

Florida Association of Academic Non-Public Schools (FAANS)

PROPOSED

INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

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FAANS Accreditation Overview

I. Step one: Review Accreditation Standards and Expectations

Before submitting an application for accreditation, the early education program must carefully review the information in the accreditation manual. The early education board, faculty, and staff must commit to completing the self-study, meet all accreditation standards, and maintain accreditation through annual reporting.

II. Step two: The Self Study

After studying the Standards, Rationale, and Self-Study Document requirements, the director and staff begin preparing a self-study document describing the program as it meets the standards required in the accreditation manual. The accreditation manual will designate when a document is to be submitted in the self-study or to be made available for review upon the validation visit. In most cases, a three-ring binder divided into sections will be sufficient to hold required documents.

III. Step three: Rating the Standards

Each standard is preceded by a rationale and preceded by a self-study document requirement or on site review, and a series of ratings. The director and staff of the early education department will determine if the program exceeds, meets, partially meets, or does not meet each requirement depending on the rating opportunities. Programs that are able to meet a significant number of exceptional compliance ratings will be more likely not to have to meet every standard as written.

Directors are encouraged to add explanations for how the program meets a standard without compromising the integrity of the rating system in the self-study notebook.

IV. Step four: Evaluation and Program Improvement Plan

After the early education program has studied each section of the accreditation manual, the staff will be able to evaluate whether or not the program is already meeting the standard; will be able to add improvements prior to the validation team visit; or if a program improvement plan will need to be adopted. When a program improvement plan is adopted, submit a copy of the plan at the end of the section corresponding to the section topic.

V. Step five: Validation Process

Upon completion of the self-study, qualified validators will read, analyze and validate the self-study report, visit the center to observe classrooms in progress, and interview administration, parents and staff. A report will be generated to reflect commendations and recommendations and affirm program improvement plans. The report will be sent to the early childhood commission who will approve or deny accreditation.

Section I

1.0 PHILOSOPHY, GOVERNANCE, AND ADMINISTRATION

RATIONALE

The role of the governing entity is to provide oversight of the early education program and to create general policies that will ensure high-quality care and educational opportunities for the children. The governing entity should empower the administrator, director, or program head to make day-to-day decisions concerning the implementation of the policies and programs being offered by the organization. These policies should be reflective of the mission and philosophy of the early education program.

Nationally accepted research provided through a cooperative effort of the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care, *The Children of the Cost, Quality and Outcomes Study Go to School* and The National Research Council in *Eager to Learn* notes that a well-planned, high-quality early childhood program leads to the success of children in later academic years. This is especially true for young children who are at greater risk of school failure because of poverty, low level maternal education, and other factors that limit opportunities and resources that enhance learning and development (Bowman 2001).

STANDARDS

1.1 MISSION, VISION, AND PHILOSOPHY

1.1.1 Mission and Vision Statements The program has a written mission statement and a written vision statement that clearly articulate the program's purpose for the care and/or education of young children.

1.1.2 Philosophy of Education Statement The program has a written philosophy regarding the care and/or education of young children, and the philosophy is based on current research and "best practices" in the field and is consistent with the program's mission and vision statements.

1.2 CORPORATE STRUCTURE

1.2.1 Bylaws The corporate status of the entity having oversight of the early education program, whether incorporated, franchised, proprietary, or religiously affiliated, has clearly articulated bylaws that include the early education program.

1.2.2 Governance Entity Programs under the auspices of another organization and/or agency are represented by a governing entity or committee (hereinafter referred to as "the governance") responsible for the general policies and the financial stability of the early education program.

1.2.3 Bylaws Authority The governance operates in conjunction with and under the appropriate bylaws of the corporation.

1.2.4 Governing Policies and Procedures The governance establishes and maintains written governing policies and procedures that are consistent with the program's philosophy.

1.2.5 Governance Role and Responsibilities The governance has clearly defined roles and responsibilities in the early education program, new governance members are provided with an orientation when they join the governance consisting of the program's written policies defining roles and responsibilities of board members and staff.

1.2.6 Minutes of Meetings Written minutes of governance meetings are maintained on file.

1.3 GOVERNANCE EVALUATION AND COMPLIANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

1.3.1 Evaluation of Director The governance ensures an annual evaluation of the early education administrator/director (hereinafter referred to as "the director").

1.3.2 Response to Civil Authorities' Requirements The governance ensures the program meets and/or exceeds all requirements of civil authorities in the areas of health and safety, child-staff ratios, background screening, fingerprinting, and staff training requirements (or training requirement equivalencies) regardless of any exception status that may be present.

1.3.3 Evaluation of Program The director (or director qualified personal) submits an annual program evaluation based on early childhood/child development theory, research, and best practices, and assists the governance in setting and prioritizing short- and long-range goals for the program.

1.4 FISCAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1.4.1 Financial Stability and Integrity The program is not undergoing financial reorganization to protect itself from creditors.

1.4.2 Governance Responsibility for Fiscal Matters The governance provides oversight of the program, and it reviews the financial position of the program and ensures its stability. .

1.4.3 Financial Records The governance requires a review of the program's financial records, including an annual internal review. General accounting procedures used by the program have been validated by an appropriate outside source.

1.4.4 Insurance In order to ensure the stability of the program in the case of a significant litigation, the governance maintains adequate liability and accident insurance including insurance on any vehicle that transports children.

1.4.5 Staff Salaries and Benefits The governing entity approves wages and benefits. Wages, benefits, recruitment procedures, and staff retention are reviewed at least annually by the governance. Policies reflect an effort to compensate and retain quality staff by including benefits such as health coverage, sick leave, vacation leave, continuing education, Social Security, and an opportunity to participate in a tax sheltered annuity, or other type of retirement plan on a prorated basis where applicable. Paid planning time away from children is also provided.

** The research on staff/child ratio's, class size, and teacher qualification continues to be an issue of concern for many early education programs. To date, there has been no scientifically validated research to conclusively prove that one proven format for the education of young children is better than another. This accreditation document considered the most current research and that which is generally accepted among nationally recognized accreditation programs and among early education specialist in developing accreditation standards.*

1.5 ADMISSIONS

Clear admissions policies and procedures are stated in writing. These policies and procedures are open in admissions, inclusive, and nondiscriminatory. Policies reflect the diversity of all children, various family structures, and the community being served.

1.6 CHILDREN'S INFORMATION AND CONDUCT

1.6.1 Records The director ensures current, complete, confidential records for each child are kept and are available to authorized personnel. The file might include such information as the child's life history, behavioral patterns, assessments of developmental and cognitive development, interests, and appropriate health records as noted in the Health and Safety section of this document.

1.6.2 Discipline The director oversees interaction between staff and children, publishing the discipline policies and procedures for parents/guardians and staff and taking appropriate measures to maintain discipline. Corporal punishment or legally questionable practices will not be utilized.

Section II

2.0 PERSONNEL

RATIONALE

Research suggests that the performance of the program director, particularly as it relates to providing leadership in a program, functioning at the administrative level, and providing high-quality supervision and feedback, predicts program quality (NCEDL). The quality of care and education received by the children, the continuing education and professional growth of the staff, and the confidence the parents will have in the program, is dependent on the knowledge and skills of the early education administrators (CFOC Standards 2002).

Extensive research has been conducted concerning the effect of early education programs on young children. The education of the staff and the training they have received in the field, as well as child to staff ratio's and group sizes and staff turnover, may play a significant role in the quality of an early education program. The longer the amount of time children attend such programs, the more likely both positive and negative consequences can be attributed to the quality of the program (Helburn 1995)

Children in early education programs who are taught and cared for by an educated staff have been shown to be more compliant and socially competent. College-educated early educators are also better equipped in developing age appropriate goals and activities for children (Fiene 2002).

