Virginia Star Quality Initiative

Mentor Toolkit
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The Mentor Toolkit was made possible with funds provided by AEP – American Electric Power Foundation.

Additional copies of this manual are available for download from: http://www.smartbeginnings.org/Home/StarQualityInitiative/ForEarlyChildhoodProfessionals.aspx

We encourage replication and use of these materials for non-profit purposes.

Acknowledgements

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SMART BEGINNINGS
Introduction

The Virginia Star Quality Initiative (VSQI) is a quality rating and improvement system for early learning programs. A quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) is a method to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs that families consider for their children. Quality rating and improvement systems:

- define standards for early childhood education,
- create a framework for accountability,
- establish a network of support and outreach for programs and practitioners,
- provide financial incentives linked to achieving and maintaining the quality standards, and
- improve the information available to parents.

VSQI is a voluntary system that sets a continuum of clearly defined star levels of increasing quality. There are two different standards, based on the setting being rated: Classroom-Based and Family Child Care. VSQI has five star levels that incorporate and build upon Virginia’s licensing standards, Board of Education requirements, Head Start Performance Standards, or other regulatory requirements. Each progressive level incorporates the requirements in the level preceding it. Participating programs are awarded one to five stars based on achievement in each of four areas. VSQI is administered through a partnership between the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) and the Virginia Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD).

Programs are assessed every two years by trained and experienced Star Quality Raters, who are regularly monitored for consistency and reliability. On-site assessments and documentation reviews are conducted every two years to determine which star level a program will receive. This also establishes consistency in quality measurement among programs, giving improved information and accountability for programs and families. Programs are also coached by Star Quality Mentors as they progress and improve their quality of care for Virginia’s children.

Initiatives like VSQI are important because early care and education experiences set the stage for all future learning. Ensuring children’s early care and education experiences are high quality is an investment in the future. Children who have high quality early childhood experiences are more likely to be successful adults. High quality care means that children are engaging in meaningful learning and play, guided by qualified caregivers in an enriched, safe, healthy educational environment.
All child care programs are eligible to participate in VSQI, including public preschool programs like the Virginia Preschool Initiative or Head Start, privately owned programs, religious exempt programs, family child care homes, and nationally accredited programs. In this toolkit the term “child care program” refers to any of these types of programs.

**Purpose**
This toolkit is meant to assist Star Quality Mentors in providing services to the child care programs that they serve. It contains guidelines, resources, and sample documentation. This toolkit is not a substitute for the formal training required to be a Star Quality Mentor. Any references to other sources such as the VSQI Standards, the Virginia Department of Social Services Licensing Standards, the Environment Rating Scales, or the Classroom Assessment Scoring System are, to the best of our knowledge, accurate as of May 1, 2012. Should discrepancies exist between this toolkit and the source, the source material must take precedence.

Please be aware that regulations are under constant revision due to changes in research findings, generally acceptable practices in child care, and laws enacted by the General Assembly. Star Quality Mentors should contact the appropriate regulating authority with specific questions.

**Definition**
A mentor is a respected and competent person who provides support, counsel, reinforcement, coaching, and a constructive example to assist someone else as they develop in their work. Mentors are good listeners, people who care, and people who want to help bring out strengths in others.

In Virginia, a Star Quality Mentor is the person assigned to provide on-site technical assistance to a child care program who has received a VSQI rating. The Star Quality Mentor assists child care programs in developing a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) that is tied to the VSQI standards and coaches programs in an effort to achieve quality improvement goals.

For the purposes of this toolkit, the terms mentor, coach, and technical assistant are all interchangeable as the activities are similar and support the work that is done by Star Quality Mentors.

**Becoming a Star Quality Mentor**
Star Quality Mentors are identified and nominated primarily through the local communities. Local coordinators are responsible for ensuring mentors are qualified and available to serve. Compensation is also handled at the local level, and it is possible mentoring may be part of ongoing job responsibilities of existing staff members with organizations supporting quality improvement. There is an application process required to become a Star Quality Mentor. Mentors are selected based on their qualifications and references, ability to complete the required duties and trainings, and demand in their area.
The minimum qualifications for mentors are as follows:

- Hold an Associate’s Degree in early childhood education, early intervention, educational psychology, developmental psychology or a related field. Exceptions to this may be granted based on a candidate’s experience and background, and/or commitment towards pursuing a degree.
- Have strong communication and writing skills.
- Have three or more years of experience working in early childhood or a related field as a primary early care and education provider or in another leadership role.
- Be able to provide constructive feedback and suggestions to programs and collaborate with providers to draft and implement a Quality Improvement Plan in a respectful and professional manner.
- Attend mandatory training on the CLASS and ERS instruments as appropriate.
- Commit to maintaining expertise and skills through periodic refresher training.
- Have knowledge of various regulating authority standards related to early childhood programs.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding issues and information concerning children, families, staff, and programs.
- Commit to ongoing professional development.

All Star Quality Mentors must also provide evidence of a negative tuberculosis screening, as well as a background check with a sworn statement or affirmation, a criminal history record report, and a child protective services central registry check.

Preferred qualifications for Star Quality Mentors include individuals who:

- Have a Bachelor’s Degree in early childhood education, early intervention, educational psychology, developmental psychology or a related field.
- Have trained with demonstrated reliability in ERS and CLASS instruments.
- Have experience working in early childhood or a related field for five or more years.
- Commit to mentoring all programs assigned for at least two years.
- Have the ability to motivate others.

Responsibilities of Star Quality Mentors

Star Quality Mentors are responsible for assisting early care and education programs in developing quality improvement plans and working with administrators, directors, family child care providers, and teachers to implement changes, and connecting programs with community resources. This process involves assisting programs in drafting a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) with improvement objectives and manageable action steps, holding regular meetings with programs, and submitting monthly progress reports to local coordinators. Mentors provide training and technical assistance to help programs establish developmentally appropriate learning environments and curriculum, and to serve children with specials needs.

Certain aspects of mentoring vary by locality, while other aspects remain consistent across the state for all communities implementing VSQI. In all localities, the Summary Report, which outlines the findings from the rater’s observation and the documentation review, is used as the basis for the development of the QIP, which contains goals to help the program move forward along a continuum of increasing quality. Across the state, mentors provide technical assistance to programs as they prioritize areas for improvement and help staff develop deeper understanding of the tools used by VSQI to identify quality child care settings for young children. Reporting formats and timelines for QIPs, monthly contact forms, and quarterly reporting forms are generally consistent across localities.

In different communities through the state, the individual requirements for additional reporting or documentation of time spent with child care programs may vary. Localities vary in their provision of direction and requirements for regular meetings, updates, and professional development of mentors. Financial incentives for accomplishing goals and funding available to implement the QIP vary across communities. Likewise, requirements and policies for requesting funding, materials, and resources vary according to the policies and procedures of different coalitions. Quality control measures, such as focus groups or interviews with participating programs regarding the quality of mentorship, are at the discretion of the local coalition. Many Star Quality Mentors work as Independent Contractors, which means they are considered self-employed. As a self-employed person, it is important to have a contract...
with any organization receiving services and to ensure that contract is fulfilled by both parties. It is also important that Independent Contractors familiarize themselves with IRS regulations regarding self-employment. Visit the IRS website (http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/selfemployed/index.html) for more information.

While visiting participating programs, mentors should always be respectful of all staff and treat everyone as professionals. Maintaining professional boundaries is important when developing relationships with directors, family child care providers, teachers and other staff. Mentors need to be patient and build trust. Mentors should wear comfortable clothing when interacting in a classroom with the children; however, casual professional dress is expected (jeans are not considered appropriate attire for a VSQI mentor). Mentors are representing the Virginia Star Quality Initiative and should take that responsibility seriously.

Training of Star Quality Mentors

In order to become a Star Quality Mentor a multiple day training course must be completed in its entirety. The training course includes information on:

• Building Relationships
• Inclusion
• Pre-K and Toddler CLASS
• Environment Ratings Scales (ITERS-R and ECERS-R or FCCERS-R)
• Quality Improvement Plans
• Policies and Procedures

Mentors who have received previous training on the CLASS or Environment Ratings Scales can be excused from that portion of the training by providing a copy of the certificate of completion from the previous training.

All costs for attending trainings are detailed in the Memorandum of Agreement potential mentors sign with their application. Periodic refresher training is required for all Star Quality Mentors, including continued review of the assessment instruments. Mentors are also required to fulfill any professional development responsibilities mandated by their locality and to attend local meetings as directed by their local coordinator.

Overview of the VSQI Process

Assignment

Star Quality Mentors are assigned to programs by the local coordinator. At the time of assignment, the local coordinator provides the program director’s or family child care provider’s name, contact information, and a copy of the Summary Report (if it is available at the time of assignment). In some localities (where funding is available), mentors are assigned to programs prior to ratings to begin establishing positive relationships during the documentation phase. In these cases, the mentor may assist with the program’s preparation for ratings.

Generally, assignment of mentors should be guided by the experience of the mentor and the needs of the program. Other factors to take into consideration are the mentor’s availability and flexibility of schedule, personality of mentor and program staff, educational philosophy of programs, mentor’s areas of expertise, and past relationships with the program itself or staff of the program. Whenever possible, it can be beneficial to pair a program with a mentor who has experience working with the same type of program. For example, a mentor with past experience working with Head Start, Montessori, or faith-based programs may be well suited to assignment to the same type of program. If particular strengths or weaknesses of a program are known prior to mentor assignment, it can be helpful to pair mentors with particular
expertise with programs in need of this type of support. Mentors’ schedules and availability should be carefully considered when assigning programs. When mentors are forthcoming about the amount of time they have available to commit to VSQI, it is possible to assign a realistic caseload that will allow the mentor to spend an appropriate amount of time on quality improvement with his or her assigned programs. Mentors should be available during the hours programs can be accessed.

**Conflict of Interest and Past Relationships**

It is helpful for local coordinators to be informed of the history and experiences of programs and mentors in their community. In some instances, there may be a conflict of interest between a program and a mentor that may not allow for a productive quality improvement relationship. If program staff or mentors have a prior relationship that would disrupt the mentoring process, it is important for these relationships to be disclosed in the beginning, so that a more appropriate mentor can be assigned to the program. In other instances, past relationships may be helpful to generating a positive mentoring experience. In these cases, existing relationships can help build trust and establish partnerships that can promote the quality improvement process. Assignment of mentors must be made on an individual basis.

Two important guidelines apply to mentors who are employed themselves by early childhood centers. Individuals who are currently employed at an early childhood program may not act as the mentor for that program, and state funds may not be used to supplant an existing staff-mentor position in an early childhood program.

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Being a Star Quality Mentor has its challenges, but it can also be very rewarding. When asked the question, *“What is the most rewarding aspect of mentoring through the Virginia Star Quality Initiative?”* mentors said:

“The biggest reward is seeing the changes take place: watching teachers feel less stress when they use strategies I’ve shared with them, watching them become excited and more active in their jobs, and most importantly watching the positive changes in the children!”

“Seeing a teacher smile when she truly understands why we need to do something a certain way.”

“Helping a program improve and having them really buy-in to change.”

“Looking back at where a program started and celebrating their progress. I always take before and after photos!”

“Watching the teachers grow, watching the quality improve, and most importantly watching the children respond positively to the changes.”

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**Resources**

QRIS National Learning Network ([qrisnetwork.org](http://qrisnetwork.org))

Virginia Early Childhood Foundation ([smartbeginnings.org](http://smartbeginnings.org))

Virginia’s Office of Early Childhood Development ([earlychildhood.virginia.gov](http://earlychildhood.virginia.gov))
Coaching

Mentoring, coaching, and providing on-site technical assistance are being used more frequently in the early childhood field to support quality improvements, encourage professional development, and influence changed practice. For the purposes of this toolkit, the terms mentor, coach, and technical assistant are all interchangeable as the activities are similar and all three define the work that may be done by a Star Quality Mentor.

Characteristics of an Effective Mentor

The role of a Star Quality Mentor is not to evaluate the performance of the program. Their role is to create a safe learning environment and assist the program in achieving goals that are decided by the program. They should work hand in hand with program staff to review the Summary Report and determine the steps that the program wants to take to achieve those quality improvement goals.

High quality mentors:

Commit to their role and responsibility by…

- Dedicating time to working with the program (teachers/directors/family child care providers)
- Persisting in efforts to assist the program despite obstacles and setbacks
- Practicing what they preach (do what you say and say what you do)
- Attending meetings and professional development activities related to mentoring
- Modeling self-reflection and self-assessment as a critical element of professionalism

Accept the program as developing and professional by…

- Attempting to see the world from the program’s point of view
- Anticipating needs by thinking from the program’s point of view
- Understanding the common problems and concerns of individuals providing early care and education
- Applying theories of adult learning and development
- Modeling acceptance of diversity in others

Reflect on communications and decisions by…

- Reflecting on what, where, when and how to communicate with the program
- Adjusting communication style as appropriate for each program staff member
- Respecting the confidentiality of the program
- Modeling effective helping skills

Model commitment to professional development by…

- Behaving as a learner as well as a mentor
- Engaging program staff as early childhood colleagues
- Pursuing professional development opportunities related to early care and education
- Advising the program on professional development opportunities
- Acknowledging successes as well as failures are a part of professional growth

Communicate positive feelings for the future by…

- Encouraging and praising the program appropriately
- Holding and communicating high expectations for the program
- Speaking highly about the early care and education profession
- Avoiding criticism of program leadership, staff, children, parents, and colleagues

Serve as an instructional coach by…

- Providing on-site technical support
- Engaging the program in team building and team efforts whenever possible
- Possessing knowledge of effective early childhood education practices
- Modeling openness to new ideas and practices

Adapted from Qualities of a High-Performance Mentor Teacher: Knowledge, Skills, and Values developed by James B. Rowley
The Early Childhood Coaching Handbook by Dathan D. Rush and M’Lisa L. Shelden is an excellent resource for providing more detailed information on coaching methods. Drs. Rush and Shelden define a coach as being:

C – competent
O – open
A – adaptable
C – caring
H – honest

Adult Learning
Mentors are most successful when they understand the ways adults learn best. It is important to be aware of several key assumptions about adult learning, first identified by Malcolm Knowles in The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species.

