experiences. ❑ **Language and literacy experiences are documented weekly** • Educator has documented one or more language and literacy learning experiences offered to the children each week.	❑ **Programming is accessible to families** • Documentation of programming is in an area that can be seen by the families. This may be digital or as a hard copy. ❑ **Three or more learning experiences are documented daily** • Educator has documented three or more learning experiences offered to the children each day. This is in addition to physical play experiences that are documented. ❑ **Five or more learning areas are documented weekly** • Over the course of the week, documentation of programming includes at least five different learning areas. This does not include physical play experiences. ❑ **Educator has access to current pedagogical resources** • Educator has access to resources such as Pedagogical Inquiry; Think, Feel, Act; How Does Learning Happen? An Introduction to How Does Learning Happen? For Home Child Care Educators.

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Observations are not documented for each child monthly** • Educator has not documented at least one observation for each child each month.	❑ **Children's interests are incorporated into learning experiences** • Educator offers planned and spontaneous experiences based on emerging interests and cues. ❑ **Observations are documented weekly for each child** • Educator has a dated written observation for each child in care every week.	

Program: Environment



Intent: Children see themselves reflected in the environment where they play. Play environment is organized and inclusive. Children feel a sense of belonging and can explore safely.



Making connections: “As children play with familiar objects that give them a sense of belonging, as well as unfamiliar objects that represent different lifestyles, they learn that all children and families make music, dress, eat and spend time in activities. This awareness can lead to developing a true respect for cultural diversity.” (Kirmani, 2007, pg. 97).



Considerations: How do I incorporate diversity and inclusion within my environment in a meaningful manner? Consider the environment and experiences that are provided for the children, what draws them in?

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Displays do not reflect more than one family structure** • Displays only reflect one type of family structure. ❑ **Toys and play materials are disorganized** • Similar toys and play materials are scattered, placed in random bins, no sense of order. ❑ **Storage for rotational toys and play materials is not available** • Educator does not have storage for additional toys and play materials. ❑ **Physical environment does not include defined learning areas** • Toys and play materials are randomly placed within the play space. ❑ **Toys and play materials do not reflect varying abilities** • Less than two types of toys and play materials reflect varying abilities. ❑ **Toys and play materials do not reflect cultural diversity** • Less than two types of toys and play materials reflect cultural diversity (e.g. dolls with a variety of skin tones, pretend play foods, etc.).	❑ **Displays reflect two or more varying abilities** • Displays include at least two different types of varying abilities. ❑ **Toys and play materials are developmentally appropriate** • Children can safely explore toys and materials through their own curiosity that align with their individual abilities. ❑ **Safe storage available for toys and play materials** • Educator has space to safely store rotational toys and play materials that is organized and easy to access. ❑ **Two or more defined learning areas are accessible to support children's exploration and natural curiosity** • Toys and play equipment have been divided into at least two defined learning areas, e.g., cognitive materials in one area, and dramatic play props and play materials in another area. ❑ **Two or more types of play materials reflect varying abilities** • Two or more types of play materials that reflect varying abilities are accessible. Types include books, puzzles, people, dolls with disabilities, accessories that support varying abilities, etc. Each of the two types needs at least two play materials in that category, for example: two books and two puzzles.	❑ **Educator has current community resources accessible to the families** • Educator has current resources to help families build awareness of events and activities within their own communities, e.g., pamphlets, website links or contact information, etc. ❑ **Toys and play materials are set up in an inviting manner to support the children's exploration and curiosity** • Educator sets up intentional invitations to play with toys and play materials. Children are encouraged to explore and investigate the invitations, e.g., placing the farmhouse on the floor and surrounding it with animals and a farmer. ❑ **Individual storage space for children's personal belongings** • Educator promotes a sense of belonging by having a designated space for each child to leave their personal items. ❑ **Three or more defined learning areas are accessible to support children's exploration and curiosity** • Toys and play equipment have been divided into at least three defined learning areas, e.g., a book area, an art and sensory area and a science table.

