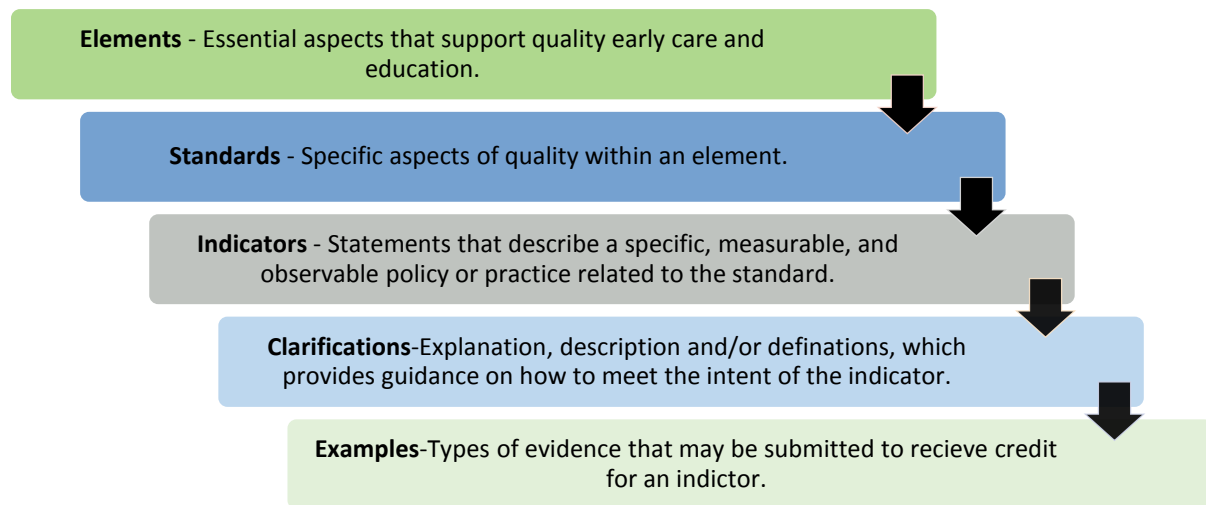# A B C Quality

ABC Quality Structural Quality Clarification Guide

Guidelines for Submission of Evidence for Structural Quality Indicators

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 Program Elements. The *ABC Quality Structural Quality Clarification Guide* is designed to support programs determine how they might meet indicators within the quality elements and standards. Structural Quality is points based and allows programs to select indicators that are individualized according to their program's strengths. Programs are not expected to meet and provide evidence for each indicator, but instead submit evidence for indicators that are currently being implemented or practiced at the time of the review. Programs are encouraged to utilize evidence that is meaningful and relevant to them. Additionally, this guide can be used for programs to set goals for continuous quality improvement. A Quality Coach is available to provide guidance on Structural Quality practices, document development, and submission.

Contact a Quality Coach: SC Child Care Resource and Referral- 888-335-1002 (toll-free), www.sc-ccrr.org

The Clarification Guide is organized as follows:

Elements - Essential aspects that support quality early care and education.

Standards - Specific aspects of quality within an element.

Indicators - Statements that describe a specific, measurable, and observable policy or practice related to the standard.

Clarifications-Explanation, description and/or definations, which provides guidance on how to meet the intent of the indicator.

Examples-Types of evidence that may be submitted to recieve credit for an indictor.

The indicator is the actual item for which the program is being scored. Indicators are organized by varied levels of quality including basic, intermediate, and advanced. 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. In some indicators (not all), the indicator at the basic level must be met in order to achieve credit at higher levels. These indicators will clearly state what needs to be met to receive credit.

The *ABC Quality Structural Quality Clarification Guide* provides additional clarity regarding each indicator to include necessary definitions and resources. Examples are given of types of documentation a program can submit as evidence for the particular indicator. Remember, examples are not intended to be the only type of evidence that can submitted to meet an indicator; your program may have a different example of evidence that will earn credit for the same indicator. Please be sure to submit evidence that represents your program.

Instructions for submission of evidence for Structural Quality Document Review:

- Submit evidence for each indicator that reflects your program's current practices. Evidence can be photos, copy of documents, handbooks, flyers, newsletters, emails, written statements, policy statements etc. The clarifications for each indicator will help determine what type of evidence can be submitted.

- Label each document submitted with the appropriate Element number, Standard letter and Indicator number (e.g., I.A.2). Each submission must be clearly labeled to receive credit. If the indicator is not written on the document, credit may not be given. Avoid using labels that may easily come off. **Writing the indicator number and highlighting relevant sections of documents is highly recommended.**

- Write the name of your program on each document.

- Do not submit documents with any personal information pertaining to children, families, and staff. If you send an example of a document that has personal information, mark through it before sending.

- Some of the indicators under the *Standard I.B Program Operations, Sub standard Business Practices* pertain to the fiscal management of your program. Note that these indicators allow submission of various kinds of documentation. Programs are not required to submit documentation with personal financial information to receive credit.

- Utilize the *Structural Quality Document Submittal Form* to record each document that has or has not been submitted for review.

- Submit copies of any ABC Quality forms that were used to go along with supporting documentation, (e.g. *Staff Education and Professional Development Tracking form, Staffing Plan form).*

- Documents may be sent by mail, e-mail, or fax. Refer to the following county listing to find contact information for submittal.

	COLUMBIA			GREENVILLE	

COLUMBIA

Aiken
Allendale
Bamberg
Beaufort
Berkeley
Calhoun
Charleston
Chesterfield
Clarendon
Colleton
Darlington
Dillon
Dorchester
Fairfield
Florence
Georgetown
Hampton
Horry
Jasper
Kershaw
Lee
Lexington
Marion
Marlboro
Newberry
Orangeburg
Richland
Sumter
Williamsburg

ABC Quality
S. C. Department of Social Services
3150 Harden Street Ext.
Columbia, SC 29203

Phone: (803) 898-2772
Fax: (803) 898-4510

GREENVILLE

Abbeville
Anderson
Cherokee
Chester
Edgefield
Greenwood
Greenville
Lancaster
Laurens
McCormick
Oconee
Pickens
Saluda
Spartanburg
Union
York

Greenville Technical College
ABC Quality
P. O. Box 5616, Station B
Greenville, SC 29606-5616

Phone: (864) 250-8468
Fax: (864) 250-8044

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.

Standard I. A Organizational Structure

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.

Sub Standard	Indicator
Program Mission or Philosophy	*Basic:* **I.A.1** The program has a clearly stated program mission or philosophy statement. *Clarification:* The program mission or philosophy statement must be clearly stated, which means it is written and provides guidance to program staff and/or parents regarding the program's core purpose, beliefs, values and/or focus. *Examples:* - Written statement that is part of a staff or parent handbook. - Photo of posted statement on a plaque or bulletin board. - Statement on program's website. - Statement on an informative brochure.

	Intermediate:
	I.A.2 The program has developed goals and/or a vision related to its stated mission or philosophy.
	
	Clarification: The program's goals and/or vision are written, and should reflect how the program plans to achieve its mission or philosophy. Goals are specific desired results that a program wants to achieve. A vision is a broader statement that explains where a program wants to be in the future. Both define the direction of a program.
	
	Examples:
	  - Written statement that is part of a staff or parent handbook.
	  - Photo of posted statement on a plaque or bulletin board.
	  - Statement on program's website.
	  - Statement on an informative brochure.

	Advanced:
	I.A.3 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.
	
	Clarification: A strategic plan is an action plan that supports the program in achieving its goals/vision. To ensure measureable outcomes, the strategic plan must include steps, timeframes, and the person or people who are responsible for achieving goals (long and/or short term). All of these components must be present to receive credit.
	A sample program goal may be: The program is aware of where children are developmentally. The Strategic plan statements that include steps, timeframes, and persons responsible related to the sample goal might look like the following:
	     o Teachers conduct annual child screening using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ).
	     o Teachers conduct ongoing assessments of children, by creating portfolios that document development.
	
	Examples:
	  - Strategic planning forms or action plans.

Program Evaluation	*Basic:*
	I.A.4 The program conducts program evaluation (i.e. suggestion box, program assessments, staff or parent interviews, questionnaires, etc.).
	
	Clarification: Program evaluation is a tool for gathering feedback from the stakeholders (parents and/or staff) regarding their satisfaction and program effectiveness. The evaluation must be solicited by the program and conducted at least on an annual basis. One example must be submitted to receive credit.
	
	Examples:
	  - Surveys conducted via online mediums, such as SurveyMonkey.
	  - Paper surveys, questionnaires, or interviews.
	  - Photo of suggestion box or written recorded suggestions.
	  - Documentation of evaluative feedback from parent organization or advisory board (e.g. meeting minutes, agendas, reports).

	Intermediate: **I.A.5** The program includes both staff and parents in program evaluation processes. ***Clarification:*** Evaluations conducted in indicator I.A.4 must gather feedback from both staff **and** parents. The evaluation must be solicited by the program and conducted at least on an annual basis. Examples submitted must demonstrate how feedback is gathered from both staff and parents to receive credit.

