



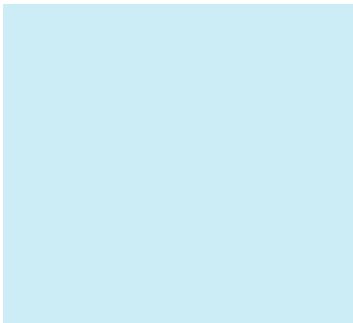
**GREATER ROCHESTER AFTER-SCHOOL ALLIANCE (GRASA)
ASSESSMENT**

2005-06 FIRST ANNUAL REPORT



WALT GRAMIAK, M.S.
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LAURI BRUGGER, M.S.
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NOVEMBER, 2006



children's institute
Strengthening social and emotional health

TECHNICAL REPORT AND WORKS IN PROGRESS SERIES: NUMBER T06-005

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Acknowledgments

This report would not be possible without the noteworthy contributions of many partners. Such partners include programs, foundations and other organizations – each consisting of individuals who gave freely of their time, ideas, hard work, energy, resources, and support to this exciting new initiative, the GRASA Assessment Pilot.

Financial support was provided by City of Rochester, Monroe County Youth Bureau and Rochester Area Community Foundation. Other contributing partners include Cameron Community Ministries; Children’s Institute; City of Rochester Bureau of Parks, Recreation and Human Services; Community Place of Greater Rochester; Cornell Cooperative Extension; Greater Rochester After-School Alliance (GRASA); IBERO-American Action League, Inc. School-Age Program; Margaret Warner Graduate School of Education, University of Rochester; Quad A for Kids; Railroad Junction School-Age Program and Summer Day Camp; Rochester After-School Academy (RASA); Rochester Childfirst Network (RCN); Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau; Rush-Henrietta School District’s School-Age Child Care Programs; Society for the Protection and Care of Children (SPCC); The Boys and Girls Club of Greater Rochester; United Way of Greater Rochester; YMCA of Greater Rochester; and Youth Services Quality Council of Rochester and Monroe County.

We express thanks to the program staff and administrators who work closely, on a daily basis, with thousands of children in Monroe County. Their personal attention to the children’s health, safety, development, and enjoyment is a major contributor to the overall well-being of our community. These program staff offered their time freely for observational purposes, and they participated in trainings and focus groups.

We are grateful to the many policymakers who took time to participate in focus groups.

We deeply appreciate the GRASA Assessment Policy Advisory Group for steering this pilot through a successful first year. The members of the team contributed much time, thought and energy towards each step in the process.

We express gratitude to the entire assessment team for their contributions to the project and this report. This year could not have been a success without the skillful Master Observers, who achieved a highly respectable inter-rater reliability, and the creative staff of Children’s Institute: Lori VanAuken for guiding the project; Rusti Berent for conducting the focus groups; and Genemarie Van Wagner, for her training of our new Master Trainer and work in development and implementation of the Master Observer training.

We are very excited about the GRASA Assessment Pilot and its impact on children and the quality of after-school programs. With a shared vision, we will continue to work towards a unified standard of quality for after-school programs that will enrich the experiences of children, staff, and parents.

Description of the GRASA Assessment

Introduction

The GRASA Assessment pilot project began in Rochester, New York in 2005 in an effort to learn about the quality of after-school programs in Monroe County. This is a community-wide partnership sponsored by the Greater Rochester After-School Alliance (GRASA). GRASA comprises program staff members, administrators, parents, policymakers and funders who are interested in improving the quality of after-school programming, children's accessibility to quality programs, and understanding the funding streams that are available to improve both quality and access.

The GRASA Assessment provides an integrated process for ensuring that after-school programs have the information they need for making informed decisions that can be used to improve program practice and outcomes. It provides useful data analysis on the status of our after-school program quality. This year, thirty program offerings were assessed.

Confidentiality of all participants is maintained in all areas and is of the utmost importance to our partnership.

The following after-school programs participated in the GRASA Assessment:

- Cameron Community Ministries
- City of Rochester Bureau of Parks, Recreation and Human Services
- Community Place of Greater Rochester
- Ibero-American Action League, Inc. School-Age Program
- Quad A for Kids
- Railroad Junction School-Age Program and Summer Day Camp
- Rochester After-School Academy (RASA)
- Rochester Childfirst Network (RCN)
- Rush-Henrietta School District's School-Age Child Care Program
- Society for the Protection and Care of Children (SPCC)
- The Boys and Girls Club of Greater Rochester
- YMCA of Greater Rochester

Program Observations

Program observations occurred in the months of March through May. Each program offering was observed one time using the Youth Program Quality Assessment (Youth PQA). The observations take approximately two hours followed by a brief interview with the program staff member. Scoring of the measure is completed off-site and requires one additional hour of the Master Observer's time. The Master Observers

submit the observation score sheets to Children's Institute within two business days. Within five days, the score sheet is reviewed for accuracy and is processed. A report is generated and returned to the program staff members that were observed, along with a photocopy of the score sheet. Program staff members are able to immediately access observation feedback and use the information to affirm good practice and to identify areas for improvement and goal setting.