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
	❑ **Two or more types of play materials reflect cultural diversity** • Two or more types of play materials that reflect cultural diversity are accessible. Types include books, puzzles, people, dolls, instruments, etc. Each of the two types needs at least two play materials in that category, for example: two dolls and two musical instruments - a maraca and a pan flute.	❑ **Three or more types of play materials reflect varying abilities** • Three or more types of play materials that reflect varying abilities are accessible. Types include books, puzzles, people, dolls with disabilities, accessories that support varying abilities. Each of the three types needs at least two play materials in that category, for example: two books, two puzzles, and two dramatic play props – a cane and a pair of glasses. ❑ **Three or more types of play materials reflect cultural diversity** • Three or more types of play materials that reflect cultural diversity are accessible. Types include books, puzzles, people, dolls, instruments, etc. Each of the three types needs at least two play materials in that category, for example: two dolls, two musical instruments – a maraca and a pan flute, and two people.

Program: Art and sensory

Intent: Children can express themselves through their own curiosity and interests using art materials accessible in the play environment. Art materials are inclusive, open-ended and accessible for the children to explore. Children can see their creativity and expression reflected within the environment.

Making connections: Educators offer “a wide variety of interesting objects and open-ended materials for children to explore with their senses, manipulate and investigate,” (HDLH, pg. 37). “Encouraging the creative expression of ideas, feelings, and interpretations using a variety of materials also helps solidify children’s learning, enhances their creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and strengthens their memory and sense of identity," (Ministry of Education, 2011, pg. 42).

Considerations: How am I supporting individual children to express themselves creatively? How am I ensuring that materials are being replenished and kept in good condition? How am I supporting an inclusive environment and fostering the expression of individual children by displaying their current artwork?

Additional information:

Open-ended: Children can explore with no desired outcome of materials used.

Process-oriented: Children can create through their own imagination and creativity with no expected product; the focus is on the process of the activity.

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Less than three types of art materials are available** • There are less than three types of art materials available in the play space for art experiences. ❑ **Art materials do not reflect diverse skin tones** • Art materials do not include diverse skin tones, e.g., pencil crayons, markers, crayons, paper, paint, plasticine, etc. ❑ **Art and sensory materials are in poor condition** • Art and sensory materials that are being used are not in good condition, e.g., containers are cracked or broken, paint is dried up, markers are not working, etc.	❑ **Two or more open-ended art materials are accessible** • Children can access at least two or more open-ended art materials, e.g., collage materials, fabrics, safe recycled containers, buttons, loose parts, modelling materials, etc. ❑ **Two or more art mediums are accessible** • Children can access at least two or more art mediums within the dedicated play space, e.g., paint, crayons, glue, markers, pastels, chalk, etc. ❑ **Two or more types of art materials that reflect diverse skin tones are accessible** • Educator has at least two or more types of art materials that have at least three or more skin tones each and are accessible, e.g., pencil crayons, markers, crayons, paper, paint, pipe cleaners, pom poms, etc.	❑ **Three or more open-ended art materials are accessible** • Children can access at least three or more open-ended art materials, e.g., collage materials, fabrics, safe recycled containers, buttons, loose parts, modelling materials, etc. ❑ **Three or more art mediums are accessible** • Children can access at least three or more art mediums within the dedicated play space, e.g., paint, crayons, glue, markers, pastels, chalk, etc. ❑ **Three or more types of diverse skin tone materials are accessible** • Educator has at least three or more types of art materials that have at least three or more skin tones each and are accessible. ❑ **One or more art experiences are documented weekly** • Educator has documented one or more art learning experiences offered to the children each week.

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Environment does not include children's artwork** • Educator has not displayed any of the children's artwork. ❑ **Toxic art and sensory materials are accessible to children** • Children have access to toxic materials, e.g., items that are labelled "Keep out of reach of children." This may include some bingo dabbers.	❑ **Art materials are developmentally appropriate** • Children can safely explore art materials through their own curiosity, based on their developmental level. ❑ **Educator has displayed at least 50 percent of process-oriented artwork** • Displays in the designated play space include at least 50 percent of artwork that is unique and individual to the creativity and exploration of each child through their own outcomes and interpretations. ❑ **Two or more sensory materials are accessible** • Children can safely explore at least two or more sensory materials, e.g., shaker bottles, scented jars, textured materials, variety of bells, etc.	❑ **The environment includes at least three pieces of artwork** • Art displays in the designated play space include artwork from within the last two months. ❑ **One or more sensory experiences are documented weekly** • Educator has documented one or more sensory learning experiences offered to the children each week.

