



SELQKII

Saskatchewan's Early
Learning and Child Care
Quality Key Indicator
Instrument
(SK Quality Tool)

Saskatchewan’s Early Learning and Child Care Program Quality Key Indicator Instrument (SK Quality Tool)

INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

Ten Quality Key Indicators make up the Saskatchewan’s Early Learning and Child Care Program Quality Key Indicator Instrument (SK Quality Tool). The details about each of the quality indicators and data collection instructions to obtain the necessary data to determine if a program meets the Key Quality Indicators are delineated below for each quality key indicator.

Part 1 - Quality Key Indicators (QKI) 1 – 5 will be collected via record or document review, interviewing individuals, or observation. Part 2 - Quality Key Indicators (QKI) 6 – 10 will be collected via observations in the classrooms throughout the assessment.

These ten quality key indicators were taken from previous studies conducted over the past 40 years by Dr Richard Fiene utilizing the Regulatory Compliance Key Indicator metric (RCKIm). The tool was validated in a study in the spring of 2023 in the province of Saskatchewan. Observer notes from this project were used to make some final modifications to the tool to make the tool more user friendly.

All this work was done as a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Education staff and the National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA) consultant pool.

PART 1 – Record/Document Review, Interview, Observation Quality Indicators

QUALITY INDICATOR 1): Number of ECE III Educators

Assessors will review staff records to determine the number of staff who have these credentials in early childhood education. Record the number of ECEs with the appropriate qualifications and divide them by the total number of ECEs to come up with a percent for the center.

How to Measure:

In this case, we are interested in the number of (ECEIII's). Teaching staff is defined as staff who have a responsibility for working with the children and the programming. Consider only the staff members who work over 65 hours/month.

If the observer has access to the **Staff Information Summary** form, this can be used to obtain the data for this item. If access to this summary is not possible, proof of certification levels can be requested from the centre director. A copy of the certification should be in each staff member's file.

Record the number of ECEIII working at least 65 hours/month.

Record the number of total teaching staff at least 65 hours/month.

Determine the percentage by dividing the total number of ECEIII Certified teaching staff by the total number of staff. $(\text{ECEIII}/\text{Total number of teaching staff} \times 100) = \text{Percent}$.

Scoring for PQKI 1:

The total number of ECEIII Certified teaching staff _____

The total number of teaching staff _____

Total ECEIII teaching staff divided by the total number of teaching staff _____ (%).

Then based on the percentage, you can find the score of 1-4 as per the chart below.

<i>Circle the Appropriate Level</i>	1 = 0 to 25%	2 = 26 to 50%	3 = 51 to 75%	4 = 76 to 100%
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Comments:

QUALITY INDICATOR 2): Stimulating and Dynamic Environment

The criteria for measuring this are drawn from *Play and Exploration Guide*. The program is child centered. Children are viewed as competent learners, and they have the freedom to access classroom materials independently without adult intervention. The children are provided with meaningful choices through activity/learning centers. There is evidence of the children's interests and their projects in the learning environment.

How to Measure:

Below is the checklist of items that should be present. If you do not actually observe the following items occurring in the classroom, then check the program plan to find documentation that it normally occurs but you just did not observe today.

1. Co-teaching is evident. Y/N _____
2. Children are viewed as competent learners & can access materials independently. Y/N _____
3. Authentic and meaningful materials are used with children. Y/N _____
4. Children are provided with meaningful choices. Y/N _____
5. Children's work, art and photos are displayed respectfully. Y/N _____
6. Family photos are displayed in the early learning program. Y/N _____
7. Documentation of learning is displayed and discusses holistic development. Y/N _____
8. Environment reflects the culture and beliefs of the children, families and staff. Y/N _____
9. Variety of books & other print materials are available throughout the classroom Y/N _____
10. A variety of writing materials are accessible to children most of the time. Y/N _____
11. There is evidence of the children's interests & projects in the classroom. Y/N _____

Scoring for Quality Indicator 2:

Total up the number of items where you recorded a "Y" above that you observed (either in the classroom or in documentation), divide by 11 then x 100 to come up with a percent and record here _____ %.