1. Adults have a need to know why they should learn something before investing time in a learning event. Star Quality Mentors should ensure that all program staff understand the purpose of the Virginia Star Quality Initiative and the reason their program has chosen to participate.

2. Adults come to a learning opportunity with a wealth of experiences and a great deal to contribute. Mentors will be more successful when they identify, build on and make use of the experiences of the program staff.

3. Adults have a strong readiness to learn those things that help them cope with daily life effectively and are willing to devote energy to learning those things that they believe will help them perform a task or solve a problem. Mentoring that is related directly to situations program staff are facing in the classroom will be viewed as relevant. Mentors who determine needs and interests and focus their coaching in response to those needs will be more effective.

4. Adults are more responsive to internal motivators such as increased self-esteem than external motivators such as classroom materials. Mentors should be aware of any barriers to internal motivation such as poor self-concept, time constraints, low literacy levels, or lack of program support.

Just like children, adults may prefer to learn by seeing, hearing, or doing. Mentors should find out the preferred learning methods when working with child care programs.

Visual learners – those who learn by seeing – benefit from receiving written information. Mentors can assist visual learners by providing written directions, enhancing presentations with graphics and diagrams, and modeling a new process.

Auditory learners – those who learn by hearing – prefer to learn new information by listening. Mentors can assist auditory learners by providing spoken directions, using small group discussion to talk through new information, and creating learning activities where the participants repeat the information.

Kinesthetic learners – those who learn by doing – benefit from hands-on learning. They learn best when they are actively involved. Mentors can assist kinesthetic learners by engaging them in learning activities and using role play to practice new skills.

Mentors should strive to use a variety of approaches when working with programs, incorporating techniques from all learning preferences.

Initial Mentoring Meeting
The first meeting with a program is the Star Quality Mentor’s opportunity to make a positive first impression and set the tone for the relationship. Mentors should always remain positive and professional, and start by telling directors, teachers, and family child care providers that they are happy to be working with their program. Mentors should tour the facility on their first visit and meet each program staff member.

As mentors talk with staff about the mentoring process, they should try to determine the knowledge level each staff member has of the Virginia Star Quality Initiative Standards and the reasons why the program is participating. The mentor should jointly select the day and time for mentoring visits with the director or family child care owner, and discuss the program’s expectations for mentoring. This will be a good opportunity to make sure that the mentor and the program leadership is on the same page with regard to the mentor’s role. It is important to discuss
any previous experiences the director/provider has had with mentoring and clarify, again, the mentor’s role and that of the program staff. The mentor should directly ask if there are any questions or concerns before concluding the initial visit.

If the program has already received their Summary Report before the initial mentoring visit, the mentor should be prepared to help the program understand how the report is written and to point out the strengths of the program that already exist. The program will likely have many questions about the content of the Summary Report and the mentor’s role is to help them understand that the quality improvement process will be guided by the philosophy and priorities of the program.

**Ongoing Visits**

A regular schedule for mentoring visits should be established with the program. It is important for mentors to confirm their visit the day before and remind the program of the visit’s purpose. Each visit should have a clear purpose. To model professionalism, mentors should arrive for each visit on time and prepared. During the visit, mentors can take thorough notes of the discussion and any observations. Before leaving, mentors should verbally summarize what was accomplished during the visit. Any necessary follow-up should be identified, along with the responsible person. The goals for the next visit should be clearly communicated as well as any information or tasks that the program is responsible for completing prior to the next visit. It is important that the mentor thank everyone who they worked with during the visit. If an unannounced visit is needed for any reason, it should be brief. Mentors should be respectful of the program staff’s day to day work schedule and their primary responsibility of caring for the children at their program. All visits and activities should be thoroughly documented on the Monthly Mentoring Contact Form, so that the local coalition and any funders can stay up to date on the work that is being done.

In *The Early Childhood Coaching Handbook*, Drs. Rush and Shelden identify five characteristics of coaching which can help structure visits from Star Quality Mentors.

1. **Joint Planning**

The Star Quality Mentor and the program agree on a two part plan. 1) What is going to be done and by whom between visits. 2) What the mentor and the program will do during the next visit. The joint plan should be reviewed at the beginning and end of each program visit, which allows the program to know what to expect from each mentoring visit. Joint plans include answers to the following questions...

- What is happening now?
- What would you like to have happen?
- What can we do to see it happen? (Including Action, Who, When, and Results)

If a joint plan is not developed, there is nothing agreed upon for the program to be working on between mentor visits. The mentor’s goal is to build capacity for improvements to first be attained and then sustained.
2. Observation

Drs. Rush and Shelden define observation as, “the examination of another person’s actions or practices with the aim of developing new skills, strategies or ideas.” Observation does not have to occur at every mentoring visit, but can be helpful when used over the course of time. Several types of observations can be used:

- Observation of the program during day to day activities
- Observation of the mentor by the program to acquire new skills and strategies (i.e., modeling)
- Observation of the environment
- Self-observations by the program outside of the mentoring visits
- Observations of others in the environment and/or in the early childhood field

3. Action/Practice

The program should be actively practicing new skills and ideas developed through the mentoring process. The action/practice may be planned to occur while the mentor is visiting, which allows the mentor to observe and assist the program in reflecting on what worked or did not work and why, but more likely it will occur during the program’s day to day activities. It is important the mentors confirm that active participation is happening between visits to ensure that the program is applying what is being shared through the mentoring process. The program may anticipate a situation that will allow for active practice and discuss with the mentor beforehand to prepare, or the program may experience a situation where they practiced new skills and discuss with the mentor after the fact.

4. Reflection

The mentor’s goal is to challenge a program to do their best as self-sufficiently as possible; therefore, it is important to understand the program’s level of understanding of the VSQI quality standards. Mentors should allow the program time to reflect prior to giving feedback and ask reflective questions to assist the program in considering the current situation. Asking reflective questions instead of providing solutions allows the program to determine what worked or did not work and why or why not. Mentors should encourage the program to generate their own solutions for making improvements. Formulating some reflective questions based on the joint plan prior to a visit can help the mentor keep the program focused on the topic.

Examples of reflective questions:

- What do you know about the CLASS, Environment Rating Scales, Developmentally Appropriate Practice?
- How did you come to believe this?
- What happened when you did…? Why?
- How is that consistent with the VSQI standards?
- How was that consistent with what you expected?
- What different ways could you approach this?
- What might happen when you…? Why?
- What would it take for you to be able to do…?

5. Feedback

Part of the mentor’s role is to give a program the information they need to make quality improvements. Providing feedback is an important part of the process. Different types of feedback may be used depending on the situation.

Informative feedback is sharing information that builds on the conversation and resources that are current with consistent research. Star Quality Mentors are selected because of their knowledge and expertise in the early care and education field, so sharing their knowledge with the program is critical to the process; however, the key is choosing the right time and way to provide feedback. In general, informative feedback is provided after a program has time for reflection; however, if a program has no understanding or previous knowledge of a concept, informative feedback should be provided prior to reflection so that the program has the knowledge to reflect upon.

Affirmative feedback is non-evaluative acknowledgment. In order to provide affirmative feedback, a mentor needs to be actively listening to the program. Affirmative feedback may be restating what the program stated, for example, “What I’m hearing you say is…” There is never any judgment in affirmative feedback. Mentors may also use affirmative feedback to state what they have observed. For example, “When you sat with the children and asked them questions, they became more engaged in the activity.”
Evaluative feedback is a way for the mentor to provide judgment on how the program is doing and includes statements like, “Good job,” and “I like the way you did that.” Programs appreciate hearing positive evaluative feedback, but if used too often it can become meaningless. Ideally, feedback should be specific and provide information about exactly what a program did that was effective and why it had the intended outcome. Mentors should be selective and appropriate with their praise.

Directive feedback should be used very sparingly when mentoring because it does not allow a program to develop their own ideas and learn from them. Directive feedback involves telling the program what to do, providing the program with solutions that the mentor developed. Although mentors will see quick improvements from providing directive feedback, programs are not able to sustain quality improvements because they did not come up with the solution themselves and may not understand why it was implemented.

**Developing a Quality Improvement Plan**

The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is the blueprint for all mentoring activities. The first draft should be completed within a month of the first mentoring visit and receipt of the Summary Report. The mentor and the program work together to develop the QIP. The QIP is a living document and can be amended and revised throughout the mentoring process; however, it is important to begin the QIP process by developing thoughtful goals that fit with the program’s philosophy and priorities as well as address the Star Quality Rater’s findings stated in the Summary Report.

Many programs have difficulty understanding the goal writing process at first, so this is an opportunity for coaching on planning and goal writing. The QIP can be a program’s template for developing a strategic plan and for outlining the vision of the program’s future. The QIP can be an outline of the action steps the program wants to take to move forward and can be shared with board members, investors, and parents.

The QIP is designed to ensure that SMART goals are set. **SMART** goals are:

- **S—Specific:** A specific goal has a much better chance of being achieved than a general goal. To set a specific goal, answer the following questions...
  - What needs to be accomplished?
  - Why will achieving this goal help improve program quality?
  - Who is involved in achieving this goal?
  - When will it be accomplished?

- **M—Measurable:** In order to track progress towards the goal and know when it is complete, it is important that measurable criteria are established. To set a measurable goal, answer the following question...
  - What evidence will demonstrate the goal has been achieved?

- **A—Attainable:** Star Quality Mentors are working with programs over the course of two years; therefore, both short-term and long-term goals should be set. In order to help the program feel successful and positive, a mentor may want to encourage them to set a few easily achievable goals for the first two quarters. However, programs should also be encouraged to develop a long-term vision and set more challenging goals for the future. It is important that there be a balance of goals which are well within reach, but also goals that stretch the program to achieve higher quality standards. To set an attainable goal, answer the following question...
  - How will this goal be achieved?

- **R—Relevant:** All goals should be related to the Summary Report; however, they should also support the program’s vision for the future. When goals are identified that are important to program staff, they begin to figure out ways to achieve them. This is just one reason why it is so important that goals are developed in partnership with the program. In order for a goal to be relevant, the program needs to understand why it is important and have the drive to accomplish it. To set a relevant goal, the program should answer yes to the following questions...
  - Does this seem worthwhile?
  - Is this the right time?
  - Does this match our other efforts/needs?
**T—Timely:** A goal should have a set time frame. Without a time frame, there is no accountability and no sense of urgency. The mentor and program should work together to prioritize the goals and decide on the time frame for each goal to be addressed. All of the goals should be listed on pages 1 and 2 of the QIP form. Goals for each quarter should be listed under the appropriate standard area of the quarter(s) designated for work on the goal to take place.

Rule of thumb is to set a balance of goals across more than one standard area. Some programs prefer to set one goal in each standard area; others prefer to set 2-4 goals in at least 2 standard areas. This balance should be decided in partnership between the mentor and the program and reflect both the program’s priorities and the needs identified by the Summary Report.

**Examples of Goals and Sample QIPs**

**General Goal:** Teachers will attend a professional conference.

**Specific Goal:** Teachers will attend the VAECE Conference in Hampton, VA on March 8-10, 2012.

**General Goal:** The teacher will follow the children’s interests.

**Specific Goal:** The teacher will follow children’s interests at least once during centers and once during group time each day.