Several research studies suggest that child to staff ratio's and group size impacts the health, safety, and school readiness of young children (Fine 2002, Bowman 2001, CFOC 2002). The Children of the Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study Go to School research project found that children in early education programs with lower ratio's and low staff turnover built closer teacher-child relationships which resulted in better classroom social and thinking skills, language ability, and math skills into the elementary school years (1999).

STANDARDS

2.1 STAFF HIRING PRACTICES AND BENEFITS

2.1.1 Employee Handbook All staff receive a copy of the employee handbook. The staff are instructed at least annually on the program's employee policies.

2.1.2 Nondiscrimination Policy The program has a published nondiscrimination policy relating its hiring practices regarding "race, color, and/or ethnicity".

2.1.3 Culturally and Racially Appropriate Staff The program actively seeks a diverse staff that reflects the school population and its surrounding community.

2.1.4 Background Screening The program's hiring procedures include background screening and fingerprinting to obtain a history regarding abuse and any criminal convictions for all employees and for others who have direct access with the children in the program.

2.1.5 Staff Orientation New staff are provided with an orientation and/or a Staff Manual that should include but not be limited to the following:

- goals and philosophy of the program
- planned activities for the program
- appropriate classroom management techniques
- routines and transitions in which the children in the program are engaged
- discipline policies and procedures
- communication with parents
- mealtimes and food-handling policies
- occupational health hazards
- emergency health and safety procedures
- general health policies and procedures including but not limited to the following:
 - hand-washing techniques
 - diapering techniques and toileting (including proper diaper disposal and diaper-changing techniques where applicable)
- child abuse/child neglect detection, prevention, and reporting
- cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting procedures
- recognition of symptoms of illness, documentation of these symptoms, and implementation of ill-child policies that include the following:
 - applying the program's policies regarding exclusion of ill children and readmission of them after illness
 - cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting procedures
 - documenting and administering prescribed medication if given to children during program hours by program employees
 - notifying parents/guardians regarding a communicable disease occurring in children or staff
 - assessing the health of children daily

2.2 DIRECTOR

2.2.1 Qualifications The director of the early education program is a minimum of 21 years of age and has professional training as evidenced by having obtained a minimum of a bachelor's degree (or documentation as listed below) from an accredited institution. The director also obtained a minimum of 9 credit hours of college course work in administration, leadership, or management and a minimum of 24 credit hours of specialized college course work in early childhood education, child development, elementary education or early childhood special education

2.2.2 General Responsibilities The director is charged with assuming responsibility of the day-to-day operations of the program, maintaining program policies, and monitoring the program's compliance with applicable requirements of civil authorities. The director's leadership addresses the program's goal of fostering the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, and character development of children.

2.2.3 Experience The director and/or program director has experience working directly with children whose ages are represented in the early education program for which the director/program director has oversight.

2.2.4 Continuing Education and Development The director obtains a minimum of thirty clock hours during the first year of employment especially as relates to State requirements. An additional twenty-four hours per year of continuing professional development, provided by a qualified entity, in such areas as emergent literacy and mathematics, child or staff development, programming, administration, health and safety, family relations, legal issues, communications, and technology is recommended. Whenever possible, continuing education should be validated by college credit and provided as a benefit of employment, part of tuition reimbursement program or financial assistance.

2.2.5 Hiring Staff The director/administrator is responsible for hiring staff, who are at least 18 years of age and support the philosophy and mission of the program in accord with applicable governance procedures.

2.2.6 Evaluation of New Employees The director ensures a formal evaluation of new employees takes place no more than six months into the orientation period and at pre-determined periods thereafter.

2.2.7 Evaluation of all Employees The director ensures for each staff member an annual written evaluation is conducted that contributes to the staff member's professional development and is kept in the staff member's file.

2.2.8 Follow-up Evaluation of Staff The director discusses the formal written evaluations with each staff person confidentially and recognizes strengths as well as those areas needing improvement. The areas needing improvement receive follow-up.

2.2.9 Staff Substitutes The director has a current list of qualified substitutes who may be called upon to maintain the integrity of the program.

2.2.10 Acting Director The director designates a qualified person to assume leadership and responsibility of the early education program in the event of his/her absence. This person shall be at least 21 years of age.

2.2.11 Developing Relationships

A. Staff treats colleagues, children and their families with equal respect and consideration regardless of race, religions, family backgrounds, or cultures.

B. Respectful relationships with children are developed by smiling, touching, holding, and speaking to children at their eye level throughout the day, during routines such as

arrival and departure and mealtimes as well as during teacher planned and child-initiated experiences.

C. Respectful relationships between colleagues encouraged and reflect mutual trust, respect, and support for each other. Staff members seek out and acknowledge each others' ideas and opinions. Staff give positive recognition to each others' skills and accomplishments and provide appropriate support for each other in dealing with stress maintain confidences at all time.

2.2.12 Staff Meetings The director builds strong relationships and communication between the staff and administration, and encourages team collaboration and spirit among the staff. Regular staff meetings are held for staff to consult on program planning, to plan for implementing and attaining goals, to plan for individual children and family involvement, and to discuss program and working conditions.

2.2.13 Program Evaluation with Staff The director meets with the staff annually to evaluate the early education program and to discuss areas of strengths as well as areas needing improvement. The areas needing improvement are addressed after the meetings through a specific Program Improvement Plan.

2.2.14 Personnel Files The director maintains a confidential personnel file on each employee. The file should contain but not be limited to the following and/or contain information that civil authorities require:

- resume
- application
- copies of college or university transcripts
- background screening and results
- fingerprints/clearance
- annual staff evaluations
- documentation of any grievances
- evidence of in-service training
- copy of contract/work agreement
- I-9 form
- health screening data (if required)

2.2.15 Volunteers Volunteers undergo orientation, background screening, fingerprinting, and training. They work under the supervision of qualified staff.

2.3 INSTRUCTIONAL AND SUPPORT STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

2.3.1 Qualifications Qualifications of all instructional and support staff meet or exceed the requirements of civil authorities.

2.3.2 Job Descriptions and Other Staff Policies Clear and up-to-date written personnel polices have been developed by the program. These policies include but are not limited to job descriptions; wages and benefits; and resignation, termination, and grievance procedures.

2.3.3 Communication of Personnel Policies Written personnel policies have been communicated with the staff, and receipt of them by the staff has been documented.

2.4 INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

2.4.1 Teachers The director recruits and hires quality staff members with appropriate training, at least 18 years of age and experience to carry out their role in the early education program.

2.4.2 Assistant Teachers

The director recruits and hires quality staff members with appropriate training, at least 18 years if age and experience to carry out their role in the early education.

2.4.3 Early Childhood Specialist If an early childhood specialist is employed, the qualifications of the specialist are a baccalaureate degree in early childhood education/child development and at least three years of full-time teaching experience with young children and/or a graduate degree in early childhood education/child development.

2.5 SUPPORT STAFF

2.5.1 Training and Experience Support staff—such as secretaries, kitchen staff, substitutes, and aides—have training, at least 18 years of age and/or experience to carry out their role in an early education program.

