Structural Clarification Guide
Center-Based
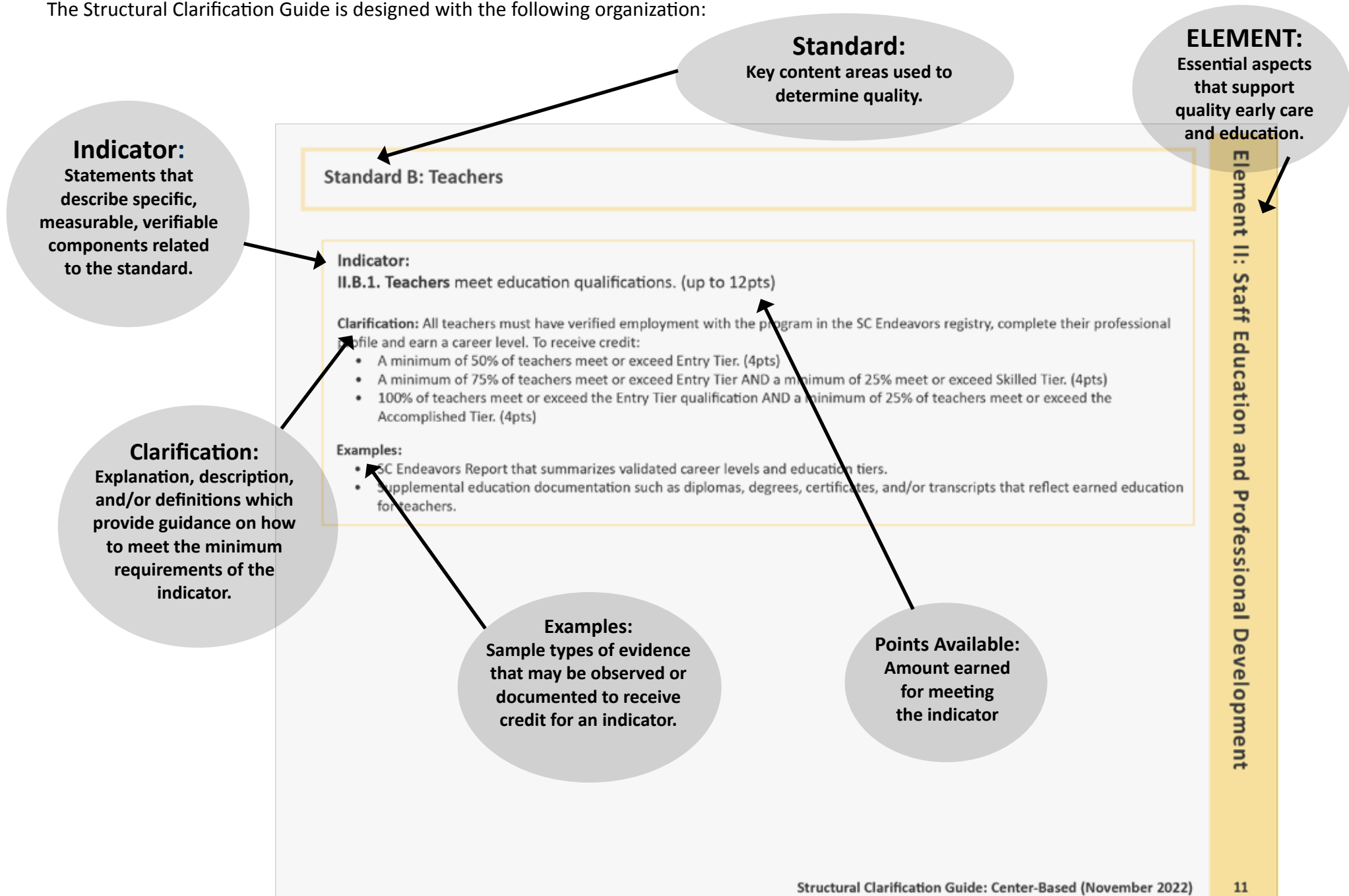
ABC Quality

DSS SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT *of* SOCIAL SERVICES

Contents

Organization of the Structural Clarification Guide

The *Structural Clarification Guide: Center-based* is a classroom assessment designed to evaluate childcare classrooms serving children ages 0 to 5. The Structural Clarification Guide is designed with the following organization:

Standard:
Key content areas used to determine quality.

ELEMENT:
Essential aspects that support quality early care and education.

Indicator:
Statements that describe specific, measurable, verifiable components related to the standard.

Clarification:
Explanation, description, and/or definitions which provide guidance on how to meet the minimum requirements of the indicator.

Examples:
Sample types of evidence that may be observed or documented to receive credit for an indicator.

Points Available:
Amount earned for meeting the indicator

Standard B: Teachers

Indicator:
II.B.1. Teachers meet education qualifications. (up to 12pts)

Clarification: All teachers must have verified employment with the program in the SC Endeavors registry, complete their professional profile and earn a career level. To receive credit:
- A minimum of 50% of teachers meet or exceed Entry Tier. (4pts)
- A minimum of 75% of teachers meet or exceed Entry Tier AND a minimum of 25% meet or exceed Skilled Tier. (4pts)
- 100% of teachers meet or exceed the Entry Tier qualification AND a minimum of 25% of teachers meet or exceed the Accomplished Tier. (4pts)

Examples:
- SC Endeavors Report that summarizes validated career levels and education tiers.
- Supplemental education documentation such as diplomas, degrees, certificates, and/or transcripts that reflect earned education for teachers.

Element II: Staff Education and Professional Development

Structural Quality Portfolio Documentation and Scoring

Programs submit evidence that showcase their strengths to meet the intention of the structural quality indicators as a part of their ABC Quality review in the SC Endeavors Registry. Once programs access their Structural Quality Portfolio they are able to electronically upload appropriate documentation or evidence for each indicator.

Each program is encouraged to collect evidence that is meaningful and relevant to them. Programs are not expected to meet and provide evidence for each indicator, but instead to collect only evidence for indicators that are currently being implemented or practiced at the time of the review. Therefore, programs also have the option to select that they do not yet meet the indicator.

