

IDHS Specialist CQI Toolkit

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT CHANGE

- The Continuous Quality Improvement Cycle
- CQI House Reflective Activity – Program Administrators
- CQI House
- Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP) Template and Summary
- Fold Your Arms – with reflective questions
- Individual Professional Development Plans
- Kaizen Philosophy and Lasting Change
- Moving From “I” to “We”: All Change is Personal
- Writing Measureable Objectives and Bloom’s Taxonomy
- Stuck on an Escalator Video Clip – with reflective questions
- Thinking Outside the Square
- Where Do You Stand: Adventurous or Cautious

Continuous Quality Improvement Cycle

Set the Overarching Goal

Collaboratively define what the team wants the program to achieve. A shared picture of the future creates ownership and commitment rather than forced compliance.

Act

Incorporate changes and improvements into the process.
Determine next steps.

- Implement the needed change(s).
- Should an alternative idea for change be considered?
- Identify what more we need to learn.
- Will the cycle run again with improvements?

Plan

Plan

Define and analyze the current process. Develop a Continuous Quality Improvement Program Plan (CQIP).

- What is the problem or challenge? What do the data tell us?
- How will we make improvements?
- How do we measure success?
- Who needs to be involved? What is our timeline?

Do

Do

Implement the plan into everyday practices.

- How is the process working?
- Are we on target with the timeline?
- Are we seeing evidence of change?

Act

Study

Analyze the impact and track the results.

- How did the process work? Were mid-course adjustments required?
- Were objectives met? How do we know?
- What still needs improvement?
- What new opportunities have surfaced?

Study

Silver/Gold Circle Cycle

#1

Support program in launching plans for a meaningful self-assessment process.

This step might include meeting with the program director, attending a staff meeting, initial relationship building activities and developing a clear message for the purposes of engaging in ExceleRate™ Illinois.

Use of Quality Standards overview chart.

#2

Specialist engages in consultation services.

Upon completion of the overview chart, the program administrator meets with the specialist to review/sign the consultation agreement. Program staff conducts self-assessment with specialist help, as needed, and develop the Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP). Provide CQIP support for the program or determine needed professional development/resources.

(This could be multiple visits.)



#4

Verification visit:

When the program administrator and specialist agree the program has prepared for or has evidence for the Silver or Gold Circle standards:

At the Silver Circle, a QS or ITCCS will conduct verification assessments.

At the Gold Circle, state-approved Assessors will conduct assessments.

#3

Check-in on CQIP Progress:

Conduct the PAS assessment and environment scan of classrooms related to ERS. Review the CQIP to update and determine additional action items.

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Planning for Change – The CQIP

A Continuous Quality Improvement Plan, or CQIP, is a powerful tool—a roadmap, really to create an intentional and systematic plan for improvement. It is based upon data. Classroom observations, various assessment tools, staff and family surveys, state, federal, and accreditation standards are just a few sources of evidence to consider when prioritizing the objectives in your plan.

You want to start off with an overarching goal for your program. It could be based off of your programs vision or mission statement or a very specific area, such as family communication, for instance. Input of the entire staff is essential for a CQIPs success. That is why you see that there are areas all over the plan where individuals can be responsible for the objective achievement or individual steps towards achievement of that objective. There are projected and actual timelines as we all know that “life happens” and timelines sometimes need to be adjusted. Keep in mind that the longest a plan should be in place is for one year. If you discover that additional work needs to be done to accomplish an objective, carry it over to the following year. There are also going to be objectives that can be accomplished in a small period of time, say for instance, reorganizing the dramatic play or art area. Perhaps the classroom(s) have the materials required, but they have simply been put away in a closet or need to be replenished as the supplies ran out. It’s important to keep in mind that you should try to only focus on 3-5 objectives per cycle, unless there are standards that your program needs to work on to achieve the QRIS level they are hoping to achieve or maintain.

