



AT A GLANCE: QUALITY STANDARDS FOR ECE PROGRAMS – REVISED 2025

Foundational Standards (FS) (Required) – Star Level 2

- FS 1:** Educators and supervisors have received an overview of the most recent NJ Birth to Three Standards and/or NJ Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards.
- FS 2:** All educators are enrolled in the NJ Workforce Registry.
- FS 3:** Written personnel and program operational policies (i.e., staff handbook) are used to communicate program policies, procedures, roles, and responsibilities to staff.
- FS 4:** Administrators and supervisors have completed professional development on evaluating and supporting early childhood educators.
- FS 5:** All educators who have completed their first year of employment receive an annual written performance evaluation conducted by their supervisor.
- FS 6:** All educators and leadership have an annual Individualized Professional Development Plan.
- FS 7:** Program implements a continuous quality improvement (CQI) process that includes regular assessments, goal setting, and action plans to address identified areas for enhancement. The CQI process should include family and staff participation and feedback. Programs utilize the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) in NJCCIS to document their CQI Journey.
- FS 8:** Programs serving infants have a Safe Sleep policy in accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics and Caring for our Children 3.1.4.1 (waived for programs who do not serve infants and toddlers). This standard is not applicable for programs serving children over 1 year of age.
- FS 9:** The program has established and enforces policies aimed at preventing suspension and expulsion.



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Curriculum Teaching and Learning (CTL)

Standard #	Standard
CTL 1	<u>Administrators and supervisors</u> have completed professional development on each of the following topics: <u>Required to qualify for 3 stars – Lesson Planning and Developmentally Responsive Practice</u> • Developmentally and culturally responsive practice related to curriculum implementation (minimum of 2 hours within past 3 years) and • Lesson planning or • 6 hrs of professional development on curriculum implementation. <u>Required to qualify for 4 or 5 stars – Curriculum Implementation Training</u> • Implementing Curriculum ○ Foundational and ongoing professional development related to curriculum implementation must be delivered by or approved by the curriculum developer. ○ Minimum of 6 hours of professional development required every 3 years up to 36 hours. After 36 hours, supervisors can select specialized professional development related* to curriculum implementation <i>*Related Curriculum Training: Once an individual has completed 36 hours of formal curriculum training by the curriculum developer or the program has completed all available training offered by the developer, staff may complete training that is related to the implementation of curriculum. Related trainings do not have to be provided by the curriculum developer however the topic and content should support the individual's efforts to effectively implement the curriculum in the classroom.</i>
CTL 2	<u>Educators</u> have completed professional development on each of the following topics: <u>Required to qualify for 3 stars – Lesson Planning and Developmentally Responsive Practice</u> • Developmentally and culturally responsive practice related* to curriculum implementation (minimum of 4 hours within past 3 years) and • Lesson planning or • 6 hrs of professional development on curriculum implementation. <u>Required to qualify for 4 or 5 stars – Curriculum Implementation Training</u> • Implementing Curriculum ○ Foundational and ongoing professional development related to curriculum implementation must be delivered by or approved by the curriculum developer. ○ Minimum of 12 hours of professional development required every 3 years up to 36 hours. After 36 hours, supervisors can select specialized professional development related* to curriculum implementation <i>*Related Curriculum Training: Once an individual has completed 36 hours of formal curriculum training by the curriculum developer or the program has completed all available training offered by the developer, staff may complete training that is related to the implementation of curriculum. Related trainings do not have to be</i>



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Standard #	Standard
	<i>provided by the curriculum developer however the topic and content should support the individual's efforts to effectively implement the curriculum in the classroom.</i>



