



# Great Start to Quality On-Site Assessment Guidance

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# Understanding and Using the Guidance Document

You can use this guidance document to help prepare for the on-site assessment using the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) tool. This guidance document will:

- Help you understand the PQA process
- Give explanations, ideas, and suggestions of how to prepare for your observation

If you need more information or other resources when you are using this document, you can refer to the:

- [Glossary](#) for definitions of terms and phrases used often in Early Care and Education and Great Start to Quality (GSQ)
- [Resources](#) section for links to outside sources with more information and guidance

In this document you will see words, phrases, and sentences that are blue and underlined; these are links. These links will lead you to more information to better understand the process. To get to the other information you can:

- Click on the link and go to the other information
  - If the link takes you to the **Glossary** or **Resources** section
    - Push "Alt" and the left arrow (←) to return to your earlier place in the document

# Introduction

The on-site assessment is a step in the [Great Start to Quality rating process](#) for programs seeking a 4 or 5 Star rating.

If your program receives a 4 or 5 Star [validation](#), you will have the choice to move on to the on-site assessment. You will receive a published rating once the on-site assessment is complete.

In the chart, you can see the range of points needed for each star rating.

<b>Star Rating</b>	<b>Number of Points Received on Validation</b>	<b>Score Received on PQA</b>
1	0-15	N/A
2	16-25	N/A
3	26-37	N/A
4	38-41	≥ 3.5
5	42-50	≥ 4.5

Great Start to Quality (GSQ) uses the [Program Quality Assessment \(PQA\)](#) tools from the HighScope Educational Research Foundation for on-site assessments. The PQA for your program depends on the type of program as well as the number of classrooms you have.

If you have any questions or would like more information about your 1 to 5 Star rating, or the other steps in the process, please refer to the [Great Start to Quality User Guide](#) or visit the Great Start to Quality website at [www.greatstarttoquality.org](http://www.greatstarttoquality.org).

# Program Quality Assessment (PQA)

## PQA DEFINITION

HighScope's Program Quality Assessment (PQA) is a rating tool designed to look at the quality of early childhood programs. Program quality includes the learning environment and what happens during the day at the program. The PQA is research-based and field-tested. This tool meets standards for best practices in Early Care and Education.

[Learn more about the Program Quality Assessment \(PQA\) developed by HighScope.](#)

## FOCUS OF THE PQA

The PQA focuses on the whole program. It looks at the learning environment, daily routine, adult-child interaction, curriculum planning and assessment, and the safe and healthy environment.

# Things to Keep in Mind

## THE PQA IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW OFF YOUR PROGRAM

The Assessors:

- Want to see what makes your program special
- Enjoy seeing a variety of programs
- Are grateful for every program taking part in the process
- Are happy to see programs' commitment to improvement
- Want to make the process as simple and pleasant as possible
- Conduct PQAs on all program types across the state
- Have worked in various program types
- Have knowledge of different philosophies and curriculum

## THE PQA IS JUST A STARTING POINT

After an Assessor visits your program and conducts a PQA you will receive a report. The detailed report will give you information on where the program is doing well and where there are opportunities for improvement. A Quality Improvement Consultant (QIC) from your local Great Start to Quality (GSQ) Resource Center will work with you and your program to review the report and plan for improvements.

The PQA can be an ongoing help to your program. As you make improvements to support children and practices, you can choose to request another PQA. You can request the PQA through [Reassessment](#) at any time to work toward increasing your score and star rating.

## ALL THE INFORMATION YOU NEED IS IN THE PQA BOOK

All programs should look at a PQA book before the observation. This is the best way to prepare for a PQA. All levels in each row show the indicators and examples.

It is best to look at the description at the top of each item. The items are the quality standards. The following rows are the ways in which the program can meet the item or standard. If information is needed regarding an item or row in the PQA, reference the Early Childhood Standards of Quality ([Prekindergarten](#) and [Infants and Toddlers](#)). Each PQA aligns to these standards.

For example, Item III-D in the Preschool PQA:

*"Adults use a variety of strategies to encourage and support child language and communication."*

- Each of the four rows discuss the strategies; sharing control of conversations, listening, and observing children, conversing in a give-and-take manner, and asking questions sparingly.
- For ways to put the strategies into practice, reference the Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten pages 30-38 in the section about Language and Early Literacy Development. It explains children's language development and offers examples of opportunities children should have to support it.

