



**A B C** Quality

**Program Manual**  
April 2018 PILOT YEAR

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[abcquality.org](http://abcquality.org)

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# ABC Quality



## SECTION 1: Getting to Know ABC Quality

## About ABC Quality

South Carolina is committed to an early care and education system that focuses on building high quality, comprehensive programs that provide integrated services. This commitment reflects a vision that every child in South Carolina will have equal opportunity for success in school based on equitable access to a high quality early care and education system.

ABC Quality, South Carolina’s statewide quality rating and improvement system (QRIS), provides the foundation for such an early care and education system through a framework to assess, improve, promote, and communicate the quality of early learning and development.

### ABC Quality

- Connects families to quality early care and education programs with the support of an easy-to-understand rating system.
- Offers coaching, professional development, and resources to early care and education providers to improve the early education environment and teaching practices and to support each child’s learning and development.
- Enables child care providers to become eligible for SC Voucher, a program that pays providers so they can care for children from low-income families.

### The ABC Quality Framework

- Provides early childhood program personnel with the criteria, tools, and resources they need to improve the quality of their programs.
- Serves as criteria used to determine a program’s *ABC Quality Level* – the quality rating that is indicated on the website and influences a program’s level of SC Voucher funding.
- Represents standardized criteria for program observation, documentation, curriculum planning, and continuous quality improvement.
- Aligns with SC’s Professional Development and Credentialing System (a standardized early childhood workforce knowledge and competency framework with a corresponding progression of credentials).
- Aligns with SC’s Early Learning Standards (a framework of criteria for children’s growth, development, and learning that educators rely on to plan curriculum).

## Benefits of Participating in ABC Quality

### Benefits for Providers

ABC Quality is becoming the primary tool parents use to identify high quality child care programs and to compare one program with another. The higher your program's rating, the more you can use it to market your program and attract new families. The benefits to child care providers include:

- Customized support and assistance to improve quality;
- Grants, awards and other financial supports;
- Free professional development and scholarships to conferences;
- Outreach and marketing to families;
- A roadmap for strengthening the quality of care and an opportunity for lifting up the child care profession and child care system;
- Increased voucher payments based on quality level; and
- As providers join and earn higher ratings, the program will systemically improve the quality of the state's early education programs.

### Benefits for Families

Families should make sound educational choices for their children and have options that will help children reach their full potential. ABC Quality helps child care programs increase their quality to make more quality options available to families. The benefits to families include:

- Supportive and developmentally appropriate environments for children that support their overall growth and development;
- Clear letter ratings to help families find quality child care for their children;
- Reliable quality child care that allows parents to work, have fewer absences and be more productive resulting in long-term earnings increases of up to 30 percent;
- Inclusion of families in discussions about their children's development and ways to support healthy development;
- Assistance for families in advocating for their children, increasing the likelihood of families to stay involved as their children enter school, thereby increasing their children's likelihood of graduating high school; and
- A quality education that prepares children in their first five years of life for school achievement and high school graduation.

### Benefits for the Community

- ABC Quality can demonstrate to policymakers that a quality early care and education system can increase children's readiness for success in kindergarten. This will build support at both the policy and appropriations levels.
- Every dollar invested in quality early education saves \$7 in special education, public assistance, corrections and lost taxes. The rate of return for quality early childhood education is ten percent per year. An \$8,000 investment at birth brings nearly an \$800,000 return over the child's life.

## Navigating the Process of ABC Quality

### Step 1: Learn about ABC Quality <http://scchildcare.org/>

- ✓ Take our 3-part online orientation series and receive FREE training hours  
Coming soon to: <https://www.prosolutionstraining.com/southcarolina/>
- ✓ Review ABC Quality information online

### Step 2: Apply to Participate

- ✓ Complete application (Coming Online Soon)
- ✓ Receive welcome call from ABC Quality Staff
- ✓ Submit eligibility documents

### Step 3: Conduct a Program Self-Assessment

- ✓ Receive Quality Coach Assignment
- ✓ Develop Quality Improvement Plan

### Step 4: Receive Professional Development and Technical Assistance

### Step 5: Submit Structural Quality Documents for Review

### Step 6: Request Onsite Program Evaluation

- ✓ Demonstrate How You Meet Program Standards
- ✓ 1-2 Day Program Observation using the Intentional Teaching Tool (ITT)
- ✓ Receive Quality Performance Report (Pilot Period)

The new **ABC Quality Standards** will be piloted statewide beginning in April 2018. ABC Quality understands providers, assessors, and our technical assistance partners will need time to become proficient in the new system and to make needed modifications based on feedback and data collected during the pilot.

All current ABC Quality providers will receive a Quality Performance Assessment and report. Ratings based on pilot results will be issued at the end of the pilot period. Current ABC Quality providers can then choose between their existing quality level or pilot quality level at the end of the pilot period, based on whichever level is the highest. The chosen quality level will carry forward to the next review period.

New enrollees to ABC Quality, April 2018 and after, will receive an announced Quality Performance Assessment at their enrollment visit and follow-up report. If eligible to enroll, they will automatically receive a pending New Enrollment Rating at the Level C payment rate until quality level rating is determined. New enrollees will be assigned their quality rating level at the end of the pilot period. The assigned quality level will carry forward to the next review period.

- ✓ Market Your Program

### Step 7: Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

- ✓ Ongoing CQI activities will help programs systematically and intentionally improve services and increase positive outcomes for the children and families they serve.

## Eligibility to Participate

To be eligible for participation in ABC Quality, programs must meet and maintain the following:

1. Current, regular license/approval/registration (or exemption) with evidence of history of compliance with SC licensing regulations. History of compliance is defined as having no frequent or multiple deficiencies or a significant event posing a substantial threat to the health or safety of the children that involves supervision, compliance with ratios, or health and safety violations; and/or
2. Head Start and other early care and education programs operated by military or tribal programs must show substantial compliance with their regulatory agency;
3. Current Pediatric First Aid and Infant/Child CPR certification for all staff responsible for caring for or supervising children;
4. Discipline policy prohibiting corporal punishment signed and dated by all staff annually;
5. Completion of the [SC Health and Safety Pre-Service Certificate](#) or ECD 101 by all staff responsible for caring or supervising children upon enrollment and within 90 days of hire for new staff;
6. Signed acknowledgement from all staff confirming their knowledge of and adherence to the ABC Quality Code of Ethics (see ABC Quality Forms).

### Additional eligibility requirements for License-Exempt Providers\*

7. Verification of minimum staff education/qualifications (18 years old, high school diploma or GED, and 6 months' experience or supervision by a teacher with more than 1 year experience); and
8. Health Documentation: TB test/Health Assessments for all staff (DSS Form 2926) <http://www.scchildcare.org/media/650/2926.pdf> and:
9. Central Registry check of all staff to be conducted by the department to determine any abuse or neglect perpetrated by the person upon a child, and a search of the National Crime Information Center's National Sex Offender Registry and the sex offender registry act pursuant to 45 CFR Sec. 98.43 (DSS Form 2924) <http://www.scchildcare.org/media/35674/DSS-Form-2924-APR-16-.pdf>

*\*Note: On or before September 2018, all staff members working at license-exempt providers must submit to a background check pursuant to the requirements in the 2014 Child Care and Development Block Grant Law and supporting regulations. While South Carolina has yet to implement this procedure, license-exempt providers should be prepared to comply once the requirement becomes effective. The background check shall include an FBI fingerprint check and a search of databases in the state where the staff member resides and each state where the staff member resided during the previous five years to include 1) state fingerprint check; 2) state sex offender registry; and 3) state abuse and neglect registry checks.*

## ABC Quality Framework

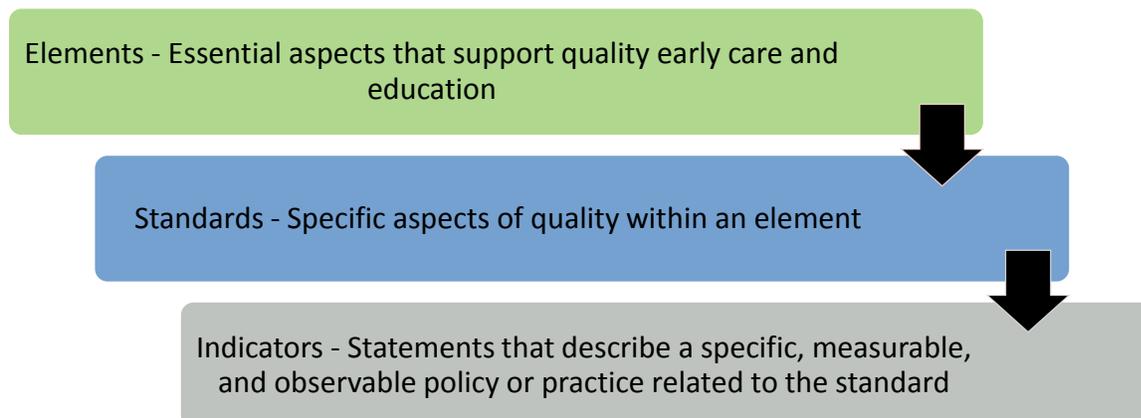
Structural and process elements frequently define early care and education quality. (Howes et al., 2008; Layzer & Goodson, 2006; Sylva et al., 2006; Thomason & La Paro, 2009). Similarly, these two elements comprise ABC Quality’s framework:

- **Structural Elements of Quality** – Refers to the administrative and policy aspects of early care and education. Structural elements of quality include group size, teacher-to-children ratio, staff qualifications and professional development, and the policies programs put into place to support such areas as family engagement, risk management and health and safety.
- **Process Elements of Quality (Intentional Teaching Practices)** – Refers to the observable experiences children have in child care and includes the social, emotional, physical and instructional aspects of early care and education. (Howes et al., 2008; Pianta et al., 2005; Thomason & La Paro, 2009).