Program Observation Process

- Master Observer contacts the program staff member to schedule the observation date
- Program observation occurs (2 hours)
- Observer conducts an interview (30-45 minutes) with the program staff member(s) immediately after the observation to obtain information not evident during observation
- Observer completes the score sheet and submits it to Children's Institute for processing
- Project coordinator reviews the score sheet for accuracy
- Score sheet is checked again for accuracy by a data clerk, the information is entered into the database; a summary report is produced
- Photocopy of original score sheet and summary report is mailed directly to program staff member
- Program staff member reviews information
- If program staff member disagrees with any item(s) in the report and wants to formally address this, he or she may initiate a collaborative review process (outlined below)

Collaborative Review Process

As part of the classroom observation process using the Youth PQA, Children's Institute provides a review process so that if any program staff member believes that the report does not accurately represent the program, there is a formal mechanism to address this. In the collaborative review, program staff members are welcome and encouraged to raise questions they have about the score of any of the quality indicators. *This year, there were no formal collaborative review requests.*

1. After an observation is complete, the independent observer returns the completed score sheet to Children's Institute for processing. A copy of the score sheet and summary report is returned directly to the program staff member along with a cover letter that serves as a guide in reviewing the report. Included in this letter is an

invitation to contact the project coordinator if he or she feels a score does not accurately represent the program.

2. If program staff member disagrees with the scoring of any item(s) and wishes to formally address this, he or she contacts the project coordinator to obtain a Collaborative Review Request Form. In this form the staff member outlines the details of the item(s) in question with additional supporting information. This must be submitted within 5 days of receipt of the original score sheet.
3. Upon receipt of the Collaborative Review Request, the project coordinator reviews the information provided by the staff member, consults the independent observer who completed the observation, and conducts a detailed re-examination of each quality indicator score. After consideration of these references, a determination is made whether any items may be scored differently.
4. In a detailed letter to the program staff member, the project coordinator formally addresses each questioned item and whether the item score is changed. A revised copy of the score sheet is returned with any applicable adjusted scores as well as a new summary report.
5. The revised scores are entered into the database.
6. If the staff member remains dissatisfied with the results of the process thus far, the project coordinator will make arrangements for a second independent observer to conduct a complete observation and submit a formal report.

Partner Development

Introductory YPQA Training

All program and administrative staff members are invited to attend an Introductory Training session in which they are introduced to the Youth PQA. This session provides history and background of GRASA, the GRASA Assessment and in-depth overview of the scale. Participants learn observation and scoring techniques, discuss the benefits of using the scale in program assessment and quality improvement processes, and review the observation process/logistics overall. Program providers are encouraged to complete a self assessment on their program as part of their familiarization with the scale. *This year, twenty program staff members and administrators participated in training sessions.*

Master Observer Training

Children's Institute sent two Project Coordinators/Master Trainers to High/Scope Educational Research Foundation for a training session with the author of the Youth PQA. After that training, the two began their co-training process in Rochester. Once they completed their co-training together and attained an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability (.85), they developed the training program for the Master Observers.

Master observers are selected on the basis of their experience in youth programming, program observation, and interest to participate. The training includes a fifteen-hour program in the first year of participation. Knowledge of the scale, refinement of observation skills, inter-rater reliability standards, logistics of the observation process, observation guidelines, and protocol are studied in depth. Master observers are trained to attain and maintain a high level of inter-rater reliability ($a/a+d > .80$). For observers beginning a second year of training and in each subsequent year, additional training of four to five hours is required. *This year, ten master observers participated in the fifteen-hour training program.*

Focus Groups

Another component of our first year is to determine the assessment needs of participants, parents, providers and policymakers. By understanding various constituents' needs a systematic evaluation can be planned, developed and implemented in future years of the GRASA Assessment. Focus groups are one method to obtain this information. Focus groups provide a general direction and give information about relevant issues that can be explored in greater detail via surveys and literature reviews. *This year, three focus groups took place; two policymaker groups and one provider group. Nine providers and six policymakers participated in focus groups.*

Additional focus groups for providers, parents and participants are planned for fall 2006.

Program Quality

Youth Program Quality Assessment (PQA)

The Youth PQA was developed by High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005). The tool is a landmark in the emerging field of youth program quality assessment, both in validity and reliability. The tool has two scales, Form A and Form B. Form A covers "Program Offering Items" which is scored based on observations and focuses on the experiences of youth. Form B covers "Organization Items" which is scored using a survey and interview with an administrator and assesses the organization's infrastructure. Both scales use rubrics for scoring. Independent, well-trained observers rated the quality of after-school programs in Monroe County using the Youth PQA.

Form A measures four subscales:

- I. Safe Environment
- II. Supportive Environment
- III. Interaction
- IV. Engagement

Each subscale contains three to six items. There are 18 items. Each item contains two to six indicator rows. There are 60 indicator rows. Each indicator row is scored 1, 3, or 5. The indicator row scores are then added and averaged to determine the item's score. The item scores are then added and averaged to find the subscale score.