In order to submit for scoring, all elements within the online portfolio must be reviewed and each of the indicators must be answered. Once submitted a Quality Assessor reviews the evidence and determines if it meets the requirements of the indicators. If met, points are applied towards their Structural Quality score.

Once scored, the Structural Quality Portfolio showcases a program's strengths within the elements of:
- Program Administration and Structure
- Staff Education and Professional Development
- Child Well-being
- Family Communication, Engagement and Cultural Competence

ELEMENT I: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND STRUCTURE

The program's leadership provides organizational structure and operational supports to strengthen the overall effectiveness of the program for staff, children, and families.

Standard A: Organizational Structure/Program Operations

Standard B: Policies and Procedures Relating to the Care of Children

Standard A: Organizational Structure/Program Operations

Indicator:

I.A.1. The program utilizes staff and parent program evaluations to inform written plans for continuous quality improvement. (3 pts)

Clarification: Program evaluation is a tool for gathering feedback from the stakeholders (parents and staff) regarding their satisfaction and program effectiveness. Program evaluation data becomes purposeful when it informs program leadership on continuous quality improvement. The following components must be present: evaluation feedback (e.g. surveys, questionnaires, suggestion box) from both parents and staff, as well as, plans/goals/action taken as a result of feedback. To receive credit, evidence of all components must be submitted.

Examples:
- Sample parent evaluation and staff evaluation forms.
- Goals from strategic plan or quality improvement plan are labeled as developed by evaluations from staff/parents.
- Written program log of feedback from evaluations and description of how it is used to develop goals for quality improvement.

Standard B: Policies and Procedures Relating to the Care of Children

Indicator:
I.B.1. The program has a transition policy that includes practices to support successful **internal transitions** and **external transitions**. (2 pts)

Clarification: Internal transitions are when children move to new classrooms within the center. The internal transition policy describes criteria for determining when a child may transition and how often children are transitioned to other classrooms. It also describes the practices that the program has put in place to support successful transitions within the program. The internal transition plan limits changes to not more than once a year. External transitions are when new children join the program or a child permanently leaves the program to attend another program or school environment. The external transition policy describes how the program supports children and their families as they arrive and/or leave to prepare for a new environment. The following components must be present: internal transition policy, which includes limiting transitions to no more than once per year and an external transition policy. To receive credit, evidence of all components must be submitted.

Example: Written program policy describing internal transitions to include frequency, and how external transitions are supported.

Indicator:

I.B.2. The program has a written Inclusion Policy. (up to 4 pts)

Clarification: Inclusion is when children of all abilities have equal access and opportunities to interact meaningfully with their peers and environment. Developing an Inclusion Policy supports high quality learning and care for all children. There are two parts to this indicator.

> **Part A:** The program's **Inclusion Policy** includes: (2 pts)
> - **Nondiscrimination** and **confidentiality** statements;
> - A description of **communication strategies** used with parents to learn about individual child needs and necessary supports for the child's inclusion and participation;
> - A process for determining reasonable **modifications and accommodations** to include children with varying abilities in all activities and routines; and
> - **Specialized services** to support children with disabilities that are carried out in the classroom setting.
> - Accommodation for individual allergic needs of children.

> **Part B:** The program's **Inclusion Policy** includes: (2pts)
> - Plans for teachers to participate in the Individualized Care Plans (**Individualized Family Service Plan** (IFSP) and/or **Individualized Education Plan** (IEP) if parents request; and
> - Plans for teachers to use goals from the IFSP/IEP to support a child's individual learning.

To receive credit, evidence of all components for Part A and/or Part B must be submitted. These components may appear separately in different parts of program's policy manual/handbooks, which can be uploaded as separate documents.

Example: Program's written Inclusion Policy that addresses the required components for Part A and/or Part B.

ELEMENT II: STAFF EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The program ensures that administrators and teachers are well-educated and well-trained in the field of Early Care and Education. The program supports staff's continuing professional development.

- Standard A: Education - Program Leadership/Administrators
- Standard B: Education - Teachers
- Standard C: Staff Evaluation and Ongoing Professional Development

Education Tiers:

SC Endeavors has a Career Ladder which is aligned to the ABC Quality Education Tiers. ABC Quality partners with SC Endeavors for the evaluation of education documents. Refer to the Early Care and Education Career Ladder to find education qualifications at the color-coded Education Tier levels.

Note:

Each Education Tier is built on the foundation of meeting the staffing qualifications defined in the Child Care Licensing Regulations (114-503 K). A high school diploma or GED is the minimum staff qualification for Child Care Licensing and therefore does NOT meet any of the Education Tiers. Early care and education professionals are encouraged to move up the tiers to advance their practice and understanding in the field.

Early Care and Education Career Ladder

Created to support the professional development system for early care and education professionals developed by SC Endeavors and funded by the Department of Social Services.

LEVEL 1	■ High school diploma or equivalent
LEVEL 2	■ SC Early Childhood Education Credential Level 1 – (3 ECE credit hours) ■ Degree out of field with no ECE credit hours
LEVEL 3	■ SC Early Childhood Education Credential Level 2 – (12 ECE credit hours) ■ Current/Valid National Child Development Associate (CDA)
LEVEL 4	■ SC Early Childhood Education Credential Level 3 – (21 ECE credit hours) ■ Early Childhood Certificate/Diploma – (27 ECE credit hours)
LEVEL 5	■ Associate's Degree in a related field with 18 ECE credit hours ■ Bachelor's Degree out of field with 12 ECE credit hours
LEVEL 6	■ Montessori Certification AMI/USA or AMS ■ Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Educaton ■ Bachelor's Degree in related field with 12 ECE credit hours ■ Bachelor's Degree out of field with 27 ECE credit hours
LEVEL 7	■ Bachelor's Degree in a related field with 18 ECE credit hours
LEVEL 8	■ Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood ■ Master's Degree in a related field with 18 ECE credit hours
LEVEL 9	■ Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education ■ Doctoral Degree in related field with 18 ECE credit hours
LEVEL 10	■ Doctoral Degree in Early Childhood Education