Program: Language and literacy

Intent: Children have access to a variety of developmentally appropriate books that include cultural diversity and varying abilities. Literacy toys and play materials are accessible for children to incorporate language opportunities in play.

Making connections: “Ensuring that the spaces and experiences provided promote play and inquiry that will help children discover and develop an increasing awareness and understanding of key concepts, including those associated with literacy and numeracy development,” (HDLH pg. 38). "Programs can best support emerging literacy skills by providing open-ended materials that foster imagination and symbolic play, including signs, symbols, and props that support print awareness in authentic contexts; by encouraging children to engage in play with words and sounds in song and rhyme; and by offering numerous opportunities for children to share books and stories," (HDLH, pg. 42).

Considerations: “Considering that children have '100 languages,' how many ways are there for children to express themselves in my program?" (HDLH, pg. 45). How am I choosing the books and literacy materials accessible to the children?

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Less than two books per child are accessible** • Less than two books per child enrolled are accessible to explore through their own curiosity. ❑ **Language and literacy experiences are not offered** • Educator does not offer opportunities for children to engage in language and literacy experiences. ❑ **Less than two books that reflect cultural diversity are accessible** • Books accessible to the children do not reflect cultural diversity. Consider including meaningful representation of children and families that are currently in care. ❑ **Less than two books that reflect varying abilities are accessible** • Children are not able to explore at least two books that reflect varying abilities.	❑ **Children can explore at least one literacy toy or play material through their own curiosity** • Children can access at least one literacy toy or play material through their own exploration. This would include any toy that has written letters, words or numbers, e.g., a cash register, blocks with letters, or puzzles with words identifying the pictures, etc. ❑ **Books meet the individual needs of children in care** • Educator has a range of topics and levels of books offered to children, e.g., picture books for infants and chapter books for school-age children, etc. ❑ **Three or more books that reflect cultural diversity are accessible** • Children can explore at least three books that reflect cultural diversity. Consider including meaningful representation of children/families that are currently in care. ❑ **Three or more books that reflect varying abilities are accessible** • Children can explore at least three books that reflect varying abilities.	❑ **Children can explore two or more literacy toys or play materials through their own curiosity** • Children can access at least two literacy toys or play materials through their own exploration. This would include any toy that has written letters, words or numbers, e.g., a cash register, blocks with letters, or puzzles with words identifying the pictures, etc. ❑ **One or more language and literacy experiences are documented daily** • Educator has documented language and literacy learning experiences offered to the children each day.

Program: Cognitive, manipulative and science

Intent: Children explore toys and play materials that are open-ended. Science and nature materials are accessible for children to investigate and to open opportunities to question and test theories.

Making connections: “Children are a laboratory for the senses with each sense activating other senses. As a result, the child’s environment cannot be seen just as a context for learning or a passive setting for activities; it is an integral part of learning and helps define their identity,” (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 2021, pg. 319).

Considerations: What types of natural materials are safe for the age of children in my care? How am I creating opportunities throughout daily experiences that enable children to explore, wonder about, care for and make connections to the natural environment?

Additional information:

Open-ended: Children can explore with no desired outcome of materials used.

Natural items: Consider how natural items are offered to children safely, e.g., seashells and bird’s nests offered in a clear container for infants to explore.

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Play materials are in poor or damaged condition** • Children have access to toys and play materials that are broken, missing pieces, etc. ❑ **Cognitive and manipulative toys and play materials do not meet the individual needs of children** • Play materials are not developmentally appropriate for the children currently in care. ❑ **Science and nature materials are not available** • Educator does not have science and nature materials for the children to explore.	❑ **Two cognitive and manipulative toys and play materials are accessible per child** • There are at least two cognitive and manipulative toys and play materials for each child in care, e.g., sorting, stacking, cause and effect, puzzles, etc. ❑ **One or more science and nature material(s) is accessible** • Children can explore at least one science and nature material through their own curiosity, e.g., seashells, rocks, pine cones, bird nests, etc.	❑ **One or more cognitive and manipulative experiences are documented daily** • Educator has documented one or more cognitive and manipulative learning experiences offered to the children each day. ❑ **One or more science and nature experiences are documented weekly** • Educator has documented one or more science and nature learning experience each week. ❑ **Children have access to open-ended toys and play materials** • Toys and play materials encourage children to engage through their own creativity and imagination e.g., loose parts.