Form B measures three subscales:

- I. Youth Centered Policies and Practices
- II. High Expectations for Youth and Staff
- III. Access

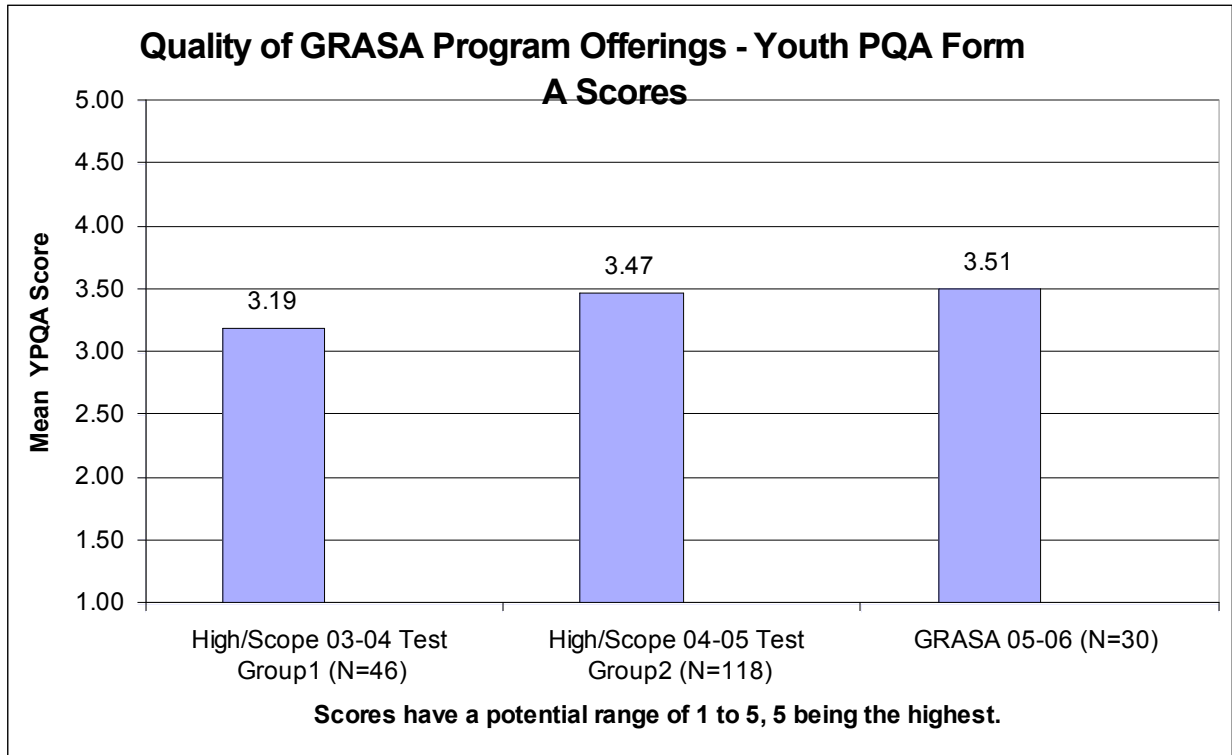
Each subscale contains four items. There are 12 items. Each item contains two to six indicator rows. There are 43 indicator rows. Each indicator row is scored 1, 3, or 5. The indicator row scores are then added and averaged to determine the item's score. The item scores are then added and averaged to find the subscale score.

After a Master Observer is trained and meets the inter-rater reliability rate of .85 with a Master Trainer using Form A, he or she is assigned sites for observation. During a typical observation, an observer spends two hours observing the program, writing a running narrative focusing on the 60 quality indicators that make up the Youth PQA Form A. After the observation, the observer needs approximately 30 minutes to interview the program staff member(s) with questions scripted on the score sheet for indicators that were not observed. Each observer will subsequently spend about one hour scoring the indicator rows.

Overall Quality of GRASA Program Offerings

The overall quality of 30 GRASA program offerings in grades four through six, within 12 agencies, was 3.51 in 2005-06. High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (the authors of Youth PQA) performed a Youth PQA validation study during 2003-05. They reported results on "two waves of data," or in other words for two test groups, over two years. For comparison purposes, the resulting mean scores using the Youth PQA Form A are shown for both GRASA and High/Scope's findings in Figure 1 below. In Figure 1, we can see that the GRASA overall quality level is similar to what High/Scope observed in their Michigan program offerings.