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Standard #	Standard
CTL 3	<u>Administrators/Supervisors and Educators</u> have completed professional development on the following topics: • Implementation of Developmental Screening • Implementation of program’s specific Performance Based Assessment (PBA) • Inclusion and inclusive practices (minimum of 2 hours within past 3 years) • Supporting children’s home language • Supporting Child Transitions • The Environment Rating Scales (minimum of 2 hours within past 3 years)
CTL 4	Professional Development for <u>Non-Instructional Staff</u> Program’s non-instructional staff receive a minimum of 2 hours of professional development on each of the following topics: • Developmentally and culturally responsive practices (within past 3 years) • Overview of <u>NJ Birth to Three Standards</u> and/or the <u>NJ Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards</u> • Appropriate adult-child interactions (Within past 3 years)
CTL 5	Required Standard for Level 3 Lesson plans and activities for all classrooms are <u>developmentally and culturally appropriate</u>, support children’s individual differences and align to the <u>NJ Birth to Three Standards</u> and/or the <u>NJ Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards</u>.
CTL 6	Required Standard for Level 4 and 5 Program adopts and fully implements a research-based validated curriculum that aligns to the NJ Birth to Three Standards and/or the NJ Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards.
CTL 7	Program has a written policy outlining the implementation of developmental screening that includes that screenings are performed in accordance with the instrument guidelines or at a minimum at 9, 18, 30, 42 and 60 months, 3, 4, and 5 years of age in accordance with <u>CDC guidelines</u>. A system is established to refer families to further evaluation that address children's developmental and behavioral needs.
CTL 8	Program implements state approved performance-based assessment (PBA) system and uses child assessment data to improve program practice.
CTL 9	Program demonstrates a commitment to inclusion by ensuring that all children, regardless of their abilities, have access to and can participate in all aspects of the program. This includes providing necessary adaptations and supports to facilitate meaningful participation and engagement.
CTL 10	Program demonstrates a commitment to supporting children’s home languages and cultural traditions through intentional practices that foster dual-language development, family engagement, and culturally responsive learning environments.
CTL 11	Program has created and implements a comprehensive plan for child transitions which ensures a smooth and supportive process for children moving between classrooms, activities, different programs including from Part C to Part B services and on to kindergarten. This plan involves collaboration among educators, families, and any relevant service providers to facilitate continuity of care and a consistent, nurturing environment.
CTL 12	Program utilizes resources including family engagement and teacher training/support to prevent suspension and expulsion.



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Child Wellbeing (CW)

Standard #	Standard
CW 1	Professional Development for <u>Administrators/Supervisors</u> Administrators and supervisors have completed at least 2 hours of professional development on each of the following topics and are currently certified in <u>Pediatric First Aid and CPR</u> : • Pediatric First Aid and CPR Certification (must include proof of certification) • Physical health (within past 3 years) • Social-emotional learning (SEL), and effective evidence-based strategies to support children's mental health
CW 2	Professional Development for <u>Educators</u> Educators have completed at least 2 hours of professional development on each of the following topics and are currently certified in <u>Pediatric First Aid and CPR</u> : • Pediatric First Aid and CPR (must include proof of certification) • Physical health (within past 3 years) • Social-emotional learning (SEL), and effective evidence-based strategies to support children's mental health (within past 3 years)
CW 3	Professional Development for <u>Non-Instructional Staff</u> Non-instructional staff are currently certified in Pediatric First Aid and CPR.
CW 4	Program delivers an array of program practices that promote the physical health of children and families.
CW 5	Program establishes and implements evidence-based practices to support children's social and emotional wellbeing. This includes incorporation of social emotional learning (SEL) concepts into daily activities, routines, and interactions rather than treating them as stand-alone lessons, creating a nurturing environment, and developing individualized plans to support children's social and emotional needs.
CW 6	Parents receive information and or resources on the importance of having a medical home or consistency in a primary care provider.
CW 7	Program has a policy that supports breastfeeding friendly principles, including accepting and storing breast milk and providing a comfortable place for breastfeeding for families and staff. Note: Not applicable if program does not serve infants.
CW 8	Vision, hearing, and/or dental screenings are completed, with parental consent, and results are shared with families.



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Family and Community Engagement (FCE)

Standard #	Standard
FCE 1	Professional Development for <u>Administrators/Supervisors</u> Administrators and supervisors have completed at least 2 hours of professional development on each of the following topics: - Supporting and engaging with diverse communities to ensure cultural responsiveness and anti-bias (within past 3 years) - Family and Community Engagement or Strengthening Families Framework (within past 3 years)
FCE 2	Professional Development for <u>Educators</u> Educators have completed at least 2 hours of professional development on the following topics: - Supporting and engaging with diverse communities to ensure cultural responsiveness and anti-bias (within past 3 years) - Family and Community Engagement or Strengthening Families Framework (within the past 3 years)
FCE 3	Program creates one-way and two-way communication and engagement with families about their child’s learning and development, curriculum objectives and supports for learning at home.
FCE 4	Program has an attendance policy and tracks and monitors absences of individual children and contacts families when children are absent after three consecutive days.
FCE 5	Program has a system in place to gather annual family feedback and uses this information to inform program policy and operations.
FCE 6	Program incorporates diverse perspectives into decision-making processes by establishing a family advisory council or committee that reflects the diversity of families in care. This ensures that the voices of all families are heard and considered in program planning and implementation.
FCE 7	Community resources are available, accessible, and updated annually for families and staff that includes community and school-based resources and/or direct services to promote child/family safety, health, and well-being.
FCE 8	Program partners with at least two community organizations that serve diverse populations to build stronger connections and better understand the needs of the families they serve. These partnerships provide valuable resources and support for program staff and families.
FCE 9	Learning opportunities to promote child and family health and wellness, positive relationships, and children’s learning and development are created with family input, provided routinely and are accessible to families.
FCE 10	<u>The Strengthening Families Protective Factors (SFPF) Framework</u> is used annually to assess engagement of and interactions with families.