Working with your CCR&R provides you with the tools and resources required to be successful in program improvement. Reach out to your local SDA for information on professional development opportunities around CQI and the CQIP as well as technical assistance that is available to help you achieve the goals that YOUR PROGRAM wants to achieve. You can find copies of these forms as well as a step-by-step guide at the following website link: <http://www.excelerateillinoisproviders.com/resources/resources-by-standard?id=57>.



Continuous Quality Improvement Program Plan Summary

Program Name: _____ ID: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ County: _____

Current Circle of Quality: _____

Last Self-Assessment Completed: _____

Last Verified Assessment Completed: _____ By: _____

Program Goal: _____

Use the Continuous Quality Improvement Program Planning Worksheet to develop objectives and transfer them to the grid below.

Objective	Projected Date of Completion	Staff Coordinating	Standard	Circle of Quality
	Actual Date of Completion			

Copy this page if additional space is needed.



Continuous Quality Improvement Program Planning Worksheet

Continuous Quality Improvement Objective: <input type="checkbox"/> Immediate (0-3 months) <input type="checkbox"/> Short Term (3-6 months) <input type="checkbox"/> Long Term (6 months - 1 year)	Staff Coordinating/Staff Involved	Projected Date of Completion
		Actual Date of Completion

ExceleRate Illinois Standard Number or Name: _____ Circle of Quality: Bronze Silver Gold

What action steps are needed to achieve this objective?

Action Steps	Person(s) Responsible	Projected Date of Completion	Actual Date of Completion

What source(s) of evidence did you use to determine the need for this objective?

Source(s) of Evidence	Date(s) Completed

What resources or supports are needed in order to achieve this objective?

Anticipated Challenges	Professional Development or Technical Assistance Needed	Changes and Improvements

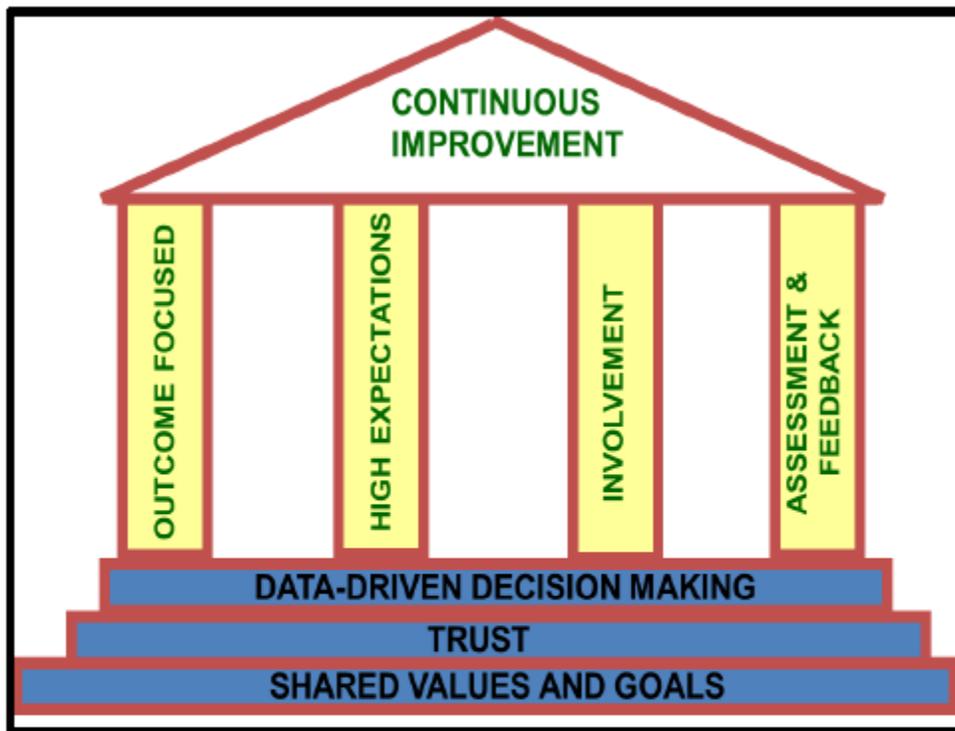
Please use the additional space (or back of this sheet) to reflect on why this objective matters for children in a high-quality program.

