

# Overview of the New Star Quality Standards

## INTRODUCTION

As we work to promote school readiness, we know that the quality of a) interactions with adults and b) environments where young children learn have the greatest impact on positive outcomes for young children. Across the country, states have turned to a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) as an important lever for improving the quality of early learning programs and therefore impacting children's school readiness.

Since 2007, Virginia has been piloting a QRIS, the Virginia Star Quality Initiative, with a two-fold purpose uniquely appropriate for Virginia:

1. Helping families identify high quality child care and preschool options for their young children
2. Assisting child care and preschool programs, regardless of their setting, with their efforts to provide high quality early care and education and recognizing them for the quality they provide.

Quality Rating and Improvement Systems have become increasingly common across the country as a strategy to ensure that families have access to high quality child care options. QRISs provide an avenue for increasing the supply of quality care as well as improving the quality of existing programs. In many states, administrators and policymakers interested in accountability for public funds value the information that QRISs provide regarding specific quality standards that go above and beyond the health and safety minimums set by licensing and other regulatory bodies. Because QRISs are voluntary systems that highlight and reward individual programs who exceed these standards, they are an important market driver, providing high quality information to families who are making child care decisions for their families. Unlike other quality initiatives such as accreditation, QRISs operate at no cost to participants, and provide quality improvement supports to programs at all points along the quality continuum.

Virginia has always placed a high value on parents' decision-making for their families, and this priority is a pillar of the purpose of QRIS in Virginia. The Virginia Star Quality Initiative provides high quality, reliable information about different child care and preschool options, so that families can select care according to their values and priorities. Virginia's QRIS was also designed to support child care and preschool programs. Regardless of setting – small businesses, publicly funded, faith-based, non-profit – programs are assessed using standards of quality most closely linked with positive child outcomes. Because participation is voluntary, this system operates as a market-based incentive so that smaller programs such as independently owned or faith-based programs can demonstrate their quality within the larger child care and preschool market. This non-regulatory method is well suited for Virginia because it recognizes the accomplishments of programs that are striving for higher levels. There is no cost to programs who wish to participate, and after receiving a rating, programs are able to access free technical assistance, mentoring, and can use their rating as a marketing tool to promote their business.

In order to move from a pilot to full implementation, the Star Quality administrative hub (the Hub) has taken the opportunity to incorporate the latest national research with the local expertise of Virginia's early childhood professionals. The revisions process was purposefully designed with several opportunities for stakeholder input as well as expert feedback and guidance. The new standards have been under development since 2012. Focus groups were conducted, working groups were convened,



and survey data was gathered from over 450 stakeholders. In July 2013, QRIS Regions were defined through the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Request for Proposals process, facilitating the important step of statewide coverage. In October 2013, recommendations for revisions based on the findings from a diverse group of national, state, and local experts on QRIS were publicly posted online. For more detailed information about the revisions process and recommendations, see [http://vecf.org/Portals/5/PDFs/VSQI/Recommendations\\_for\\_Revisions.pdf](http://vecf.org/Portals/5/PDFs/VSQI/Recommendations_for_Revisions.pdf).

In order to assure that the process protects the validity of ratings and provides for a supportive transition into full implementation, the Hub engaged Child Trends to conduct evaluation activities in preparation for the transition process. Child Trends is a national nonprofit, nonpartisan research center that studies children at all stages of development. Its mission is to improve outcomes for children by providing research, data, and analysis to the people and institutions whose decisions and actions affect children. Child Trends is a leader in QRIS policy research, having partnered successfully with several states across the country to strengthen their QRIS initiatives.

The Child Trends study took place from November 2013 through September 2014 and included an analysis of existing data and documents, mentor online survey, coordinator online survey, program director online survey, interviews with participating programs, regional site visits and coordinator group interviews, double-coding visits with raters, and interviews with Hub staff. The results of the Child Trends study have been used to inform the new Star Quality standards.

## STAR QUALITY 1.0

The standards for classroom-based (or center-based) programs were developed as part of the Alignment Project, a cross-sector, multi-agency initiative spearheaded by the Virginia Department of Social Services in February 2006. The Star Quality 1.0 standards include measurements of structural quality (structural features of the program like teacher education and ratios/group size) and process quality (a measure of the child's experience in the program). Due to the national research linking the quality of interactions and children's school readiness outcomes, the Interactions standard, measured by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), was given the greatest weight in determining a classroom-based rating.

Figure 1. *Star Quality 1.0 Standards for Classroom-based programs*



Figure 1 represents the classroom-based standards that were developed and have been piloted. In Star Quality 1.0, participating programs are measured on all four components of quality including structural and process quality measurements at the same time. Programs then work on quality improvement for all four components at the same time. Each component is worth a different amount of points, which means that if programs are not as strong in one area, they can “make up for it” in other areas and still receive a higher rating.

In 2010, the family child care version of the QRIS began its pilot. The standard for family child care homes had been developed by an interdisciplinary team that built from the work of the Alignment Project. Because guidance had not yet been developed for using the CLASS to measure the quality of interactions in family child care homes, the CLASS was used to guide quality improvement for family child care homes in Star Quality 1.0, but not as part of the overall rating. Because a direct comparison to classroom-based ratings cannot be made, pilot family child care ratings are not published.

## **STAR QUALITY 2.0**

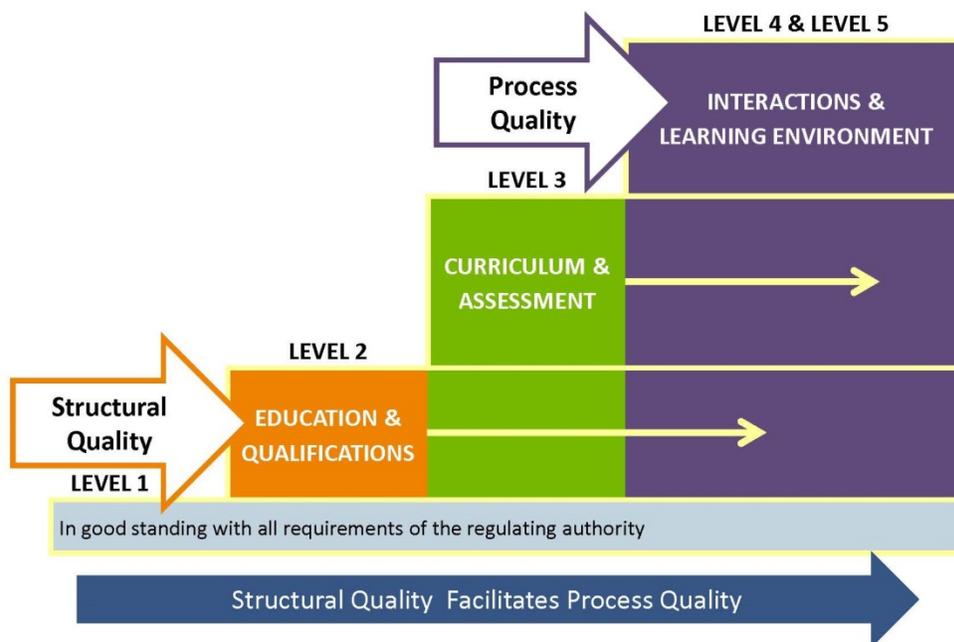
Based on the latest national research and feedback from the multi-year pilot, Star Quality 2.0 standards were developed with six specific goals in mind:

1. Expansion: Increase the number of programs that can be served by QRIS
2. Sustainability: Automate and streamline processes while maintaining quality and rigor
3. Accessibility: Offer user-friendly application and participation processes
4. Supportive: Emphasize continuous quality improvement by integrating quality improvement activities and supports at every point of contact
5. Alignment: Build on existing documents and standards
6. Reflective: Incorporate feedback from communities and research on best practice in QRIS

Star Quality 2.0 will be applicable to both classroom-based programs and family child care homes. Both structural quality and process quality will continue to be measured; however, in the new standards all elements of quality will not be measured at the same time. Participation will be spread out over several levels, and programs will engage in quality improvement through the whole process. Participating programs will move up through the levels by reaching quality milestones and demonstrating specific features of quality. Programs will be able to move through the quality levels at their own pace. The most challenging aspects of quality will be measured in the highest levels, after programs have had the opportunity to work on the components of quality that lay the foundation for success in those higher levels.



Figure 2. *Star Quality 2.0 Standards for all Child Care and Preschool Programs*



As shown in Figure 2 there are still four quality standards in Star Quality 2.0; however, they are slightly different from the four Star Quality 1.0 standards. A new standard focused on curriculum and assessment has been added. It is important to note that the curriculum and assessment standard is designed to assess the extent to which programs are intentional in promoting children’s learning in ways that align with developmentally appropriate practices and children’s development. Whether programs are using a purchased curriculum, a “home grown” curriculum, or an educational philosophy such as Montessori, they will be able to receive credit within this standard as long as they are developmentally appropriate and aligned with best practices. The ratio and group size standard has been removed. Ratio and group size will still be part of the QRIS, but not included as a separate standard. Programs will be required to be in good standing with any ratio and group size requirements of their regulatory body like licensing, Head Start, or the Virginia Preschool Initiative. Since smaller ratio and group size facilitate positive interactions, both will be addressed in the quality improvement process.