ABC Quality has identified **5 Elements of Quality** (4 Structural and 1 Process).

Structural Elements	Process Element
1) Program Administration and Structure 2) Staff Education and Professional Development 3) Child Well-being 4) Family Communication, Engagement and Cultural Competency	5) Intentional Teaching Practices
<i>Documented via a portfolio or document review.</i>	<i>Documented via observed criteria defined by ABC Quality’s Intentional Teaching Tool (ITT).</i>

Elements of quality are further defined through Standards and Indicators.



### Four Structural Elements of Quality

The following provides definitions and rationales for the ABC Quality Framework and the criteria used for Structural Elements of Quality and Intentional Teaching Practices. This information is provided to support your program’s self-assessment and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Process.

#### **Element I: Program Administration and Structure**

**Standard I.A** Organizational Structure

**Standard I.B** Program Operations

**Standard I.C** Policies and Procedures Relating to the Care of Children

#### **Element II: Staff Education and Professional Development**

**Standard II.A** Education - Program Leadership/Administrators

**Standard II.B** Education - Teachers

**Standard II.C** Ongoing Professional Development

#### **Element III: Child Well-being**

**Standard III.A** Nutrition

**Standard III.B** Physical Health

**Standard III.C** Mental Health

**Standard III.D** Child Screening and Referrals

#### **Element IV: Family Communication, Engagement and Cultural Competency**

**Standard IV.A** Family Communication, Engagement and Cultural Competency

### Process Element of Quality

#### **Element V: Intentional Teaching Practices**

**Standard V.A** Responsive and Sensitive Care

**Standard V.B** Language and Communication

**Standard V.C** Guidance

**Standard V.D.** Program Structure

**Standard V.E** Early Learning

**Standard V.F** Environment

## Assessor Reliability

ABC Quality is committed to scoring each observed classroom using the Intentional Teaching Practices Tool (ITT) accurately and reliably. All ABC Quality program assessors have extensive education, training and experience with classroom practice, observation and assessment. They have been trained to remain completely objective and unbiased when observing a program.

For the ITT, there are 4 anchors reliable to each other who then provide the rigorous orientation process for the state team of Quality Assessors. The orientation includes hands-on practice and ends with an intense test of skills to determine reliability. Testing for reliability requires a minimum of three assessments conducted by the assessor and anchor scoring side by side. Reliability is measured by reaching consensus on 85% of the tool's indicators. Once the assessor is determined reliable, she/he may conduct observations independently. Each assessor and anchor must undergo periodic rechecks according to policy to assure objectivity and reliability in scoring. If a Quality Assessor's score is not reliable on a recheck, she/he cannot complete an assessment alone until s/he completes additional shadowing and/or training. The Quality Assessor is tested again for reliability for another three assessments.

# A B C Quality



## SECTION 2: Tools for Measuring Structural and Process Quality

**Structural Indicators to Support Quality**

Structural Quality is verified through a review of documentation gathered by the program. Documentation must demonstrate how the program meets the intention of indicators across each of the 4 Program Elements. Programs are encouraged to move beyond basic indicators in their practices and quality improvement plan. This strengths-based system awards points for each indicator met at basic, intermediate and advanced levels. Programs are encouraged to utilize evidence that is meaningful and relevant to their program. Your Quality Coach is available to provide guidance on Structural Quality document development and submission. To contact a Quality Coach call:

**SC Child Care Resource and Referral**

Toll-Free: 888-335-1002

[www.sc-ccrr.org](http://www.sc-ccrr.org)

*Note: When submitting evidence for the document review each item should be clearly labeled with the Element number, Standard letter, and Indicator number.*

**Example I.B.10** The program completes an annual audit of income and expenses.

**CHILD CARE CENTER**

Annual Finance Report

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Company Description and Overview .....	1
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**Tool A: Structural Indicators**

**Element I: Program Administration and Structure**

**Standard I.A Organizational Structure**

**Standard I.B Program Operations**

**Standard I.C Policy and Procedures Relating to the Care of Children**

**DEFINITION** – This section covers both leadership and management functions that support quality improvement and includes planning, implementing policies and procedures, and evaluating a child care program. Leadership functions relate to the broad plan of helping an organization clarify and affirm values, set goals, articulate a vision, and chart a course of action to achieve that vision. Managerial functions relate to the actual orchestration of tasks and the setting up of systems to carry out the organization’s mission.

**RATIONALE** – Having a strong business foundation and sound program leadership is crucial to program quality for early care and education providers. This puts the program in a much better position to support children’s development and potential as successful learners. Research shows that program directors are often highly trained in child development and education pedagogy but tend to lack formal program administration and business training. With a sound understanding of best business practices and areas where more development is needed, administrators can create a strategic plan to operate more efficiently.

<b>Standard I. A Organizational Structure</b>		
Values, Goals, Vision and Mission Statement – Creating values, a vision, a mission and goals will help your program and staff focus on what is important to you and your organization. In addition, clear articulation of a vision and goals sets the basis for developing your strategic plan.		
Program Evaluation – Ongoing reflective program evaluation helps program staff assess: the needs and wants of customers and staff; how organizational, program, and classroom practices are accomplished; and determines the effects of your program.		
<b>Sub Standard</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>MET/ NOT YET</b>
<b>Program Mission or Philosophy</b>	<i>Basic:</i> <b>I.A.1</b> The program has a clearly stated program mission or philosophy statement.	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>I.A.2</b> The program has developed goals and/or a vision related to its stated mission or philosophy.	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>I.A.3</b> The program’s mission, philosophy, goals and/or vision are consistent with components of a strategic plan to achieve a quality learning environment. Strategic planning provides a sense of direction for your program and outlines measurable, time specific goals.	
<b>Program Evaluation</b>	<i>Basic:</i> <b>I.A.4</b> The program conducts program evaluation (i.e. suggestion box, program assessments, staff or parent interviews, questionnaires, etc.).	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>I.A.5</b> The program includes both staff and parents in program evaluation processes.	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>I.A.6</b> The program utilizes the data gained from staff and parent program evaluations to inform a written plan for continuous quality improvement.	

**Standard I.B: Program Operations**

Staff Orientation – It is critical for new staff to receive a thorough orientation of childcare licensing and program-specific regulations, and of classroom and program-specific job responsibilities. An effective orientation protocol contributes to a more effective and productive workforce, improves retention, promotes communication between a supervisor and new employee, contributes to employee confidence and adaptation to the program, and sets clear expectations for roles and responsibilities.

Human Resource Policies – Human resource policies represent guidelines on the approach your program intends to use in managing staff. HR policies could cover the following topics: federal and state employment requirements, compensation and benefits, labor management relations, employment practices and placement, workplace diversity, health, safety and security, information systems, orientation, evaluation and ongoing professional development.

Business Practices – Understanding establishing and maintaining sound business practices is key to protecting your program’s fiscal health.

Sub Standard	Indicator	MET/ NOT YET
<b>Staff Orientation</b>	<i>Basic:</i> <b>I.B.1</b> The program has a written orientation procedure that covers all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job description;</li> <li>• Employee/staff handbook;</li> <li>• Parent handbook; and</li> <li>• Personnel policies.</li> </ul>	
	<i>Basic:</i> <b>I.B.2</b> The orientation must be conducted within 30 days of hire	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>I.B.3-</b> The orientation includes the above components in I.B.1 AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ABC Quality Standards; <i>and</i></li> <li>- SC Early Learning Standards*</li> </ul>	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>I.B.4-</b> The written staff orientation is reviewed with all staff annually.	
<b>Human Resource Policies</b>	<i>Basic:</i> <b>I.B.5</b> The program provides a written pay scale and benefits plan for staff.	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>I.B.6</b> The program’s compensation package (salary and benefits) is differentiated based on an employee’s position, years of experience, education level, and/or staff evaluations.	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>I.B.7</b> The program provides at least 2 of the following benefits to staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Options for affordable health insurance;</li> <li>- Paid time-off (sick and/or vacation);</li> <li>- Retirement plan options; or</li> <li>- Tuition reimbursement or paid professional development (including participation in TEACH).</li> </ul>	
<b>Business Practices</b>	<i>Basic:</i> <b>I.B.8</b> The program maintains a budget that includes income and expense projections.	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>I.B.9</b> The program works with an outside professional (CPA, etc.) to develop the budget at least quarterly and make modifications as needed.	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>I.B.10</b> The program completes an annual audit of income and expenses.	