CQI Reflective Activity – Program Administrators

List some key words that you are picking out that are common threads in the CQI Cycle, the ExceleRate Silver/Gold Cycle, and the CQIP. List some key words which describe your vision.

1. What do you want to achieve in your program?
2. What's important to you?
3. How do you share this with your staff?
4. How do you put this into action?
5. Do you know what each member of your staff believes is important for your program?

The Components of Exemplary Organizations



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Building a House of Quality

THOUGHTS FOR PROGRAM LEADERS TO CONSIDER

Look at the *CQI House* graphic and really break down what each component means in our daily work.

The discussion points below relate to the house graphic at the foundation level. Each table should generate ideas and turn in one response page. Responses will be collected, analyzed, and shared at a future meeting.

1. Brainstorm strategies that support shared values and goals among staff serving children and families in Illinois.
2. Brainstorm strategies that support staff in creating an atmosphere of trust.
3. What information or data do you collect currently to inform decision making and how do you use it?

Reflection

Respond to the above questions in the context of the CQI House graphic. Use the space below if needed.

Fold Your Arms Activity

We often take for granted how comfortable we get in our daily habits. We often say and do things without even thinking about it. Here is an activity to give meaning or a “feel” to this statement. Face a partner and stand in front of one another and cross your arms in front of you. Fold your arms like you would typically fold them. Good. Easy enough. Now, switch directions and cross your arms the opposite way. How comfortable did that feel? Changing something, even as small as how you cross your arms can be uncomfortable or feel “unusual” to you.

1. Think of a personal or work habit that you have considered changing. What was the motivator for that consideration?
2. How did it “feel” at the time you were asked to adjust?
3. How does this activity resonate with you as you consider change?



Planning for Individual Professional Development – The IPDP

As early childhood administrators and teachers know, well-educated, skilled teachers are the key to implementing high-quality programs for young children. You also know that professional development is essential for supporting personal growth in knowledge, skills, and dispositions as well as keeping staff committed to the program and to the profession.

Let's tackle the big definition question first. What exactly is "professional development"? The term professional development is often confusing because it is used as both a noun and a verb. As a noun it is the transformational process of personal growth that over time expands one's knowledge base and builds new competencies. It is, in essence, the personal change that results from reflecting on experience.

As a verb, professional development refers to the actual activities and experiences that individuals engage in to enhance their repertoire of professional skills. In this sense, professional development can be viewed as a synonym for training—allocating resources, setting expectations, and providing opportunities for individuals to engage in experiences that will result in personal growth or change.

To further complicate things the terms "professional development" and "staff development" are often used interchangeably. Technically, however, there is a subtle difference between these two terms. Professional development applies to both the individual and to the whole staff where staff development refers to the whole staff.

Knowledge is what a person knows—the range of information a person possesses relating to child development, curriculum, teaching methodologies, inclusion, family relations, assessment, and so on. You get the idea. It's the content of what teachers learn in formal college coursework, informal in-service training, on-the-job experience, exploring the Internet, attending conferences, talking with colleagues, and even those pearls of wisdom tucked in fortune cookies.

Skill is the ability to put that knowledge into action through deliberate, systematic, and sustained practice. A teacher may read a dozen books and articles about different classroom management strategies, but not have a clue about how to translate that knowledge into practice when confronted with a dozen energetic three-year-olds all tussling for limited space in the block area. Skill also relates to a person's level of abstract thinking. This impacts his or her capacity to make informed decisions, solve problems, and fulfill the demands of a job.

Dispositions, while harder to observe and measure, are also essential in the competence equation. Dispositions are unique human qualities, a person's usual temperament. Dispositions are our tendency

to respond to situations in certain ways. Some dispositions are absolutely essential for effective classroom teaching—empathy, positive regard for others, flexibility, a nurturing spirit. Other dispositions are essential for ethical professional practice—fairness, appreciation of differing points of view, respect for diversity, a sense of social justice.