Star Quality 2.0 has an increased focus on improvement. Interactions will continue to be the most critical component of quality as they have the biggest impact on children’s school readiness. Programs (both classroom-based and family child care homes) that demonstrate high quality interactions will be the programs that reach the highest levels in Star Quality 2.0.

Star Quality 2.0 focuses on participation as a process of quality improvement. At each level, programs will be measured on certain quality features and will be engaged in quality improvement. These are called “requirements” and “activities” in the new QRIS framework. The requirements define what the program will be assessed on, and the activities define the quality improvement activities that will be available to help lay the foundation for future levels. The new framework will also allow for an accelerated process for participating programs that are already demonstrating quality through another system. In other words, programs that participate in other quality improvement efforts will be able to get credit within Star Quality 2.0 for the quality they’re currently demonstrating to another organization such as the Virginia Preschool Initiative, Head Start, or a national accreditation program. In order for



these systems to utilize the accelerated process, a “crosswalk” will be completed between the organization’s early childhood education standards and the new Star Quality 2.0 standards, so that programs can receive QRIS credit for the Star Quality standards they are already meeting. Hub staff are available to assist organizations in the completion of the crosswalk, and the crosswalk process is already underway for the Virginia Preschool Initiative, Head Start, and NAEYC, three of the most common organizations that monitor the quality of early childhood programs in Virginia.

A detailed summary of the new standards follows, and Figure 3 on page 10 provides a one-page overview of the new standards.

## QUALITY STANDARDS

Four quality standards are included with each standard highlighted in a quality level:

- Education & Qualifications (assessed by documentation)
- Curriculum & Assessment (assessed by documentation and observation)
- Environment (assessed by observation)
- Interactions (assessed by observation)

**Requirements:** Specific quality standards that must be met to achieve a particular Level within the Star Quality Initiative. Requirements define the quality Levels.

**Activities:** Specific quality improvement activities that must be completed to progress to the next Level within the Star Quality Initiative. Activities build the foundation for success in subsequent Levels.

### LEVEL 1: Basic Health & Safety

Early learning programs must be *in good standing* with all requirements of their regulating authority. “In good standing” indicates that while there may be noncompliance with one or more standards that represent a minor or minimal risk or violation, compliance clearly and obviously exists with the standards as a whole. Level 1 requirements are not monitored separately within Star Quality 2.0; Virginia’s Health and Safety regulatory system is in place through systems such as licensing, VPI, or Head Start. Instead, Star Quality Levels 2 through 5 focus on quality indicators that promote school readiness, with the understanding that Basic Health and Safety lays the critical foundation to programs’ success in the higher levels. For this reason, Basic Health and Safety requirements must be maintained to achieve any of the higher star quality Levels.

### LEVEL 2: Education & Qualifications

While the literature is inconclusive about the optimal educational credential for demonstrating effective competencies in teachers of young children, research does show that a teacher’s participation in formal education in child development/early childhood education has an impact on children’s school readiness. When teachers have some formal education, such as a CDA, professional certificate, or child-related college credits, they are more prepared to intentionally support children’s learning through high quality interactions. For this reason, Level 2 is designed to ensure that teachers in Star Quality programs have some formal education to establish the competencies necessary to deliver high quality services to children and families that are focused on promoting school readiness.



## Level 2 Requirements

Early learning programs must meet all Level 1 requirements, register in the QRIS online system/Professional Development Registry, and complete a Health & Safety checklist.

### Classroom or Center-based Programs

- At least one (1) Administrator/Director meets Level 6 on Virginia's Early Childhood Career Lattice<sup>1</sup> OR has earned 24 child-related credits from an accredited college
  - *Alternative pathways:*
    - *At least one (1) Administrator/Director with a minimum of 2 years programmatic experience with 1 year in a supervisory capacity in a child-related environment with a professional development plan in place demonstrating progress toward achieving this requirement, to be complete prior to Level 3*
    - *Programs may request a waiver to this requirement, provided that they meet all Level 3 requirements and are seeking a Level 4/5 observation<sup>3</sup>*
- At least 50% of Lead Teachers meet Level 3 on Virginia's Early Childhood Career Lattice<sup>2</sup> OR another approved credential, such as an American Montessori Society Credential
  - *Alternative pathways:*
    - *At least 50% of Lead Teachers have a documented professional development plan in place demonstrating progress toward achieving this requirement, to be complete prior to Level 3*
    - *Programs may request a waiver to this requirement, provided that they meet all Level 3 requirements and are seeking a Level 4/5 observation<sup>3</sup>*

### Family Child Care Homes

- The Family Child Care Provider responsible for the direct supervision of children and delivery of the curriculum and instruction meets Level 3 on Virginia's Early Childhood Career Lattice<sup>2</sup> OR another approved credential, such as an American Montessori Society Credential
  - *Alternative pathways:*
    - *The Family Child Care Provider has a documented professional development plan in place demonstrating progress toward achieving this requirement, to be complete prior to Level 3*
    - *Family Child Care Providers may request a waiver to this requirement, provided that they meet all Level 3 requirements and are seeking a Level 4/5 observation<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Associate degree in a relevant field with a minimum of 15 child-related credits

<sup>2</sup> National Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) OR 12 total child-related credits OR Virginia approved/accepted training exceeding 120 clock hours or equivalent

<sup>3</sup> In order to use this waiver, programs must successfully demonstrate high quality interactions by achieving Level 4 or higher through on-site observation



## Level 2 Activities

*These activities are designed to build the foundation for success in the subsequent star quality levels and must be completed before moving on to Level 3.*

### Classroom or Center-based Programs and Family Child Care Homes

- Complete the Star Quality Professional Development series, available through the QRIS online system or through the QRIS region, on:
  - Inclusion
  - Kindergarten transition
  - Strengthening Families
  - Cultural Competence
  - Curriculum and Assessment using Virginia's *Milestones for Child Development* and *Foundation Blocks for Early Learning*
  - High Quality Interactions using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
  - Play-Based Learning Environments using the Environment Rating Scales (ERS)
  - Creating Professional Development Plans (required for Administrators/Directors and Family Child Care Providers who employ staff)
  - Conducting Employee Orientation (required for Administrators/Directors and Family Child Care providers who employ staff)

### LEVEL 3: Curriculum & Assessment

Research shows that intentional teaching has an impact on children's school readiness. Virginia has developed the *Milestones of Child Development: A Guide to Young Children's Learning and Development from Birth to Kindergarten* and the *Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds* to guide early childhood educators in promoting school readiness.

## Level 3 Requirements

*To earn Level 3 status, early learning programs must meet all Level 1 and 2 requirements in full unless a waiver has been granted.*

### Classroom or Center-based Programs and Family Child Care Homes

- Completion of curriculum & assessment checklist through the online QRIS system, to demonstrate selection and use of curriculum or other teaching framework aligned with Virginia's *Milestones of Child Development* and/or *Foundation Blocks for Early Learning*<sup>4</sup>
- Documentation of at least 8 hours of training on implementing the identified curriculum or teaching framework
- Visit by an external validator to confirm the accuracy of curriculum & assessment checklist through on-site observation (must be completed within 1 year of awarding Level 3 status)

<sup>4</sup> Alignment with the *Foundation Blocks for Early Learning* is required for all Virginia Preschool Initiative classrooms



### Level 3 Activities

*These activities are designed to build the foundation for success in the subsequent star quality levels and must be completed before moving on to Level 4.*

#### **Classroom or Center-based Programs and Family Child Care Homes**

- Participate in regional/locally supported activities on Curriculum & Assessment, ERS, and CLASS (may include learning collaboratives, peer-to-peer mentoring, on-site coaching, or other supports)
- Complete *Environment Rating Scale* (ERS) self-study using the appropriate tool for the ages served and setting
- Complete *Classroom Assessment Scoring System* (CLASS) self-study using the appropriate tool for ages served or participate in the Effective Classroom Interactions online course, if offered
- Develop a quality improvement plan (QIP) based on the ERS and CLASS self-study (programs that have received an on-site observation using CLASS/ERS should develop a QIP using this feedback)

### **LEVELS 4 & 5: Environment & Interactions**

Research shows that children engaged in meaningful learning and play, guided by qualified caregivers in an enriched educational environment has an impact on school readiness.