2.5.2 Continuing Education and Development Programs The teaching staff obtains a minimum of thirty clock hours during the first year of employment especially as it relates to State requirements. In addition, a minimum of twenty four documented clock hours of continuing education or professional development of which twelve hours are provided by an outside source relating to: child growth and development in the areas of cognitive learning and social, emotional, and physical development; safety and health issues for young children; family and community relations; classroom and program management; and professional development which may include special needs. Training may also include related language development, discipline, and technology. Whenever possible, continuing education should be validated by college credit and provided as a benefit of employment, part of tuition reimbursement program or financial assistance

2.6 CHILD-STAFF RATIOS

2.6.1 Primary Teacher/Caregiver In order to help ensure the care, bonding, and nurturing of the individual child, each group of children has one primary teacher/caregiver.

2.6.2 Ratios

Section 2.6.2 Staff child ratios for each age group are as follows:

Age	Maximum Child: Staff Ratio	Maximum Group Size
Birth – 12 mos.	4:1	8
13 - 24 mos.	4:1	8
25 - 35 mos.	5:1	10
3-year-olds	9:1	18
4-year-olds	10:1	20
5-year-olds	12:1	24

When mixed age groups of infants and toddlers are in the same room, the child staff ratio is maintained according to the youngest child in the room. If the children in the mixed age group are older than toddlers, the child-staff ratio is maintained according to the average age of the children.

2.6.3 Supervision of Children The staff maintains a continuous, accurate account of the children in their care.

2.6.4 Internal Communication Related to Supervision Staff who are sharing the primary responsibility of a group of children communicate with one another to ensure smooth operation of the program.

2.7 Internal Relations

All early care and education personnel are expected to work closely with the administration in the on-going efforts to ensure collaboration and good relations that will promote a high quality educational program.

2.7.1 Teacher/Caregiver/Staff Survey All early care and education teachers, caregivers and staff are given the opportunity to complete a survey in which they are asked to evaluate the quality of the early care and education program and work environment. A survey form is sent along with a letter that explains the purpose of the survey as an integral part of the program and solicits full participation. The letter also instructs the personnel to return the completed survey sealed in an envelope and given to a designated holder. The sealed surveys are opened and processed by an assigned validator the day of the site visit. Responses from the Survey will be provided to the early childhood program administration with a summary included in the final evaluation report. (See Sample Survey- Pages 13 – 14)

SAMPLE: TEACHER/CAREGIVER/STAFF ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Instructions: Your opinion about our early care and education program is important. Please complete this survey. Do **NOT** sign your name. Return it to the center sealed in the envelope provided. For questions 1-12, circle the number that corresponds with your level of agreement with the statements. (Number 1 indicates no agreement with the statement, and 5 indicates strong agreement.) You may add a brief comment about any statement. Upon completion of the ranked response items, answer the open-ended questions 13-17.

How many years/months have you worked at this early childhood education and care program?

Circle one: 1 to 12 months 1 to 3 years 3 to 6 years more than 6 years

Agreement

Low - - - - - High

- | | | |
|-----------|-----|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. | The program administration keeps me informed of working policies, schedules, and procedures and any changes thereof in a timely manner. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 2. | Staffing at this early care and education program is good and fair; there are no discriminatory problems. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 3. | I feel accepted and respected by my coworkers. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 4. | Staff are usually involved in the development and implementation of new programs. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 5. | The governance, administration and program offered where I work is high quality. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 6. | The administration assists me in developing professionally. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 7. | Positive teamwork and collaboration among staff members is high. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 8. | Reports from program governance and civil authorities containing information that affects my work/responsibilities are shared with me by my administration in a timely manner. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 9. | The administration models maintaining a healthy, safe and orderly environment. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 10. | The everyday working relationship among the personnel in my specific area (e.g. food service, classroom, front office) is amiable and professional. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 11. | The due process provided by the administration for seeking solutions is adequate. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 12. | I feel that my suggestions to the administration regarding curriculum, classroom management, programming, building parent and community relations are appreciated and taken into consideration. |

13. Why did you choose to work at this early childhood program, and what do you like most about your work?
14. What do you consider to be the strengths of this early childhood program?
15. What areas of the early childhood program could be improved?
16. What suggestions would you offer the administration for improvement?
17. Additional comments:

Section III

3.0 CURRICULUM

RATIONALE

Research on cognition and learning, child development, and the social and cultural context of learning has shown that young children are competent learners even at a young age. It is important to note, however, that the “pace of learning will depend on whether and to what extent the child’s inclinations to learn encounter and engage supporting environments” (Bowman, et al. 2001).

Federal-State partnerships in the delivery of quality early education programs are now being formed that impact all pre-kindergarten program. These educational reform initiatives have specifically targeted the need to align expectations of the early education program prior to children entering kindergarten and what is expected of them once they enter the elementary school years.

Initiatives are also being developed to evaluate the success of the early education program by how well the children are prepared to succeed once in the elementary school system.

Finally, initiatives to develop informational pieces to educate teachers, parents, childcare providers, and others are in place to provide ways to prepare children to be ready for school.

Voluntary guidelines are being developed to support early education programs in preparing young children in the areas of literacy, language, pre-reading skills, pre-mathematics, science, and early social studies.

The following standards were based on a review of State and Federal pre-kindergarten curricular guidelines.

STANDARDS

3.1 GENERAL PRACTICE OVERVIEW

3.1.1 Curriculum Guide The curriculum used by an early education program consists of proven successful resources with a consistent scope and sequence for each age group. Written goals and objectives drawn from researched- based developmental benchmarks and scientifically based research is included and reviewed on an annual basis.

3.1.2 Lessons Plans Instructional staff develop lesson plans for each class/age group that reflects the goals and objectives of the curriculum. Plans are developed through consultation and shared ideas with other colleagues who communicate frequently to ensure smooth operations.

3.2 PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

3.2.1 Balanced Program--Indoor and Outdoor Play The curriculum is designed to meet the physical needs of each child. The curriculum includes a balance of indoor and outdoor play opportunities to enable the children to develop gross-motor skills.

3.2.2 Motor Skills The curriculum results in lesson plans that provide opportunities for children to develop fine- and gross-motor skills.

3.3 SOCIAL AND EMOTION

The curriculum and environment provide opportunities to foster the social/emotional development of children through respectful interactions with children by frequently, making eye contact and using clear, correct language patterns, and affectionate, supportive words. Staff-child interactions are an integral part of the social development of children's emotional development which is exemplified by a supportive and comfortable environment where they can be relaxed, happy, and involved in play and other activities.

3.4 TEACHING STRATEGIES

3.4.1 Balanced Activities The curricular practices provide for a balance of active and quiet activities including large-group (teacher-directed), small-group (teacher/child-interactive), and individual-choice (child-initiated) activities throughout the day.

3.4.2 Length of Group Times The length of group times is appropriate for the age and development of the children in the class. In mixed-age groupings, accommodations and flexibility meet the needs of each age group included in the class.

3.4.3 Use of Transition Activities Staff uses transition activities to move the children from one activity to another throughout the day. Transitional tools may include songs, poems, or other signs that children recognize as signaling a change of activity.

3.4.4 Materials and Equipment Ample developmentally appropriate materials and equipment are provided to support the learning objectives of the program's scope and sequence. Materials and equipment may include but are not limited to manipulatives, puzzles, building materials, musical instruments, creative art materials, sand and water tables, dolls, and other props that support the educational objectives.

3.4.5 Small Group and Large Group Instruction Ample opportunities for children to interact independently, in small groups and in large groups, are provided in order to help meet social/emotional needs of children.

3.4.6 Involving the Children Instructional staff initiates interaction with children who are not engaged in order to stimulate and expand the involvement of these children in the classroom offerings.

3.4.7 Healthy Nutrition in Curriculum Curricular plans include ensuring children learn about healthy nutrition through experience and instruction, as appropriate to the program.

