

# PIRL

## Preparation, Interaction, Reflection and Logistics (PIRL) Tool

*An adaptation of the Weikart Center's School Age PQA for Denver's Virtual Youth Programs*

VERSION 1 | UPDATED 5.15.20



<b>Organization:</b>	
<b>Session name:</b>	
<b>Staff name:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Assessor name:</b>	

# PIRL

## TOOL OVERVIEW

Background on the development of PIRL, and how to prepare to use it.

### BACKGROUND

With more youth-serving programs using online platforms to provide remote instruction, the Denver Afterschool Alliance (DAA) is providing technical support to help the out-of-school time (OST) provider community assess and improve the quality of this delivery model. As part of our support, DAA is proud to offer the free-to-use *Preparation, Interaction, Reflection and Logistics* (PIRL) tool, which assesses various dimensions of quality for online learning and youth development sessions. Although this tool was minimally field tested, it borrows heavily from the well-researched Program Quality Assessment (PQA) from the David P. Weikart Center, and DAA has added a suite of items that specifically addresses quality factors unique to the online learning experience.

### WHY USE THE TOOL?

With just 24 items to score, the tool is easy to use and fits any online subject matter. With the information that PIRL provides, youth-serving providers can identify ways to improve the quality of their online sessions. For some, this will result in minor changes, while other providers may identify opportunities to make major enhancements to their sessions. In either case, PIRL users should be mindful that the intent of this tool is to improve the experience of an online session, and it should not be used as a single piece of evidence to make important decisions.

### WHAT CAN BE ASSESSED?

This tool is appropriate for assessing online, live sessions on platforms (e.g., Zoom, Google Classrooms, MS Teams) where youth are engaging with an instructor and their peers. All of these tools allow youth to participate in real time, which is critical for youth development to occur. While parts of this tool can be applied to pre-recorded sessions, the lack of person-to-person interaction results in a different youth experience.

### HOW TO PREPARE TO USE PIRL.

Before using PIRL, every organization should consider their level of preparation, as well as what they hope to achieve by using the tool. Here are a few questions to consider:

- 1. What is the capacity of your staff to use PIRL?** Ideally, your staff are trained PQA assessors who are familiar with the tool and the approach to scoring. Additionally, your organization should expect that each PIRL assessment takes about three hours from start to finish.
- 2. What is the data culture of your organization?** For youth-serving organizations that have a history of making data-driven decisions, this tool will feel very familiar. Organizations that are not as familiar with using data should consider how this tool can help achieve their program quality or evaluation goals.
- 3. Do you have the data permissions to use PIRL?** All individuals, both adults and youth, have a right to know how you collect data on the sessions they participate in. Before using PIRL, review your parental consent waivers to ensure that you have the appropriate permissions to have an observer (whether internal or external to your organization) attend the session.

### LIST OF TERMS

**Denver Afterschool Alliance:** DAA, the developer of this tool, works with Denver out-of-school-time providers to help improve the quality of their programming.

**The Weikart Center:** The creator of the Youth Program Quality Intervention and the Program Quality Assessment.

**Online platform:** Tools that allow youth to interact with adults, peers, and activities in real time (e.g. Zoom, Google Classrooms, MS Teams).