### Level 4 Requirements

*Early learning programs must meet all Level 1-3 requirements. To reach a Level 4 or 5 an on-site assessment by an approved Star Quality Rater is required. Programs that do not meet the requirements for Level 4 or 5 will remain at Level 3.*

#### **Classroom or Center-based Programs and Family Child Care Homes**

- Achieve an average ERS score of 4 or higher across four subscales (Language-Reasoning/Listening and Talking, Activities, Interaction, and Program Structure)
- Achieve an average CLASS score of 5 or higher in Emotional Support & Classroom Organization (Pre-K CLASS), Emotional and Behavioral Support (Toddler CLASS), and Relational Climate & Teacher Sensitivity (Infant CLASS)
- Achieve an average CLASS score of 3.25 or higher in Instructional Support (Pre-K CLASS), Engaged Support for Learning Score (Toddler CLASS), and Facilitated Exploration & Early Language Support (Infant CLASS)

### Level 4 Activities

*These activities are designed to build the foundation for successfully maintaining quality and achieving higher thresholds in CLASS/ERS on-site observations.*

#### **Classroom or Center-based Programs and Family Child Care Homes**

- Participate in regional/locally supported activities on CLASS and ERS (may include learning collaboratives, peer-to-peer mentoring, on-site coaching, online coursework, or other supports)
- Develop a quality improvement plan based on feedback from the CLASS and ERS observation



## Level 5 Requirements

Early learning programs must meet all Level 1-3 requirements. To reach a Level 4 or 5 an on-site assessment by an approved Star Quality Rater is required. Programs that do not meet the requirements for Level 4 or 5 will remain at Level 3.

### Classroom or Center-based Programs and Family Child Care Homes

- Achieve an average ERS score of 5 or higher across four subscales (Language-Reasoning/Listening and Talking, Activities, Interaction, and Program Structure)
- Achieve an average CLASS score of 6 or higher in Emotional Support & Classroom Organization (Pre-K CLASS), Emotional and Behavioral Support (Toddler CLASS), and Relational Climate & Teacher Sensitivity (Infant CLASS)
- Achieve an average CLASS score of 4.25 or higher in Instructional Support (Pre-K CLASS), Engaged Support for Learning Score (Toddler CLASS), and Facilitated Exploration & Early Language Support (Infant CLASS)

## Levels 5 Activities

These activities are designed to build the foundation for successfully maintaining quality and achieving higher thresholds in CLASS/ERS on-site observations.

### Classroom or Center-based Programs and Family Child Care Homes

- Participate in regional/locally supported activities on CLASS and ERS (may include learning collaboratives, peer-to-peer mentoring, on-site coaching, online coursework, or other supports)
- Develop a quality improvement plan based on feedback from the CLASS and ERS observation

## Timeframes for Review of Quality Levels\*

Level	Timeframe	Data Required
Level 1	Annually	-Demonstration of good standing with regulatory authority
Level 2	Annually	-Demonstration of Level 1 requirements -Update Education & Qualification data online
Level 3	Annually	-Demonstration of Level 1 & 2 requirements -Update Curriculum & Assessment data online -Curriculum & Assessment checklist visit
Level 4	Annually	-Demonstration of Level 1-3 requirements
	Every 3 years	-CLASS & ERS on-site observation by a Star Quality Rater
Level 5	Annually	-Demonstration of Level 1-3 requirements
	Every 3 years	-CLASS & ERS on-site observation by a Star Quality Rater

\*It will be up to a program to decide whether they want to remain at their current level or complete the requirements to move up a level. To remain at their current level, programs must demonstrate that they are continuing to meet the requirements of that Level. Programs will receive an automated reminder from the QRIS database when it is time to update their information or schedule an on-site observation.





# Star Quality Standards for Child Care and Preschool Programs

## LEVEL 1

### Basic Health & Safety\*

- In good standing with regulating authority requirements (e.g., Virginia Department of Social Services Licensing Standards, Virginia Board of Education Regulations, Head Start Performance Standards, Local Ordinance or Licensed Family Day System)
- Health & Safety demonstrated
- Star Quality Profile completed

## LEVEL 2

### Education & Qualifications

#### Classroom-based Programs

- At least one (1) Administrator/Director meets Level 6 on Virginia's Early Childhood Career Lattice<sup>1</sup> OR has earned 24 child-related credits from an accredited college (or in progress)\*\*
- At least 50% of Lead Teachers meet Level 3 on Virginia's Early Childhood Career Lattice<sup>2</sup> OR another approved credential, such as an American Montessori Society Credential (or in progress)\*\*
- Online professional development (PD) series<sup>3</sup> completed

#### Family Child Care Homes

- The Family Child Care Provider responsible for the direct supervision of children and delivery of the curriculum and instruction meets Level 3 on Virginia's Early Childhood Career Lattice<sup>2</sup> OR another approved credential, such as an American Montessori Society Credential (or in progress)\*\*
- Online PD series completed

### Curriculum & Assessment

- PD on curriculum & assessment

### Learning Environment

- PD on play-based learning environments
- Health & safety checklist completed

### Teacher-Child Interactions

- PD on high quality interactions using the CLASS<sup>4</sup> system

## LEVEL 3

### Education & Qualifications

- Maintain requirements at previous levels
- Staff have 8-hours of training on implementing the identified curriculum or teaching framework

### Curriculum & Assessment

- Completion of curriculum & assessment checklist online to demonstrate selection and use of curriculum or other teaching framework aligned with best practices such as Virginia's Milestones of Child Development or Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning<sup>5</sup>
- Visit by an external validator to confirm accuracy of curriculum & assessment checklist through on-site observation (must be completed within 1 year of achieving Level 3 status)
- Participate in regional technical assistance (TA) on curriculum & assessment

- Complete Environment Rating Scale (ERS)<sup>6</sup> self-study using the appropriate tool for the ages served and setting
- Participate in regional TA on high quality learning environments

- Complete CLASS<sup>4</sup> self-study using the appropriate tool for ages served or participate in the Effective Classroom Interactions online course, if offered
- Participate in regional TA on high quality interactions

### Learning Environment

- Complete Environment Rating Scale (ERS)<sup>6</sup> self-study using the appropriate tool for the ages served and setting
- Participate in regional TA on high quality learning environments

### Teacher-Child Interactions

- Complete CLASS<sup>4</sup> self-study using the appropriate tool for ages served or participate in the Effective Classroom Interactions online course, if offered
- Participate in regional TA on high quality interactions

## LEVEL 4

### Education & Qualifications

- Maintain requirements at previous levels

### Curriculum & Assessment

- Maintain requirements at previous levels

### Learning Environment

- Achieve an average ERS score of 4 or higher across four subscales (Language-Reasoning/Listening and Talking, Activities, Interaction, and Program Structure)
- Participate in regional TA on high quality learning environments

- Achieve an average CLASS score of 5 or higher in Emotional Support & Classroom Organization (Pre-K CLASS), Emotional and Behavioral Support (Toddler CLASS), and Relational Climate & Teacher Sensitivity (Infant CLASS)

### Teacher-Child Interactions

- Achieve an average CLASS score of 3.25 or higher in Instructional Support (Pre-K CLASS), Engaged Support for Learning Score (Toddler CLASS), and Facilitated Exploration & Early Language Support (Infant CLASS)
- Participate in regional TA on high quality interactions

- Participate in regional TA on high quality interactions

## LEVEL 5

### Education & Qualifications

- Maintain requirements at previous levels

### Curriculum & Assessment

- Maintain requirements at previous levels

### Learning Environment

- Achieve an average ERS score of 5 or higher across four subscales (Language-Reasoning/Listening and Talking, Activities, Interaction, and Program Structure)
- Participate in regional TA on high quality learning environments

### Teacher-Child Interactions

- Achieve an average CLASS score of 6 or higher in Emotional Support & Classroom Organization (Pre-K CLASS), Emotional and Behavioral Support (Toddler CLASS), and Relational Climate & Teacher Sensitivity (Infant CLASS)
- Achieve an average CLASS score of 4.25 or higher in Instructional Support (Pre-K CLASS), Engaged Support for Learning Score (Toddler CLASS), and Facilitated Exploration & Early Language Support (Infant CLASS)
- Participate in regional TA on high quality interactions

\*Basic Health & Safety requirements must be maintained to achieve any of the higher quality Levels

\*\*Programs may request a waiver to this requirement, provided that they meet all Level 3 requirements and are seeking a Level 4 or 5 observation

<sup>1</sup> Associate degree in a relevant field with a minimum of 15 child-related credits

<sup>2</sup> National Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) OR 12 total child-related credits OR Virginia approved/accepted training exceeding 120 clock hours or equivalent

<sup>3</sup> Includes training on topics like Inclusion, Kindergarten transition, Strengthening Families, Cultural Competence, Professional Development Plans, and Employee Orientation

<sup>4</sup> Go to <http://teachstone.com> for more information on the CLASS

<sup>5</sup> Alignment with the Foundation Blocks for Early Learning is required for all Virginia Preschool Initiative classrooms

<sup>6</sup> Go to <http://ersi.info> for more information on the ERS

## TIMELINE FOR TRANSITION

Phase 1: Fall 2014 (October-December 2014) – Info Launch

- Training on new standards for Star Quality Coordinators
- New standards posted online
- Programs will continue to be rated and participate in Star Quality 1.0

Phase 2: Winter 2015 (January-March 2015) – Star Quality 2.0 Live

- New and existing programs can begin enrolling in Star Quality 2.0 on February 16, 2015
- Training on new standards for Star Quality Mentors and Raters
- Process evaluation begins

Phase 3: Spring 2015 (April-June 2015) – Accelerated Options and Outreach Campaign

- Statewide Public Awareness campaign launched
- VPI, Head Start, and NAEYC accredited programs may apply for Level 4 and 5 through an accelerated process facilitated by quality standards crosswalks (other accrediting organizations interested in completing a crosswalk should contact: [gris@vecf.org](mailto:gris@vecf.org))
- Process evaluation continues

Phase 4: Summer 2015 (July-September 2015) – Reflection and Refinement

- Process evaluation finalized
- Results reviewed and any needed adjustments to Star Quality 2.0 made

Phase 5: Fall 2015 (October 2015) – Full Scale Implementation

## CONCLUSION

Preparation for Star Quality 2.0 and the appropriate transition supports have already begun and will continue through Fall 2015. During this time, the Hub will support continued recruitment efforts and parent awareness about the proposed changes.

