



# Because Early Experiences Last a Lifetime

Step Up To Quality Guidance Document  
May 29, 2012



Numbers Matter		Qualified Administrators & Teachers Matter	Ongoing Professional Development Matters	Administrative Supports Matter	Children's Experiences Matter	
<u>RATIO, GROUP SIZE</u> (Group size twice the ratio)		<u>STAFF EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS</u>	<u>SPECIALIZED TRAINING</u>	<u>ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES</u>	<u>EARLY LEARNING</u>	
STEP THREE 	At no time may group size for children 0-18 months exceed 10 children  <b>Infants/Toddlers</b> 0-12 months - 1:4 or 2:8 or 3:10 12-18 months - 1:5 18-36 months - 1:6  <b>Preschoolers</b> 36-48 months - 1:10 48-60 months - 1:10  <b>Family or Mixed Age Groups</b> 0-36 months - 1:4 36-60 months - 1:10  <b>School-Agers</b> 5-15 years - 1:15  * Alternate Pathway Available (National Accred. or overall ERS score of 5)	Administrator has a BA in ECE or related field, or the Career Pathways Level 4  <b>AND</b> Each classroom has a Lead Teacher with an AA in ECE or related field for school age teachers or Career Pathways Level 3  <b>AND</b> 50% of Classrooms have Assistant Teachers who have a CDA or Career Pathways Level 2	Administrators, Lead Teachers, and Assistant Teachers receive a minimum of 20 clock hours of specialized training every two years. 10 hours of specialized training must be completed prior to an initial rating being awarded.  After completion of 10 hours of pre-requisites, the training must be completed with topics related to the individual's PD plan. Training must be approved as listed on the PD registry at: <a href="http://www.opdn.org">www.opdn.org</a>  Individuals who are currently enrolled in a degree granting program in early childhood or a related field can use coursework to fulfill the training requirement.	<b>Program Planning/Evaluation</b> A quality improvement plan is completed and implemented based on a PAS self-assessment, classroom assessments and input from parents and staff and updated annually. <b>AND</b> <b>Human Resource Development</b> Administrator and all teachers must have an annual professional development plan that at a minimum includes a performance appraisal, goals, and a plan for completing specialized training. <b>AND</b> <b>Benefits/Compensation</b> <b>3 of the following:</b> Salary structure based on education and length of employment; employer offers and/or pays a portion of health insurance; 5 days of paid leave; Paid professional membership; Education benefits (T.E.A.C.H.); Retirement; Discount on child care	Program utilizes a written, evidence based comprehensive curriculum. Curriculum planning is aligned with the Infant/Toddler Guidelines and/or Ohio's Early Learning Content Standards and/or Ohio's K-12 Standards to maximize growth across a broad range of developmental and content areas. <b>AND</b> Children are assessed systematically utilizing both formal and informal methods to inform intentional teaching and the sharing of progress with families. <b>AND</b> All children (except school age) receive a developmental screening within 60 days of enrollment and annually thereafter. Referrals, if needed, are completed within 90 days.	
	STEP TWO 	At no time may group size for children 0- 12 months exceed 10 children.  <b>Infants/Toddlers</b> 0-12 months - 1:5 12-18 months - 1:6 18-36 months - 1:7  <b>Preschoolers</b> 36-48 months - 1:10 48-60 months - 1:12  <b>Family or Mixed Age Groups</b> 0-36 months - 1: 5 36-60 months - 1:10  <b>School-Agers</b> 5-15 years - 1:16  * Alternate Pathway Available (National Accreditation or overall ERS score of 5)	Administrator has an AA in ECE or related field or Career Pathways Level 3  <b>AND</b> 50% of Lead Teachers have an AA in ECE or related field for school age teachers or Career Pathways Level 3	Administrators, Lead Teachers, and Assistant Teachers receive a minimum of 20 clock hours of specialized training every two years. 10 hours of specialized training must be completed prior to an initial rating being awarded.  After completion of 10 hours of pre-requisites, the training must be completed with topics related to the individual's PD plan. Training must be approved as listed on the PD registry at: <a href="http://www.opdn.org">www.opdn.org</a>  Individuals who are currently enrolled in a degree granting program in early childhood or a related field can use coursework to fulfill the training requirement.	<b>Program Planning/Evaluation</b> A quality improvement plan is completed and implemented based on a PAS self-assessment and classroom assessments and is updated annually. <b>AND</b> <b>Human Resource Development</b> Administrator and all teachers must have an annual professional development plan that at a minimum includes a performance appraisal, goals, and a plan for completing specialized training. <b>AND</b> <b>Benefits/Compensation</b> <b>2 of the following:</b> Salary structure based on education and length of employment; employer offers and/or pays a portion of health insurance; 5 days of paid leave; Paid professional membership; Education benefits (T.E.A.C.H.); Retirement; Discount on child care	Program utilizes a written, evidence based comprehensive curriculum. Curriculum planning is aligned with the Infant/Toddler Guidelines and/or Ohio's Early Learning Content Standards and/or Ohio's K-12 Standards to maximize growth across a broad range of developmental and content areas. <b>AND</b> All children (except school age) receive a developmental screening within 60 days of enrollment and annually thereafter. Referrals, if needed, are completed within 90 days. Results are formally communicated with families.
		STEP ONE 	At no time may group size for children 0- 12 months exceed 10 children.  <b>Infants/Toddlers</b> 0-12 months - 1:5 or 2:10 12-18 months - 1:6 18-36 months - 1:7 30-36 months - 1:8  <b>Preschoolers</b> 36-48 months - 1:12 48-60 months - 1:14  <b>Family or Mixed Age Groups</b> 0-36 months - 1:5 36-60 months - 1:12  <b>School-Agers</b> 5-15 years - 1:18	Administrator has a CDA or Career Pathways Level 2  <b>AND</b> One Lead Teacher with an AA in ECE or Career Pathways Level 3  Stand alone school age programs must have one Lead Teacher with an AA in related field or Career Pathways Level 3	Administrators, Lead Teachers, and Assistant Teachers receive a minimum of 20 clock hours of specialized training every two years. 10 hours of specialized training must be completed prior to an initial rating being awarded.  After completion of 10 hours of pre-requisites, the training must be completed with topics related to the individual's PD plan. Training must be approved as listed on the PD registry at: <a href="http://www.opdn.org">www.opdn.org</a>  Individuals who are currently enrolled in a degree granting program in early childhood or a related field can use coursework to fulfill the training requirement.	<b>Program Planning/Evaluation</b> Program completes a quality improvement plan based on results of their annual PAS self-assessment. <b>AND</b> <b>Human Resource Development</b> Administrator and all teachers must have an annual professional development plan that at a minimum includes a performance appraisal and a plan for completing specialized training. <b>AND</b> <b>Benefits/Compensation</b> <b>1 of the following:</b> Salary structure based on education and length of employment; employer offers and/or pays a portion of health insurance; 5 days of paid leave; Paid professional membership; Education benefits (T.E.A.C.H.); Retirement; Discount on child care

	Numbers Matter	Qualified Administrators & Teachers Matter	Ongoing Professional Development Matters	Administrative Supports Matter	Children's Experiences Matter
	<u>RATIO, GROUP SIZE</u> Group size 2X the ratio	<u>STAFF EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS</u>	<u>SPECIALIZED TRAINING</u>	<u>ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES</u>	<u>EARLY LEARNING</u>
 <b>STEP THREE</b>	<p>Be NAFCC or Montessori Accredited</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <p>Ratio 1:4 or 2:9 or 3:12</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <p>Score an overall score of 5 on the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale and no less than 4 on each subscale</p>	<p>Administrator has an AA in ECE or the Career Pathways Level 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p>Each Lead Teacher has an AA in ECE or related field for school age teachers, or a Career Pathways Level 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p>50 % of Assistant Teachers have a CDA or Career Pathways Level 2.</p>	<p>Administrators, Lead Teachers and Assistant Teachers receive a minimum of 15 clock hours of specialized training annually.</p> <p>The specialized training must be approved by ODJFS. Training hours must be job specific and/or related to the age group(s) of children that the program serves.</p>	<p><u>Program Planning/Evaluation</u> A program action plan is completed and implemented based on a annual self-assessment and input from parents and staff.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p><u>Human Resource Development</u> Administrator and all teachers must have a professional development plan that at a minimum includes a performance appraisal, goals, and a plan for completing specialized training.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p><u>Benefits/Compensation</u> <b>3 of the following:</b> Salary structure based on education and length of employment; employer offers and/or pays a portion of health insurance; 5 days of paid leave; Paid professional membership; Paid specialized training/tuition; Retirement fund; Discount on child care; T.E.A.C.H.</p>	<p>Program has an identified curriculum and planning is aligned with the Early Learning Content Standards, and/or Infant Toddler Guidelines, and/or Ohio's K-12 Standards, and informs on-going child assessment.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p>All children (except school age) receive a developmental screening within 60 days of enrollment. Referrals, if needed, are completed within 90 days.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p>Program creates and implements an annual action plan based on self-assessment results using the FCCRS.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p>Children's progress is formally communicated with parents.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p>A formal transition process is utilized for when children enter and/or exit the program.</p>
 <b>STEP TWO</b>	<p>NAFCC Accreditation self-study is completed and proof of observation being applied for</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <p>Ratio 1:5 or 2:10 or 3:12</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <p>Score an overall score of 5 on the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale or no less than 4.0 on each subscale</p>	<p>Administrator has an AA in ECE or Career Pathways Level 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p>One Lead Teacher has an AA in ECE or related field for school age teachers or Career Pathways Level 3</p>	<p>Administrators, Lead Teachers, and Assistant Teachers receive a minimum of 10 clock hours of specialized training annually.</p> <p>The specialized training must be approved by ODJFS. Training hours must be job specific and/or related to the age group(s) of children that the program serves.</p>	<p><u>Program Planning/Evaluation</u> A program action plan is completed and implemented based on an annual self-assessment.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p><u>Human Resource Development</u> Administrator and all teachers must have a professional development plan that at a minimum includes a performance appraisal, goals, and a plan for completing specialized training.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p><u>Benefits/Compensation</u> <b>2 of the following:</b> Salary structure based on education and length of employment; employer offers and/or pays a portion of health insurance; 5 days of paid leave; Paid professional membership; Paid specialized training/tuition Retirement fund; Discount on child care; T.E.A.C.H.</p>	<p>Program has an identified curriculum and planning is aligned with the Infant/Toddler Guidelines and/or Ohio's Early Learning Content Standards and/or Ohio's K-12 Standards.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p>All children (except school age) receive a developmental screening within 60 days of enrollment. Referrals, if needed, are completed within 90 days.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p>An annual self-assessment using the FCCRS is conducted.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p>Children's progress is formally communicated with parents.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p>A formal transition process is utilized for when children enter and/or exit the program.</p>
 <b>STEP ONE</b>	<p>Purchase the "Guide to Achieving NAFCC Accreditation" and complete Chapter 5.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p>Ratio 2:12 or 1:5 if youngest child is under 12 months and only one staff member is present.</p>	<p>Administrator has a CDA</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <p>Career Pathways Level I equaling 40 points or more</p>	<p>Administrators, Lead Teachers, and Assistant Teachers receive a minimum of 5 clock hours of specialized training annually.</p> <p>The specialized training must be approved by ODJFS. Training hours must be job specific and/or related to the age group(s) of children that the program serves.</p>	<p><u>Program Planning/Evaluation</u> Administrator conducts an annual self-assessment.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p><u>Human Resource Development</u> Administrator and all teachers must have a professional development plan that at a minimum includes a performance appraisal and a plan for completing specialized training.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p><u>Benefits/Compensation</u> <b>1 of the following:</b> Salary structure based on education and length of employment; employer offers and/or pays a portion of health insurance; 5 days of paid leave; Paid professional membership; Paid specialized training/tuition; Discount on child care; T.E.A.C.H.</p>	<p>Programs serving infants/toddlers must have a copy of Ohio's Infant Toddler Guidelines available for use.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p>Programs serving preschoolers must have a copy of Ohio's Early Learning Content Standards and Ohio's Early Learning Program Guidelines available for use.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p>Programs serving school age children must have a copy of Ohio's K-12 Standards available for use.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p>A formal transition process is utilized for when children enter and/or exit the program.</p>