3.4.8 Good Health Practices Children are made aware of good health practices. Methods may include the use of related daily routines by teachers, teacher example, visits to health facilities or from health care professionals, and other curricular presentations appropriate to the program's curriculum.

3.4.9 Disciplinary Policies and Practices The program's discipline policy is clearly articulated in a written document. The policy employs interactive procedures such as redirection, reflective listening, adult role modeling, and positive reinforcement. Corporal punishment or demeaning practices are not used.

3.4.10 Forming Habits and Routines Staff prepares the environment and plans the flow of the day in such a way that encourages children to become independent and to accept personal responsibility with initiative. For example, routines are clearly established so that children know when to clean and organize the room, when to put on clothing for outside activities, and/or when to transition to different activities.

3.4.11 Hand Washing and Cleanliness Hand-washing techniques are appropriately taught as part of the curriculum. Specifically, hand-washing always precedes eating, and children regularly wash hands after bathroom use and outside activities.

3.4.12 Proper use of Media & Technology Media (especially videos) are used on a limited basis, and are used particularly for the reinforcement of a teaching topic.

3.4.13 Special Needs Children The early care and education program is designed to be an inclusive environment and include children with identified disabilities, special learning and developmental needs. Teachers of special needs children have developed individual program plans and access to a referral system. Children are professionally evaluated and their progress is reviewed through a team approach which includes parents, teachers, and specialist.

3.4.14 Enrollment and Termination of Special Needs Children Policies regarding the enrollment and termination of children protect children's rights as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act.

3.5 LANGUAGE & LITERACY—CORE KNOWLEDGE

The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of the whole child including social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and the development of character. This includes but is not limited to the multiple intelligences, learning styles, and learning preferences of each child.

RATIONALE

Children begin developing language and literacy at birth. As young children express their feelings, ask questions, and share imaginative stories, they are communicating what they know about their world. Between the ages of three and five children are becoming more aware of print

in their environment, however, oral language continues to be their primary means of communicating (Preschool Planning Guide 1998).

STANDARDS

3.5.1 Appropriate Language Experience Receptive and expressive language experiences appropriate to the development of children are provided throughout the day. Children in the preschool classes are provided with increased exposure to print and active experiences that support the development of listening and speaking concepts and skills.

3.5.2 Print-Rich Environment Teachers provide daily interactions with labels, signs, and/or other forms of print, and read aloud to the children. They provide exposure to the sounds and names of the letters of the alphabet.

3.5.3 Vocabulary and Comprehensive Development The instructional staff consciously works to help children develop vocabulary and comprehension. They verbally interact with the children to guide them in the acquisition of new and expanded vocabulary, in anticipating outcomes, and in comprehension of what they have heard. This may include (1) “What if?” type questions to help children anticipate outcomes, (2) recall of a story, and (3) other verbal interactions that help the children understand sequence (building memory), interaction between characters, etc.

3.5.4 Phonemic Awareness “Children begin to develop a phonemic awareness through understanding that words are made up of a combination of sounds. Lesson plans reflect a variety of songs, fingerplays, stories, and games that have rhyming words and alliteration to strengthen phonemic awareness.” (Preschool Planning Guide 1998).

Lesson plans include activities that encourage the awareness of phonemes, such as (1) listening for sounds in words; (2) beginning to isolate the syllables of a word using snapping, clapping, or rhythmic movement (e.g., cat, apple); (3) learning to differentiate between sounds that are the same and different (e.g., environmental sounds, animal sounds, phonemes); and (4) beginning to recognizing when words share phonemes (sounds) and repeat the common phoneme (e.g., /b/ as in Bob, ball, baby; /t/ as in Tom, kite, boat) (ODE 2002)

3.5.5 Alphabet Children are exposed to the form and function of the alphabet through opportunities such as tracing shapes, copying or writing letters, and practicing writing names.

3.6 MATHEMATICAL AWARENESS—CORE KNOWLEDGE

RATIONALE

Young children begin to develop the concept of number through interactions in their environment on a daily basis. They learn through observations and hands-on activities that objects may be manipulated, sorted, ordered, and quantified. They learn about relationships, when engaged in meaningful experiences involving skills that include collecting, counting, building, and comparing. “As they proceed through the daily routine, children experience a variety of ‘math moments.’” (Preschool Planning Guide 1998).

STANDARDS

3.6.1 Mathematical Activities The instructional staff plan activities that expose children daily to math activities such as sorting and classifying concrete objects; recognizing and identify likenesses and differences; recognizing first, middle, and last; using opposite concepts such as long and short, in and out, up and down, over and under, and top and bottom; and using concepts of quantity, such as more than and less than.

3.6.2 Mathematical Concepts The instructional staff plan ample opportunities for children to be exposed to basic math concepts such as numbers and numeration through counting; placing objects in one-to-one correspondence; grouping objects by color, shape, or other characteristics; patterning; and recognizing numbers in their environment.

3.7 SCIENCE—CORE KNOWLEDGE

RATIONALE

Preschool children learn about the natural world, including the physical properties of things around them, as they interact with objects, people, and other living things. Children whose early lives are rich in sensory experiences and accompanying verbal labels tend to have greater facility for building up the more complex labels and patterns required for thought and problem solving in later life

STANDARDS

3.7.1 Sensory-Rich Environment The preschool classroom is a sensory-rich environment, and it includes numerous objects and organisms with which the students can interact. Opportunities are provided throughout the day for children to use their senses for observing and learning about objects, events, and organisms. Instructional staff help children to perform simple investigations and to describe their observations.

3.8 SOCIAL STUDIES—CORE KNOWLEDGE

RATIONALE

Preschool children develop an awareness of self as a growing individual. They learn about their own needs, interests, and abilities. They begin to learn about similarities and differences between themselves and others, including their peers, their family members, and their community.

STANDARDS

3.8.1 Advancement of Social Skills Instructional staff promotes the advancement of social skills and positive dispositions by offering numerous opportunities for children to learn about themselves and others.

3.8.2 Promotion of Communication and Interaction Instructional staff foster positive communication and interaction as preschoolers actively engage in a variety of such learning experiences as taking turns, playing simple small-group games, and performing daily routines.

3.8.3 Cultural and Racial Awareness Instructional staff provide opportunities and activities that expose children to cultural diversity.

3.9 FINE ARTS—CORE KNOWLEDGE

3.9.1 Musical Experiences The curriculum daily provides age-appropriate opportunities to expose children in each age group to a variety of musical experiences—including child-initiated ones—such as singing, listening, rhythmic movements, and playing rhythm instruments.

3.9.2 Creative Arts Experiences The curriculum daily provides opportunities to expose children in each age group to a variety of age-appropriate creative arts experiences—including child-initiated ones—such as painting, gluing items together to create art, cutting for design purposes, combining mediums, molding with clay, and creating one's own stories, plays, and other dramatic activities.

3.10 PROGRAM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT

3.10.1 Curriculum Involvement and Training Instructional staff is trained in the use and deliverance of the curriculum. Opportunities for instructional staff to share their suggestions and ideas regarding the curriculum are provided annually.

3.10.2 Continuous Student Assessment Ongoing assessment of children's progress takes place and is used to plan activities for individual children and for groups of children. Children's progress is reported with supporting documentation, and the assessment methods are consistent with the program's philosophy and methodology.