**\*Not applicable for School-Age Only Programs**

**Standard 1.C: Policies and Procedures Relating to the Care of Children**

**Staffing Plan** – The program develops a written plan than ensures classrooms are staffed to meet ABC Quality Ratios and Group Size at all times. Ratios are determined by how many staff to how many children and are applied using the youngest child in the group. Group Size refers to the number of children in a classroom. Considerations in the staffing plan should handle teacher absences, breaks, and planning time.

Age of Child	ABC Ratio	ABC Group Size
0 to 12 months	1 adult : 4 children	8
12 to 24 months	1 adult : 5 children	10
2 to 3 years	1 adult : 7 children	14
3 to 4 years	1 adult : 11 children	22
4 to 5 years	1 adult : 13 children	26
5 to 6 years	1 adult : 15 children	30
6 to 9 years	1 adult : 18 children	36
9 to 13 years	1 adult : 20 children	40

**Transition Policy** – Programs also have a role in creating policies and procedures to support successful transitions between classrooms and to other programs. The issue of transitions is particularly sensitive for infants and toddlers because of the developmental characteristics of this age group. Infants and toddlers have a limited framework for understanding change and fewer resources to deal with stress than older children. Consistency and continuity are critical in helping children successfully manage transitions.

**Inclusive Practices Policy** – Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs and services are access, participation, and supports (DEC/NAEYC, 2009).

**Child Assessment and Lesson Planning** – Early childhood lesson plans align with the SC Early Learning Standards, are individualized as needed and are based on children’s developmental needs and interests. Child assessments are used to inform the lesson planning process and to provide teachers and families with critical information about development and growth.

Sub Standard	Indicator	MET/ NOT YET
<b>Staffing Plan</b>	<i>Basic:</i> <b>I.C.1</b> The program has a staffing plan that demonstrates how each classroom will meet ABC Quality ratios.	
	<i>Basic:</i> <b>I.C.2</b> The staffing plan provides a procedure to ensure proper staffing is maintained when assigned teachers are unavailable without shifting or moving children to other classrooms.	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>I.C.3</b> The program demonstrates how each classroom will meet ABC Quality group size.	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>I.C.4</b> The program has designated floaters or substitutes to ensure that children have consistency of staff.	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>I.C.5*</b> The program’s staffing plan ensures that children remain in their assigned classroom for at least 85% of the day.	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>I.C.6</b> The program has a staffing plan that demonstrates how each classroom exceeds ABC Quality Ratios and Group Size Requirements.	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>I.C.7</b> Children are assigned a primary teacher.	

	<p><i>Advanced:</i>  <b>I.C.8*</b> The program provides paid planning time for teachers as a part of their staffing plan. This time can be used for teachers to plan together, mentor each other, etc.</p>	
<b>Transition Policy*</b>	<p><i>Basic:</i>  <b>I.C.9*</b> The program has a transition policy that includes practices to support successful internal transitions (moving into new classrooms within the center) for children and their families. The policy must include plans to limit internal transitions of children to a new age group/classroom to no more than once a year.</p>	
	<p><i>Advanced:</i>  <b>I.C.10*</b> The Transition Policy has a plan to ensure successful external (children moving to a new program or school) transitions for children and their families.</p>	
<b>Inclusive Practices Policy</b>	<p><i>Basic:</i>  <b>I.C.11</b> The program’s Inclusion Policies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nondiscrimination and confidentiality statements;</li> <li>- A description of communication strategies used with parents to learn about individual child needs and necessary supports for the child’s inclusion and participation; and</li> <li>- A process for determining reasonable modifications and accommodations to include children with varying abilities in all activities and routines.</li> <li>- Specialized services to support children with disabilities are carried out in the classroom setting.</li> </ul>	
	<p><i>Intermediate:</i>  <b>I.C.12</b> The program provides literature and resources to support parents of children with disabilities.</p>	
	<p><i>Advanced:</i>  <b>I.C.13</b> The program’s Inclusion Policies include all of the items in I.C.11 and I.C.12 AND:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plans for teachers to participate in the Individualized Care Plans (IFSP/IEP) if parents request; and</li> <li>- Plans for teachers to use goals from the IFSP/IEP to support a child’s individual learning.</li> </ul>	
<b>Child Assessments and Lesson Planning*</b>	<p><i>Intermediate:</i>  <b>I.C.14*</b> The program has a procedure to support ongoing observation and documentation of child learning and development.</p>	
	<p><i>Advanced:</i>  <b>I.C.15*</b> The program has lesson plans that are linked to specific learning goals and objectives based on individual child assessments.</p>	

**\*Not applicable for School-Age Only Programs**

## Element II: Staff Education and Professional Development

**Standard II.A** Education - Program Leadership/Administrators

**Standard II.B** Education - Teachers

**Standard II.C** Staff Evaluation and Ongoing Professional Development

**DEFINITION** – Education, on-going professional development and staff evaluations ensure that Early Care and Education Professionals working with young children have adequate knowledge to provide a developmentally and culturally appropriate program that supports each learner.

**RATIONALE** – Education and professional development with specialized, child-focused content are directly linked to the quality of educator practice. Administrative and leadership staff in quality programs possess the training and education necessary to support the implementation of a quality program that is consistent with the program’s philosophy and mission. Teachers possess the training and professional development to recognize that learning occurs within the context of positive relationships. (Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2011; Center for Law and Social Policy, 2009; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010; State of New Mexico Children Youth and Families Department, 2010; Vu, Jeon, & Howes, 2008; Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001; Curby, Ferhat, Edwards & Chavez, 2012).

### Education Tiers

Each tier is built on the foundation of meeting the staffing qualifications defined in the Child Care Licensing Regulations (114-503 K). Early care and education professionals are encouraged to move up the tiers to advance their practice and understanding in the field. **(See SC Early Care and Education Career Path and Credential Levels in ABCQ Supplemental Information)**



**Standard II.A Program Leadership/Administrators**

Early Care and Education Professionals who supervise staff and support curriculum planning and daily program operations.

Sub Standard	Indicator	MET/ NOT YET
Education Level	<i>Basic:</i> <b>II.A.1</b> Program Leadership/Administrators meet the <i>Entry Tier</i> qualifications.	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>II.A.2</b> All Program Leadership/Administrators meet the <i>Entry Tier</i> qualifications and at least one meets the <i>Skilled Tier</i> .	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>II.A.3</b> All Program Leadership/Administrators meet the <i>Skilled Tier</i> qualifications and at least one meets <i>Accomplished Tier</i> .	

**Standard II.B Teachers**

Early Care and Education Professionals who supervise, plan, and implement developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to promote optimal growth and development of children.

Education Level	<i>Basic:</i> <b>II.B.1</b> A minimum of 50% of teachers meet or exceed the <i>Entry Tier</i> qualifications.	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>II.B.2</b> A minimum of 75% of teachers meet or exceed the <i>Entry Tier</i> qualifications. AND A minimum of 25% of teachers meet or exceed the <i>Skilled Tier</i> qualifications.	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>II.B.3</b> 100% of teachers meet or exceed the <i>Entry Tier</i> qualifications. AND A minimum of 25% of teachers meet the <i>Accomplished Tier</i> qualifications.	

**Standard II.C**

**Staff Evaluation and Ongoing Professional Development**

Staff Evaluations – Performance evaluations provide information on how and what a staff member is doing compared to their job responsibilities as outlined in their job description. Evaluations should outline skill sets, knowledge, initiative and participation in carrying out the program’s vision as well as opportunities for ongoing professional development and support.

Professional Development Plans and Annual Training Hours– Ongoing professional development provides learning opportunities that support knowledge, skill and practice advancement. The calendar year for professional development runs from January – December and is verified based on PREVIOUS calendar year. New employees will be required to meet a pro-rated number of hours based on the number of months employed. (See Supplemental Guide)

Staff Evaluations	<i>Basic:</i> <b>II.C.1</b> Program Leadership provides early care and education professionals with an annual written evaluation based on supervision and observation of performance.	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>II.C.2</b> The written staff evaluation ( <b>see ABCQ Supplemental Information</b> ) includes feedback on strengths and areas that need improvement.	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>II.C.3</b> The results of written evaluations inform staff professional development plans and/or targeted staff supports to improve practice.	
Professional Development Plans and Annual Training Hours.	<i>Basic:</i> <b>II.C.4</b> 100% of the program’s early care and education professionals have a Professional Development Plan. ( <b>see ABCQ Supplemental Information</b> )	
	<i>Basic:</i> <b>II.C.5</b> At least 50% of teachers exceed 15 hours of training in the calendar year.	
	<i>Basic:</i> <b>II.C.6</b> The program leadership/administrators exceed 20 hours of training in the calendar year.	