Then based on the percentage, you can find the score of 1-4 as per the chart below.

Circle the Appropriate Level	1 = 0 to 25%	2= 26 to 50%	3 = 51 to 75%	4 = 76 to 100%
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Comments:

QUALITY INDICATOR 3): Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum Based on Assessments of Each Child

The key for this quality key indicator is that the program is following an individualized prescribed planning document when it comes to curriculum. It does not mean it is a canned program, in fact, it shouldn't if it is based upon the individual needs of each child's developmental assessment. The assessor will ask to see what is used to guide the curriculum. There should be a written document that clearly delineates the parameters of the philosophy, activities, guidance, and resources needed for the particular curricular approach. There should also be a developmental assessment which is clearly tied to the curriculum. The developmental assessment can be home-grown or a more standardized off-the shelf type of assessment, the key being its ability to inform the various aspects of the curriculum. The purpose of the assessments is not to compare children but rather to compare the developmental progress of individual children as they experience the activities of the curriculum.

The following key elements should be present when assessing this quality indicator.

1. The program practices emergent curriculum, allowing the interests of the children to determine the learning content. The curriculum is informed by individual developmental assessments of each child in the respective classrooms.
2. The children and educators are co-learners in the exploration of projects.
3. Learning activities of the children are documented, displayed in the learning environment, and used to plan further learning activities.

How to Measure:

Take a sample of 10 individual children's records and consider the above three elements for each record. You should be asking yourself if there is a clear link between an assessment and the developmentally appropriate curriculum so that an individualized learning approach is being undertaken and each child's developmental needs are taken into consideration. These records could be formal, such as portfolios kept for each child or a more informal, anecdotal type of record keeping. **The key is that there is a record that can be looked at.** It is not adequate if the teacher says they do it from memory – it needs to be written down and documented.

Record whether, you are able to identify evidence of the practice occurring. All three blocks need to be checked for each child/record (1-10).

Emergent Curriculum is Practiced (3.1)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Children and Educators are Co-learners (3.2)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Learning Activities are Documented and Displayed and Used to Plan Future Learning (3.3)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Total of All Three Key Elements (3.4)

All three key elements must have a 'Yes' to get an overall score of 'Yes'. If all three key elements have a 'Yes' for that individual child/record, then record 'Yes' in the corresponding block below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Scoring for Quality Indicator 3:

Count the number of positive records (all 'Yes' for all three elements) _____

Calculate the percentage of positive records (all 'Yes').

Divide the number of positive records by 10 then x 100 = _____ %.

Then based on the percentage, you can find the score of 1-4 as per the chart below.

Circle the Appropriate Level	1 = 0 to 25%	2 = 26 to 50%	3 = 51 to 75%	4 = 76 to 100%
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Comments:

QUALITY INDICATOR 4): Opportunities for Staff and Families to Get to Know Each Other

There should be activities both within the center as well as off site, or outside of the early learning program hours, where staff and parents/families have opportunities to meet and interact. Communication with family members should be documented to enable early childhood educators to assess the need for follow-up communication and/or responsive program adjustments/additions.

Early childhood educators should have dedicated time when they are available to talk with family members either in person or by phone. Family members are encouraged to share their experiences and knowledge of their child as well as raise any questions or concerns.

How to Measure:

Look for the following 3 examples in policies developed by the program and/or determine if they have been carried out with families. It will be necessary to interview staff to complete this indicator if you do not find the three examples in policies, but some examples/documentation must be observed to confirm.

1. The program provides communication, education, and informational materials & opportunities for families that are delivered in a way that meets their diverse needs.

Y/N _____

2. The program communicates with families using different modes of communication, and at least one mode promotes two-way communication.

Y/N _____

3. The program engages in ongoing two-way communication. Communication demonstrates respect for each family’s strengths, choices, & goals for their children.

Y/N _____

Scoring for Quality Indicator 4:

Record the number of Yes’s (Y’s): _____ (Range: 0 – 3). Divide by 3 then x 100 = _____%. Then based on the percentage, you can find the score of 1-4 as per the chart below.