# Table of Contents

Quality Rating and Improvement Systems.....	6
Ohio's Quality Rating and Improvement System.....	7
<i>Step Up To Quality</i> .....	7
<i>Step Up To Quality Goals</i> .....	8
<i>Step Up To Quality Benchmarks/Standards</i> .....	8
Participation in Step Up To Quality.....	8
<i>Program Participation</i> .....	8
<i>Eligibility requirements to become Star Rated</i> .....	8
Applying for a Star Rating.....	9
<i>Preparing to apply for a Star Rating</i> .....	9
<i>How to determine your program's Step level</i> .....	9
<i>Withdraw Application</i> .....	9
<i>Evidence Portfolio</i> .....	9
Lead Teacher Requirements.....	10
<i>Specialized training pre-requisites</i> .....	10
<i>College coursework</i> .....	11
<i>Specialized training requirements for staff with dual roles</i> .....	11
Specialized Training Guidance for Initial Star Rating.....	12
Specialized Training Guidance for Star Rating Renewal or Change.....	13
Change of rating at renewal visit only, indicate change on application submission.....	13
Alternate pathway to meet ratio/group size benchmark.....	14
<i>Accrediting Bodies accepted for the alternate pathway</i> .....	14
<i>Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) as the alternate pathway</i> .....	14
<i>Alternate pathway for meeting the administrator and/or teacher qualification benchmark</i> .....	14
The Verification Process.....	14
<i>Verification Visit</i> .....	15
<i>Between application and verification visit</i> .....	15
<i>Onsite Verification</i> .....	15
<i>Serious Risk Non-Compliance during a verification visit</i> .....	15
Incentives and Supports for Rated Programs.....	16
<i>Quality Achievement Award</i> .....	16
<i>Quality Incentive Add-on Payment</i> .....	16
<i>T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships</i> .....	17
<i>SUTQ Marketing</i> .....	17
Maintaining a Star Rating.....	17
<i>The Star Rating is valid for one year from the date on the Star Rating certificate</i> .....	17
<i>Star Rating change</i> .....	17
<i>Changes in a benchmark indicator after the program is rated</i> .....	17
<i>Rating Renewal</i> .....	17
Deferral Policy – effective January 1, 2012.....	18
Rating Suspension and Removal.....	19
<i>Serious Risk Non-Compliance Warning and Suspension</i> .....	19
<i>Rating Removal</i> .....	19
<i>Loss of Star Rating</i> .....	19
Appeal of Rating Removal or Result of Verification Visit.....	19
<i>Appeal Guidelines</i> .....	19
<i>Appeal</i> .....	19
<i>Consequence of Rating removals</i> .....	20
<i>Change in administrator</i> .....	21
<i>Rated program closes and merges with another rated program</i> .....	21

<i>Rated program closes and merges with another program that is not rated</i> .....	21
<i>Rated program expands i.e. additional classrooms and/or additional age groups</i> .....	21
<i>Change of ownership</i> .....	21
<i>Rated program closes</i> .....	21
Glossary .....	22
Preparing For The Initial Rating Verification Visit.....	30
After The Visit .....	30
Evidence Portfolio.....	31
SUTQ Curriculum Guidance .....	39
Infant Grouping Guidance .....	40
Guidance for Evening / Overnight / Weekend Care .....	41
Career Pathways Model for Ohio Early Childhood & Afterschool Professionals.....	42
Guidance for Selection of a Comprehensive Early Childhood Curriculum.....	46
Guidance for Selection of a Comprehensive Early Childhood Curriculum Checklist .....	48
Commonly Used Objective Screening Tools for Young Children.....	49
<i>General Developmental Screening Tools</i> .....	49
<i>Social-Emotional Screening Tools</i> .....	50
Research Base Supporting Step Up To Quality.....	51

## Quality Rating and Improvement Systems

Numerous research studies demonstrate that higher quality care leads to better child outcomes. Quality rating and improvement systems have emerged as a systemic way to measure quality and promote high quality programs. In other words, a quality rating and improvement system is a method to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early care and education settings (NCCIC 2006). It is similar to rating systems for restaurants and hotels. A quality rating and improvement system awards ratings to early care and education programs that achieve increasingly higher standards.

Quality rating and improvement systems generally have the following five components: standards, accountability, program and practitioner outreach and support, financial incentives linked to compliance with quality standards, and parent and consumer education (Anne Mitchell).

- Standards (called benchmarks in Ohio) vary by state but are built on state licensing regulations, and generally include two or more levels.
- Accountability determines how all programs are meeting standards (benchmarks). A symbol (stars in Ohio) is awarded to each participating program, which represents the program's level of quality.
- Program and practitioner outreach and support help programs meet higher standards and promote participation. Training, mentoring, and technical assistance are the supports provided most often.
- Financial incentives linked to compliance with quality standards can also help increase program participation.
- Parent and consumer education efforts within quality rating and improvement systems help parents learn about quality, as well as program ratings, so they can make more informed choices on behalf of their children.

Ohio was the 14th state to implement a quality rating and improvement system statewide. There are now 25 states with statewide quality rating and improvement systems. Quality rating and improvement systems are now commonly referred to as Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS). For more information, visit [www.nccic.org](http://www.nccic.org).

A quality rating and improvement system is one component of an early learning system that links to other system components, such as professional development, financing and accountability, with an emphasis on system-wide continuous improvement.

Quality is important because early experiences last a lifetime. The research is clear: High-quality early care and education programs can help prepare children for success in school, work and life. Higher quality care leads to greater cognitive language and social skills for children, which are key measures of school readiness. James Heckman, Nobel Laureate and University of Chicago economics professor, states: "Learning starts in infancy, long before formal education begins, and continues throughout life. Recent research demonstrates how vitally important the early preschool years are for skill formation. Early learning begets later learning, and early success breeds later success, just as early failure breeds later failure."

High-quality programs are characterized by structural and process features that promote children's learning and development. Research typically points to two dimensions of quality: structural features and process features. Structural features refer to the way programs are organized or structured, such as staff-to-child ratios and teacher qualifications. Process features refer to the

positive interactions between children and others, which support experiences that promote children's learning and development. (Catherine Scott-Little)

A variety of program-level and policy-level supports promote quality. Program-level supports include the structural and process indicators listed above. An essential factor is the relationship between the teacher and the child. In addition, studies also show that more stringent licensing requirements and adequate funding are essential factors in supporting quality. (Cost Quality Outcomes Study Team, 1995)

## Ohio's Quality Rating and Improvement System

### Step Up To Quality

Step Up To Quality is Ohio's voluntary quality rating and improvement system, which uses licensing as a foundation and sets a continuum of clearly defined levels (steps) of increasing quality. Step Up To Quality utilizes a building block approach, in which every quality level consists of specific benchmark (rating) indicators.

Step Up To Quality has three Steps (levels) above Ohio's licensing standards. Licensing compliance provides the strong foundation needed to support quality. Each step builds upon the one before it. Therefore, a program must meet all the indicators for each benchmark at each step before progressing to the next step. Each step equates to a Star Rating. Step Up To Quality awards either one, two, or three stars for each of the steps.

The benchmarks (Ratio/Group Size, Staff Education and Qualifications, Specialized Training, Administrative Practices, and Early Learning) have indicators that must be achieved for each step. These benchmarks and indicators have been selected as a result of a thorough review of the research literature and promising practices in other states. Current research confirms that early care and education programs that focus on improving the following benchmarks — ratios, the formal education and ongoing professional development of teaching staff, administrative policies, and curriculum — are predictors that can lead to positive outcomes for children. The indicators for each benchmark do not represent an exhaustive list, but rather the essential list of what matters most for programs to achieve higher levels of quality.

In addition, research and analysis of Ohio's benchmark indicators was recently conducted. This included a thorough review of Ohio's Early Learning Program Guidelines, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation standards, Early Head Start and Head Start performance standards, and the National Institute Early Education Research (NIEER) standards. As a result, some benchmark indicators were strengthened to align to those state and national standards. See the alignment matrix at [http://jfs.ohio.gov/CDC/SUTQ\\_Research.stm](http://jfs.ohio.gov/CDC/SUTQ_Research.stm).

Programs are assessed and monitored by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' Step Up To Quality Licensing Specialists. Thorough on-site verification visits are conducted to insure consistency among programs, which provides increased accountability for parents.



Step 1



Step 2



Step 3

## Step Up To Quality Goals

- Increase the number of high-quality early care and education programs serving children;
- Provide an easy-to-use tool for parents so they can choose high-quality early care and education programs for their children;
- Recognize and support programs that achieve higher levels of quality.

## Step Up To Quality Benchmarks/Standards

**Ratios and group size** matter because lower ratios mean fewer children per teacher. This allows for more positive interactions and more opportunities for individual attention.

**Staff education and qualifications** matter because a teacher's knowledge and understanding of early childhood development are central to the quality of care children receive.

**Specialized training** matters because research clearly shows that specialized and ongoing training improves program quality and the sensitivity of interactions between teachers and children.

**Administrative practices** matter because good teachers work and stay in good programs. Program policies and practices directly affect the overall work climate and can either support or undermine teacher efforts. Turnover is reduced when teachers are treated professionally and compensated adequately, which impacts the continuity of care for children.

**Early Learning** matters because early experiences last a lifetime. This means that teachers utilize research based information to plan experiences that best meet children's individual developmental needs so they are well prepared for school and life.

## Participation in Step Up To Quality

Why should a program participate in Step Up To Quality? Because quality matters to Ohio's children! Programs have nothing to lose and everything to gain by participating. Regardless of where a program may be on the quality continuum, there is a Step that can accommodate their progress, from One Star to a Three Star Rating. Step Up To Quality provides programs with a road map to quality improvement. There are supports and incentives that aid movement to the next step. Finally, Step Up To Quality provides programs with visible recognition for their continued commitment to achieving and maintaining higher quality standards.

## Program Participation

All ODJFS licensed programs can participate, except those that have received a notice of intent to revoke a license from the director of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services within 48 months prior to the date of the application. Additionally, Day Camps or ODJFS licensed programs that operate only during the summer months are not eligible to participate.