■ Entry Education Tier in ABCQ
■ Skilled Education Tier in ABCQ
■ Accomplished Education Tier in ABCQ

SC Endeavors
P.O. Box 5616
Greenville, SC 29606-5616

864.250.8581 OFFICE
866.845.1555 TOLL FREE

Standard A: Program Leadership/Administrators

Indicator:

II.A.1. All **program leadership/administrators** meet education qualifications. (Up to 12pts)

Clarification: All program leadership/administrator must have verified employment with the program in the SC Endeavors registry, complete their professional profile and earn a career level. To receive credit:
- All program leadership/administrators meet or exceed Entry Tier (4pts)
- All program leadership/administrators meet or exceed Entry Tier AND at least one administrator meets or exceeds Skilled Tier. (4pts)
- All program leadership/administrators meet or exceed the Skilled Tier qualification AND at least one Administrator meets or exceed the Accomplished Tier. (4pts)

Examples:
- SC Endeavors Report that summarizes validated career levels and education tiers.
- Supplemental education documentation such as diplomas, degrees, certificates, and/or transcripts that reflect earned education for program leadership/administrators.

Standard B: Teachers

Indicator:

II.B.1. Teachers meet education qualifications. (up to 12pts)

Clarification: All teachers must have verified employment with the program in the SC Endeavors registry, complete their professional profile and earn a career level. To receive credit:
- A minimum of 50% of teachers meet or exceed Entry Tier. (4pts)
- A minimum of 75% of teachers meet or exceed Entry Tier AND a minimum of 25% meet or exceed Skilled Tier. (4pts)
- 100% of teachers meet or exceed the Entry Tier qualification AND a minimum of 25% of teachers meet or exceed the Accomplished Tier. (4pts)

Examples:
- SC Endeavors Report that summarizes validated career levels and education tiers.
- Supplemental education documentation such as diplomas, degrees, certificates, and/or transcripts that reflect earned education for teachers.

Standard C: Staff Evaluation and Ongoing Professional Development

Indicator:

II.C.1. Program leadership provides early care and education professionals with an annual written evaluation based on supervision and observation of performance, which includes feedback on strengths and areas that need improvement. (up to 3pts)

Clarification: There are two parts to this indicator:
- Part A: Written, annual staff evaluations are conducted by the program leadership. (1pt)
- Part B: The staff evaluation provides performance feedback to employees, includes both strengths and areas in need of improvement. Strengths and weaknesses can come in the form of a rating scale, open-ended comments, checklists, and/or feedback from performance evaluations. (2pts)

To receive credit, evidence of Part A and/or Part B must be submitted.

Examples:
- Sample staff evaluation with feedback that includes protocol on how frequently they are conducted.
- Written policy that details the staff evaluation process.

Indicator:

II.C.2. The results of written evaluations inform staff **professional development plans** and/or targeted staff supports to improve practice. (2 pts)

Clarification: Staff evaluations are used to support staff in their professional growth. Program leadership may identify areas that need improvement/goals, or a teacher may express areas of interest during the evaluation process. Once identified, professional development plans and/or targeted staff supports are located to enhance learning and improvement of practice. To receive credit, evidence of how staff evaluations are used to support professional growth must be submitted.

Examples:
- Sample staff evaluation that has section regarding next steps/targeted supports.
- Professional Development Plans are developed and/or edited based on staff evaluations.
- Policy in the staff handbook regarding how staff evaluations determine professional development plans and/or other supports.

Indicator:
II.C.3. The program's early care and education professionals utilize an individualized **professional development** plan. (2 pts)

Clarification: A Professional Development Plan is a written roadmap for an individual's skills practice, training and/or educational goals. It can be based on areas identified as needing improvement during the written evaluation. To receive credit, submitted Individualized Professional Development Plans must include timeframes to meet goals.

Example: Sample of professional development plan.

Indicator:
II.C.4. All **program leadership/administrators** exceed 20 hours of training in the calendar year (Jan – Dec). (2 pts)

Clarification: South Carolina regulations require that child care directors receive 20 hours of training each year. ABC Quality expects program leadership/administrators to go above and beyond minimum standards. Training hours are verified on the PREVIOUS calendar year. All training must be recorded on the SC Endeavors learning record/training transcripts. To receive credit, all of the program's leadership staff must exceed 20 hours of annual training. New employees hired with the previous calendar year will be required to exceed a pro-rated number of hours based on the number of months employed. New employees who have been hired within the calendar year of their current ABCQ Assessment will not be included in total.

Example: SC Endeavors report.

Indicator:

II.C.5. Teachers exceed minimum standards for annual training. (Up to 4 pts)

Clarification: South Carolina regulations require that child care professionals (excluding Emergency Persons) receive 15 hours of training each year. ABC Quality expects teachers to go above and beyond minimum standards. Training hours are verified based on the PREVIOUS calendar year. All training must be recorded on the SC Endeavors learning record/training transcripts. New employees hired within the previous calendar year will be required to exceed the pro-rated number of hours based on the number of months employed. New employees who have been hired within the calendar year of their current ABCQ assessment will not be included in the total.

To receive credit:
- At least 50% of teachers exceed 15 hours (1 pt)
- At least 75% of teachers meet or exceed 20 hours (1 pt)
- 100% of teachers meet or exceed 20 hours (2 pts)

Example: SC Endeavors report.

Indicator:

II.C.6. All staff receive specific training in evidence-based practices and supports for social-emotional development and behavioral health. (1 pt)

Clarification: Within the annual training hours that staff receive, 1 hour must cover topics that support children's social emotional development. Topics could include: positive guidance strategies, developing friendships, and supporting children's social, emotional, mental or behavioral health. Training hours are verified based on the PREVIOUS calendar year (Jan.-Dec.). Training will be counted only if the training is approved through SC Endeavors (registered and/or certified). New employees who have not been employed for a full calendar year are not included in the staff who need to meet this indicator. Emergency persons are not included in the calculations for staff. To receive credit, all staff must receive at least 1 hour of annual training in social-emotional development and/or behavioral health.