**General Goal:** Staff to child ratios will be reduced for infants.

**Specific Goal:** An assistant will begin working on Tuesdays and Thursdays when an additional infant is in attendance.

**General Goal:** The children will always be within sight of the teacher.

**Specific Goal:** The teacher will ensure visual supervision of the children by moving the paint easel.

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**On a QIP, these goals would be written like this:**

**Summary of Quality Improvement Goals (by Standard area):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard 1:</th>
<th>Goal 1: Teachers will attend the VAECE Conference in Hampton, VA on March 8-10, 2012.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard 2:</td>
<td>Goal 1: The teacher will follow children’s interests at least once during centers and once during group time each day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 3:</td>
<td>Goal 1: An assistant will begin working on Tuesdays and Thursdays when an additional infant is in attendance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 4:</td>
<td>(Note – this goal would be included under Standard 2 for Family Child Care Homes since it is related to the ERS) Goal 1: The teacher will ensure visual supervision of the children by moving the paint easel.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1st Quarter**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD/GOAL</th>
<th>Standard 1: Teachers will attend the VAECE Conference in Hampton, VA on March 8-10, 2012.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>The education, qualifications, and training of early childhood educators significantly contribute to quality and to positive child outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Register through the VAECE website (<a href="http://www.vaece.org/registration.html">http://www.vaece.org/registration.html</a>) using budget dollars allocated for teacher training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>Teachers will be responsible for registering themselves and keeping a copy of the registration information on file at the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Quarter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHEN</strong> Teachers will register by January 15, 2012.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVIDENCE</strong> Certification of training, which will be kept on file at the program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STANDARD/GOAL</strong> Standard 4: The teacher will ensure visual supervision of the children by moving the paint easel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong> Teachers need to maintain visual supervision of all areas where children may be playing. This ensures for a safe environment for the children.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW</strong> The teacher will move the easel to various locations to find the spot that will allow easy supervision of all areas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHO</strong> The teacher will discuss options with the mentor and her colleagues.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHEN</strong> The relocation will take place immediately.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVIDENCE</strong> The mentor will observe the placement during the mentoring visit. (If classroom-based: The director will observe the classroom on a regular basis for evidence that the teacher can easily supervise in all areas of the classroom)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note – this goal would be included under Standard 2 for Family Child Care Homes since it is related to the ERS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2nd Quarter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STANDARD/GOAL</strong> Standard 2: The teacher will follow children’s interests at least once during centers and once during group time each day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong> It is important for children to have their perspective taken into consideration. The teacher has shown high levels of positive interactions with the children and this would add one more element to the learning environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW</strong> The teacher will note in her lesson plans possible places where she might solicit the children’s interests/choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHO</strong> The teacher is primarily responsible with follow up observation done by the mentor. (If classroom-based: Follow-up observation done by the mentor and director)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHEN</strong> Fully implemented by June 15, 2012.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVIDENCE</strong> The teacher will self-reflect at the end of the day on her group lessons and center times and journal how they followed the children’s interest. Outside observations will note when the teacher followed a child’s interest. Lesson plan format will include space to indicate when children will be given choice throughout the day.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3rd Quarter</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STANDARD/GOAL</strong> Standard 3: An assistant will begin working on Tuesdays and Thursdays when an additional infant is in attendance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY</strong> Research has shown that both small group size and low child-adult ratios are linked to higher quality in early childhood programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW</strong> Review budget to determine where dollars can be moved to pay for a part-time hourly assistant. Conduct interviews to find an assistant who meets the criteria outlined in the Employee Handbook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHO</strong> Family Child Care Owner (If classroom-based: Director)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When considering which aspects of a program will be focused on in the QIP, mentors can consider the following guidelines:

**Focusing on change and the impact of change**
- Be patient and build rapport with program leadership and staff
- Consider the early care and education experiences of the program staff
- Explain why changes are needed
- Practice good listening techniques, including reflective listening

**Focusing on “Technical” change (materials, etc.)**
- Promote technical change through the addition of activities in ITERS-R, ECERS-R and FCCERS-R
- Add materials to the interest centers
- Make materials accessible on low shelves within easy reach of the children
- Increase portable equipment used with children in outside activities
- Teachers find it easier to receive mentoring for visible change

**Focusing on “Adaptive” change (moving from teacher directed to child-directed)**
- Adaptive change is more difficult for teachers to see
- Adaptive change deals directly with the teacher’s perception of their job responsibilities
- Adaptive change may impact types of art offered and reduce whole group activity time
- Adaptive change should be approached individually with teachers and in small steps
- Creating a safe environment for questions to be asked is essential for progress
- Space changes to allow teachers time to deal with each change before implementing more change and goal setting

**Cultural, Linguistic, and Disability Awareness**
Racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity is reflected in many early care and education programs. Many programs also have children with disabilities or developmental delays. The diverse composition of early care and education settings brings many challenges as well as many opportunities to mentors and the programs with which they work. By bringing knowledge of effective practices, mentors can help programs be responsive to the diverse needs of all children. Mentors can discuss the following recommendations with programs to take into account the diverse needs of young children:
- Learn about cultural diversity and early education. Ensure that the program has a goal of valuing diversity.
- Provide training in child development, children with special needs, language acquisition, appropriate instruction and assessment techniques, curriculum development, and strategies to involve diverse parents.
- Develop strategies for integrating children with disabilities into the program.
- Develop strategies for including language-minority children.
- Promote the value of fostering second language development in young children.
- Inquire about how teachers view their role in instructing children with diverse cultural backgrounds. Encourage teachers to reflect on their practices to ensure they are providing positive learning experiences for all children.
- Select professional development topics that promote teacher understanding of diversity.
- Promote collaboration with programs serving students with limited English proficiency and other special needs.
- Reflect various language groups in the program display and in communication with families.
- Encourage planning for family participation.
- Ensure that the program environment makes all families feel respected and valued.
- Seek out cultural organizations and community agencies to serve as resources and partners.
The Virginia Department of Education’s Training and Technical Assistance Centers (T/TAC) are a state-wide resource available to help those working with children with disabilities. The SpecialQuest approach to professional development focuses on inclusion for young children with disabilities and their families. The SpecialQuest Multimedia Training contains information on the SpecialQuest approach and the contents of the SpecialQuest curriculum and is available at no cost from www.SpecialQuest.org. The web-based library has additional information about the SpecialQuest approach, as well as resources for mentors who desire to incorporate the SpecialQuest approach in their work.

Best practice is to match mentors and programs that speak the same native language. However, there may be occasion, due to limited resources or other extenuating circumstances, where it is necessary to match a mentor with a program where the same native language is not spoken. In these circumstances, an interpreter is required to bridge the language gap making selection of the right interpreter key. Mentors should determine the interpreter’s level of proficiency in English and the program’s native language, assess the interpreter’s educational background and experience, and consider the interpreter’s communication style. Prior to involving the interpreter in a meeting with the program, the mentor should meet one-on-one with the interpreter and explain the mentoring process, the goals of the initiative, and ensure the interpreter is going to be a positive addition in support of the program. The mentor must ensure the interpreter understands that everything said by the mentor to the program and everything the program says back to the mentor must be interpreted. The mentor should learn greetings and the appropriate pronunciation of the names of all program staff and children in their care in their native language. The mentor should also take care to continue to talk directly to the program, not the interpreter, and avoid oversimplification of important explanations. The mentor should provide written materials in the program’s native language whenever possible.

**Sustaining Improvements**

Upon completion of the mentoring process, the final QIP must be submitted to the local coordinator. The local coordinator will submit the completed QIP to the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation at qris@vecf.org. As programs complete the mentoring process, they should feel more confident identifying areas for improvement and developing goals and plans for continuous quality improvement. In order to set the stage for sustaining quality after the mentoring process is over it is important for mentors to:

- Have the complete cooperation and support of the person who has the power to make and sustain change at the program
- Have an understanding about programmatic decisions that affect quality so that feasible solutions can be developed and considered
- Consider the effect of one change on the other aspects of quality
- Lead the program through the joint planning and reflection process, so that the program is ultimately choosing whether to change a practice or not change a practice

Following are two examples of how a mentor can address quality improvement opportunities to ensure sustainable change is made. These examples were adapted from examples provided by Dr. Debby Cryer from Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

There is no simple answer to guarantee lasting quality improvements. However, sustainable change is possible given the right supports. It is important that mentors provide consistent coaching and fully understand the barriers that are preventing the program from making improvements.
Example 1:
**Quality Improvement Opportunity** – Teacher is not reading informally to children.

**Barrier to Change** – The teacher says that if she reads informally to a child, she cannot supervise the 10 children, especially the two very impulsive and aggressive children. So she can only read during group time. She says if she closed some centers, she could manage the reading.

**Change Decision** – Yes

**Plan of Action** – A volunteer will help during morning free play to supervise fine motor and art while the teacher supervises books and writing. In addition, the teacher will emphasize reading during early morning and late afternoon, when fewer children are present.

**Follow-up** – Informal reading takes place in early morning and late afternoon, but a volunteer has not yet been located during morning free play. The program is still searching for a volunteer with a goal to have someone in place next month.

Example 2:
**Quality Improvement Opportunity** – Teachers are extremely strict with children who eat in the program’s cafeteria. Children are not allowed to talk much, required to sit with nothing to do until everyone is finished eating, and children must leave the cafeteria at one time in a straight line.

**Barrier to Change** – Teachers say that if they could have meals/snacks in their room, they could be more flexible and allow meals to be much more pleasant learning times. However, because the program is located in a church and the rooms are used for multiple purposes, the church board does not allow food in the rooms. In addition, the church food service staff wants all children in the program to eat at one time so they can serve the senior citizens who use the same area.

**Change Decision** – No. The program decided there are fundamental issues which cannot be addressed at this time and put this on a long-term goal list. The teachers came up with the temporary solution of bringing an activity box to the cafeteria, so once children have finished their lunch they do not have to wait with nothing to do.

**Resources**
Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) Coaching Materials (csefel.vanderbilt.edu)

Coaching and Quality Assistance in Quality Rating Improvement Systems – National Center for Children in Poverty (nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_1047.pdf)


Mentoring, Coaching, and Reflective Practice: An Annotated Resource List – National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative at ZERO TO THREE (main.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/Final_Resources_for_Mentoring.pdf?docID=1796)
Virginia Star Quality Initiative Standards

Education, Qualifications, and Training

Education, Qualifications, and Training compose Standard 1 for both the Classroom-Based and Family Child Care performance standards. This standard is assessed by documentation that is submitted by the program through the VSQI website. Certain levels of education or other training are required at each star level for directors (classroom-based only), teachers, and assistant teachers. In addition to prior qualifications, directors (classroom-based only), teachers, and assistant teachers must maintain ongoing professional development as part of Standard 1. These types of requirements build upon what is required by the regulating authorities for public and private programs. Increasing numbers of clock hours of professional development in child-related areas are required at each star level, building upon the minimum amount required by Virginia Department of Social Services’ licensing standards for each position. Additional professional development requirements were included to reward and encourage programs to engage in professional development activities beyond training.

Definitions

Several terms used in Standard 1 may require additional information or clarification in order for the program to properly document their progress.

Teacher – the term “teacher” is used in both the Classroom-Based and Family Child Care performance standards and refers to the adult having the primary responsibility for the direct supervision of children and for the delivery of the curriculum and instruction through the activities and services for a specific group of children.

Assistant Teacher – the term “assistant teacher” is used in both the Classroom-Based and Family Child Care standards and refers to the individual who works under direct supervision of a teacher by assisting in the supervision of the same group of children and the implementation of activities and services for these children.

Child-related fields – include, but are not limited to, early childhood education, elementary education, early childhood special education, child or early childhood development, human development, child care, or a Baccalaureate degree in any discipline with at least 30 credit hours in those areas.

Approved training – child-related training provided by an individual or by an organization with an expertise in preparation of early childhood professionals. The training should have written goals and objectives, and the facilitator should assess the student’s competence, document the student’s mastery, and be considered a valid training option by the appropriate regulating authority.

Approved training topics – include, but are not limited to, child development, interactions with children, behavior management, observation and assessment, developmentally appropriate curriculum, inclusive practices, family involvement and communication, transition practices, health and safety (including medication administration, immunization requirements, daily health observation, and compliance with OSHA blood borne pathogens regulations, disease prevention, emergency preparedness), nutrition, and child abuse detection and prevention.
Clock hours – equal the actual hours of instruction, i.e. a 3-hour training class is worth 3 clock hours. Credit hours can be converted to clock hours: 1 credit hour converts to 15 clock hours of training. Assistant teachers are asked to provide the total number of clock hours of training over their career.

Credit hours – a unit of academic credit from a college or accredited institution and are the responsibility of the college or accredited institution to determine. All staff is asked to provide the total number of child-related credits over their career.

Programmatic experience – applies to all years working in a child-related environment.

Supervisory experience – applies to years that an individual served in a supervisory or management-related capacity in a child-related environment.

Training plan – may be a plan for the program as a whole or for each staff member, in which case it should be tailored to the individual needs and role of that staff member. The plan (which could be part of an employee handbook) should include details such as: specific workshops, trainings, and conferences staff will attend; the number of hours of training staff are expected to complete; and topics that should be covered in trainings.

New staff orientation – indicates the instruction/training process for new staff and may also be part of an employee handbook.

Mentorship – must be in a professional capacity by a person who is trained as a mentor. Mentoring is a relationship-based process between colleagues in similar professional roles, with a more-experienced individual with adult learning knowledge and skills, the mentor, providing guidance and example to the less-experienced mentee. Mentoring is intended to increase an individual’s personal or professional capacity resulting in greater professional effectiveness. It can be accomplished by some supervisors, but should be distinguished from supervisory processes and should not be used as a method of evaluating job performance. (Definition from the Early Childhood Education Professional Development: Training and Technical Assistance Glossary, which can be found by visiting naeyc.org/GlossaryTraining_TA.pdf)

Journal of Observation – written analysis of the professional’s performance and practice in the classroom and its relationship to children’s learning. The goal is to improve and build the professional expertise, based on their strengths and needs for growth, which can be self-identified or identified by a mentor or supervisor. A journal can include ideas for improving future lessons and activities the individual learned from a workshop or from a colleague, reflections on how a particular lesson or activity incorporated feedback received from a mentor, description of how a new strategy for classroom management worked (or did not work) in the classroom, or other ideas related to professional development. This section is not designed to include journals of observation about specific children’s progress or learning. A sample template that mentors can share with programs to use to ensure journal of observations are completed after any training opportunities is included on the following pages.
Keys to Quality

Write down your “key learnings”. The 4 key things you want to remember or things you want to do when you go back to your classroom.

1

2

3

4
Reflections

After implementing the 4 key things listed on page 1, write down the lessons learned (what went well, what did not go well, what you plan to repeat and what you plan to change).
Finding Professional Development to Support a Program’s Needs

The first step to finding professional development that supports a program’s needs is determining what the program’s needs are. Star Quality Mentors and program staff can review the Summary Report to develop a list of training needs, but should also complete a professional development plan to track professional growth and development. By assisting the program in creating a professional development plan, mentors can ensure that the professional development completed by the program is not just a means to fulfill training requirements, but is meaningful to the program’s quality improvement efforts. A professional development plan should be individualized for each staff member and can include the following elements:

- Employment History
- Educational Degrees and Certifications (copies of all educational records, certificates and transcripts should be kept on file)
- Required Training and Expiration Dates (like CPR, First Aid, Medication Administration Training)
- Ongoing Education and Training (like training classes, college courses, conferences)
- Other Professional Development Experiences (like reading, watching educational videos, attending professional meetings)
- Training Goals for the Future

A sample professional development plan is included on the following pages.
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RECORD

The Professional Development Record (PDR) should be used to keep an account of all the education and training you complete for professional growth and development in the early care and education field.

