



# AQI in Durham: A System-Level Perspective

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# Why Assessment for Quality Improvement?

## The System Problem

- Homegrown tools led to inconsistent data
- Limited clarity on true indicators of quality
- Need for a shared, reliable standard across the system

## Why Toronto's AQI

- Validated and inter-rater reliable
- Developed in a comparable municipal context
- No cost to adopt, no need to reinvent

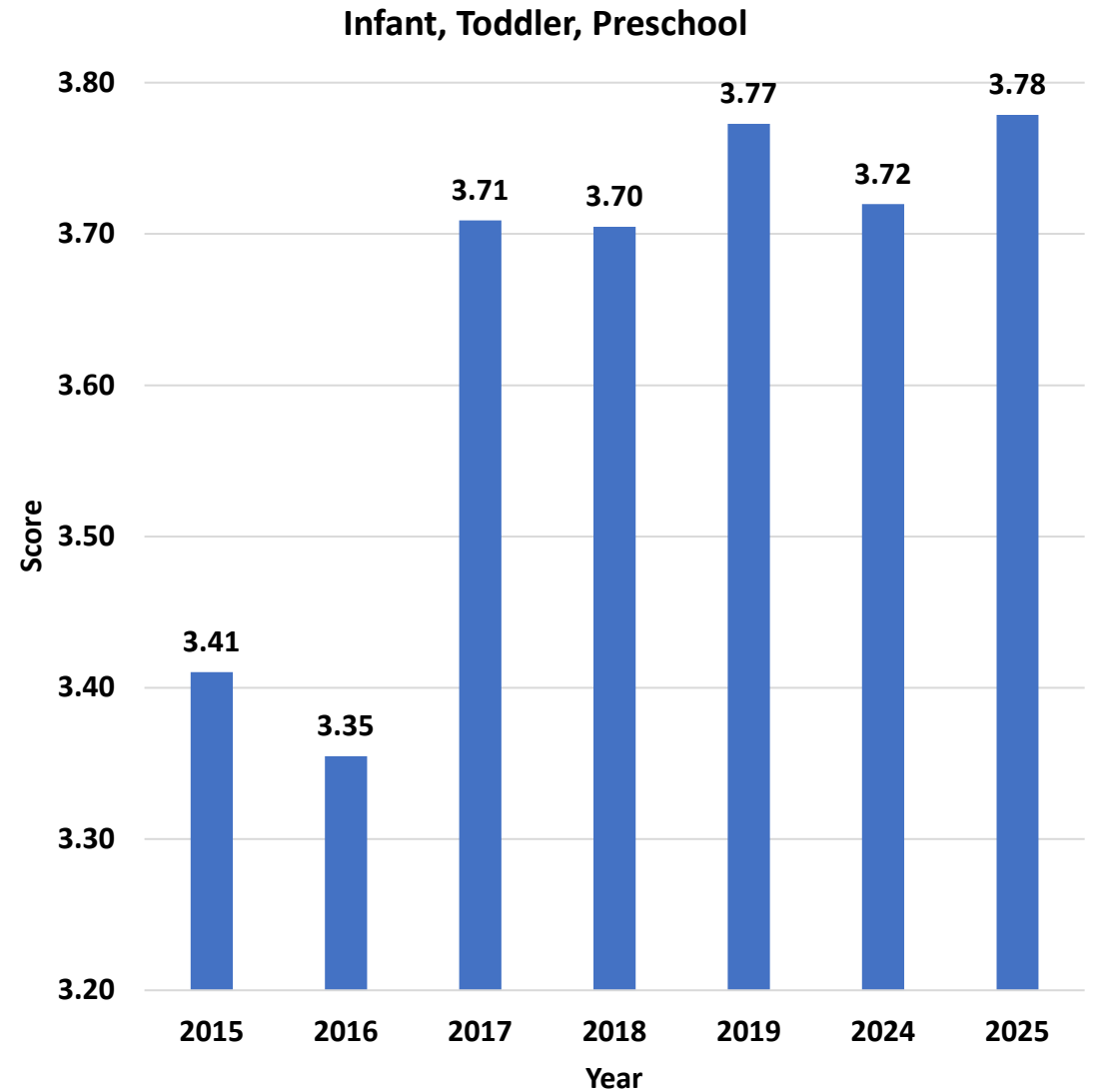
## How We Implement AQI

- 6 Quality Assurance & Contract Compliance Advisors
- 4 Training Specialists Annual assessments of 264 sites
- Same sites year-over-year with safeguards against bias
- Action plans built jointly with supervisors
- Training Specialists embedded in improvement work
- Immediate feedback + follow-up support



## What the Data Tells Us

- Most operators meet expectations
- System improved (2015–2025)
- AQI highlights where support, not punishment, is needed





# What Makes AQI Effective

## Quality Indicators

- Focus on educator–child interactions
- Simple, observable indicators
- Rate + support model
- Aligns with How Does Learning Happen

## CMSM Alignment

- Supports CWELCC accountability pressures
- Complements (does not duplicate) Licensing & Public Health
- Strengthens contract compliance and quality outcomes

## Challenges & What We Learned

- Initial resistance usually tied to misinterpretation
- Clear criteria supports operator buy-in
- AQI enables constructive conversations about quality



## Key Takeaway

A validated quality tool—  
when paired with support—  
can improve quality,  
strengthen relationships,  
and support system  
accountability

