

Spark Self-Assessment

Domain: Health & Safety

The Spark Self-Assessment is a reflective tool designed to help you evaluate your program, identify areas for growth, and set improvement goals. The Domains, Standards and Indicators are identical to the Spark portfolio.

While it can support progress toward completing your portfolio, it is not required to use this tool. It can also serve as a valuable guide for setting goals for a Quality Improvement Cycle.

As you review the standards and indicators at each star level, use the 7-point rating scale to assess how well your program implements the practice.

- **Circle 7** if the practice is already a strong and consistent part of your program.
- **Circle 1** if the practice is not currently in place.
- **Use your best judgment** to determine where your program falls on the scale.

Evaluate your program at each star level, even if you don't plan to complete a portfolio for every level. You will decide which star levels to submit and which goals to focus on.

If you rate any standard at any star level **4 or lower**, you can choose it as a **Quality Improvement (QI) Cycle** goal to strengthen your program and make progress on completing your Spark portfolio.

Any terms in **GREEN** are defined after each domain.

Domain: Health & Safety (HS)

Standard HS1: Children are provided instruction and support to independently manage health and hygiene practices.

Why is this important?	Teaching children to independently manage their health and hygiene practices is essential for their overall well-being and development. By providing positive, individualized instruction during toileting and other daily routines, children gain confidence and important self-care skills. Encouraging proper hygiene helps prevent germ transmission and helps reduce the spread of illness. Instruction on teeth brushing reinforces good oral hygiene habits that can last a lifetime. Using naturally occurring opportunities to teach these skills ensures that learning is meaningful and developmentally appropriate. A supportive and encouraging approach helps children feel capable and motivated to care for themselves.		
Star Level	Indicators of Meeting the Standard	This is already a strong practice	There is room for improvement
3	<p>Children are provided positive support and instruction at the individual ability level of the child during toileting. Instruction is provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● in a positive manner ● using naturally occurring opportunities ● on an individual basis 	7-----6-----5-----4-----3-----2-----1	
4	<p>Children are provided instruction on preventing germ transmission (for example, instruction on frequent and thorough hand washing, using a tissue to wipe nose, sneezing and coughing in elbow, and not sharing drinks). Instruction is provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● in a positive manner ● using naturally occurring opportunities ● on an individual basis ● during group activities 	7-----6-----5-----4-----3-----2-----1	
5	<p>At least once per year, children are provided instruction on how and when to brush teeth (for example, staff or dental hygienist demonstrating techniques, providing brushes and having children practice technique, etc.) and have opportunities to practice tooth brushing.</p>	7-----6-----5-----4-----3-----2-----1	

Definitions for HS1:

- **Naturally occurring opportunities** are instances in which support and/or information can be shared with a child during a situation which is unplanned. For example, a child coughing into their hands would be a naturally occurring opportunity to demonstrate handwashing.
- An **individual basis** would be providing support and/or information to a single child based on their needs. For example, taking an individual child to use the toilet at regular intervals would be providing toileting instruction on an individual basis.

Standard HS2: Children are provided instruction and support on safety rules and expectations.			
Why is this important?	Teaching children safety rules and expectations is essential for their well-being and helps them develop lifelong awareness of safe behaviors. Posting rules in a visible place reinforces learning and provides a clear reference for children and staff. Using both structured lessons and everyday situations to teach safety ensures children understand how to apply these rules in different settings. By integrating safety instruction into daily activities, children learn to recognize risks and make safe choices both in the child care program and in the community. A consistent and positive approach helps children feel secure and confident in following safety guidelines.		
Star Level	Indicators of Meeting the Standard	This is already a strong practice	There is room for improvement
3	The program has a set of safety rules for children that is posted in a visible place	7-----6-----5-----4-----3-----2-----1	
Meets 4-, & 5-star levels	Program personnel use both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> formal instruction naturally occurring opportunities to teach safety rules and expectations that apply both in the program and in the community 	7-----6-----5-----4-----3-----2-----1	

Definitions for HS2:

- Naturally occurring opportunities** are instances in which support and/or information can be shared with a child during a situation which is unplanned. For example, a child coughing into their hands would be a naturally occurring opportunity to demonstrate handwashing.