## Eligibility requirements to become Star Rated

1. Is fully licensed, and out of the provisional licensing period
2. Has no serious risk non-compliances at the last regular licensing inspection
3. Has no serious risk non-compliances at a complaint investigation that occurred since the last licensing inspection
4. Meets all the benchmark indicators of the step for which they apply
5. Compile an Evidence Portfolio documenting achievement of benchmark indicators

6. Have required staff complete the Professional Registry profile online at: [www.opdn.org](http://www.opdn.org)

## Applying for a Star Rating

### Preparing to apply for a Star Rating

1. Review your last licensing inspection report to determine if your program had any serious risk non-compliances.
  - If your program did not have a serious risk non-compliance at your last licensing inspection or complaint investigation, then your program meets the licensing requirement for application.
  - If your program did have a serious risk noncompliance at your last licensing inspection or complaint investigation, then you are not eligible to apply at this time.
  - Programs are eligible to apply once they have no serious risk non-compliances at the last regular licensing inspection or complaint investigation.
2. Become familiar with this guidance document.
3. Review the Step Up to Quality (SUTQ) 101 web-based training session to learn about all the benefits and requirements. Go to [www.stepuptoquality.org](http://www.stepuptoquality.org) and click on General Information for Providers link.
4. Please note that the administrator (the person or persons named on the program license) must complete the application. The application is located at [www.stepuptoquality.org](http://www.stepuptoquality.org).

### How to determine your program's Step level

Before you submit an application for a Star Rating, you must meet all the benchmark indicators in the step for which you plan to apply. The program should begin at Step One and check off every indicator that the program meets. If the program meets all the indicators in Step One, proceed to Step Two and if appropriate, to Step Three. Apply for the highest step in which all indicators are met. Apply for the step you qualify for today, not what you may be able to attain in the future. Programs can request a change at the time of the verification visit if they are able to meet all the benchmark indicators of a higher step.

### Withdraw Application

If for any reason at any time a program decides not to participate in Step Up To Quality after the application is submitted, a representative from the program can fill out the JFS 1556 Request to Withdraw form (which can be found at <http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/inter.asp>) and submit the completed form to the Step Up Licensing Specialist (SULS).

### Evidence Portfolio

The Evidence Portfolio is a compilation of all required documentation needed to verify the benchmark indicators for the step for which you apply. Evidence Portfolio requirements, including Evidence Portfolio tabs, can be found at [www.stepuptoquality.org](http://www.stepuptoquality.org).

In order to verify Staff Education and Qualifications for SUTQ, ODJFS utilizes the Ohio Professional Development Registry. All administrators and lead and assistant teachers must complete a professional profile in the Ohio Professional Development Registry found at [www.opdn.org](http://www.opdn.org). The Registry provides a centralized, coordinated system for Ohio early childhood and afterschool professionals to track and be recognized for their experience, education, credentials and training.

After receipt of the SUTO application, the SULTS will verify through the Registry that the professional profiles have been completed. If the profiles have not been completed, the program will receive a letter stating that the verification visit will be delayed.

Once the profiles are complete the program is responsible for notifying the SULTS. The SULTS will verify the profiles are in the Registry. After verification of the profiles is complete, the program will receive an eligibility letter. The program will receive an unannounced SUTO verification visit within 90 days of the date of the letter.

<b>Registry</b>
Registry Profiles
In addition to the creation of a profile, the program must send education and training documentation to the Registry for verification. During the verification visit, the SULTS will use a report generated from the Registry to verify the education levels of the administrator(s), lead and assistant teachers.
Director Information Portal (DIP)
The DIP was developed as tool to assist program administrators to manage their program's Registry information from one central convenient location. Administrators can manage their staff profiles from their own Registry profile. Please click here to be directed to the DIP and for further information. <a href="http://www.opdn.org/documents/DirectorInfoPortal.pdf">http://www.opdn.org/documents/DirectorInfoPortal.pdf</a>

## Lead Teacher Requirements

SUTO Rated programs are required to have the appropriate number of designated lead teacher(s) in order to meet the benchmark indicator for their current step level or the level they wish to be rated.

A lead teacher is defined as the adult who has the primary responsibility for a group of children and implements program activities (for example, lesson planning, parent conferences, child assessment and curriculum planning). The lead teacher has the highest educational qualifications and is regularly assigned for a minimum of 3 ½ hours per day to teach a specific group of children. The lead teacher is counted in meeting the required staff/child ratio.

In programs that operate multiple sessions (i.e. part time preschool, before and after school age programs and programs operating multiple shifts) there must be a lead teacher available each day of operation and each shift (except for 3rd). In programs that staff classrooms with teachers that work four 10 hour shifts (teachers work four days per week vs. five eight hour days), it is required that there is a lead teacher in the classroom with the children all five days per week.

## Specialized Training

All administrators and lead and assistant teachers must complete 20 hours of specialized training every two years based upon their hire date at the program.

### Specialized training pre-requisites

All administrators and lead and assistant teachers must complete 10 hours of pre-requisite training. After the pre-requisites are complete, training must be completed with topics related to the individual's professional development plan.

- Administrators: 7.5 hour Administrator Rules Training and 2.5 hours of approved SUTQ training
- Infant Toddler Staff: 10 hours of the Infant/Toddler Guidelines Modules
- Preschool Staff: 10 hours of Early Learning Content Standards Training
- Schoolage Staff: 10 hours of It's Series Training for Schoolage Staff

### **College coursework**

College coursework can meet specialized training requirements as outlined below:

- Staff that are enrolled in an early childhood degree granting program in early childhood or a related field can use their college coursework (including general coursework) to fulfill the specialized training requirement. There will need to be documentation on file to verify enrollment and degree content area. At the completion of the degree, the coursework will be assessed to determine if pre-requisite training requirements were met.
- Early Childhood college coursework taken during or after completion of a degree and completion of pre-requisites may be used in lieu of specialized training.
- CDA (Child Development Associate Credential) college coursework can be used to meet specialized training requirements after the person has first completed the pre-requisites.

In order to count college coursework for specialized training, the coursework must be completed within the training period and with a grade of C or better. College coursework completion will be verified from an official transcript or grade card or a print out of the coursework from the college website printed at the time of the visit in the presence of the Step Up Licensing Specialist.

For the purposes of calculating clock hours from a college course, one quarter hour is equal to 10 clock hours and one semester hour is equal to 15 clock hours.

### **Specialized training requirements for staff with dual roles**

One individual can serve a dual role at one program; for example, one person may be the lead teacher and the administrator or they may be the lead teacher for two part-time sessions but one person may not serve dual roles at dual programs. For specialized training purposes, a person that is the administrator and a teacher will complete the administrator pre-requisites first and then develop a Professional Development plan that outlines continued training.

Refer to the next two charts for detailed information on specialized training requirements for initial applications for participation in SUTQ and for rating renewals and changes.

## Specialized Training Guidance for Initial Star Rating

Verification Visit Type	Benchmark Requirements	Evidence Portfolio
Initial Star Rating		
Each administrator, lead, and assistant teacher employed for at least 6 months on the date the application was submitted:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must have completed 10 hours of specialized training</li> <li>• Staff must fulfill their 20 hours of training every two years by first taking the pre-requisites. Once the pre-requisites are completed, staff can satisfy their 20 hours every two years training requirement with any other SUTQ approved training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation of training completed for all administrators, lead and assistant teachers.</li> <li>• Documentation accepted: ODJFS/ODE in-service training forms/certificates, CEU certificates, completed college coursework verified through transcripts or grade reports</li> </ul>
Each administrator, lead, and assistant teacher employed for less than 6 months on the date the application was submitted:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must have a professional development plan outlining their plan to complete required specialized training hours.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development plan                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Completed by 31<sup>st</sup> calendar date after employee's date of hire</li> <li>○ Outlines plan to complete specialized training requirements which at a minimum includes the training topics and a timeline for completion.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Each administrator, lead, and assistant hired after the date the application was submitted:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must have a professional development plan outlining their plan to complete required specialized training hours.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development plan</li> <li>• Completed by 31<sup>st</sup> calendar date after employee's date of hire</li> <li>• Outlines plan to complete specialized training requirements which at a minimum includes the training topics and a timeline for completion.</li> </ul>

## Specialized Training Guidance for Star Rating Renewal or Change

Change of rating at renewal visit only, indicate change on application submission.

Verification Visit Type	Benchmark Requirements	Evidence Portfolio
Star Rating Renewal/ Change		
Each administrator, lead, and assistant teacher who has been employed for 30 days or less:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
Each administrator, lead, and assistant teacher who has been employed for 31 days but less than 24 months:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must have a professional development plan outlining their plan to complete required 20 hours of specialized training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development plan                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Completed by 31<sup>st</sup> calendar date after employee's date of hire</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Outlines plan to complete specialized training requirements which at a minimum includes the training topics and a timeline for completion.</li> <li>• Documentation of any training completed to fulfill the professional development plan</li> </ul>
Each administrator, lead, and assistant teacher who has been employed for more than 24 months:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must have 20 hours of specialized training completed for the 24 month period.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation of training completed for all administrators, lead and assistant teachers.</li> <li>• Documentation accepted: ODJFS/ODE in-service training forms/certificates, CEU certificates, completed college coursework verified through transcripts or grade reports</li> </ul>

## Alternate pathway to meet ratio/group size benchmark

Programs that apply for a Step Two Rating that meet the education, specialized training, administrative practice and early learning benchmarks for a Step Two and meets one of the two below listed criteria may utilize the alternate pathway and follow Step One ratios and group size.

Likewise, programs that apply for a Step Three Rating that meet the education, specialized training, administrative practice and early learning benchmarks for a Step Three and meets one of the two below listed criteria may utilize the alternate pathway and follow Step Two ratios and group size.

- The program is nationally accredited by one of the accepted accrediting bodies listed below and in the Glossary of the Guidance Document, or
- The program has an overall average score of five (5) on the annual Environment Rating Scales (ERS) for all ages of children served with no single subscale score on the ERS can be less than a four (4).

### Accrediting Bodies accepted for the alternate pathway:

- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)
- National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC) managed by the National Association of the Child Care Providers (NACCP)
- National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)
- National Afterschool Association (NAA) which is now the Council on Accreditation (COA).

### Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) as the alternate pathway

Programs must notify the Step Up To Quality Licensing Specialist prior to the verification visit or at the start of the verification visit that they are requesting the alternate pathway.

ERS will be conducted in all classrooms by inter-rater reliable assessors. Scores will be calculated and averaged for the overall score.

### Alternate pathway for meeting the administrator and/or teacher qualification benchmark

The Career Pathways Levels (CPL) 2, 3 and 4 are approved to meet benchmark indicators. Refer to the [Career Pathways Model](#) for detailed information on the points and experience calculations and the worksheet.

## The Verification Process

When an application for participation in SUTQ is received, the program's compliance history is reviewed to ensure that it had no serious risk non-compliances at its last licensing inspection. If the program did have a serious risk noncompliance at the last licensing inspection, it will receive an e-mail stating that the program is ineligible to apply for a Star Rating at this time. Once the program can meet eligibility requirements, a new application can be submitted.