3.10.3 Variety of Assessment Techniques The program recognizes that instructional improvement, as evidenced by the progress of children, requires the use of multiple tools for assessment. Such assessment should include such tools of evidence as the following:

- Samples of children's concrete learning explorations (writing and art projects) and sketches of constructions with blocks or sand
- Photographs, audio recordings, and videos of children engaged in play while alone and while in groups in a variety of situations and of children otherwise engaged in interactions with others
- Written observations such as time and event samplings of children's interactions, individual and group activities, and language while alone and in groups

- A checklist of developmental levels and behaviors, on which to mark children’s progress and increasing capacities across time
- Observations that address all areas of children’s development—that is, the seven intelligences, not just cognitive development
- Results of screenings and formal assessments
- Individual portfolios that contain a wide array of these records and other documentation and that aid teachers in using flexibility to adapt lesson plans
- Written assessment tools shared with parents

3.10.4 Training for Assessment The director ensures instructional staff either are qualified to observe children and record these observations or have aid from personnel trained in methods of observing children and recording these observations. Results of observations are used for curriculum planning after identification of each child’s stage of development, and parent/guardian conferences.

3.10.5 Age Appropriate Assessment Tools An age-appropriate, research-based assessment tool is used to identify the developmental levels and growth of children.

3.10.6 Observations of Child Development Observations of children by staff address all areas of children’s development, including but not limited to multiple intelligences, learning styles, and learning preferences and character development.

3.10.7 Teaching Toward Individual needs Observations of children by staff address the various learning styles, multiple intelligences, and learning preferences. Staff then use these observations to incorporate classroom activities that address the individual needs, strengths, and preferences of the children in their care.

Section IV

4.0 NUTRITION AND FOOD SERVICES

RATIONALE

One of the basic responsibilities of every parent and caregiver is to provide nourishing food that is clean, safe, and developmentally appropriate for children (Caring for Our Children 2002).

Early food and eating experiences are the foundation for the formation of attitudes about food and eating behavior and consequently of food habits. Sound food habits build on eating and enjoying a variety of healthful foods. Including culturally acceptable family foods is a dietary goal for feeding infants and young children.

Current research documents that a balanced diet combined with regular and routine age-appropriate physical activity can reduce the risks of chronic diseases later in life that are related to diet (U.S. Dept of Agriculture 2000).

STANDARDS

4.1 FOOD PREPARATION

4.1.1 Response to Civil Authorities' Standards If food is prepared on the premises, the program must be in compliance with the requirements of civil authorities for food storage, preparation, and service. Food may be prepared at an approved facility and transported to the program in approved containers and at approved temperatures.

4.1.2 Nutritional Guidelines The meals and/or snacks provided for the children meet the nutritional guidelines regarding food groups and quantities that are age appropriate for the children, as suggested by the Child Care Food Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

4.1.3 Sanitary Conditions Kitchen equipment is monitored by civil authorities, where applicable, to ensure healthy and sanitary conditions.

4.2 PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

4.2.1 Availability of Menus Parents/guardians have access to written menus that meet all nutritional guidelines established by civil authorities. Written menus of all snacks and meals provided by the program are also posted in such a way that they are easily seen by parents/guardians. At least two food groups are included for each snack (programs are encouraged to ensure one of these items is a protein source), and four food groups are included for each meal.

4.2.2 Suggestions for Food from Home Suggestions for food choices that meet nutritional requirements are made available to the parents/guardians who send meals and/or snacks with their own children. Parents/guardians are encouraged to include at least two

food groups, including one protein source, for each snack and four food groups for each meal.

4.2.3 Food Storage Food brought from home is stored appropriately.

4.3 SOCIAL INTERACTION

4.3.1 Standards for Mealtime Mealtime is to be cultivated as a pleasant social time. Staff members sit with children and encourage healthy social interaction, appropriate table manners, and good eating habits.

4.3.2 Size of Furniture Tables and chairs used for snack/mealtimes are appropriate for the sizes of the children.

4.3.3 Children's Responsibilities The children are encouraged to serve themselves and assist with cleanup, within age-appropriate levels of ability.

4.4 FOOD FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS

4.4.1 Feeding Infants Infants are held when bottle-fed and not placed with bottles into cribs at any time.

4.4.2 Recording of Food Intake and Times Feeding times and amount of food consumed are recorded and made available to parents/guardians of infants and toddlers on a daily basis.

Section V

5.0 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

RATIONALE

Programs should provide equipment, materials, and space to facilitate the children's success in learning, by encouraging teachers to effectively organize the classroom and playground environments in a way that not only promotes the achievement of each child's educational goals but also increases the number of opportunities for achieving these goals during both child- and teacher-initiated activities (Bowman, et al. 2001).

STANDARDS

5.1 LIGHTING AND VENTILATION

The physical environment of the program provides sufficient lighting, good ventilation, and a comfortable temperature.

5.2 CLASSROOMS

5.2.1 Suitable for Class Size. Classrooms are suitable for the age and activities of the children in the program. Floor space meets or exceeds a minimum of thirty-five square feet of usable space per child.

5.2.2 Classroom Maintenance Classrooms are clean and well maintained.

5.2.3 Classroom Arrangement of Furnishings The physical environment of the classroom is arranged not only to stimulate learning by accommodating large and small groups of children but also to encourage exploration and experimentation. The following are examples:

Infants have a protected space for crawling and playing away from more mobile babies. Mirrors, pull-up bars, and/or other interactive items are placed on the walls at babies' eye level.

5.2.4 Age Appropriate Furniture and Equipment The environment designed for toddlers and two-year-olds facilitates optimal age-appropriate learning experiences. Shelving and storage units provide an organized flow to the room and thereby invite children to interact with materials and equipment.

5.2.5 Children's Personal Storage Space Children are provided with individual spaces, such as cubbies, in which they can store their work and personal belongings.

5.2.6 Appropriate Classroom Flooring The physical environment includes not only appropriate furnishings, such as tables and chairs, that allow children's feet to touch the floor but also appropriate room flooring and soft areas that are comforting to children.

5.2.7 Drinking Water Drinking water is adequately provided to the children as regulated by civil authorities.

5.3 RESTROOM FACILITIES

5.3.1 Accessible & Appropriate Sinks and Toilets Sinks and toilets are readily accessible to children. The number of sinks and toilets (child-sized ones are recommended) must be in compliance with civil authorities and adequate for the number of children in attendance.

5.3.2 Location and Adequacy of Lavatories Sinks are located in the area near the toilets, with soap and paper towels accessible to the children.

5.4 DIAPERING OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS

The diapering area is in good repair and is sanitized after each use, and soiled diapers are stored in a sealed container. Gloves as well as running water and soap for hand washing are accessible and utilized by the staff during diapering.

5.5 STAFF SPACE

5.5.1 Director's Office The facilities include appropriate office space for the director of the program.

5.5.2 Staff Meeting Room The facilities include an appropriate area for staff meetings and breaks.

5.5.3 Storage Space The facilities provide suitable storage space.

5.6 OUTDOOR FACILITIES

5.6.1 Adequate Outdoor Space To accommodate the children's various play activities, the outdoor physical environment includes seventy-five square feet per child on the playground at any given time.

5.6.2 Playground Equipment Playground equipment is varied and sufficient for the number of children on the playground at the same time. The playground is designed and equipped to provide optimal learning experiences for children.

5.6.3 Playground Supervision Children are supervised at all times, and the child-adult ratio is maintained while the children are on the playground.

5.6.4 Playground Safety, Security, and Protection The program provides adequate protection for the play area, including fencing and a balance of sun and shade.

5.6.5 Playground Surfaces Wood chips, sand, and other cushioning materials of recommended depths are used under equipment such as swings and climbing apparatus, as recommended by civil authorities or national playground safety standards.

5.6.6 Inspections and Repairs Through routine inspections and resulting timely repairs, the outdoor play area is well maintained to prevent children from being injured by broken equipment, sharp edges, and rusty parts.