(From *Inspiring Peak Performance*, pp.4–5)

There are five characteristics of effective professional development that can help you assess the adult learning experiences available for staff in the program. Effective professional development should be tied to the career stage, learning style, and competence level of each individual teacher. The cornerstone of our work with children rests on the recognition of individual differences. We use the term “developmentally appropriate” all the time. With children we take for granted that we should tailor our curriculum to their individual developmental needs. The same principle applies to the adults on staff. No two adults are alike. Thus cookie-cutter approaches to staff development are bound to fail. It’s akin to asking staff to all wear the same size shoe.

Second, professional development experiences should build on a teacher’s strengths and interests, not just focus on their shortcomings and deficits. A deficit model is damaging. It implies that the teacher is incompetent and by using prescriptive techniques we can “fix” the person just like we might fix a broken chair. A growth model works in partnership with the teacher to identify strengths and areas that can be improved. It implies that teaching and learning are complex activities in which no one ever masters the totality. Teachers need to play an active role in identifying those areas of professional practice that they want to strengthen.

Third, effective professional development takes into consideration the importance of the teacher’s work context. Teacher development does not take place in a vacuum. Its success is influenced in many ways by the organizational supports available to the teacher. Personal and professional change cannot occur if there is not a supporting organizational framework.

The fourth characteristic is that professional development should scaffold the teacher to the next level of competence. Professional development experiences that tend to be the most meaningful in producing change are those that build the teacher’s knowledge and skill in small incremental steps. In other words, professional development experiences need to be challenging but not too overwhelming.

The final characteristic of effective professional development is that it occurs over time. One-shot workshops seldom produce lasting change. Follow-up and opportunities to reflect on new learning are essential if the goal is to change behavior and attitudes.

As you can see from the samples in the next following pages, creating an individual professional development plan, (IPDP) involves many steps that involve each staff member and the director collectively creating an educational plan that meets the needs of the individual and program as well.

Your CCR&R is a great resource to find out what professional development opportunities are available around how to complete these plans as well as providing technical assistance around IPDPs in your program.

Individual Learning Plan Sample

Teacher's name: Amber

Date: September 24

Self-Reflection

- ❖ What aspect of your job gives you the greatest personal satisfaction?

My relationship with the children is my greatest joy. I am lucky to have such a diverse group this year from very different cultural traditions. I also love working with my assistant teacher, Carmen. She has a special way of connecting with the parents of our dual language learners.

- ❖ What aspect of your job is most frustrating?

With the staffing changes earlier this month, Carmen and I inherited Lila's old classroom. The layout is horrible. The kids are tripping over one another in some areas of the room and other areas are definitely underutilized.

- ❖ What keeps you from being as effective as you would like to be in your position?

The poor arrangement of space has definitely contributed to some behavioral problems with the children. They are dumping bins of plastic toys all over the place and not really using them in meaningful ways. Cleanup time is a real struggle.

- ❖ If you had the power to change anything about your job, what would you change?

I think teachers should have more time to get their classrooms set up before new students arrive in September. That didn't happen this year. It would be good if staffing and classroom assignments could be decided earlier next year.

- ❖ What do you see yourself doing five years from now?

I hope one day to be the lead teacher in the pre-K wing.

- ❖ What new skills or knowledge would you like to learn this year?

Last year I focused on my role managing children's behavior. Now I want to learn how the arrangement of space and changes in lighting, color, texture, and other design elements impact children's behavior. I'd also like to see how I can reduce the amount of plastic in my classroom and introduce more natural elements to make it more calming and aesthetically pleasing.

Adapted from Bella, J., & Bloom, P.J., & Hentschel, A. (2014). *Inspiring Peak Performance Trainer's Guide*. Lake Forest, IL: New Horizons. Reprinted with permission.

❖ How can I or other staff help you achieve your personal and professional goals?

I'd like to explore some of the ideas with you that are in two books in our staff library: *Inspiring Spaces for Young Children* and *Designs for Living and Learning*. I'd also like to be able to visit the Reggio-inspired classroom at the community college lab school with you.