Examples:
- Surveys conducted via online mediums, such as SurveyMonkey.
- Paper surveys, questionnaires, or interviews.
- Photo of suggestion box (that indicates who uses it) or written recorded suggestions.
- Documentation of evaluative feedback from parent organization or advisory board (e.g. meeting minutes, agendas, reports).

Advanced:

I.A.6 The program utilizes the data gained from staff and parent program evaluations to inform a written plan for continuous quality improvement.

Clarification: Program evaluation data becomes purposeful when it informs program leadership on continuous quality improvement. A written quality improvement plan with target goals is developed based on the feedback from staff and parents. The following components must be present to receive credit: evaluation feedback, source of feedback (parents or staff), and plans/goals/actions taken as a result of feedback.

Examples:
- Goals from strategic plan or quality improvement plan are labeled as developed by evaluations from staff/parents.
- Written program log of feedback from evaluations and description of how it is used to develop goals for 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
Staff Orientation	*Basic:* **I.B.1** The program has a written orientation procedure that covers all of the following: • Job description; • Employee/staff handbook; • Parent handbook; and • Personnel policies. *Clarification:* The program has a written orientation plan/procedure to provide staff with information about the program and must review the following: job description, employee/staff handbook (includes relevant policies and programmatic information), parent handbook/policies, and personnel policies (may be included as a part of the employee handbook). All four components must be present to receive credit.

Examples:
- Orientation checklist with topics that are covered.
- Orientation procedure that lists what is covered.
- Orientation training plan that states what is covered.

Basic:
I.B.2 The orientation must be conducted within 30 days of hire

Clarification: The program's written orientation plan/procedure that states that it is conducted within 30 days of hire.

Examples:
- Orientation checklist that states when it is conducted.
- Orientation procedure that states when it is conducted.
- Orientation training that states when it is conducted.
- A signed and dated receipt of orientation by new hires and corresponding hire dates.

Intermediate:
I.B.3 The orientation includes the above components in I.B.1 AND
- ABC Quality Standards; *and*
- SC Early Learning Standards*

Clarification: The program has a written orientation plan/procedure that meets indicator I.B.1 and must review the following: ABC Quality Standards and SC Early Learning Standards. Both components must be present to receive credit. If the program serves school-age children only, they are not required to add the SC Early Learning Standards.

Examples:
- Orientation checklist with topics that are covered.
- Orientation procedure that lists what is covered.
- Orientation training plan that states what is covered.

Advanced:
I.B.4 The written staff orientation is reviewed with all staff annually.

Clarification: The program's written orientation plan/procedure that states that it is reviewed annually with all staff.

Examples:
- Orientation checklist that states that it is conducted for all staff on an annual basis.
- Orientation procedure that states that it is conducted for all staff on an annual basis.
- Orientation training that states that it is conducted for all staff on an annual basis.
- Training transcripts for staff that demonstrate annual review of staff orientation (if the staff orientation has been approved for training credit through the Center for Child Care Career Development).

Human Resource Policies	*Basic:* **I.B.5** The program provides a written pay scale and benefits plan for staff. *Clarification:* A written pay scale states hourly or salary earnings for staff positions. Benefits are any perks that employees receive as a part of their employment in the program. A program must provide written evidence of the pay scale and employee benefits.

Examples:
- Pay Scale: Statement of what employees earn.
- Benefits: List of perks/benefits that employees receive. These could include the following: paid vacation/holidays/sick leave, discounted child care, discounted insurance, retirement options, paid travel expenses for training, paid cell phone plan, tuition reimbursement (TEACH), and bonuses.

Intermediate:

I.B.6 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.

Clarification: A compensation package includes pay and benefits. A written pay scale states hourly or salary earnings for staff positions. Benefits are any perks that employees receive as a part of their employment in the program. Both components (pay and benefits) of a compensation package must be present, but one or both must be differentiated based on an employee's position, years of experience, education level, and/or staff evaluations. A program must provide written evidence of how the compensation package is differentiated based on one or more of the listed criteria.

Examples:
- Pay Scale: Statement of what employees earn that demonstrates differentiation.
- Benefits: List of perks/benefits that employees receive demonstrates differentiation.

Advanced:

I.B.7 The program provides at least 2 of the following benefits to staff:
- Options for affordable health insurance;
- Paid time-off (sick and/or vacation);
- Retirement plan options; or
- Tuition reimbursement (including participation in TEACH) or paid professional development.

Clarification: The written benefit package that all staff (part and full-time) receive includes two of the above listed components. Options for affordable health insurance means that the program/employer must contribute to or provide discounted health insurance plans. Paid professional development refers to the employee receiving compensation for the time spent attending trainings or professional development sessions.

Examples:
- Employee handbook states the benefits that are provided.
- Employment agreement with benefits listed.
- Human resource policies regarding benefits.

Business Practices	*Basic:* **I.B.8** The program maintains a budget that includes income and expense projections. *Clarification:* The program submits evidence/documentation of a budget that includes income and expenses. While the program may submit actual numbers, the program may elect to remove numbers from their budget forms to maintain confidentiality. *Examples:* - Written program budget form/financial statement that shows income and expenses. - Printed budget report from business software. - Statement from a program's owner, treasurer, CPA or financial advisor that explains the program's budgeting practices.

Intermediate:
I.B.9 The program works with an outside professional (CPA, etc.) to develop the budget at least quarterly and make modifications as needed.

Clarification: The program's budget is developed quarterly by an outside professional. The outside professional must have financial expertise which could include a CPA or financial manager. The professional supports the program in making modifications to the budget as needed.

Examples:
- Quarterly budgets statements prepared by outside professional.
- Statement from financial advisor or CPA that explains their work and role with the program.

Advanced:
I.B.10 The program completes an annual audit of income and expenses.

Clarification: An annual audit is an official inspection of a program's financial accounts. An audit must be conducted by an outside source, such as a CPA or financial advisor.

Examples:
- Program audit letter or report from a CPA.
- Statement from a financial advisor or CPA that they conduct the program's annual audit.

*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.

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.

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

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
Staffing Plan	*Basic:* **I.C.1** The program has a staffing plan that demonstrates how each classroom will meet ABC Quality ratios. ***Clarification:*** The staffing plan lists which staff are assigned to each classroom and how many children are enrolled in each classroom by age (including part-time and drop-in children). The plan includes the staff's scheduled hours for the classroom. It should also list the maximum staff:child ratio maintained for each classroom. All of these components must be present to received credit and the plan must demonstrate that ABC Quality ratios are met. ABC Quality ratios are applied using the youngest child in the group. ***Examples:*** - Staff schedules with work hours and corresponding classroom tracking sheets. - Completion of ABCQ Staffing Plan (see Quality Forms).
	Basic: **I.C.2** 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. ***Clarification:*** Shifting children is a practice that moves one or more children to a classroom other than their assigned classroom in order to meet staff:child ratios. This practice is detrimental to children's feelings of trust and security because it removes them from their established relationships and environment. It also disrupts children's cognitive processing by interrupting their play and interactions with peers and teachers. The staffing plan includes a procedure that explains how the program maintains ratios when an assigned teacher is not present or in situations when a child arrives, who would place a classroom over ratio. This procedure/plan must exclude the practice of shifting. ***Examples:*** - A written plan or procedure to ensure Child Care Licensing ratios are met in classrooms at all times. - A policy that prohibits the use of shifting to maintain ratios. - Completion of ABCQ Staffing Plan (see Quality Forms).
	Intermediate: **I.C.3** The program demonstrates how each classroom will meet ABC Quality group size. ***Clarification:*** Group size is determined by the total number of children in a classroom. It is based on the number of children enrolled in the classroom. Documentation must include children's ages or dates of birth. ***Examples:*** - A list of classrooms with their enrolled numbers of children by age. - Classroom attendance lists that include full enrollment with the children's ages. - Printed classroom enrollment reports. - Completion of ABCQ Staffing Plan (see Quality Forms).
	Intermediate: **I.C.4** The program has designated floaters or substitutes to ensure that children have consistency of staff. ***Clarification:*** A floater is an employee who is available on a regular basis and is able to relieve staff as needed. A substitute is a part-time employee who is able to replace staff who are not present. Due to the magnitude of a program director's responsibilities he/she should not be relied on as a floater/substitute.

Examples:
- List of floaters and/or substitutes.
- Completion of ABCQ Staffing Plan (see Quality Forms).

Intermediate:

I.C.5* The program's staffing plan ensures that children remain in their assigned classroom for at least 85% of the day.

Clarification: In order to ensure consistency in a child's day, each child should be assigned to a specific classroom. However, due to staggered arrival and departure times a program may elect to stagger classroom opening/closing times. The time children spend in classrooms other than their assigned classroom should not exceed 15% of the total daily operating hours of the program. When children move with their assigned teacher and class to another classroom or building space for an activity or routine this is not included in the time calculated in the 15%.