5.6.7 Substitute and Adequate Space Indoors for Large Group Play When inclement weather prevents children from playing outdoors, alternative activities are planned to ensure large-motor exercise and to foster large-motor development.

5.6.8 Maintenance of Buildings and Grounds There is a process in place that ensures proper maintenance of the buildings, grounds, and equipment.

Section VI

6.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

RATIONALE

The early education program has a responsibility for the health, safety, and general welfare of each child in attendance. The staff should have continuing and required training in emergency first aid and in special medical needs in order to be alert and prepared for emergencies. Staff members need to be safety conscious with a view toward prevention (Caring for Our Children 2002).

STANDARDS

6.1 DOCUMENTATION OF INSPECTIONS

The program is inspected by city/state agencies as applicable for licensing or exemption under state or federal law (i.e., fire department, health department, food services, etc.). Inspection documentations are on file. If the program is exempt from licensing, voluntary inspection has been sought, and recommendations for improvement have been followed.

6.2 CHILDREN'S HEALTH RECORDS

Up-to-date, complete, and confidential health records for each child enrolled in the program are maintained in a safe and secure area and are available to authorized personnel. These files may include such information as the child's life history, developmental milestones, screening or assessment results, typical behaviors, and interests. Children in attendance are in compliance with the requirements of civil authorities regarding immunizations, physical examinations, and communicable diseases.

6.3 EMERGENCY, HEALTH, AND SECURITY INFORMATION

Current emergency information is maintained for each child enrolled in the program, including expected attendance, parent/guardian contact information, people authorized to take the child off the premises, allergies, and other important health information.

6.4 POLICIES REGARDING ILLNESSES

A written policy regarding the attendance of children who are ill, have been diagnosed with a contagious disease, or have been found to have a communicable condition has been developed and made available to parents/guardians. An isolation area is made available for ill or contagious children while they wait for someone to take them home.

6.5 SPECIAL HEALTH NEEDS OF CHILDREN

Staff are alerted to special health conditions of children and are equipped, when applicable, to handle such concerns.

6.6 ADMINISTERING AND STORING OF MEDICINES

A written policy that complies with the requirements of civil authorities for administering and storing medications has been developed and made available to the parents/guardians of the children in the program.

6.7 MEDICAL LOG

A detailed medical log is maintained that includes a record of all medications given to children, the time the medication was given, and the person administering the medication.

6.8 BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGENS

The program has developed policies and procedures to protect the staff and children from blood-borne pathogens by developing a blood-borne exposure control plan and by providing annual in-service to the staff regarding protective procedures. As a result, the staff use “universal precautions” when encountering children’s body fluids.

6.9 CLEANLINESS REQUIREMENTS

Children and adults wash their hands after toileting, before eating or handling food, and as otherwise necessary to prevent the spread of disease.

6.10 WASHING OF INFANT AND TODDLER BEDDING

Infant and toddler bedding is washed at a minimum of twice per week and more often when soiled, and it is used by only one child between washings. Bedding used by preschoolers is washed a minimum of once per week and more often when soiled, and it is used by only one child between washings.

6.11 HEALTH SCREENINGS

The program makes visual, auditory, speech, language development, physical development, cognitive development, and other health screening assessments when available to the children, having the consent of their parent or guardian, in the program at least annually.

6.12 SAFETY

6.12.1 Supervision of Arrivals and Departures Safe arrival and departure procedures have been developed that ensure all children in the program are accounted for throughout the day and released only to authorized adults. Children are supervised by sight at all times, and transition of children from one teacher to another or from one area to another is accounted for to ensure the supervision and whereabouts of children at all times.

6.12.2 Signs of Child Abuse and Neglect The staff is trained to recognize signs of child abuse and neglect. They know the laws and procedures for reporting to the appropriate agency. All communications with authorities are documented and placed in a confidential file.

6.12.3 Policies and Procedures to Eliminate Child Abuse Exemplary abuse prevention is practiced throughout the early education program. For example, a minimum of two teachers are assigned to a group of children. Viewing windows allow for visual access into the classrooms, bathroom doors are left open, and random walk-throughs are practiced throughout the day.

6.12.4 Providing Extra Clothing for Children Parents/guardians are encouraged to provide a change of clothing for their children to keep on the program's premises in the case of an accident. The program maintains a supply of generic clothing in varying sizes to ensure children are provided with a change of clothing in case of an emergency.

6.12.5 First Aid Certified Personnel At least one staff member with first aid certification—and infant/child CPR certification will be present on the premises at all times. (It is recommended that all staff have basic first aid and CPR training.)

6.12.6 First Aid Supplies The program maintains adequate first aid supplies and a universal precaution kit that are conveniently available to the classrooms but not to the children. The program maintains a detailed medical log regarding the use of these items.

6.12.7 Written Record of Accidents and Illnesses A written notice of accidents and/or illnesses is kept on file, and a copy is given to the parents/guardians of the children in the program.

6.12.8 Emergency Preparedness Plans The program has a general disaster plan and/or an Emergency Crisis Manual that includes evacuation procedures and inside actions in the event of a disaster or crisis (e.g., snowstorm, tornado, lightning, flooding, fire, bomb threat, violence, and hostage situation). The plan includes directions for disasters common to the geographic area. Staff members are familiar with routes and procedures, which are posted in each classroom, and staff regularly practice drills with the children. Such plan should be reviewed periodically by the local law enforcement, emergency personnel, and conform to that recommended by the Office of Homeland Security.

6.12.9 Fire Extinguishers and Detectors Fire extinguishers and smoke detectors are provided and checked as mandated by the local fire marshal, and staff is trained in the use of fire extinguishers.

6.12.10 Emergency Phone Numbers Emergency phone numbers or 911 is posted by readily accessible telephones that have 911 access in order to allow for quick reference in contacting the fire department, police department, poison center, and rescue squad.

6.12.11 Notifying Parents/Guardians in Emergencies A plan is in place to contact parents/guardians in case of an emergency closing, and the parents/guardians have been made aware of the plan.

6.12.12 Proper Chemical Labeling and Storage All chemicals, medicines, and other “dangerous if swallowed” materials are stored in their original containers. All potentially dangerous products are stored in a locked area. An MSD (Material Safety Data) sheet is strategically placed near harmful chemicals.

6.12.13 Vehicle Inspection, Permits, and Qualified Drivers Current documentation is available on all vehicle safety inspections and driver qualifications, verifying that all requirements of civil authorities and all specific vehicle transportation requirements are being met.

6.12.14 Vehicles with Restraining Devices and Emergency Equipment Vehicles are equipped with age-appropriate restraint devices and a first aid kit, and appropriate safety precautions are taken when children are being transported.

6.12.15 Field Trip Policies and Procedures The program has written field trip policies and procedures that ensure the supervision of all children at all times and thus promote the safety of the children. These are shared with parents/guardians and implemented by the program. The policies and procedures must include that permission is attained from parents/guardians and that roll checks are logged before, regularly during, and upon return to the program’s facilities.

6.12.16 Cleanliness of Facilities The facilities are cleaned on a daily basis, including sanitizing the bathrooms and removing trash. The facilities are free of mold and offensive odors.

6.12.17 Sanitizing Toys and Equipment The program has an established plan of sanitizing toys and equipment regularly (infants: daily, toddlers: semiweekly, preschoolers: weekly—with all three groups of toys and equipment receiving more frequent sanitization as needed to maintain a healthy environment for the children).

6.12.18 Hot Water Conditions Hot water heaters are set for 110°F or less if the heated water is accessible to children.

6.12.19 Safe Electrical Outlets Electrical outlets in the wall are covered to prevent children from being shocked by electricity.