**Assessor:** The person who observes the program and scores the rubric.

**Provider:** The person (or organization) who delivers the activities with youth using an online platform.

**PIRL rubric:** The scoring tool that comprises the remainder of this document.

**Continuous improvement:** An approach to regularly collecting and reviewing data to achieve quality goals.

# PIRL

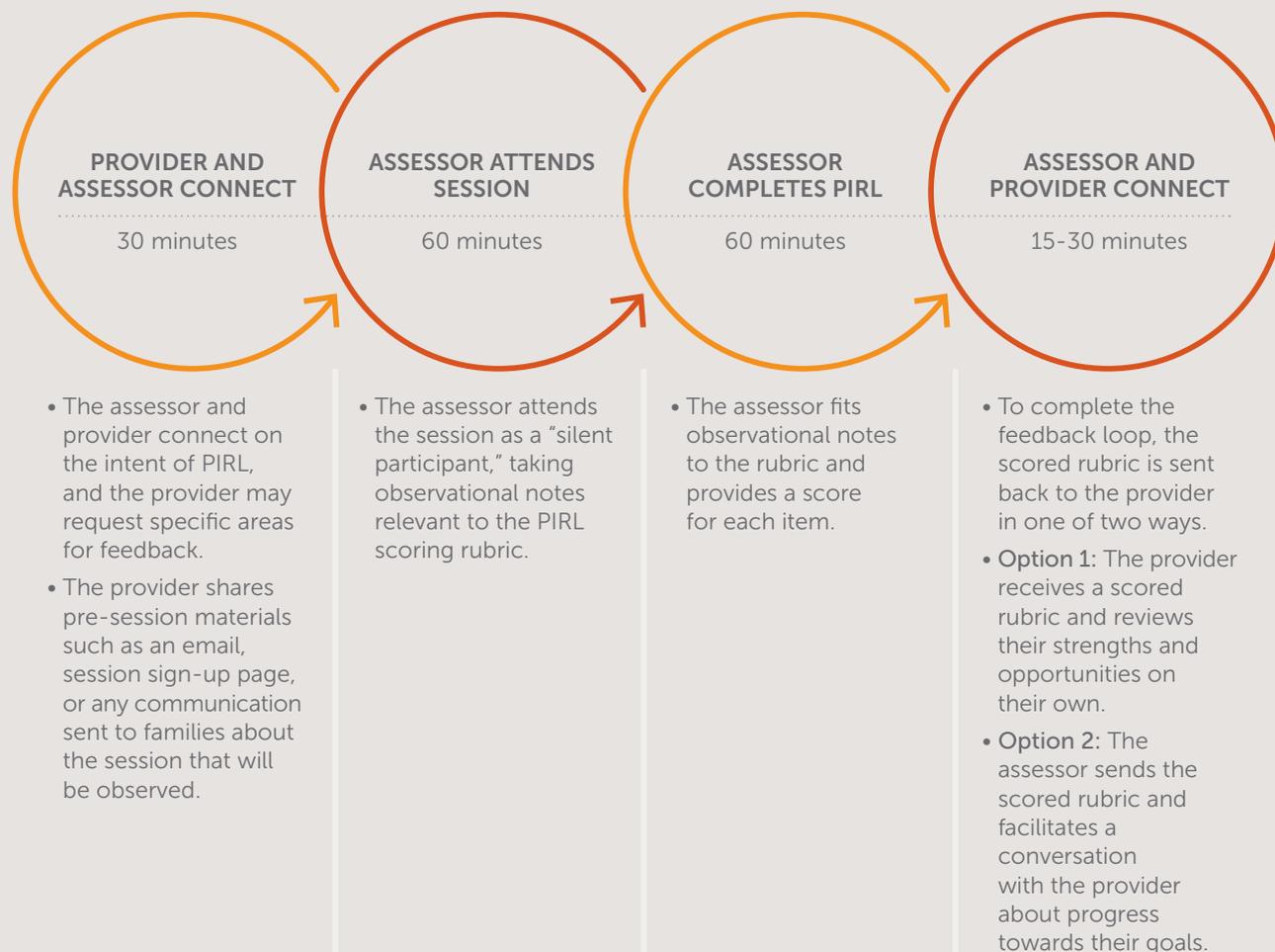
## PROCESS OVERVIEW

How to use PIRL to drive quality improvement.

### USING THE TOOL

**Scoring.** The remainder of this document details the PIRL rubric, which includes nine measurement areas and 24 items. Consistent with the PQA scoring guide, each item is scored on a 1-3-5 scale, with the opportunity for the assessor to provide narrative feedback. Based on the number of items, we estimate that scoring the entire rubric should take approximately one hour, and should be completed directly after observing the session. Assessors should use the "Save As" function and create a descriptive file name.

**Continuous improvement.** Once the session has been observed and the scoring rubric has been filled out, the assessor will send scores to the provider so that they can review and reflect on the quality of their session. When used as part of a larger continuous improvement process, assessors might be observing multiple sessions, and in this scenario, they might also schedule a follow-up meeting to provide insights on how the program is tracking towards its quality goals. In either case, PIRL scores can be used both as an asset to improve quality as well as a tool for evaluating this improvement.



## SECTION 1: PREPARATION

Communication with participants sets the stage for a successful session.