Program: Blocks and construction



Intent: Children can construct through their own imagination using a variety of building and construction materials and accessories.



Making connections: "Through play and inquiry, young children practice ways of learning and interacting with the world around them that they will apply throughout their lives. Problem solving and critical thinking, communication and collaboration, creativity and imagination, initiative and citizenship are all capacities vital for success throughout school and beyond," (HDLH, pg. 15). “Continuously questioning and testing their own theories and strategies and seeking new ideas to facilitate children’s exploration and understanding of the world around them in meaningful ways,” (HDLH, p. 38).



Considerations: What are some open-ended materials that could support children as they explore and investigate the block area? How am I considering invitations to play with the props and play materials?

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Block and construction materials are not available** • Toys and play materials do not include block and construction materials. ❑ **Block accessories are not available** • Toys and play materials do not include block accessories that can be used while constructing with blocks, e.g., adding animals to a zoo that children are building.	❑ **Two or more types of block and construction materials are accessible** • Children can access at least two or more types of block and construction materials, e.g., plastic and wooden blocks, etc. ❑ **Two or more types of block accessories are accessible** • Children have a choice of at least two types of block accessories, e.g., animals, dinosaurs, cars, people, etc.	❑ **Additional block and construction materials and accessories are available** • Educator has other block and accessories that can be added to the play space to support emerging interests and cues. ❑ **Children can continue to work on projects later** • Children can keep creations to come back to and continue with later.

Program: Dramatic play and music

Intent: Through social play and exploring music, children learn to communicate and engage with the world around them. Diverse materials allow children to develop cultural awareness. Materials are varied and/or open-ended to encourage children's emerging independence and autonomy. Props and play materials support children so that they can freely express themselves as they engage in creative and imaginative play.

Making connections: "When children manipulate materials, explore music and movement, create symbols (e.g., mark-making), and engage in imaginative expression (e.g., visual art) and dramatic play, they are communicating," (HDLH, pg.42.).

Considerations: When you consider the instruments that are accessible to the children in your program, what made you decide to use those ones? When adding props and play materials to the dramatic area, how are you ensuring that they are interesting and open-ended? How are you supporting an inclusive experience for the children to explore through imagination and creative thinking?

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Dramatic play materials are not available** • Educator does not have play materials that encourage pretend play experiences. ❑ **Radio and/or live streaming is playing while children are in care** • Children are exposed to live streaming or the radio while in care. Content is not age-appropriate and includes advertisements.	❑ **Two or more types of dramatic play materials are accessible** • Children can access at least two types of pretend play materials to support imaginative play, e.g., dress-up clothes, dolls, play food, dishes, fabrics, etc. ❑ **Dramatic play materials include two or more items that reflect cultural diversity** • Children can engage in imaginative play using two or more pretend play materials that reflect diversity. This can include dolls, clothing, food, fabric, dishes, etc. ❑ **Developmentally appropriate culturally diverse music is available** • Educator offers culturally diverse music.	❑ **Three or more types of dramatic play materials are accessible** • Children can access at least three types of pretend play materials to support imaginative play, e.g., dress up clothes, dolls, play food, dishes, fabrics, etc. ❑ **Two or more musical props and play materials are accessible** • Children can express themselves with at least two musical props and play materials that are accessible and from diverse music genres (e.g., homemade musical instruments, streamers, maracas, etc.).

Program: Screen time

Intent: Children can safely engage in opportunities that include screens. Alternative activities are accessible for the children if they choose not to engage in screen time. Educators are aware of parental controls with different platforms and can enable them as needed. Screen time is encouraged to be used to extend and enhance learning.

Considerations: How is offering screen time bringing quality to my program? How am I supporting individual interests of the children with alternative activities? What considerations have I included?

Additional information: Screen time includes television, computers, tablets and hand-held devices. Reference Government of Canada's Healthy Living Guidelines on screen time

Parental controls: ability to control and disable content accessible to children.