Examples:
- List of program hours with corresponding classroom opening/closing times that also provides explanation of where children are placed when their assigned classroom is not open.
- Completion of ABCQ Staffing Plan (see Quality Forms).

Advanced:

I.C.6 The program has a staffing plan that demonstrates how each classroom exceeds ABC Quality Ratios and Group Size Requirements.

Clarification: Credit for indicators I.C.1 and I.C.3 must be met in order to receive credit. In addition, the program must demonstrate on its staffing plan how the ratios and group sizes for each classroom exceed ABC Quality Ratios and Group Size.

Examples:
- See I.C.1 and I.C.3

Advanced:

I.C.7 Children are assigned a primary teacher.

Clarification: Credit for indicators I.C.2 and I.C.5 must be met in order to receive credit. A primary teacher has assigned responsibility to specific children and is responsible for those children's care. The primary teacher carries out most routine caregiving interactions with the child (diapering/toileting, feeding, and communication with families at drop off and pick up, completion of developmental assessments, documentation of daily activities, etc.). Primary care does not mean exclusive care. It means that all parties know who has primary responsibility for each child. The assigned primary teachers must cover the majority of the day (8-9 hours). Each classroom must have assigned primary teachers.

Examples:
- Lists of each classroom's primary care groups with assigned teachers and children.
- Program policy that reflects the practice of primary caregiving for all classrooms.
- Completion of ABCQ Staffing Plan (see Quality Forms).

Advanced:

I.C.8* The program provides paid planning time for teachers as a part of their staffing plan.

Clarification: Paid planning time must occur when a teacher does not have direct responsibility for children. This time can be used for teachers to plan together, mentor each other, child portfolio development etc. The staffing plan must demonstrate how teachers are relieved to have time for planning.

	Examples: - List of times that each classroom teacher is given planning and who fills in for the teacher. - Completion of ABCQ Staffing Plan (see Quality Forms).
Transition Policy*	*Basic:* **I.C.9*** 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. *Clarification:* An internal transition is when a child is assigned to a new classroom within the program. The written transition policy describes criteria for determining when a child may transition and how often children are transitioned to other classrooms. It also describes the practices that the program has put in place to support successful transitions within the program. Both components must be present to receive credit, and transitions must be limited to no more than once a year. *Examples:* - Written program policy describing the transition process including frequency.
	Advanced: **I.C.10*** The Transition Policy has a plan to ensure successful external (children moving to a new program or school) transitions for children and their families. *Clarification:* An external transition occurs when new children arrives to a program or when a child permanently leaves the current program to attend another program or school environment. This most frequently occurs when new children enroll in the program or when children go to Kindergarten (however, due to family circumstances children may move to another school at any time). The transition policy describes how the program supports children and their families as they arrive and/or leave to prepare for a new environment. *Examples:* - Written program policy describing practices that support external transitions.
Inclusive Practices Policy	*Basic:* **I.C.11** The program's Inclusion Policies include: - Nondiscrimination and confidentiality statements; - 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 - A process for determining reasonable modifications and accommodations to include children with varying abilities in all activities and routines. - Specialized services to support children with disabilities are carried out in the classroom setting. *Clarification:* The following definitions and explanations describe the components listed above for the Program's written Inclusion Policy. - Nondiscrimination means that children and families do not receive unjust or prejudicial treatment based on sex, race, national origin, religious beliefs, medical condition, disability, marital status/family structure, or sexual orientation. The program must establish a written policy statement to ensure nondiscrimination. - Confidentiality means that programs keep personal, identifying, and medical information pertaining to children and families private. The program must establish a written policy statement to ensure confidentiality. - Communication strategies are the multiple methods that programs use to determine the diverse needs of children in order for them to fully participate in the program. The program must list or share written evidence of two or more methods they use to communicate with families to learn about their child's individual needs or supports. Strategies could include: daily verbal or written communication, parent meetings/conferences, and a child intake form.

- Modifications and accommodations are the changes that programs make to their facility, policies, and/or practices that enable children to fully participate. For additional information about reasonable modifications and accommodations, visit: https://www.ada.gov/childqanda.htm. The program must establish a written description, plan or procedure for determining how and when reasonable modifications and accommodations will be made to support children's participation.
- Specialized services are recommended or prescribed interventions and/or services that are provided to children with disabilities to support their development, learning, and/or participation (e.g., Physical Therapy, Early Intervention, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy). The written policy must address how these types of services will take place in the child's classroom setting.
ALL of the above components must be a part of the program's written Inclusion Policy to receive credit.

Examples:
   - Program's written Inclusion Policy that addresses ALL of the above components.

Intermediate:
I.C.12 The program provides literature and resources to support parents of children with disabilities.

Clarification: Literature and resources include education, information, and/or specific community resources and support groups. The focus must be on supporting parents of children who already have an identified disability or may suspect a developmental delay. The program must submit at least two items to receive credit.

Examples:
   - Informative brochures.
   - Educational books or pamphlets.
   - Lists of contact information for community resources or support groups.
   - List of nationally recognized website links.

Advanced:
I.C.13 The program's Inclusion Policies include all of the items in I.C.11 and I.C.12 AND:
   - Plans for teachers to participate in the Individualized Care Plans (IFSP/IEP) if parents request; and
   - Plans for teachers to use goals from the IFSP/IEP to support a child's individual learning.

Clarification:
   - Children with disabilities age birth to three may have an individualized family service plan (IFSP). The IFSP is developed by a team and includes information about the child's current development, and family identified outcomes for themselves and their child. Children with disabilities over the age of three may have an individualized education program (IEP). The IEP is developed through a team process and it includes information about the child's current development levels and annual goals that can be academic and functional. With parent permission, the child's teacher can participate in the development of these plans.
   - Teachers work with either the IFSP/IEP team to incorporate activities and strategies to support child's goals, and outcomes in the child's classroom.

Examples:
   - Written program policy could include the following:
      o Child care offers to host the IFSP planning meeting at the center.
      o Programs allow teachers, at the family's request, to be included in IFSP/IEP meetings.
      o Teachers seek permission from parents to communicate with public school based special education personnel.
      o With parent's permission, teachers communicate with specialized service providers.
      o Teachers consider IFSP/IEP goals when writing lesson plans or developing an individualized learning plan for child.
      o Teacher and parent determine goals that should be addressed in the classroom.

Child Assessments and Lesson Planning*	*Intermediate:* **I.C.14*** The program has a procedure to support ongoing observation and documentation of child learning and development. ***Clarification:*** Observation and documentation of child learning is an assessment technique used to help teachers determine children's development on a continuum in various developmental domains. The SC Early Standards defines the following developmental domains: Approaches to Play and Learning, Emotional and Social Development, Health and Physical Development, Language Development and Communication, Mathematical Thinking and Expression, and Cognitive Development. Examples of child assessment include: Child portfolios, Anecdotal notes regarding individual children, and assessments that are linked to the program's curriculum (e.g.Creative Curriculum Gold). Ongoing means that the process of observing children and collecting documentation occurs throughout the year. To receive credit, programs must describe and/or show evidence of how they conduct ongoing observation and documentation of learning for all children enrolled. ***Examples:*** - Written procedure of how the program conducts observation and documentation of all children enrolled. - Policy in handbook that explains the program's assessment process. - Sample of current child assessments/documentation. - If varied assessments are used in different classrooms: Description of each process/assessment.
	Advanced: **I.C.15*** The program has lesson plans that are linked to specific learning goals and objectives based on individual child assessments. ***Clarification:*** There are 3 components that must be met to receive credit for this indicator. 1. All of the classrooms must have current (dated) and written lesson plans. 2. The program must be conducting child assessments and received credit for indicator 1.C.14. 3. Learning goals for children, based on the child assessments, must be reflected on the lesson plans. ***Examples:*** - Current, dated lesson plan from each classroom that reflects children's learning goals. - Current, dated lesson plan that are organized by developmental domains.