Section I enables you to list your employment history.

Section II allows you to record prior training and other professional development activities as well as the training you participate in once you begin using the PDR.

Section III provides you with the means to write your annual training plans and goals.

Please duplicate pages as needed for all sections.

IN SECTION I of the PDR, list your employment history. This should include the agencies, organizations and child care facilities where you have been employed, including your current employment situation. You should list the name, address and phone number for each place of employment. Also, indicate the time period of your employment, position or title and salary. It is recommended that you get an official letter on letterhead from your employer verifying the time of your employment.

IN SECTION II of the PDR, record your educational degrees and certificates, awards, achievements and any clearances you may have. Also track and record your required trainings (i.e. first aid, CPR, universal precautions) and any other professional development experiences. For each training you list, record the title and date of the training, the training organization or presenter, number of actual training hours (this does not include breaks, lunches or travel time) and type of training credit (CEU’s* or college credit).

SECTION III of the PDR provides you with a form to write your annual professional development training plan and to evaluate what you have accomplished at the end of the year. Using this form will help you to identify the knowledge and skill areas where you need training. Your training plans should be developed on an annual basis and evaluated at the end of each year to determine if your training goals were achieved. Knowing this will assist you in putting together your next annual professional development training plan.

Your Professional Development Record is an important document of your growth and development as an ECE provider. Keep the original copy and accompanying documentation as a personal portfolio. You may wish to make copies for your personnel file at your place of employment.

*A CEU is a continuing education unit. This is a nationally recognized unit of measure used to quantify continuing education and training activities. A certificate is provided to individuals who participate in the training.
# SECTION I: Employment History

List the information for the agencies, organizations and child care facilities for each place of employment. If you operate a family child care program in your home, put your name where it asks for “Facility Name” and indicate “Self –Employed FCC.” Be sure to add a new listing when your job title or job description changes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Name:</th>
<th>Supervisor/Contact Person:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Title or Position:</td>
<td>□ Hourly □ Annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary Start:</td>
<td>Salary End:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address of Facility:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Number:</td>
<td>Email Address of Facility:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed From:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start Date (MM/DD/YYYY):</td>
<td>End Date (MM/DD/YYYY):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Description:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason for Leaving:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Name:</th>
<th>Supervisor/Contact Person:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Title or Position:</td>
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<td>Salary Start:</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Email Address of Facility:</td>
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<td>Employed From:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start Date (MM/DD/YYYY):</td>
<td>End Date (MM/DD/YYYY):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Description:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason for Leaving:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION II: Professional Development History

In this section, record your previous education and training, as well as other professional development activities you wish to track. Please note that you should retain all educational records, certificates and transcripts. You may want to keep them in this Professional Development Record, creating a professional development portfolio which documents your progress.

Educational Degrees and Certificates
Please list your current educational degrees and certifications in the space provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School or Agency:</th>
<th>Location:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Field/Area of Certification:</td>
<td>Degree/Certificate:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of Graduation or Certification:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start Date (MM/DD/YYYY)</td>
<td>End Date (MM/DD/YYYY)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Awards, Achievements or Credentials
Please list any awards or achievements in the space provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Award of Achievement:</th>
<th>Description of Award or Achievement:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Granting Organization:</td>
<td>Year Received:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Required Training
Use the form below to list completed training that is required on a regular basis (e.g. First Aid, CPR). Use the space provided to track the dates you are certified and when you will be required to take the training again. Additional space is provided for other required training (e.g. Medication Administration Training).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Aid</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date Certified:</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPR</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date Certified:</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date Certified:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Other Professional Development Experiences
Use this form to record other professional development experiences in which you have participated (e.g. reading, watching educational videos, attending professional meetings, etc.). For each activity please record the following: title and/or type of activity (e.g. book/title of book, video/title of video, meeting/title of meeting, etc.), the date or dates of the activity and what you gained as a result (i.e. new practices, new theory, classroom ideas, etc.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title and/or Type of Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>What did you gain from participating in the activity?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Prior and Ongoing Education and Training Experiences**

Use this form to record your prior and ongoing education and training. List the professional development activities (e.g. workshops, college courses, mentoring activities, etc.) that you participated in.

For each training, please record all the information required in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Training:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of training hours:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Training:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of training hours:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION III: Professional Development Training Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Beginning Month/Year:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ending Month/Year:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer:</td>
<td>Position or Job Title:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My goals for the year are to participate in training and educational opportunities to develop my knowledge and ability in the following areas:

Indicate areas of focus:

Write your specific goal:

Was the goal accomplished?

Personal comments on how your goals were achieved. Reflect on any continuing goals you would focus on for next year.

Print Name of Supervisor:  
Signature of Supervisor:

Your Signature:  
Date:
Once a professional development plan is developed, there are many resources for finding professional development. The following list is by no means all inclusive, but provides links to some professional development resources for child care programs.

**State Resources:**
Smart Beginnings Greater Roanoke ([smartbeginningsroanoke.org/early-educators](http://smartbeginningsroanoke.org/early-educators))
Virginia Child Care Resource & Referral Network ([vachildcare.org](http://vachildcare.org))
Virginia Department of Social Services TIPS Calendar ([dss.virginia.gov/family/cc_providertrain/tips.cgi](http://dss.virginia.gov/family/cc_providertrain/tips.cgi))
Virginia Infant & Toddler Specialist Network ([va-itsnetwork.org](http://va-itsnetwork.org))
Virginia Training & Technical Assistance Center ([ttaconline.org](http://ttaconline.org))

**National Resources:**
Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation ([www.ecmhc.org](http://www.ecmhc.org))
Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL) ([earlyliteracylearning.org](http://earlyliteracylearning.org))
CONNECT: The Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge ([community.fpg.unc.edu](http://community.fpg.unc.edu))
The Program for Infant/Toddler Care ([pitc.org/pub/pitc_docs/resources.html](http://pitc.org/pub/pitc_docs/resources.html))

Star Quality Mentors may also facilitate training for the programs that they are working with, but should confirm they have the proper credentials on the topic they are teaching and that they are following the training guidelines set by the Virginia Department of Social Services, which can be found by visiting their website at [dss.virginia.gov/family/cc/professionals_resources.cgi](http://dss.virginia.gov/family/cc/professionals_resources.cgi), as well as the typical training cycle outlined below.
Star Quality Mentors should align training with Virginia’s Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals and Milestones of Child Development. Virginia’s Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals is a best practice guide for adults – supporting the growth and development of children from birth to kindergarten entry. The Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals illustrates what early childhood professionals should know and be able to do to provide quality care and education.

The Milestones of Child Development, published by the Virginia Department of Social Services in 2008, illustrates milestones in development for young children from birth to kindergarten entry. Parents, early childhood educators, and any adult in a child’s life can refer to the Milestones of Child Development to see children holistically and to gain a greater understanding of expectations for young children from birth to Kindergarten.

The cost of continuing education or professional development can be a barrier for some programs. The Virginia Department of Social Services Child Care Scholarship Program provides tuition assistance for providers to attend courses at Virginia institutions of higher learning. By joining a professional network like the local affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), programs may have access to additional scholarships and resources.

**Resources**


**Observational Assessments**

There are two tools used for observational assessment in the Classroom-Based standard: the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and the Environment Rating Scale (ERS). There is one tool used for observational assessment in the Family Child Care standard: the Environment Rating Scale (ERS). The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is not used as part of the observational assessment for the Family Child Care performance standard, but is used as part of the mentoring process.

The CLASS measures the effectiveness of interactions between teachers and children in the classroom and is available for toddler, Pre-K, and K-3 settings. CLASS tools are in development for infant, upper elementary, and secondary settings. Formal training is required to use the CLASS and is included as part of the training required to be a Star Quality Mentor. Additional information on the CLASS, including training and updates, can be found through Teachstone. The CLASS observation is included as Standard 2 in the Classroom-Based standards.

The ERS measures the level of process quality by assessing indicators like:
- supervision and interactions (including language) that occur in the classroom
- schedule of the day (including routines and activities)
- support offered to parents and staff

The ERS is available for infant/toddler (ITERS-R), early childhood (ECERS-R), family child care (FCCERS-R), and school-age (SACERS) settings. Formal training is required to use the ERS and is included as part of the training required to be a Star Quality Mentor. Additional information on the ERS, including training and updates, can be found through the Environment Rating Scales Institute. The ERS observation is included as Standard 2 in the Family Child Care standards, and is included as part of Standard 4 in the Classroom-Based standards.
Rationale for Using CLASS and ERS

The specific qualities of interactions are the mechanism through which curriculum and materials are translated into learning results. Research shows strong correlation between the quality of interactions and child outcomes in academic, social, emotional, and motivational development. The CLASS is a valid and reliable observational instrument to assess classroom quality based on multiple dimensions of teaching and quality that have been linked to student achievement and development. High scores on the CLASS have also been related to better social adjustment in the early years of school. VSQI uses the Pre-K and Toddler versions of the CLASS.

CLASS is organized into broad domains of interactions, and within these domains fall specific dimensions of interactions. In the Pre-K version, dimensions are organized into 3 broad domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. Emotional Support includes the dimensions of: classroom climate (positive and negative), teacher sensitivity, and regard for student perspectives. Classroom Organization includes behavior management, productivity, and instructional learning formats. Finally, Instructional Support includes concept development, quality of feedback, and language modeling. In the Toddler version, dimensions are organized into two domains to be more developmentally appropriate: Emotional and Behavior Support and Engaged Support for Learning. Emotional and Behavior Support measures the dimensions of: classroom climate (positive and negative), teacher sensitivity, regard for child perspectives, and behavior guidance. Engaged Support for Learning measures the dimensions of facilitation of learning and development, quality of feedback, and language modeling.

Research on best practices in early childhood education is the basis for the environment and instruction standard. The overall learning environment and instructional practices of early childhood programs will be evaluated based on Star Quality Raters’ observations using the applicable Environment Rating Scale(s). These scales, developed at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina, assess early childhood programs through various items organized into particular subscales.

The ERS are widely used in both the United States and other countries to assess quality of child care and early education environments. The essential criteria for high quality learning environments and instructional practices included in the ERS focus on aspects of the day-to-day experiences of children in care, including space and furnishings, personal care routines, listening, talking, and language-reasoning, activities, interactions, program structure, and parents and staff. All of the environment rating scales are appropriate for use in assessing inclusive and culturally diverse programs, and the scales have proven reliability and validity.

Checklists

The tools are a great starting point to expand on many ways to improve a child care program. Star Quality Mentors should work with programs to focus on quality enhancements and improving skills that fit the philosophy and priorities of the program. The following checklists may be helpful when mentoring programs on the observational assessments and when looking for specifics areas of quality to provide more enhanced focus. These checklists are not substitutes for the actual tools.
CLASS Checklist

Look for evidence of these indicators and briefly note what you saw the teacher do or say.

**Emotional Support:**

- Teacher enthusiasm, enjoyment of children and activities (smiles, laughter, joining in fun, teacher-child matched emotions)
- Children’s enjoyment of teachers, peers and activities
- Lots of social talking between teachers and children
- Teacher respect for each child (using children’s names, polite language, listening to and responding to children, taking child’s perspective, closely observing children to tailor approach)
- Facilitating positive peer interactions (solving problems, modeling desired behaviors)
- Encouragement of children’s efforts and peer to peer learning
- Actively seeking out and supporting children’s ideas, point of view, and participation
- Giving children choices
- Giving children real classroom responsibilities to encourage ownership of classroom
- Absence of negativity (tension, “down” atmosphere, sarcasm, gestures/facial expressions, negative commands, belittling of children, threats and punishment, irritability)

**Notes:**

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**Classroom Organization:**

- Proactive behavior management (anticipating and preventing misbehavior or misplaced behavior)
- Monitoring behavior and redirecting to more appropriate/safer behavior
- Clearly communicating behavioral expectations that are easy for children to understand, and repeating them regularly (expressed positively rather than negatively)
- Consistency with consequences and reinforcing expected behaviors
- Using specific, not general praise (“you gave your friend a turn with the toy, that made her feel really happy” vs “good job”)
- Encouraging children to settle disputes (teach and support problem solving approach)
- Learning activities – making sure children know exactly what the learning objective is (“we are going to try to pop all the bubbles in our sheets of bubble wrap”) and having alternate activities ready for children who finish early or are not engaged
- Being organized and efficient (having everything “ready to go” and practicing ahead of time to anticipate glitches and opportunities (read through story, use intended materials, etc.)
- Minimizing disruptions to learning if possible (where will activity take place, what else will be going on nearby, how to work around)
- Minimizing time spent on managerial or administrative tasks or turn them into a learning activity with clear objectives (taking attendance becomes a social-emotional lesson)
Minimizing transitions, and making the most of those that occur (imbedding learning within transitions)

Using appropriate materials (age appropriate, interesting, relevant, in good condition) and making them available and accessible to children (container bins labeled and open, sufficient supplies)

Actively involving children by thinking of ways for them to participate (passing out paper, group responses to story text, chanting nursery rhymes, etc.)