If you need a copy of a PQA book, you can:

- Contact your local [Great Start to Quality \(GSQ\) Resource Center](#) to check out a copy from the Lending Library
- Contact [HighScope](#) to buy a copy



## WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED HELP?

You are not alone in this process. Most programs and providers have questions or need help. This is because the assessment process and PQA book cover a lot of information. The great news is there are skilled staff at your local GSQ Resource Center who want to help. All you need to do is reach out!

Contact your local [Great Start to Quality Resource Center](#) using the GSQ website or call 1-877-614-7328.

# Great Start to Quality and the PQA

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR A PROGRAM QUALITY ASSESSMENT (PQA)?

If you are a [Non-Alternate Path](#) program who receives a 4 or 5 Star rating during the validation, the program **must** have an on-site assessment to complete the rating process. If you have a PQA with a score above a 3.5 you will receive a published rating of a 4 Star. If you have a PQA with a score above a 4.5 you will receive a published rating of a 5 Star. If you choose not to have a PQA, your program will publish as a 3 Star, even if you scored a 4 or 5 Star on your validation.

If you are an [Alternate Path](#) program who receives a 5 Star rating on the validation, the program **must** have an on-site assessment to complete the rating process. If you have a PQA with a score above a 4.5 you will receive a published rating of a 5 Star. If you choose not to have a PQA, your program will publish as a 4 Star, even if you scored a 5 Star on your validation. Alternate Path programs maintain the 4 Star rating because they are already monitored at a national or state level beyond licensing.

[See the range of points needed for each star rating in this chart.](#)

## WHO CONDUCTS THE PQA?

A GSQ Rater or an Approved Rater will complete the on-site assessment. All GSQ Raters and Approved Raters, receive training by HighScope and must complete regular reliability testing.

- A [GSQ Rater](#) is an employee of the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC); also known as an [Assessor](#)
- An [Approved Rater](#) is someone with the certification that you select to complete your PQA

Non-Alternate Path programs will have their on-site assessment conducted by a GSQ Rater (Assessor).

Head Start, Early Head Start and National Association for the Education of You Children (NAEYC) accredited classrooms have the choice to use an Approved Rater or a GSQ Rater.

All Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) classrooms must request an Approved Rater and use the PQA completed by an Early Childhood Specialist.

## WHY DOES GREAT START TO QUALITY USE THE PQA?

Great Start to Quality (GSQ) uses the PQA because it is a comprehensive tool for all programs, regardless of curriculum. The PQA aligns with the [Michigan Early Childhood Standards of Quality](#). This tool is valid and reliable and focuses on children's progress and early childhood best practices. This makes it a great tool to support the children and staff in your program.

Great Start to Quality uses three versions of the PQA:

- Infant-Toddler PQA
- Preschool PQA
- Family Child Care PQA

Each version of the PQA is for a specific age group or type of care. The tool used for the on-site assessment is based on the age group and type of care you offer.

## WHY IS PROGRAM ASSESSMENT IMPORTANT FOR YOUR PROGRAM?

The assessment step of GSQ is important because it gives an in-depth and objective look at the practices in your program. Programs and classrooms are always changing and growing. Having an outside person assess the program gives an unbiased look at program practices. An assessment gives valuable information for reflection and quality improvement. It can be an ongoing asset to your program as you continue to work toward increasing program quality.

## HOW MANY PQA OBSERVATIONS WILL I RECEIVE?

Family and Group Child Care providers will receive one on-site assessment visit using the Family Child Care PQA.

Centers serving infants/toddlers and/or preschoolers will have observations in at least one-third (1/3) of the total number of classrooms and in each age group. All classrooms are randomly selected for observation.

To find the total number of PQA observations your program needs to fulfill the one-third (1/3) requirement, please see the chart below.