	<p><i>Intermediate:</i>  <b>II.C.7</b> At least 75% of teachers meet or exceed 20 hours of training in the calendar year.</p>	
	<p><i>Advanced:</i>  <b>II.C.8</b> 100% of teachers meet or exceed 20 hours of training in the calendar year.</p>	
	<p><i>Advanced:</i>  <b>II.C.9</b> A minimum of 10 hours of the training hours in II.C.8 are from certified trainings.</p>	
	<p><i>Advanced:</i>  <b>II.C.10</b> 25% of staff are enrolled in ECE coursework or a formal training series on ECE topics (e.g. Curriculum, Early Literacy, PITC, Conscious Discipline, ERS, CLASS, SHAPES, Cara’s Kit, etc.).</p>	
	<p><i>Advanced:</i>  <b>II.C.11</b> All staff receive specific training in evidence-based practices and supports for social-emotional development and behavioral health e.g. Pyramid Model  <a href="http://www.pyramidmodel.org">http://www.pyramidmodel.org</a>, Conscious Discipline <a href="https://consciousdiscipline.com">https://consciousdiscipline.com</a> .</p>	
	<p><i>Advanced:</i>  <b>II.C.12</b> All staff received at least one hour of training related breastfeeding, infant feeding or child nutrition in each calendar year.</p>	
	<p><i>Advanced:</i>  <b>II.C.13</b> All staff received at least one hour of training related to children’s movement/physical activity in each calendar year.</p>	

### Element III: Child Well-being

**Standard III.A Nutrition**

**Standard III.B Physical Health**

**Standard III.C Mental Health**

**Standard III.D Child Screening and Referrals**

**DEFINITION** – Attention to each child’s overall health and wellness (including their nutritional, physical and mental well-being) establishes a foundation for healthy development and provides for early detection, support, and intervention. With parental consent, quality programs use information from screenings to provide appropriate referrals while supporting the full participation of each child and his family.

**RATIONALE** – Early childhood programs are in a unique position to support families by providing a healthy environment for children to play and grow. (Harvard School Public Health Obesity Source Website, 2017). All children benefit from eating nutritious foods and being physically active. Children in care can receive up to two-thirds of their daily food intake while in child care and spend the majority of their waking hours in the child care program. The number of obese children in the United States is growing by staggering numbers. Obesity leads to numerous childhood health issues. Early detection is the key to prevention of many childhood diseases that could harm children’s physical growth, development, and health. A developmental screening provides families with information about their child’s growth and development. (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2012; Centers for Control and Prevention, and Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2007).

**Standard III.A Nutrition**

Nutrition is directly linked to all aspects of growth and development. Children are healthier when they eat a balanced diet. Better nutrition also boosts social skills, learning readiness, and analytical thinking. When children suffer from food instability or poor nutrition, they struggle to focus on growth and learning. Programs should create policies to support nutritious foods served to children while in care.

Sub Standard	Indicator	MET/ NOT YET
Nutrition Policy	<i>Basic:</i> <b>III.A.1</b> Nutrition Policy includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plans to ensure that children receive healthy and well-balanced meals that meet nutritional requirements by following the USDA CACFP meal pattern requirements for all meals/snacks;</li> <li>- Prohibition on using food as reward/punishment; and</li> <li>- Accommodation for individual allergic needs of children.</li> </ul>	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>III.A.2</b> Nutrition Policy includes all items in III.A.1 AND: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accommodation of special dietary requirements of children based on physical, religious or cultural beliefs;</li> <li>- Planned and/or informal opportunities to learn about healthy eating are provided to children at least once a week; and</li> <li>- Teacher practices to encourage healthy eating.</li> </ul>	

	<p><i>Advanced:</i></p> <p><b>III.A.3</b> Nutrition Policy includes all of III.A.1, III.A.2 AND:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guidelines for foods offered during holidays and celebrations;</li> <li>- Plans to educate families about child nutrition and/or infant feeding; and</li> <li>- Plans for fund-raising with non-food items.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Menus</b></p>	<p><i>Basic:</i></p> <p><b>III.A.4</b> Menus reflect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All meals and/or snacks are planned and served to meet children’s nutritional requirements as recommended by following the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program meal pattern requirements;</li> <li>- Unflavored whole milk must be served to 1 year olds; unflavored skim or 1% milk must be served to children 2 years and older;</li> <li>- 100% juice is allowed once per day in the appropriate serving size;</li> <li>- Sweet foods are served no more than two times per week; and</li> <li>- Sugar-sweetened beverages are not served.</li> </ul>	
	<p><i>Intermediate:</i></p> <p><b>III.A. 5</b> Menus reflect all of III.A.4 AND for programs serving a) 2 meals and 1 snack or b) lunch and 2 snacks or c) lunch and 1 snack:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fruit (not juice) is served at least two times per day;</li> <li>- A vegetable, other than white potatoes, is served at least once per day;</li> <li>- Whole grain foods are served at least once per day;</li> <li>- High-fat meats are served no more than two times per week; and</li> <li>- Fried/pre-fried foods are served no more than one time per week.</li> </ul> <p>For programs serving a snack only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fruit (not juice) is served at least two times per week;</li> <li>- A vegetable, other than white potatoes, is served at least two times per week;</li> <li>- Whole grain foods are served at least two times per week;</li> <li>- High-fat meats are served no more than two times per week; and</li> <li>- Fried/pre-fried foods are served no more than one time per week.</li> </ul>	
	<p><i>Advanced:</i></p> <p><b>III.A.6</b> Menus reflect all of III. A.4 and III. A.5 AND:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A vegetable, other than white potatoes, is served at least two times per day;</li> <li>- Whole grain foods are served at least two times per day;</li> <li>- Sweet foods are served no more than one time per week;</li> <li>- High-fat meats are served no more than one time per week; and</li> <li>- Fried/pre-fried foods are served no more than one time in a two-week period.</li> </ul>	

**Standard III.B: Physical Health**

Physical health in children is a general state of health and wellbeing and is usually achieved through proper nutrition, moderate to vigorous physical activity, and sufficient rest. Physical activity and movement are an essential part of the development, learning, and growth of young children. Physical activity helps keep children at a healthy weight, preventing many health problems that can come with obesity. Even in their earliest days, infants and toddlers are learning through their experiences and developing their gross and fine motor skills. As children grow, regular physical activity continues to hone motor skills and large muscle development. Children’s fitness, cardiovascular health, bone development, sleep quality, weight, and sense of wellbeing are tied to physical activity. Programs should create policies and procedures to support children’s activity and movement while in care.

Sub Standard	Indicator	MET/ NOT YET
<b>Physical Activity Policy</b>	<i>Basic:</i> <b>III.B.1</b> Physical Activity Policy includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotion of a least restrictive, safe environment for infants and toddlers at all times;</li> <li>- No screen time, media viewing or computer use for children under age 2;</li> <li>- Not using or withholding physical activity as punishment;</li> <li>- Frequency and amount of time provided for daily active outdoor play for all children;</li> <li>- Description of appropriate dress for outdoor play; and</li> <li>- Teacher practices that encourage physical activity.</li> </ul>	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>III.B.2</b> Physical Activity Policy includes all of III.B.1 AND: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Education for families on children’s physical activity; and</li> <li>- Education for families on screen time.</li> </ul>	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>III.B.3</b> Physical Activity Policy includes all of III.B.1 and III.B.2 AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inclement weather plan that provides for indoor active play; and</li> <li>- Limits to the amount of screen time, media viewing or computer use allowed for children age 2 and older.</li> </ul>	
<b>Daily Schedule</b>	<i>Basic:</i> <b>III.B.4</b> Daily schedule reflects the frequency and amount of time provided for active outdoor play	
	<b>III.B.5</b> Daily schedule meets III.B.4 AND reflects teacher-planned physical activities that support gross motor development at least two times a day.	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>III.B.6</b> Daily schedule reflects that indoor active play time will be provided, equivalent to the amount of time allocated for outdoor play, in the event of inclement weather.	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>III.B.7</b> The program maintains an inclement weather plan that reflects materials and/or activities to support indoor active play when unable to play outdoors due to adverse weather conditions.	

**Standard III C: Mental Health**

Early childhood mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how children think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how children handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Good mental health provides an essential foundation of stability that supports all other aspects of child development.

Sub Standard	Indicator	MET/ NOT YET
<b>Referrals and Services for Children</b>	<i>Basic:</i> <b>III.C.1</b> The Program has a current resource list of appropriate services/agencies.	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>III.C.2</b> The program has a policy to refer children in need of mental health services to the appropriate agency	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>III.C.3</b> Parents and program staff develop joint strategies to manage children with challenging behaviors (i.e. developmentally appropriate and when possible, evidence-based).	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>III.C.4</b> The program partners with community resources and families to identify and facilitate appropriate referrals for specific children and families regarding medical, developmental, mental health, and/or other needs.	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>III.C.5</b> The program works to see that referrals meet the diverse needs of families, with particular consideration given to issues concerning resources, culture, and language.	
<b>Community Partnerships</b>	<i>Basic:</i> <b>III.C.6</b> The program establishes and maintains partnerships with relevant child- and family-serving agencies within the community (e.g. those involving Early Head Start, Head Start, child care, family support, early intervention, mental health treatment, child welfare) to collaborate on behalf of children and families.	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>III.C.7</b> Community resources are accessed for children and families experiencing trauma.	
<b>Discipline, Suspension and Expulsion Policies</b>	<i>Basic:</i> <b>III.C.8</b> The program adopts a suspension and expulsion policy. <a href="https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/im-2016-03">https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/im-2016-03</a>	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>III.C.9</b> The program’s discipline policy is based on a framework of evidence-based practices and supports for social-emotional development and behavioral health e.g. Pyramid Model <a href="http://www.pyramidmodel.org">http://www.pyramidmodel.org</a> , Conscious Discipline <a href="https://consciousdiscipline.com">https://consciousdiscipline.com</a>	

**Standard III.D Child Screening and Referrals\***

Early identification of developmental delays is critical to the well-being of children and their families. Early care and education programs should have a policy to support the administration of a brief screening tool to identify possible developmental delays. The Ages and Stages Questionnaires®, Third Edition (ASQ-3™) is a widely used developmental screening tool to determine if young children (1 month-5 ½ years) are at risk for a developmental delay. Programs can visit <http://www.scinclusion.org/child-care-providers/developmental-screening/>. The Centers for Disease Control also offers a free developmental monitoring tool called Learn the Signs Act Early it can be accessed here <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones-app.html>.