<i>Circle the Appropriate Level</i>	1 = 0 to 25%	2= 26 to 50%	3 = 51 to 75%	4 = 76 to 100%
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Comments:

QUALITY INDICATOR 5): Families Receive Information on Their Child’s Progress Regularly

The results and possible responses to the developmental assessment (as per quality indicator #3) should be the focus of a parent conference/discussion. Parental feedback about the assessment and how it compares to their experiences at home is an excellent comparison point. All these interactions should be done in a culturally and linguistically appropriate way representing the parents/families being served.

How to Measure:

Look in policies/documentation developed by the program to determine if and how families receive information of their child’s developmental progress. Record the number of reports completed or parent conferences over the past year. It will be necessary to interview staff to complete this indicator if you cannot determine from records that the conferences or reports were completed.

1. The program does have regularly scheduled (at least 2xs/year) parent conferences/events in which the children’s developmental progress is discussed AND provides the family with a report/document with information on their child’s developmental progress.
Y/N _____ If “Yes” then go to number 4. If “No”, then go to number 2.
2. The program has regularly scheduled (at least 2xs/year) parent conferences/events in which the children's developmental progress is discussed, but it does not provide a report/document with information on their child’s developmental progress.
Y/N _____ If “Yes” then go to number 4. If “No”, then go to number 3.
3. If the program does not have regularly scheduled (at least 2xs/year) parent conferences/events, does it provide the family with a report/document with information on their child's developmental progress.
Y/N _____ Go to Number 4.
4. All these interactions are done in a culturally and linguistically appropriate way representing the parents being served.
Y/N _____

Scoring for Quality Indicator 5:

If #1 was ‘Yes’, then score 3 points.

If #2 was ‘Yes’, then score 2 points.

If #3 was ‘Yes’, then score 1 point.

If #4 was ‘Yes’, then add 1 point to the score to obtain the total score.

Record the number of points: _____ (Range: 0 - 4)

Comments:

PART 2 - OBSERVATIONS:

For quality key indicators 6, 7 and 8, it is recommended that the assessor refer to the appropriate Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS or ITERS) as a reference because these indicators are taken directly from these tools. It is also recommended that these be assessed/observed throughout the assessment and not just during key activity times. Please follow the specific instructions and examples as delineated below and in the appropriate ERS tool: ECERS (Items 12 and 13) or ITERS (Item 12). These specific instructions and examples are provided within this tool for ease of administration and data collection.

QUALITY INDICATOR 6): Educators Encourage Children to Communicate (Preschool Class)

NOTE: If there is preschool classroom that needs to be assessed, then use the following item taken from the ECERS, if there is not a preschool classroom, then skip to Indicator 7.

Assessors will need to observe this item to gather reliable and valid information regarding this question/standard. It needs to be observed in the various interactions between staff and children for credit to be given. Things to look for would be more back and forth conversations rather than one-way conversations where educators are telling children what to do. Look for opportunities where children can describe what they are doing, how they feel about what they are doing, and why they are doing particular activities. Educators should expand upon children's conversations. Children talk more when there is an interested person who listens to them.

These opportunities can occur anywhere in the classroom or outside, such as in the dramatic play area, tabletop activities or in the play yard. Materials should be present that encourage communication such as toy telephones, puppets, dolls, flannel/magnetic boards, and dramatic play props such as small people and animals, with barns, or dollhouses. These create a lot of conversation among children as they assume different roles. The staff in a high-quality early childhood classroom will use both activities and materials to encourage growth in receptive and expressive language skills.

How to Measure:

Observe the classroom for a minimum of 15 minutes. Once completed, consider where the classroom falls based on the following:

1. Staff balance listening and talking appropriately for age and abilities of children during communication activities, for example: leave time for children to respond; verbalize for child with limited communication skills.

Y/N _____

Staff link children's spoken communication with written language, for example: write down what children dictate & read it back to them; help them write notes to parents.