Star Quality remains committed to a two-fold purpose: providing child care and preschool programs with a means of improving their quality, and providing families with a simple way to find high quality child care and preschool programs. ***The new Star Quality standards will continue to strengthen and stabilize Virginia's capacity to ensure a strong early education system by supporting the school readiness of all young children.***



## Child Care in Virginia

Type	Number of Facilities	Capacity	Monitoring	Complaint Investigations of Licensing Issues	Regulatory Authority
<b>Licensed Family Day Home</b>	1,323	Maximum 12	Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) – twice a year	VDSS	22VAC-40-111
<b>Voluntary Registered Family Day Home</b>	893	Maximum 5	VDSS Approved Contract Agency checks 10% of homes on USDA Food Program, VDSS checks 20% of all	VDSS and Contract Agency	22VAC-40-180
<b>Family Day System Home</b>	1	Normally maximum of 12	VDSS Approved System – quarterly	Family Day System	22VAC-120
<b>Locality Approved Family Day Home</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	Maximum of 5-12 dependent on locality	5 or less – Locality	Locality and VDSS	
<b>Unregulated Family Day Home</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	Maximum of 5	<b>None</b>	VDSS	
<b>Licensed Child Day Center</b>	2,468	2 or more at a setting not the provider's home.	VDSS – twice a year	VDSS	22VAC-40-185
<b>Unregulated Child Day Center</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	2 or more	<b>None</b>	VDSS	

## **Child Care in Virginia**

NOTE: Every child in Virginia is protected by law against child abuse and neglect. Allegations of abuse and neglect are investigated by local departments of social services. The Child Protective Services Hotline number is 1-800-552-7096.



# Crosswalk Tool for Accreditation Organizations

## Overview

In order to reduce duplication for child care and preschool programs volunteering to participate in the Virginia Star Quality Initiative, an accelerated option is available for programs whose quality is already being assessed and monitored by another organization. In order to facilitate the accelerated process for child care and preschool programs accredited by their organization, the accreditation organization must: (1) demonstrate their current status as an accrediting organization, and (2) show evidence of quality early childhood standards through submitted crosswalk data and submit a copy of the standards.

Once an accrediting organization is approved, child care and preschool programs accredited by that organization may participate in the Virginia Star Quality Initiative through the accelerated process by completing an online Star Quality profile and providing documentation of their accreditation status.

Any questions regarding the accelerated process or crosswalk tool should be submitted to: [gris@vecf.org](mailto:gris@vecf.org)

## Status of Accreditation Organization

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Name of Accrediting Organization

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Phone Number

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Address, City, State, Zip

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Contact Person Name

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Email

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Phone Number

(direct line, if different from above)

Area of Specialization: (Please select all that apply)

Center-based (Birth - 5 years)

School-based (Pre-K – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade)

Family Child Care Home

Other (indicate specialization): \_\_\_\_\_

When was the accreditation organization established? \_\_\_\_\_

Is a verifiable and current list of accredited programs publicly available?

Yes

No

If yes, where can the list be found? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there administrative policies and system evaluation procedures in place to avoid conflicts of interest and address issues such as appeals and complaints?

Yes

No

If yes, briefly describe.



Briefly describe the length of the accreditation award period and the process for interim accountability to ensure maintenance of quality standards.

### **Evidence of Quality Early Childhood Standards – Quality Crosswalk**

In order to participate in the Virginia Star Quality Initiative, child care and preschool programs must be in good standing with all requirements of their regulating authority. “In good standing” indicates that while there may be noncompliance with one or more standards that represent a minor or minimal risk or violation, compliance clearly and obviously exists with the requirements as a whole.

Please complete the following questions AND provide a copy of your accreditation standards.

#### **Education & Qualifications Standards**

Do your accreditation standards require at least one (1) Administrator/Director to have an Associate degree in a relevant field with a minimum of 15 child-related credits OR 24 child-related credits from an accredited college? Yes      No

If yes, please indicate the criteria of your aligned standards and the method of verification used.

Do your accreditation standards require at least 50% of Lead Teachers or the Family Child Care Provider working with children ages birth to 5 to have a National Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) OR 12 total child related credits OR another approved credential, such as an American Montessori Society Credential? Yes      No

If yes, please indicate the criteria of your aligned standards and the method of verification used.

Do your accreditation standards require programs to have basic training on any of the following topics? (Please check all that apply)

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Inclusion                        | Kindergarten transition                 |
| Strengthening Families           | Cultural Competence                     |
| Curriculum and Assessment        | High Quality Interactions               |
| Play-Based Learning Environments | Creating Professional Development Plans |
| Conducting Employee Orientation  |   |

If yes, please indicate the criteria of your aligned standards and the method of verification used.

### **Curriculum & Assessment Standards**

Do your accreditation standards require programs to have an intentional approach to promoting children's learning and development? Yes No

If yes, please indicate the criteria of your aligned standards and the method of verification used.

Do your accreditation standards require programs to align with specific standards, such as the Virginia Early Learning Guidelines ([Milestones of Child Development](#) or [Foundation Blocks for Early Learning](#))? Yes No

If yes, please indicate the criteria of your aligned standards and the method of verification used.

Do your accreditation standards require programs to individualize instruction using assessment data or use another method of supporting individual children in the program? Yes No

If yes, please indicate the criteria of your aligned standards and the method of verification used.

### **Environment and Interactions Standards**

An on-site observation using the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) appropriate for the setting is used to assess environmental quality of a program. Four subscales of the ERS are included in the Star Quality assessment: Language-Reasoning/Listening and Talking, Activities, Interactions, and Program Structure. For more information on the ERS, go to <http://ersi.info>.

An on-site observation using the CLASS tool appropriate for the setting is used to assess the quality of the teacher-child interactions in a program. For more information on the CLASS, go to <http://teachstone.com>.

All child care and preschool programs wishing to pursue Level 4 or 5 in the Virginia Star Quality Initiative will need to apply to have an on-site observation conducted by an approved Star Quality Rater.

**Other Standards**

Do your accreditation standards require programs to demonstrate quality in any other ways that you would like taken into consideration as part of this quality crosswalk?                      Yes              No

If yes, please describe.

Thank you for providing information on your accreditation standards. The completed crosswalk will be used to determine how your accreditation standards address the standards used in the Virginia Star Quality Initiative. Please email your completed crosswalk and a copy of your accreditation standards to [gris@vecf.org](mailto:gris@vecf.org).



# VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

## **Licensure and Regulation of Child Care Facilities in the Commonwealth**

*December 8, 2014*

Jack B. Frazier  
Deputy Commissioner





# Child Day Program Defined

- The Code of Virginia § 63.2-100 defines a child day program as a “regularly operating service arrangement for children where, during the absence of a parent or guardian, a person or organization has agreed to assume responsibility for the supervision, protection, and well-being of a child under the age of 13 for less than a 24-hour period.”

# Child Day Programs in Virginia By The Numbers



<b>FY 14</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Capacity</b>
Child Day Center	2,468	247,489
CDC Short Term	81	9,378
Family Day Home	1,323	14,042
Religious Exempt	998	82,999
Certified Pre-School	8	666
Voluntarily Registered FDH	893	4,465
Family Day System	1	475
Unregulated FDH (w Sub)	451	2,255
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,223</b>	<b>361,769</b>



# Types of Family Day Homes

- Licensed
- Regulated/Not Licensed
- Approved
- Not Licensed or Regulated But Eligible As a Subsidy Vendor



# Types of Child Day Centers

- Licensed
- Regulated/Not Licensed
- Not Licensed/Regulated but eligible as Subsidy Vendor



# Regulated Child Day Programs

- Religious Exempt
- Certified Pre-school
- Voluntary Registered Family Day Homes
- Family Day Systems



# Unregulated Child Day Programs

- Numbers and Locations Unknown
- No Requirements:
  - Background Check
  - Facility Requirements
  - Health/Safety Requirements
- Not Monitored or Inspected Unless Complaint is Received for an Illegal Operation



# Licensure Requirements

Part of VA Administrative Code in Chapter 22

All Areas of Facility are Assessed for Compliance With Standards Including:

- Physical Plant/Indoor and Outdoor
- Child and Staff Records – Including Background Checks
- Observation of Children and Staff
- Nutrition and Food Service
- Staff Training Requirements