Sub Standard	Indicator	MET/ NOT YET
<b>Child Screening and referrals</b>	<i>Basic:</i> <b>III.D.1*</b> The program conducts regular, informal developmental monitoring. <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html">https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html</a>	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>III.D.2*</b> The program conducts assessments from a nationally recognized formal screening tool at least once per year.	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>III.D.3*</b> Developmental, vision and hearing screenings are conducted within 60-90 days of a child entering the program. <a href="http://scfirststeps.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/VisionHearingGuidance_2011.pdf">http://scfirststeps.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/VisionHearingGuidance_2011.pdf</a>	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>III.D.4*</b> The program has a plan to ensure that child screenings and assessments are done in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner, including in the child’s home language.	
<b>Referrals</b>	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>III.D.5*</b> Appropriate referrals are made based on the results of the screening.	
<b>Family Supports</b>	<i>Basic:</i> <b>III.D.6*</b> The program supports families by providing information on professional resources when they suspect a child may have a developmental delay.	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>III.D.7*</b> Information about a child’s growth and progress, based on results of the screenings, is shared with families according to the instruments’ implementation timeframe.	
<b>Community Collaboration</b>	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>III.D.8*</b> The program collaborates with other professionals (i.e. local school district, Babynet, etc.) during the evaluation and eligibility determination process to provide information about the child’s specific needs and developmental concerns.	

\* Not applicable for School-Age Only Programs

## Element IV: Family Communication, Engagement and Cultural Competency

**DEFINITION – Family Communication, Engagement and Cultural Competency** refers to the range of practices that promote family engagement and individualized culturally appropriate practices.

**RATIONALE –** Research indicates that human development is the result of an interaction of nature (biological factors) and nurture (experience factors), with culture affecting caregiving practices (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Every child in South Carolina has diverse strengths rooted in his or her family’s unique culture, heritage, language, beliefs, and circumstances. Early care and education programs support the full participation of every family and child. The programs promote a sense of respect and belonging, support positive social relationships and supports teachers. These strengths support cultural competence and positively impact the life of every family and child served.

### Standard IV.A. Family Communication, Engagement and Cultural Competency

Engagement is essential for enhancing children’s learning and family well-being. Family engagement occurs when there is an ongoing, reciprocal, strengths-based partnership between families and their children’s early childhood education programs (Halgunseth et al, 2009).

Sub Standard	Indicator	MET/ NOT YET
<b>Communication with Families</b>	<i>Basic:</i> <b>IV.A.1</b> The program utilizes a method to collect information about the child and his/her family, including information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Family preferences regarding routine care (sleeping, diapering/toileting, and feeding);</li> <li>- Temperament;</li> <li>- Dominant language;</li> <li>- Social/emotional concerns;</li> <li>- Special needs.</li> </ul>	
	<i>Basic:</i> <b>IV.A.2</b> The program regularly communicates information with families in multiple ways, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Having family bulletin boards with relevant information;</li> <li>- Providing daily communication sheets about the child’s day;</li> <li>- Newsletters, e-mail blasts, or website updates; and/or</li> <li>- Family/teacher conferences, open houses.</li> </ul>	
	<i>Basic:</i> <b>IV.A.3</b> The program has a policy for families to drop off and pick up children in their classroom, supporting daily communication with teachers.	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>IV.A.4*</b> Teachers offer a minimum of 2 family/teacher conferences annually.	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>IV.A.5</b> Programs have a plan to communicate with families in their home language. <a href="https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/culture-language/article/home-language-support">https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/culture-language/article/home-language-support</a>	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>IV.A.6</b> Programs utilize home visitations as a means to develop relationships with families.	

<b>Family Engagement</b>	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>IV.A.7</b> The program demonstrates multiple methods for family engagement, i.e.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Family members volunteer and participate in program activities.</li> <li>- The program hosts family workshops, social gatherings, and/or targeted outreach events.</li> </ul>	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>IV.A.8</b> The program provides opportunities to engage families based on cultural needs and interests.	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>IV.A.9</b> The program solicits family input through surveys, a suggestion box, or parent boards/organizations.	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>IV.A.10</b> The program completes a family engagement self-assessment and planning process. See ABC Quality Family Engagement Toolkit <a href="http://www.scchildcare.org/library/abc-quality-documents.aspx">http://www.scchildcare.org/library/abc-quality-documents.aspx</a> and Strengthening Families Self-Assessment ( <a href="https://www.cssp.org/reform/strengtheningfamilies/2014/CENTER-BASED-EARLY-CARE-AND-EDUCATION-PROGRAM-SELF-ASSESSMENT.pdf">https://www.cssp.org/reform/strengtheningfamilies/2014/CENTER-BASED-EARLY-CARE-AND-EDUCATION-PROGRAM-SELF-ASSESSMENT.pdf</a> )	
<b>Cultural Competency</b>	<i>Basic:</i> <b>IV.A.11</b> The program has policies and practices in place to support the needs of dual language learners and children and families from different cultures.	
	<i>Intermediate:</i> <b>IV.A.12</b> The program utilizes strategies to support families whose home language is not English.	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>IV.A.13</b> The program completes a self-assessment of cultural competence using a tool, such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children Pathways to Cultural Competence Checklist ( <a href="https://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/policy/state/QBCC_Tool.pdf">https://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/policy/state/QBCC_Tool.pdf</a> ) or the Self-Assessment Checklist for Personnel Providing Services and Supports In Early Intervention and Early Childhood Settings from the National Center on Cultural Competence.	
	<i>Advanced:</i> <b>IV.A.14</b> The program provides policies and documents in their families' home language.	

**\*Not applicable for School-Age Only Programs**

## Tool B: ABC Quality’s Intentional Teaching Tool (ITT) – Infant and Toddler Classrooms

### Element V: Intentional Teaching Practices

**DEFINITION** – Intentional Teaching Practices refer to an educator being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in his/her decisions and actions.

**RATIONALE** – In ABC Quality, intentional teaching practices represent the range of practices that promote engagement in play, learning, development, and a sense of belonging for each child. Intentional teaching means teachers act with specific outcomes in mind for all domains of children’s development and learning. Intentional teachers integrate and promote meaningful learning through play in *all* domains using a repertoire of instructional strategies that are age, individually and culturally appropriate.

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**Standard V.A. Responsive and Sensitive Care** – The program staff supports the emotional development of infants and toddlers through warm, trusting relationships with familiar and responsive teachers.

**Rationale** – High-quality infant and toddler programs support young children’s emotional development through nurturing staff-child interactions that are sensitive, responsive, and consistent. Emotional development is the child’s emerging ability to become secure, express feelings, develop self-awareness, and self-regulate. This is supported by staff responding to and engaging children in positive interactions as they occur naturally throughout the day.

Indicator
V.A.1 Demonstrates physical warmth through touching, holding, hugging, patting, rocking, and/or keeping a child close to the teacher’s body.
V.A.2 Contributes to the overall positive tone of the classroom by being respectful and calm.
V.A.3 Spends the majority of time interacting with children.
V.A.4 Responds immediately and appropriately to support a child’s expression of emotions.
V.A.5 Recognizes children’s need for attachment by demonstrating patience and understanding.
V.A.6 Respects children’s privacy and maintains confidentiality.
V.A.7 Positions body to interact and engage with children on their eye-level.
V.A.8 Respectfully and actively listens when a child talks or attempts to communicate.

**Standard V.B. Language and Communication** – The program staff supports children’s language development through a variety of personal and meaningful interactions throughout the day.

**Rationale** – High-quality infant and toddler programs support children’s language development by increasing their ability to communicate successfully with others to build relationships, share meaning, and express needs in multiple ways. This is supported by staff responding to and engaging children in playful and meaningful interactions throughout the day.

Indicator
V.B.1 Regularly initiates communication with individual children.
V.B.2 Responds verbally to all types of a child’s communication attempts.
V.B.3 Models back and forth communication with individual children. This includes both verbal and non-verbal exchanges.

V.B.4 Helps children connect words with actions by using self-talk.
V.B.5 Helps children connect words with actions by using parallel talk.
V.B.6 Encourages and supports individual children in communicating and labeling their feelings.
V.B.7 Asks individual children simple, open-ended questions and waits for a response.
V.B.8 Expands children’s vocabulary by elaborating, extending, and sharing information.
V.B.9 Uses verbal play to help children learn the foundations of language and early literacy.
V.B.10 Facilitates peer-to-peer communication to promote social interaction.
V.B.11 Encourages children to communicate and share language with each other.