Y/N _____

If both these items are evident, record the score of 4 and this quality indicator is complete. If they are not both evident, go to number 2.

2. Communication activities take place during both free play and group times, for example: child dictates story about painting; small group discusses trip to store.

Y/N _____

Materials that encourage children to communicate are accessible in a variety of interest centers, for example: small figures and animals in block area; puppets and flannel board pieces in book area; toys for dramatic play outdoors or indoors.

Y/N _____

If both these items are evident, record the score of 3 and this quality indicator is complete. If they are not both evident, go to number 3.

3. Some activities are used by staff w/children to encourage them to communicate.

Y/N _____

Some materials are accessible to encourage children to communicate.

Y/N _____

Communication activities are generally appropriate for the children in the group.

Y/N _____

If all three of these items are evident, record the score of 2 and this quality indicator is complete. If they are not both evident, go to number 4.

4. No activities used by staff with children to encourage them to communicate, for example: nontalking about drawings, dictating stories, sharing ideas at circle time, finger plays, singing songs.

Y/N _____

Very few materials accessible that encourage children to communicate.

Y/N _____

Record the score of 1 and this quality indicator is complete.

Scoring for Quality Indicator 6:

Total up the number of "Y's" and record the appropriate level. For a classroom to receive a particular score, all "Y's" must be checked for the appropriate level (1 - 4) from above or partial credit given to obtain a "+". If there is a "+" please also mark it in the box.

If #1 was all 'Yes', then score 4 points.

If #2 was all 'Yes', then score 3 points.

If #3 was all 'Yes', then score 2 points.

Otherwise record a one.

Record the number of points: _____ (Range: 0 - 4)

Circle the Appropriate Level	1 = 0 to 25%	2 = 26 to 50%	3 = 51 to 75%	4 = 76 to 100%
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Comments:

QUALITY INDICATOR 7): Infant/Toddler Observation (Infant and/or Toddler Class)

NOTE: If there is an infant, toddler or combined infant/toddler classroom that needs to be assessed, then use the following item taken from the ITERS Tool (Item 12), if there is not an infant/toddler classroom, then skip to Indicator 8.

Conversations and questions should be used with all children, even young infants. Conversations using verbal and nonverbal turn-taking should be considered when scoring. Most conversations and questions initiated by infants will be nonverbal, such as widening of baby's eyes or waving arms and legs. Observe staff response to such nonverbal communication. For infants and toddlers, the responsibility for starting most conversations and asking questions belongs to the staff. As children become more able to initiate communication, staff should modify their approach to allow children to take on a greater role in initiating conversations and asking questions. Staff should provide answers to questions used by children if children cannot answer, and as children become more able to respond, questions should start to include those that the child can answer.

How to Measure:

Observe the classroom for a minimum of 15 minutes. Once completed, consider where the classroom falls based on the following;

1. Staff frequently have turn taking conversations with children throughout the observations. Many appropriate questions are used throughout the observation, during both play and routines.

Y/N _____

Staff ask children appropriate questions, wait a reasonable time for child response, and then answer if needed, for example: "Are you hungry? . . . Yes, you are!"; "Where's the ball? . . . There it is! You found the ball".

Y/N _____

If both these items are evident, record the score of 4 and this quality indicator is complete. If they are not both evident, go to number 2.

2. Staff initiate engaging conversations with children throughout the observation, for example: show enthusiasm; use tone that attracts child's attention.

Y/N _____

Staff often personalize questions and/or conversations for individual children, for example: talk about children's families, preferences, interests; what they are playing with; what they did over weekend; child's mood; use child's name.

Y/N _____

Staff often pay attention to children's questions, verbal or nonverbal, and answer in a satisfying manner for the child.

Y/N _____

Staff ask questions in which children show interest in answering, for example: make the questions funny or mysterious; use attractive tone; meaningful and not too difficult to answer.

Y/N _____

If all these items are evident, record the score of 3 and this quality indicator is complete. If they are not all evident, go to number 3.