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Screen content is not developmentally appropriate** • Children have access to content that is not developmentally appropriate, e.g., local news channel is playing or children can access websites, links or games that are rated not for children. ❑ **Social media platforms are in use that do not offer parental control settings** • Children are independently able to access inappropriate content. (This sub-item may be N/A) ❑ **Educator does not supervise screen time** • Educator is unaware of the content that children are watching or listening to.	❑ **Alternate activity is provided** • Children can engage in an alternate experience while screen time is offered. ❑ **Educator has enabled parental controls on social media platforms accessed within the home** • Educator is aware of and is using parental control settings for social media platforms and internet use within the home. (This sub-item may be N/A) ❑ **Educator has documented screen time content and time spent accessing/viewing electronic devices in an area accessible to families** • Educator documents the content children are viewing through electronic devices. (This sub-item may be N/A)	❑ **Two or more alternate activities are provided** • Children have a choice to engage in two or more alternate experiences while screen time is offered. ❑ **Daily screen time is less than one hour per day** • Children are engaging in screen time for less than 60 minutes each day.

Program: Physical play



Intent: Toys and equipment are accessible for children to explore and adapt within their play. In the event of inclement weather, physical play experiences are offered indoors.



Making connections: “In addition to providing physical benefits, active play outdoors strengthens functioning in cognitive areas such as perception, attention, creative problem-solving, and complex thinking.” (HDLH, p. 29).



Considerations: How am I balancing my supervision with engagement? How am I supporting the current cues and interests of the children with materials and activities outside? How could I adapt an activity to spark interest and engagement? In the event of inclement weather, consider how you may provide indoor physical play experiences?



Additional information: Outdoor physical play programming is in addition to daily expectations for programming.

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Less than two physical play materials and toys available** • Educator does not have physical play materials, e.g., push toys, riding toys, balls, frisbees, etc. ❑ **Physical play experiences are not offered** • Educator does not include time throughout the day for children to engage in physical play.	❑ **Developmentally appropriate physical play experiences are documented daily** • Educator has planned and/or documented physical play experiences each day that meet the abilities of the children in care. ❑ **Evidence that outdoor safety checks are completed and documented daily** • Educator documents daily that outdoor safety checks are completed before children use the physical space. ❑ **Educator engages with children during indoor and/or outdoor physical play** • Educator can balance supervision and engagement with the children.	❑ **Children have a choice of at least three types of physical play materials and toys** • Children have a choice of at least three different types of physical play materials, e.g., balls, balancing toys, tunnels, slides, etc. ❑ **Two physical play experiences are documented daily** • Educator has documented two or more physical play learning experiences each day.

Section three: Interactions

In this section:

- Positive
- Supervision
- Children's cues and guidance
- Meals and snacks



Interactions: Positive

Intent: Children feel supported by their educators as they build positive relationships. Educators support a sense of belonging with all children and their families by demonstrating patience, identifying emotions and are welcoming.

Making connections: Educators "cultivate authentic, caring relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults, and the world around them," (HDLH, pg. 24).

Considerations: How am I recognizing children's emotions throughout the day? How am I incorporating a sense of belonging for each child in my home?

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Educator uses disrespectful language and words with children** • Educator uses mocking or unkind words that would be considered humiliating or degrading. These could include body language, gestures, facial expressions, etc. ❑ **Educator is observed to be impatient** • Educator does not demonstrate patience when interacting with an individual on more than two occasions. ❑ **Educator uses terms of endearment in place of their chosen name** • Educator uses other names in place of child's chosen/given name. Using a child's name supports a sense of belonging and individuality. Terms of endearment may include “honey,” “sweetie,” “darling,” etc.	❑ **Educator maintains a calm and pleasant tone of voice** • Educator maintains a warm, kind tone of voice when interacting with any individual in the environment, including children, parents/caregivers, and visitors. ❑ **Educator is welcoming, friendly and accepting of all children and families** • Educator engages with all individuals in a welcoming, friendly and accepting manner, which fosters a sense of belonging. ❑ **Educator acknowledges and supports children with their emotions** • Educator connects with children and discusses their emotions, e.g., recognizing excitement when a child is cheering and jumping up and down about an art experience being offered.	❑ **Educator recognizes children’s accomplishments** • Educator communicates specific examples of achievements to the children. ❑ **Educator acknowledges and supports children with identifying their emotions and the emotions of others** • Educator has conversations with the children about how they and/or others may be feeling, eg., a child is disappointed because their turn was not next, etc. ❑ **Educator incorporates resources/materials to support children's emotions** • Educator supports children with identifying their emotions and offers toys and play materials to help self-regulate, e.g., flash cards, images, picture stones, emotion wheel, stress balls, etc.