Example: SC Endeavors report that documents relevant training for staff in social-emotional development such as:
- Pyramid Model http://www.pyramidmodel.org
- Conscious Discipline https://consciousdiscipline.com
- Child Guidance
- Trauma-informed care
- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- SC Endeavors report or supplemental information: If a training is not identified with the social-emotional qualification, please submit the training event ID listed on training section of the personal profile in the SC Endeavors registry in order to verify content area.

Indicator:

II.C.7. All staff receive at least one hour of training related to breastfeeding, infant feeding or child nutrition each calendar year. (1 pt)

Clarification: Within the annual training hours that staff receive, 1 hour must cover child nutrition, breastfeeding, infant feeding, and/or USDA meal requirements. Training hours are verified based on the PREVIOUS calendar year (Jan.-Dec.). Training will be counted only if the training is approved through SC Endeavors (registered and/or certified). New employees who have not been employed for a full calendar year are not included in the staff who need to meet this indicator. Emergency persons are not included in the calculations for staff. To receive credit, all staff must receive at least 1 hour of annual training in child nutrition.

Examples:
- SC Endeavors report and/or supplemental information that documents relevant training for staff in breastfeeding, infant feeding or child nutrition.
- SC Endeavors report or supplemental information: If a training is not identified with the child nutrition qualification, please submit the training event ID listed on training section of the personal profile in the SC Endeavors registry in order to verify content area.

Indicator:

II.C.8. All staff receive at least one hour of training related to children's movement/physical activity each calendar year. (1 pt)

Clarification: Within the annual training hours that staff receive, 1 hour must cover children's physical activity. Physical activities are those activities that supports gross motor development and planning for indoor/outdoor movement activities. Training hours are verified based on the PREVIOUS calendar year. Training will be counted only if the training is approved through SC Endeavors (registered and/or certified). New employees who have not been employed for a full calendar year are not included in the staff who need to meet this indicator. Emergency persons are not included in the calculations for staff. To receive credit, all staff must receive at least 1 hour of annual training in children's movement and/or physical activity.

Examples:
- SC Endeavors report and/or supplemental information that documents relevant training for staff in children's movement and/or physical activity.
- SC Endeavors report or supplemental information: If a training is not identified with the physical activity qualification, please submit the training event ID listed on training section of the personal profile in the SC Endeavors registry in order to verify content area.

Indicator:
II.C.9. The program has a written plan/procedure for staff orientation. (Up to 3 pts)

Clarification: There are two parts to this indicator.
    Part A: The program has a written staff orientation plan/procedure that states it is conducted within 30 days for new hires. (1pt)
    Part B: The orientation must provide staff with information about the program and review the following topic areas: parent and family handbook/policies, personnel policies/staff handbook, job description and ABC Quality Standards. (2pts)

To receive credit, evidence of Part A and/or Part B must be submitted.

Examples:
- Staff Orientation checklist that states when it is conducted and lists the topics that are covered.
- Staff Orientation policy/procedure explains that the orientation is conducted within 30 days of hiring new employees that lists what content is covered.
- Staff Orientation training plan that states what content is covered and notes that it was conducted for a new employee who was hired within the past 30 days.

ELEMENT III: CHILD WELL-BEING

The program supports children's well-being through policies, procedures, and support services that are essential for healthy growth, learning, and development.

Standard A: Nutrition
Standard B: Physical Health
Standard C: Healthy Social-Emotional Development (Mental Health)
Standard D: Child Screening and Referrals

Standard A: Nutrition

Indicator:

III.A.1. The program has a nutrition policy to support the health and well-being of children. (Up to 3 pts)

Clarification: Nutrition education and positive food experiences are ways programs help children increase understanding of the relationship between food and health, shape their attitudes toward food, and build a foundation for healthy eating habits for a lifetime. Developing a Nutrition Policy guides programs' practices related to meals, accommodations and nutrition education.

There are three parts to this indicator:

Part A: The program's **Nutrition Policy** includes: (1pt)
- Plans to ensure that children receive healthy and well-balanced meals that meet nutritional requirements by following the USDA CACFP meal pattern requirements for all meals/snacks;
- Prohibition on using food as reward/punishment; and
- Accommodation for individual allergic needs of children.

Part B: The program's **Nutrition Policy** includes: (1pt)
- All components in Part A
- Accommodation of special dietary requirements of children based on physical, religious or cultural beliefs;
- Planned and/or informal opportunities to learn about healthy eating are provided to children at least once a week; and
- Teacher practices to encourage healthy eating.

Part C: The program's **Nutrition Policy** includes: (1pt)
- Meets all component for Part A and B
- Guidelines for foods offered during holidays and celebrations;
- Plans to educate families about child nutrition; (Plan to educate parents can come in the form of a policy or evidence of brochures/handouts or other types of nutritional education)
- Plans for fund-raising with non-food items (If the program does not conduct any fundraising, credit can still be received, however this must be documented by the program).

To receive credit, evidence of all components for Part A, Part B, or Part C must be submitted. These components may appear separately in different parts of program's policy manual/handbooks.

Example: Program's nutrition policies and discipline policy if necessary (may be a part of staff and/or parent handbook).

Indicator:

III.A.2.* The program develops and maintains menus that reflect nutritionally, well-balanced healthy meals and/or snacks for all children. (Up to 3 pts)

Clarification: Programs that offer meals and/or snacks to children in their care play an important role in supporting health, wellness and development through the provision of nutritious food and beverages. Menu planning facilitates the purchase and preparation of meals and/or snacks to ensure they are balanced and nutritionally adequate. Menus must be current (dated within 45 days of the submission) and clearly labeled (e.g. 100% juice, unflavored 1% milk, whole grain) for all meals and snacks provided. Two weeks of menus must be submitted. If additional weeks of menus are submitted, all will be evaluated to ensure compliance.

There are three parts to this indicator:

Part A: The program's **Menus** reflect: (1 pt.)
- All meals and/or snacks are planned and served to meet children's nutritional requirements as recommended by following the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program meal pattern requirements;
- Unflavored whole milk must be served to 1 year olds; unflavored skim or 1% milk must be served to children 2 years and older;
- 100% juice is allowed once per day in the appropriate serving size;
- Sweet foods are served no more than two times per week; and
- Sugar-sweetened beverages are not served.