Figure 1 Overall Quality of GRASA programs



Scores by Subscale

Figure 2 GRASA Overall Mean Scores by Subscale

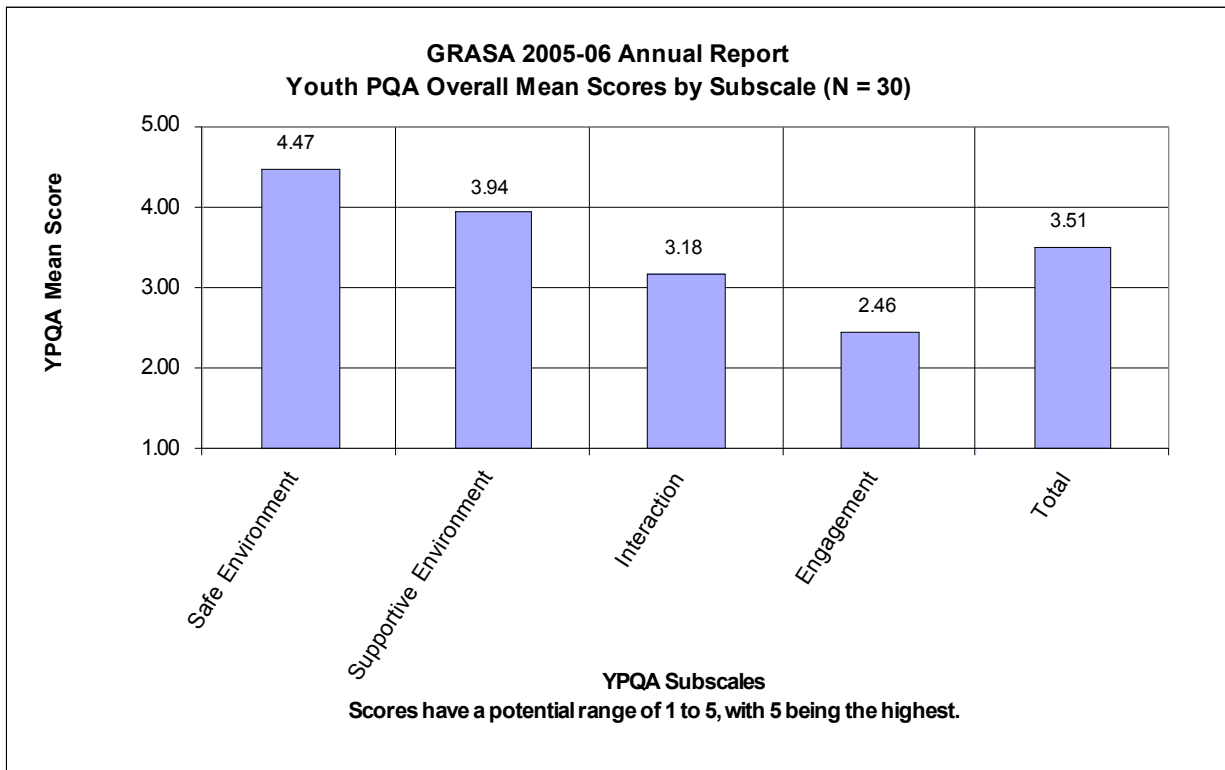


Figure 2 illustrates that of the four subscales in the Youth PQA, Safe Environment had the highest mean score (4.47 out of a possible 5.0). This is a positive outcome for the first assessment year – youths are in safe programs. The subscale showing the greatest opportunity for improvement is Engagement with a mean score of 2.46. Items in this subscale include: “Youth have opportunities to reflect,” “Youth have opportunities to make choices based on interests” and “Youth have opportunities to set goals and make plans.”

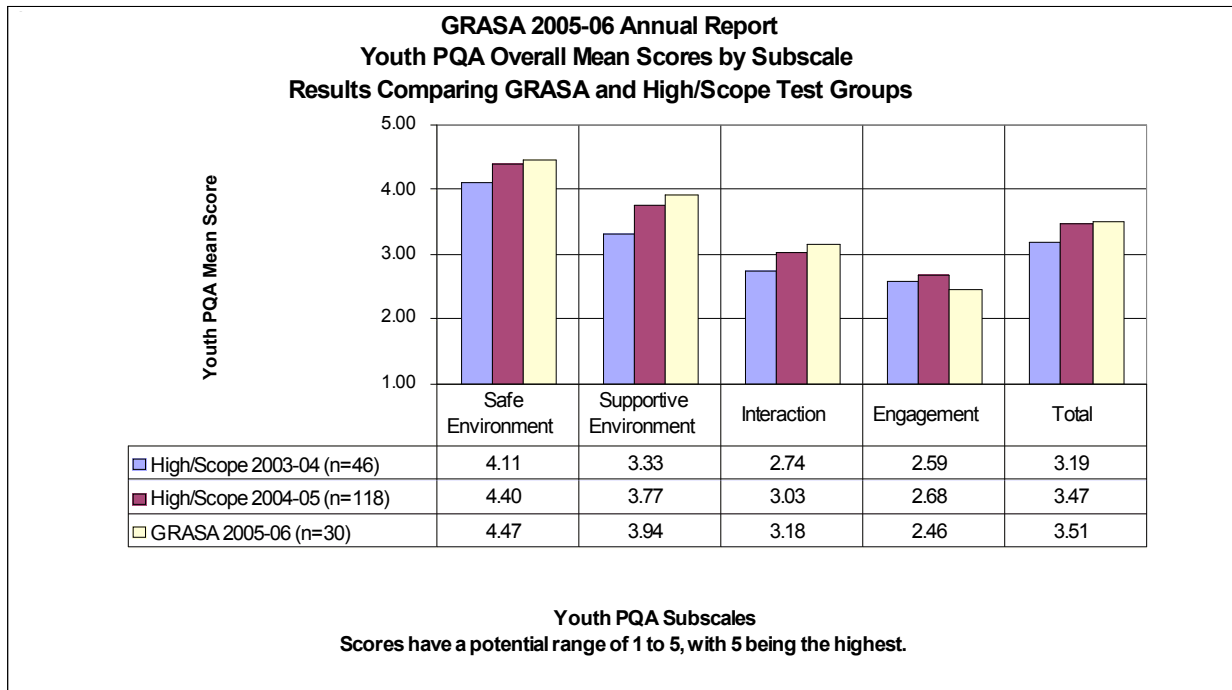
Subscale	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Safe Environment	30	4.47	0.37	3.82	5.00
Supportive Environment	30	3.94	0.71	2.06	5.00
Interaction	30	3.18	0.97	1.29	4.67
Engagement	30	2.46	1.02	1.00	5.00
Total – 4 Subscales	30	3.51	0.61	2.29	4.86

Note: * Scores have a potential range of 1 to 5, 5 being the highest.