Interactions: Supervision



Intent: Educator is always aware of where children are in care at all times. The environment is used as a third teacher and is set up to inspire exploration and curiosity safely. Educators accurately document children in care daily.



Making connections: Educators are “participating with children as a co-investigator, co-learner, and co-planner,” (HDLH, pg. 38).



Considerations: How could I adapt my environment to support safe supervision and minimize barriers? How can I maintain a balance of supervision and connections with the children throughout my day?

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Educator cannot locate all children** • Educator is unaware of children's location, e.g., hiding in another room, etc. ❑ **Educator does not position themselves to engage at children's level** • Educator repeatedly connects with children from a distance and does not facilitate face-to-face interactions and/ or engage with children at their level (e.g., directing a child from across the room, standing rather than sitting with children while they engaged in play, etc.). ❑ **Daily attendance is completed in pencil** • Educator does not complete the daily attendance in permanent ink.	❑ **Educator visually supervises all children** • Educator positions themselves to ensure safe supervision of all children. ❑ **Educator engages in play to support development, balancing supervision with connections** • Educator participates in the children's play experiences as a co-learner to support and enhance development, balancing their focus between supervision of the environment and small group/individual interactions. ❑ **Attendance accurately reflects current children in care** • Educator accurately records the time of arrival and departure for each child.	❑ **Educator positions themselves in various areas of the program space** • Educator moves throughout the program space to respond and support experiences that are initiated by the children, while maintaining safe supervision. This may include asking open-ended questions, encouraging play materials being moved from one area to another, etc. ❑ **Educator positions themselves to consistently maintain sight lines** • Educator positions themselves in areas where they can see all children at all times (e.g., positioning in a central point in the space or moving around to maintain a clear view of different play areas).

Interactions: Children's cues and guidance

Intent: The educator recognizes the cues and interests of the children and incorporates that curiosity into their program.

Making connections: When educators, "take a purposeful curious approach to new experiences and ideas rather than acting as the expert, children are more likely to engage in creative problem-solving and more complex play and inquiry," (HDLH, pg. 35).

Considerations: "What barriers exist that may limit some children's ability to engage in active exploration, play and inquiry? What adaptations and changes might be made to ensure the inclusion and participation of every child?" (HDLH, pg. 39).

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Learning experiences are limited and structured** • Learning experiences do not allow for children's individual choice, creativity or exploration. ❑ **Educator does not follow through with positive guidance strategies** • Educator responds to conflicts with punishment or threats. ❑ **Educator focuses on correcting and directing behaviours** • Educator focuses more attention on correcting and directing behaviour rather than connecting with children and fostering strong relationships. ❑ **Educator repeatedly does not allow time for completion of self-help skills** • The children are repeatedly rushed during opportunities to engage in self-help, e.g., children are not given enough time to complete getting ready to go outside.	❑ **Children are offered opportunities to make choices** • Educator offers opportunities for children to make choices throughout the day to foster a sense of autonomy, competence and critical thinking skills. ❑ **Educator supports all children to resolve issues/conflicts in a positive manner** • To support a sense of belonging, the educator connects with all children involved in the situation, e.g., the educator encourages children to share their own ideas and listen to their peers. ❑ **Educator supports children to communicate their needs and wants** • Children are supported during conflict on how to communicate their feelings and what they would like or need, e.g., "I don't like it when you take my toy." ❑ **Educator uses clear and simple language** • Educator uses simple language that is developmentally appropriate for the individual children.	❑ **Educator adapts and/or extends learning experiences to respond to children's cues and interests** • Educator observes the children's cues and interests and offers opportunities to adapt and/or extend learning experiences, e.g., borrowing library books on bridges to support the children to expand their block constructions or educator offers zoo animals after a child has visited the zoo over the weekend, etc. ❑ **Educator role-models problem-solving strategies** • Educator engages in conversations with the children on how they can come up with a solution to a current situation. ❑ **Educator adjusts expectations based on the individual needs of the children** • Educator adjusts the behaviour expectations to meet the child's developmental level, e.g., offering opportunities for parallel play and turn-taking with a singular item. ❑ **Educator creates opportunities to practice self-help skills throughout the day** • Educator incorporates daily opportunities for the children to practice and experiment with self-help skills.