For programs that are eligible (that did not have a serious risk noncompliance at their last licensing inspection), they will receive a letter stating that an unannounced verification visit will occur within 90 days.

The unannounced visit cannot occur until all administrators and lead and assistant teachers have completed their professional development profiles so that a registry report can be generated for the Step Up Licensing Specialist to use during the verification visit.

### **Verification Visit**

Programs that apply for participation in SUTQ will receive a verification visit. There are staff in each licensing field office whose sole responsibility is Step Up To Quality. The Step Up Licensing Specialist (SULS) will verify benchmark indicators (standards) using a standardized verification tool. The visit consists of direct observation of all classrooms, document review, and administrator and teacher interviews. Programs are required to provide an Evidence Portfolio, which includes the specific evidence that is needed to verify benchmark indicators (standards). If the Evidence Portfolio is not onsite on the date of the verification visit, the visit will not continue.

### **Between application and verification visit**

Once a program receives the eligibility letter, the SULS will conduct the unannounced verification visit within 90 days. Prior to the verification visit, the SULS will screen the program's compliance history since the date of the application. If there has been a licensing inspection or complaint investigation with a serious risk non-compliance the program will receive an ineligibility letter and will be able to reapply for a Star Rating once it has had a regular licensing inspection without a serious risk non-compliance.

If at any time prior to the verification visit there is any change where the program no longer meets one or more indicators, such as teacher qualifications, the program can request a lower step or fill out the JFS 1556 Request to Withdraw form (<http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/inter.asp>) and submit it to the SULS.

Any change in staffing will require new staff complete an individual Professional Registry Profile so that the program profile can be updated. This includes education and supporting documentation is submitted to the Registry and verified by the Registry staff. This is essential for administrators and lead teachers needed to meet benchmark indicator (standards).

If the program is a part time program that does not operate in the summer months, and the program is closed prior to the verification visit date, the verification visit will occur within 90 days after the program reopens.

### **Onsite Verification**

All verification visits are unannounced. If for any reason the administrator is not present at the program on the day of the verification visit, the visit will continue. All ODJFS licensed programs are required to have a designee and, therefore, the program's named designee will proceed with the verification visit in the absence of the administrator.

The designee must have access to the Evidence Portfolio in order for the SULS to verify benchmark indicators. If the Evidence Portfolio is not onsite on the date of the verification visit, the visit will not continue.

### **Serious Risk Non-Compliance during a verification visit**

During the verification visit, the SULS will observe in classrooms, review the Evidence Portfolio and supporting documentation and interview the administrator and lead teachers. If at any point in time during the verification visit, a serious risk non-compliance is observed, SULS will complete a licensing compliance report that documents the serious risk non-compliance. The program will be required to submit a corrective action plan to their child care licensing specialist within 30 days of the finding.

- If the serious risk non-compliance occurs during an initial application verification visit, the visit will end and the program will be ineligible to apply for a Star Rating until it has had a regular licensing inspection without a serious risk noncompliance.
- If the serious risk non-compliance occurs during a rating renewal verification visit, the serious risk non-compliance will be assessed for warning, suspension or removal. Refer to [Rating Suspension and Removal](#) section for detailed information.

All of the benchmark indicators (standards) will be verified during the visit. If some of the indicators cannot be verified during the Step verification visit, the program can choose to accept a lesser step if all the benchmark indicators for that step can be verified, or it can reapply for a rating six months from the date of the visit.

If the program has achieved the benchmark indicators (standards) for a higher step between the application date and the verification visit, the program can request to be assessed for a higher step by contacting their SULS. If the request is made on the day of the verification visit, the request must be made at the beginning of the visit as the verification for each step is different and the SULS must be prepared to assess for the correct step.

At the conclusion of the verification visit after all observations are complete, the Evidence Portfolio reviewed and administrator and teacher interviews completed, there will be an exit interview. The Onsite Visit Summary is provided at the exit interview. The verification visit report is then forwarded to the Step Up supervisor for review. If for some reason a summary or copy of the report cannot be left at the program at the conclusion of the verification visit, it will be mailed to the program after review by the supervisor. Notification of Star Rating will occur within 30 days.

For an outline of the process please refer to "[Preparing for the Verification Visit.](#)"

Please note: ODJFS reserves the right to not rate a program even if benchmark indicators (standards) are met. It also could reduce a program's Star Rating and/or remove a program's Star Rating.

## Incentives and Supports for Rated Programs

### Quality Achievement Award

Rated programs that maintain their Star Rating requirements are eligible to receive an annual Quality Achievement Award. The amount of the award is based on a program's Star Rating, total enrollment and the number of subsidized children. The annual award is disbursed in one payment. For more detailed information about Quality Achievement Awards, including award amounts, please refer to the Quality Achievement Award Payment Matrix for Centers and Type A Homes that are posted on [www.stepuptoquality.org](http://www.stepuptoquality.org). Awards are subject to the availability of funding.

### Quality Incentive Add-on Payment

Star Rated programs that have a contract with the local county JFS office and provide child care for subsidized children are eligible for the quality incentive add-on payment. All rated programs are eligible for a seven percent (7%) add-on as long as the customary rate is at least seven percent (7%) higher than the ceiling reimbursement rate. Step 2 and 3 programs are eligible to receive an additional seven percent (7%) and twelve percent (12%) respectively. It is the Star Rated programs responsibility to notify their local county JFS offices of their rating and any changes to their rating. Please contact your local county JFS office for more information.

## **T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships**

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Ohio is a scholarship and compensation program for teachers and administrators working in early childhood programs that are participating in Step Up To Quality. T.E.A.C.H. scholars are eligible for assistance with tuition, books and release time to pursue an associate's degree. For more information about T.E.A.C.H., contact Greg Yorker at [gyorker@occrpa.org](mailto:gyorker@occrpa.org).

## **SUTO Marketing**

Programs receive a variety of materials to publicize their Star Rating achievement and to inform parents and the community about the quality indicators. The ODJFS Child Care in Ohio website <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/childcare.stm> provides a tool for families looking for child care to view inspection results and to search for child care by county, zip code, name and other search options. When looking for child care, the website displays a program's Star Rating with red stars acknowledging their One, Two or Three Star Rating. The website also includes Fact Sheets for each of the Star Rating levels.

Marketing materials are available for pickup from the local Child Care Resource & Referral agency. These items include a large banner, framed poster, parent brochures, Step Up to Quality logo slicks, and sample press releases, letters and articles.

In addition, Step Up To Quality Three Star programs are recognized at the annual Early Childhood Conference Awards Celebration.

## **Maintaining a Star Rating**

**The Star Rating is valid for one year from the date on the Star Rating certificate.**

Star Rated programs are evaluated annually, and serious risk noncompliance findings are monitored through regular licensing inspections. Additional visits may occur based on ODJFS discretion.

## **Star Rating change**

Programs can apply for a higher Star Rating at the time of renewal. The program will note the step they are applying for on the renewal application. The online application is located at [http://jfs.ohio.gov/CDC/SUTO\\_applicationprocess.stm](http://jfs.ohio.gov/CDC/SUTO_applicationprocess.stm).

## **Changes in a benchmark indicator after the program is rated**

The program must notify the Step Up Licensing Specialist in writing within 10 days, that there has been a change in a benchmark indicator. Once the program notifies the Step Up Licensing Specialist that there has been a change in a benchmark indicator (for example, if a lead teacher left the program), an unannounced visit may take place, and the rating will remain if the benchmark indicator can be verified.

## **Rating Renewal**

Star Ratings are effective for one year. Programs will receive an e-mail reminder approximately 90 prior to the Rating expiration date to submit their renewal application. Upon submission of the application, programs receive a summary profile of the program's application.

If a benchmark indicator cannot be verified during the renewal verification visit, the Star Rated program can take a lesser step if the benchmark indicators for that step can be verified.

## Deferral Policy – effective January 1, 2012

If all of the benchmark indicators (standards) can not be met at the verification visit, the following guidelines will be used in making the decision as to whether or not a 30 day deferral would be granted.

Staff/Child Ratio and Group Size not met: No deferral granted

Education Qualifications not met: No deferral granted

Specialized Training not met: No deferral granted

Administrative Practices: The expectation is that a program have all indicators complete at the time of the verification visit. A deferral may be granted to a program in order to revise or complete an indicator – not to begin working on an indicator. If possible, the indicator will be completed at the time of the visit. A deferral may be granted if the following benchmark indicators cannot be completed at the time of the visit.

- Modifications to Professional Development Plans
- Performance Evaluations (must have majority completed)
- Completion of the Program Administration Scale (PAS) Item Summary Form and PAS Profile (pages 65-66)
- Modifications to the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

Early Learning: Verification of Early Learning is done through direct observation of all classrooms, teacher and/or administrator interviews and review of written documentation including the Evidence Portfolio. The length and depth of this process increases as Step levels increase. In most cases a deferral will not be granted for indicators in the Early Learning benchmark. If a deferral is granted it will be to provide clarification for a specific indicator. Examples include but are not limited to the items listed below.

- Modification to written policies/procedures for screening and referral process
- Modification to written policies/procedures for curriculum planning and assessment process
- Modification to written description of self created curriculum

No deferrals would be granted in the following instances:

- Programs seeking an increase in their rating
- Program seeking a rating after either a reduction or removal of star rating

Additional guidelines:

- A deferral will not be granted at consecutive visits.
- If multiple indicators from the same benchmark are not met, a deferral will not be granted.

# Rating Suspension and Removal

## Serious Risk Non-Compliance Warning and Suspension

Star Rated programs must maintain compliance with Serious Risk Non-Compliances (SRNC). If the program has an SRNC, the program may receive a warning or suspension or have the rating removed as outlined in the progressive sanctions matrix found at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/CDC/docs/ProgressiveSanctions.pdf>

Serious Risk Non-Compliances are documented with a Sanswrite report. The SRNC can be observed at a regular licensing inspection by the regular child care licensing specialist or during a verification visit observed by the SULS.

A warning is a one point occurrence. A suspension is a two or more point occurrence that results in a rating being removed from the JFS Child Care website for a minimum of 45 days.

A removal is a six or more point occurrence from a one time incident or an accumulation of points over a 24 month period.

## Rating Removal

Removals result in the program being ineligible for a Star Rating for a length of time determined by ODJFS. The Step Up To Quality Licensing Specialist will notify the program of the removal and the length of the removal, in writing. All Step Up To Quality materials will need to be relinquished. Refer to the Progressive Sanctions Matrix located at [www.stepuptoquality.org](http://www.stepuptoquality.org).

## Loss of Star Rating

Programs may lose their Star Rating for any of the following reasons:

- Receipt of Notice of Intent to Revoke the license
- A single six (6) point occurrence of a serious risk noncompliance
- More than six (6) points accumulated over a 24 month period. For further information, see Center Serious Risk Information on [www.stepuptoquality.org](http://www.stepuptoquality.org).
- Program fails to maintain compliance with Star Rating requirements.