### Items

<b>1.*</b>	<b>1</b> Pre-session communications were not sent or were very unclear.	<b>3</b> Pre-session communications are provided but are somewhat unclear (e.g., don't contain agenda, preparation expectations, materials list, or objectives where needed).	<b>5</b> Pre-session communications are provided and include agenda, preparation expectations, materials list, and objectives where needed.
<b>2.*</b>	<b>1</b> Majority of youth do not have the materials to complete the activities, or materials needed are different from what was communicated beforehand.	<b>3</b> Some youth do not have the materials to complete the activities.	<b>5</b> Majority of youth have the materials to complete the activities.
<b>3.*</b>	<b>1</b> Activities are evidently too easy or too challenging for youth in session.	<b>3</b> The activities are too easy or too challenging for many youth in session.	<b>5</b> Activities are neither too easy nor too challenging for most youth in session.

### Supporting Evidence

† Item copied from the PQA.  
‡ Item borrowed from the PQA, but modified.  
\* Item developed by DAA.

### Items

<p><b>1.‡</b> <b>1</b> The emotional climate of the session is predominantly negative (e.g., disrespectful tense, exclusive, even angry or hostile); negative behaviors, such as rudeness, bragging, insults, “trash talking,” negative gestures or other such actions are not mediated by either youth or staff.</p>	<p><b>3</b> The emotional climate of the session is neutral or characterized by both positive and negative behaviors.</p>	<p><b>5</b> The emotional climate of the session is predominantly positive (e.g., staff member establishes/refers to group expectations, staff creates protocols for taking turns, and there is an absence of negative behaviors including in the chat function). Any playful negative behaviors (not considered offensive by parties involved) are mediated (countered, curtailed, defused) by staff or youth.</p>
<p><b>2.†</b> <b>1</b> Staff does not provide opportunities for youth to get to know each other (e.g., the entire session is structured so youth have no time where talking among themselves is allowed or encouraged).</p>	<p><b>3</b> Staff provides informal opportunities for youth to get to know each other (e.g., youth engage in informal conversations, youth get to know each other as a by-product of an activity).</p>	<p><b>5</b> Staff provides structured opportunities with the purpose of helping youth get to know each other (e.g., there are team-building activities, introductions, personal updates, welcomes of new group members, icebreakers).</p>

### Supporting Evidence

† Item copied from the PQA.

‡ Item borrowed from the PQA, but modified.

\* Item developed by DAA.

### Items

<b>1.†</b>	<b>1</b> No youth are greeted by staff as they arrive or at the start of the session.	<b>3</b> Some youth are greeted by staff as they arrive or at the start of the session.	<b>5</b> All youth are greeted by staff as they arrive or at the start of the session.
<b>2.†</b>	<b>1</b> Staff mainly uses a negative tone of voice and disrespectful language.	<b>3</b> Staff sometimes uses a negative tone of voice and disrespectful language and sometimes uses a warm tone of voice and respectful language.	<b>5</b> Staff mainly uses a warm tone of voice and respectful language.
<b>3.‡</b>	<b>1</b> Staff generally frowns or scowls, uses unfriendly gestures and avoids eye contact (e.g., Doesn't look into the camera).	<b>3</b> Staff sometimes exhibits unfriendly behaviors and sometimes uses a friendly approach.	<b>5</b> Staff generally smiles, uses friendly gestures and makes eye contact (e.g. frequently looks into the camera).

### Supporting Evidence

† Item copied from the PQA.

‡ Item borrowed from the PQA, but modified.

\* Item developed by DAA.

### Items

<p><b>1.†</b> 1 The activities provide no opportunities for youth to engage with materials or ideas; activities mostly involve waiting, listening watching and repeating.</p>	<p><b>3</b> The activities provide opportunities for youth to engage with materials or ideas for less than half of the time.</p>	<p><b>5</b> The activities involve youth in engaging with (creating, combining, reforming) materials or ideas (e.g., role play, projects, experiments, writing and illustrating stories, outside exploration) for at least half of the time.</p>
<p><b>2.‡</b> 1 Staff does not provide any youth structured opportunities to talk about (or otherwise communicate) what they are doing and what they are thinking about to others.</p>	<p><b>3</b> During activities, staff provides some youth a structured opportunity to talk about (or otherwise communicate) what they are doing and what they are thinking about to others (e.g., staff asks some youth to explain what they are doing or why, staff has half the youth explain their art project to another youth).</p>	<p><b>5</b> During the activities, staff provides all youth a structured opportunity to talk about (or otherwise communicate) what they are doing and what they are thinking about to others (e.g. each youth explains their reasoning behind their design to staff; staff assigns youth to small groups or breakout rooms to work on a shared task).</p>
<p><b>3.†</b> 1 Staff does not provide explicit opportunities for youth to make connections between current activities and prior experiences and/or knowledge.</p>	<p><b>3</b> Staff tells youth about a connection between the current activity and youth's prior knowledge or experience (e.g., staff says, "This is a follow up to the experience we had last week").</p>	<p><b>5</b> Staff has youth make a connection between the current activity and the youth's prior knowledge or experience (e.g., staff asks youth what they learned in a related experience, staff asks youth what similar tools they have at home, staff has the youth draw a picture of their favorite fruit or vegetable).</p>

### Supporting Evidence

† Item copied from the PQA.