<b>Number of classrooms</b>	<b>Minimum # of PQAs required</b>
1 to 4 classrooms	1 PQA
5 to 7 classrooms	2 PQAs
8 to 10 classrooms	3 PQAs
11 to 13 classrooms	4 PQAs
14 to 16 classrooms	5 PQAs
17 to 19 classrooms	6 PQAs
20 classrooms	7 PQAs
Family Child Care	1 PQA

Non-Alternate Path programs will have their on-site assessment conducted by an Assessor and will not need to request a rater in the Great Start to Quality (GSQ) STARS platform.

If an Alternate Path program requests an [Approved Rater](#) to complete only some of their classrooms, a [GSQ Rater](#) will observe in any remaining classrooms to fulfill the one-third (1/3) and age group requirement.

To request your rater, go to the "**Self-Assessment Survey**" tab in the GSQ STARS platform and select the "**Request PQA Rater(s)**" button. You will then select an "**Approved Rater**" or a "**GSQ Rater**" from the drop-down menu.

- For further instructions about requesting a rater, see the [Great Start to Quality User Guide](#)

## WHAT IS THE ASSESSMENT TIMELINE FOR A NON-ALTERNATE PATH PROGRAM USING AN GSQ RATER?

It can take up to 90 days from the time you submit the Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) until the star rating publishes. When starting the rating process, keep in mind days the program might close for breaks, holidays, or the summer.

Programs are given a four-week window in which the on-site assessment can take place. It is best to complete the validation and be ready for the PQA at least six weeks before you will close for an extended time.

Should the situation arise where the [Assessment Team](#) cannot make contact or the program is not available to have an on-site assessment, the PQA will be postponed and the program will publish as a 3 Star (Non-Alternate Path) or a 4 Star (Alternate Path). As soon as you are ready to have an assessment, you can apply for [Reassessment](#). Reassessment will let you resume the process at a time more convenient for the program. If you need to wait longer than six months after the validation is completed, you will go through the validation process again before having a PQA. This confirms current program quality is being measured.

## WHAT IS THE ASSESSMENT TIMELINE FOR AN ALTERNATE PATH PROGRAM USING AN APPROVED RATER?

The Assessment Team recommends programs begin preparing to submit their SAS in January. It can take up to 90 days for a program to receive a star rating. PQA results for GSQ must be from the current school year. It is best for Alternate Path programs, especially Great Start Readiness Programs (GSRP), to submit the SAS before their PQAs are completed.

All PQA results must be in OnlinePQA with the correct classroom identifier by June 30 of the current school year for use by GSQ. This means the program must have their validation completed and request an Approved Rater by June 30. Alternate Path programs who have not completed these steps by June 30 will not be able to use those PQA results from the current school year. The program will have to wait until the following school year to have another PQA conducted.

Sometimes the classroom identifier or other information is incorrect in OnlinePQA. It is important to allow time to find and correct any errors, so PQA results can be used toward the star rating.

# What to Expect During Your On-Site Assessment Visit When Using an Assessor

## BEFORE YOUR VISIT

After you qualify for an on-site assessment, the Assessment Manager will call or email the program about:

- Scheduling window
  - Programs are given a four-week window in which the on-site assessment can take place
- Block-out days
  - Days that would not be good for us to observe (e.g. field trips, special visitors, anything that might cause you to have an unusual day, etc.)
  - Every program receives five block-out dates during the scheduling window
    - If your program needs more than five block-out dates for a special situation, please tell the Assessment Manager
- Days and hours of operation
- Teachers' names
- Primary language spoken
- Parking and entering instructions
  - Share information about special parking lots or spaces and which doors to use
- Special scheduling considerations
  - For example, let the Assessment Manager know if:
    - Any days are not typical with special activities (e.g. library, music, chapel, etc.)
    - Any children have special accommodations or routines (e.g. behavior plans, Individual Education Plans (IEP), new children unaware of the routine, etc.)
    - The program layout makes it challenging for only one person to see everything (e.g. children move in and out of multiple rooms, children divided into groups throughout the day, etc.)

- Any teachers or children are participating in religious practices (e.g. fasting, special celebrations, etc.)
- The program is using a different space or temporary changes made to the space (e.g. renovations in progress, special decorations, etc.)