Using a variety of ways to teach (movement, visual, auditory, touch such as incorporating hand motions within a song)

Getting involved (playing with children in their activities, taking an active facilitation role that elevates children’s performance – e.g., “pushes” learning)

Asking questions to encourage children’s participation

Instructional Support:

- Focusing children on understanding concepts and generating solutions to a problem, rather than “the right answer” – ask “thinking” (open-ended) rather than “right answer” questions
- Asking questions and use strategies that focus on critical (higher order) thinking, such as comparing and contrasting, classifying, sequencing, and problem solving
- Exploring concepts with children (predicting, experimenting, brainstorming) – focusing on expanding range of possibilities rather than coming up with the right answer
- Linking concepts across activities that can be connected (within a given day, across time) - this helps children apply understanding across different types of learning
- Connecting concepts to children’s lives and their knowledge/experience (e.g., what are the steps to brushing your teeth)
- Focusing on the process of learning (make learning accessible to all) by asking such questions as “how did you know that?” or “can you show your partner how you did that?”

- Scaffolding – providing hints and cues (verbal and/or physical) to assist children having difficulty with task or concept
- Continuous contingent responding (aka “feedback loops”) – keep the conversation going with follow-up comments, questions, clarifying check-ins; have many conversations with children
- Giving thoughtful and specific feedback to children about their efforts (instead of generalized “wow” or “awesome” say, “how many blocks did you stack to make your tower that high?” and “you balanced those blocks so carefully. How did you do it?”
- Giving children relevant and interesting topics to talk about to promote their language development
- Using specific language-expanding strategies: repeat and extend, self-talk and parallel talk, advanced language/vocabulary imbedded
- Encouraging children to talk to one another by modeling or referring them to each other “ask Tommy if he knows how to tie shoelaces” or “Kevin went on a picnic this weekend, ask him about it.”

Notes:

The CLASS measure is not a checklist. Reliable observers make standardized judgements about teacher-child interactions.

Resources:
ECERS-R Materials Checklist

Place a check by those items available in classroom. Write needed items on designated line.

This guide is to assist you only in preparing your centers. For more information and clarification on classroom environment, refer to the All About The ECERS-R.

A. Activities

1. Fine Motor (Page 189) examples:
   - Small building toys:
     - ___ Interlocking blocks
     - ___ Lincoln Logs
     - ___ Bristle blocks
     - ___ Tinker Toys
     - ___ Small blocks, inch cubes
   - Art materials:
     - ___ Crayons, watercolor markers (wide or narrow)
     - ___ Pencils (colored or black, large or small)
     - ___ Paints (tempera or watercolors) with brushes, finger paints
     - ___ Paper (various sizes and colors, construction, painting, drawing)
     - ___ Play dough, clay
     - ___ Collage materials (glue, paste, string, yarn, paper scraps, fabric)
   - Manipulatives:
     - ___ Stringing beads in various sizes, colors, shapes
     - ___ Pegs/peg board in various sizes, colors, shapes
     - ___ Lacing cards with strings
     - ___ Gears with interlocking plates and connectors
     - ___ Nuts and bolts
   - Puzzles:
     - ___ In frames with differing number of pieces
     - ___ Knobs to grasp or knob less
     - ___ Varying levels of difficulty
     - ___ Floor puzzles
     - ___ Jigsaw puzzles

   IMPORTANT:
   - Materials available on different levels of difficulty
   - Materials organized in containers with picture labels
   - Materials rotated regularly to maintain interest
   - Materials accessible for a substantial portion of the day
   - At least 3 of each type of fine motor materials accessible

   I need: ____________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________

2. Art (Item 20 - Page 200)

   Drawing Materials:
   - ___ Paper
   - ___ Crayons
   - ___ Water color markers / felt tip markers
   - ___ Chalk
   - ___ Pens / pencils

   Things to draw/scrabble on:
   - ___ Paper in various shapes, sizes and types
   - ___ Chalk boards
   - ___ Paper plates
   - ___ Dry erase boards
3-D Materials:
- Play dough
- Clay
- Wood for gluing or for carpentry
- Pipe cleaners
- Modeling compound

Collage Materials:
- Paste or glue
- Paper in various types, colors and shapes
- Magazine pictures
- Egg cartons
- Felt remnants, cotton balls, sequins, feathers, buttons, glitter

IMPORTANT:
- 3-5 of each type of art materials are available
- Materials available for substantial portion of the day
- Individual expression exhibited
- 3-D art displayed
- Multi-step projects encouraged
- Art activities related to experiences

Tools:
- Safe scissors
- Staplers
- Hole punches
- Tape dispensers with tape
- Tools to use with play dough (stencils, sponge painters, rollers, brushes of various sizes and shapes

Paint materials:
- Finger paints
- Tempera paints
- Watercolor paint sets with brushes and paper

3. Music/Movement (Item 21 - Page 211)
Music materials:
- Tape / CD / record player
- Software for computers that offer extensive musical content
- Dance props (scarves, bean bags)

Movement:
- Dancing
- Marching
- Exercising
- Videos

Musical instruments:
- Drums
- Electric keyboards
- Bells
- Piano
- Triangles
- Xylophones
- Harmonicas
- Rhythm sticks

Variety of music tapes / CDs / records:
- Classical
- Popular
- Children's songs
- Jazz
- Rock
- Reggae
- Rhythm and blues
- Music characteristic of different cultures
- Songs in different languages
- Lullabies
- Folk songs
- Country and western
IMPORTANT:
• Music for both a group activity and daily free choice at least 1 hour daily
• At least 3 types of music must be used regularly
• Creative music - acting out songs, rhymes or chants (large muscle activity) must be a daily option
• At least one music activity daily (sing songs, soft music at nap, play music for dancing)
• Instruments enough for at least half of the children to use at once
• Movement/dance activity at least weekly to encourage creativity and understanding
• Movement/dance activity can be prescribed body actions or create their own motions

I need: ________________________________________________________________________________________

4. Blocks – Gross Motor (Item 22 - Page 219)
   Types of blocks: (includes descriptions)
   ____ Unit blocks
   • wood, plastic or foam
   • different sizes and shapes
   • smaller blocks represent fractions of the larger blocks

   ____ Large hollow blocks
   • wood, cardboard or hard plastic
   • about the size of cinder blocks (bigger than unit blocks)
   • good for outdoor use

   ____ Homemade blocks – can be made from the following:
   • food boxes
   • larger cardboard boxes
   • plastic containers
   • foam containers
   • tissue boxes
   • wood cut into block shapes

   Block materials: (solid or hollow)
   ____ Wood
   ____ Plastic
   ____ Cardboard
   ____ Cloth-covered or vinyl-covered foam

   Block accessories:
   ____ Small trucks, cars, trains
   ____ Road signs
   ____ Small toy people
   ____ Small toy animals

IMPORTANT:
• Enough space, blocks, and accessories are accessible for 3 or more children to build elaborate structures
• Blocks are accessible for a substantial portion of the day
• At least two types of blocks are accessible (they must have different characteristics to provide for varied building experiences)
• Interlocking blocks are not given credit for this item
• Blocks available inside and out
• Blocks stored according to type on open, labeled shelves (pictures or outlines needed)
• Blocks are plentiful, organized, easy to access and play space is out of flow of traffic

I need: ________________________________________________________________________________________
5. Sand/Water (Item 23 - Page231)

Types of sand/water containers:
- Dishpans
- Plastic bins
- Sand boxes
- Sand pits
- Various types of tables
- Tubs
- Bucket
- Sinks

Sand/water toys: (to measure, dig, scoop, pour, fill, empty and experiment with)
- Measuring cups
- Unbreakable Containers
- Funnels
- Plastic tubes
- Molds
- Shovels
- Scoops
- Trowels
- Pails
- Rakes
- Sifters
- Sand / water wheels
- Pipes

Water toys: including above
- Sponges
- Things that sink or float
- Turkey basters
- Spray bottles
- Pumps to experiment with

Dramatic play toys:
- Animals
- Dinosaurs
- Small trucks and cars
- Small people and figurines
- Large trucks and diggers
- Cooking props (pots, pans, pitchers, dishes, bowls, cups, spoons)

IMPORTANT:
- Materials in sand table changed
- Provision for sand and/or water play both indoors and outdoors, with one available at least one hour daily
- Variety of toys accessible (to measure, dig, scoop, pour, fill, empty, experiment with, explore and learn)
- Different activities for Water:
  - Bubbles added
  - Color added
  - Wooden or plastic boats used
  - Sink and float experiment done with water play
  - Sponges and nonporous objects used to compare
  - Shells or toy sea creatures added
  - Small water droppers and large basters used
  - Plastic pipes used to route water
- Different activities for Sand:
  - Wet sand used instead of dry, with toys that can be used to mold sand
  - Cars and trucks added
  - Small people added
  - Another material used instead of sand
  - Tools to make differing designs in sand provided
  - Small animal toys used

I need: ____________________________
6. Dramatic Play (Item 24 – Page 237)

Dress-up clothes:
- Shirts / blouses for both men and women
- Dresses, skirts, pants, jackets
- Footwear
  - boots
  - sandals
  - slipper
  - various shoes
- Ties, scarves
- Belts
- Aprons for cooking or for using tools
- Uniforms
  - medical
  - firefighter
  - postal worker
  - office
  - construction
- Hats for men and women
  - hard hats
  - different job hats
  - hats for different kinds of weather
  - hats for leisure
  - flowery hats
- Accessories
  - jewelry
  - hair clips
  - purses / tote bags
  - briefcases
  - glasses – no lenses
  - sunglasses

Housekeeping props:
- Child-sized furniture
  - kitchen sink
  - stove / oven
  - washer / dryer
  - refrigerator
  - ironing board with iron
  - couch
  - table and chairs
- Cooking / eating equipment
  - pots / pans
  - utensils
  - dishes
  - tea set
  - wok
  - toaster
  - microwave oven

- Play foods – including different ethnic foods
- Dolls – showing racial diversity
  - baby dolls
  - dolls representing adults
  - small dolls for doll-houses
  - paper dolls
  - wooden dolls
  - people figures to use with blocks or building sets
- Doll furniture
  - baby doll-sized bed
  - highchair
  - stroller
  - cars
  - other disabilities equipment – walkers or wheelchairs
- Doll clothes
- Stuffed animals
- Telephones
- Mirror
- Play houses

Different kinds of work props:
- Office
- Store
- Restaurant
- Construction
- Zoo keeper
- Medical
- Farmer or gardener
- Airplane or train
- Fire fighting

Fantasy props:
- Simple, non-frightening masks or face paint
- Magic wands or other accessories
- Lot of costumes
- Things needed to act out familiar stories
- Animals / dinosaurs

Leisure props:
- Participating in or watching sports
- Camping
- Going on vacations to different places
- Picnicking
- Bird-watching
- Fishing
- Boating
- Parties
Examples of outdoor props:
- Trucks with people or things to transport
- Play houses with furniture, dolls or other props
- Riding toys that look like cars
- Gardening tools with wheel barrows
- Big pieces of equipment shaped like vehicles
- Toy strollers or shopping carts with dolls or stuffed animals
- Prop boxes for different jobs (painter, fire fighter, bus driver)

IMPORTANT:
- Many dramatic play materials accessible at one time for a substantial portion of the day
- Enough materials for 3 or more children to use at one time and can encourage complex play
- 2-3 gender-specific examples of dress-up items are required
- Enough props accessible for meaningful play for 2 different themes daily
- Materials can be accessible indoors or outdoors, but must be enough in either place to allow meaningful play
- Props rotated and represent diversity (race, culture, ability, age or gender)
- Dramatic space defined with sufficient, organized labeled storage
- Pictures, stories and trips are used to enrich children’s dramatic play

I need:

   Collections of natural objects: (in different sizes and shapes)
   - Rocks
   - Seashells
   - Insects
   - Leaves
   - Seed pods
   - Different types of wood
   - Pinecones
   - Birds’ nests
   Living things: (to care for and observe)
   - House plants, terrarium, seeds that children plant and watch grow
   - Garden the class planted and cares for
   - Class pet
   - Window bird feeder
   - Aquarium with fish snails, or other animals
   - Ant farm with living ants
   - Worm farm
   - Butterfly hatching kit
   - Eggs that hatch

Books, games or toys: (realistic and fact based)
   - Books (realistic pictures, photos, or drawings)
     - Animals
     - Plants
     - Birds
     - Fish
     - Human body
     - Seasons
     - Weather
     - Plants
   - Toys (portray natural life)
     - Plastic sets of animals
     - Puzzles with nature pictures or natural sequences
   - Games
     - Nature matching cards
     - Nature sequence cards
     - Body part matching games
     - Board games with a nature theme
     - Factual nature/science videos or computer games
Nature/science activities:
- Magnets with objects to experiment with
- Magnifying glasses with things to look at
- Sink and float activity, with objects to use in an experiment
- Racing cars down slopes that vary in length and incline
- Shaking cans filled with differing substances to match and compare sounds
- Smelling and matching cans filled with different spices
- Using plastic translucent color paddles to make colors that match objects
- Cooking foods that change when mixed, cooled, cooked
- Completing a weather chart, after looking to see the weather
- Using a rain gauge to record how much rain fell
- Planting seeds and/or a garden and taking care of it
- Tasting and comparing sweet, sour, bitter, salty
- Lifting objects with levers and pulleys
- Using different length pendulums with different weights
- Looking at objects under a simple microscope

IMPORTANT:
- In addition to center materials, you must provide a theme related activity within the center (see examples above)
- Realistic and fact-based books, games, videos, computer games, and toys, used to extend knowledge, can be located throughout the classroom
- Materials should encourage or allow children to experiment with scientific concepts or observe scientific processes unfold
- 3-5 examples from at least 3 categories accessible for a substantial portion of the day
- Sufficient numbers of the objects in each collection must be present to allow for exploration of similarities and or differences
- Nature/science activities requiring staff input offered at least every two weeks (cooking, measuring rainfall, field trips)

