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## **The Clear Language versions of *I Care for Kids – I Care for Quality***

The Home Child Care Association of Ontario wants to ensure that home child care providers across the province clearly understand the basic elements of this valuable resource. We were concerned that the original *I Care for Kids – I Care for Quality* manual used a format and language that were more difficult than they needed to be.

We wanted to make sure that the manual served its purpose, so we asked Clear Language and Design (CLAD) to help create clear language versions in English.

### **What is clear language?**

Documents in clear language have a clear purpose and use language that is familiar to the people who read them. Clear language is a way to make written communication more effective. It removes barriers for people who struggle with English or literacy, and makes it easier for fluent readers to read, understand and use documents.

We want home child care providers across Ontario to be able to read and use *I Care for Kids - I Care for Quality*. This audience includes people in many different contexts across the province. Providers may be highly-educated or people with limited formal education who are not comfortable with print. Many are fluent while others are still learning English. This broad cross-section of people reflects the diversity of Ontario's population.

### **How did the manual change?**

Clear Language and Design noticed that the manual used the Ministry's terminology rather than everyday language. To make sure that the manual could be used by all of our providers, CLAD recommended that the manual be written at a Grade 6 Reading Level. This is similar to the reading level of *The Toronto Star*. CLAD also recommended that the layout be changed so that the form would be easier to use. They pointed out that asking users to look up the meaning of symbols before they could assess themselves made the manual more complex than it needed to be.

To revise the document, CLAD edited the language to

- address providers directly
- use the active voice to make it clear what providers should **do**
- use shorter sentences and everyday language

CLAD also developed a new layout that would

- emphasize the difference between required and suggested standards
- allow more room for providers to write how they planned to improve
- make it easier for providers to know how to assess their compliance with a standard, by grouping items according to whether the answer was yes/no, always true/sometimes true/never true or always do/sometimes do/never do

make it easier for providers to skip points which do not apply to them



To learn more about clear language, visit **Clear Language and Design's** website [www.eastendliteracy.on.ca/clearlanguageanddesign/](http://www.eastendliteracy.on.ca/clearlanguageanddesign/)

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