Section VII

7.0 FAMILY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

RATIONALE

Parents are a child's first teacher, and the early education program respects the critical role parents play in supporting the growth and development of their child. Partnerships with parents are a part of a quality early education program. A rapport is built between staff and parents, which supports communication between the home and the early education program.

STANDARDS

7.1 PUBLIC RELATIONS

All informational sources established by the program accurately describe the early education program, including its enrollment policy, mission, and statement of nondiscrimination and satisfied consumer protection requirements as established by state, Federal law or Administrative Rule.

7.2 PARENT OR GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

7.2.1 Contents and Communication Parents/guardians of the children in the program receive a parent/guardian handbook that includes but is not limited to (1) the philosophy statement regarding the care and education of young children attending the program, including what discipline techniques will be used; (2) policies regarding holidays, illnesses, hours of operation, fees, refunds, enrollment, and termination procedures; and (3) an explanation of the program's day-to-day functioning. Parents/guardians sign a statement acknowledging that they understand and support the program's policies as outlined in the parent/guardian handbook.

7.2.2 Visitation Rights The program has an open-door policy regarding visits by parents/guardians on the program's premises, including in their child's classroom. Policies concerning parent/guardian involvement (e.g., visiting, observing, and volunteering) are in place to ensure the partnership between home and program is maintained.

7.3 COMMUNICATION

7.3.1 Communication with Parents or Guardians Administrators and staff communicate with the parents/guardians in a variety of ways on a regular basis—daily and weekly by verbal communication or posted information and monthly by newsletter and/or classroom calendar of events, or through evolving electronic means.

7.3.2 General Conferences about their Children Conferences with each child’s parent(s)/guardian are offered at least twice per year—and at other times as needed—to discuss the child’s developmental progress, personal care, and education. Conference schedules accommodate working parents/guardians.

7.3.3 Conferences Regarding the Child’s Development Progress Parents/guardians of the children in the program receive communication regarding their children’s developmental progress at least twice per year. During parent/guardian conferences, summaries of the results of child observation forms used during scheduled observations of the child are shared with parents/guardians, and parents/guardians are encouraged to participate in the goal-setting process for the child.

7.3.4 Reporting of Significant Changes in Behavior Significant changes in a child’s pattern of behavior and/or physical condition are reported to the parent(s)/guardian(s), documented, and placed in the child’s file.

7.4 PARENT OR GUARDIAN EDUCATION

7.4.1 Parent Training Programs The program director plans and implements regularly scheduled parent/guardian programs that support parents/guardians in their parenting role and reinforce the mission of the program. These programs take place at least quarterly.

7.4.2 Referral to Community Resources The director is familiar with community services and resources regarding children with specific needs and provides this information to parents/guardians. The director and staff work collaboratively with community agencies in providing information as needed.

7.4.3 Parent Survey

All parents/legal guardians of children enrolled in the early care and education program are given the opportunity to complete a survey in which they’re asked to evaluate the quality of the program. A survey form is sent along with a letter that explains the purpose of the survey as an integral part of the program and solicits full participation. The letter also instructs the parents/guardian to return the completed survey sealed in an enclosed, pre-stamped and addressed envelope. The sealed surveys are opened and processed by a designated validator the day of the site visit and responses of the Survey will be provided to the early childhood program administration and staff with a summary included in the final evaluation report.

SAMPLE: PARENT ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Instructions: Your opinion about the quality of the early care and education program is important. Please complete this parent survey. Do **NOT** sign your name. Return it to the early childhood program facility sealed in the envelope provided. For questions 1–12, rate your early childhood program by circling the number that corresponds with your level of agreement with the statements about the early childhood program. (Number 1 indicates no agreement with the statement, and 5 indicates strong agreement.) You may add a brief comment about any statement. Upon completion of the ranked response items, answer the open-ended questions 13–16.

How many year/months have you had a child / children enrolled in this early childhood program?

Please indicate in which group(s) you have a child/children:

A. infant B. toddler C. three-year-old D. four-year-old E. five-year-old

Agreement
Low ----- High

- | | | |
|-----------|-----|--|
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. | I am informed of the early childhood education and care programs and policies. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 2. | Communication and reports concerning my child’s development and progress are regular and adequate. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 3. | The director and teachers have informed me of a variety of resources available to my child and I. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 4. | The children, teachers, caregivers and staff have a good working relationship. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 5. | Accommodations for children with special needs are made in this early childhood education and care facility and program. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 6. | My child receives adequate help from the teachers and staff. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 7. | I feel welcome at this early childhood program facility. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 8. | I am respected and feel that the teachers and staff respect my child and family. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 9. | Children and staff are provided a safe and orderly environment for living and learning. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 10. | I believe that the teachers are effective in fostering appropriate development and growth for my child. |

- 1 2 3 4 5 11. Teachers / caregivers hold high expectations for learning, growth and development.
- 1 2 3 4 5 12. The educational program and care offered at this early childhood program is of high quality.

13. Why have you chosen this early childhood program for your child(ren) to attend?
14. What do you consider to be the strengths of the early childhood program?
15. What areas of the early childhood program could be improved / what suggestions would you offer for improvement?
16. Additional concerns or comments:

7.5 Stakeholders Survey

All early care and education program stakeholders are given the opportunity to complete a survey in which they're asked to evaluate the quality of program administration. A survey form is sent along with a letter that explains the purpose of the survey as an integral part of the program and solicits full participation. The letter also instructs the stakeholders to return the completed survey sealed in an enclosed, pre-stamped and addressed envelope. The sealed surveys are opened and processed by a designated validator the day of the site visit. Responses from the Survey will be provided to the early childhood program administration and governance with a summary included in the final evaluation report.

SAMPLE: STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Instructions: Your opinion about the quality of the early care and education program administration is important. Please complete this survey. Do *NOT* sign your name. Return it to the early childhood program facility sealed in the envelope provided. For questions 1–10, rate your responses by circling the number that corresponds with your level of agreement with the statements. (Number 1 indicates no agreement with the statement, and 5 indicate strong agreement.) You may add a brief comment about any statement. Upon completion of the ranked response items, answer the open-ended questions 11–13.

How many years have you been a stakeholder of this early childhood education and care program? _____

Agreement
Low ----- High

- | | | |
|-----------|-----|--|
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. | Adequate information on the program's governance, policies and practices is available to stakeholders. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 2. | Communication and reports from the program's administration to its stakeholders are regular and adequate. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 3. | The director and staff display resourcefulness and positive community relations. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 4. | The administration facilitates a good working relationship among all program personnel. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 5. | The administration makes itself available and responds to stakeholders in a timely fashion. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 6. | I feel that stakeholders are respected by the administration. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 7. | The administration maintains a consistently safe, healthy and orderly environment for children and adults. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 8. | The educational program and care offered at this early childhood program is of high quality. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 9. | This early care and education program administration maintains and follows its claimed mission, vision, and purpose. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 10. | Stakeholders have adequate opportunity to give input to the administration and governance. |

11. What do you consider to be the strengths of the early childhood program governance and administration?

12. What areas of the early childhood program could be improved / what suggestions would you offer for improvement?

13. Additional concerns or comments:

APPENDIX

Child : Staff Ratio Form

Room # or Group Name			
Age(s) of Children in Group			
Highest # of Children Enrolled in the Class or Group			
# of Teachers			
# of Assistants			
# of Teacher Aides			
Teacher's Hours			
Assistant's Hours			
Aide's Hours			

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Staff Members

Staff member (first name only)			
Job Title			
Years of work experience with young children			
Employment date			
Years of high school completed			
Years of college completed			
Degree's awarded			
Number of early education credits acquired			
ECE Credential/Certificate			
A.A. degree in ECE/CD			
B.A./B.S. degree in ECE/CD			
Graduate work in ECE/CD			
Master's degree in ECE/CD			
Doctorate degree in ECE/CD			

GLOSSARY

Background checks - The process of checking for history of criminal charges of potential child care providers before they are allowed to care for children.