**Standard V.C. Guidance** – The program staff guide children’s social skills with respect to each child’s development, culture, and abilities.

**Rationale** – High-quality infant and toddler programs support children’s social development by increasing their understanding of self and others, and how they relate to other people and their environment. This support and guidance is maintained through caregiving practices that are consistent, predictable, and positively structured.

Indicator
V.C.1 Uses positive guidance techniques.
V.C.2 Guides children’s behavior by telling them what to do when an undesirable or disruptive behavior occurs.
V.C.3 Demonstrates consistency with all children.
V.C.4 Models and promotes positive peer interactions.
V.C.5 Encourages children by acknowledging efforts, accomplishments and helpful behaviors.
V.C.6 Demonstrates realistic expectations for each child.
V.C.7 Designs and manages the classroom environment to promote positive interactions.
V.C.8 Anticipates children’s actions to prevent potential conflict or danger by intervening when appropriate.

**Standard V.D. Program Structure** – The program is structured and organized to individualize care in group care settings.

**Rationale** – High-quality infant and toddler programs support children’s development by individualizing daily routines, conducting smooth and engaging transitions, and establishing flexible schedules to meet the needs of individual children while in group care. Emerging social and emotional development is supported and strengthened when there are consistently implemented care practices in small group settings.

Indicator
V.D.1 The room meets the ABC ratios.
V.D.2 The room meets the ABC group size.
V.D.3 On a daily basis, children remain in their enrolled classroom for the majority of the day.
V.D.4 Children’s exposure to unfamiliar teachers is limited.
V.D.5 Each child is assigned a primary teacher.
V.D.6 The daily routine includes hand washing with soap and water for teachers and children.
V.D.7 Teachers use daily routines and/or transitions as opportunities to engage children.
V.D.8 Teachers conduct smooth transitions.
V.D.9 Accommodations are made during daily routines to meet children’s individualized needs.
V.D.10 Family-style dining is practiced during a meal service to encourage independence and socialization.
V.D.11 Teachers follow a predictable daily routine/schedule so children can learn sequences of events and feel more secure.
V.D.12 Child-directed activities are provided for children based on their interest.
V.D.13 All children must have daily outdoor time, weather permitting.

**Standard V.E. Early Learning** – Program staff facilitate early learning by creating meaningful experiences that support all areas of development. These experiences should build on children’s interests and encourage curiosity, exploration, and problem solving.

**Rationale** – High-quality infant and toddler programs support children’s development in all domains by allowing them to freely explore, discover and manipulate objects throughout the day. Teachers should observe and assess the development of each child within the context of these daily experiences and use this information to plan appropriate activities and interventions based on each child’s strengths and abilities.

Indicator
V.E.1 Teacher provides developmentally appropriate opportunities for discovery and learning by allowing children to actively explore the room in a least restrictive environment.
V.E.2 Teacher provides developmentally and culturally appropriate opportunities for children to complete or participate in self-care and community care tasks.
V.E.3 Teacher provides developmentally appropriate activities and materials that are concrete and meaningful to children.
V.E.4 Teacher scaffolds children’s learning during routines and activities.
V.E.5 Classroom has a written plan of activities that supports the developmental progress of children.
V.E.6 Ongoing observation and documentation of children’s learning and development are conducted throughout the year.
V.E.7 Planned activities are linked to specific learning goals and objectives based on individual child assessments.
V.E.8 Teacher provides experiences that promote children’s early literacy development.
V.E.9 Teacher provides developmentally appropriate opportunities for children to develop problem solving skills.
V.E.10 Teacher uses everyday conversations as opportunities for children to learn about nature, science or math.
V.E.11 Teacher provides developmentally appropriate opportunities for children to enhance fine and gross motor development.

**Standard V.F. Environment** – Program staff design the environment using the space, materials, and furnishings as resources for creating a safe, interesting, developmentally appropriate place for all children to play, learn, and grow.

**Rationale** – High-quality infant and toddler programs support children’s development by intentionally arranging and organizing spaces for play and learning. Children are drawn into play activities with toys, materials, and others more readily when the environment conveys a positive message. Inviting rooms that are welcoming help children and families transition from home to group care settings by encouraging exploration and instilling a sense of belonging. Additionally, high-quality infant and toddler programs support children’s development by intentionally planning, equipping, and maintaining safe, age-appropriate outdoor spaces for young children to grow and develop. Emerging motor abilities and skills are supported when outdoor spaces and equipment allow children to move freely and have appropriate levels of challenge.

Indicator
V.F.1 Room has sufficient, age-appropriate materials so that all children can be actively involved.
V.F.2 Children are provided some variety of materials from which to choose.
V.F.3 Children are provided a wide variety of materials from which to choose.
V.F.4 Play materials are well-organized for children to access them and make deliberate choices.
V.F.5 The room is divided into spaces for routines and both active and quiet play that are appropriate for the ages of the children enrolled.
V.F.6 Materials that reflect the diversity of the children’s community are accessible.
V.F.7 A literacy-rich environment is present in the classroom.
V.F.8 The classroom has a variety of child-related displays that are easily visible to children.
V.F.9 Furnishings and equipment are child-sized and appropriate for the children currently enrolled.
V.F.10 Space and furnishings are arranged so that adults can directly supervise and respond to children during routine care and play activities.
V.F.11 A protected cozy area is available to children throughout the day.
V.F.12 The classroom space is uncluttered and noise is kept to a moderate level to avoid over-stimulation and distraction.
V.F.13 Designated outdoor spaces for infants, toddlers, and twos promote exploration in a least restrictive environment.
V.F.14 Outdoor equipment and materials are age-appropriate, accessible, and sufficient for all children to be actively engaged.
V.F.15 A variety of age appropriate outdoor portable play materials/equipment is available.
V.F.16 Outdoor space is planned as a play and learning environment.
V.F.17 The outdoor environment is naturalized.

## Tool C: ABC Quality’s Intentional Teaching Tool (ITT) – Preschool Classrooms

### Element V: Intentional Teaching Practices

**DEFINITION** – Intentional Teaching Practices refer to an educator being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.

**RATIONALE** – In ABC Quality, intentional teaching practices represent the range of practices that promote engagement in play, learning, development, and a sense of belonging for each child. Intentional teaching means teachers act with specific outcomes in mind for all domains of children’s development and learning. Intentional teachers integrate and promote meaningful learning through play in *all* domains using a repertoire of instructional strategies that are age, individually and culturally appropriate.

**Standard V.A. Responsive and Sensitive Care:** The program is effectively administered with attention to the needs and desires of children, parents and staff. Interactions between children and staff provide opportunities for children to develop an understanding of self and others and are characterized by warmth, personal respect, individuality, positive support, and responsiveness. Staff shall frequently interact, be available and be responsive to children through (1) active listening (2) giving feedback

Indicator
V.A.1 Speaks unsolicited to a child.
V.A.2 Responds verbally to child’s comments/questions.
V.A.3 Acknowledges a child’s comment/request.
V.A.4 Shows patience and lack of annoyance with child’s questions.
V.A.5 Converses mostly with children/limited conversation with adults.
V.A.6 Maintains eye contact while talking with children.
V.A. 7 Gives appropriate feedback. Examples: repeat what child says, ask for additional information, give relevant comments to children’s questions/comments.
V.A.8 Attends while child is speaking to adult, i.e. does not walk away or try to do something else (like wiping tables).
V.A.9 Actively listens to child’s verbalizations (does not interrupt or cut off child’s verbalizations).

**Standard V.B. Language and Communication** – Staff shall initiate conversations with individual children in a positive and inquisitive manner to stimulate language and thinking skills. Staff use: (1) questions (2) information sharing (3) positive feedback

Indicator
V.B.1 Asks children individually to talk about activities they are doing (share experiences). Examples: "Was it hard to do?" or "What are you cooking?"
V.B.2 Asks children individually to share their ideas/feelings about activities/happenings. Examples: (ideas) "What will you make/build?" (feelings) "How do you feel about that?"
V.B.3 Asks individual children open-ended questions that encourage critical thinking and begin with "why? what? where? and how?"
V.B.4 Engages in information sharing conversations. Example: "This is a lop-ear rabbit. He likes to eat carrots. Watch while I feed him the carrot."
V.B.5 Responds in calm manner (no screaming or yelling).
V.B.6 Listens to a child's explanation/comments even though the child's thinking is faulty. Listens respectfully to child.

**Standard V.C. Guidance** – Staff shall foster independence, encourage decision-making and use of positive techniques of guidance. Staff: (1) provide opportunities for children to be responsible; (2) provide choices; and (3) avoid comparison or criticism.