‡ Item borrowed from the PQA, but modified.

\* Item developed by DAA.

### Items

<p><b>1.‡</b> 1 Staff never mentions a specific learning or skill-building focus for the session or activity (e.g., objective, learning target, goal).</p>	<p><b>3</b> Staff tells youth a specific learning or skill-building focus for the session or activity (e.g., objective, learning target, goal) but the focus is not clearly linked to the activity.</p>	<p><b>5</b> Staff tells youth a specific learning or skill-building focus for the session or activity (e.g., objective, learning target, goal) and the focus is clearly linked to the activity (e.g., students do activity related to focus, language from focus is described in activity).</p>
<p><b>2.‡</b> 1 Staff does not model skills. (Modeling may use visual clues such as presenter demonstrations, slide presentations, handouts, or videos.)</p>	<p><b>3</b> Staff models skills for some youth. (Modeling may use visual clues such as presenter demonstrations, slide presentations, handouts, or videos.)</p>	<p><b>5</b> Staff models skills for all youth. (Modeling may use visual clues such as presenter demonstrations, slide presentations, handouts, or videos.)</p>
<p><b>3.†</b> 1 Staff does not break difficult task(s) into smaller, simpler steps for any youth or there are no tasks of sufficient difficulty to warrant explaining steps.</p>	<p><b>3</b> Staff breaks difficult task(s) into smaller, simpler steps for some youth.</p>	<p><b>5</b> Staff breaks difficult task(s) into smaller simpler steps for all youth (e.g., steps are explained in sequence; instructions are provided for specific steps; examples of completed steps are shared).</p>

### Supporting Evidence

† Item copied from the PQA.

‡ Item borrowed from the PQA, but modified.

\* Item developed by DAA.

### Items

<p><b>1.†</b> 1 Staff does not support contributions or accomplishments of youth in either of the ways described for a score of 3 or 5, or simply doesn't support youth at all.</p>	<p><b>3</b> Staff supports contributions or accomplishments of youth but uses subjective or evaluative comments, such as "Good job!", "I like it!" or "You're so smart!"</p>	<p><b>5</b> Staff supports at least some contributions or accomplishments of youth by acknowledging what they've said or done with specific, non-evaluative language (e.g., "It looks like you put a lot of time into choosing the color for your painting," "You came up with lots of ideas for the group activity.").</p>
<p><b>2.†</b> 1 Staff rarely or never asks open-ended questions.</p>	<p><b>3</b> Staff makes limited use of open-ended questions (e.g., only uses them during certain parts of the activity or repeats the same questions).</p>	<p><b>5</b> Staff makes frequent use of open-ended questions (e.g., staff asks open-ended questions throughout the activity and questions are related to the context; most youth have opportunities to answer questions that seek opinions or require thoughtful answers).</p>

### Supporting Evidence

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‡ Item borrowed from the PQA, but modified.

\* Item developed by DAA.

### Items

<p><b>1.†</b> <b>1</b> Staff does not provide opportunities for youth to make choices within activities, or choices given are false, token ones (e.g., staff says, “You can annotate with the heart stamp or the star stamp”).</p>	<p><b>3</b> Staff provides opportunities for some youth to make authentic choices within activities (e.g., some youth are asked to create a project and present while others only give feedback).</p>	<p><b>5</b> Staff provides opportunities for all youth to make authentic choices within activities (e.g., all youth are able to choose what to build, all youth choose which yoga move to demonstrate, all youth choose which items to share for virtual show and tell).</p>
<p><b>2.†</b> <b>1</b> Staff does not provide opportunities for youth to make choices within activities.</p>	<p><b>3</b> Staff provides opportunities for youth to make discrete choices between set options within activities (e.g., youth choose whether to draw an owl, penguin or ostrich; youth choose whether to play ‘I spy’ or ‘Never Have I Ever’).</p>	<p><b>5</b> Staff provides opportunities for youth to make open-ended choices within activities rather than choosing from limited options provided to them (e.g., youth choose any animal they want to, youth decide to build any structure, youth make choices to act out a character for a virtual role play).</p>

### Supporting Evidence

† Item copied from the PQA.