You will then receive a follow up email explaining:

- An overview of what to expect during the observation
- A link to a [photo and biography](#) for each Assessor
- A list of follow-up questions the Assessor may ask during the observation
- A list of items to have prepared for the Assessor to review or take including:
  - A copy of the daily schedule
  - Copies of current lesson plans
  - Copies of current anecdotal notes
  - Access to a child's file for review
  - Copy of the written curriculum statement
  - Diagram/map of the program space with approximate square footage
  - Approximate square footage of the outdoor play area

It is helpful to let the children know an Assessor will be coming to their program or classroom. Tell the children the Assessor will observe their learning and play for the day. This may ease their anxiety about having a stranger in the program. Introduce the Assessor on the day of observation as someone who will not be able to play with them.



## DURING YOUR VISIT

During the on-site assessment, the Assessor will:

- Arrive unannounced during the PQA scheduling window
- Stay at your program for three to six hours, depending on the daily schedule
  - The Assessor may observe for a longer time or may leave and return to see certain parts of the day
- The Assessor will observe the following:
  - Arrivals/Departures
  - Environment
  - Materials
  - Playtimes (indoor and outdoor)
  - Group times
  - Mealtimes
- The Assessor will:
  - Be friendly, courteous, and stay as unnoticed as possible
  - Arrive early enough to see most children arrive
  - Greet the staff and talk briefly about the day
  - Need to see a typical day
  - Take notes, while sitting quietly out of the way, but near enough to see and hear the children and teachers
  - Kindly direct children back to the teacher
  - Finish the observation
    - Around nap/rest time for full day programs
    - At the end of the session for part day programs
  - Have questions to ask at the end of the observation
    - This usually takes about 15 to 30 minutes
- If your program is eligible for more than one PQA:
  - You may have different Assessors for each observation
  - Visits may be on the same day or different days

## AFTER YOUR VISIT

After the on-site assessment, the Assessor will:

- Send you a survey invitation so that you can share feedback about your experience and the entire process
  - This will help us to continue to improve the process
- Review the observed evidence and score the PQA
- Complete a detailed PQA report which includes the observed evidence and the scores for each section and row

After the on-site assessment, the program will:

- Be contacted by the Quality Improvement Consultant (QIC) with your PQA results a few weeks after all on-site assessments are complete
  - Share any questions you have about your PQA report with your QIC, who will then reach out to your Assessor for more information or clarification
- Your program will then receive its published rating.
  - This rating will show when families search for care on the [GSQ website](#)
  - This rating is valid for two years from the date you receive your published rating
  - You can see the published rating date in the published rating box on your program's Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) page, on the Great Start to Quality (GSQ) STARS platform
  - If your program has made changes to improve program quality, you may apply for [Reassessment](#) prior to your two-year expiration date
    - For more information about Reassessment, see the [Great Start to Quality User Guide](#) or the [Reassessment Steps](#) document.

# Understanding Your PQA Results

## HOW IS THE PQA SCORED?

The Assessor will use their notes from the observation to score each row and section of the PQA. The scoring directions for each PQA are at the front of each PQA book.

- Each row in the PQA has a score of a level 1, level 3, or level 5
  - Level 5 = only high-quality observations
  - Level 3 = a mixture of high quality observations and areas for improvement
  - Level 1 = an area for improvement
- The overall score is an average of each section in the PQA
- Rows that score a level 5 will not have evidence in the report, as the program achieved high quality in these areas
  - If you would like evidence for certain level 5 rows, please tell your Quality Improvement Consultant (QIC) and they will contact your Assessor for the evidence
- Rows that score a level 3 or a level 1 will include evidence from the observation, including interactions between teachers and children, quotes from teachers and children, details about the environment, materials, and schedule, etc.

## HOW WILL THE PQA AFFECT MY STAR RATING?

If you had more than one PQA observation, all scores are averaged together for the final PQA score. The PQA scores and your validation results give the final published star rating.