I need: ____________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

8. Math/Number (Item 26 – Page 267)
Counting:
- Teddy bears or other small objects to count
- Money in the dramatic play center
- Pegboards with number printed and holes to match
- Puzzles, toys or games (where quantities of objects are matched to written numbers)
- Beads and bead patterns
- Pegs to fill different numbers of pegboard holes

Measuring:
- Measuring cups and spoons for sand/water, cooking or housekeeping
- Balance scale with things to weigh
- Rulers and tape measures with things to measure
- Thermometers
- Yardsticks or rulers on woodworking bench
- Height chart
- Foot size measurer
Comparing quantities:
   ___ Toys and games used to figure out “more and less”
   ___ Geoboards and pegs
   ___ Unit blocks
   ___ Attribute blocks
   ___ Parquetry blocks
   ___ Pattern or matching cards for any shape toys
   ___ Magnetic shapes

Becoming familiar with written numbers:
   ___ Number puzzles
   ___ Magnetic numbers
   ___ Play telephones
   ___ Dramatic play cash register with play money
   ___ Number lotto
   ___ Clocks
   ___ Calendar
   ___ Playing cards
   ___ Number lacing cards
   ___ Number books and posters

IMPORTANT:
   • 3-5 examples from all 5 categories accessible for a substantial portion of the day, rotated to maintain interest, and organized (may not necessarily be in a specific center)
   • Math/number activities requiring staff input should be offered every two weeks

I need: ________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

9. Use of Video, TV, and/or Computers (Item 27 – Page 279)

   Encourage active Involvement:
   ___ Dance
   ___ Play musical instruments
   ___ Finger plays
   ___ Sing
   ___ Exercise
   ___ Creative drawing or painting
   ___ Think and solve problems (computer games)
   ___ Support and extend classroom themes and activities
   ___ Add to children’s experiences

IMPORTANT:
   • Staff are actively involved in use of equipment (participate in activities, watch and discuss videos with children, do activities suggested in educational TV programming, help children learn to use computer)
   • Materials used are non-violent, culturally sensitive, and/or “good for children” (Sesame St., Educational Videos, Educational computer games)
   • Time children are allowed to use computer or TV is limited (TV- 1 hour / Computer - 20 minutes daily)
   • 2 or more alternative activities are accessible to children while TV/Computer is being used but carries no negative message
   • Use of this equipment is optional

I need: ________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________
10. Promoting acceptance of diversity (Item 28 – Page 287)

Books, pictures, toys, print and AV materials:

- Races
- Cultures
- Ages
- Abilities
- Gender

Props:

- Dress up clothing (representing different countries and customs)
- Dolls and puppets (representing people of different cultures)
- Small toy people representing various ethnic groups, for use with blocks
- Play food representing different cultures
- Cooking utensils representing different cultures
- Baby carriers from different cultures
- Play money from different countries
- Pieces of fabric or blankets typical of different cultures
- Real equipment used by people with disabilities
- Equipment for dolls representing certain disabilities

Diversity as part of daily routines:

- Ethnic foods are served often as meals or snacks
- Staff use some words in different languages to talk about routines
- Music from varying cultures is used at naptime
- Staff say hello or good bye in different languages
- Family traditions and utensils are provided at meals and snacks, if desired

Diversity as part of play activities:

- Cooking activities, foods representative of other cultures are prepared by children
- Bingo is played in different languages
- Children regularly dance to music from various cultures
- Art materials and activities associated with different cultures are used – colored sands for sand paintings, clay for making pottery, origami paper folding activities
- Musical instruments representing various cultures
- Children celebrate winter holiday of many different cultures
- People come in to teach children folk songs of different countries
- Children learn dances from different countries
- Children see a video of games children play in other countries

IMPORTANT:

- 2 or more different races, cultures, and ethnic groups are represented
- Presence of diversity must be in classroom and obvious
- All categories of diversity listed need to be included to some degree

I need: ____________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________


A wide selection:

- Fantasy
- Factual Information
- Stories about People
- Stories about Animals
- Nature/science
- Different races and cultures

- Different abilities
Additional language materials used daily to encourage children to communicate
   ____ Posters and pictures
   ____ Flannel board stories in book area
   ____ Picture card games
   ____ Recorded stories and songs
   ____ Listening center with CD / tape player

   ____ Puppets in book area
   ____ Small figures in block area
   ____ Animals in block area
   ____ Telephones
   ____ Dramatic play props
   ____ Dolls

IMPORTANT:
• A wide selection of books (3-4 examples of each type), rotated to maintain interest with at least 3 relating to current theme, are organized in a reading center and are accessible for a substantial portion of the day (At least 20 books for a group of 15 children plus one extra for each additional child)
• Books, materials, and activities do not show violence in a graphic way and are appropriate for children in the group
• Book should include simpler books for younger children, large print books for visually impaired, books in the primary language of children, rhyming games for older children
• Staff reads books to children informally daily. (During free play, at nap time, as an extension of an activity)

I need: ______________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

12. Cozy Area / Privacy Space (Page 15)

IMPORTANT:
• A well-defined secluded area where one or two children are protected from active play through its placement in the room
• The cozy area should be filled with several types of soft furnishings such as carpet, stuffed animals, pillows, bean bags or soft chairs
• Cozy Area / Privacy Space may be combined if all criteria are met
• Books, quiet games, toys, and soft music should be accessible

Resources: East Baton Rouge Parish Schools Title I Pre-Kindergarten 2008 - 2009
**ITERS-R Materials Checklist**

### Using books:
*At least 12 books including books about:*

- ☐ people of varying races, ages, and abilities
- ☐ animals
- ☐ familiar objects
- ☐ familiar routines

### Fine motor:
*enough to rotate and for children to use without excessive competition as well as varied colors and skills such as:*

**For infants:**
- ☐ grasping toys
- ☐ busy boxes
- ☐ nested cups
- ☐ textured toys
- ☐ containers to fill and dump
- ☐ cradle gyms

**For toddlers:**
- ☐ shape sorting games
- ☐ large stringing beads
- ☐ big pegs with peg boards
- ☐ simple puzzles
- ☐ pop beads
- ☐ stacking rings
- ☐ nesting toys
- ☐ medium or large interlocking blocks
- ☐ crayons

### Active physical play:
*Ample materials and equipment so that children do not have to wait including:*

**For infants:**
- ☐ outdoor pad or blanket
- ☐ crib gym
- ☐ small push toys
- ☐ balls
- ☐ sturdy things to pull up on
- ☐ ramps for crawling

**For toddlers:**
- ☐ riding toys without pedals
- ☐ large push-pull wheel toys
- ☐ balls and bean bags
- ☐ age-appropriate climbing equipment
- ☐ slide
- ☐ balance board
- ☐ cushions or rugs for tumbling
- ☐ tunnels
- ☐ large cardboard boxes

### Art:
*Some of each of the following:*

- ☐ drawing materials such as paper, crayons, nontoxic markers
- ☐ brush & finger paints
- ☐ play dough
- ☐ collage materials

**Note: edible materials should NOT be used!**

### Music/movement:
*Some of each:*

- ☐ tape/cd player
- ☐ music boxes
- ☐ musical toys & instruments
- ☐ safe, home-made instruments such as shakers

**Variety of tapes/cds including:**
- ☐ classical
- ☐ popular
- ☐ cultural
- ☐ different languages

### Blocks:
*At least 3 sets of blocks (10 or more per set) of different types as well as variety of accessories including:*

- ☐ soft blocks
- ☐ light-weight blocks of various sizes, shapes, colors
- ☐ large cardboard blocks
- ☐ toy people, animals, vehicles
- ☐ containers to fill & dump

### Dramatic play:
*Enough materials to rotate and some of each of the following:*

**For infants:**
- ☐ dolls
- ☐ soft animals
- ☐ pots & pans
- ☐ toy telephones

**For toddlers:**
- ☐ dress-up clothes
- ☐ child-sized house furniture
- ☐ cooking/eating equipment
- ☐ dolls
- ☐ doll furnishings
- ☐ soft animals
- ☐ small play buildings with accessories
- ☐ toy telephones
**Sand/Water:**
*Sand AND water, both indoors AND outdoors*

Variety of toys such as:
- kitchen utensils
- shovels & buckets
- small cars and trucks
- floating toys
- plastic containers

**Nature/science:**

At least some items in each of the following categories:
- living things such as house plants, aquariums, classroom pets
- nature science books that represent nature realistically
- nature/science toys that represent nature realistically

FCCERS-R Materials Checklist

**Books**
*At least 12 appropriate for each age group (no less than 2 for each child in the group)*
- People
- Animals
- Race
- Familiar Objects
- Age
- Familiar Routines
- Ability
- Nature/Science

**Fine Motor**
*At least 10 appropriate materials for infants/toddlers
At least 3 from each category for preschoolers*

**For Infants:**
- Rattles to shake and grasp (of different textures, colors, shapes, with varying noises)
- Safe hanging things to bat at or to grasp
- Small soft grasping toys, such as animals, rings, or dolls
- Simple stacking rings
- Clean teething toys
- Large pop beads
- Cause-and-effect toys, which respond with sounds or other responses when buttons are pushed

**For Toddlers:**
- Containers to drop objects into
- Bead mazes
- Sets of manipulatives with larger than preschool-sized pieces, such as links, interlocking stars, medium-sized interlocking blocks, or large beads to string
- Simple lacing toys
- Finger paints
- Large watercolor markers
- Puzzles with knobs and large pieces
- Crayons
- Glue sticks

**Small Building Materials**
- Interlocking Blocks
- Bristle Blocks
- Lincoln logs
- Tinker Toys
- Small blocks, inch cubes
- Magnetic Blocks

**Art Materials**
- Crayons, watercolor markers
- Colored pencils
- Paints (tempera, watercolors, fingerpaints)
- Paper
- Tools (hole punch, scissors stencils)
- Play dough, clay

**Manipulatives**
- Beads and strings in various sizes, colors, shapes
- Lacing cards with strings
- Pegs with peg boards
- Parquet shapes or other shapes used to make designs
- Zip, snap, and button toys, such as dolls with clothes to fasten or dressing frames
- Snaps
- Links
- Nuts and bolts
- Other toys with pieces to link or fit together, such as pop beads, snap cubes, magnetic blocks, Mr Potato Head, toy train tracks
- Gears

**Puzzles**
- Puzzles
- Picture puzzles in frames with differing numbers of pieces
- With knobs
- Puzzles without frames, such as floor puzzles, jigsaw puzzles
Art
Older children—3-5 materials from 4 categories daily is recommended. Toddlers—3 drawing materials 3 times a week is recommended.

Young toddler (12-23 months):
- Large, non-toxic crayons
- Large paper taped to a surface
- Non-toxic finger paint
- Large, non-toxic chalk

Older toddler (24-30 months):
- Watercolor markers
- Tempera paints
- Painting tools, such as paint brushes of various widths w/short handles
- Paper of different sizes and colors
- Easy-to-use scissors
- Unbreakable chalk board with chalk and erasers
- Play dough to manipulate with fingers and with simple tools (rollers, plastic or wooden utensils that are safe and free of sharp or pointed ends, but not cookie cutters)
- Large self-stick stamps, stickers, and tape
- Scrap paper and cut-out pictures for collage with glue sticks

Drawing Materials
- Paper
- Nontoxic markers
- Crayons

Paint Materials
- Finger paint
- Water-color paints
- Tempera paints
- Appropriate brushes

Three-dimensional materials
- Pipe cleaners
- Modeling compound
- Wood for gluing

Collage materials
- Felt
- Magazine pictures
- Yarn
- Cotton balls
- Pom-poms
- Sequins
- Feathers
- Natural objects
- Cardboard tubes

Tools
- Safe scissors
- Stencils
- Staplers
- Brushes
- Hole punches
- Sponges
- Tape dispensers with tape
- Rollers
- Tools to use with play dough

Music and movement
At least 10 musical toys (3 for each age group)

Adult-initiated
- Tape recording a child or a group singing and playing it back for them to listen to
- Singing to a child during handwashing
- Playing recorded music for children to listen to
- Humming and rocking a baby to sleep
- Chanting and doing finger plays
- Singing softly to children before or after nap-time
- Singing a “clean up” song during transitions
- Encouraging children to clap to music
- Singing while using puppets with a small group of children
- Singing and playing records of different tempo
- Singing in different pitches
- Playing a simple musical toy for a child
- Playing a musical instrument alongside children playing the same instrument

Child-initiated
- Pulling or pushing toys that make musical sounds when rolled
- Playing with noise-making rattles
- Shaking wrist bells
- Banging cymbals or clackers
- Pressing keys or buttons on musical toys
- Grasping and shaking soft objects with bells inside
- Using beaters on drums, xylophones, or bells
**Movement experiences**
- Dancing while holding a non-mobile infant, so he can feel the movements w/music
- Holding hands with one or two children and swaying to music
- Gently bouncing a child on lap to rhythms or a song
- Encouraging older infants and toddlers to move to recorded music as a free choice activity
- Encouraging 2-year olds to dance or move to the tempo of music
- Encouraging children to clap to different rhythms
- Encouraging a small group to move and dance with musical instruments or scarves

**Various types of music—at least 3 different types used regularly**
- Vocal and instrumental music
- Children’s song
- Opera
- Classical
- Jazz
- Lively or quiet
- Rock
- Reggae
- Rhythm and Blues
- Lullabies
- Rap
- Folk songs
- Country and Western