For comparison purposes, High/Scope reported results for two test groups, over two years is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2					
2003-05 High/Scope Reported Results*					
Overall Youth PQA Scores by Subscale**					
Subscale	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
2003-04 Test Group					
Safe Environment	46	4.11	0.92	1.00	5.00
Supportive Environment	46	3.33	0.85	1.87	4.78
Interaction	46	2.74	1.03	1.00	5.00
Engagement	46	2.59	0.99	1.00	4.67
Total – 4 Subscales	46	3.19	0.79	1.63	4.49
2004-05 Test Group					
Safe Environment	118	4.40	0.62	1.00	5.00
Supportive Environment	118	3.77	0.83	1.68	5.00
Interaction	118	3.03	0.90	1.00	4.83
Engagement	118	2.68	1.11	1.00	5.00
Total – 4 Subscales	118	3.47	0.66	2.05	4.77
Notes:					
* The High/Scope Educational Research Foundation is the author of the Youth PQA measure. The High/Scope Test group's results were reported in the Youth PQA Administration Manual, published by High/Scope Press 2005.					
** Scores have a potential range of 1 to 5, 5 being the highest.					

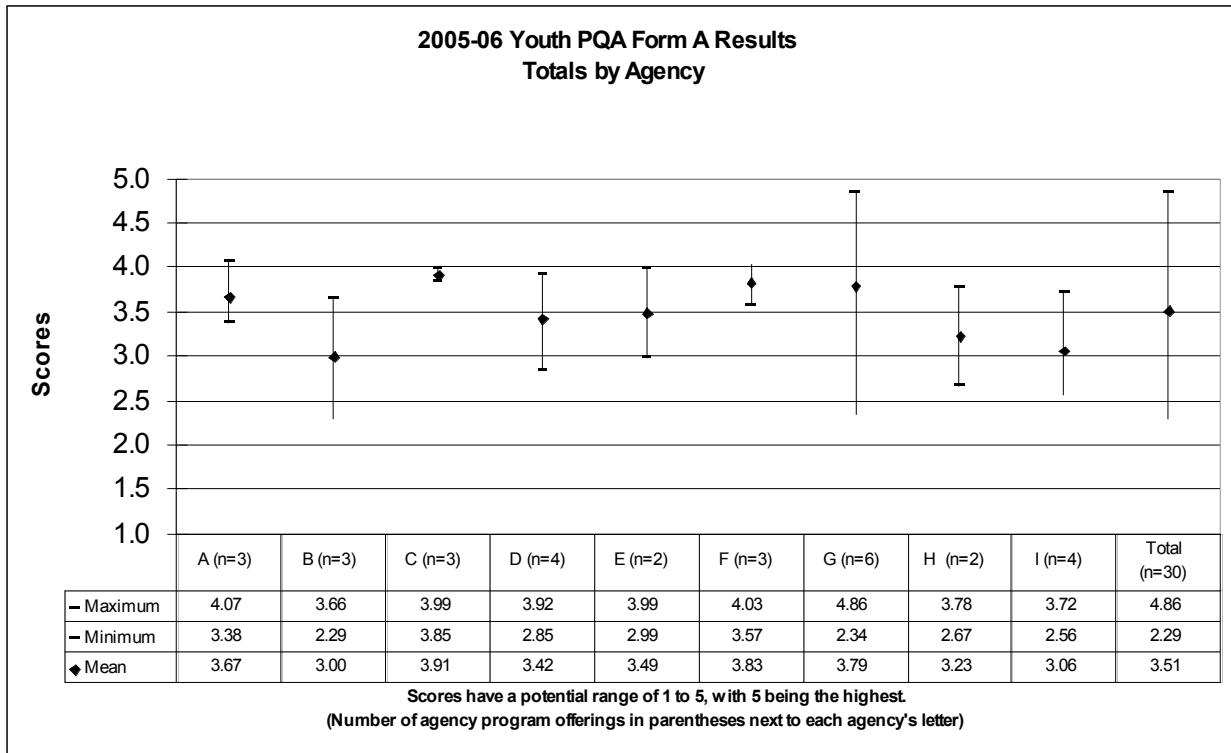
Figure 3 Comparing GRASA and High/Scope by Subscale



Based upon one-sample t-Tests, all of the GRASA scores except for Engagement were significantly above the High Scope 2003-04 Study (significant at $p < .05$). In addition, also based upon one-sample t-Tests, all of the GRASA scores were not significantly different than the High Scope 2004-05 Study (not significant at $p > .05$).