Part B: The program's **Menus** reflect all of Part A and: (1 pt.)

For programs serving a) 2 meals and 1 snack or b) lunch and 2 snacks or c) lunch and 1 snack:
- Fruit (not juice) is served at least two times per day;
- A vegetable, other than white potatoes, is served at least once per day;
- Whole grain foods are served at least once per day;
- High-fat meats are served no more than two times per week; and
- Fried/pre-fried foods are served no more than one time per week.

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

Part C: The program's **Menus** reflect all of Part A, Part B, and: (1 pt.)
- A vegetable, other than white potatoes, is served at least two times per day; (Not required for programs serving a snack only)
- Whole grain foods are served at least two times per day; (Not required for programs serving a snack only)
- Sweet foods are served no more than one time per week;
- High-fat meats are served no more than one time per week; and
- Fried/pre-fried foods are served no more than one time in a two-week period.

To receive credit, each menu submitted must meet of all components for Part A, Part B, or Part C. This indicator is not applicable to programs that do not serve any meals and/or snacks. *N/A for programs where parents provide ALL meals and snacks.

Example: 2 weeks of current menus.

Element III: Child Well-being

Standard B: Physical Health

Indicator:

III.B.1. The program's **physical activity policy** and practices encourage the well-being of children. (Up to 3 pts)

Clarification: Physical Activity is vital to children's overall health and development. The benefits of physical activity include but are not limited to cardiovascular health; stronger muscles and bones; improved coordination, balance, posture and flexibility; emotional development and social competence. Developing a Physical Activity policy guides program practices that encourage movement, limit screen time and promote and active lifestyle.

There are three parts to this indicator:

Part A: The program's physical activity policy includes: (1pt)
- Promotion of a safe, **least restrictive environment** for infants and toddlers at all times;
- No **screen time**, media viewing, or computer use for children under age 2;
- Not using or withholding physical activity as punishment.
- Frequency and amount of time provided for daily active outdoor play for all children.
- Description of appropriate dress for outdoor play.
- Teacher practices that encourage physical activity.

Part B: The program's physical activity policy includes all of Part A and: (1pt)
- Education provided to families about children's physical activity.
- Education provided to families about limiting screen time.

Part C: The program's physical activity policy includes all of Part A, Part B and: (1pt)
- Plan that provides for indoor active play to be provided, equivalent to the amount of time allocated for outdoor play, in the event of **inclement weather.**
- Limits to the amount of screen time, media viewing, or computer use allowed for children age 2 and older.

To receive credit, the program's written physical activity policy and/or practices must meet all the components for Part A, Part B, or Part C. However, these components may appear separately in different parts of program's policy manual/handbooks/planning.

Examples:
- Program's written physical activity policy and if needed, discipline policy (may be a part of staff and/or parent handbook).
- Agenda from parent meetings.
- Brochures/handouts/newsletters.

Standard C: Healthy Social-Emotional Development (Mental Health)

Indicator:

III.C.1. The program's **discipline policy** is founded in an understanding of social-emotional development/ behavioral health. The program staff collaborate with parents to plan developmentally appropriate, evidence-based strategies to support children with challenging behaviors. (Up to 4 pts)

Clarification: Positive guidance promotes self-control, teaches responsibility and helps children make thoughtful choices. It is the shared responsibility of families and programs that requires mutual respect and collaboration between home and care provider. A written discipline policy supports programs and families to promote the intentional teaching of social-emotional skills as they guide children toward positive behavior choices.

There are two parts to this indicator:

Part A: A program's discipline policy must outline the positive guidance strategies that will be used to prevent challenging behaviors and appropriately respond to challenging behaviors. These strategies must be developmentally appropriate and promote the social-emotional and well-being of children. (2pts)

Part B: Must meet Part A AND program staff (administrators, teachers) and parents work together to teach children appropriate behaviors to meet their needs. The strategies to teach these behaviors must be developmentally appropriate and evidence-based. (2pts)

To receive full credit, evidence for Part A and Part B must be submitted.

Examples:
- Program's discipline policy that outlines positive guidance strategies.
- Written guidance policy that describes how strategies are developed jointly with parents and program.
- Program's policy describes how they support early identification of child's mental health needs in partnership with the family.
- Family/teacher conferences regarding behavior.

Indicator:

III.C.2. The program adopts a policy to limit or eliminate **suspension and expulsion**. (3pts)

Clarification: The program's written policy includes how it limits or eliminates suspension and expulsion. The program's policy must include the following components: prevention measures, parent and program collaboration strategies, alternative options, and transition process. The transition process is not required if suspension & expulsion are eliminated. To receive credit, evidence of a written policy that includes all components must be submitted.

Example: Program's written policy limits or eliminates the use of suspension and expulsion.

Standard D: Child Screening and Referrals

Indicator:

III.D.1. The program conducts developmental, vision and hearing screenings and shares information about a child's growth and progress, based on results of the screenings, with families confidentially according to the instruments' implementation timeframe. (up to 6 pts)

Clarification: Developmental screenings provide a snapshot of children's development at that time. These tools capture areas of children's strengths as well as areas that may need additional support and/or intervention.

There are three parts to this indicator:

Part A: The program utilizes a nationally recognized developmental screening tool. Screenings are conducted annually for all children who are not enrolled in school. (2pts)

Part B: Part A must be met AND within 90 days of enrollment developmental, hearing and vision screenings are conducted on all children. Vision and hearing screening may be provided on site or off site by a local health professional and/or community agency. Parents may provide the program a statement that these screening have been conducted by their health professional. (2pts)

Part C: Part A must be met AND information about a child's growth and progress, based on results of the screenings, is shared with families confidentially according to the instruments' implementation timeframe. (2pts)

To receive full credit, Part A, Part B, and Part C must be met. To receive credit for Part B or Part C, Part A must be met.

Examples:

Part A:
- Written program policy or sample parental consent form that describes and explains what and how often a national recognized screening tool is used by the program to screen all children. Such as:
- The Ages and Stages Questionnaires©, Third Edition (ASQ-3TM) is widely used developmental screening tool to determine if young children (1 month-5 ½ years) are at risk for a developmental delay.
- The Battelle Developmental Inventory.
- Brigance IED III.