**Blocks**
*At least 2 sets of different types for each age group*

**Toddlers:**
- Lightweight, hollow brick blocks made of cardboard
- Fabric covered blocks
- ABC wooden blocks larger than 2”
- Hard and soft plastic blocks of different sizes
- Geometric-shaped blocks used with shape sorters
- Blocks with bells inside
- Homemade blocks
- Wooden or hard foam unit blocks

**Preschool/Kindergarten:**
- Unit blocks
- Large hollow blocks
- Homemade blocks
- Accessories
- Animals of various types, including farm animals, zoo animals, pet animals, or dinosaurs
- Sets of people, such as families of different races and ages or community helpers
- Small vehicles, such as cars, trucks, or airplanes

**Dramatic Play**
*Infant (3-5 examples of materials recommended):*
- Dolls
- Soft animals
- Pots and Pans
- Toy telephones

*Toddlers (2 or more of each recommended):*
- Dress-up clothes (some required)
- Child sized furniture
- Cooking/eating equipment
- Play foods
- Dolls
- Doll furnishings
- Play buildings with accessories
- Toy telephones
- Soft animals

**Preschool**
- Dress-up clothes (some required)
- Shirts/blouses for men and women
- Dresses, skirts, pants jackets
- Footwear
- Ties
- Aprons for cooking
- Uniforms of various work roles
- Hats of may types
- Accessories, jewelry, hair clips, purse, totebags, briefcases

**Themes – 2 themes**
- Office play
- Restaurants
- Construction workers
- Medical
- Farmer or gardener
- Fantasy
- Leisure
Math/number 5 different materials for each age group

**Infants and Toddlers:**
- Rattles of various shapes
- Nested cups
- Cradle gyms with hanging shapes
- Stacking rings
- Numbers and shape board books
- Shape sorters
- Simple shape puzzles
- Toy telephones
- Cash registers w/numbers

**Preschoolers:**
*Small objects used in counting activities*
- Balance scales
- Rulers
- Number puzzles
- Magnetic numbers
- Geometric shapes
- Attribute blocks
- Books on counting and shapes
- Number games
- Dominoes, number lotto

**School-agers:**
- Rulers
- Tape measures
- Number lines
- Unit rods and cubes
- Geo boards
- Math card and board games
- Calculators
- Parquetry blocks

**Nature and science**
*Daily experience with living plants or animals indoors and at least 9 different examples with at least 3 of the 4 categories*

**Books, Pictures, Toys**
*Pictures:*
- Posters
- Photographs
- Drawings

**Toys:**
- Realistic zoo & farm animals, insects
- Puzzles w/ realistic nature or science content
- Scent boxes
- Realistic plastic vegetables and fruits
- An infant mat with realistic nature or science pictures displayed
- Realistic animal-shaped rattles
- Mobile with realistic birds or butterflies that infants can play with
- Large magnets that toddlers can experiment with
- Magnifying glasses for older toddlers

**Collections of natural objects**
- Leaves
- Seashells
- Rocks
- Different types of wood
- Pinecones
- Birds’ nest

**Living things**
- House plants
- Garden
- Pet
- Window bird feeder
- Aquarium with fish, snails or other animals
- Ant farm
- Worm farm
- Butterfly hatching kit
- Eggs that hatch

**Nature/Science activities**
- Magnets
- Magnifying glasses
- Sink and float
- Shaking cans filled with differing substances
- Smelling
- Plastic translucent color paddles
- Rain gauge
- Cooking scale

**Funding for Materials and Improvements**

In each community, there may be a differing level of resources and funding available to implement quality improvements. Local policies will vary according to the procedures for requesting needed materials and resources. Many public libraries and community colleges have early childhood DVDs and materials that support skills assessed through the observation tools. VECF and T/TAC also have lending libraries with VSQI specific materials available. Many mentors encourage programs to visit discount stores or thrift shops to find inexpensive materials. Mentors may also want to facilitate donations of books or materials for child care programs through local nonprofits. Local businesses may want to participate by sponsoring a child care program, hosting a book or toy drive to support VSQI, or providing volunteers to assist with environmental improvements. Mentors should check with their local coordinator regarding any fundraising efforts.

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**Resources**

Environment Rating Scales Institute ([ersi.info](http://ersi.info))

Teachstone ([teachstone.org](http://teachstone.org))

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**Structure**

Structure, including staff to child ratio and group size, comprises Standard 3 of both the Classroom-Based and Family Child Care performance standards. The structure of early childhood programs plays a large role in determining the quality of the program, especially in terms of safeguarding optimal health and safety of children and in encouraging positive interactions and caregiving. Research has shown that both small group size and low child-adult ratios are linked to higher quality in early childhood programs. Based on evidence from the research, group size and ratio requirements for each star level are differentiated by the age of the children served, from infants to preschool-aged children.

For child care programs with multiple staffing plans throughout the day, the ratios and group sizes that occur during the core portion of the day are what are examined for scoring purposes. For programs with multiple classrooms, the scores are averaged across all classrooms to provide an overall picture of the staffing structure at the facility.

The child to staff ratios and group sizes corresponding to each star level were taking into account a) minimal requirements for local ordinance, licensed, VPI, and Head Start providers; b) recommendations of early childhood professional organizations, accrediting bodies, and research; and c) QRIS in use in other states and other research.

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**Resources**

Research on Ratios, Group Size and Staff Qualifications and Training in Early Years and Child Care Settings – Thomas Coram Research Unit, University of London ([education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RR320.pdf](http://education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RR320.pdf))


Transition Practices

Standard 4, in both the Classroom-Based and Family Child Care performance standards, incorporates both the program’s relationship with families and transition practices. An effective transition process, from home to child care to the formal school system, is vital in order to maintain and build upon the cognitive and developmental gains children experience from early care and education. Early intervention research has shown that the benefits of early childhood education may fade; however, results from the National Head Start Demonstration evaluation have also shown that effective transition practices at the local level can mitigate this decline.

Effective transition practices engage many stakeholders to form a web of support for children, including families, early childhood providers and elementary school administrators, other providers of services for families and children, and community groups. Transition practices increase in detail and scope as the star level increases. Although documentation can be provided that allows the program to receive credit for transition practices, it is the mentor’s role to: (1) work with the program to ensure these practices are occurring in a way that benefits the families and children, and (2) improve the quality of the transition practices even once credit has been received through the rating. The following information can assist mentors in helping programs understand the continuum of quality for transition practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to the program for families</td>
<td>This can be a group orientation session where families meet each other and the child care program staff. It is a great opportunity to orient families not only to the policies and procedures of the program, but also introduce them to some of the ways that their children will be learning new things. This can also be information that programs give to parents to orient them to the program, such as a parent handbook. Recommended corresponding documentation to meet this goal: copy of flyers, newsletters, calendar, website, etc. showing orientation session or copy of orientation materials distributed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written plan for supporting children with special needs</td>
<td>Inclusion means that all children learn together in a setting that addresses the needs and interests of each child, including those with disabilities. Inclusive child care programs provide experiences that are appropriate for children with and without special needs — playing together with typical daily experiences and routines. A sample policy statement is included, which can be used as a starting point for programs to personalize their own policy statement. Mentors should ensure that the program practices the policy if it is included. Mentors can access resources through T/TAC for additional assistance. Recommended corresponding documentation to meet this goal: example of written plan or policy describing these plans in Family Handbook. If a program chooses to include an individualized plan, all identifying information should be deleted/redacted prior to submitting for review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General information to parents on transitioning children to another setting</td>
<td>Programs can share information on kindergarten registration, such as where to go, when to go, and what information is needed. Programs can also share activities that families can be doing with their children to prepare them to transition to another setting. A sample policy statement is included, which can be used as a starting point for programs to personalize their own policy statement. Several examples of information that may be shared are also included. Recommended corresponding documentation to meet this goal: copy of information distributed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Criteria</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group meeting for parents to provide information regarding a child’s transition to another setting, including how parents can support this process</td>
<td>The group meeting can include an activity demonstrating how families can support children transitioning, specific details on the transition taking place, and an opportunity for families to discuss any questions or concerns. A family child care provider who only has one child transitioning may want to join with other family child care providers to conduct a group meeting and share responsibility. Recommended corresponding documentation to meet this goal: copy of flyers, newsletters, calendar, website, etc. announcing group meeting or agenda/materials distributed at the meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age appropriate activities to prepare children for transitions</td>
<td>Age appropriate activities may include sharing stories, reading books about transitions, visiting another classroom, or visiting public school. Some lesson plan ideas to support these suggested activities are: brainstorm with children what they think Kindergarten or a different class or school may be like; write an experience chart about the trip (to another classroom or public school) to include what children saw; draw a picture describing what children liked best about the trip. Recommended corresponding documentation to meet this goal: lesson plans showing activities or a list describing the activities used (when did it take place, how did teacher facilitate and relate the activity to transition).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual meetings with families to share specific information regarding the child’s progress including the transition to another setting</td>
<td>Parent/teacher conferences are a time for the child care program and the families to work together as a team to discuss ways they both can help children succeed. A sample kindergarten readiness skill checklist that can be completed by the child’s teacher and shared with the child’s family in fall, winter, and spring is included. Recommended corresponding documentation to meet this goal: copy of flyers, newsletters, calendar, website, etc. announcing meeting or information/materials distributed at the meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination with families and schools, programs, or agencies to transfer child records, including written information concerning child’s abilities, learning styles, medical/safety concerns</td>
<td>There may be occasions when families request a child’s records be made available to another school, child care center, or agency where the child may be receiving services. The program can give the child’s records directly to the parents, or the parent must sign the appropriate permission to release information form in order for the child care program to be able release the information to another agency or school. A sample release form is included. Recommended corresponding documentation to meet this goal: copy of cover letter attached to records, log of records transferred, or copy of policy statement in Family Handbook regarding transfer of child records.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition-related training for staff involved in child’s transition (to another program or to kindergarten)</td>
<td>Transition-related training for staff may include external or internal training. External training could include a workshop or training focused on transitions and how to handle them, and an internal training could include similar information, but may also be more focused on program specific concerns, like reviewing transition procedures within the program and to another school, what transition materials are going to be provided to families, and setting timelines/dates for activities. Recommended corresponding documentation to meet this goal: dated memos on professional development opportunities, copy of flyer, copy of training certificate, or copy of staff newsletter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Resources**

Enhancing the Transition to Kindergarten: Linking Children, Families, and Schools – National Center for Early Development & Learning, Kindergarten Transition Studies, University of Virginia (cpirc.org/vertical/sites/%7B95025a21-dd4c-45c2-ae37-d35ca63b7ad9%7D/uploads/%7Bb2fc278e-5fc7-47fa-9039-e69743aba64%7D.pdf)

Ready, Set, Go! (readysetk.org)
MEETING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

SAMPLE POLICY STATEMENT

All of the children we serve in our program deserve special attention. The goal of our program is to serve all children to the best of our ability. When children come to our program with identified special needs, we have the following policy:

• When you enroll your child, please make sure you complete the part of the application that identifies whether the child has any “Chronic physical problems/pertinent development information/special accommodations needed” to help us with assessing the child's needs while they are attending this program.

• Also on the application, please let us know whether or not your child has an IEP or IFSP with the public school system. Also, please share any other available assessments about your child’s abilities.

• A parent/teacher conference will be scheduled to assess what accommodation the child may need while attending this program to ensure that the program can meet that child’s needs.

• A mutual decision will be made about whether a trial placement is in the child's best interest to ensure that their needs can be met in the program, and that the child is placed in the appropriate classroom.

• If minor modifications need to be made to meet the child’s needs, this will be addressed, and evaluation of the modifications will be made to ensure the child’s needs are being met.

• Parents will be expected to be involved with the staff in setting goals for the child while attending the program, and that the goals are consistent with any goals established in an IEP or IFSP.

• Program teachers may be asked to participate in any IEP or IFSP meetings related to the child, with the parent signing the appropriate confidentiality forms for the child care program to have access to the information. To the extent possible, program teachers will contribute to professional assessments and intervention plans.

• If it is determined that the program can meet the child’s needs, every attempt will be made to integrate the child in ongoing group activities with other children in the classroom.

• Child care program staff will follow through with activities and interactions recommended by other professionals working with the child (this means that the staff are aware of the recommendations and goals for the child).

• As much of the professional intervention that is needed as possible will be carried out within the regular activities in the classroom, for example speech or physical therapy.

• No changes will be made to the child’s placement in a specific classroom, or to their enrollment in the program, without a parent conference to address and come to mutual conclusion about recommendations for the child.
CLASSROOM TRANSITION PROCEDURES

SAMPLE POLICY STATEMENT

Children are assigned to their classroom and teacher at the start of the school year based on the age of the child. Other developmental issues may be taken into consideration for classroom assignment. If a child were to be changed to another classroom, the following procedures would take place:

• Director and teacher would meet to address the child’s needs and reasons why child would be moved to another classroom.

• Family of child transitioning to another class would be made aware of the change. All efforts would be made to make sure the child's family is comfortable with the decision and understands why the change is being made, and the change process.

• The child who is transitioning would spend time in the new class each morning for a week prior to the full time change.

• If a child is changing to another location of the program, he or she would have the opportunity to visit the new center and the class they would be joining. If possible the child would visit in the new class for a few days before attending the new class full time.

• Every effort would be made to make the family and child comfortable with the transition process.

• If the family has any concerns about a child’s movement to another class, the director and the teacher will meet with the parent to address those concerns. Families will continue to be informed of progress once their child has been moved to a different class.
PREPARING FOR KINDERGARTEN

As the first day of school approaches, here are some steps you can take to set your child on the path to school success.

1. Find out if the school that your child will attend has a registration deadline. Some schools have a limited number of slots for children. Start early to find out your school’s policy and the procedures.

