

10A NCAC 09 .3221 CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (CQI) STANDARDS

(a) This rule shall apply to child care facilities that have earned a two through five star rated license using the program assessment licensure pathway or the classroom and instructional quality licensure pathway in Rules .3203, .3204, .3205 and .3206 of this Section. Child care facilities that have earned a two through five star rated license using the accreditation and Head Start licensure pathway in Rule .3207 of this Section shall comply with standards set forth by those organizations for continuous quality improvement.

(b) Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) means a process that individuals and facilities shall use to identify areas of growth and determine a path toward enhanced teaching, learning and practices to achieve better outcomes for children, staff, and programs. The CQI process builds over time, using established goals to support individuals and facilities in achieving and sustaining continual improvements.

(c) All administrators and other staff members with caregiving responsibilities on a routine schedule of at least once per week shall complete an individual continuous quality improvement plan. This shall also apply to operators of centers located in a residence, as described in Rule .0102 of this Chapter, and their employed staff members. Each individual continuous quality improvement plan shall be reviewed annually, accompany the professional development plan required in Rule .1104 of this Chapter, be maintained in the individual's personnel file, and include:

- (1) Identification of the resources or supports needed by the individual to achieve the established goal(s) of the professional development plan, including but not limited to, the time estimated to achieve the goal and specific support needed from the operator to complete the goal;
- (2) Documentation of the individual's efforts toward completion of the established goal(s), changes to the established goal and challenges experienced;
- (3) Development of a new goal during the annual review if established goal is achieved or changed; and
- (4) Documentation from the individual regarding how their progress or completion of a goal has enhanced their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

(d) A child care center's administrator shall also complete a continuous quality improvement plan that addresses programmatic goals. The programmatic continuous quality improvement plan shall be updated annually, maintained on file at the center, and include:

- (1) Identification of at least one programmatic goal, the timeframe estimated to achieve the goal and the steps that will be taken by the center administrator to complete the goal;
- (2) Documentation of the reason or source of need for each goal, such as sustaining programmatic achievements, feedback received from staff or families, or licensure pathway requirements;
- (3) Identification of resources needed by the center administrator to achieve the programmatic goal, including but not limited to materials, technical assistance, participation of staff, or other items specific to the goal;
- (4) Documentation of supports offered by the program to encourage longevity and retention of staff;
- (5) Documentation of efforts toward completion of the established goal, changes to the established goal and challenges experienced; and
- (6) Development of a new goal during the annual review if established goal is achieved or changed.

(e) The operator of a family child care home and any additional caregivers, as set forth in Rule .1729 of this Chapter, shall complete a continuous quality improvement plan that addresses professional goals. The continuous quality improvement plan shall be updated annually, accompany the professional development plan required in Rule .1703(f) of this Chapter, be maintained in the operators personnel file, and include:

- (1) Identification of at least one professional goal, the timeframe estimated to achieve the goal, the resources needed to achieve the goal, and the steps that will be taken by the operator to complete the goal;
- (2) Documentation of the reason or source of need for the goal, such as sustaining programmatic achievements, feedback received from families, or licensure pathway requirements;
- (3) Documentation of efforts toward completion of the established goal, changes to the established goal and challenges experienced;
- (4) Development of a new goal during the annual review if the established goal is achieved or changed; and
- (5) Documentation from the operator regarding how progress toward or completion of a goal has enhanced their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

(f) Sample continuous quality improvement plan templates may be found on the Division's website at <https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Provider/Provider-Documents-and-Forms>. Another form may be used other than the sample template provided by the Division as long as the form includes the information set forth in this Rule.

History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85(3); 11088(7); 110-90(4); 143B-168.3; S.L. 2024-34; 42 USCS 9858e; 45 CFR 98.45;
Eff. July 1, 2025.