### Non-Alternate Path Programs:

- Who validate at a 4 Star and have
  - an average PQA score of 3.5 or higher publish as a 4 Star
  - an average PQA score of 3.49 or lower publish as a 3 Star
- Who validate at a 5 Star and have
  - an average PQA score of 4.5 or higher publish as a 5 Star
  - an average PQA score of 3.5 to 4.49 publish as a 4 Star
  - an average PQA score of 3.49 or lower publish as a 3 Star

### Alternate Path Programs:

- Who validate at a 5 Star and have
  - an average PQA score of 4.5 or higher publish as a 5 Star
  - an average PQA score of 4.49 or lower publish as a 4 Star

# Things to Know About Using an Approved Rater

## WHO CAN USE AN APPROVED RATER?

Programs monitored at a national level or state level beyond licensing in Michigan are Alternate Path programs. These programs are:

- Great Start Readiness Programs (GSRP)
- Early Head Start
- Head Start
- Programs accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Alternate Path programs reaching the on-site assessment step of the process may have the choice of using an Approved Rater.

- Head Start, Early Head Start, NAEYC accredited programs can choose their Approved Rater
- GSRP programs, **must** use their Early Childhood Specialist (ECS) as their Approved Rater

## WHAT DOES AN OBSERVATION WITH AN APPROVED RATER LOOK LIKE?

Great Start to Quality (GSQ) does not assign Approved Raters. Program who have chosen to use the Approved Rater work directly with the Approved Rater. The program and Approved Rater decide scheduling, compensation, expectations, timelines, and all other details.

## HOW DO YOU BECOME AN APPROVED RATER?

Anyone wishing to serve as a GSQ Approved Rater must have all the following:

- Training through HighScope in the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) applicable to the program or classroom they will be conducting the assessment in (Preschool, Infant-Toddler, or Family Child Care)
- Certification from HighScope as a Reliable PQA Assessor (annually for the first two years and every two years thereafter)
- Be free of conflict of interest defined as:
  - Having supervisory responsibility for the program, classroom, or staff
  - Having a personal relationship with the director, owner, or staff of the program
    - A personal relationship is a friend or family member.
      - Share specific situations during the Approved Rater certification process for approval on a case by case basis
  - Having worked for the program in the past
  - Having an employment or contractual relationship with a Great Start Collaborative, Great Start Parent Coalition, or GSQ Resource Center to fulfill the duties of a Director/Coordinator, Parent Liaison, Quality Improvement Consultant (QIC), or Quality Improvement Specialist (QIS)
  - Having a relationship with the program resulting in financial benefit
- Complete the GSQ [Approved Rater Certification Process](#)

After all documentation and verification is complete, Approved Raters will receive a certificate via email appointing them as an Approved Rater for the PQA.

Early Childhood Specialists supporting Great Start Readiness Programs (GSRP) meet all Approved Rater Requirements through GSRP and do not need to do anything further to serve as an Approved Rater.

For more information about becoming an Approved Rater, please visit the [Approved Rater](#) page of the GSQ website or email: [GSQApprovedRater@ecic4kids.org](mailto:GSQApprovedRater@ecic4kids.org)

## WHAT DOES AN APPROVED RATER DO WITH THE PQA RESULTS?

Approved Raters enter the PQA results into the OnlinePQA system.

The following criteria must be complete in the OnlinePQA system for the PQA scores to transfer to the Great Start to Quality (GSQ) STARS platform.

- The program **must** show they have requested an Approved Rater on their Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) page in the GSQ STARS platform by clicking the "**Request PQA Rater(s)**" button and selecting "**Approved Rater**"
- The *classroom name* in the Online PQA system **must** be the License ID and classroom identifier (ex. DC123456789-PreK2)
- Classroom has not yet had a score sent to the GSQ STARS platform
- Assessment is complete in the OnlinePQA system and from the current school year
- Each classroom assessment says *Observer* NOT *Self* in OnlinePQA

The [Classroom Identifier Guidance](#) document can help you make sure you have completed these steps.

Once the results transfer to the GSQ STARS platform, your program will receive its published rating.

- This rating will show when families search for care
- This rating is valid for two years from the date you receive your published rating
- You can see the published rating date in the published rating box on your program's SAS page
- If your program has made changes to improve quality, you may apply for [Reassessment](#) prior to your two-year expiration date
  - For more information about Reassessment, see the [Great Start to Quality User Guide](#) or the [Reassessment Steps](#) document.