# Appeal of Rating Removal or Result of Verification Visit

## Appeal Guidelines

Programs can appeal the removal of the Star Rating or they can appeal the results of the verification visit. These are the only circumstances that can be appealed. Programs must complete the JFS 01563 Appeal Request for Step Up To Quality. This can be found in the Policies and Procedures link under Information for Providers on the Step Up To Quality website at [www.stepuptoquality.org](http://www.stepuptoquality.org). The JFS 01563 will need to be submitted electronically, faxed or mailed into ODJFS within the 30 day time frame.

## Appeal

Once an appeal is filed within 30 days as outlined in Rule 5101:2-17-03 (OAC), an appeal panel has been organized to meet and review appeals brought forward to ODJFS. Prior to the panel convening for the review, the program will provide the panel members with written documentation to support their position in regard to the removal or the results of the verification visit. Step Up To Quality staff will also provide documentation to support the

department's findings. The panel consists of internal and external stakeholders, including administrators from Step 3 Rated programs.

**Consequence of Rating removals**

Programs whose Star Ratings are removed are no longer eligible for Quality Achievement Awards and/or quality incentive add-on payments for county subsidies.

# Program Changes

Please refer to this chart to determine requirements when a Star Rated program has any of the following changes:

<b><u>Change in administrator</u></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The program must first complete all necessary licensing notification and amendments to the program's license.</li> <li>2. The program must notify the SULTS in writing within 10 days of the change in administrator.</li> <li>3. The new administrator must complete a professional registry profile and the rating will remain if benchmark indicators can be verified during an unannounced verification visit.</li> </ol>
<b><u>Location Change</u></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The program must first complete all necessary licensing notification and amendments to the program's license.</li> <li>2. The program must notify the SULTS in writing 10 days prior to a change in location.</li> <li>3. The Rating may remain, if benchmark indicators can be verified during an unannounced verification visit.</li> </ol>
<b><u>Rated program closes and merges with another rated program</u></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The program must first complete all necessary licensing notification and closure of the program's license.</li> <li>2. If both programs are rated, the programs must notify the SULTS in writing 10 days prior to a change in location and to clarify with the SULTS what the programs are doing.</li> <li>3. The Rating may remain, if benchmark indicators can be verified during an unannounced verification visit at the merged programs.</li> </ol>
<b><u>Rated program closes and merges with another program that is not rated</u></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The program must first complete all necessary licensing notification and closure of the program's license.</li> <li>2. The program must notify the SULTS in writing 10 days prior to the closure.</li> <li>3. Once the rated program closes and moves, the rating is relinquished and all SUTQ marketing materials will be retrieved.</li> <li>4. The merged program will need to apply for an initial rating and follow the process in place for all programs applying for a rating.</li> </ol>
<b><u>Rated program expands i.e. additional classrooms and/or additional age groups</u></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The program must first complete all necessary licensing notification and amendment of the program's license.</li> <li>2. The program must notify the SULTS in writing 10 days prior to the expansion.</li> <li>3. The SULTS will discuss the expansion with the program and determine what type of follow-up, including a possible verification visit, are necessary.</li> </ol>
<b><u>Change of ownership</u></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The program must first complete all necessary licensing notification and amendments to the program's license.</li> <li>2. The program must notify the SULTS in writing 10 days prior to a change in ownership.</li> <li>3. A change in ownership requires the program to complete a new application and the rating may remain, if benchmark indicators can be verified during an unannounced verification visit.</li> </ol>
<b><u>Rated program closes</u></b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The program must first complete all necessary licensing notification and amendment of the program's license.</li> <li>2. The program must notify the SULTS in writing 10 days prior to the closure.</li> <li>3. Once the rated program closes, the rating is relinquished and all SUTQ marketing materials will be retrieved.</li> </ol>



## Glossary

**Accrediting Bodies** – Accrediting Bodies accepted for the alternate pathway

The Ohio Administrative Code allows five percent subsidy increases for programs with accreditations from the following organizations:

- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)
- National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC) managed by the National Association of the Child Care Providers (NACCP)
- National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)
- National Afterschool Association (NAA) which is now the Council on Accreditation (COA).

**Administrator(s)** – Person(s) responsible for the day-to-day operations of a child care program as named on the ODJFS Child Care License. SUTQ requirements apply to all persons listed as administrator on the ODJFS license.

**Administrator Rules Training** – ODJFS developed training for administrators effective January 1, 2007. This training is a prerequisite for administrators and provides 7.5 of the required 10 hours for the pre-requisite.

**Afterschool Specialist** – Afterschool Specialists are available in each CCR&R. They are primarily responsible for training, assessing school-age classrooms using the SACERS and providing technical assistance.

**Alignment Tools** – Tools created to show alignment between guidelines/standards and curriculum and assessment.

**Alternate Pathway for Ratio and Group Size for Step 2 and 3** – Programs that can meet the benchmark indicators for the next Step except for ratio and group size can earn the higher rating if they are either accredited by an accepted accrediting body or if they have an overall environment rating scale score of at least five (5).

**Approved accrediting bodies** – National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC); National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA); National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC) managed by the National Association of the Child Care Providers (NACCP), National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC); National Afterschool Association (NAA) accreditation completed by Council on Accreditation (COA)..

**Assessment** – The process of gathering information about children and/or the classroom from several forms of evidence and organizing and interpreting that information (see formal and informal assessment). Child assessments are used to make, adjust and refine instructional decisions and to evaluate child progress. Classroom assessments are used to make, adjust and refine the classroom environment to support children's learning.

- **Assessment System** – A system that allows for decisions to be made about curriculum, special interventions, behavioral supports, eligibility for services and program improvement. A well-designed assessment system provides educators with information needed to make decisions.
- **Authentic Assessments** – Natural or authentic real-life tasks, examples of children's work, observations of children in naturalistic settings and ratings of children's everyday behaviors provide accurate reflections of their abilities. Authentic assessments of children occur in the regular classroom using tasks similar to what they are accustomed to, administered by individuals with whom they are familiar.
- **Child Portfolio Assessments** – Portfolios containing student work reflecting their accomplishments toward significant curriculum goals, particularly those that require complex thinking and the use of multiple resources. Because the assessment of student performance on these tasks can provide evidence of students' accomplishments and thereby serve as a tool to support the instructional process, portfolio assessments can bolster teachers' efficacy, encouraging them to consider how students are progressing. In addition, portfolios invite students to reflect on and take responsibility for their own progress, the assessment process, and, ultimately, their own learning. Finally, portfolios provide parents and the wider community with credible evidence of student achievement and inform policy and practice at every level of the educational system.

- **Formal Child Assessment** – Formal child assessment is utilized as part of an on-going assessment process. Assessments are used to report information to others such as families and program administrators as well as to provide teachers with information to adjust individual instruction. Formal assessment strategies include the use of a standardized procedure for all children and a specific standardized tool or instrument.
- **Informal Child Assessment** – Assessment of children by observing and recording children’s behavior and progress, using such tools as developmental checklists, anecdotal records, work sampling and portfolios, in order to help in the design of instructional activities that support a range of developmental levels across all domains.
- **On-Going Child Assessment System** – Regularly and continually observing and recording children’s behavior and progress, using developmental checklists, anecdotal records, and portfolios, in order to assess progress in achieving curriculum goals and inform intentional teaching strategies to support achieving these goals.
- **Classroom Assessment** – A classroom self-assessment that is conducted annually using one of the following: ITERS-R; ECERS-R or ELLCO; SACERS; NAEYC tools; CLASS; Early Language and Literacy Reflection Tool (Preschool); High Scope Program Quality Assessment (POA) and curriculum tools based on the age of the children in the classroom.
- **CLASS** – Classroom Assessment Scoring System. E-Mail: [contact@classobservation.com](mailto:contact@classobservation.com)
- **Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R)** - An assessment tool that measures environmental indicators of quality in preschool classrooms. The tool is may be used annually in preschool classrooms to meet requirements. For more information, see [http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers/ecers\\_frame.html](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers/ecers_frame.html).
- **Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) Profile Report** – The report given to programs after the ECERS-R has been completed identifying the score for each indicator on the scale.
- **Early Language & Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO)** - A standardized observation tool used to describe the extent to which classrooms provide children support for their language and literacy development. The ELLCO consists of three components: literacy environment checklist, classroom observation, and teacher interaction and literacy activities rating scale. The Early Language and Literacy Reflection Tool may be used annually in the preschool rooms as a classroom assessment. For more information, see <http://www.pbrookes.com/store/books/smith-ellco/>.
- **Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R)** – An assessment tool that measures environmental indicators of quality in infant and toddler classrooms. The tool may be used annually in infant and toddler classrooms. For more information, see [http://www.fpg.unc.edu/products/product\\_detail.cfm?apubsID=530](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/products/product_detail.cfm?apubsID=530).
- **Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R)** – An assessment tool that measures environmental indicators of quality in family child care homes. The tool may be used annually in family child care homes. For more information, see <http://store.tcpress.com/0807747254.shtml>
- **School Age Care Environmental Rating Scale (SACERS)** – An assessment tool that measures environmental indicators of quality in school age classrooms. The tool may be used annually in school age classrooms [http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers/sacersdevelopment\\_frame.html](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers/sacersdevelopment_frame.html)
- **Program Administration Scale (PAS)** – This instrument is used to assess a program’s administrative policies, procedures and practices.
- **Program for Infant/Toddler Program Assessment Rating Scale (PITC PARS)** – Based on PITC definitions of high-quality child care, this tool is used to assess the integrity with which programs implement key aspects of the PITC approach, in particular those that focus on teacher’s responsiveness and interactions with the children in their care.

**Assistant Teacher** – Adults who work under the direct supervision of a lead teacher and implement program activities. Assistant teachers can work independently in a teacher’s absence, but for the vast majority of time the assistant teacher works directly with the teacher in the same space, with the same group of children. This does not include cooks, bus drivers, family service workers, floaters and substitutes.

**Associate's Degree** – To be counted in the Career Pathways, this two-year degree must be from an accredited college. Official transcripts are the only acceptable form of verification of completion of college coursework.

**Benchmarks (Standards)** – Ratio, group size, staff education and qualifications, specialized training, administrative practices and early learning. These are identified in the research literature as essential elements of quality.

**Career Pathways** - An assigned level calculated by data in the Professional Development Registry. Data used to calculate a professional designation are based on a combination of formal education (official transcripts are the only acceptable form of verification of completion of college coursework), experience and ongoing professional development. [www.opdn.org](http://www.opdn.org) : The Ohio Professional Development Network

**Child Care Resource & Referral** – (CCR&R) Local child care resource & referral agencies providing services to families, early childhood professionals and communities statewide.

**Child Development Associate Credential** – (CDA) - is a competency-based, nationally-recognized credential awarded by the Council for Professional Recognition in Washington, DC. To count in meeting benchmark indicators for education qualifications, the CDA must be current. Additionally, CDA college coursework is accepted as college coursework as outlined on the specialized training benchmark. [www.cdacouncil.org](http://www.cdacouncil.org)

**Continuing Education Units** – (CEUs). One clock hour equals .1 CEU.

**Clock hours** – Sixty minutes equals one clock hour.

**College coursework**- Individuals who are currently enrolled in an accredited degree-granting program in early childhood education or a related field can use coursework (general education as well early childhood) with a C or better to fulfill the annual training requirement. Official transcripts are the only acceptable form of verification of completion of college coursework.