# Regulating Virginia's Child Care Facilities

- Eight Regional Licensing Facilities
  - Abingdon, Roanoke, Fishersville, Warrenton, Fairfax, Richmond, Newport News, and Virginia Beach
- Licensing Administrator and Inspectors
- 95 Staff Responsible for Statewide Inspections
  - 63 Children's Facility Staff ~ \$4.4M per year
  - 32 Adult Facility Staff ~ \$2.2M per year

# SFY 2014 Total Expenditures for Child Care Subsidies



Source	Amount
State General Funds	\$27,375,698
CCDF Federal Funds	\$65,483,027
TANF Transfer	\$17,805,152
Total	\$110,663,877

## Average Monthly Subsidy Payment Per Child (SFY 2014 )

In SFY 2014, the average monthly payment per child was **\$382**

In SFY 2014, the average monthly payment per family was **\$649**

Child Care Subsidy Program served **43,823** children in SFY 2014

## **Access and Quality of Preschool and Childcare Subgroup** *December 8 Meeting Notes*

### **Welcome**

Selena Mayo, the Chair of the Workgroup, welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves. The following workgroup members were in attendance:

Selena Mayo, Total Action for Progress (Head Start and Early Head Start provider)  
Bill Ermatinger, Huntington Ingalls/ Chamber of Commerce  
Senator Frank Ruff  
Phyllis Mondak, Special Education, Dept of Education  
Angelica Light, Elevate Early Education  
Barbara Newlin, Division of Childcare and Early Childhood, Dept of Social Services  
Toni Cacace-Beshears, VA Association for Early Childhood Education  
Josie Webster, VA Council for Private Education  
Sharon Veatch, Child Care Aware  
Alex London-Gross, Virginia Alliance of YMCAs  
Karen Lange, Regional Military Child Care Liaison, Child Care Aware  
Karen Gallagher, Child Development Center for Learning and Research, Virginia Tech  
September Jonas, Knowledge Universe

### **Virginia (VSQI) Briefing**

Kathy Glazer, of the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, provided an overview of quality rating systems as a promising practice throughout the country that benefits to families, communities and states in a variety of ways. Her presentation is online here:

Zelda Boyd, Virginia Department of Social Services, then addressed the recent changes in Virginia's rating system. Her presentation is online here:

[http://www.ltgov.virginia.gov/docs/120814\\_Access\\_VSQIPresentation.pdf](http://www.ltgov.virginia.gov/docs/120814_Access_VSQIPresentation.pdf)

As is an overview she shared of the standards:

[http://www.ltgov.virginia.gov/docs/120814\\_Access\\_VSQIOverview.pdf](http://www.ltgov.virginia.gov/docs/120814_Access_VSQIOverview.pdf)

Concerns were also raised about the DOD reimbursements for off-base care based on QRIS ratings, and Karen noted that they are starting to look beyond that but changes would require legislative action.

### **Current Child Care Licensing Standards and Concerns**

Jack Frazier, Department of Social Services, provided the group with a comprehensive overview of how the state regulates and licenses the wide variety of child care facilities and homes in the Commonwealth. His presentation and materials are online here:

[http://www.ltgov.virginia.gov/docs/120814\\_Access\\_LicensingRegsPPT.pdf](http://www.ltgov.virginia.gov/docs/120814_Access_LicensingRegsPPT.pdf)

[http://www.ltgov.virginia.gov/docs/120814\\_Access\\_ChildCareOverview.pdf](http://www.ltgov.virginia.gov/docs/120814_Access_ChildCareOverview.pdf)

A request was made that at future meetings the group hear about model regulatory structures in other states.

### **Discussion of Survey Results and Subgroup Priorities**

The group then spent time looking at the results (online here:

[http://www.ltgov.virginia.gov/docs/120814\\_Access\\_SurveyResults.pdf](http://www.ltgov.virginia.gov/docs/120814_Access_SurveyResults.pdf)) from the online survey that was circulated among group members prior to the meeting.

A great deal of the conversation focused on the “Swiss cheese” model of licensing that exists, and recognition that given the recent tragic deaths in unregulated homes, the General Assembly will likely take on some of these issues.

Discussion included recognition that any action the state takes to tighten licensing may drive other providers underground and that the tension is quite real. The goal for DSS is to bring as many providers into some form of registration without imposing such undue cost burdens that parents can no longer afford such settings.

Amy Atkinson, Director of the Virginia Commission on Youth, shared a draft letter with the group (online here: [http://www.ltgov.virginia.gov/docs/120814\\_VCOYLetter.pdf](http://www.ltgov.virginia.gov/docs/120814_VCOYLetter.pdf)) which bears a request from the Commission that the Council look at regulations around child care.

There was also discussion of the role of the interagency group the COY requested the Board of Education create in partnership with VECF, DSS, DOE and other stakeholders. The goal of that workgroup is to develop a competency-based professional development framework to inform the requirements and guidelines for pre-service education, in-service education, and training for early learning practitioners in all of Virginia’s early learning settings. Barb Newlin serves on that group and agreed to be a liaison between the two groups so that efforts are not duplicated.

After much discussion the group agreed on a shared vision that work will be focused on: that every child in the Commonwealth will have access to quality programs, which will be measured by their basic health (reduced deaths) and their PALS scores in kindergarten.

***What are the most pressing issues, related to access to and quality of child care and preschool, that you think need to be addressed by this workgroup?***

**Professional Development and Retention of Teachers:**

The need for consistent and quality professional development for the workforce available statewide. Build on the work of the Virginia Cross-sector Professional Development work group.

Professional development to support the workforce so they can and will work with children with diverse abilities and needs. We need to increase the number of placements that are of quality for the special needs population (children with disabilities, special health care needs, English language learners, etc)

Establish a competency-based professional development framework for early care and education practitioners in Virginia. Framework would inform the requirements and guidelines for pre-service education, in-service education and training for practitioners in all early care and education settings.

One of the most pressing issues related to access to and quality of child care and preschool is the retention of qualified teachers. This is due to the low pay and lack of benefits associated with the teaching positions. Often if a teacher is qualified with a degree, he/she will leave the position as soon as a teaching position in the public school system becomes available. As a result, programs are forced to hire new teachers with minimal education and experience. These teachers are implementing strategies such as how they were parented as a child or that were attempted during prior babysitting jobs.

Improving teacher qualifications can be financially challenging for programs. If teachers are trained during the day, then substitute teachers must be paid to staff the classrooms during the training. If teachers are trained after operating hours, then overtime compensation must be provided (even if free trainings can be located).

Provide training opportunities for childcare providers in health/wellness topics

Create a professional development system supported by licensing.

**Access:**

Availability of quality child care and early education - statewide

Business training for child care operators to increase likelihood of success

Development of strategies that promote the financial success of the early education and childcare industry

Lack of a clearinghouse for information for parents about childcare, health and support services

Ensure access to quality early childhood programs statewide. Examine the distribution of early childhood programs (Child Care, Head Start, VPI) throughout the state, Identify known quality providers, Identify service gaps, Identify strategies to expand the availability of quality early care and education; Expand QRIS.

**Quality:**

Selection and training of early education teachers

Lack of programmatic outcomes information required for evaluation

Establishing quality standards for Out of School Time and a system for data management

The financial limitations of programs is also a contributor to access and quality. Often a program is aware of what steps can be taken to promote quality (higher wages to retain qualified teachers, more nutritious meals, materials that facilitate growth in all developmental domains etc) however, revenues barely cover expenses or the program falls short of meeting all expenses.

Families are also limited to access and quality due to constraints within the household budget since programs that maintain higher standards of quality charge higher rates that are often not affordable. Additionally a family's understanding of quality, developmentally appropriate practices, and the natural progression of developmental milestones can impact how a school is selected.

### **VA's Quality Rating System:**

Voluntary nature of quality rating system

Improve Virginia's QRIS to include health standards

Expand QRIS

Updating QRIS standards for early childhood

Encourage/recruit more centers to participate in QRIS, provide resources to improve quality

### **Child Care Licensing:**

Strengthening child care regulations to support quality care (including fingerprint checks and lowering the licensing threshold)

Ensure child care licensing statutes adequately protect and promote children's' health, safety and well being.

Identify and eliminate statutory exceptions/exemptions that leave children unprotected; Require that child care providers participating in the State Child Care Subsidy Program be licensed.

Looking at current child care system and what needs to be added or changed to better protect children in care and to improve quality i.e. requiring fingerprint background checks, family child care threshold, 14 exemptions to licensing, creating a training and technical assistance system for child care providers, increasing wages for child care including subsidy reimbursements for vendors, improving the child care scholarship model to include and outcome based approach, transition from preschool/child care to school.

Defining childcare beyond preschool - including out-of-school time for elementary age

Create a professional development system supported by licensing.

### **Kindergarten Readiness Assessment:**

Development and adoption statewide of a comprehensive kindergarten readiness assessment would help pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers assess if children are ready for school and on track for school success; It would also help the Commonwealth gain greater insight as to types of early childhood experiences that correlate with school success.

### **Administration:**

Ensure maximum coordination between and among government agencies that oversee and/or interact with child care providers.