# Glossary

**Assessment Team:** Employees of the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) who support the assessment process; including the Assessors and the Assessment Manager

**Assessor:** An employee of the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) who conducts Program Quality Assessments (PQA) for Great Start to Quality (GSQ); also known as a GSQ Rater

**Alternate Path Program:** An Alternate Path program has a Head Start, Early Head Start, Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) classroom, or is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

**Approved Rater:** Someone who has completed the certification process that you have chosen to complete your Program Quality Assessment (PQA) for Great Start to Quality (GSQ)

**Great Start to Quality (GSQ):** Michigan's quality rating and improvement system that supports you while also helping families find and choose quality programs that meet their children's needs

**GSQ Rater:** An employee of the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) who conducts Program Quality Assessments (PQA) for Great Start to Quality (GSQ); also known as an Assessor

**Non-Alternate Path Program:** Any program that does not have a Head Start, Early Head Start, or a Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) classroom, or is not accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

**Program Quality Assessment (PQA):** A rating tool designed by HighScope to look at the quality of early childhood programs



**Reassessment:** Reassessment is a process programs and providers go through when they have made any significant change that affects their published rating prior to their expiration date

**Re-Rating:** Re-Rating is a new rating process that programs and providers go through to renew their current published rating before the rating expires

**Reliable:** Results and information obtained from a tool that are the same no matter who conducted it, where it was completed or when it was used

**Valid:** Results obtained based on what the tool should measure

## Resources

**Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Infant and Toddler Programs:**

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/ECSQ\\_IT\\_approved\\_422341\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/ECSQ_IT_approved_422341_7.pdf)

**Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten:**

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/ECSQ\\_OK\\_Approved\\_422339\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/ECSQ_OK_Approved_422339_7.pdf)

**Great Start to Quality Resource Center Information:**

<http://www.greatstarttoquality.org/find-resource-center> or call [1-877-614-7328](tel:1-877-614-7328)

**Great Start to Quality Login Page:**

<https://stage.worklivesystems.com/program/4>

**Great Start to Quality User Guide:**

<http://www.greatstarttoquality.org/sites/default/files/GSQ%20User%20Guide.pdf>

**Great Start to Quality website:**

<http://www.greatstarttoquality.org>

**HighScope Website:**

<http://www.highscope.org>

## Assessment Team Photos and Biographies

### **Allyson Page - Assessor**



Allyson Page joined the Early Childhood Investment Corporation in September 2017. Her current work is focused on conducting on-site assessment based on the Program PQA tools.

Ms. Page's goal is to help provide quality education for children. She has worked in the Education field for over ten years, and four of those years were working in Early Childhood. She has worked in infant, toddler and preschool settings, as a Substitute Teacher, a Paraprofessional, an Athletic Coach, and as a Private and Public-School Teacher for Young 5's through 12th grade. Through her work and educational background, Ms. Page has gained knowledge and experience in assessment and curriculum tools, organization and planning, and adaptation and collaboration.

Ms. Page received a Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education with a minor in Health, from Grand Valley State University. Ms. Page is also certified as a reliable Program Quality Assessment tool assessor.

### **Amber Vanderzalm - Assessor**



Amber Vanderzalm joined the Early Childhood Investment Corporation in January of 2017. Her current work is focused conducting on-site assessments based on the PQA tools. Previously, Ms. Vanderzalm worked as an independently contracted Great Start to Quality Assessment Specialist. In that role, she validated programs' Self-Assessment Surveys and completed on-site assessments using the PQA tools.

Ms. Vanderzalm has worked in the Early Childhood field for eighteen years. She has been a lead teacher in preschool classrooms in child care centers and in a Head Start program. Ms. Vanderzalm spent eleven years as a lead teacher in a Head Start preschool classroom and was promoted to the Education Specialist. As the Education Specialist, she was responsible for mentoring eleven preschool

teachers, as well as providing training and resources. Through her work, Ms. Vanderzalm gained experience in best practices in teaching, assessment of programs and staff, and providing resources to improve the quality of the program.

Ms. Vanderzalm received her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education, with an emphasis on Early Childhood, from Western Michigan University and is certified as a reliable Program Quality Assessment tools assessor.

### **Hayley Norris - Assessor**



Hayley Norris joined the Early Childhood Investment Corporation in January of 2017. Her current work is focused on conducting on-site assessments based on the PQA tools. Previously, Ms. Norris worked as an independently contracted Great Start to Quality Assessment Specialist. In that role, she validated programs' Self-Assessment Surveys and completed on-site assessments using the PQA tools.