3. Staff sometimes initiate conversations with children, for example: babble back and forth with baby; copy baby's sounds; respond to baby's crying with verbal response; have short back and forth toddler interactions.

Y/N _____

Staff sometimes ask children appropriate questions and wait for the child to respond, for example: ask baby if she likes toy and pay attention as baby smiles; ask toddler what he is eating and wait for him to think of word(s).

Y/N _____

Staff respond neutrally or positively to children who can't answer questions. Questions asked are sometimes meaningful to children, for example: child responds with interest; does not ignore staff questions.

Y/N _____

If all these items are evident, record the score of 2 and this quality indicator is complete. If they are not all evident, go to number 4.

4. Staff never initiate turn-taking conversations with children, for example: rarely encourage baby to babble back; simple back and forth exchanges with verbal children never observed.

Y/N _____

Staff questions are often not appropriate for children, for example: no questions are asked, too difficult to answer, or carry a negative message.

Y/N _____

Staff respond negatively when children can't answer questions, for example: "You should know this"; "You did not listen".

Y/N _____

Record the score of 1 and this quality indicator is complete.

Scoring for Quality Indicator 7:

If #1 was all 'Yes', then score 4 points.

If #2 was all 'Yes', then score 3 points.

If #3 was all 'Yes', then score 2 points.

Otherwise record a one.

Record the number of points: _____ (Range: 0 - 4)

<i>Circle the Appropriate Level</i>	1 = 0 to 25%	2 = 26 to 50%	3 = 51 to 75%	4 = 76 to 100%
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Comments:

QUALITY INDICATOR 8): Educators Use Language to Develop Reasoning Skills (Preschool)

Assessors will need to observe very carefully as this standard can be difficult to determine because it is tying language and cognition together. Again, this opportunity can occur in any setting in or out of the classroom because it is the basis for problem solving using language. Also look for educators redirecting children's conversations when appropriate. Staff should use language to talk about logical relationships using materials that stimulate reasoning. Using materials, staff can demonstrate concepts such as same/different, classifying, sequencing, one-to-one correspondence, spatial relationships, and cause and effect.

How to Measure:

Observe the classroom for a minimum of 15 minutes. Once completed, consider where the classroom falls based on the following;

1. Staff encourage children to reason throughout the day, using actual events and experiences as a basis for concept development, e.g.: children learn sequence by talking about their experiences in the daily routine or recalling the sequence of a cooking project.

Y/N _____

Concepts are introduced based upon children's interests or needs to solve problems, for example: talk children through balancing a tall block building, help children figure out how many spoons are needed to set a table.

Y/N _____

If both these items are evident, record the score of 4 and this quality indicator is complete. If they are not both evident, go to number 2.

2. Staff talk about logical relationships while children play with materials that stimulate reasoning, for example: sequence cards, same/different games, size and shape toys, sorting games, numbers and math games.

Y/N _____

Children are encouraged to talk through or explain their reasoning when solving problems, for example: why they sorted objects into different groups, in what way two pictures are the same or different.

Y/N _____

If both these items are evident, record the score of 3 and this quality indicator is complete. If they are not both evident, go to number 3.

3. Staff sometimes talk about logical relationships or concepts, e.g.: explain that outside time comes after snacks, point out differences in sizes of blocks children use.

Y/N _____

Some concepts are introduced appropriately for ages and abilities of children in group, using words and experiences, for example: guide children with questions and words to sort big and little blocks or to figure out why ice melts.

Y/N _____

If both these items are evident, record the score of 2 and this quality indicator is complete. If they are not both evident, go to number 4.

- Staff do not talk with children about logical relationships, for example: ignore children's questions and curiosity about why things happen, do not call attention to sequence of daily events, differences and similarity in number, size, shape, cause and effect.

Y/N _____

Concepts are introduced inappropriately, for example: concepts too difficult for age and abilities of children, inappropriate teaching methods used such as worksheets without any concrete experiences; teacher gives answers w/o helping children to figure things out.

Y/N _____

Record the score of 1 and this quality indicator is complete.