2. Learn as much as you can about the school your child will attend before the school year begins. Schools—even schools in the same district—can differ greatly. Don’t rely only on information about kindergarten that you have received from other parents—their schools might have different requirements and expectations. You will want to find out the following:
   - The principal’s name;
   - The name of your child’s teacher;
   - What forms you need to fill out;
   - What immunizations are required before your child enters school;
   - A description of the kindergarten program;
   - The yearly calendar and daily schedule for kindergarten children;
   - Procedures for transportation to and from school;
   - Available food services; and
   - How you can become involved in your child’s education and in the school.

   Some schools will send you this information. In addition, some schools will hold orientation meetings in the spring for parents who expect to enroll their children in kindergarten the following fall. If your school doesn’t plan such a meeting, call the principal’s office to ask for information and to arrange a visit.

3. Find out in advance what the school expects from new kindergarten students. If you know the school’s expectations a year or two ahead of time, you will be in a better position to prepare your child. Sometimes parents and caregivers don’t think the school’s expectations are right for their children. For example, they may think that the school doesn’t adequately provide for differences in children’s learning and development or that its academic program is not strong enough. If you don’t agree with your school’s expectations for your child, you may want to meet with the principal or kindergarten teacher to talk about the expectations.

4. Visit the school with your child. Walk up and down the hallways to help her learn where different rooms—her classroom, the library, the gym, the cafeteria—are. Let your child observe other children and their classrooms.

5. Talk with your child about school. During your visit, make positive comments about the school—your good attitude will rub off! (“Look at all the boys and girls painting in this classroom. Doesn’t that look like fun!”) At home, show excitement about the big step in your child’s life. Let him know that starting school is a very special event.

   Talk with your child about the teachers she will have and how they will help her learn new things. Encourage your child to consider teachers to be wise friends to whom she should listen and show respect. Explain to your child how important it is to go to class each day. Explain how important and exciting the things that she will learn in school are—reading, writing, math, science, art and music.

6. Consider volunteering to help out in the school. Your child’s teacher may appreciate having an extra adult to help do everything from passing out paper and pencils to supervising children on the playground. Volunteering is a good way to learn more about the school and to meet its staff and to meet other parents.
When the long-awaited first day of kindergarten arrives, go to school with your child (but don’t stay too long). And be patient. Many young children are overwhelmed at first, because they haven’t had much experience in dealing with new situations. They may not like school immediately. Your child may cry or cling to you when you say goodbye each morning, but with support from you and his teacher, this can change rapidly.

As your child leaves home for her first day of kindergarten, let her know how proud of her you are!

Resources
http://www.fact-sheets.com/education/prepare_for_kindergarten/

### 80 Skills that Help Ease Kids Transition into Kindergarten:

#### Reading Readiness
- Remembers pictures from a printed page
- Repeats a 6 to 8 word sentence
- Pretends to read (has been read to often)
- Identifies own first name in writing
- Attempts to print own first name
- Answers questions about a short story
- Looks at pictures and tells a story
- Understands words are read left to right
- Familiar with the letters of the alphabet
- Knows some nursery rhymes
- Knows the meaning of simple words

#### Time
- Understands day and night
- Knows age and birthday

#### Recognizes Colors & Shapes
- Recognizes primary colors
- Recognizes triangles, circles, squares & rectangle

#### Numbers
- Counts to 10
- Can count objects

#### Listening & Sequencing
- Follows simple directions
- Pays attention
- Recognizes common sounds
- Retells a simple story in sequence

#### Listening & Sequencing (cont.)
- Repeats a sequence of sounds
- Repeats a sequence of numbers heard

#### Size, Position & Direction
- Big and little
- Long and short
- In and out
- Front and back
- Over and under
- Hot and cold
- Empty and full
- More and less
- Fast and slow
- Top and bottom

#### Motor Skills
- Run
- Walk a straight line
- Jump
- Hop
- Alternate feet walking downstairs
- March
- Stand on one foot 10 seconds
- Walk backwards for 5 feet
- Throw a ball
- Paste pictures on paper
- Clap hands
- Button clothes
- Build with blocks
- Complete simple 5 piece puzzle or less
- Draw or color beyond a simple scribble
- Zip clothes
- Control pencil and crayon well
- Handle scissors
- Cut and draw simple shapes

#### Social-Emotional
- Expresses self verbally
- Looks forward to going to school
- Recognizes authority
-Shares with others
- Helps with family chores
- Works independently
- Identifies other children by name
- Can take care of toilet needs independently
- Cares for own belongings
- Dresses self
- Brushes teeth
- Can be away from parents for 2 to 3 hours
- Joins in family conversation
- Carries a plate of food
- Maintains self-control
- Gets along well with others
- Talks easily
- Meets visitors without shyness
- Puts toys away

**My Child Knows ...**
- Body parts
- Own first name
- Own last name
- Parents’ names
- Home address
- Home phone number
- When to use a handkerchief
- Own sex

This list, which was compiled by researchers for World Book, Inc., on the basis of a survey of 4,500 kindergarten teachers, represents the ideal - something parents can aim for.

Resource:
The Florida Center for Parent Involvement, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, University of South Florida
# Kindergarten Readiness Skills Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Development</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Date skill/knowledge observed, comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>States full name.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>States address.</td>
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<tr>
<td>States telephone number.</td>
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<tr>
<td>States parent’s/guardian’s names.</td>
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<tr>
<td>States age or birth date.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Separates easily from parents/caregivers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognizes and expresses own emotions by using words rather than actions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goes to the bathroom independently.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interacts appropriately with other children and familiar adults by cooperating, helping, sharing and expressing interest.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shows interest and curiosity in learning new concepts and trying new activities and experiences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing positive responses to challenges while working independently and/or cooperatively to solve problems.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical and Motor Development</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Date skill/knowledge observed, comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates progress in performing selected locomotor skills such as jumping, hopping, galloping, and skipping.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates mature forms of walking, running; walks up and down stairs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manipulates small objects using one hand independently, the other hand independently, and both hands working together on the same task; uses large plastic nuts and bolts, cuts with safety scissors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holds and uses pencils, crayons, or markers using a three finger grasp, not in a fist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literacy/Language</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Date skill/knowledge observed, comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speech is clear, easily understood by adults and peers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uses appropriate language for a variety of purposes, e.g., while asking questions, expressing needs, getting information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follows simple, one-step oral direction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identifies words that rhyme, completes simple rhyming pairs, e.g., ball–tall, cat–bat.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identifies 10-18 alphabet (uppercase) letters by name in random order.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Selects a letter to represent a sound (8-10 letters), e.g., s-snake, t-tree.</td>
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<td>Demonstrates directionality of reading left to right on a page.</td>
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<td>Prints first name independently with recognizable letters.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Date skill/knowledge observed, comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counts to 20 or more.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Describes changes in groups (sets/collections) by combining or separating groups, e.g., using counting bears, adding and taking away amounts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognizes attributes of length by using terms longer and shorter when comparing objects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognizes shapes (circle, square, rectangle, triangle) by pointing to appropriate figure when asked the names of the shape.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sorts and classifies objects according to one to two attributes (color, size, shape and texture).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Date skill/knowledge observed, comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identifies the body parts that correspond with each of the five senses, e.g., nose – smell, eyes-sight.</td>
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<td>Identifies colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, brown) and black and white.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Describes home and school/child care routines.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**History and Social Science** | Fall | Winter | Spring | Date skill/knowledge observed, comments
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Draws a picture of a person. |  |  |  | 
Engages in pretend play to understand self and others. |  |  |  | 
Expresses the difference between past and present using words such as before, after, now and then. |  |  |  | 
Uses words to describe features of locations in the environment and man made structures found in stories and seen in everyday experiences, e.g., farm, school, grocery store. |  |  |  | 
Identifies pictures of work and name of jobs people do, e.g., doctor, fireman, teacher. |  |  |  | 
Demonstrates responsible behaviors in caring for classroom materials. |  |  |  | 

Every four months, schedule a time to meet with the parent/guardian to review the child’s progress. Together, discuss/plan/share activities the program and the parent/guardian can do to support the child’s growth and development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Fall Review with Parents/Guardian</strong></th>
<th>Name of person completing this checklist:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills we will focus on for the next couple of months.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Things to work on at home.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date reviewed with parents:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date reviewed with parents:</td>
<td>Comments:</td>
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Cover Letter for Transfer of Information

Date:______________________________________________________________

From: ____________________________________________________________

Name of Program: _________________________________________________

Address: _________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Phone Number: ____________________________

Director: _________________________________________________________

To: ________________________________________________________________

Name of Program, Agency, School: _________________________________

Contact: _________________________________________________________

Phone Number: ____________________________

Regarding: _______________________________________________________

Name of Child: __________________________________________________

DOB: ____________________________

Parent/Guardian: ___________________________________________________

Authorization to Release and/or Exchange Information Attached: ___________________

Dear _____________________________________________________________:

Per your request, information about (child’s name)
________________________________________________________ is enclosed. Also enclosed is the parent
signed Authorization to Release and/or Exchange Information.
Please contact us if we can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,
Frequently Encountered Situations

Applying the tools of coaching is an ongoing learning process. It requires hard work, a desire to grow, and the ability to reflect on one’s own behaviors. Certain behaviors may detract from the mentor’s ability to effectively coach programs. By periodically reviewing the list of behaviors below and reflecting on recent coaching interactions difficult mentoring situations may be avoided.

1. Talking too much and listening too little – coaching works best through two-way conversation. When mentors listen, they are better able to find out what a program needs and understand their point of view. By carefully listening and asking reflective questions, a mentor may gain a better understanding of why a program is not making progress. Listening also motivates others since it shows the mentor cares.

2. Not following through and following up – following through is doing what you said you would do, and following up is checking back later to see what has happened or to review progress that has been made. Not doing these things gives a feeling that the program is not a priority to the mentor and it allows the program to exhibit the same behaviors, stalling the improvement process.

3. Attending to tasks rather than goals – to be effective and make lasting quality improvements mentors need to help programs look to the future and keep focused on the goals. It can be easy to get caught in the cycle of assisting programs in solving their day to day problems, but many times by focusing on the overall goals the day to day problems are alleviated.

Tips for Successful Mentoring

Plan Ahead. Make certain you review all of your notes prior to each visit, including the QIP. Remember to take the necessary materials and resources you need for each visit.

Minimize Distractions. Make it a practice to minimize disruptions to everyone’s schedule – the director/provider, the teachers, and the children. Remember the care of the children is always the primary concern of the staff and the visit may have to be rescheduled if the program is not adequately staffed the day of the visit.

Use language that is simple, direct, and understandable. This is a learning process. Teachers may feel overwhelmed and confused when you use language that is not familiar to them. Observe the program to get a feel for their level of understanding of best practices. Ask clear, direct questions and use positive language when talking to the teachers.

Remain calm if you see inappropriate practices. You are in the child care program to help facilitate the process of change with appropriate practices. This is something that must be learned and cannot be dictated. Effective modeling and helping a teacher who is experiencing frustration helps build healthy mentoring relationships. If a safety issue arises,
address it immediately. Any suspicions of child abuse or neglect must be reported to Child Protective Services (CPS) by calling 1-800-552-7096.

Offer constructive suggestions. Maintaining a positive relationship with the program staff is of great importance during the mentoring process. When suggestions are offered, they should be phrased positively. Focus on why the suggestion may bring about positive change. Remember that the purpose of the quality improvement process is to help raise the level of quality for the children.

Model appropriate practices. Effective mentoring may also include modeling specific strategies in the classroom for the teachers. This works best when there is an agreed upon focus for the modeling. When modeling a technique, be purposeful and clear beforehand so that everyone knows exactly which techniques are being modeled. This will promote learning for the staff who are observing.

Explain the purpose for the suggested change. Be certain to use all of the instruments (including the All About books and the CLASS Dimensions Guide) as resources when explaining proposed improvements to the classroom. Utilize as many resources as possible, including the local coordinator and other mentors in your locality.

Always follow through with tasks you have committed to complete. The mentor should always be mindful that mentoring occurs not only while at the program but also in the follow up responsibilities. Be certain to set a professional example and follow through with any tasks you have committed to complete.

Remember that change can be difficult. It is important to use a variety of approaches to lead change:

- Continually provide coaching and teaching on the new concepts and behaviors.
- Understand the impact that the changes will have on an individual’s schedule, workload, time, priorities, etc.
- Figure out how behaviors and attitudes will have to change to make new processes work.
- Provide encouragement and feedback continuously along the way to maintain motivation, and increase understanding of the importance of the change.

- Collect data to assess whether changes are being made, staff reactions to the changes, and the impact of the changes.
- Provide adequate time for staff to focus on improvement efforts.
- Celebrate success – allow staff to take pride in improved outcomes.

Following is a list of situations that many mentors encounter that can be difficult to navigate. As a proactive measure, mentors should discuss these situations with their local coordinator and other mentors to determine potential resolutions. Care should be taken to maintaining confidentiality and respect of participating programs. Anytime mentors are involved in a situation where they are unsure of next steps, their first action should be to contact the local coordinator and VSQI staff. It is also helpful to revisit the five characteristics of coaching identified by Drs. Rush and Shelden in The Early Childhood Coaching Handbook.

- Questioning the validity of a rating
- No progress made on QIP
- Repeatedly canceled visits
- Licensing violations
- Staff turnover
- Debriefing sessions after teacher observation
- Staffing changes
- Keeping the relationship professional

Remember the first point of contact is your local coordinator. Contact information for all of the local Smart Beginnings coalitions can be found by visiting www.smartbeginnings.org.