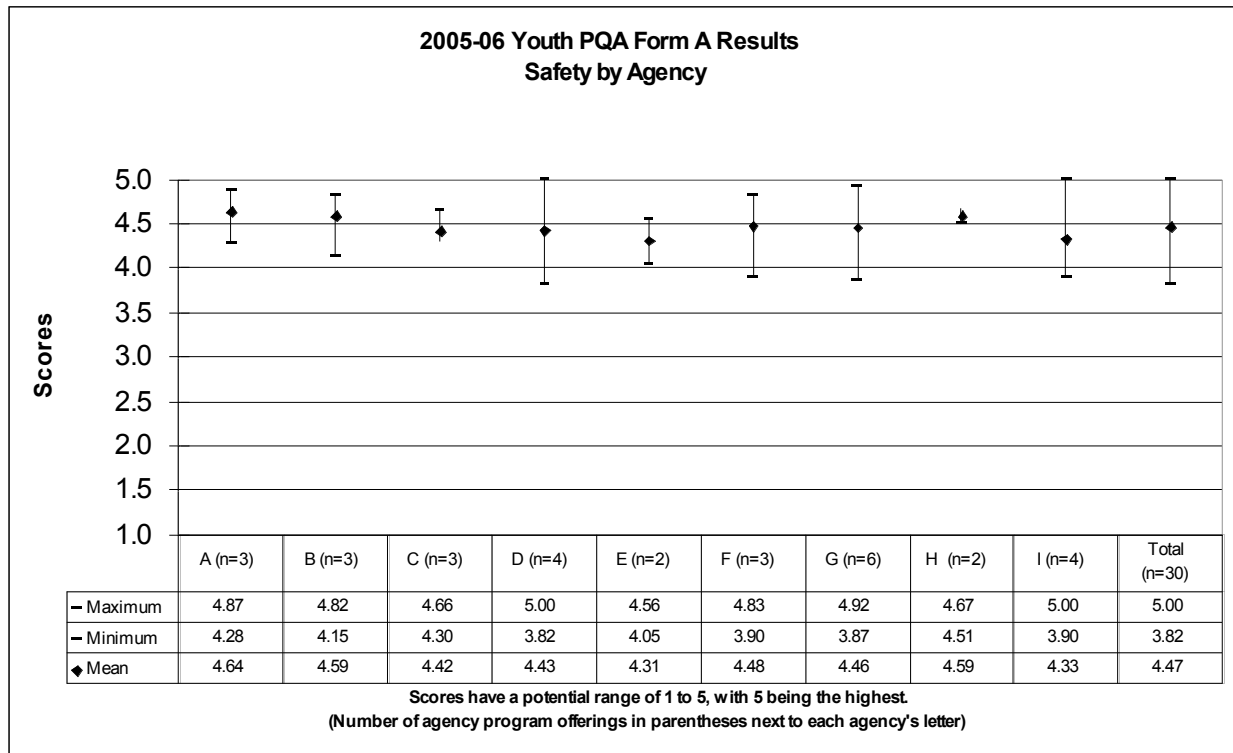
Scores by Agency

Figure 4 Total Score for 4 Subscales Combined



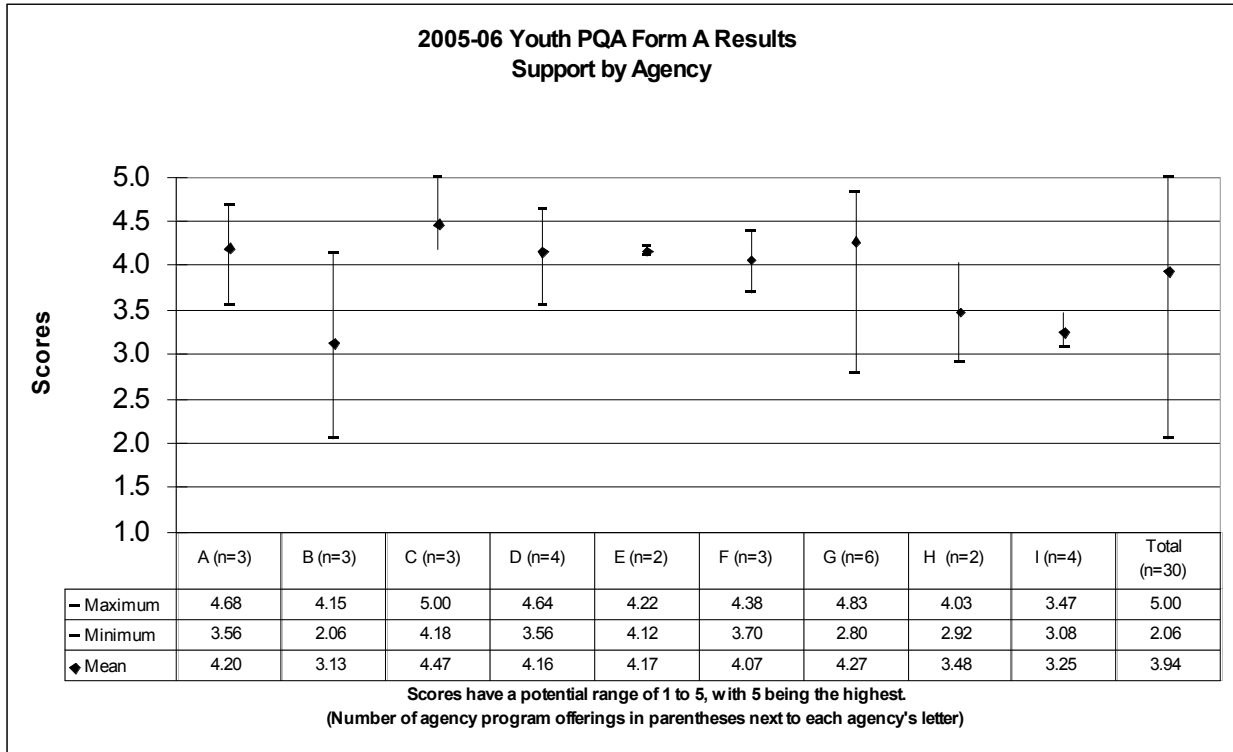
Number of Program Offerings Within Score Range by Agency											
Score Range	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total	Percent
1-1.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
2-2.9	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	6	20.0%
3-3.9	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	1	2	17	56.7%
4-4.9	1	0	1	0	1	1	3	0	0	7	23.3%
5.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Total	3	3	3	4	2	3	6	2	4	30	100.0%