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

Part C:
- Program policy regarding families receiving the information and results of the screenings being conducted.
- Agenda from parent-teacher conference that includes evidence that screening results were addressed.

Indicator:

III.D.2. The program partners with families to make appropriate referrals based on parental concerns/requests, child screening, and/or on-going documentation.

Clarification: Programs that provide effective referrals strengthen and support children and families by providing connections to services that meet their identified interests, concerns and/or needs. Linking families to appropriate agencies that provide evaluations, resources, and/or services for children's development (physical, social-emotional, cognitive, and language) can improve their later outcomes.

Part A: Program responds to parents' concerns related to child screening and/or on-going documentation and assists parents in seeking appropriate referrals and resources. Programs and families develop a positive relationship with reciprocal communication in order to provide referrals/resources to families pertaining to their children. The program must have a written policy or procedure for referral services which include the family. (2pts)

Part B: Program responds to parents' concerns related to child screening and/or on-going documentation and assists parents in seeking appropriate referrals and resources. Programs and families develop a positive relationship with reciprocal communication in order to provide referrals/resources to families pertaining to their children. The program must have a written policy or procedure for referral services which include the family. (2pts)

To receive full credit, Part A and Part B must be met.

Examples:
- Example of recommendation or referral forms to appropriate agencies (i.e. pediatrician, mental health services, or other intervention supports).
- Written policy that describes the referral process, including mental health.

Indicator:

III.D.3. The program collaborates with experts, professionals, and community resources/agencies/organizations to support children and families regarding medical, developmental, mental health, and/or other needs. (2 pts)

Clarification: Programs should develop relationships with experts, professionals and/or organizations (e.g. local school district, BabyNet, SC Inclusion Collaborative, etc.) to collaborate and partner to address concerns and questions during the monitoring and screening process. These partners should help guide programs in supporting children with developmental delays. To receive credit, the program must provide evidence of partnerships/collaborations with at least 2 agencies/community resources.

Examples:
- Correspondence with partner organization (e.g, email, letters, invitations).
- Feedback/summary report from partnering agency.
- Policy regarding who the program collaborates with to support children and families.
- Sign in record of therapist/interventionist participation in program.
- Copy of partner agreement with agency.

The program engages with families to provide consistency and familiarity in children's care and demonstrates that each family is unique and valued.

Standard A: Family Communication, Engagement, and Cultural Competence

Indicator:

IV.A.1. The program utilizes a method to collect information about the child and their family. (3pts)

Clarification: The program collects information about the child and family they serve to better meet their needs. Information is collected on all children in the program regardless of age to include:
- Family preferences regarding routine care
- Temperament
- Dominant languages
- Social/emotional needs
- Special accommodations

To receive credit, documentation must be submitted that includes all of the required criteria.

Examples:
- Child intake form that collects information about the child and family (e.g. *Getting to Know You* form).
- Questionnaire to parents about their child and family.

Indicator:

IV.A.2. The program communicates with families in multiple ways, including a plan or policy for daily communication between families and teachers. (2 pts)

Clarification: Programs communicate with families in multiple ways. To receive credit, current evidence of at least 3 methods used must be submitted. One of the 3 ways must be a form of daily communication between teachers and families for all children enrolled.

Examples:
- Policy statement regarding daily family/teacher communication.
- Announcements in newsletters, website, email.
- Photo of family bulletin boards with current information.
- Providing daily communication sheets about the child's day.
- Flyers of events.
- Family/teacher conferences, open house.

Indicator:
IV.A.3. The program maintains a resource list and/or literature from appropriate services/agencies to support children and families. The resource list and/or literature includes appropriate mental health services/agencies. (up to 3 pts)

Clarification: Programs that maintain a comprehensive list of local, state and/or national agencies and resources are better prepared to support families who are seeking additional support and information.

Part A: The resource list consists of specific community resources and agencies. The focus must be on supporting families who need information that supports the needs of the family (e.g. job training, housing, literacy, violence prevention, substance abuse prevention, food pantries, etc.). At least 4 community resources must be submitted. (2pts)

Part B: The resource list/brochures include specific community resources and agencies that support families who need information regarding children's mental health. At least 2 mental health resources must be submitted. (1pt)

To receive credit, evidence for Part A and/or Part B must be submitted.

Examples:
- Informative brochures from community agencies and those that support mental health.
- Lists of contact information of community agencies that assist families and those who provide mental health support.

Indicator:
IV.A.4. Teachers offer a minimum of 2 family/teacher conferences annually. (3 pts)

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

To receive credit, the program must submit documentation that is shared with families, describing the frequency and plan for family/teacher conferences.

Examples:
- Policy statement regarding family/teacher conferences.
- Policy statement in enrollment packet, parent handbook.
- Announcements of parent conferences in newsletter, website, email.
- Family/Teacher conference form with frequency conducted.

Indicator:

IV.A.5. The program demonstrates multiple methods to support **family engagement** including opportunities to engage families based on **cultural** needs and interests. (3 pts)

Clarification: Family engagement occurs when programs and families work together in partnership to build relationships to support children's learning, healthy development and family well-being. Family engagement occurs when strategies are planned based on families' interests and preferences that are responsive and supportive to their cultural and linguistic needs. To receive credit, the program must submit evidence of at least **2 current** methods used to engage families, including at least one way that engages and supports families' culture and interests.

Examples:
- Family members volunteer and participate in program activities/field trips.
- The program hosts family workshops, social gatherings, and/or targeted outreach events (targeted outreach is when the program and families go out into the community).
- Families serve as board members on Policy Boards.
- Families donate items to support curriculum.
- Cultural celebrations that families participate in or organize.
- Classroom storytelling/sharing from grandparents or other family.
- Cultural food sharing at a program pot-luck.
- Family and programs attend cultural events together.
- Program adapts curriculum to be representative of the cultures of families in the center.