Scoring for Quality Indicator 8:

If #1 was all 'Yes', then score 4 points.

If #2 was all 'Yes', then score 3 points.

If #3 was all 'Yes', then score 2 points.

Otherwise record a one.

Record the number of points: _____ (Range: 0 - 4)

<i>Circle the Appropriate Level</i>	1 = 0 to 25%	2 = 26 to 50%	3 = 51 to 75%	4 = 76 to 100%
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Comments:

For quality key indicators 9 and 10 it is recommended that these be assessed/observed throughout the observation period and not just during a single activity. These two quality key indicators should be observed in two-minute blocks over ten sequences for a total of 20 minutes.

QUALITY INDICATOR 9): Educators Listen Attentively When Children Speak

This quality indicator focuses on the early childhood educator(s) looking directly at the children with nods, rephrases their comments, engages in conversations. Children should have the undivided attention of the specific educator they are addressing. Educators should not be looking away or preoccupied with others. They should be at the child’s level making eye contact. The intent is to observe all children and educators in the room.

How to Measure:

Do this in 2-minute timed observations of educators in the classroom, recording each time you observe. Record 10 different observation periods. These do not need to be consecutive. Observe the staff assigned to the class (not any staff covering breaks etc.)

Please use the following scale to assess your recordings: Likert Scale (1-4) where 1 = Never/Not at All; 2 = Somewhat/Few Instances; 3 = Quite a Bit/Many Instances; 4 = Very Much/Consistently): Record below.

Observations:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Educator 1											
Educator 2											
Educator 3											

Scoring for Quality Indicator 9:

Once all the observations are made, add up the results in the totals column.

Add the total for each educator together and divide by the number of educators. Record the number here: _____ (Range: 10 - 40)

(Divide this result by 10) = _____ (1-4)

Round upward or downward to the whole number (3.7 = 4; 2.2 = 2).

Circle the Appropriate Level	1 = 0 to 25%	2= 26 to 50%	3 = 51 to 75%	4 = 76 to 100%
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Comments:

QUALITY INDICATOR 10): Educators Speak Warmly to Children

This quality indicator focuses on the early childhood educator(s) always engaging in a caring voice and body language with every child. Educators do not use harsh language or commands in speaking to children, but rather are on the child’s level making eye contact.

How to Measure:

Do this in timed 2-minute observations recording each time you observe this occurring. Record at least 10 different observation periods. Please use the following scale to make your recordings: (This item is on a Likert Scale (1-4) where 1 = Never/Not at All; 2 = Somewhat/Few Instances; 3 = Quite a Bit/Many Instances; 4 = Very Much/Consistently):

Make the actual recordings using the Likert Scale (1-4) above for each individual observation and record in each cell below.

Observations:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Educator 1											
Educator 2											
Educator 3											

Scoring for PQI 10:

Once all the observations are made, add up the results in the totals column.

Add the total for each educator together and divide by the number of educators. Record the number here: _____ (Range: 10 - 40)

(Divide this result by 10) = _____ (1-4)

Round upward or downward to the whole number (3.7 = 4; 2.2 = 2).

<i>Circle the Appropriate Level</i>	1 = 0 to 25%	2= 26 to 50%	3 = 51 to 75%	4 = 76 to 100%
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Comments:

**Saskatchewan’s Early Learning and Child Care Program Quality Key Indicator
Instrument (SK Quality Tool)**

Scoring Summary

Child Care Centre Name:

Age Group Being Observed:

Program Quality Indicator	Score (1-4)
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7 (Infant/toddler group only)	
8 (Preschool group only)	
9	
10	
Total Score	
Program Quality Level	

Interpreting the Score = Program Quality Level

	Infant/Toddler	Preschool	Mixed Age
High Quality	Score of 28 or higher	Score of 32 or higher	Score of 36 or higher
Medium-High Quality	Score of 22-27	Score of 26-31	Score of 30-35
Medium-Low Quality	Score of 12-21	Score of 16-25	Score of 20-29
Low Quality	Score of 11 or less	Score of 15 or less	Score of 19 or less