Interactions: Meals and snacks

Intent: Educator uses meal and snack times to engage and extend language and learning with the children, as well as develop relationships and self-help skills for individual children.

Making connections: “There is a variety of ways in which early years programs can have a positive influence on child health and well-being such as providing nutritious food and beverages that incorporate family and cultural preferences and creating positive eating environments with foods and portion sizes that are responsive to children’s cues of hunger and fullness,” (HDLH, pg. 29).

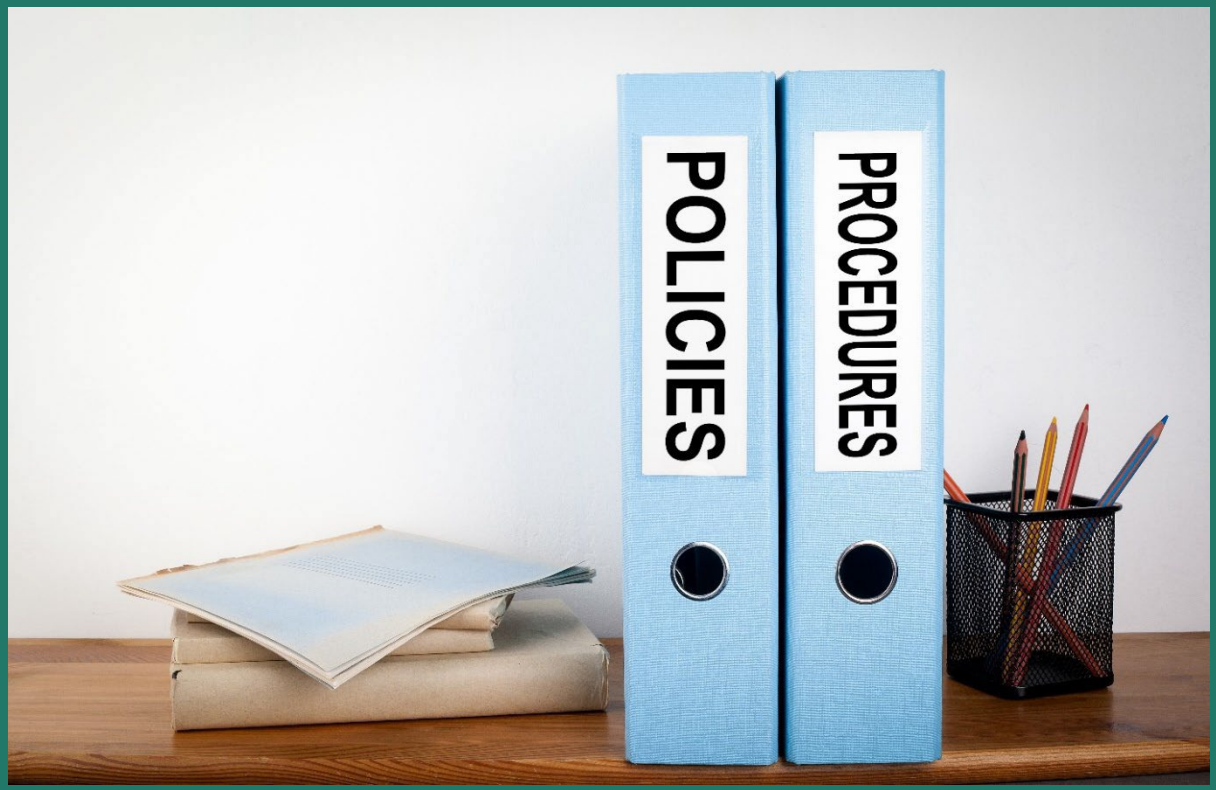
Considerations: How am I supporting individual children with building upon their self-help skills? How does the routine and set up of the meals and snacks build on the children’s self-help skills, e.g., child-sized tongs, small pouring jugs etc.? How am I connecting with individual children during meal and snack times, e.g., talking about the activities that morning or describing the food?