‡ Item borrowed from the PQA, but modified.

\* Item developed by DAA.

### Items

<p><b>1.†</b> 1 Staff does not create an opportunity for any youth (individual or group) to make plans (e.g., youth plan how to spend their time, how to do something).</p>	<p><b>3</b> Staff creates an opportunity for some youth (individual or group) to make plans (e.g., youth plan how to spend their time, how to do something).</p>	<p><b>5</b> Staff creates an opportunity for all youth (individual or group) to make plans (e.g., youth plan how to spend their time, how to do something).</p>
<p><b>2.†</b> 1 Staff does not engage youth in an intentional process of reflecting on what they have done during the program session.</p>	<p><b>3</b> Staff engages some youth in an intentional process of reflecting on what they have done during the program session.</p>	<p><b>5</b> Staff engages all youth in an intentional process of reflecting on what they have done during the program session (e.g., writing in journals, reviewing minutes, sharing progress, accomplishments, or feelings about the experience).</p>
<p><b>3.‡</b> 1 Staff dismisses feedback from youth who initiate it, or youth have no opportunities to provide feedback on the activities.</p>	<p><b>3</b> Staff is receptive to feedback initiated by youth on the activities but does not solicit it.</p>	<p><b>5</b> Staff initiates structured opportunities for youth to give feedback on the activities (e.g., staff asks feedback questions, provides session evaluations, or quickly polls youth at the end of the session).</p>

### Supporting Evidence

† Item copied from the PQA.

‡ Item borrowed from the PQA, but modified.

\* Item developed by DAA.

### Items

1.*	1 Staff volume, background noise or technology makes staff frequently inaudible.	3 Staff volume, background noise or technology makes staff sometimes inaudible.	5 Staff volume is fully audible and staff uses clear annunciation.
2.*	1 Camera angles, staff positioning or technology used frequently make it hard so see their face or what is happening.	3 Camera angles, staff positioning or technology used sometimes make it hard so see their face or what is happening.	5 Camera angles, staff positioning or technology used make it easy to see their face and the activities that are happening.
3.*	1 Staff does not provide an overview of the technological features of the platform that will be used.	3 Staff provides an overview of the technological features of the platform, but the explanation is insufficient to complete the activities (e.g., youth are confused, youth are not able to complete activities, or in-the-moment explanations are required).	5 Staff provides a sufficient overview of the technological features of the platform being used.
4.*	1 Staff does not use any safety features of the platform to ensure that youth are protected OR does not address unsafe virtual behavior when needed (e.g., using registration codes, creating waiting rooms, monitoring breakouts, disabling inappropriate chats, or expelling disruptive youth).	3 Staff uses at least one safety feature of the platform to ensure that youth are protected, OR does not appropriately utilize to address unsafe behavior effectively when needed (e.g., using registration codes, creating waiting rooms, monitoring breakouts, disabling inappropriate chats, or expelling disruptive youth).	5 Staff uses multiple safety features of the platform to ensure that youth are protected, and uses them to effectively address behavior when needed (e.g., using registration codes, creating waiting rooms, monitoring breakouts, disabling inappropriate chats, or expelling disruptive youth).

### Supporting Evidence

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\* Item developed by DAA.

The Denver Afterschool Alliance (DAA) unites out-of-school-time (OST) providers and professionals in a single network, providing resources and supports to help improve the quality of OST programming for all Denver youth.

As the COVID-19 crisis continues, DAA is committed to helping OST providers respond to the changing needs of Denver's youth and families. Building on our commitment to quality and accessibility, we are creating and offering free resources and tools to OST providers so they are better prepared to serve youth under these new conditions. The PIRL tool detailed here is an example of a modified resource available to all OST providers. To access additional supports, and learn more about DAA's work, visit [www.denvergov.org/afterschoolalliance](http://www.denvergov.org/afterschoolalliance).

DAA recognizes the David P. Weikart Center's Program Quality Assessment (PQA) tool and approach to quality improvement as the basis for the development of PIRL. With online learning becoming a more prevalent delivery method for youth-serving programs, we will continue to learn and enhance this tool. In that spirit, if you use this tool, please let us know about your experience by reaching out to the DAA's John Lewis or Daniel Read.

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