**College transcripts** – Official record of completed coursework. Official transcripts are the only acceptable form of verification of completion of college coursework.

**Content Standards** - Standards describing the knowledge and skills students should attain – often called the “what” of “what students should know and be able to do.” Content standards indicate ways of thinking, working, communicating, reasoning and investigating the important and enduring ideas, concepts, issues, dilemmas and knowledge essential to the discipline (see Early Learning Content Standards).

**Continuous Improvement Planning** - The process of continuous improvement includes planning, acting upon the plan, studying the results of the actions and, when necessary, revising those actions.

**Core Competencies** – Define what skills, knowledge and attributes early care and education professionals should possess. Ohio's Early Childhood Knowledge and Core Competencies documents are available from the local CCR&R

- Ohio's Core Knowledge & Competencies for Afterschool Professionals Who Work with Children Ages 5-12 – Document that defines the areas of professional practice in which staff and caregivers of school-age children should strive to gain knowledge and skills. <http://asi.ocrra.org/index.php?pid=15>
- Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies – Document that defines what all adults who work with young children need to know, understand and be able to do in order to ensure that children have the best possible environments, experiences and relationships in which to grow and learn. <http://www.opdn.org/?wid=12&>

**Corrective Action Plan (CAP)** – A plan submitted to the child care licensing specialist and to the SULS outlining steps to be taken to achieve and maintain compliance with a SRNC finding. The CAP is to be submitted within 30 days of the SRNC.

**Critical Repair** – To improve the health and safety of the physical environment.

**Curriculum** – Goals for children's development and learning; experiences through which they will achieve those goals; what staff and families do to help children achieve goals; materials needed to support the implementation of curriculum. Programs are to utilize a curriculum that is comprehensive, evidence-based and provides the program with a complete plan for learning.

**Deferral** – A 30 day deferral may be granted at the end of a verification visit to support a program's efforts to become star rated or maintain current star rating. The 30 day deferral will allow time for the program to complete specific benchmark indicators that could not be verified at the time of the verification visit.

**Designee** – A child care staff member who has been designated as the person in charge in the absence of the administrator. The designee must have access to any pertinent documents needed to verify benchmark indicators.

**Developmental Screening** – A process using an age appropriate standardized tool relevant to the population served. The screening is used to identify developmental levels of the children enrolled to support instruction. Domains must include speech/language, cognitive, gross motor, social/emotional, behavioral. Results are shared with families and used to inform instruction. A listing of screening tools can be found on pages.44 and 45 of this document.

**Discount on Child Care** – A workplace characteristic that provides free or reduced child care costs for employees' children.

**Dual Role** – A dual role is an administrator or teacher who serves in two different capacities at the program. One individual can serve a dual role at one program; for example, one person may be the lead teacher and the administrator or they may be the lead teacher for two part-time sessions but one person may not serve dual roles at dual programs.

**Early Childhood Degree** –Degree in Early Childhood Education, Human Ecology, Child Development, Family Studies, and Child & Family Community Studies.

**Early Learning Program Guidelines** – The Ohio Department of Education has crafted this document to assist early childhood education leaders and teachers in meeting the conditions considered essential for children's healthy development and preparedness for school.

<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?Page=3&TopicRelationID=1390&Content=80165>

**Early Learning Resources** – Resources for the sole purpose of purchasing curriculum and/or assessment tools to support instruction.

**Enhanced Alternative Pathway** – Programs that wish to achieve a Step Three Rating via an Enhanced Alternative Pathway must meet all the benchmark indicators for Step Three except for preschool group size, receive an overall ERS score of 5, and have an overall CLASS score of 5 or better.

**Evidence Portfolio** – A portfolio(s) that holds the required evidence necessary to verify a Star Rating. This evidence must be available for review by the Step Up Licensing Specialist during the rating verification visit.

**Family/Mixed Age Groupings** – A group of mixed-aged children that adheres to staff/child ratios for the youngest child in the group.

**Get it, Got it, Go!** - Also referred to as GGG, this is a literacy screen used to (1) monitor child progress and (2) monitor teacher interventions, with respect to early reading skills.

**Group size** – Group size shall not exceed twice the maximum number of children allowed per child care staff member. Group size requirements are based on the program following the ratio of the specific step requirements.

**High School Diploma or equivalent** – A staff person counted in meeting staff/child ratios must have a high school diploma recognized by the Ohio Department of Education. There must be evidence or documentation of the high school diploma. Documentation may include a copy of the actual diploma or a college transcript naming the employee's high school, or a copy of the employee's degree or High School Equivalence Diploma.

**Indicator** – Specific item under each benchmark that must be verified in order to receive a Star Rating.

**Infant** – A child aged birth to 18 months.

**Infant Toddler Guidelines Training** – This is the pre-requisite training for infant and toddler staff specifically aligned to Ohio's Infant Toddler Guidelines. This training is a pre-requisite and infant toddler teachers must complete 10 hours prior to taking any other SUTQ approved training.

**Infant Toddler Specialist** – Infant Toddler Specialists are available in each CCR&R. They are primarily responsible for providing Infant Toddler Guidelines Training (prerequisite), assessing infant and toddler classrooms using the ITERS-R and providing technical assistance at Emerging Star programs.

**Inservice Training** – Inservice training is a licensing requirement for 15 hours of annual training until a total of 45 hours has been completed. The training shall include trainings in child development, health and safety, child abuse recognition/prevention, first aid and management of communicable disease. One quarter hour of college coursework translates into ten clock hours of inservice training. One semester hour of college coursework translates into fifteen clock hours of inservice training.

**Intentional Teaching** - Describes strategies that may address specific skills and knowledge needed by some or all students. Intentional teaching is the collection of directed, designed and rich interactions between children and teachers in which teachers purposefully challenge, structure and extend learning to promote attainment and mastery of

children's skills. Intentional teaching includes evaluating and adjusting responses to differing abilities, temperaments, activity levels and developmental abilities.

**It's Series Training** - This is the pre-requisite training for schoolage staff specifically developed for schoolage staff. This training is a pre-requisite and schoolage teachers must complete 10 hours prior to taking any other SUTQ approved training.

**Kindergarten-Age Eligible** – A child is eligible to attend kindergarten as determined by the public school system where the child resides.

**Lead Teacher** – The adult who has the primary responsibility for a group of children and implements program activities (for example, lesson planning, parent conferences, child assessment and curriculum planning). The lead teacher has the highest educational qualifications and is regularly assigned for a minimum of 3 ½ hours per day to teach a specific group of children. The lead teacher is counted in meeting the required staff/child ratio.

**Lesson Plan** – The detailed written plan of daily activities to support children's development and learning.

**National Afterschool Alliance (NAA)** – See [www.naaweb.org](http://www.naaweb.org).

**NAEYC Accreditation** - A process that recognizes programs for meeting and maintaining higher quality standards.

**National Association for the Education of Young Children** – (NAEYC) The largest member organization of early childhood educators dedicated to improving the quality of programs for children from birth to grade three. For more information, see <http://www.naeyc.org>.

**National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)** – See [www.nafcc.org](http://www.nafcc.org).

**National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER)** – See [www.nieer.org](http://www.nieer.org).

**Notice of Intent to Revoke** – Proposed Adjudication Order (PAO) – A letter from the ODJFS director that puts the program on notice of the department's intent to take action against the application or license.

**Ohio AfterSchool Association (OAA)** – See [www.ohioafterschool.org](http://www.ohioafterschool.org)

**Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children (OAEYC)** – A state affiliate of NAEYC. For more information, see [www.oaeyc.org](http://www.oaeyc.org)

**Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association** – (OCCRRA) - A statewide nonprofit agency that promotes positive development of children, especially in out-of-home learning environments. The membership of OCCRRA consists of 12 local resource and referral agencies that provide services to families, early childhood professionals and communities. Oversees T.E.A.C.H, The Ohio Professional Development Registry and Quality Achievement Awards. For more information, see <http://www.occrra.org>.

**Ohio Department of Education, Office of Early Learning and School Readiness (ODE)** – See <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDefaultPage.aspx?page=1>.

**Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS)** – Develops and oversees programs that provide health care, employment, economic assistance, child support, and services to families and children. For more information, see <http://jfs.ohio.gov/CDC/childcare.stm>

**ODJFS In-Service Training Form** – The prescribed form (JFS 01307) used to document required training hours.

**Ohio's K – 12 Standards Guides for Families** – Documents that highlight some skills your child should know and be able to do at each grade. They are based on Ohio's Academic Content Standards. <http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEPrimary.aspx?Page=2&TopicID=1695&TopicRelationID=1696>

**ODJFS Licensing Rules** – Ohio's minimum health and safety requirements for licensed child care programs. For more information, see <http://jfs.ohio.gov/CDC/childcare.stm>.

**Ohio's Early Learning Content Standards** – A framework for curriculum and instructional planning for pre-kindergarten teachers outlining expectations for what children should know and be able to do when they enter kindergarten. There are early learning content standards in English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies that align to the K-12 standards. For more information, see <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDefaultPage.aspx?page=1>.

**Ohio's Early Learning Program Guidelines** – Guidelines developed by the Ohio Department of Education that define the program elements and expectations that public preschools and Early Learning Initiative programs must follow. See <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?Page=3&TopicRelationID=1390&Content=66730>.

**Ohio's Infant Toddler Guidelines** – Guidelines that outline the developmental milestones for infants and toddlers that were written with the support of WestEd's Program for Infant Toddler Care staff. See <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/InfantToddler.pdf>.

**Ohio Professional Development Network (OHPD Network)** - A collaboration of early childhood and after-school professionals and partner agencies and organizations at the state and local levels. Provides a forum for input and involvement of early childhood advocacy and professional organizations and their public and private partners to examine early childhood professional development initiatives. This collaborative partnership continues its efforts to strengthen and build a system that provides support for the continued growth, learning, and advancement of early childhood professionals in Ohio.

**Online Application** – Programs apply online for an initial rating, changes, and renewals on the Step Up To Quality website [www.stepuptoquality.org](http://www.stepuptoquality.org)

**Paid Leave** – Holiday, sick, vacation, maternity, etc. Five days annually, for full time staff; paid leave may be pro-rated for part time staff.

**Performance Appraisal** – A standardized, written assessment tool used to identify strengths and areas for improvement that at a minimum outlines goals for the next evaluation period and requires a minimum of one observation annually.

**Plan for completing Specialized Training** – A plan incorporated into the employee's professional development plan that outlines their intent to complete specialized training as required in the Specialized Training benchmark.

**Prerequisite** - Staff must fulfill their annual training requirements by first taking the required 10 hours of prerequisites. Prerequisites for staff are age specific. Administrators also have specific prerequisites for their position.

**Preschooler** – A child who is at least 3 years old but is not kindergarten age-eligible.

**Professional Development Plan** – A written, individualized plan used to document the ongoing training and professional development needs of staff, related to the meeting of specific performance goals that must be completed within 30 days of hire and updated at least annually. A performance evaluation appraisal requires a minimum of one observation annually. A sample form is available on the Bureau's Web site at [www.stepuptoquality.org](http://www.stepuptoquality.org).