Indicator:

IV.A.6. The program has policies and practices in place to support the needs of dual language learners (DLL). (3 pts)

Clarification: DLL are children who are learning a second language while continuing to develop their home language. Providing support for DLL benefits all children in the program by building social and cultural competence, improved communication abilities and strengthened cognitive and memory processes. The program has written policy, practices, and/or strategies to support dual language learners in the classroom. To receive credit, the program must submit evidence that describes how they support the needs of dual language learners.

Examples:
- Program policy that describes supports for DLL.
- Written plan for working with children who are learning multiple languages simultaneously.
- List of strategies used with DLL.
- Implementing evidence-based curriculum with an intentional plan for DLL.

Indicator:

IV.A.7. The program supports families by having a plan to communicate in their home language and providing policies and documents in their home language. (3 pts)

Clarification: Parents whose home language is other than English sometimes have difficulty communicating and understanding communication provided. Programs should identify resources in advance that they may draw upon to ensure that all families are received into the program with the information and understanding they require to be comfortable and well-informed. Programs identify resources and establish a plan to verbally communicate with families. Programs provide policies and documents translated to the home language of the family and/or a resource that would be used to have documents translated. To receive credit, the program must have a written plan that describes how they will get support to communicate with families in their home language in both print and verbal communication.

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

Glossary of Terms

Child Well-Being – Attention to each child's overall health and wellness (including their nutritional, physical, and mental well-being).

Communication Strategies – Multiple methods that programs use to determine the diverse needs of children in order for them to fully participate in the program.

Confidentiality – Means that programs keep personal, identifying, and medical information pertaining to children and families private. The program must establish a written policy statement to ensure confidentiality.

Cultural (culture) – A family's way of life, as shown in their values, attitudes, traditions, practices, and ordinary behavior. Family engagement occurs when strategies are planned based on the families' interests and preferences that are responsive and supportive to their cultural and linguistic needs.

Current – Within the last year.

Discipline Policy - Positive guidance strategies that are used to prevent challenging behaviors and appropriately respond to challenging behaviors. These strategies must be developmentally appropriate and promote the social-emotional and behavioral well-being of children.

Dual Language Learners – Children who are learning their native language while concurrently learning English; they are not yet proficient in either language.

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

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

External Transition – When new children arrive to a program or when a child permanently leaves the current program to attend another program or school environment.

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

Family Engagement – Family engagement occurs when programs and families work together in partnership to build relationships to support children's learning, healthy development, and family well–being.

Half-day Only Program – Operate 6 hours or less per day. (Programs that operate more than 4 hours per day are required to receive licensure per SC Child Care Licensing Law, https://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t63c013.php.

Inclement Weather – Defined by the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education (2010) as a wind chill factor at or below 20 degrees Fahrenheit or at or above a heat index of 90 degrees Fahrenheit. In addition, falling precipitation or weather advisories may prevent children from going outside.

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

Individualized Education Program (IEP) – (Applies to children with disabilities over the age of three) The IEP is developed through a team process and it includes information about the child's current development levels and annual goals that can be academic and functional. With parent permission, the child's teacher can participate in the development of these plans.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) – (Applies to children with disabilities under the age of three) The IFSP is developed by a team and includes information about the child's current development, and family identified outcomes for themselves and their child. With parent permission, the child's teacher can participate in the development of these plans.

Internal Transition – When a child is assigned to a new classroom within the program. The written transition policy describes criteria for determining when a child may transition and how often children are transitioned to other classrooms. It also describes the practices that the program has put in place to support successful transitions within the program.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – Supports children in moving freely in the learning environment to play and explore. LRE is part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA says that children who receive special education supports should learn in the least restrictive environment. This means they should spend as much time as possible with peers who do not receive special education.

Menus – Written meal plans used for developing nutritious meals and/or snacks for a specified period (generally weekly or monthly) for all age groups served in the program. Menus are current and dated and helps a program to know what foods are served during that time period.

Modifications and Accommodations – Changes that programs make to their facility, policies, and/or practices that enable children to fully participate. For additional information about reasonable modifications and accommodations, visit: https://www.scinclusion.org/about/contact-us/.

Nondiscrimination – Children and families do not receive unjust or prejudicial treatment based on sex, race, national origin, religious beliefs, medical condition, disability, marital status/family structure, or sexual orientation. The program must establish a written policy statement to ensure nondiscrimination.

Nutrition Policy – A set of written expectations related to different aspects of nutrition (the process of takin in food and using it for growth and health) for all children involved in the program. It will outline a clear and consistent plan to guide the program in providing an environment that supports development of healthy eating habits in children.

Physical Activity Policy – A set of written expectations related to different aspects of children's movement and/or physical activity (movement of the body that requires energy) for all children involved in the program. It will outline a clear and consistent plan to guide the program in providing an environment that supports development of regular physical activity habits in children.

Physical Health – A general state of health and well-being usually achieved through proper nutrition, moderate to vigorous physical activity, and sufficient rest. Physical activity and movement are an essential part of the development, learning, and growth of young children.

Professional Development Plan – A written roadmap for an individual's skills practice, training and/or educational goals. It can be based on the areas that need improvement during the written evaluation. The plan establishes timelines for achieving goals to ensure progress.

Program Leadership/Administrator – Early Care and Education Professionals who supervise staff and support curriculum planning and daily program operations, includes positions such as directors, assistant directors, supervisors, and curriculum coordinators.

Quality Assessor – Individual who conducts site visits to early childhood and school-age child care programs participating in the statewide quality rating and improvement system to review eligibility requirements, program structural quality and intentional teaching practices (program process quality).

SC Early Learning Standards (ELS) – SC ELS define the following developmental domains: Approaches to Play and Learning, Emotional and Social Development, Health and Physical Development, Language Development and Communication, Mathematical Thinking and Expression, and Cognitive Development. This document can be found at https://www.scchildcare.org/media/55097/SC_ELS-second-edit.pdf

Screen Time – Refers to use of television, computers, tablets, phones, and smart boards, etc. In the first 2 years of life, children's brains and bodies are going through critical periods of growth and development. It is important for infants and young children to have positive interactions with people and not sit in front of a screen that takes time away from social interactions with parents, peers and teachers.