Goal Setting

Strengths as a teacher:

1. Creates a nurturing emotional climate for children
2. Supports assistant teacher through effective modeling and helpful feedback
3. Promotes a spirit of teamwork in the pre-K wing

Identified growth areas:

1. I'd like to expand my understanding about how the classroom space is currently being used and
2. I want to learn how different design elements like color, texture, light, and objects from nature can be integrated into the learning environment to make it more aesthetically pleasing.
3. I'd like to explore how to weave examples from the children's cultural heritages into the classroom environment.

Goal: The classroom space will be a warm and engaging learning environment that reflects the cultural diversity of the children served.

Related standards: NAEYC Early Childhood Program Accreditation Standards and Criteria

- 3.A. Designing enriched learning environments
- 7.A. Knowing and understanding the program's families
- 2.J. Curriculum content area for cognitive development: Creative expression and appreciation for the arts

Objectives:

1. To improve the use of space during free-choice time

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2. To increase the use of natural elements in the classroom environment and decrease reliance on plastic and commercially produced materials
3. To increase the ways that children's cultural heritages are reflected in the environment

Action Steps

Objective #1: To improve the use of space during free-choice time

Activities	Time needed	Resources needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do an observation of how the children currently use different learning centers during free-choice time ▪ Based on the findings, rearrange the classroom to achieve better overall balance in the use of learning centers ▪ Document changes in a second observation in 3 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4 hrs to gather initial data ▪ 2 hours to draw up new plan and 8 hrs over a weekend to rearrange classroom ▪ 4 hrs to gather data documenting change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4 hrs of floater time to help out during data collection ▪ Someone to help rearrange space ▪ 4 hours of floater time for post analysis

Evaluation: Share initial findings and plan for redesign with my supervisor in October. Discuss findings from post analysis and share journal reflections of the change process in May.

Objective #2: To increase the use of natural elements in the classroom environment and decrease reliance on plastic and commercially produced learning materials

Activities	Time needed	Resources needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct a self-study of classroom using the Rating Observation Scale for Inspiring Environments (ROSIE), visit Reggio-inspired classroom at the college lab school, and read four articles ▪ Participate in "Going Green" webinar ▪ Make 2 changes each week to reduce plastic and add more natural elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 hrs to do self-study and 4 hours for site visit ▪ 4 hours to read books and articles ▪ 2 hrs per week to gather materials and make changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Copy of ROSIE ▪ 4 hrs of substitute time ▪ \$80 to purchase baskets, fabric, pillows, and misc items from thrift store

Evaluation: Share results of self-study with my supervisor in October. Take photographs weekly to document changes.

Objective #3: To increase the ways children's cultural heritage is reflected in the environment

Adapted from Bella, J., & Bloom, P.J., & Hentschel, A. (2014). *Inspiring Peak Performance Trainer's Guide*. Lake Forest, IL: New Horizons. Reprinted with permission.

Activities	Time needed	Resources needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Invite families to share photographs, books, fabric, musical instruments, and other artifacts reflecting their cultural heritage ▪ Display cultural items as appropriate and weave into curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 20 min per family ▪ 15 min/wk to update displays with new items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 20 min of Carmen's time per week to connect with Spanish-speaking families

Evaluation: Share progress with supervisor and peer learning team in February.

Goal Setting

Strengths as a teacher:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Identified growth areas:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Goal:

Related standards: NAEYC Early Childhood Program Accreditation Standards and Criteria

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Objectives:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Action Steps

Objective #1:

Activities	Time needed	Resources needed

Evaluation:

Objective #2:

Activities	Time needed	Resources needed

Evaluation:

Objective #3:

Activities	Time needed	Resources needed

Evaluation:

Kaizen Philosophy and Lasting Change

The Japanese management theory of Kaizen challenges the notion that bold new products or innovative school reform proposals are the recipe for lasting change. Kaizen emphasizes making changes in small, doable, incremental steps. It is these small steps that add up to big, sustainable change over time.

Let's take a few minutes for you to share some examples of the Kaizen approach. I'd like to you find a learning partner. You'll each have about two minutes to share an example of a time when you broke down a big project into small steps. It could be a personal example (a successful diet you went on) or a professional example (a major project at work). Ring a bell (or clap your hands) at the 2-minute mark to let the pair know when it is the other person's time to talk. Share among the group three or four examples of the ways you have applied the principle of Kaizen.