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Educator does not engage with the children during the meal and/or snack times** • Educator does not engage in conversation or interactions during the meal and/or snack time other than to give direction. ❑ **Meal and/or snack time is rushed** • Educator does not provide time for children to enjoy a relaxing meal.	❑ **Educator sits and connects with the children at meal/snack times** • Educator sits with the children during meal and/or snack time to support socialization. ❑ **During meals and snacks, the educator encourages children to develop self-help skills** • Educator offers opportunities for children to build on their individual abilities, e.g., giving a child who is learning to self-feed their own spoon while still helping to feed them with another spoon.	❑ **Meal and snack routines meet individual needs of children** • Educator follows individual needs of children. This may include flexible times for offering food, such as offering a snack sooner for a child who is hungry. ❑ **Meal and snack area is set up to support interactions** • The furnishings during meals/snacks are positioned to allow the children to face each other, which supports social interaction and connection.

Section four: Administration

In this section:

- Policies and procedures



Administration: Policies and procedures

Intent: Educator, families and visitors are aware of the agency values, beliefs and practices that will guide the educator with the day-to-day operations in a meaningful way. In the event of an emergency, the educator is aware of the steps and procedures.

Making connections: Educators "take responsibility for their own learning and make decisions about ways to integrate knowledge from theory, research, their own experience, and their understanding of the individual children and families they work with," (HDLH, pg. 7).

Considerations: How am I nurturing individual children's healthy development and well-being? How is the program statement reflected in my program? What considerations are in place to determine what professional development I will participate in each year?

Additional information:

Individual Support Plan (ISP): Identifies strategies for a child and is developed in collaboration with the family, educator and support services.

Food restrictions: This includes both parent requests/preferences and medical/allergies, e.g., vegetarian, halal, gluten-free/dairy-free, peanut allergy. This sub-item may be non-applicable (N/A) if there are no children currently in care with dietary restrictions and/or food allergies.

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Program statement is not available** • Educator does not have either an electronic or hard copy of the program statement for reference. ❑ **Agency policies are not available** • Educator is not able to refer to agency policies within dedicated operating space. ❑ **Allergies and/or food restrictions of children are not available** • Educator does not have documentation of children's allergies and/or food restrictions available. (This sub-item may be N/A) ❑ **Educator is unaware of special needs resourcing supports available** • Educator has no knowledge of how to access special needs resourcing that could support children in care. ❑ **Educator does not have access to Individual Support Plan (ISP) forms** • Educator does not have access to either an electronic or hard copy of an ISP form for a child needing extra support.	❑ **Program statement is accessible** • Educator can review an electronic or hard copy of the program statement while in the dedicated operating space. ❑ **Educator has copies of agency policies accessible within the operating space that include:** • Parent Handbook • Accident Reporting • Serious Occurrence • Medication • Duty to Report • Anaphylactic • Expulsion • Individual Support Plans • Safety Plans Educator has access to policies and can refer to them as needed, e.g., to report a suspected case of child abuse. ❑ **A list of allergies and/or food restrictions is in the food prep area** • Educator has a list of all children's food allergies and/or food restrictions available in the area where food preparation occurs. (This sub-item may be N/A)	❑ **Program statement is posted and accessible to families** • Families can see the program statement while they are dropping off or picking up their child from care. ❑ **Evidence that agency policies are reviewed annually and signed off** • Educator has documentation that agency policies have been signed off each year. ❑ **Allergies and/or food restrictions are posted and accessible to families** • Educator has posted the allergies and/or food restrictions that are currently in the home in an area that is visible to families when they drop off and pick up children from care. (This sub-item may be N/A) ❑ **Evidence that educator has completed professional learning to support children with varying abilities** • Educator has completed professional learning that focuses on how to support children with varying abilities. This is updated at least every two years.

Developing	Demonstrating	Leading
❑ **Educator has not completed professional learning opportunities** • Educator has not completed professional learning within the past year.	❑ **Educator knows the process to access special needs resourcing supports** • Educator is aware of the steps to initiate access to support for an individual child within the home. ❑ **Educator has completed one professional learning opportunity** • Educator has completed one professional learning opportunity. This may include attending a workshop or training, webinar, podcast, research, article review, ongoing education, etc.	❑ **Evidence that educator has completed professional learning to support understanding of reporting procedures** • Educator has completed professional learning that focuses on reporting procedures, e.g., serious occurrence reporting or Duty to Report. This is updated at least every two years ❑ **Evidence that educator has completed 10 or more hours of professional learning opportunities within the past year** • Educator has completed a minimum of 10 hours within the past year of professional learning. This may include attending workshops or trainings, webinars, podcasts, research, article reviews, ongoing education, etc.