Not applicable for School-Age Only Programs

Element II: Staff Education and Professional Development

> **Standard** II.A Education - Program Leadership/Administrators
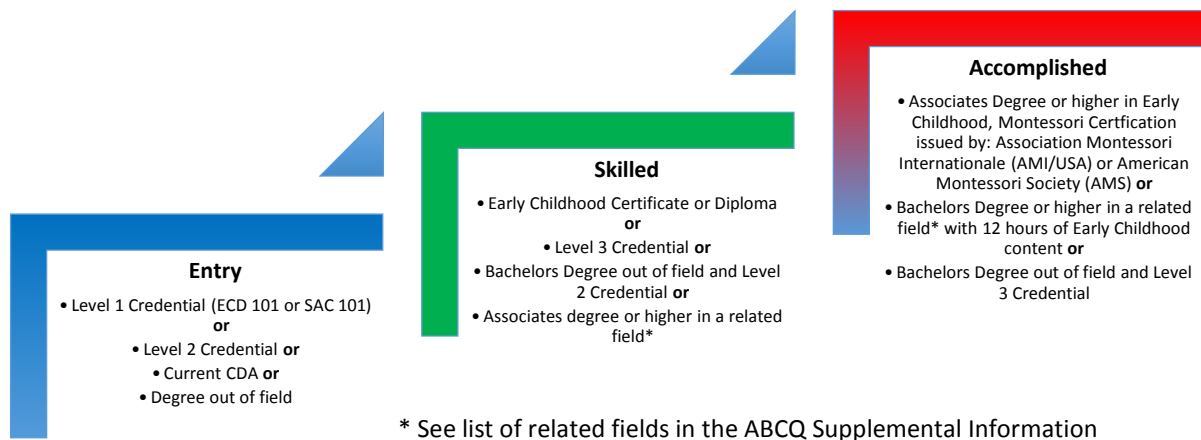> **Standard** II.B Education - Teachers
> **Standard** II.C Staff Evaluation and Ongoing Professional Development

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).

<div align="center">

Education Tiers

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Each tier is built on the foundation of meeting the staffing qualifications defined in the Child Care Licensing Regulations (114-503 K). A high school diploma or GED is the minimum staff qualification for Child Care Licensing and therefore does NOT meet any of the Education Tiers. 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)**

Accomplished
• Associates Degree or higher in Early Childhood, Montessori Certfication issued by: Association Montessori Internationale (AMI/USA) or American Montessori Society (AMS) **or**
• Bachelors Degree or higher in a related field* with 12 hours of Early Childhood content **or**
• Bachelors Degree out of field and Level 3 Credential

Skilled
• Early Childhood Certificate or Diploma **or**
• Level 3 Credential **or**
• Bachelors Degree out of field and Level 2 Credential **or**
• Associates degree or higher in a related field*

Entry
• Level 1 Credential (ECD 101 or SAC 101) **or**
• Level 2 Credential **or**
• Current CDA **or**
• Degree out of field

* See list of related fields in the ABCQ Supplemental Information

NOTE: Completion of the *Element II: Staff Education and Professional Development Tracking Form* with supporting evidence tracks the documentation needed to receive credit for this Element.

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
Education Level	*Basic:* **II.A.1** Program Leadership/Administrators meet the *Entry Tier* qualifications. **Clarification:** Program leadership/administrator includes positions such as directors, assistant directors, supervisors, and curriculum coordinators. Refer to the Education Tiers chart to find education qualifications at the *Entry Tier*. The *Element II: Staff Education and Professional Development Tracking Form* is a support document that can be used to list staff and their related qualifications (see ABC Quality Forms). **Examples:** - Copies of diplomas, degrees, certificates, and/or transcripts that reflect earned education for all program leadership/administrators. - Completed *Staff Education and Professional Development Tracking Form* **AND** copies of supporting education documents.
	Intermediate: **II.A.2** All Program Leadership/Administrators meet the *Entry Tier* qualifications and at least one meets the *Skilled Tier.* **Clarification:** Program leadership/administrator includes positions such as directors, assistant directors, supervisors, and curriculum coordinators. Refer to the Education Tiers chart to find education qualifications at the *Entry Tier* and *Skilled Tier*. The *Element II: Staff Education and Professional Development Tracking Form* is a support document that can be used to list staff and their related qualifications (see ABC Quality Forms). **Examples:** - Copies of diplomas, degrees, certificates, and/or transcripts that reflect earned education for all program leadership/administrators. - Completed *Staff Education and Professional Development Tracking Form* **AND** copies of supporting education documents.
	Advanced: **II.A.3** All Program Leadership/Administrators meet the *Skilled Tier* qualifications and at least one meets *Accomplished Tier.* **Clarification:** Program leadership/administrator includes positions such as directors, assistant directors, supervisors, and curriculum coordinators. Refer to the Education Tiers chart to find education qualifications at the *Skilled Tier* and *Accomplished Tier*. The *Element II: Staff Education and Professional Development Tracking Form* is a support document that can be used to list staff and their related qualifications (see ABC Quality Forms). **Examples:** - Copies of diplomas, degrees, certificates, and/or transcripts that reflect earned education for all program leadership/administrators. - Completed *Staff Education and Professional Development Tracking Form* **AND** copies of supporting education documents.

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	*Basic:* **II.B.1** A minimum of 50% of teachers meet or exceed the *Entry Tier* qualifications. **Clarification:** A teacher is defined as any position that works directly with children, such as lead, assistant, floater, substitute, and emergency person. Refer to the Education Tiers chart to find education qualifications at the *Entry Tier*. The *Element II: Staff Education and Professional Development Tracking Form* is a support document that can be used to list staff and their related qualifications (see ABC Quality Forms). **Examples:** - Copies of diplomas, degrees, certificates, and/or transcripts that reflect earned education for all teachers. - Completed *Staff Education and Professional Development Tracking Form* **AND** copies of supporting education documents.
	Intermediate: **II.B.2** A minimum of 75% of teachers meet or exceed the *Entry Tier* qualifications. AND A minimum of 25% of teachers meet or exceed the *Skilled Tier* qualifications. **Clarification:** A teacher is defined as any position that works directly with children, such as lead, assistant, floater, substitute, and emergency person. Refer to the Education Tiers chart to find education qualifications at the *Entry Tier* and *Skilled Tier*. The *Element II: Staff Education and Professional Development Tracking Form* is a support document that can be used to list staff and their related qualifications (see ABC Quality Forms). **Examples:** - Copies of diplomas, degrees, certificates, and/or transcripts that reflect earned education for all teachers. - Completed *Staff Education and Professional Development Tracking Form* **AND** copies of supporting education documents.
	Advanced: **II.B.3** 100% of teachers meet or exceed the *Entry Tier* qualifications. AND A minimum of 25% of teachers meet the *Accomplished Tier* qualifications. **Clarification:** A teacher is defined as any position that works directly with children, such as lead, assistant, floater, substitute, and emergency person. Refer to the Education Tiers chart to find education qualifications at the *Entry Tier* and *Advanced Tier*. The *Element II: Staff Education and Professional Development Tracking Form* is a support document that can be used to list staff and their related qualifications (see ABC Quality Forms). **Examples:** - Copies of diplomas, degrees, certificates, and/or transcripts that reflect earned education for all teachers. - Completed *Staff Education and Professional Development Tracking Form* **AND** copies of supporting education documents.

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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	*Basic:* **II.C.1** Program Leadership provides early care and education professionals with an annual written evaluation based on supervision and observation of performance. *Clarification:* Written, annual staff evaluations are conducted by the program leadership and provide performance feedback to employees. *Examples:* - Sample staff evaluation with protocol on how frequently they are conducted.
	Intermediate: **II.C.2** The written staff evaluation **(see ABCQ Supplemental Information)** includes feedback on strengths and areas that need improvement. *Clarification:* The feedback included on written staff evaluations must include both strengths and areas in need of improvement. *Examples:* - Sample staff evaluation that includes employee strengths and areas for improvement.
	Advanced: **II.C.3** The results of written evaluations inform staff professional development plans and/or targeted staff supports to improve practice. *Clarification:* Staff evaluations are used to support staff in their professional growth. Program leadership may identify areas that need improvement, or a teacher may express areas of interest during the evaluation process. Once identified, professional development plans and/or targeted staff supports are located to enhance learning and improvement of practice. *Examples:* - Sample staff evaluation that has section regarding next steps/targeted supports. - Professional Development Plans are developed and/or edited based on staff evaluations. - Policy in the staff handbook regarding how staff evaluations determine professional development plans and/or other supports.

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Professional Development Plans and Annual Training Hours.	*Basic:* **II.C.4** 100% of the program's early care and education professionals have a Professional Development Plan. **(see ABCQ Supplemental Information)** *Clarification:* A Professional Development Plan is a written roadmap for an individual's skills practice, training and/or educational goals. It can be based on the areas that need improvement during the written evaluation. The plan should establish timelines for achieving goals to ensure progress. *Examples:* - Sample of Professional Development Plan.

	Basic:
	II.C.5 At least 50% of teachers exceed 15 hours of training in the calendar year.
	
	Clarification: SC Licensing Regulations require that child care professionals (excluding emergency persons) receive 15 hours of training each year. The calendar year for professional development runs from January – December and is verified based on the PREVIOUS calendar year. ABC Quality recommends that teachers (excluding emergency persons) exceed these minimum requirements. All training received must be recorded on the Center for Child Care Career Development's training transcripts. To receive credit, at least half of the program's teaching staff must exceed 15 hours of annual training. New employees hired within the previous calendar year will be required to exceed a pro-rated number of hours based on the number of months employed. (See Supplemental Guide). New employees who have been hired within the calendar year of their current ABCQ Assessment will not be included in total.
	