Identify the range of government (and possibly nonprofit organizations) with which child care providers interact and the nature and frequency of the interactions to identify if unnecessary duplication/overlap occurs, if unnecessary barriers exist that prohibit enhanced data sharing, and if better coordination or technology could streamline interactions and save time and money for all parties; Potential entities to participate in this analysis might include: Department of Health, USDA, VDSS Child Care Subsidy, Professional Development and Licensure Programs, Office of the Fire Marshall, Local governments (business licenses, zoning, etc.), Smart Beginnings Coalitions, Quality Rating and Improvement System Regional Coalitions, Others?

**Transitions:**

Promote alignment and smooth transition between segments of the early childhood education continuum. Prior to entering the first grade, it is not unusual for young children to be served in a number of early care settings including home or relative care, birth-to-three child care, a pre-kindergarten experience for four-year-olds, and then kindergarten for five-year-olds .

Because there is no unified “early childhood system,” early care and education professionals that purposefully align expectations and activities (through curriculum alignment, transition planning, portfolio development, and activities like “visits to the big school”) make it easier for children and their families to anticipate and succeed at each major step in early education

**Other:**

Build cross sector support for early childhood development, including: Identify and promote strategies to encourage private sector support for quality child care; Tax incentives, low interest loan programs, awards and recognition

Include community child care in pre-K

# Quality Rating & Improvement System

## *Virginia Star Quality Initiative*



# Quality Rating & Improvement System

- Voluntary, market-driven strategy adopted in almost every state in the nation
- A method to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early care and education settings/programs
- A system to address multiple aspects of early care and education through a uniform approach that is available throughout a state
- Scope may include a broad range of early care and education programs and funding streams (*NCCIC, 2006*)

# QRIS Participation in Virginia

- **Total number of eligible programs\*:** 5424 (7/2014)
- **2014 Baseline:** 8% (429) rated programs in VSQI (7/2014)
- **2016 Target:** 15% of eligible programs

**\*Eligible programs:** licensed child day centers, licensed family day homes, certified preschools, religious exempt child day centers, Head Start and Early Head Start, and Virginia Preschool Initiative programs

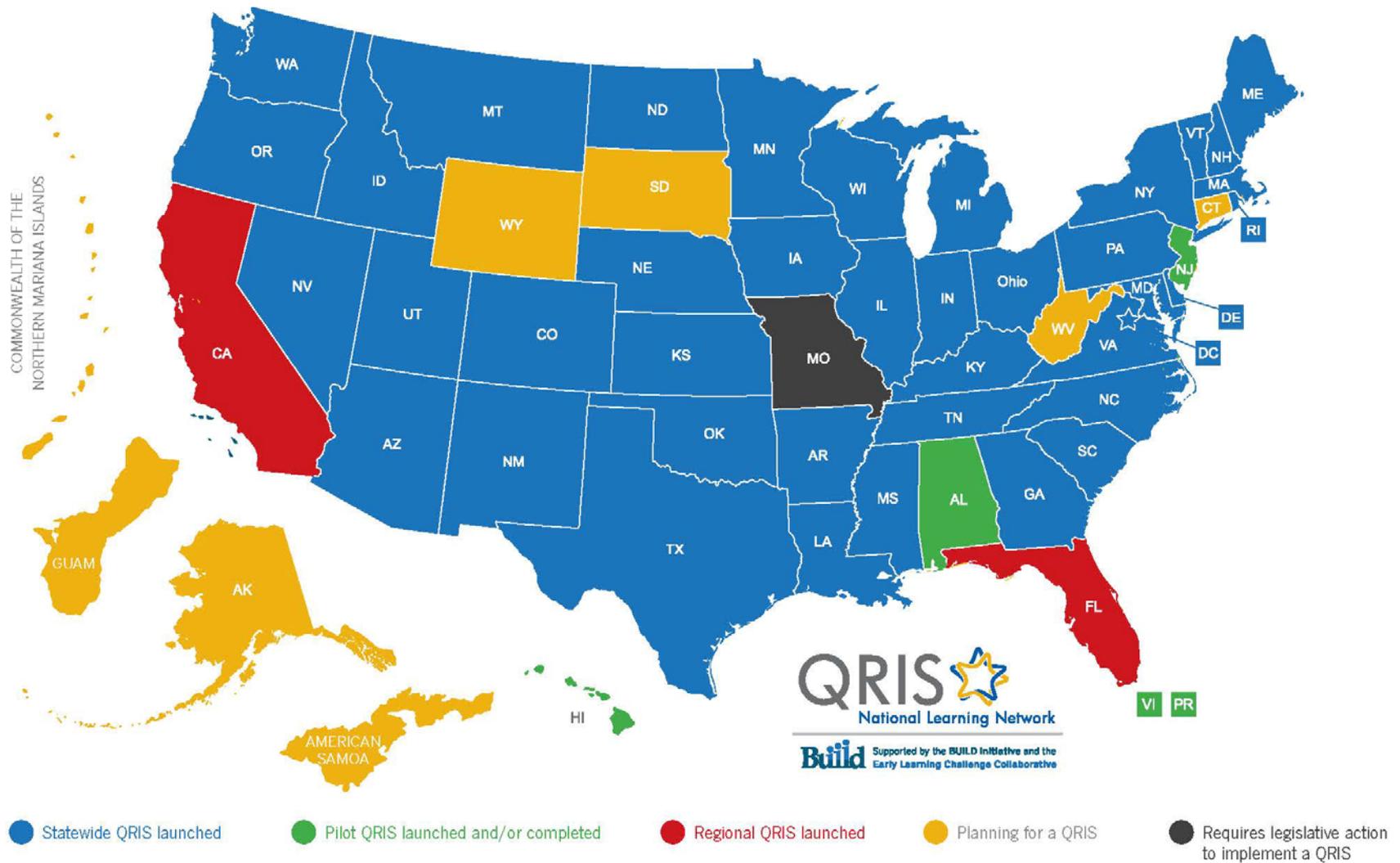
# Virginia Star Quality Initiative Regions