Body fluids - Urine, feces, saliva, blood, nasal discharge, eye discharge, and injury or tissue discharge.

Bottle propping - Bottle-feeding an infant by propping the bottle near the infant's mouth and leaving the infant alone rather than holding the bottle by hand.

Caregiver – The person responsible for the care and education of the children in an early education program.

Center - A facility that provides care and education for any number of children in a nonresidential setting and is open on a regular basis (for example, it is not a drop-in facility).

Child abuse - For the purposes of this set of standards, its definition is considered to be that contained in the laws of the state in which the standards will be applied. While these differ somewhat, most of them contain basic elements as follows:

Emotional abuse - Acts that damage a child in psychological ways, but do not fall into other categories of abuse. Most states require for prosecution that psychological damage be very definite and clearly diagnosed by a psychologist or psychiatrist; this category of abuse is rarely reported and even more rarely a cause of protective action.

Neglect - Neglect is divided into two categories: general neglect and severe neglect.

General neglect - Failure to provide the common necessities, including food, shelter, a safe environment, education, and health care, but without resultant or likely harm to the child.

Severe neglect - Neglect that results or is likely to result in harm to the child.

Physical abuse - An intentional (non accidental) act affecting a child that produces tangible physical harm.

Sexual abuse - Any sexual act performed with a child by an adult or by another child who exerts control over the victim. (Many state laws provide considerable detail about the specific acts that constitute sexual abuse.)

Child :Staff ratio - The maximum number of children permitted per teacher/caregiver.

Compliance - The act of carrying out a recommendation, policy, or procedure.

Corporal punishment - Pain or suffering inflicted on the body (such as spanking).

Credential – A competency based award granted to early educators based on formal and informal education, experience working with young children, and observations of competency within the classroom.

Disinfect - To eliminate virtually all germs from inanimate surfaces through the use of chemicals (e.g., products registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as "disinfectants") or physical agents (e.g., heat). In the child care environment, a 1:64 dilution of domestic bleach made by mixing a solution of 1/4 cup household liquid chlorine bleach with 1 gallon of tap water and prepared fresh daily is an effective method to remove germs from environmental surfaces and other inanimate objects that have been contaminated with body fluids (see Body fluids), provided that the surfaces have first been cleaned of organic material before applying bleach and at least 2 minutes of contact time with the surface occurs. (Since complete elimination of all germs may not be achieved using the 1:64 dilution of domestic bleach solution, technically, the process is called sanitizing, not disinfecting. The

term sanitize is used in these standards most often, but disinfect may appear in other or earlier publications when addressing sanitation in child care.)

Early Education – the care and education of young children between the ages of birth through five-years of age prior to entering formal kindergarten programs whether in part-time part-day programs traditionally called “preschool” or full-day week-day programs traditionally called “childcare”.

Evaluation - Impressions and recommendations formed after a careful appraisal and study.

Facility - A legal definition. The buildings, the grounds, the equipment, and the people involved in providing child care of any type.

Fever - An elevation of body temperature the body temperature can normally be as high as 99.3° oral, 100° rectal or 98.0° axillary. A fever exists when the body temperature is higher than these numbers. The amount of temperature elevation varies at different body sites, and the height of the fever does not indicate a more or less severe illness. The method chosen to take a child's temperature depends on the need for accuracy, available equipment, the skill of the person taking the temperature, and the ability of the child to assist in the procedure. Oral temperatures should not be taken on children younger than 4 years. Rectal temperatures should be taken only by persons with specific health training in performing this procedure. Axillary temperatures are only accurate in young infants. Electronic devices for measuring temperature in the ear canal give temperature results similar to rectal temperature, but these devices require specific training and are not widely available in child care settings.

Gross-motor skills - Large movements involving the arms, legs, feet, or the entire body (such as crawling, running, and jumping).

Group size - The number of children assigned to a caregiver or team of caregivers occupying an individual classroom or well-defined space within a larger room. See also Child:Staff Ratio.

Health plan - A written document that describes emergency health and safety procedures, general health policies and procedures, and policies covering the management of mild illness, injury prevention, and occupational health and safety.

Immunizations - Vaccines that are given to children and adults to help them develop protection (antibodies) against specific infections. Vaccines may contain an inactivated or killed agent or a weakened live organism. Childhood immunizations include protection against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, and *Haemophilus influenzae* type b. Adults need to be protected against measles.

Infant - A child between the time of birth and the age of ambulation (usually between the ages from birth to 18 months).

Instructional Staff – teachers/caregivers responsible for the early education instruction provided to young children within a program

Medications - Any substance that is intended to diagnose, cure, treat, or prevent disease or is intended to affect the structure or function of the body of humans or other animals.

Parent - The child's natural or adoptive mother or father, guardian, or other legally responsible person.

Pediatric first aid - Emergency care and treatment of an injured child before definite medical and surgical management can be secured. Pediatric first aid includes rescue breathing and first aid for choking.

Phonemic awareness - The ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds in spoken words. An example of how beginning readers show us they have phonemic awareness is combining or blending the separate sounds of a word to say the word (“/c/ /a/ /t/ - cat.”)

Preschooler - A child between the age of toilet learning/training and the age of entry into a regular school; usually aged 3 to 5 years and related to overall development.

Sanitize - To remove filth or soil and small amounts of certain bacteria. For an inanimate surface to be considered sanitary, the surface must be clean and the number of germs must be reduced to such a level that disease transmission by that surface is unlikely. This procedure is less rigorous than disinfection and is applicable to a wide variety of routine housekeeping procedures involving, for example, bedding, bathrooms, kitchen countertops, floors, and walls. To clean, detergent or abrasive cleaners may be used but an additional sanitizer solution must be applied to sanitize. A number of EPA-registered "detergent-disinfectant" products are also appropriate for sanitizing. Directions on product labels should be followed closely.

Scope and Sequence – A curriculum plan or guide in which a range of instructional objectives, skills, etc., is organized according to the consecutive levels in which they are expected to be taught.

Staff - Used here to indicate all personnel employed at the facility, including both caregivers and personnel who do not provide direct care to the children (such as cooks, drivers, and housekeeping personnel).

Substitute staff - Caregivers (often without prior training or experience) hired for one day or for an extended period of time, who work under direct supervision of a trained, licensed/certified permanent caregiver.

Teacher – The person responsible for the planning and implementation of the classroom early education program.

Toddler - A child between the age of ambulation and the age of toilet learning/training, usually one aged 13 to 35 months.

Universal precautions - apply to blood, other body fluids containing blood, semen, and vaginal secretions, but not to feces, nasal secretions, sputum, sweat, tears, urine, saliva and vomitus unless they contain visible blood or are likely to contain blood. Universal precautions include avoiding injuries caused by sharp instruments or devices and the use of protective barriers such as gloves, gowns, aprons, masks, or protective eyewear, which can reduce the risk of exposure of the worker's skin or mucous membranes that could come in contact with materials that may contain blood-borne pathogens while the worker is providing first aid or care.

Volunteer - In general, a volunteer is a regular member of the staff who is not paid and is not counted in the child:staff ratio. If the volunteer is counted in the child:staff ratio, he/she must be 16 years or older and preferably work 10 hours per week or more in the facility.

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