	Examples:
	  - Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD) training transcripts for all teachers, except emergency persons, **AND** complete list of teachers with hire dates.
	  - Completed *Staff Education and Professional Development Tracking Form* **AND** *s*ubmission of all Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD) training transcripts for all teachers.

	Basic:
	II.C.6 The program leadership/administrators exceed 20 hours of training in the calendar year.
	
	Clarification: SC Licensing Regulations require that child care directors receive 20 hours of training each year. The calendar year for professional development runs from January – December and is verified based on the PREVIOUS calendar year. ABC Quality recommends that program leadership exceeds these minimum requirements. All training received must be recorded on the Center for Child Care Career Development's training transcripts. To receive credit, all of the program's leadership staff must exceed 20 hours of annual training. New employees hired within the previous calendar year will be required to exceed a pro-rated number of hours based on the number of months employed. New employees who have been hired within the calendar year of their current ABCQ Assessment will not be included in total.
	
	Examples:
	  - Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD) training transcripts for program leadership/administrators.
	  - Completed *Staff Education and Professional Development Tracking Form* **AND** *s*ubmission of all Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD) training transcripts for all program leadership/administrators.

	Intermediate: **II.C.7** At least 75% of teachers meet or exceed 20 hours of training in the calendar year.

Clarification: SC Licensing Regulations require that child care professionals (excluding emergency persons) receive 15 hours of training each year. ABC Quality recommends that teachers (excluding emergency persons) exceed these minimum requirements. All training received must be recorded on the Center for Child Care Career Development's training transcripts. To receive credit, 75% of the program's teaching staff must meet or exceed 20 hours of annual training. New employees hired within the previous calendar year will be required to exceed a pro-rated number of hours based on the number of months employed. New employees who have been hired within the calendar year of their current ABCQ Assessment will not be included in total.

Examples:
- Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD) training transcripts for all teachers, except emergency persons, **AND** complete list of teachers with hire dates.
- Completed *Staff Education and Professional Development Tracking Form* **AND** *s*ubmission of all Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD) training transcripts for all teachers.

Advanced:
II.C.8 100% of teachers meet or exceed 20 hours of training in the calendar year.

Clarification: SC Licensing Regulations require that child care professionals (excluding emergency persons) receive 15 hours of training each year. ABC Quality recommends that teachers (excluding emergency persons) exceed these minimum requirements. All training received must be recorded on the Center for Child Care Career Development's training transcripts. To receive credit, all of the program's teaching staff must meet or exceed 20 hours of annual training. New employees hired within the previous calendar year will be required to exceed a pro-rated number of hours based on the number of months employed. New employees who have been hired within the calendar year of their current ABCQ Assessment will not be included in total.

Examples:
- Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD) training transcripts for all teachers, except emergency persons, **AND** complete list of teachers with hire dates.
- Completed *Staff Education and Professional Development Tracking Form* **AND** *s*ubmission of all Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD) training transcripts for all teachers.

Advanced:
II.C.9 A minimum of 10 hours of the training hours in II.C.8 are from certified trainings.

Clarification: Credit for indicator II.C.8 must be met in order to receive credit. The SC training system has two types of training credit, registered and certified. While training credit is received for both types, certified trainings ensure that the trainer is qualified by having a four-year degree with course work in early childhood content areas, professional experience in early childhood programs/content areas, and coursework in teaching adults. In addition the training outlines go through an objective scoring process to ensure they represent current best practices in early childhood education and in principles of adult education. Due to this extensive process, certified trainings are considered higher quality and therefore at least 10 hours of training for all staff (excluding emergency persons) must be certified.

Examples:
- Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD) training transcripts for all teachers, except emergency persons, **AND** complete list of teachers with hire dates.
- Completed *Staff Education and Professional Development Tracking Form* **AND** *s*ubmission of all Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD) training transcripts for all teachers.

Advanced:
II.C.10 25% of staff are enrolled in ECE coursework or a formal training series on ECE topics.

Clarification: Early Childhood Education courses must be taken at accredited colleges and universities. A formal training series in early childhood topics must be comprised of at least 2 sessions totaling a minimum of 10 training hours. Current enrollment or completion of coursework/training within the calendar year will receive credit. Once completed, the training series should be reflected on the Center for Child Care Career Development's training transcript. Emergency persons are not included in the calculations for staff.

Examples:
- Transcripts that reflect enrollment or completion of ECE coursework at colleges or universities.
- Programs of study from a college or university.
- Registration, statement from trainer, or training certificates from a professional training series such as:
   o Curriculum based training series (e.g. High Scope, Creative Curriculum, Montessori)
   o Child Assessment training series (e.g. Creative Curriculum Gold)
   o PITC training modules series
   o Natural Learning Initiative series on Outdoor Learning Environments
   o Conscious Discipline series

Advanced:
II.C.11 All staff receive specific training in evidence-based practices and supports for social-emotional development and behavioral health.

Clarification: Within the annual training hours that staff receive, 1 hour must cover topics that support children's social-emotional development. could include: positive guidance strategies, developing friendships, and supporting children's social, emotional, mental or behavioral health. Training hours are verified based on the PREVIOUS calendar year. New employees who have not been employed for a full calendar year are not included in the staff who need to meet this indicator. Emergency persons are not included in the calculations for staff.

Examples:
- CCCCD Training transcripts for all staff that reflect 1 hour of training in social-emotional development such as:
   o Pyramid Model http://www.pyramidmodel.org
   o Conscious Discipline https://consciousdiscipline.com
   o Certified training in Child Guidance.

Advanced:
II.C.12 All staff received at least one hour of training related to breastfeeding, infant feeding or child nutrition in each calendar year.

Clarification: Within the annual training hours that staff receive, 1 hour must cover child nutrition, breastfeeding, infant feeding, and/or USDA meal requirements. Training hours are verified based on the PREVIOUS calendar year. New employees who have not been employed for a full calendar year are not included in the staff who need to meet this indicator. Emergency persons are not included in the calculations for staff.

Examples:
- CCCCD Training transcripts for all staff that reflect 1 hour of training in nutrition.

Advanced:
II.C.13 All staff received at least one hour of training related to children's movement/physical activity in each calendar year.

	Clarification: Within the annual training hours that staff receive, 1 hour must cover children's physical activity; physical activities are those activities that support gross motor development and planning for indoor/outdoor movement activities. Training hours are verified based on the PREVIOUS calendar year. New employees who have not been employed for a full calendar year are not included in the staff who need to meet this indicator. Emergency persons are not included in the calculations for staff. *Examples:* - CCCCD Training transcripts for all staff that reflect 1 hour of training in physical activity.

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

Nutrition Policy	*Basic:*
	III.A.1 Nutrition Policy includes:
	  - 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;
	  - Prohibition on using food as reward/punishment; and
	  - Accommodation for individual allergic needs of children.
	
	Clarification: Written nutrition policy must include all of the above criteria to receive credit. However if the "prohibition on using food as reward/punishment" statement appears instead in the program's discipline policy, credit may be received.
	
	Examples:
	  - Program's nutrition policies and discipline policy if necessary (may be a part of staff and/or parent handbook).

	Intermediate: **III.A.2** Nutrition Policy includes all items in III.A.1 AND: - Accommodation of special dietary requirements of children based on physical, religious or cultural beliefs; - Planned and/or informal opportunities to learn about healthy eating are provided to children at least once a week; and - Teacher practices to encourage healthy eating. *Clarification:* Credit for indicator III.A.1 must be met in order to receive credit. In addition the written nutrition policy must include all of the above criteria to receive credit. ***Examples:*** - Program's nutrition policy (may be a part of staff and/or parent handbook).
	Advanced: **III.A.3** Nutrition Policy includes all of III.A.1, III.A.2 AND: - Guidelines for foods offered during holidays and celebrations; - Plans to educate families about child nutrition and/or infant feeding; and - Plans for fund-raising with non-food items. *Clarification:* Credit for indicators III.A.1 and III.A.2 must be met in order to receive credit. In addition, the written nutrition policy must include all of the above criteria to receive credit. If the program does not conduct any fundraising, credit can still be received, however this must be documented by the program. ***Examples:*** - Program's nutrition policy (may be a part of staff and/or parent handbook).
Menus **** N/A for programs where parents provide ALL meals and snacks.**	*Basic:* **III.A.4 **** Menus reflect: - 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; - Unflavored whole milk must be served to 1 year olds; unflavored skim or 1% milk must be served to children 2 years and older; - 100% juice is allowed once per day in the appropriate serving size; - Sweet foods are served no more than two times per week; and - Sugar-sweetened beverages are not served. *Clarification:* Menus must be current (dated) and clearly labeled (e.g. 100% juice, unflavored 1% milk, whole grain) for all meals and snacks provided. 2 weeks of current menus that meet the above criteria must be submitted to receive credit. If additional weeks of menus are submitted all will be evaluated to ensure compliance. ***Examples:*** - 2 weeks of current menus.
	Intermediate: **III.A. 5**** 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: - Fruit (not juice) is served at least two times per day; - A vegetable, other than white potatoes, is served at least once per day; - Whole grain foods are served at least once per day; - High-fat meats are served no more than two times per week; and - Fried/pre-fried foods are served no more than one time per week.