as of July 1, 2013

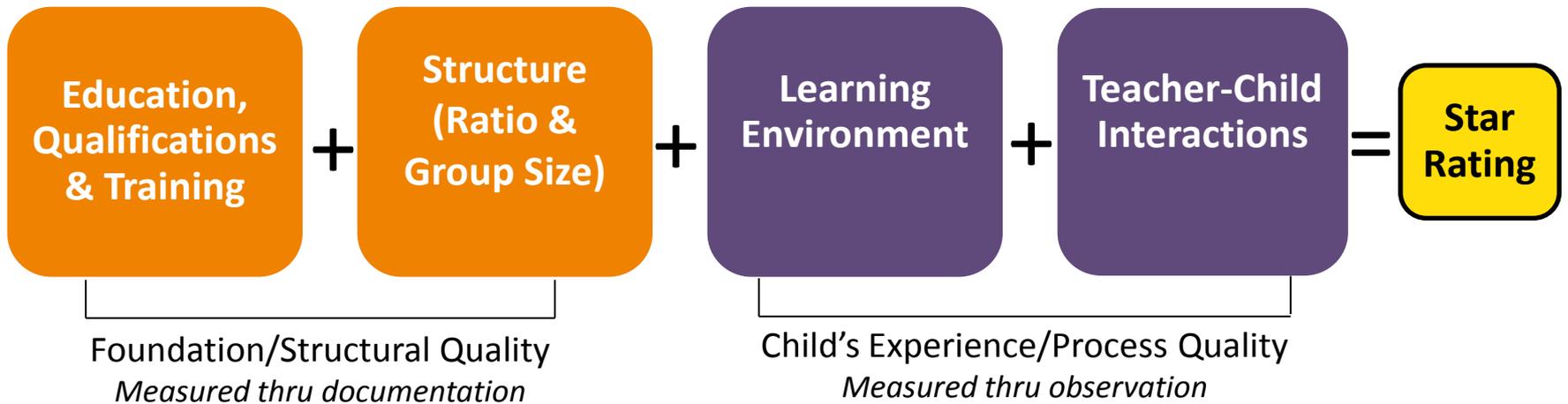


# Current Status of QRIS in States

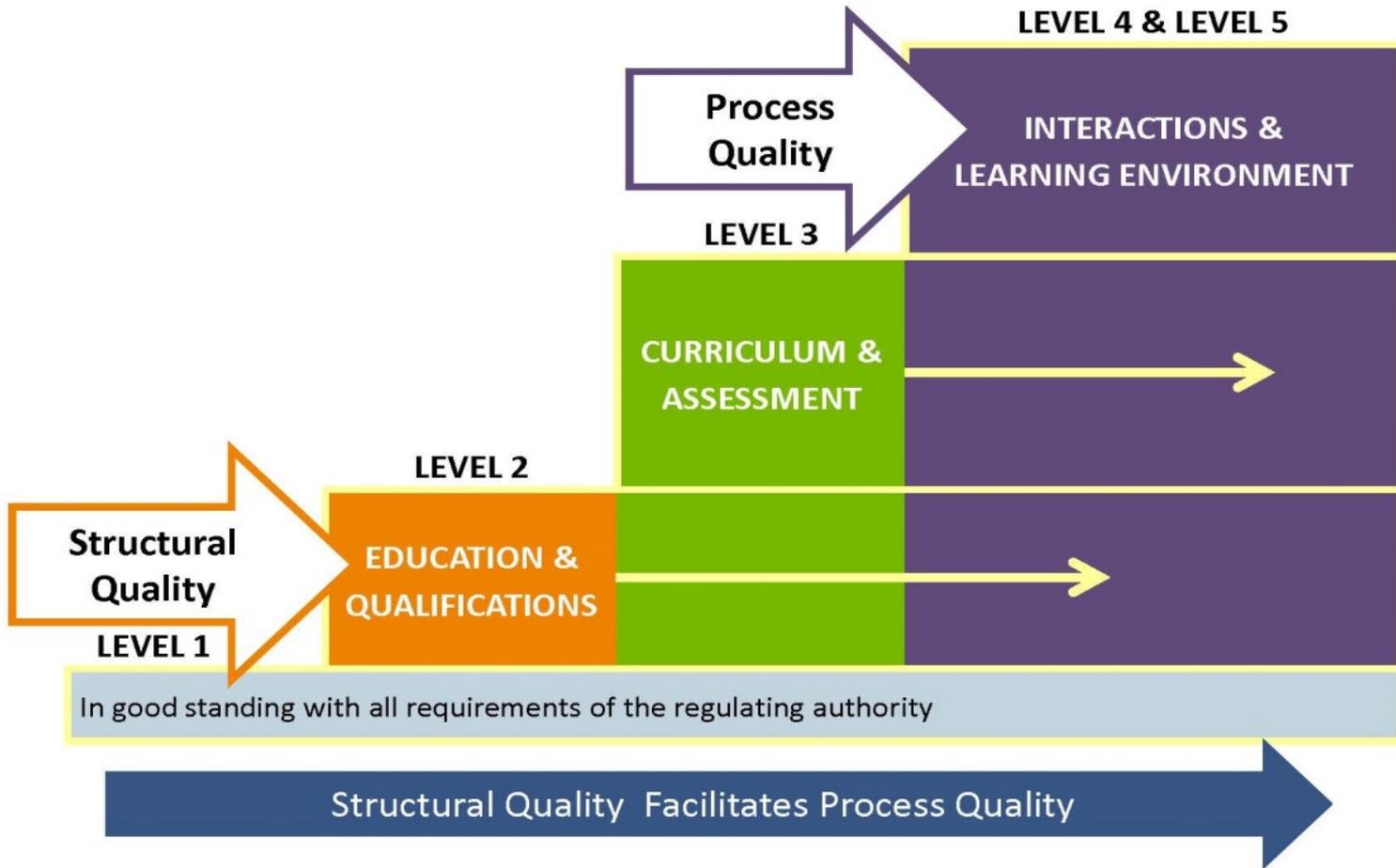
August 2014



# Star Quality 1.0



# Revised Framework





## Star Quality Standards for Child Care and Preschool Programs

			LEVEL 5	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LEVEL 1</b></p> <p><b>Basic Health &amp; Safety*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ In good standing with regulating authority requirements (e.g., Virginia Department of Social Services Licensing Standards, Virginia Board of Education Regulations, Head Start Performance Standards, Local Ordinance or Licensed Family Day System)</li> <li>□ Health &amp; Safety demonstrated</li> <li>□ Star Quality Profile completed</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LEVEL 2</b></p> <p><b>Education &amp; Qualifications</b> <i>Classroom-based Programs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ At least one (1) Administrator/Director meets Level 6 on Virginia's Early Childhood Career Lattice<sup>1</sup> <u>OR</u> has earned 24 child-related credits from an accredited college (or in progress)**</li> <li>□ At least 50% of Lead Teachers meet Level 3 on Virginia's Early Childhood Career Lattice<sup>2</sup> <u>OR</u> another approved credential, such as an American Montessori Society Credential (or in progress)**</li> <li>□ Online professional development (PD) series<sup>3</sup> completed</li> </ul> <p><i>Family Child Care Homes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ The Family Child Care Provider responsible for the direct supervision of children and delivery of the curriculum and instruction meets Level 3 on Virginia's Early Childhood Career Lattice<sup>2</sup> <u>OR</u> another approved credential, such as an American Montessori Society Credential (or in progress)**</li> <li>□ Online PD series completed</li> </ul> <p><b>Curriculum &amp; Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ PD on curriculum &amp; assessment</li> </ul> <p><b>Learning Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ PD on play-based learning environments</li> <li>□ Health &amp; safety checklist completed</li> </ul> <p><b>Teacher-Child Interactions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ PD on high quality interactions using the CLASS<sup>4</sup> system</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LEVEL 3</b></p> <p><b>Education &amp; Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Maintain requirements at previous levels</li> <li>□ Staff have 8-hours of training on implementing the identified curriculum or teaching framework</li> </ul> <p><b>Curriculum &amp; Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Completion of curriculum &amp; assessment checklist online to demonstrate selection and use of curriculum or other teaching framework aligned with best practices such as Virginia's Milestones of Child Development or Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning<sup>5</sup></li> <li>□ Visit by an external validator to confirm accuracy of curriculum &amp; assessment checklist through on-site observation (must be completed within 1 year of achieving Level 3 status)</li> <li>□ Participate in regional technical assistance (TA) on curriculum &amp; assessment</li> </ul> <p><b>Learning Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Complete Environment Rating Scale (ERS)<sup>6</sup> self-study using the appropriate tool for the ages served and setting</li> <li>□ Participate in regional TA on high quality learning environments</li> </ul> <p><b>Teacher-Child Interactions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Complete CLASS<sup>4</sup> self-study using the appropriate tool for ages served or participate in the Effective Classroom Interactions online course, if offered</li> <li>□ Participate in regional TA on high quality interactions</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LEVEL 4</b></p> <p><b>Education &amp; Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Maintain requirements at previous levels</li> </ul> <p><b>Curriculum &amp; Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Maintain requirements at previous levels</li> </ul> <p><b>Learning Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Achieve an average ERS score of 4 or higher across four subscales (Language-Reasoning/Listening and Talking, Activities, Interaction, and Program Structure)</li> <li>□ Participate in regional TA on high quality learning environments</li> </ul> <p><b>Teacher-Child Interactions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Achieve an average CLASS score of 5 or higher in Emotional Support &amp; Classroom Organization (Pre-K CLASS), Emotional and Behavioral Support (Toddler CLASS), and Relational Climate &amp; Teacher Sensitivity (Infant CLASS)</li> <li>□ Achieve an average CLASS score of 3.25 or higher in Instructional Support (Pre-K CLASS), Engaged Support for Learning Score (Toddler CLASS), and Facilitated Exploration &amp; Early Language Support (Infant CLASS)</li> <li>□ Participate in regional TA on high quality interactions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Education &amp; Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Maintain requirements at previous levels</li> </ul> <p><b>Curriculum &amp; Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Maintain requirements at previous levels</li> </ul> <p><b>Learning Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Achieve an average ERS score of 5 or higher across four subscales (Language-Reasoning/Listening and Talking, Activities, Interaction, and Program Structure)</li> <li>□ Participate in regional TA on high quality learning environments</li> </ul> <p><b>Teacher-Child Interactions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Achieve an average CLASS score of 6 or higher in Emotional Support &amp; Classroom Organization (Pre-K CLASS), Emotional and Behavioral Support (Toddler CLASS), and Relational Climate &amp; Teacher Sensitivity (Infant CLASS)</li> <li>□ Achieve an average CLASS score of 4.25 or higher in Instructional Support (Pre-K CLASS), Engaged Support for Learning Score (Toddler CLASS), and Facilitated Exploration &amp; Early Language Support (Infant CLASS)</li> <li>□ Participate in regional TA on high quality interactions</li> </ul>
<p>*Basic Health &amp; Safety requirements must be maintained to achieve any of the higher quality Levels</p> <p>**Programs may request a waiver to this requirement, provided that they meet all Level 3 requirements and are seeking a Level 4 or 5 observation</p> <p><sup>1</sup> Associate degree in a relevant field with a minimum of 15 child-related credits</p> <p><sup>2</sup> National Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) <u>OR</u> 12 total child-related credits <u>OR</u> Virginia approved/accepted training exceeding 120 clock hours or equivalent</p> <p><sup>3</sup> Includes training on topics like Inclusion, Kindergarten transition, Strengthening Families, Cultural Competence, Professional Development Plans, and Employee Orientation</p> <p><sup>4</sup> Go to <a href="http://teachstone.com">http://teachstone.com</a> for more information on the CLASS</p> <p><sup>5</sup> Alignment with the Foundation Blocks for Early Learning is required for all Virginia Preschool Initiative classrooms</p> <p><sup>6</sup> Go to <a href="http://ersi.info">http://ersi.info</a> for more information on the ERS</p>				

# Implementation Plan

## **Phase 1:** Fall 2014 (October-December 2014) – Info Launch

- Training on new standards for Star Quality Coordinators
- New standards posted online
- Programs will continue to be rated and participate in Star Quality 1.0

## **Phase 2:** Winter 2015 (January-March 2015) – Star Quality 2.0 Live

- New and existing programs can begin enrolling in Star Quality 2.0 on February 16, 2015
- Training on new standards for Star Quality Mentors and Raters
- Process evaluation begins