Ms. Norris has worked in the Early Childhood field for eleven years. After graduating college, Ms. Norris became a nanny for a family of two young children before taking a position as a preschool teacher in Bloomfield Hills. From there, she moved out-of-state where she became a lead teacher in Georgia's state funded Georgia Pre-K program. She also spent time as a lead teacher while living in Georgia. In August of 2009, Hayley moved back to Michigan where she began subbing at the ECC in Birmingham, where she then quickly became the lead teacher of their HighScope based preschool classroom. From there she became an interim co-director of the ECC. Through her work, Ms. Norris gained experience in best practices in teaching, assessment of programs and staff, and providing resources to improve the quality of the program.

Ms. Norris received her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education, with an emphasis on Early Childhood, from Western Michigan University and is certified as a reliable Program Quality Assessment tools assessor.

### **Lisa Bremer - Assessor**



Lisa Bremer joined the Early Childhood Investment Corporation in January of 2017. Her current work is focused on conducting on-site assessments based on the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) tools. Previously, Ms. Bremer worked as an independently contracted Great Start to Quality Assessment Specialist. In that role, she also completed on-site assessments using the PQA tools.

Ms. Bremer worked in the education field on and off for the past 22 years. She has been a substitute teacher, the lead teacher in preschool classrooms, and the assistant director of an early childhood center. Her multiple roles allowed her to expand her knowledge of early childhood education not only from the teaching perspective but from the management aspect as well. She homeschooled two of her four children through elementary school and has volunteered in her children's classrooms throughout their education.

Ms. Bremer earned her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education with an Early Childhood Endorsement from Western Michigan University, graduating with honors. She held a Michigan's Teaching Certificate and is certified as a reliable Program Quality Assessment tools assessor.

### **Nicole Kretzschmer - Assessment Manager**



Nicole Kretzschmer provides oversight and leadership to the Assessment Team in implementing the Assessment portion of Great Start to Quality. She joined the Investment Corporation as a Great Start to Quality Validator in January of 2015. This work was focused on reviewing the evidence submitted by programs and providers as a part of their Self-Assessment Survey. Previously, Ms. Kretzschmer worked as an independently contracted Great Start to Quality Assessment Specialist. In that role, she validated programs' Self-Assessment-Surveys and completed on-site assessments using the Program PQA tools.

Prior to joining Great Start to Quality, Ms. Kretzschmer worked in various early childhood programs with a diverse set of early childhood professionals, families, and children to support quality early childhood education. She has experience working with children from birth through eighth grade in settings which include family child care programs, privately owned child care programs, religious-based programs, summer camps, and Head Start. She has been a preschool lead teacher and has worked with elementary age children in out of school time settings. During her time in early childhood, she gained an in-depth understanding of preschool curriculum best practice, child development screening and assessment, and how to structure peer learning opportunities.

Ms. Kretzschmer received her Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Great Lakes Christian College. She is certified as a reliable Program Quality Assessment tools assessor and has completed Adaptive Schools Training, Cognitive Coaching, and Crucial Conversations.

### **TaShanna Norrell - Assessor**



TaShanna Norrell joined the Early Childhood Investment Corporation in January of 2017. Her current work is focused on conducting on-site assessments based on the PQA tools. Previously, Ms. Norrell worked as an independently contracted Great Start to Quality Assessment Specialist. In that role, she also completed on-site assessments using the PQA tools.

Ms. Norrell's goal is to help provide quality education for children. She has worked in the Education field for over ten years, and in the Early Childhood Field for five years. She has worked in preschool settings, as a Head Start Teacher, GSRP teacher, Assistant Director, a Site Leader, and an Educational Specialist for GSRP. She has experience in implementing and training educational staff in the assigned curriculum.

Ms. Norrell received a Bachelor's Degree in Education with a minor in Early Childhood Education, from Ashford University. She also has a Masters of Art in Early Childhood Education and a Master's of Science in Early Childhood Education with the focus of Teaching Early Childhood to Adults. Ms. Norrell also is certified as a reliable Program Quality Assessment tools assessor.