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For programs serving a snack only:
- Fruit (not juice) is served at least two times per week;
- A vegetable, other than white potatoes, is served at least two times per week;
- Whole grain foods are served at least two times per week;
- High-fat meats are served no more than two times per week; and
- Fried/pre-fried foods are served no more than one time per week.

Clarification: Credit for indicator III.A.4 must be met in order to receive credit. Menus must be clearly labeled for all meals and snacks provided. In addition, the program's menus must meet the above criteria to receive credit.

Examples:
- 2 weeks of current menus.

Advanced:
III.A.6** Menus reflect all of III. A.4 and III. A.5 AND*:*
- A vegetable, other than white potatoes, is served at least two times per day;
- Whole grain foods are served at least two times per day;
- Sweet foods are served no more than one time per week;
- High-fat meats are served no more than one time per week; and
- Fried/pre-fried foods are served no more than one time in a two-week period.

Clarification: Credit for indicators III.A.4 and III.A.5 must be met in order to receive credit. Menus must be clearly labeled for all meals and snacks provided. In addition, the program's menus must meet the above criteria to receive credit. Programs that serve snack only are not required to meet the first two bullets.

Examples:
- 2 weeks of current menus.

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
Physical Activity Policy	*Basic:* **III.B.1** Physical Activity Policy includes: - Promotion of a least restrictive, safe environment for infants and toddlers at all times; - No screen time, media viewing or computer use for children under age 2; - Not using or withholding physical activity as punishment; - Frequency and amount of time provided for daily active outdoor play for all children; - Description of appropriate dress for outdoor play; and - Teacher practices that encourage physical activity.

Clarification: Written physical activity policy must include all of the above criteria to receive credit. However if the statement "Not using or withholding physical activity as punishment" appears instead in the program's discipline policy, credit may be received. The first two bullets are not applicable for programs who serve children who are only age 2 or older.

Definitions:
- Least restrictive environment means that children are allowed to move freely in the learning environment to play and explore. Restrictive means that children are not allowed to move freely by their own will, that they are prohibited access to areas they wish to explore, and are made to participate in activities of no interest to them. See Infant Toddler Clarification Guide, E.1, pg. 30 for more information.
- Screen time refers to use of television, computers, tablets, phones, and smart boards, etc. In the first 2 years of life, children's brains and bodies are going through critical periods of growth and development. It is important for infants and young children to have positive interactions with people and not sit in front of a screen that takes time away from social interactions with parents, peers and teachers. Before age 2 television viewing can have modest negative effects on cognitive development of children, *Caring for Our Children, 3rd Edition.*
- Withholding physical activity means that teachers use or deny gross motor activity as a strategy to correct/punish because of inappropriate behavior (i.e., outdoor play time prohibited because of uncompleted activities/misbehavior, forcing children to run laps or other exercises because of misbehavior, using threats of forcing/taking away physical activity because of misbehavior).
- Appropriate dress for outdoor play means that children are appropriately dressed to safely play in most outdoor weather conditions, lack of appropriate dress is a barrier to participation in outdoor play.
- Teacher practices that encourage physical activity means that teachers are modeling healthy and safe behaviors. Teachers move around the outdoor environment with children; they participate and engage in activities together. Teachers lead children in activities to promote active play.

Examples:
- Program's written physical activity policy and discipline policy (may be a part of staff and/or parent handbook).
- Parental signed document provided during orientation.

Intermediate:
III.B.2 Physical Activity Policy includes all of III.B.1 AND:
- Education for families on children's physical activity; and
- Education for families on screen time.

Clarification: Credit for indicator III.B.1 must be met in order to receive credit for III.B.2. Education for families on the importance of physical activity and/or how families can support children's physical activity at home, in addition to sharing guidance and/or recommendations for screen time will encourage a balanced, healthy lifestyle for children. Both components must be present to receive credit.

Examples:
- Program's physical activity policy (may be a part of staff and/or parent handbook).
- Written policies may include examples of how the program meets education for parents on children's physical activity and screen time activities.

Advanced:
III.B.3 Physical Activity Policy includes all of III.B.1 and III.B.2 AND
- Inclement weather plan that provides for indoor active play; and
- Limits to the amount of screen time, media viewing or computer use allowed for children age 2 and older.

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	Clarification: Credit for indicators III.B.1 and III.B.2 must be met in order to receive credit. In addition, the written physical activity policy must include all of the above criteria to receive credit. A written inclement weather plan for each classroom describes what active play experiences are offered when the weather does not permit children to go outside. The National Association for the Education for Young Children (NAEYC) has a position statement regarding the use of technology, which may be a helpful resource when developing a program's policy regarding screen time and technology use. https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/topics/PS_technology_WEB.pdf
	
	Definitions**:**
	    • Inclement weather means that outdoor weather conditions pose a health and safety risk to children and adults (i.e. falling precipitation, thunder, lightning, wind chill factor at or below 20 degrees F, heat index above 90 degrees F, unhealthy ozone levels).
	    • Screen time refers to use of television, computers, tablets, phones, and smart boards, etc.
	
	Examples:
	  - Program's written physical activity policy (may be a part of staff and/or parent handbook)*.*

Daily Schedule	*Basic:* **III.B.4** Daily schedule reflects the frequency and amount of time provided for active outdoor play *Clarification:* The schedule reflects that all children are provided daily opportunities for active play. Active play requires freedom of movement to ensure that children can be physically active. Buggy rides or outdoor time where children are held by teachers or otherwise confined, would not meet this indicator. All classroom schedules should clearly state when and how often children are provided outside time for active play. *Examples:* - A copy of each classroom's schedule indicating times for active outdoor play.

	III.B.5 Daily schedule meets III.B.4 AND reflects teacher-planned physical activities that support gross motor development at least two times a day.
	
	Clarification: Credit for indicator III.B.4 must be met in order to receive credit. In addition, the schedule must state when teachers have planned for activities that support children's gross motor development at least twice a day (indoors or outdoors). Descriptions or plans of movement activities that support gross motor may also be found in the teacher's lesson plans. For non-mobile infants this could include opportunities for tummy time or freedom of movement.
	
	Examples:
	  - A copy of each classroom's schedule reflecting activities that support gross motor development twice a day.
	  - Lesson plans with corresponding classroom schedules that describe and provide frequency of activities that support gross motor development.

	Intermediate: **III.B.6** 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. *Clarification:* Inclement weather is defined by the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education (2010) as a wind chill factor at or below 20 degrees Fahrenheit or at or above a heat index of 90 degrees Fahrenheit. In addition, falling precipitation or weather advisories may prevent children from going outside. When these situations occur, active play indoors should be incorporated to ensure the equivalent amount of time of opportunities for physical activity that children would have had outside.

	Examples: - A copy of each classroom's schedule stating/explaining how active play indoors is equivalent to scheduled outdoors times when there is inclement weather. - Inclement weather policy written in parent/staff handbook.
	Advanced: **III.B.7** 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. *Clarification:* An inclement weather plan describes what a program will do for each age group when they are unable to go outside due to weather conditions. It should specifically include what materials and/or activities will be used. *Examples:* - Inclement weather plans for each classroom. - Classroom schedule and lesson plan describes inclement weather plan.

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
Referrals and Services for Children	*Basic:* **III.C.1** The program has a current resource list of appropriate services/agencies. *Clarification:* A current resource list consists of specific community resources and agencies. The focus must be on supporting families who need information regarding children's mental health. The program must submit at least 2 resources to receive credit. *Examples:* - Informative brochures from agencies that support mental health. - Lists of contact information for community resources.
	Intermediate: **III.C.2** The program has a policy to refer children in need of mental health services to the appropriate agency. *Clarification:* Program responds to parents' concerns related to children's social emotional needs, and assists parents in seeking appropriate referrals and resources. Programs and families develop a positive relationship with reciprocal communication in order to provide referrals/resources to families pertaining to their children. *Examples:* - Process for making recommendations to see a pediatrician. - Written policy that describes the referral process.
	Intermediate: **III.C.3** Parents and program staff develop joint strategies to manage children with challenging behaviors (i.e. developmentally appropriate and when possible, evidence-based). *Clarification:* Administrators, teachers, and parents work together to teach children appropriate behaviors to meet their needs. The strategies to teach these behaviors must be developmentally appropriate and evidence based.

Examples:
- Pyramid Model.
- Conscious Discipline.
- Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Written policy that describes how strategies are developed jointly with parents and program (e.g. program policy on guidance, see III.C.9).
- Programs policy describes how they support early identification of child's mental health needs.
- Program seeks professional development (training, technical assistance and/or coaching) to learn strategies that support social-emotional development and prevent challenging behavior.

Advanced:
III.C.4 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.