## **Phase 3:** Spring 2015 (April-June 2015) – Accelerated Options and Outreach Campaign

- Statewide Public Awareness campaign launched
- VPI, Head Start, and NAEYC accredited programs may apply for Level 4 and 5 through an accelerated process facilitated by quality standards crosswalks (other accrediting organizations interested in completing a crosswalk should contact: [gris@vecf.org](mailto:gris@vecf.org))
- Process evaluation continues

## **Phase 4:** Summer 2015 (July-September 2015) – Reflection and Refinement

- Process evaluation finalized
- Results reviewed and any needed adjustments to Star Quality 2.0 made

## **Phase 5:** Fall 2015 (October 2015) – Full Scale Implementation



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA  
*Commission on Youth*

Delegate Christopher K. Peace, *Chair*  
Senator Barbara A. Favola, *Vice Chair*

General Assembly Building  
201 N. 9th Street, Suite 269  
Richmond, Virginia 23219-0406

*Executive Director*  
Amy M. Atkinson

804-371-2481  
FAX 804-371-0574  
<http://vcoy.virginia.gov>

December 5, 2014

The Honorable Ralph S. Northam  
Lieutenant Governor of Virginia  
Office of the Lieutenant Governor  
P. O. Box 1195  
Richmond, VA 23218

Subject: Early Childhood Education – Workgroup on Quality

Dear Lieutenant Governor Northam:

I am writing regarding a legislative initiative recently conducted by the Virginia Commission on Youth. You may recall that the Commission convened the Early Childhood Education Workgroup on Quality on June 17 at the Capitol. The Workgroup brought together representatives from the General Assembly, the Executive Branch, the business community, and impacted stakeholders to investigate ways Virginia could invest in high-quality early childhood education. Attached is a copy of the Commission's Study Plan for your review.

The Workgroup identified that high-quality early childhood education is critical to success in school and to the future workforce. Investments in high-quality early education have demonstrated a \$7-10 return. In addition, there will be several opportunities over the coming year to enhance licensure and regulatory requirements in early learning. For example, the reauthorization of the federal *Child Care and Development Block Grant* (CCDBG) offers the opportunity to examine ways to link quality improvement with standards/regulations for early learning providers.

At the Commission's meeting on December 2, 2014, members, including Gubernatorial appointees, adopted a recommendation to be shared with the Executive Branch. This recommendation is outlined herein:

Request the Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success to investigate the development of a child care system where all providers, including home-based providers, be required to obtain a child care license and present on its activities to the Commission on Youth prior to the 2016 General Assembly Session.

The Honorable Ralph S. Northam  
December 5, 2014  
Page Two

The Commission respectfully requests your careful consideration of this recommendation. Please feel free to contact me or Mrs. Amy Atkinson, Executive Director, at 804-371-2481 or [aatkinson@vcoy.virginia.gov](mailto:aatkinson@vcoy.virginia.gov), if you have any questions or if you wish to schedule a meeting to discuss this study recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher K. Peace". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Christopher K. Peace

Enclosure

cc: Holly Coy  
Amy M. Atkinson



# Star Quality Standards for Child Care and Preschool Programs

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LEVEL 1</b></p> <p><b>Basic Health &amp; Safety*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ In good standing with regulating authority requirements (e.g., Virginia Department of Social Services Licensing Standards, Virginia Board of Education Regulations, Head Start Performance Standards, Local Ordinance or Licensed Family Day System)</li> <li>□ Health &amp; Safety demonstrated</li> <li>□ Star Quality Profile completed</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LEVEL 2</b></p> <p><b>Education &amp; Qualifications</b> <i>Classroom-based Programs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ At least one (1) Administrator/Director meets Level 6 on Virginia's Early Childhood Career Lattice<sup>1</sup> <b>OR</b> has earned 24 child-related credits from an accredited college (or in progress)**</li> <li>□ At least 50% of Lead Teachers meet Level 3 on Virginia's Early Childhood Career Lattice<sup>2</sup> <b>OR</b> another approved credential, such as an American Montessori Society Credential (or in progress)**</li> <li>□ Online professional development (PD) series<sup>3</sup> completed</li> </ul> <p><i>Family Child Care Homes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ The Family Child Care Provider responsible for the direct supervision of children and delivery of the curriculum and instruction meets Level 3 on Virginia's Early Childhood Career Lattice<sup>2</sup> <b>OR</b> another approved credential, such as an American Montessori Society Credential (or in progress)**</li> <li>□ Online PD series completed</li> </ul> <p><b>Curriculum &amp; Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ PD on curriculum &amp; assessment</li> </ul> <p><b>Learning Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ PD on play-based learning environments</li> <li>□ Health &amp; safety checklist completed</li> </ul> <p><b>Teacher-Child Interactions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ PD on high quality interactions using the CLASS<sup>4</sup> system</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LEVEL 3</b></p> <p><b>Education &amp; Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Maintain requirements at previous levels</li> <li>□ Staff have 8-hours of training on implementing the identified curriculum or teaching framework</li> </ul> <p><b>Curriculum &amp; Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Completion of curriculum &amp; assessment checklist online to demonstrate selection and use of curriculum or other teaching framework aligned with best practices such as Virginia's Milestones of Child Development or Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning<sup>5</sup></li> <li>□ Visit by an external validator to confirm accuracy of curriculum &amp; assessment checklist through on-site observation (must be completed within 1 year of achieving Level 3 status)</li> <li>□ Participate in regional technical assistance (TA) on curriculum &amp; assessment</li> </ul> <p><b>Learning Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Complete Environment Rating Scale (ERS)<sup>6</sup> self-study using the appropriate tool for the ages served and setting</li> <li>□ Participate in regional TA on high quality learning environments</li> </ul> <p><b>Teacher-Child Interactions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Complete CLASS<sup>4</sup> self-study using the appropriate tool for ages served or participate in the Effective Classroom Interactions online course, if offered</li> <li>□ Participate in regional TA on high quality interactions</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LEVEL 4</b></p> <p><b>Education &amp; Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Maintain requirements at previous levels</li> </ul> <p><b>Curriculum &amp; Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Maintain requirements at previous levels</li> </ul> <p><b>Learning Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Achieve an average ERS score of 4 or higher across four subscales (Language-Reasoning/Listening and Talking, Activities, Interaction, and Program Structure)</li> <li>□ Participate in regional TA on high quality learning environments</li> </ul> <p><b>Teacher-Child Interactions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Achieve an average CLASS score of 5 or higher in Emotional Support &amp; Classroom Organization (Pre-K CLASS), Emotional and Behavioral Support (Toddler CLASS), and Relational Climate &amp; Teacher Sensitivity (Infant CLASS)</li> <li>□ Achieve an average CLASS score of 3.25 or higher in Instructional Support (Pre-K CLASS), Engaged Support for Learning Score (Toddler CLASS), and Facilitated Exploration &amp; Early Language Support (Infant CLASS)</li> <li>□ Participate in regional TA on high quality interactions</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LEVEL 5</b></p> <p><b>Education &amp; Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Maintain requirements at previous levels</li> </ul> <p><b>Curriculum &amp; Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Maintain requirements at previous levels</li> </ul> <p><b>Learning Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Achieve an average ERS score of 5 or higher across four subscales (Language-Reasoning/Listening and Talking, Activities, Interaction, and Program Structure)</li> <li>□ Participate in regional TA on high quality learning environments</li> </ul> <p><b>Teacher-Child Interactions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Achieve an average CLASS score of 6 or higher in Emotional Support &amp; Classroom Organization (Pre-K CLASS), Emotional and Behavioral Support (Toddler CLASS), and Relational Climate &amp; Teacher Sensitivity (Infant CLASS)</li> <li>□ Achieve an average CLASS score of 4.25 or higher in Instructional Support (Pre-K CLASS), Engaged Support for Learning Score (Toddler CLASS), and Facilitated Exploration &amp; Early Language Support (Infant CLASS)</li> <li>□ Participate in regional TA on high quality interactions</li> </ul>
<p>*Basic Health &amp; Safety requirements must be maintained to achieve any of the higher quality Levels</p> <p>**Programs may request a waiver to this requirement, provided that they meet all Level 3 requirements and are seeking a Level 4 or 5 observation</p> <p><sup>1</sup> Associate degree in a relevant field with a minimum of 15 child-related credits</p> <p><sup>2</sup> National Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) <b>OR</b> 12 total child-related credits <b>OR</b> Virginia approved/accepted training exceeding 120 clock hours or equivalent</p> <p><sup>3</sup> Includes training on topics like Inclusion, Kindergarten transition, Strengthening Families, Cultural Competence, Professional Development Plans, and Employee Orientation</p> <p><sup>4</sup> Go to <a href="http://teachstone.com">http://teachstone.com</a> for more information on the CLASS</p> <p><sup>5</sup> Alignment with the Foundation Blocks for Early Learning is required for all Virginia Preschool Initiative classrooms</p> <p><sup>6</sup> Go to <a href="http://ersi.info">http://ersi.info</a> for more information on the ERS</p>				