**Professional Development Registry** – A computer-based system that compiles the profiles of individuals in the early care and education field and calculates, based on experience, training and/or credentials a career pathways level for each professional. The Registry includes a Director Information Portal (DIP) for administrators to use for their staff profiles, provides a means for persons to track their own professional development, includes available trainings across the state including pre-requisites, and identifies approved trainers. See [www.opdn.org](http://www.opdn.org).

**Professional Membership** – Membership, paid for by the program, to organizations such as NAEYC, OAA, and Zero to Three. This applies to full-time teaching staff.

**Professional Registry Profile** – A profile that must be completed for all lead and assistant teachers, including the administrator(s). Registry Profiles are to be completed prior to applying for a rating. See [www.opdn.org](http://www.opdn.org).

**Quality Achievement Awards** – Annual awards for rated programs that maintain licensing compliance and Star Rating requirements. The Quality Achievement Award matrixes for centers and for Type A homes are located at [www.stepuptoquality.org](http://www.stepuptoquality.org).

**Quality Guidelines for Ohio's Afterschool Programs** - Document that identifies program quality elements based on current research and assists program providers in program planning, assessment and program improvement planning. <http://www.ohioafterschoolnetwork.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=5>

**Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)** - A Quality Improvement Plan lists goals and outcomes for the program. It describes the action steps that will help programs achieve these goals and includes information regarding resources and services that will help programs achieve their goals.

**Related Field for Early Childhood Education Degree** – Early Childhood Education (ECE), Child Development, Family Studies, Human Ecology, Human Development, Child and Family Community Studies, Elementary Education with four courses in Child Development or Early Childhood Education from an accredited institution.

**Related Field for School Age Teachers** – Related fields may be elementary, middle or secondary education, physical education, counseling, etc., from an accredited institution.

**R&R Step Up Specialist** – The CCR&R staff person who is dedicated to working with programs in local communities.

**Referrals** - Children with developmental needs are referred within 90 days to the appropriate developmental professional in full partnership with the family based on developmental screening results.

**Renewal Visit** – Ratings are valid for one year and programs need to apply to have their rating renewed. The renewal visit will be conducted to verify that the program continues to meet the benchmark indicators.

**Research-based** – Rigorous, systematic, objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge about education activities and programs.

**Retirement Fund** – The program provides employees the opportunity to contribute to a fund specifically set aside for retirement.

**Salary Structure** – A written process for compensating staff based on education and length of employment.

**Schoolage Pre-requisite** - Ten hours of approved It's Series training provided by the After-school Specialists from the local CCR&R.

**School-Ager** – A child who is in school or is school-eligible based on the entry requirements for the school district of residence, but is less than 15 years old.

**School Readiness** - Children who are school ready are physically healthy, have engaged in positive social experiences with other children, are learning to manage their feelings, have good communication skills, and are enthusiastic and curious about learning. It is through home, early learning and child-care experiences and the support of their communities that children enter kindergarten ready for success.

**Self-assessment** – An annual process that assesses either teacher, classroom and/or program effectiveness and identifies progress toward meeting goals and objectives.

**Serious Risk Noncompliance** – House Bill 11 required the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to put forth recommendations for fines and sanctions for programs that fail to comply with licensing requirements. A new initiative called “Regulation for the 21st Century” was created to embrace this charge. In phase one, a workgroup of key stakeholders put forth the serious risk noncompliances that would lead to fines and sanctions. These became the initial eligibility requirements in order to become a rated program. They are also the basis for either suspending or removing a Star Rating. See <http://jfs.ohio.gov/CDC/childcare.stm>

**Specialized Training** – Approved training for administrators, lead teachers and assistant teachers. This training requirement is based on employee's hire dates. Approved specialized training is based on current research and evidence based practices. In-service training in basic health and safety such as first aid, CPR, and communicable disease and child abuse prevention do not count as specialized training.

**Standards of Care & Teaching for Ohio's Infants & Toddlers** – Document that identifies what is foundational and essential for programs in supporting the development and learning of infants and toddlers. <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/docs/ITStandards.pdf>

**Star Rating** – Programs that apply for and, upon verification, meet the benchmark indicators for Step Up To Quality Steps 1, 2 or 3 will be awarded a Star Rating.

**Star Rating Certificate** – A certificate detailing the program's achievement in meeting the indicators for the Step in which they applied.

**Star Rating removal** – A Star Rating may be removed when a program accumulates more than six points during its two-year licensing period.

**Star Rating suspension** - A Star Rating may be suspended for a minimum of 45 days when a program has a serious risk noncompliance that results in a minimum of two points.

**Step 1** – Programs earn a One Star Rating for meeting all of the indicators in each of the benchmarks in this Step.

**Step 2** - Programs earn a Two Star Rating for meeting all of the indicators in each of the benchmarks in this Step.

**Step 3** - Programs earn a Three Star Rating for meeting all of the indicators in each of the benchmarks in this Step.

**Step Up To Quality Licensing Specialist** – (SULS) ODJFS Child Care Licensing Specialist, who is responsible for verifying Star Ratings.

**Subsidized Child Care** – provides child care assistance to TANF eligible families.

**Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.)** -- T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Ohio provides scholarships to teachers and family child care providers to earn degrees and credentials in Early Childhood Education. See <http://teach.occrra.org/>.

**Technical Assistance (TA)** – Technical Assistance staff support programs in a variety of ways, to eliminate barriers and to identify resources that can help them improve and achieve Star Ratings. TA staff can be mentors/coaches, make on-site visits, and provide assistance in group settings.

**Toddler** – A child aged 18 to 36 months.

**Tuition Reimbursement** – The program provides, at a minimum, partial tuition reimbursement for college coursework for full-time staff. T.E.A.C.H. support can be counted to meet this indicator.

**Verification Visit** – Visit conducted by Step Up Licensing Specialist that verifies the benchmark indicators for the Step in which the program applies.



## Preparing For The Initial Rating Verification Visit

- During the rating verification visit the administrator, or designee, should be prepared to:
  - Provide the Step Up Licensing Specialist with the Evidence Portfolio, a place to work, and a tour of the program.
  - Be available to answer questions.
  
- The Step Up Licensing Specialist (SULS) will:
  - Utilize both observation and a review of the required documentation in assessing benchmark indicators.
  - Observe in all classrooms to verify staff/child ratios, group size, lead teacher assignments and early learning indicators if applicable.
  - Interview administrator and lead teachers.
  - Review the completed report during an exit interview with the administrator and provide a copy of the summary report to the administrator.
  
- Special Note: The Specialist will end the visit if:
  - A serious risk non-compliance is observed. If this happens, the program may re-apply after they have had one regular licensing inspection without any serious risk non-compliances.
  - The Evidence Portfolio is incomplete or not available on site.
  - An indicator cannot be verified and there is no lesser step available. If this happens, the program may re-apply after 6 months from the date of the visit.
  - ODJFS reserves the right to not rate a program even if benchmark indicators are met; reduce a program's Star Rating and/or remove a program's Star Rating.

### After The Visit

- After the visit, you will receive the following:
  - Onsite visit summary reviewed during the exit interview
  - After approval by the Step Up supervisor
    - Newly rated programs and programs with a rating change will receive a copy of the full report
    - Renewed rated programs will receive a copy of the final report summary
  - Star Rating letter and certificate
  - Marketing materials that can be picked up from the local Child Care Resource & Referral Agency

## Evidence Portfolio

**Evidence Portfolio** – A portfolio(s) that holds the required evidence necessary to verify a Star Rating. This evidence must be available for review by the Step Up Licensing Specialist (SULS) during the rating verification visit.

**Evidence Portfolio Tabs** – Tabs that have been developed to assist programs with compiling the portfolio. The Tabs outline the required documents that need to be included to support the program's verification. In addition to the Tabs, clarification of the requirements can be found in this appendix.

On the Step Up To Quality website under Policies and Procedures, [http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/SUTQ\\_PoliciesandProcedures.stm](http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/SUTQ_PoliciesandProcedures.stm), the actual Tab print files are available for download. In this Guidance Document, you will find pages with the Tab content and the supporting materials that can also be printed.

Please review the Evidence Portfolio Requirements and Documentation information and contact your SULS if you have any questions while compiling your Evidence Portfolio.

## Ratio and Group Size Requirements

Ratio and Group Size requirements will be verified during the SUTQ verification visit. The program will be assessed for SUTQ ratios and group size requirements as outlined on the SUTQ Tiers. Documentation included in the Evidence Portfolio will be reviewed at the verification visit.

### Alternative Pathway

- **Alternative Pathway** – Programs can utilize an alternate pathway to meet SUTQ ratio and group size for Step Two (following Step One ratio and group size) and Step Three (following Step Two ratio and group size) when the program meets Education Qualifications, Specialized Training, Administrative Practices and Early Learning Benchmarks for the Step for which they are applying. They then must meet one of the following:
  - The program must be nationally accredited by one of the following approved accrediting bodies – National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA), National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC) managed by the National Association of the Child Care Providers (NACCP), National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), National Afterschool Association (NAA) which is now the Council on Accreditation (COA).
  - Program is able to achieve an overall combined score of five (5) on the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) for all ages of children served with no single subscale score on the ERS less than a four (4).
  - Programs must notify the Step Up To Quality Licensing Specialist prior to the verification visit or at the start of the verification visit that they are requesting the alternate pathway. All of the other benchmarks must be verified prior to the ERS being conducted.
  - The ERS will be conducted in all classrooms by inter-rater reliable assessors. Scores will be calculated and averaged for the overall score. Scores will be submitted to the SUTQ supervisor to determine if the program has achieved a star rating. This process will be repeated annually upon renewal.
- **Enhanced Alternative Pathway** - Programs that wish to achieve a Step Three Rating via an Enhanced Alternative Pathway must meet all the benchmark indicators for Step Three except for **preschool group size**, receive an overall ERS score of 5, and have an overall CLASS score of 5 or better.
  - Programs must notify the SUTQ Licensing Specialist prior to the verification visit or at the start of the verification visit that they are requesting the Enhanced Alternative Pathway. The verification visit will be conducted and programs must meet all other benchmark indicators. The ERS will then be conducted by inter-rater reliable assessors and if the program achieves an overall ERS score of 5, then a CLASS will be conducted by inter-rater reliable assessors. Scores will be submitted to the SUTQ supervisor to determine if the program has achieved a star rating. This process will be repeated annually upon renewal.

## Educational Qualifications Requirements

All education requirements for administrator(s), lead and assistant teachers need to be verified through the Registry. A copy of both the Director Information Portal (DIP) report which outlines each staff person's education qualifications, hire date and position; and a copy of each individual staff person's profile must be available in the Evidence Portfolio. These reports are used to verify the Career Pathways Level and/or the education qualifications for administrator(s), lead and assistant teachers for the step for which the program has applied.