Clarification: Program responds to parents' concerns related to children's social emotional needs and assists parents in seeking appropriate referrals and resources. Programs and families develop a positive relationship with reciprocal communication in order to provide referrals/resources to families pertaining to their children. The program must submit at least 2 resources to receive credit.

Examples:
- Recommendation or referral forms to see a pediatrician.
- Written policy that describes the referral process.

Advanced:
III.C.5 The program works to see that referrals meet the diverse needs of families, with particular consideration given to issues concerning resources, culture, and language.

Clarification: To the greatest extent possible the program considers the families cultural and linguistic needs in order to provide appropriate resources and referrals that support children's social-emotional and behavioral needs.

Examples:
- Resource list of service providers that speak languages other than English.
- Referral process demonstrates a sensitivity to meeting the diverse needs of families, such as addressing culture, religious beliefs, home language, and/or limits in resources or access.

Community Partnerships

Basic:
III.C.6 The program establishes and maintains partnerships with relevant child- and family- serving agencies within the community to collaborate on behalf of children and families.

Clarification: Programs identify and develop relationships with agencies within their local community that support children's mental health needs. Local resources may include, but are not limited to: pediatricians, Baby Net, Child Find, mental health clinics, child welfare agencies, SC Child Care Inclusion Collaborative, Early Head Start, Head Start and School Guidance Counselors. To receive credit, partnerships with at least two agencies or organizations must be identified.

Examples:
- List of agencies who support children's mental health, with local contact information.
- Written contracts or agreements with partnering agencies.
- Written evidence of referrals or partnerships.

	Intermediate: **III.C.7** Community resources are accessed for children and families experiencing trauma. *Clarification:* Programs identify resources within their local community that support children and families who are experiencing trauma. Local resources may include, but are not limited to: United Way, homeless or domestic violence shelters, faith communities, grief counselors, food pantries, Red Cross, pediatricians, mental health clinics, child welfare agencies, and school guidance counselors. To receive credit at least 2 resources must be identified. In addition, the program must establish a procedure or policy regarding how they will work with families in accessing these resources. *Examples:* - List of community resources, agencies or organizations **AND** a plan, procedure, or policy for how the program will help families access these resources.
Discipline, Suspension and Expulsion Policies	*Basic:* **III.C.8** The program adopts a suspension and expulsion policy. *Clarification:* The program's written policy should eliminate or limit suspension and expulsion. These exclusionary practices should only be used as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety concern that cannot be reduced or eliminated with reasonable modifications. Expulsion and suspension from child care can have detrimental effects, particularly on children's social-emotional development and learning outcomes. These exclusionary practices have long term negative effects for children, their families, and the program. More information can be found at: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/im-2016-03 *Examples:* - Policy that eliminates or limits the use of suspension and expulsion.
	Intermediate: **III.C.9** The program's discipline policy is based on a framework of evidence-based practices and supports for social-emotional development and behavioral health. For example: Pyramid Model http://www.pyramidmodel.org and Conscious Discipline https://consciousdiscipline.com *Clarification:* A program's discipline policy must outline the positive guidance strategies that will be used to prevent challenging behaviors and appropriately respond to challenging behaviors. These strategies must be developmentally appropriate and promote the social-emotional and behavioral well-being of children. *Examples:* - Program's discipline policy.

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.

Sub Standard	Indicator
Child Screening and referrals	*Basic:* **III.D.1*** The program conducts regular, informal developmental monitoring.

Clarification: Developmental monitoring observes how a child develops and reaches various milestones over time. Regularly is defined as ongoing and continual. Informal means that the monitoring tool could be program developed or could be a widely distributed national developmental checklist, such as the Learn the Signs, Act Early Developmental Milestones Checklist, provided by The Centers for Disease Control. This free tool can be accessed at https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html. All children who are served in the program who are not enrolled in school must be included to receive credit.

Examples:
- Program's informal developmental monitoring tool, which demonstrates frequency of use.
- Program policy regarding developmental monitoring and frequency.

Intermediate:
III.D.2* The program conducts assessments from a nationally recognized formal screening tool at least once per year.

Clarification: Formal, nationally recognized screening tools are questionnaires or checklists that have been validated based on research. They ask questions about a child's development, including language, movement, thinking, behavior, and emotions. Screening is not meant to establish a diagnosis for a child, however, these tools can be used to determine if a child might need a more formal evaluation to reveal the presence of a developmental delay in any area. All children who are served in the program who are not enrolled in school must be screened to receive credit.

Examples:
- Written program policy or parental consent form that describes and explains what and how often a formal screening tool is used by the program to screen all children. Such as:
  - 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. For more information visit: http://www.scinclusion.org/child-care-providers/developmental-screening/
  - The Battelle Developmental Inventory. For more information visit: https://www.hmhco.com/programs/battelle-developmental-inventory
  - Brigance IED III. For more information visit: https://www.curriculumassociates.com/products/detail.aspx?Title=BrigEC-IED3

Advanced:
III.D.3* Developmental, vision and hearing screenings are conducted within 60-90 days of a child entering the program.

Clarification: To receive credit, indicator III.D.2 must be met. Additionally, program must ensure that all screenings including vision and hearing are conducted within 60-90 days of the child's enrollment. For children under 6 months of age the program may request that parents provide a doctor's statement regarding a child's adequate hearing or vision screening. Additional guidance regarding vision and hearing screening can be found at http://scfirststeps.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/VisionHearingGuidance_2011.pdf. For information about a resource to conduct hearing screenings, please visit: *http://scbegin.org/hearing-screenings/*. For information about a resource to conduct vision screenings, please visit: h*ttps://impactamerica.com/southcarolina/*.

Examples:
- Written policy that explains the process for implementation of vision and hearing screenings.
- Letter, contract, program results, or statement from professionals who conduct vision and hearing screenings that also indicate frequency.
- Parent consent forms for vision and hearing screenings that indicate when screening will be conducted.

	Advanced: **III.D.4*** 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. *Clarification:* Since screenings are used to monitor children for potential developmental delays, it is important to recognize that they should be done in a culturally and linguistically supportive manner. If used inappropriately, the screening results could be misinterpreted. Some screening tools, such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaires©, Third Edition (ASQ-3™) have been translated into multiple languages. Programs must be thoughtful in creating a written plan to support families from various cultures and those whose home language is not English. *Examples:* - Written plan or policy to ensure that screenings are completed in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.
Referrals	*Intermediate:* **III.D.5*** Appropriate referrals are made based on the results of the screening. *Clarification:* To receive credit, indicator III.D.2 must be met. Programs must establish a clear procedure, which includes the family, regarding how they will use the results of screenings to make appropriate referrals when a possible developmental delay is suspected. *Examples:* - Program plan, policy, or procedure for making appropriate referrals based on screening results.
Family Supports	*Basic:* **III.D.6*** The program supports families by providing information on professional resources when they suspect a child may have a developmental delay. *Clarification:* Programs must develop and maintain a list of professional resources that would be able to support families regarding children's potential development delays, such as BabyNet, Child Find, and pediatricians. *Examples:* - List of resources that parents may access to support their child when a developmental delay is suspected. - Program policy that provides parents various community resources when developmental delays are suspected.
	Intermediate: **III.D.7*** Information about a child's growth and progress, based on results of the screenings, is shared with families according to the instruments' implementation timeframe. *Clarification:* To receive credit, indicator III.D.2 must be met. Additionally, families must be provided the results of the screenings. *Examples:* - Program policy regarding families receiving the information and results of the screenings being conducted. - Agenda from parent-teacher conference, which addresses screening results.
Community Collaboration	*Advanced:* **III.D.8*** The program collaborates with other professionals during the evaluation and eligibility determination process to provide information about the child's specific needs and developmental concerns.

	Clarification: Programs should develop relationships with experts, professionals and/or organizations (e.g. local school district, BabyNet, SC Inclusion Collaborative etc.) to collaborate and partner to address concerns and questions during the monitoring and screening process. These partners should help guide programs in supporting children with developmental delays. **Examples:** - Correspondence with partner organization. - List of partnering agencies. - Policy regarding who the program collaborates with the support children and families.

* 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

Communication with Families	*Basic:*
	IV.A.1 The program utilizes a method to collect information about the child and his/her family, including information on:
	   - Family preferences regarding routine care (sleeping, diapering/toileting, and feeding);
	   - Temperament;
	   - Dominant language;
	   - Social/emotional concerns;
	   - Special needs.
	
	Clarification: It is important for child care programs to gather information about the families and the children they serve to better meet their needs. Information collected is for children of all ages. All of the above criteria must be collected in a written format to receive credit.
	
	Definition:
	   • Temperament means a child's personality, moods, and behaviors. Temperament is the way people tend to behave and the types of emotions they tend to exhibit.
	   • Dominant language is the language in which the child is most proficient. Typically, it is the family's native language, or the language most used at home.
	   • Social/emotional refers experiences pertaining to one's self and relationships with others.
	   • Special needs refers to any needs that a child has that the program needs to know to support that child and family to be successful.
	