Figure 5 Safe Environment Subscale



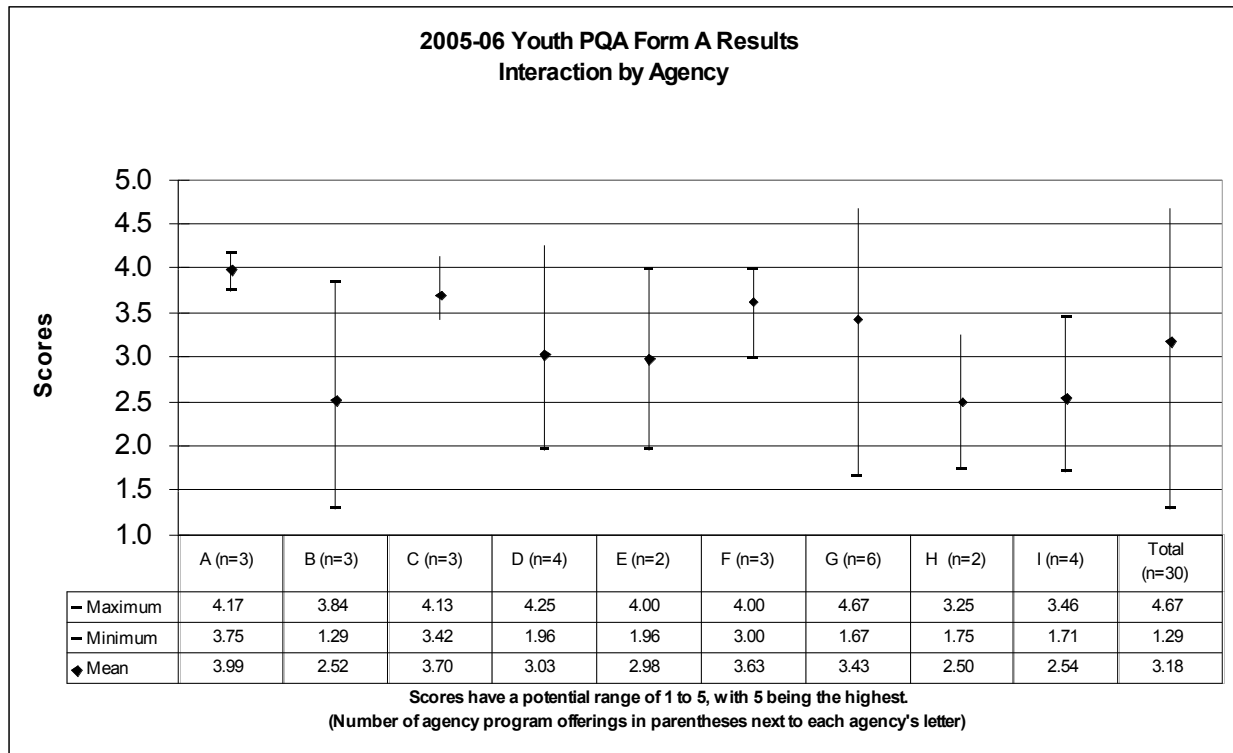
Number of Program Offerings Within Score Range by Agency											
Score Range	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total	Percent
1-1.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
2-2.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
3-3.9	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	4	13.3%
4-4.9	3	3	3	2	2	2	5	2	2	24	80.0%
5.0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	6.7%
Total	3	3	3	4	2	3	6	2	4	30	100.0%

Figure 6 Supportive Environment Subscale



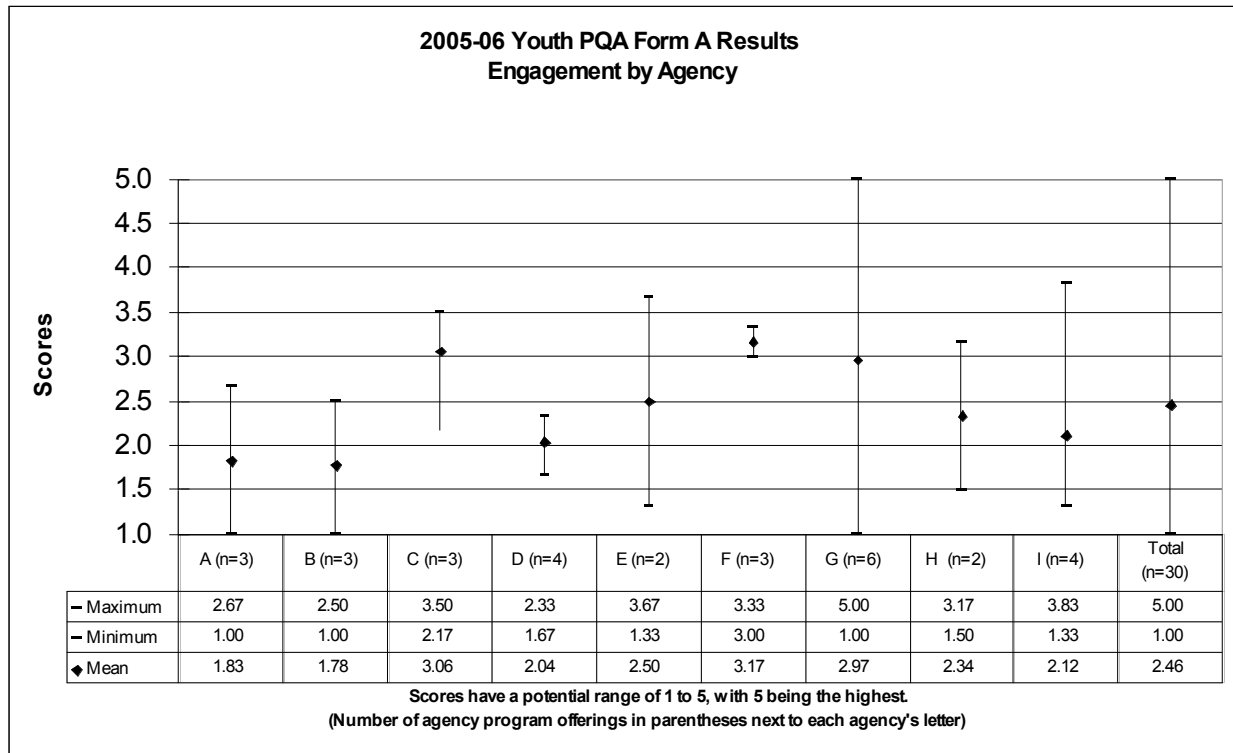
Number of Program Offerings Within Score Range by Agency											
Score Range	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total	Percent
1-1.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
2-2.9	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	7	23.3%
3-3.9	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	5	16.7%
4-4.9	2	1	2	3	2	2	4	1	0	17	56.7%
5.0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3.3%
Total	3	3	3	4	2	3	6	2	4	30	100.0%

Figure 7 Interaction Subscale



Number of Program Offerings Within Score Range by Agency											
Score Range	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total	Percent
1-1.9	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	4	13.3%
2-2.9	0	1	0	2	1	0	1	0	2	7	23.3%
3-3.9	1	1	2	1	0	2	2	1	1	11	36.7%
4-4.9	2	0	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	8	26.7%
5.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Total	3	3	3	4	2	3	6	2	4	30	100.0%

Figure 8 Engagement Subscale



Number of Program Offerings Within Score Range by Agency											
Score Range	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total	Percent
1-1.9	2	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	2	10	33.3%
2-2.9	1	1	1	3	0	0	2	0	1	9	30.0%
3-3.9	0	0	2	0	1	3	1	1	1	9	30.0%
4-4.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	3.3%
5.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	3.3%
Total	3	3	3	4	2	3	6	2	4	30	100.0%

Reliability of the Youth PQA Form A

Cronbach's alpha

Cronbach's alpha is a test of a measure's internal consistency. It is sometimes called a "scale-reliability coefficient." For any assessment process, it is important to know whether the same set of questions measures a similar construct. Measures are declared to be reliable only when they provide consistent responses.

Cronbach's alpha assesses the internal reliability of a measure's answers. By measuring and reporting Cronbach's alpha values, we have what is considered a numerical coefficient of reliability. Table 3 displays the Cronbach's alpha values for this year's Youth PQA measure. For comparison purposes, the High/Scope reported results* from their testing are also included in Table 3.

	GRASA Project 2005-06		High/Scope Test Group 1 2003-04		High/Scope Test Group 2 2004-05	
	N	Alpha	N	Alpha	N	Alpha
Youth PQA Form A						
Total for 4 all Subscales	30	0.86	22	0.84	118	0.74
Safe Environment (5 items)	30	0.55	22	0.38	118	0.43
Supportive Environment (6 items)	30	0.73	22	0.85	118	0.84
Interaction (4 items)	30	0.81	22	0.72	118	0.64
Engagement (3 items)	30	0.64	22	0.71	118	0.70

Note: * The High/Scope Educational Research Foundation is the author of the Youth PQA measure. The High/Scope Test group's results were reported in the Youth PQA Administration Manual, published by High/Scope Press 2005.

Inter-Rater Reliability of Youth PQA Form A

As part of an ongoing effort to assure the accuracy of the measures used, 25% of program offerings are observed by two observers so that we can calculate the level of agreement or inter-rater reliability between different observers.

Table 4 shows the inter-rater reliability of Youth PQA total score and subscales using a simple correlation (r) and the median inter-rater reliability for exact matches uses a/a+d; where a=agreement and d=disagreement. The GRASA inter-rater reliability for exact matches was found to be 0.89 for seven observations. These findings for each subscale and total in Table 4 below show that the administration of the YPQA by GRASA conforms to high standards and is of high quality. For comparison, the developers of the YPQA reported an inter-rater reliability 0.66 (N=48) for the total score of Form A (Subscales 1 through 4) in their testing. High/Scope's test findings* are included in Table 4 for comparison.

Table 4		
Inter-Rater Reliability of the Youth PQA Form A Measure		
	GRASA Project 2005-06*	High Scope Test Group 1 2003-04
Sample size N	7	48
Median Inter-rater Reliability for Exact Matches **	0.89	0.65
Safe Environment (r)	0.86	0.48
Supportive Environment (r)	0.88	0.69
Interaction (r)	0.76	0.83
Engagement (r)	0.89	0.72
Total YPQA Form A (r)	0.86	0.66
Notes:		
* Signifies that all inter-rater reliability values in this column are significant at p<.05.		
** Signifies that inter-rater reliability for exact matches is equal to a/a+d; where a=agreement and d=disagreement.		
(r) Signifies that these values are Pearson Correlation Coefficients.		

Note: * The High/Scope Educational Research Foundation is the author of the Youth PQA measure. The High/Scope test group's results were reported in the Youth PQA Administration Manual, published by High/Scope Press 2005.