Standard HS3: Healthy eating habits are supported and encouraged.			
Why is this important?	Supporting healthy eating habits is essential for children’s growth, development, and lifelong well-being. Positive mealtime experiences help children build independence, social skills, and a healthy relationship with food. Offering fresh fruits and vegetables, appropriate portions, and encouraging but not forcing new foods fosters a balanced diet. Engaging children in meal routines, like setting the table and serving themselves, promotes responsibility and confidence. Teaching about good nutrition in a positive, age-appropriate way helps children understand how food fuels their bodies and supports overall health. By creating a supportive mealtime environment, children are more likely to develop lifelong healthy eating habits.		
Star Level	Indicators of Meeting the Standard	This is already a strong practice	There is room for improvement
3	Program personnel encourage healthy eating habits during mealtime by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sitting with children during meals and snacks • engaging in conversations with children • encouraging conversations between children • providing appropriate portion sizes 	7-----6-----5-----4-----3-----2-----1	
4	Program personnel encourage healthy eating habits during mealtime by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encouraging children to try foods but not requiring them to eat specified foods or amounts • providing information about good nutrition and eating habits • dividing children into small groups • providing child size serving utensils for children to use • having children help during meals (setting the table, serving themselves, clearing the table or their place setting) • offering fresh fruit and vegetables at least twice a week 	7-----6-----5-----4-----3-----2-----1	
5	Program personnel provide instruction about healthy nutrition, including instruction on eating from the USDA guidelines, how foods help bodies grow (preschool), and how good nutrition helps keep bodies healthy (school-age). Instruction is delivered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in a positive manner • using naturally occurring opportunities • on an individual basis • during group activities 	7-----6-----5-----4-----3-----2-----1	

Definitions for HS3:

- **Naturally occurring opportunities** are instances in which support and/or information can be shared with a child during a situation which is unplanned. For example, a child coughing into their hands would be a naturally occurring opportunity to demonstrate handwashing.
- An **individual basis** would be providing support and/or information to a single child based on their needs. For example, taking an individual child to use the toilet at regular intervals would be providing toileting instruction on an individual basis.

Standard HS4: Healthy fitness habits are supported and encouraged.			
Star Level	Indicators of Meeting the Standard	This is already a strong practice	There is room for improvement
Why is this important?	Encouraging healthy fitness habits is essential for children's physical development, overall health, and well-being. Regular physical activity helps build strong muscles and bones, supports coordination and motor skills, and improves mood and focus. By incorporating movement into daily routines and planning active play, staff help children develop a natural love for being active. Teaching the importance of physical activity in a positive, age-appropriate way helps children understand how exercise keeps their bodies strong and healthy. Running, jumping, and other active play not only promote fitness but also support social skills and teamwork. A supportive and engaging approach encourages children to stay active and develop lifelong healthy habits.		
3	Program personnel support children's physical activity by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using naturally occurring opportunities to increase physical activity plan daily moderate-to-vigorous physical activity 	7-----6-----5-----4-----3-----2-----1	
Meets 4-, & 5-star levels	Program personnel provide instruction on the importance of physical activity.	7-----6-----5-----4-----3-----2-----1	

Definitions for HS4:

- Naturally occurring opportunities** are instances in which support and/or information can be shared with a child during a situation which is unplanned. For example, a child coughing into their hands would be a naturally occurring opportunity to demonstrate handwashing.
- Moderate to vigorous** physical activity would include running or jumping.

Standard HS5: Program personnel collaborate with health and related service professionals to address the individual health needs of children, as applicable.			
Why is this important?	Coordinating with health and related service professionals is essential to ensuring all children receive the care and support they need to thrive. By making necessary accommodations, child care programs create an inclusive environment where children with special health needs can fully participate. Collaboration with health professionals allows staff to develop appropriate care plans, ensuring each child's individual needs are met safely and effectively. This partnership also provides staff with the knowledge and resources to respond to health concerns confidently. Supporting children's health needs fosters their overall well-being, promotes equal opportunities for learning and play, and helps families feel secure in their child's care.		
Star Level	Indicators of Meeting the Standard	This is already a strong practice	There is room for improvement
3	The program's policy indicates willingness to include children with special health needs (temporary or ongoing) and to make the necessary exceptions and accommodations.	7-----6-----5-----4-----3-----2-----1	
Meets 4-, & 5-star levels	Program personnel consult and collaborate with health care and related service professionals to meet children's special health care needs , as applicable.	7-----6-----5-----4-----3-----2-----1	

Definitions for HS5:

- Some examples of **special health needs** include asthma, allergies, feeding issues, and chronic illnesses.