	Examples:
	  - Child intake form that collects information about the child and family, *(e.g. Getting to Know You* form).
	  - Questionnaire to parents about their child and family.

Basic:
IV.A.2 The program regularly communicates information with families in multiple ways.

Clarification: Regular communication supports positive relationships with families. There are many ways a program may communicate with families. To receive credit, submit evidence of at least 2 methods used to communicate on a regular basis with families.

Examples:
- Photo of family bulletin boards with current information;
- Providing daily communication sheets about the child's day;
- Newsletters, e-mail blasts, website updates; flyers of event; and/or
- Family/teacher conferences, open houses.

Basic:
IV.A.3 The program has a policy for families to drop off and pick up children in their classroom, supporting daily communication with teachers.

Clarification: When parents come to the classroom to drop off their children and pick them up, they have the opportunity to exchange important information about their child's day with teachers. The intent of this indicator is that drop-off and pick-up times are used as an opportunity to communicate with families and allow teachers to share information about the child's day. Programs that support this type of system promote positive transitions for children from home and school and vice versa. The program's written policy regarding drop-off and pick-up, or regular family communication states that parents come to classroom and speak with the teacher where their child is in care.

Examples:
- Policy regarding drop-off and pick-up.
- Policy regarding communication with parents.

Intermediate:
IV.A.4* Teachers offer a minimum of 2 family/teacher conferences annually.

Clarification: Family and teacher conferences are opportunities to discuss the child's developmental progress and classroom experiences. It also provides time for the family to share important information about their child. The program must allocate time to offer at least 2 conferences to each family annually. This practice goes beyond offering conferences at the parent's request. The program has a written statement that is conveyed to families, describing the frequency and plan for family/teacher conferences.

Examples:
- Policy statement regarding family/teacher conferences.
- Policy statement in enrollment packet, parent handbook.
- Announcements of parent conferences in newsletters, website, email.

Advanced:
IV.A.5 Programs have a plan to communicate with families in their home language.
https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/culture-language/article/home-language-support

Clarification: The parent is the child's first educator in early child care settings. Parents whose home language is other than English sometimes have difficulty communicating their wants and needs for their child. Programs that provide communication in the families' home language supports a child's social emotional needs, learning goals, and sense of belonging. Families who speak languages other than English may move to a community and enroll in a child care program at any time. Being prepared in advance for this eventuality is a hallmark of program quality. Programs should identify resources in advance that they

may draw upon to ensure that all families are received into the program with the information and understanding they require to be comfortable and well-informed. The goal of this indicator is not for programs to become proficient in the family's home language, but to have a plan to communicate to families in their home language. The program must have a written plan that describes how they will get support to communicate to families in their home language.

Examples of items included in the plan:
- Translators/interpreters are sought from parents, staff, board members, and local colleges.
- Teacher supported strategies.
- Forms of communication translated/interpreted in child's home language (e.g., enrollment packet, handbooks, newsletters, emails).

Advanced:
IV.A.6 Programs utilize home visitations as a means to develop relationships with families.

Clarification: Home visiting is an effective way to support families. Home visits are an opportunity to see the child in their natural environment, learn about the family's values and practices, establish and build relationships, and support positive parental practices. Home visits can vary in goals and content. They may include, parenting and health care education, child abuse prevention, and early intervention and education services for young children and their families.

Examples:
- Program's policy/plan to conduct home visits.
- Signed parental permission form to conduct home visit.
- Statement in application, enrollment packet, or parent handbook.
- Home visit schedule or record of home visit form.

Family Engagement	*Intermediate:* IV.A.7 The program demonstrates multiple methods for family engagement. ***Clarification:*** Family engagement occurs when programs and families work together in partnership to build relationships to support children's learning, healthy development and family well–being, The program provides multiple ways for families to become involved or engaged. To receive credit, submit evidence of at least 2 current (within the past year) methods used to engage families. ***Examples:*** - Family members volunteer and participate in program activities. - The program hosts family workshops, social gatherings, and/or targeted outreach events (targeted outreach is when the program and families go out into the community). - Family serve as board members on Policy Boards - Families donate items to support curriculum
	Intermediate: **IV.A.8** The program provides opportunities to engage families based on cultural needs and interests. ***Clarification:*** Culture is defined as a family's way of life, as shown in their values, attitudes, traditions, practices, and ordinary behavior. Family engagement occurs when strategies are planned based on the families' interests and preferences that are responsive and supportive to their cultural and linguistic needs. To receive credit, submit evidence of at least 2 methods used to engage families in way that supports their culture and interests.

Examples:
- Cultural celebrations that families participate in or organize.
- Classroom storytelling/sharing from grandparents or other family.
- Cultural food sharing at a program pot-luck.
- Family and programs attend cultural events together.
- Program adapts curriculum to be representative of the cultures of families in the center.
- Cultural and linguistic activities on lesson plans.

Intermediate:
IV.A.9 The program solicits family input.

Clarification: Programs acknowledge and use family input to inform program planning and policies. Families should be actively involved in providing information regarding program improvement. To receive credit, submit evidence of at least one method used to solicit family input.

Examples:
- Surveys/questionnaires.
- Suggestion box.
- Parent boards/organizations.

Advanced:
IV.A.10 The program completes a family engagement self-assessment and planning process.

Clarification: The family engagement self-assessment process assists programs in evaluating how they are meeting the needs of the families within their programs. The results help programs plan new strategies to work with families. ABC Quality has recommended 2 different self-assessments. See ABC Quality Family Engagement Toolkit http://www.scchildcare.org/library/abc-quality-documents.aspx and Strengthening Families Self-Assessment (https://www.cssp.org/reform/strengtheningfamilies/2014/CENTER-BASED-EARLY-CARE-AND-EDUCATION-PROGRAM-SELF-ASSESSMENT.pdf To receive credit, an assessment must be completed and plans/goals developed.

Examples:
-Completed family engagement self-assessment and associated plans/goals based on the assessment.

Cultural Competency	*Basic:* **IV.A.11** The program has policies and practices in place to support the needs of dual language learners and children and families from different cultures. *Clarification:* Dual language learners are children who are learning their native language while concurrently learning English; they are not yet proficient in either language**.** The program must have a policy pertaining to supporting dual language learners in the classroom. Additionally the program must have a policy to support and address the needs of diverse families from different cultures. Families who speak languages other than English may move to a community and enroll in a child care program at any time. Being prepared in advance for this eventuality is a hallmark of program quality. Programs should identify resources in advance that they may draw upon to ensure that all families are received into the program with the information and understanding they require to be comfortable and well-informed. The program has written policies that describe how they adapt practices to support the needs of dual language learners, as well as children and families from different cultures. Both components must be present to receive credit. *Examples:* - Written plan for working with children from different cultures, and children who are learning multiple languages simultaneously. The plan should include procedures to enhance and improve communication with families. - Implementing evidence based curriculum with an intentional plan to support DLL. - Requiring professional development for staff in culturally and linguistically responsive practice.

Intermediate:
IV.A.12 The program utilizes strategies to support families whose home language is not English.

Clarification: Programs must identify and plan strategies to support the multiple ways they can support families whose home language is not English. Families who speak languages other than English may move to a community and enroll in a child care program at any time. Being prepared in advance for this eventuality is a hallmark of program quality. To receive credit, 2 strategies must be provided.

Examples:
- Plan for providing information to families in their primary language.
- Requiring professional development for staff in linguistically responsive practices.
- List of staff who are bilingual (including languages spoken).

Advanced:
IV.A.13 The program completes a self-assessment of cultural competence using a tool.

Clarification: The cultural competence self-assessment process assists programs in evaluating how they are meeting the needs of the families within their programs, (e.g., National Association for the Education of Young Children Pathways to Cultural Competence Checklist, (https://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/policy/state/QBCC_Tool.pdf) 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.)

Examples:
- Copy of completed a cultural competence self-assessment and associated plans/goals based on the assessment.

Advanced:
IV.A.14 The program provides policies and documents in their families' home language.

Clarification: Parents whose home language is other than English sometimes have difficulty communicating and understanding the communication provided to the family. Programs that provide communication written in the families' home language promote a family's efforts to support their child's learning goals and development. Families who speak languages other than English may move to a community and enroll in a child care program at any time. Being prepared in advance for this eventuality is a hallmark of program quality. Programs should identify resources in advance that they may draw upon to ensure that all families are received into the program with the information and understanding they require to be comfortable and well-informed. Programs provide policies and documents translated to the home language of the family and/or a resource that would be used to have documents translated.

Examples:
- Copies of forms, handbooks, policy, newsletter, flyers, daily reports, surveys in the enrolled family's home language.
- If no families are enrolled whose home language is not English, a plan for accessing services for translating program policies and documents, in case the need arises.

*Not applicable for School-Age Only Programs