It is a challenge for many of us to move slowly and gradually, it is not in our DNA! We are a people of immediate gratification! I want to see it NOW! We want to move quickly and see the results immediately. Kaizen reminds us that to have the best chance of the change taking hold we must slow down and gradually make the changes needed. The examples you've provide give us powerful evidence of that.



Designing Measurable Objectives

As you engage in the continuous quality improvement process and design objectives for your facility the following is very important to keep in mind:

1. The objective must be performance based
2. The objective must be clear (not subject to misinterpretations)
All employees should know exactly what is expected of them
3. The objective needs to be action oriented, an action verb is used. Action verb examples include: list, describe, develop, implement, etc...
4. Consider your strategic, business and financial plans in developing your objectives
5. The end result is observable and measurable.
6. Use Bloom's taxonomy as a resource to write objectives.

Let's practice identifying a measureable objective in the next activity. For each number, circle the objective that meets the above criteria.

1. By the end of next year all the staff will better understand child development and will use this knowledge when lesson planning.

OR

By the end of next year all the staff will be able to list the domains of child development and use the different domains when lesson planning.

2. By January all head teachers will be able to better arrange their classroom.

OR

By January all head teachers will attend an ERS workshop and practice implementing the key principles of room arrangement using the ERS scale appropriate for their age group.

3. Beginning September 1st, during new staff orientation all staff will learn what the acronyms DAP, NAEYC and ExceleRate stand for and will be able to discuss the importance of each one by at their one month evaluation.

OR

During new staff orientation everyone will learn about DAP and will understand its importance in the early childhood field.

4. All staff will begin using the proper diaper changing procedure.

OR

All staff will learn about the new diaper changing procedure.

5. All staff will participate in workshops where they will learn about the importance of partnering with families.

OR

All staff will take at least two workshops over the next year and by next January each staff member will be able provide evidence of 3 strategies they use in their classroom that help them partner with families.

Bloom's Cognitive Taxonomy and Competency Levels

BLOOM'S COGNITIVE TAXONOMY

Bloom's classification of cognitive skills (1956) is widely used in instruction planning. The taxonomy was updated in 2001 by Lorin Anderson, a student of Bloom's, to reflect relevance to 21st century work. The six levels are arranged by level of complexity using verbs to describe the levels.

Category	Definition	Related Behaviors
Remembering	Recalling or remembering something without necessarily understanding, using or changing it. Can the student recall or remember the information?	Define, describe, identify, label, list, match, memorize, point to, recall, select, state.
Understanding	Understanding something that has been communicated without necessarily relating it to anything else. Can the student explain ideas or concepts presented?	Alter, account for, annotate, calculate, change, convert, group, explain, generalize, give examples, infer, interpret, paraphrase, predict, review, summarize, translate.
Applying	Using a general concept to solve problems in a particular situation; using learned material in new and concrete situations. Can the student use the information in a new way?	Apply, adopt, collect, construct, demonstrate, discover, illustrate, infer, outline, point out, select, separate, sort, subdivide.
Analyzing	Breaking something down into its parts; may focus on identification of parts or analysis of relationships between parts, or recognition of organization principles. Can the student distinguish between the different parts or principles?	Analyze, compare, contrast, diagram, differentiate, dissect, distinguish, identify, illustrate, infer, outline, point out, select, separate, sort, subdivide.
Evaluating	Judging the value of material or methods as they might be applied in a particular situation; judging with the use of definite criteria. Can the student justify a stand or decision?	Accept, appraise, assess, arbitrate, award, choose, conclude, criticize, defend, evaluate, grade, judge, prioritize, recommend, referee, reject, select, support.
Creating	Creating something new by putting parts of different ideas together to make a whole. Can the student create new product or point of view?	Blend, build, change, combine, compile, compose, conceive, create, design, formulate, generate, hypothesize, plan, predict, produce, reorder, revise, tell, write.

Source: Anderson, L.W., & Krathwohl (Eds.). (2001). *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. New York: Longman.

All Change Is Personal – Moving From “I” to “We”

All change is personal. I’m sure at some point in your career when you’ve been confronted with the prospect of change some of these thoughts have gone through your mind. Whether you are a leader in your organization or a team member, it will be important to remember that staff may be feeling the same thing even when you and they both know a proposed change is needed. If you can help staff shift from an “I” and “Me” focus to an “Us” and “We” focus, it can help temper some of the anxiety that comes with change. Consider the following statements privately as they relate to being asked to make a change. Then allow the group to discuss how each statement resonates within the group.

- What do I have to do **now**?
- What do they expect from **me**?
- What if it’s something **I don’t know** how to do?
- I’m pretty sure this **isn’t** in my job description!

A continuous quality Improvement (CQI) leadership philosophy is a mindset that filters what you do day-to-day in your group and how you make decisions and solve problems. There are three assumptions guiding this philosophy. First, change is ongoing. There is no “finish line” in the race to quality. Even star-studded programs can improve. New research, changing funding requirements, and our own wisdom gleaned from working with children and families provide the questions we need to ask ourselves about how we can strengthen the quality of what we do. Second, change that is self-directed and self-determined will elicit a deeper commitment from all involved. This is an important point. CQI differs from traditional quality assurance or licensing requirements in that it is not imposed by an external entity. The program drives the focus of change, not an outside entity. Third, change that is implemented in small, incremental steps will more likely achieve better results. As you consider these three components, ask yourself these additional questions:

- What is it **we** are going to accomplish?
- What are **our** goals?
- What is the benefit to **our** children, families, staff, and the program?

Now discuss as a group how valuable this switch from “I” to “We” can make change less daunting and the responsibility of the entire team. This can be in small or a large group. Someone should chart the discussion as there may be some great supports here when anyone on the team gets “stuck”.

Stuck On an Escalator Video Clip

Many people handle problems and challenges differently. This can be due to past experiences, confidence levels, or trust in oneself or their team. Let's watch a [brief video](#) that demonstrates how some people struggle with a problem or challenge.

1. How does the video clip "Stuck on an Escalator" connect with you?
2. Why do you think that for some people, they get "stuck" in a way of doing things and can't see beyond the current situation?
3. How do you help a colleague (or yourself) get off the escalator?
4. What other thoughts or questions come to your mind as you reflect upon this video clip?

Thinking Outside The Square

Problem solving comes naturally to some of us – it is a learned skill for others. Here is an activity to do in a staff meeting that looks at the problem solving process in a light hearted game format. Here are the rules of the “game”.

GROUND RULES

1. Everyone must have both feet on a square.
2. When I say, “Change!” everyone must move to a new square.
3. We cannot continue with the next “change” unless everyone has both feet on a square.

Set up: Put all the newspaper (or recycled paper) squares on the floor. Space them out randomly. There should be the same number of newspaper/paper squares as there are participants. (Note: For this activity to be successful, you need to make certain that there are other “square” objects in the room.)

Narrative: You’re familiar with the term “Outside the Box.” This next activity is going to take a slightly different twist on that term. I’m calling it “Outside the Square.” Take a moment now to find a square and go stand on that square. (Note: Do not say “Newspaper/Paper Square” at any time during this activity, only the word “Square.”). Take a look at the screen. I am going to read the ground rules for this activity:

(Once everyone has both feet on a square, you can start the game.)

“Change.” (Once everyone have moved to a new square, you can then say the next “Change.” Do this about three times. After having about three changes, pick up one of the squares as they are moving during a change so that there are not enough newspaper/paper squares on the floor for everyone to have one to stand on. At this stage, the person who does not have a square to stand will usually believe they are out of the game.)

Let me read once again our third rule: “We cannot continue with the next ‘Change’ unless everyone has both feet on a square.” Does everyone have both feet on the square? (The answer is an obvious “no,” because this one person is “out.” Repeat the third rule once again and then keep quiet. You will find that they will all look around in silence for a couple of seconds and then someone will offer to share her/his newspaper/paper square with that person.)

(Possible prompting questions you may need to interject are as follows: Note that other questions may be generated based upon the comments from the participants as they go through the experience. The questions may occur in any order as participants share feelings or make comments or suggestions.)

1. (If someone tears a square) Wow! That is a GREAT solution! I wonder what other options exist out there?
2. As people start to say “I guess I am out” (or something similar to this statement). Hmm...I wonder if there has to be a “loser”? Is there another way?
3. What do you think will happen if you keep following the same strategy you have been of simply moving to an open square? What will I keep doing? How does this make you feel?

Congratulations for thinking outside the square. Change. (Do this several more times while you continue to take newspaper/paper squares away. You will find that as the number of squares decreases, participants will start getting anxious and start rushing toward the few remaining newspaper/paper squares. This is because they view all these changes from an old mind map and from a viewpoint of scarcity. At this point, stop the activity temporarily, while they are still standing on their newspaper/paper squares.)

What is happening here? What am I doing? (The obvious answer is that you are taking their squares away.) What do you think I am going to keep on doing? Where will this activity end if you keep on acting with the same mindset? (You will find confused faces. Some will answer your last question. But just put the pressure back on by saying “Change” again and start taking more newspaper/paper squares away. This will keep until one person realizes that a square doesn’t have to be a NEWSPAPER/PAPER square. This is the time when someone stands on a chair with the rationale that the chair’s seat is a square. Or she/he realizes that the room that they are in is a square and so on. If someone finds an “alternative” square, ask him or her if they have both feet in a square. If they answer “yes,” carry on with the game and say, “Change” again. Some people will follow the lead and find alternative squares. But the interesting thing is that most people don’t try to find alternative squares. They keep on thinking with the “old” view of a square equals a newspaper/paper square. This simulates the normal human behavior during change. Some will embrace change as an opportunity and others will take some time to adapt. Keep on saying, “Change” until all the newspaper/paper squares are gone and everyone has found an alternative square. As time permits, debrief on the purpose of this activity.)

Adapted from: <http://www.sustainable-employee-motivation.com/change-management-activity.html>

SQUARE OFF

1. What were you feeling/thinking as the game started? As it progressed?
2. Give an example where you have had to think outside of the box when being asked to do more with less resources? What was your original reaction?
3. How did you overcome this frustration or anxiety?
4. If you have a difficult time managing this frustration or anxiety, how might this activity help you as a team discuss making changes/improvements in your programs?

Where Do You Stand?

Let's explore our own reactions to change. I'm sure you know some people who are real risk takers. They're game to go skydiving out of an airplane or go bungee jumping from a bridge. They'll change their hair style at a whim or follow the latest fashion craze with enthusiasm. They're adventurous trying out new foods and new ideas to add zest to their life. At the other end of the continuum are folks that aren't quite so comfortable with change. They tend to be more cautious and conservative in their approach to life, like established routines, and embrace the status quo because it gives structure and stability to their life. They feel more comfortable with continuity and consistency. Both traits are valuable to any organization. Having a balance of these two mindsets is a good thing! Figuring out how to create a team around these two different reactions to change can be a challenge. This is important to keep in mind. As the following statements are read, imagine an imaginary line down the middle of the room and move to a spot along that line where you feel you fall. At one end is the cautious person who feels more comfortable with the continuity and predictability of the status-quo; at the other end is the adventurous risk-taker who loves change-for-change's sake. (Point to each end of the room.)

Cautious



Adventurous

(Allow time for people to position themselves on the continuum as you read each new item.)

I generally....

- believe I must succeed before I will try something new
- feel there is a right and wrong way to do most things
- like to experiment doing things in different ways
- believe that my staff are satisfied with the way things are
- avoid taking risks
- believe that established routines are really important
- hold on to the status quo because change is too stressful
- love variety and shaking things up

1. How does knowing where an individual "lands" on each statement support growth in the team?
2. How does it support the growth of an individual?
3. Why are both considerations important to an organization?