Standard HS6: Program uses screen time appropriately. Screen time includes all electronic media, such as television, video/DVD, electronic games, computers, tablets, smart phones, or any other screened electronic devices. This does not include augmentative communication or other electronic devices that are used by children with disabilities as part of their educational program.			
Star Level	Indicators of Meeting the Standard	This is already a strong practice	There is room for improvement
Why is this important?	Appropriate screen time use supports children's development while minimizing potential negative effects. Excessive or unstructured screen time can interfere with active play, social interactions, and hands-on learning. By using screen time intentionally and linking it to instructional goals ensure that technology enhances—rather than replaces—meaningful learning experiences. Clear guidelines, such as limiting screen time, selecting appropriate content, and ensuring active child engagement, help create a balanced media environment. Keeping screens off during meals and non-viewing times promotes social interaction and healthy habits. Staff refraining from personal cell phone use during the care day ensure children receive proper supervision and attention. Thoughtful screen time policies support children's overall well-being and a developmentally appropriate learning environment.		
Meets 3-, & 4-star levels	<p>Appropriate screen time use includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● parents are informed if electronic media are used in the program ● screen content is appropriate for ages of children, nonviolent, and culturally sensitive ● at least one alternative activity is available while electronic media is used ● program's use of screen viewing encourages active child involvement ● electronic media is not on during non-viewing time and is not allowed during meals or snack time ● no screen time for children younger than two years of age ● adults do not use electronic media for personal use during the care day 	7-----6-----5-----4-----3-----2-----1	
5	<p>Appropriate screen time use includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● program uses screen time intentionally ● screen time is related to instructional goals (i.e., supports and extends children's current interests and experiences, content is discussed with children, etc.) ● screen media is free of advertisement and brand placement ● screen time is limited to no more than one hour per day 	7-----6-----5-----4-----3-----2-----1	

Definitions for HS6

- **Culturally sensitive** screen content represents all people and groups respectfully, and without stereotypes or negative images.

Goal Documentation

If you rated any standards **4 or below** and would like to set a goal in that standard, check the corresponding box in the table below. You may select multiple goals from a single standard or choose goals from different standards. Then, describe the intended goal/s you will be working on in each standard. It can be a brief description of the goal/s because you may not know yet exactly how you want to achieve it, and you will have the opportunity to describe it in more detail when you document them for a Quality Improvement (QI) Cycle.

Example:

Check the box if choosing a goal in the standard	Standards
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LD2: The program uses a curriculum that supports all children's learning and development.
What goal/s would you like to work on?	<i>I would like to find a curriculum that meets the needs of the 3-year olds that are in my program. I would also like to take training on how to use it.</i>

Check the box if choosing a goal in the standard	Standards
<input type="checkbox"/>	HS1: Children are provided instruction and support to independently manage health and hygiene practices.
What goal/s would you like to work on?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	HS2: Children are provided instruction and support on safety rules and expectations.
What goal/s would you like to work on?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	HS3: Healthy eating habits are supported and encouraged.
What goal/s would you like to work on?	

Check the box if choosing a goal in the standard	Standards
<input type="checkbox"/>	HS4: Healthy fitness habits are supported and encouraged.
What goal/s would you like to work on?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	HS5: Program personnel collaborate with health and related service professionals to address the individual health needs of children, as applicable.
What goal/s would you like to work on?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	HS6: Program uses screen time appropriately.
What goal/s would you like to work on?	

Next Steps:

If you choose to use any of these goal/s for a **Spark Quality Improvement (QI) Cycle**, you can record them on the **QI Cycle Documentation Form**. This is an on-line form that is emailed to programs after they complete a **Spark Participation Application** and indicate they wish to do a QI Cycle. The link to the **Spark Participation Application** can be found at oregonspark.org.

On the **QI Cycle Documentation Form** you can access resources to help you achieve your specific goals and document the steps you are planning to use to achieve them. Once you complete your goal/s and submit a **QI Cycle Reflection Form**, you can begin a new QI Cycle with additional goal/s.