Screening Tools – Questionnaires or checklists that have been validated based on research. They ask questions about a child's development including language, movement, thinking, behavior, and emotions. Screening is not meant to establish a diagnosis for a child; however, these tools can be used to determine if a child might need a more formal evaluation to reveal the presence of a developmental delay in any area. For more information contact SC Inclusion Collaborative at https://www.scinclusion.org/about/contact-us/.

Specialized Services – Recommended or prescribed interventions and/or services that are provided to children with disabilities to support their development, learning, and/or participation (e.g. Physical Therapy, Early Intervention, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy).

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

Standards – Specific aspects of quality within an element.

Suspension and Expulsion – Exclusionary practices used as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety concern that cannot be reduced or eliminated with reasonable modifications. Expulsion and suspension can have detrimental effects, particularly on children's social-emotional development and learning outcomes. These exclusionary practices have long term negative effects for children, their families, and the program. More information can be found at: https://challengingbehavior.org/pyramid-model/suspension-expulsion/

Teacher – Early Care and Education Professional who supervises, plans, and implements developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to promote optimal growth and development of children. Teachers are defined as any position that works directly with children, such as lead, counselor, assistant, floater, substitute, and emergency person.

Classroom Score Sheet

Room Name: _____

Age Range of Children: _____

Date of Observation: _____

Time of Observation (Begin to End): _____

Teachers' Initials: _____

Assessor Name: _____

CLASSROOM SCORE SUMMARY:	
ELEMENT I: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND STRUCTURE	9
ELEMENT II: STAFF EDUCATION AN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	43
ELEMENT III: CHILD WELL-BEING	28
ELEMENT IV: FAMILY COMMUNICATION, ENGAGEMENT AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE	20
Total:	100
OVERALL CLASSROOM SCORE:	**Average Percentage:**

Element I: Program Administration and Structure

Standard A: Organizational Structure/Program Operations
Standard B: Policies and Procedures Relating to the Care of Children

Standard	Points Available	Y or N	Points Earned	Comments
I.A.1. The program utilizes staff and parent program evaluations to inform written plans for continuous quality improvement.	3			
I.B.1. The program has a transition policy that includes practices to support successful internal transitions and external transitions.	2			
I.B.2. The program has a written Inclusion Policy that has the following components: (4pts) • **Nondiscrimination and confidentiality** statements; • A description of **communication strategies** used with parents to learn about individual child needs and necessary supports for the child's inclusion and participation; • A process for determining reasonable **modifications and accommodations** to include children with varying abilities in all activities and routines	4			

Total Points Available: 9   Points Earned: Percentage:

ELEMENT II: STAFF EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT I: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND STRUCTURE

Standard A: Education – Program Leadership/Administrators
Standard B: Education – Teachers
Standard C: Staff Evaluation and Ongoing Professional Development

	Points Available	Y or N	Points Earned	Comments
II.A.1. All program leadership/administrators meet education qualifications.	12			
II.B.1. Teachers meet education qualifications.	12			
II.C.1. Program leadership provides staff with an annual written evaluation based on supervision and observation of performance, which includes feedback on strengths and areas that need improvement.	3			
II.C.2. The results of written evaluations inform staff professional development plans and/or targeted staff supports to improve practice.	2			
II.C.3. The program's leadership develops an individualized professional development plan for all staff.	2			
II.C.4. All program leadership/administrators exceed 20 hours of training in the calendar year (Jan – Dec).	2			
II.C.5. Teachers exceed minimum standards for annual training.	4			
II.C.6. All staff receive specific training in evidence-based practices and supports for social-emotional development and behavioral health.	1			
II.C.7. All staff receive at least one hour of training related to child nutrition each calendar year.	1			
II.C.8. All staff receive at least one hour of training related to children's movement/physical activity each calendar year.	1			
II.C.9. The program has a written plan/procedure for staff orientation.	3			

Total Points Available: 43   Points Earned: Percentage:

Element III. Child Well-being

Standard A: Nutrition Standard B: Physical Health Standard C: Healthy Social-Emotional Development (Mental Health) Standard D: Child Screening and Referrals	Points Available	Y or N	Points Earned	Comments
III.A.1. The program has a nutrition policy to support the health and well-being of children.	3			
III.A.2. The program develops and maintains menus that reflect nutritionally, well-balanced healthy meals and/or snacks for all children.	3			
III.B.1. The program's physical activity policy and practices encourage the well-being of children.	3			
III.C.1. The program's discipline policy is founded in an understanding of social-emotional development/behavioral health. The program staff collaborate with parents to plan developmentally appropriate, evidence-based strategies to support children with challenging behaviors.	4			
III.C.2. The program adopts a policy to limit or eliminate suspension and expulsion.	3			
III.D.1. The program conducts developmental, vision and hearing screenings and shares information about a child's growth and progress, based on results of the screenings, with families confidentially according to the instruments' implementation timeframe.	6			
III.D.2. The program partners with families to make appropriate referrals based on parental concerns/requests, child screening, and/or on-going documentation.	4			
III.D.3. The program collaborates with experts, professionals, and community resources/agencies/organizations to support children and families regarding medical, developmental, mental health, and/or other needs.	2			

Total Points Available: 28   Points Earned: Percentage:

Element IV: Family Communication, Engagement and Cultural Competence

Standard A: Family Communication, Engagement and Cultural Competence

	Points Available	Y or N	Points Earned	Comments
IV.A.1. The program utilizes a method to collect information about the child and their family.	3			
IV.A.2. The program communicates with families in multiple ways.	2			
IV.A.3. The program maintains a resource list and/or literature from appropriate services/agencies to support children and families. The resource list and/or literature includes appropriate mental health services/agencies.	3			
IV.A.4. Teachers offer a minimum of 2 family/teacher conferences annually.	3			
IV.A.5. The program demonstrates multiple methods to support family engagement including opportunities to engage families based on cultural needs and interests.	3			
IV.A.6. The program has policies and practices in place to support the needs of English language learners (ELL).	3			
IV.A.7. The program supports families by having a plan to communicate in their home language and providing policies and documents in their home language.	3			

Total Points Available: 20   Points Earned: Percentage: