



# Best Starts for Kids Expanded Learning Quality Initiative Overview



# Table of Contents

---

**01** General Initiative Structure

**02** Our Cohorts

**03** Initiative Timeline

**04** Training Expectations

**04** Coaching Expectations

**05** Place-Based Collaboratives

**05** Licensed Childcare Providers



# General Initiative Structure



The Best Starts for Kids Expanded Learning Quality Initiative features a professional development process that all grantee organizations will participate in over the course of the 3 year grant cycle.

A Continuous Quality Improvement process is anchored by the Forum for Youth Investment's David P. Weikart Center's [Assess-Plan-Improve cycle](#). Grantees will be supported through this process by SOWA's professional development services of program assessment, training, and coaching. To ensure each organization receives the most suitable support for their unique needs, the Quality initiative will be organized into three different cohorts with tailored activities, timelines, and goals.

Cohort placement will be determined after organizations are awarded funds and have no relationship to funding amount. Grantee organizations will determine their own cohort placement, in conversation with SOWA staff and utilizing a rubric as a reference tool. While organizations may shift their cohort placement in relevant circumstances, the intention of this design is to engage in the same cohort for the entirety of the initiative as this will ensure the most cohesive experience of Quality support.

# Our Cohorts

## Program Quality Readiness Cohort

For those with low/no exposure to the Weikart Center's formal Program Quality Intervention (PQI) as well as those with limited internal capacity.

- Dive into the philosophy of continuous quality improvement as an introduction to specific skill-building
  - Ease into learning the mechanics of a formal PQI process, culminating in full engagement in a cycle
  - Learn the framework of quality youth work practices and build foundational adult practices into program delivery for direct-service staff
  - Establish foundational, long-term tools to maintain continuous quality improvement work for program managers and leadership
- 

## Continuous Program Quality Improvement Cohort

For those with foundational quality youth work practices and strong organization infrastructure. Prior experience with Weikart Center models not required.

- Leverage internal structures to participate in a formal Program Quality Intervention (PQI), the keystone of continuous quality improvement
  - Immediately engage in multiple rounds of a PQI cycle to build more robust and consistent practices
  - Explore Social Emotional Learning practices for direct-service staff
  - Gain strategies to support continuous quality improvement (regardless of formal PQI engagement) for program managers and leadership
- 

## Deepening Quality Cohort

For those with successful, seasoned participation in Program Quality Interventions (PQI).

- Strengthen existing continuous quality improvement practices and structures to ensure quality is embedded into all levels of the program and is not dependent on individual staff
- Emphasis on management coaching, train-the-trainer supports, and peer learning
- Immediately engage in the formal PQI cycle, including assessments
- Dig deep into adapting Social Emotional Learning practices to your program context

# Initiative Timeline

Note that the PQR Cohort is individualized while the CPQI and DQ Cohorts share an aligned timeline.

<p><b>June and July 2022</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grantees finalized</li> <li>• Organizations work with SOWA to determine cohort placement</li> <li>• Coaches are matched with all organizations</li> <li>• Foundational online course shared with organizations for self-paced engagement</li> </ul>
<p><b>August 2022</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intro to Program Quality Pre-Training (PQR)</li> </ul>
<p><b>September 2022</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PQI Kick-Off (CPQI and DQ)</li> <li>• Follow-up training on foundational courses</li> <li>• SEL PQA Basics (CPQI and DQ)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fall 2022</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessments</li> <li>• Introduction to Learning Community Meetings (CPQI and DQ)</li> <li>• Bridge Conference</li> <li>• Planning with Data (CPQI and DQ)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Spring 2023</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Learning Community Meetings (PQR)</li> <li>• Planning with Data (PQR)</li> <li>• LCM and Data LCM (CPQI and DQ)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fall 2023</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PQI Kick-Off (PQR)</li> <li>• SEL PQA Basics (PQR)</li> <li>• LCM and Data LCM (CPQI and DQ)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Spring 2024</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LCM and Data LCM (All Cohorts)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fall 2024</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LCM, Closing Reflection Session (All Cohorts)</li> </ul>



## Training Expectations

The required trainings for each cohort prioritize a core suite of foundational skills and group learning spaces. Grantees are strongly encouraged to attend additional SOWA trainings, which are held regularly throughout the year and cover a broad range of topics. Tailored training recommendations will be provided for each cohort, and organizations will have the flexibility and autonomy to determine what additional content is relevant to their work.

## Coaching Expectations

At the start of each year of the initiative, grantees will work with their coach to develop a coaching plan. Organizations are expected to meet with their coach at least once a month, ideally with a consistent schedule. Additional requirements differ for the 3 cohorts, will be designed to support organizations through the formal Program Quality Intervention cycle.

### PQR Cohort coaching

- Self-Assessment consensus meeting
- Quality goal-setting process
- Quality onboarding for new staff

### CPQI Cohort coaching

- Self-Assessment consensus meeting
- Quality goal-setting process

### DQ Cohort coaching

- Self-Assessment consensus meeting
- Quality goal-setting process
- Management coaching

# Place-Based Collaboratives

Collaboratives may consist of members who are in different cohorts. In general, expectations for each partner will be consistent with their individual cohort.

<p><b>Coaching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All partners will meet monthly with a combination of each other organization and their coach (this can look many different ways so long as all organizations connect with each other and their coach in some format)</li><li>• Further support for partnerships will be available through resources like training and technical assistance, outside of formal coaching</li></ul>	<p><b>Assessments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If Collaborative members are in different cohorts, those in the Program Quality Readiness cohort will “shadow” the process of their partners but won’t be expected to preemptively participate in consensus, goal setting, or in implementing goals</li><li>• All self-assessments are to be done jointly</li><li>• All organizations receive individual external assessments, and SOWA will share back aggregate EA scores for the whole collaborative</li></ul>
---	---

# Licensed Childcare Providers

The unique structure of LCPs can make engagement in a Program Quality Intervention initiative challenging. To mitigate this and to ensure that SOWA’s professional development is relevant and valuable to these providers, some modifications will be made:

<p><b>Coaching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LCPs will be matched with a coach who is best suited to streamline and help navigate additional, external supports</li></ul>	<p><b>Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LCPs will primarily access self-paced, online content housed on SOWA’s Learning Management System as training schedules are often incompatible with LCP hours</li><li>• STARS credit will be available for all required trainings, and for the majority of additional SOWA trainings</li></ul>
---	---

Best Starts for  
**KIDS**

**sowa**  
School's Out Washington