Indicator
V.C.1 Provides opportunities for children to be responsible. Examples: picking up toys, wiping spills, personal grooming (toileting, washing hands), obtaining and caring for materials, and other self-help skills.
V.C.2 Provides children varieties of activities from which to choose: Lets children choose the interest/activity area in which they want to work and also choose the activity in the interest area. This means that staff will not tell children where to go, what to do, or how long to work in an area.
V.C.3 Staff encourages children to treat each other with kindness and respect; no evidence of ridicule or making fun of others.
V.C.4 Children's mistakes are handled as routine matters. Example: "You spilled the milk, I'll help you clean it up."
V.C.5 Room and materials are ready when children arrive.
V.C.6 Children are told and prepared for what happens next. Example: "After lunch we will take a nap."
V.C.7 When a child makes an inappropriate choice, the adult helps the child to think about and make a better choice.
V.C.8 Staff talks about the behavior she wants to correct instead of judging the child. Examples: "It's O.K., we all spill. Use the rag to wipe up the spill." Do not judge: "O.K., Clumsy Sam, wipe up the spill." Children are told what to do not what not to do. Instead of "Don't run" say "John, walk in the class, run outside."
V.C.9 Staff has a few, fair, simple appropriate classroom rules (no more than 5) and states them clearly to children. Examples are: 1) Walk in the room/run outside. 2) Use your hands to help your friends. 3) Use indoor voices in the classroom.
V.C.10 Staff practices/models classroom rules (actions speak louder than words). Examples: When staff asks children to use indoor voices, she models using indoor voice (quiet, low pitched).
V.C.11 Staff encourages children and tells them when they have behaved appropriately. Examples: "You put the puzzle back on the shelf, thank you."
V.C.12 Children's mistakes are handled individually and privately as possible. Staff do not compare children.
V.C.13 Uses positive guidance techniques. Clarification: To receive credit, one positive strategy must be observed. If one instance of negative discipline is observed, credit is not received. Examples: Redirection, Anticipation/elimination of potential problem, children are given choices.

## Standard V.D. Program Structure

Indicator
V.D.1 <b>Program maintains required ratio.</b> Staffing patterns shall provide for adult supervision of children at all times and the availability of an additional adult to assume responsibility if one adult must respond to an emergency. Staff are <u>with</u> children, not distracted by other duties (such as cleaning or cooking). Every attempt shall be made to have continuity of adults who work with children. Staff-child ratios shall be maintained through provision of substitutes when regular staff members are absent. Clarification: For mixed age grouping, ratio is based on youngest member of group.
V.D.2 <b>Program maintains required group size.</b> Staffing patterns shall provide for adult supervision of children at all times and the availability of an additional adult to assume responsibility if one adult must respond to an emergency.
V.D.3 Children are not required to sit at tables for long periods of time. (Not over 15 to 20 minutes.)
V.D.4 Group times are relatively short, include experiences children enjoy doing together, and focus on topics of current interest. Clarification: Teacher planned physical activities lasting 5-10 minutes occur at least 2 times per day. These can be planned during total group activities and may include music/movement activities. If group time not observed, teacher interview and lesson plan can be reviewed for planned activities.
V.D.5 Teachers and children routinely wash hands with soap and water at appropriate times. Clarification: Teachers and children should wash hands with soap and water before preparing/eating a meal or snack, after toileting and after contacting bodily fluids or contaminated items.
V.D.6 Morning and afternoon schedules allow a large block of time, 45 minutes to 2 hours, for individual and small group activities conducted in interest/activity areas. Children are read to daily in small groups.
V.D.7 All children must have daily active outdoor play.
V.D.8 Teacher planned physical activities lasting 5-10 minutes occur at least 2 times per day. Clarification: These can be planned during total group activities and may include music/movement activities. If group time not observed, teacher interview and lesson plan can be reviewed for planned activities.

**Standard V.E. Early Learning** – The activities encourage children to be actively involved in the learning process, to experience a variety of developmentally appropriate activities and materials, and to pursue their interests in the context of life in the community and world.

Staff shall plan and carry out a variety of developmentally appropriate activities which address the individual differences of children and provide materials selected to emphasize concrete learning within a planned daily schedule which provides a balance of activities.
<b>Indicator</b>
V.E.1 Each child is provided opportunities to learn through actively using materials (touching, holding, handling, and trying different ways to use the materials).
V.E.2 Teacher provides concrete activities that are meaningful to children. Some examples are: sand, water, blocks and puzzles.
V.E.3 Each child is provided daily opportunities to select materials/companions and manage play independently.
V.E.4 Each child has an opportunity to work in many positions. Examples are: on a carpet/rug, on the floor, on a platform, standing at a table/easel, sitting at a table or on a cushion, sitting on the lap of a teacher who's reading to them.
V.E.5 Each child is allowed choices of activities in which to participate and areas of interest in which they work.
V.E.6 Each child has ongoing opportunities to talk with adults and other children to share ideas, share classroom and personal experiences and to gain experience through use of language.
V.E.7 Materials are provided which allow children to use them in many different ways. Examples: playdough can be used to make snakes, used with cookie cutters, used to make "pretend" cake, used to make bracelets or many other uses.
V.E.8 Children have opportunities to learn about nutrition one time a week or more. Clarification: Nutrition education may be provided during large groups, small groups, in centers or during lunch or snack. If not observed, teacher interview can be used or written plan/schedule can be reviewed.
V.E.9 Teachers provide opportunities for children to enhance motor development both indoors and outdoors. Clarification: Children are encouraged to be physically active indoors and outdoors at appropriate times. Monitor may interview teacher if not observed.

**Standard V.F. Environment** – The indoor and outdoor physical environment fosters optimal growth and development through opportunities for exploration and learning. Only age-appropriate, fully intact, and properly functioning materials that are in children’s reach and accessible can be counted. Enough materials should be available for several children to be engaged in a similar activity, thus reducing competition.

Indoor Physical Environment Calculation

Interest/Activity Areas	# of different accessible materials
Dramatic Play	
Blocks	
Art	
Manipulatives	
Library	
Music	
Science	
Indoor Physical Activity	
Other	

Age-appropriate materials & equipment (indoor) of sufficient quantity, variety and durability shall be readily accessible to children and arranged to promote independent use by children.
<b>Indicator</b>
V.F.1 Room has 5 interest/activity areas with a minimum of 5 different accessible materials per interest/activity area.
V.F.2 Age appropriate equipment is used. (Manufacturer's label may note age appropriateness).
V.F.3 Materials are intact and in good repair with no missing parts, sharp edges, or rust.
V.F.4 Materials are arranged so children can get materials by themselves without adult assistance.
V.F.5 Children work independently with equipment/materials by themselves or in small groups.
V.F.6 Children are provided play materials that promote physical activity indoors (e.g. scarves, bean bags, ribbons, music/movement CD's, musical instruments) at appropriate times.
<b>Materials and equipment – Outdoor</b>
<b>Indicator</b>
V.F.7 Age appropriate outdoor equipment is used. (Manufacturer's label may note age appropriateness).
V.F.8 Materials are in good repair with no sharp edges, rust or other hazards.
V.F.9 The outdoor play area is clean, safe, and free of hazards such as garbage, glass, cans, overgrowth, broken structures, loose nails, tree limbs and junked equipment/cars.
V.F.10 There is a variety of age-appropriate outdoor portable play materials/equipment on the playground sufficient for all children to be actively involved in vigorous play activities. Children do not just wander around with nothing to do. This can be accomplished by supplementing outdoor portable play materials/equipment with in-ground playground equipment (or) leading and involving children in games (or) a combination of portable play materials and any of the others.

## Tool D: ABC Quality’s Intentional Teaching Tool (ITT) – School Age Classrooms

### Element V: Intentional Teaching Practices

**DEFINITION** – Intentional Teaching Practices refer to an educator being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in his/her decisions and actions.

**RATIONALE** – In ABC Quality, intentional teaching practices represent the range of practices that promote engagement in play, learning, development, and a sense of belonging for each child. Intentional teaching means teachers act with specific outcomes in mind for all domains of children’s development and learning. Intentional teachers integrate and promote meaningful learning through play in *all* domains using a repertoire of instructional strategies that are age, individually and culturally appropriate.

ABC Quality Program Reviewers observe each classroom for 30 minutes to one hour using the Intentional Teaching Tool (ITT). Programs are required to meet minimal score thresholds to be considered for Level B or A designation.

**STANDARD V.A. Responsive and Sensitive Care** – Interactions between children and staff provide opportunities for children to develop an understanding of self and others and are characterized by warmth, personal respect, individuality, positive support, and responsiveness.

Staff shall frequently interact, be available and be responsive to children through (1) active listening and (2) giving feedback.
<b>Indicator</b>
V.A.1 Speaks unsolicited to a child.
V.A.2 Responds verbally to a child's comments/questions.
V.A.3 Acknowledges a child's comment/request.
V.A.4 Shows patience rather than annoyance with a child's questions.
V.A.5 Talks mostly with children/limited conversation with other staff.
V.A.6 Maintains eye contact while talking with children.
V.A.7 Gives appropriate feedback. Examples: repeats what a child says, asks for additional information, gives relevant comments to children's questions or comments.
V.A.8 Attends while a child is speaking to him/her, i.e. does not walk away or try to do something else (like wiping tables).
V.A.9 Actively listens when a child talks (does not interrupt or cut off child's conversations).