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Workforce Development and Supports (WDS)

Standard #	Standard
WDS 1	Professional Development for <u>Administrators/Supervisors</u> Administrators and supervisors have completed at least 2 hours (every 3 years) of professional development related to key characteristics and skills of high impact leaders.
WDS 2	Program supports educators, administrators, supervisors and non-instructional staff in attaining higher qualifications on the NJ Career Lattice
WDS 3	Minimum educator qualifications help to ensure that the ECE program provides high-quality instruction and care. This standard emphasizes the importance of continued education for educators to enhance their skills and knowledge, thereby improving program outcomes for children.
WDS 4	Professional development at the program-level is data-driven and centered around program and staff needs.
WDS 5	Multiple types of bi-directional communication responsive to staff needs and preferences are used to inform staff of program activities, policies, etc.
WDS 6	Program promotes a positive organizational climate based on staff needs and feedback.
WDS 7	Program fosters a supportive environment where educators and staff feel appreciated and listened to.
WDS 8	Program provides comprehensive support for the social-emotional wellness of administrators, educators, and non-instructional staff.
WDS 9	Program actively recruits and retains a diverse workforce by implementing inclusive hiring practices and creating a supportive environment that values and respects differences.



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Administration and Management Practices (AMP)

Standard #	Standard
AMP 1	Professional Development for <u>Administrators/Supervisors</u> Required Standard for Level 3 and Above Administrators and supervisors have completed at least 2 hours of professional development on the following topic: The Environment Rating Scales
AMP 2	Program staff have access to paid benefits.
AMP 3	Program implements a transparent wage scale that links wages to staff qualifications.
AMP 4	Paid planning time policy is implemented for all educators to engage in lesson planning, performance-based assessment, reflective teaching practices, and/or planning time to support developmentally and culturally appropriate practice.
AMP 5	Program maintains accurate and up-to-date financial records using accounting software. Regular audits, either internal or external, are conducted to ensure transparency and accountability.
AMP 6	Program has a current, comprehensive annual budget that outlines all expected revenues and expenditures. Regular financial reviews and adjustments are conducted to ensure alignment with financial goals.
AMP 7	Program has a strategic or business plan that includes marketing/recruitment plan to maximize full enrollment.
AMP 8	Program develops and implements clear, written policies and procedures for all aspects of the program. These are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect current best practices including equity and inclusivity.
AMP 9	Program adheres to all relevant local, state, and federal regulations and regularly reviews compliance requirements and updates policies accordingly.



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Additional Point Opportunities (partial credit not awarded)

Programs may receive additional points towards their star rating by meeting one or more of the high-quality activities below.

- AP 1:** Program is accredited by American Montessori Society (AMS) or Association of Montessori Internationale (AMI).
- AP 2:** Program offers additional supports to families such as providing transportation, having mental health professionals on staff or on call, offering on site therapeutic services such as speech, physical and or occupational therapy and/or having certified special education staff.
- AP 3:** Program Director or Administrator has completed the HEART of Leadership series.
- AP 4:** Program offers continuity of care (looping) for young children. Teachers remain with the child's age group for 2 plus years.
- AP 5:** Program offers a multi-language approach. Curriculum is implemented in 2 or more languages.
- AP 6:** A minimum of 1 educator from each classroom completes the three module Pyramid Training Series (30 hours) to ensure programming that supports all infants and young children (ages 0-8) in developing social-emotional competence.
- AP 7:** A minimum of 1 educator from each classroom completes Keeping Babies and Children in Mind training Series (21 hours).
- AP 8:** Program is a Pyramid Model Implementation program.
- AP 9:** Educators, supervisors and administrators receive professional development and/or coursework on the implementation and benefits of home visiting. Home Visits are modeled after Head Start guidelines and are offered to all enrolled families.
- AP 10:** Program is a Pyramid Model Demonstration site.