**STANDARD V.B. Language and Communication** – Staff shall begin conversations with individual children in a positive and curious manner to stimulate critical thinking and meaningful conversations. Staff shall encourage conversations between children, actively promoting the development of friendships. Staff use: (1) questions; (2) information sharing; and (3) positive feedback.

Indicator
V.B.1 Asks children individually to talk about activities they are doing (share experiences) to adults and other children. Examples: "Was it hard to do?" or "What are you cooking?" or "Tell Tom how you made that."
V.B.2 Asks children individually to share their ideas/feelings about activities/happenings to adults and children. Examples: (ideas) "What will you make/build?" (feelings) "How do you feel about that?"
V.B.3 Asks children individually open-ended questions that require more than just "yes" or "no." Example: "What do you think would happen if...?"
V.B.4 Responds in a calm manner (no screaming or yelling).
V.B.5 Listens to a child's explanation/comments and helps extend his thinking by asking additional questions. Listens respectfully to each child.

**STANDARD V.C. Guidance** – Staff shall help children be independent in making decisions and shall use positive techniques of guidance which encourage children to take responsibility for their own actions/behaviors and to understand the need to develop pro-social behaviors. Staff shall provide children a choice of activities and an environment free of comparison or criticism.

Indicator
V.C.1 Provides opportunities for children to practice and display their abilities with independent living skills, such as housekeeping chores, caring for animals/materials, personal grooming.
V.C.2 Encourages and supports children to make decisions for themselves. Staff are available in time of need.
V.C.3 Provides opportunities for children to become involved in meaningful activities of their own choosing by offering a variety of age-appropriate activities.
V.C.4 Encourages children to treat each other with kindness and respect and to learn appropriate ways to handle rejection, teasing and other actions which could cause hurt feelings.
V.C.5 When children accidentally damage equipment, have spills, or break things, teacher handles the matter privately. Example: A child leaves the lid off the bottle of glue and the glue is drying out. Teacher says, "Mix some water in the glue. It's easy to forget to put the lid on."
V.C.6 Provides children with a dependable yet flexible routine.
V.C.7 When mistakes are made, teacher assists children in looking for alternative ways to solve their mistakes or problems.
V.C.8 Has a few, fair, positive, simple, appropriate classroom rules which are posted. Children are encouraged and involved in discussing the rules. Staff models classroom rules (actions speak louder than words).
V.C.9 Uses positive guidance techniques. Clarification: To receive credit, one positive strategy must be observed. If one instance of negative discipline (as defined in Standard II.A.) is observed, credit is not received.
V.C.10 Responds equitably to all children without comparison ("Why can't you be good like John?") or criticism ("You are so messy. Why can't you be neat?") or harsh treatment.
V.C.11 Helps children develop negotiating skills in solving disputes using words to work out problems.
V.C.12 Uses opportunities during activities to actively teach children how to cooperate with each other.
V.C.13 Steps in quickly when children's responses become physical and discusses inappropriateness of such responses.
V.C.14 Helps children deal with feelings (anger, sadness, frustration) by comforting, identifying feelings and helping children use words to solve their problems.
V.C.15 Knows where children are and what they are doing at all times, but children may be allowed to pursue activities outside of a teacher's direct sight.

## STANDARD V.D. Program Structure

Indicator
V.D.1. Program maintains required ratio. Staffing patterns shall provide for adult supervision of children at all times and the availability of an additional adult to assume responsibility if one adult must respond to an emergency. Staff are <u>with</u> children, not distracted by other duties (such as cleaning or cooking). Every attempt shall be made to have continuity of adults who work with children. Staff-child ratios shall be maintained through provision of substitutes when regular staff members are absent.
V.D.2. Program maintains required group size. Staffing patterns shall provide for adult supervision of children at all times and the availability of an additional adult to assume responsibility if one adult must respond to an emergency.
V.D.3 Teachers and children routinely wash hands with soap and water at appropriate times.
V.D.4 Provides all children daily active outdoor play, weather permitting. criteria above. Note clarifications for programs offering part day or half day (Standard II. C. 5.)
V.D.5 Schedule balances total group, small group and individual time.
V.D.6 Teacher planned physical activities lasting 5-10 minutes occur at least twice a day in a full-day schedule, (or once in a part-time or half-day program). If not observed, teacher interview and lesson plan can be reviewed for planned activities.
V.D.7 Conducts smooth and unregimented transitions between activities. School-age children help plan and participate in the change of activity, and have time to adjust to change from school to center.

**STANDARD V.E. Early Learning** – Teachers encourage children to be actively involved in activities provided, to experience a variety of developmentally appropriate activities and materials, and to use their leisure time to have fun and experience success.

Indicator
V.E.1 Encourages children to be physically active indoors and outdoors at appropriate times through a variety of large muscle activities and vigorous exercises that allows children to move around and "let off steam." Examples: running, jumping, throwing, catching, tumbling, dodge ball. If not observed, teacher interview and lesson plan can be reviewed for planned activities.
V.E.2 Provides children time to be alone, to rest, reflect and read.
V.E.3 Provides children a place, time and adult guidance/support/assistance to complete homework.
V.E.4 Provides each child opportunities to experience success through actively using materials (touching, holding, handling, and experimenting with different ways to use the materials.
V.E.5 Allows each child choices of activities in which to participate and areas of interest in which to work. Provides each child daily opportunities to select materials/companions and manage play independently, i.e. may participate in group games or may choose to work or play alone.
V.E.6 Does not require children to sit at tables but gives them an opportunity to work in many positions. Examples: on a carpet/rug, on the floor, or sitting at a table or on a cushion, sofa, bean bag, stage, pillows, etc.
V.E.7 Provides each child ongoing opportunities to talk with adults and other children to share ideas, share classroom and personal experiences and to develop friendships, etc.
V.E.8 Provides many ways to express creativity: cooking, paint, clay, crafts, etc. Encourages dancing, creative dramatics, singing, or playing instruments.
V.E.9 Activities emphasize cooperation; games and activities do not require excessive competition.
V.E.10 Program includes opportunities to learn about nutrition 1 time per week or more. Clarification: Nutrition education may be provided during large groups, small groups, in centers or during lunch or snack. If not observed, teacher interview can be used or written plan/schedule can be reviewed.

**STANDARD V.F. ENVIRONMENT** – The indoor and outdoor physical environments foster optimal growth, development and personal interest through opportunities for exploration, pleasure, enrichment, and development of friendships. Age-appropriate materials and equipment (indoor) of sufficient quantity, variety and durability shall be readily accessible to children and arranged to promote independent use by children. Only age-appropriate, fully intact and properly functioning materials that are in children’s reach and accessible can be counted. Enough materials should be available for several children to be engaged in a similar activity, thus reducing competition.

Interest/Activity Areas/Categories	# of different accessible items
Active indoor area (e.g. tumbling, balls, balance beam)	
Building and miniature materials for imaginative play (e.g. Legos, unit blocks, tinker toys)	
Dramatic play and home living, role playing with a variety of career awareness materials (e.g. teacher, journalist, restaurant worker, police officer, doctor.)	
Arts, crafts, and creative construction (e.g. paints, chalk, markers, pompoms, beadwork, pipe stems, cloth, cardboard tubes, woodworking, modeling clay)	
Quiet center (e.g. loft, quiet pillow corner, large boxes)	
Literature (e.g. books, flannel board stories, writing centers, listening activities, audio-visual resources)	
Puzzles (e.g. variety of puzzles, problem solving situations)	
Table games (e.g. chess, checkers, monopoly and cards)	
Science, math, social studies and exploration (e.g. experiments, math and science games, plants, animals, computers, gardening)	
Homework area with current resource materials available. (e.g. paper, pens, dictionary, thesaurus, clipboards, textbooks)	
Homelike area (e.g. adult-sized upholstered furniture, tables, lamps)	
Music and movement (e.g. CD player, CD’s, scarves, ribbons, streamers, rhythm instruments)	
Others (please list)	

<b>Indicator – Indoor</b>
V.F.1 School age children have at least 5 interest/activity areas with a minimum of 5 different materials per interest/activity area set up to encourage children's freedom of choice and opportunities to use materials in activities with adults assuming roles of resource persons.
V.F.2 Age appropriate equipment is used.
V.F.3 Materials are intact and in good repair with no missing parts, sharp edges, or rust.
V.F.4 Materials are arranged so children can get materials by themselves without adult assistance.
V.F.5 Children work independently with equipment/materials by themselves or in small groups.
V.F.6 Children's storage with private compartments or space is provided.
V.F.7 Children are provided play materials that promote physical activity indoors (e.g. balls, music/movement CD's) at appropriate times.
<b>Indicator – Outdoor</b>
V.F.8 Age appropriate outdoor equipment is used.
V.F.9 Materials are in good repair with no sharp edges, rust or other hazards.
V.F.10 The outdoor play area is clean, safe, and free of hazards such as garbage, glass, cans, overgrowth, broken structures, loose nails, tree limbs and junked equipment/cars.
V.F.11 There is a variety of age-appropriate outdoor portable play materials/equipment on the playground sufficient for all children to be actively involved in vigorous play activities. This can be accomplished by supplementing outdoor portable play materials/equipment with playground equipment, or planning/leading and involving children in games, or a combination of portable play materials and any of the others.