- **The program is responsible for submitting education and training documentation to the PD Registry.** Visit [www.opdn.org](http://www.opdn.org) for complete details. Review the *Required Documents for Verification* handout and utilize the Cover Sheet for Documentation Submission.
- If an individual updates their education and training information in the Registry, a new individual profile should be printed and a copy placed in the Evidence Portfolio.
- Administrator(s) lead and assistant teachers must have their profile information submitted to the Registry and a Career Pathways Level calculated in the Registry prior to the submission of an application for a Star Rating.
- Administrator, lead or assistant teachers hired after submission of an application have 30 days to submit documentation to PD Registry for verification of education.
- SULTS will use **official transcripts** (or a copy of an official transcript) to verify education of staff hired after application submission.

Note: As of January 1, 2012, the Career Pathways calculation has been updated to include additional points for Early Childhood coursework and new certifications. Individuals should print and retain a copy of their current Career Pathways calculation prior to January 1, 2012. If an individual submits additional coursework or certification documentation, an updated copy of their Career Pathways should be printed and included in the Evidence Portfolio. For more information regarding the updates please visit the Registry at: [www.opdn.org](http://www.opdn.org).

# Specialized Training Requirements

## Pre-requisite Training

- **Pre-requisite Training** – Programs at all Step Levels are required to have administrators, lead and assistant teachers complete ten hours of pre-requisite training for all job functions. The following are the pre-requisites for each job function:
  - Administrators: Administrator Rules Training (7.5 hours taken after January 1, 2007) plus 2.5 hours of approved specialized training topics
  - Infant/Toddler Staff: Infant/Toddler Guidelines Training (10 hours)
  - Preschool Staff: Early Learning Content Standards Training (10 hours)
  - Schoolage Staff: It's Series Training (10 hours)

## On-Going Training

- After pre-requisites are met, 20 hours of specialized training must be completed every two years, based on the employee's hire date.
- Staff must fulfill their 20 hours of training every two years by first taking the pre-requisites. Once the pre-requisites are completed, staff can satisfy their 20 hours every two years training requirement with any other. The training should be outlined in and aligned to the goals of the individual's Professional Development plan.

## Clarification Regarding College Coursework

- College coursework must be completed within the current timeframe based on the individual's hire date
- College coursework must be successfully completed (with a grade of C or better or a passing grade from a pass/fail course) from an accredited institution of higher education

College coursework from an accredited institution of higher education can be used in the following ways:

- Individuals enrolled in college pursuing a degree in early childhood or a related field may use general education college coursework to fulfill their training requirement which includes pre-requisites.
  - Pre-requisites will not be assessed until degree is complete
- Individuals completing a college course in Early Childhood or related field may use the college course to meet their training requirement once pre-requisite training has been completed.
- College coursework with content in OELCS may be used to satisfy preschool prerequisites. Program must send course description to SULS for approval.
- Individuals completing a college course as part of a CDA program can use the college course to meet specialized training requirements once pre-requisite training has been completed.

# Administrative Practices Requirements

## Professional Development Plans

Programs at all Step levels must have a written description of the program's system for completing professional development plans which includes the process for:

- ensuring PD plans are completed within 30 days of employment
- ensuring Profiles are completed in the OHPD Registry at [www.opdn.org](http://www.opdn.org)
- submitting and tracking verification of education qualifications and training to PD Registry
- determining if specialized training pre-requisites have been met
- determining PD needs and setting goals for new and existing staff
- scheduling and tracking the completion of required specialized training hours
- revising/updating PD plans (Plans are to be updated at least annually if not more often)
- completing annual performance appraisals

A blank copy of the professional development plan form should be in the Evidence Portfolio. A random sampling of completed plans will be reviewed during the verification visit.

## Benefits and Compensation

Written description of program's benefits plan that includes one, two or three (for the SUTQ Rating applied for) of the benefits as outlined on the Tiers and in the SUTQ Guidance Document.

## Program Planning/Evaluation

- **Program Administration Scale (PAS)** – Program administrator at all Step levels is required to complete the Program Administrator Scale (PAS) annually.
- **Classroom Self- Assessments** – Step 2 & 3 programs are required to conduct annual classroom assessments and provide a written description of how the program conducts annual classroom assessments which include:
  - Tool(s) used for each classroom and/or age group served
  - Methods used to conduct observation
  - Process used to evaluate information obtained from observation
  - Process used to create goals for classroom improvement
  - Process used to include observation results in Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)
  - Completed classroom observation tool for each classroom

- **Quality Improvement Plan** – All steps are required to complete an annual Quality Improvement Plan with the following components:
  - Goals – the goals which must be included for each step level are found below.
  - Each goal must have the following components for implementation outlined:
    - Action steps
    - Person(s) responsible
    - Resources needed
    - Implementation timeline and checkpoints
    - Annual updates to reflect progress towards meeting goals

### **Step 1 QIP Goals**

- Raise PAS score(s)
- Implement age appropriate standards and guidelines for all age groups served in program (e.g. research curriculum models, begin lesson planning process)

### **Step 2 QIP Goals**

- Raise PAS score(s)
- Implement (or continue to implement) age appropriate standards and guidelines for all age groups served in program (e.g. ongoing monitoring of program's current curriculum process)
- Identify classroom improvement opportunities based on classroom self-assessment

### **Step 3 QIP Goals**

- Raise PAS score (s)
- Implement (or continue to implement) age appropriate standards and guidelines for all age groups served in program(e.g. – On-going monitoring of program's current curriculum planning and assessment process)
- Identify classroom improvement opportunities based on classroom self-assessment
- Identify program improvement based on parent input
- Identify program improvement based on staff input

## Early Learning Requirements

Verification of the Early Learning benchmark is completed through a three prong approach which includes classroom observation, teacher interview and review of written documentation.

### Standards and Guidelines

- **Standards and Guidelines** – Programs at all Step Levels are required to have state standards and guidelines on site, as outlined in the SUTQ tiers.

### Screening and Referral Process

- **Screening Process** – Step 2 & 3 programs are required to have a written description of the program's screening process which includes:
  - The screening tool(s) used (include sample form)
  - The process used to complete screenings
  - The tracking system to ensure screenings are complete within 60 days of enrollment and annually thereafter for all children(except SA)
  - The method in which screening results are communicated to families
  - The method in which teachers utilize results in the planning process
- For children who have a current IEP (Individualized Education Plan) the screening requirement applies to all domains of development that are not addressed in the IEP. Screening results are to be shared with all individuals working with the child including teachers, itinerant teachers, intervention specialists and families. The IEP is to be shared with the child's classroom teacher(s) so that individual instruction can be adjusted to support the needs of the child. – **Clarification added 5/29/12**

A sample of completed screenings will be reviewed at the time of the verification visit.

- **Referral Process** – Step 2 & 3 programs must have a written description of the program's process for making needed referrals which includes:
  - The process used to determine if a referral is needed
  - A description of the referral process
  - The agency or organization to which referrals will be made
  - The process to ensure referrals are made within 90 days
  - Written documentation that verifies a referral was made

Written documentation of a referral (if needed) will be verified at the time of the verification visit.

## Curriculum and Planning

- **Written Curriculum** – Step 2 & 3 programs are required to have a written description of the program’s identified curriculum for all age groups served. The description should include the rationale for adopting the curriculum and how it supports the program’s philosophy. (See the SUTQ Curriculum Guidance section for additional information.)
- **Planning** – Step 2 & 3 programs are required to have a written description of the program’s planning process which includes:
  - Method(s) used to ensure that planning is based on the needs, interest and abilities of children
  - Method(s) used to include a variety of types of experiences for children such as large and small group, teacher and child initiated activities and blocks of time for play and exploration
  - Methods used to include age appropriate routines/transitions such as feeding, toileting and hand washing as part of the child’s daily experiences

Current plans will be verified at time of the visit. Lead teachers will be interviewed to explain their individual processes.

- **On-Going Child Assessment** – Step 3 programs are required to have a written description of the program’s on-going child assessment process which includes:
  - Description of the on-going process used for child assessment
  - Identification of the standardized tool(s) utilized in the assessment process (e.g. COR, CC Developmental Continuum, TS Gold, Galileo, Work Sampling Method)
  - Method(s) in which child observations are conducted and recorded
  - Method(s) used to develop individual goals for children’s learning
  - Method (s) used to collect supporting evidence such as anecdotal notes, photos and work samples
  - Method(s) used to utilize assessment results to inform instructional practices

Documentation will be reviewed at the time of the visit. Lead teachers will be interviewed to explain their individual processes.

## SUTQ Curriculum Guidance

In order to meet the benchmark indicator for Step 2 or Step 3 a program must utilize a written, evidence based comprehensive curriculum. Curriculum planning must be aligned with age appropriate standards/guidelines to maximize growth across a broad range of developmental and content areas.

Please refer to the SUTQ Curriculum Guidance listed below:

**Written** – Published or self created must meet below criteria

### **Evidence Based**

- Based on sound ECE theory/practice
- Clearly demonstrates approach to learning that supports research

### **Comprehensive**

- Addresses all domains of development and learning - physical, social and emotional, language and communication, cognitive and motor.
- Includes a balance of experiences that address all areas of children's development and learning
- Integrates content areas such as early literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, creative arts and technology
- Is age appropriate
- Includes goals and objectives for children's learning and development
- Includes opportunities for experiences that will support diverse learners and facilitate each child's progress towards the goals and objectives
- Provides opportunities for families to be included in goal setting process
- Includes a means to ensure assure that the environment, activities and interactions children experience are appropriate for all children.

### **Aligned**

- **Aligned with age appropriate state standards and guidelines**
- **Birth to Age 3**
  - Ohio's Infant & Toddler Program standards of care & Teaching
  - Ohio's Infant / Toddler Guidelines
- **Preschool – 3-5 years**
  - Ohio's Early Learning Program Guidelines
  - Ohio's Early Learning Content Standards
- **School – Age**
  - Quality Guidelines for Ohio's Afterschool Programs
  - Ohio's K-12 Standards
  -

For additional information on curriculum you will find Guidance for Selection of a Comprehensive Early Childhood Curriculum Office of Early Learning and School Readiness – Ohio Department of Education in the resource section of this document.

## Infant Grouping Guidance

### The importance of group size:

To ensure that infants become healthy, emotionally secure individuals, it is critical to establish intimate relationships between infants and caregivers. Group care that meets the intimacy needs of infants does so by caring for infants in small intimate groups.

### Staff/Child ratios and Group Sizes for Infant Groups:

Step One	Step Two	Step Three
Infants: 0-12 months Ratio: 1:5 or 2:10  <b>At no time may the group size for 0-12 month olds exceed 10</b>	Infants: 0-12 months Ratio: 1:5 or 2:10  <b>At no time may the group size for 0-12 month olds exceed 10</b>	Infants: 0-18 months Ratio 1:4, 2:8 or 3:10  <b>At no time may the group size for 0-18 months exceed 10</b>
Infants: 12-18 months Ratio: 1:6 or 2:12	Infants: 12-18 months Ratio: 1:6 or 2:12	Infants: 12-18 months Ratio: 1:5 or 2:10

### What will the Step Up Licensing Specialist (SULS) be looking for:

- Each group of 10 infants has a separate play space for the group's exclusive use.
- Cribs arranged by group of infants but all cribs may be in a common area;
- Each group of infants has a separate attendance sheet;
- Each group of infants has a lead teacher.

**Many current programs maintain a group size of 2:12 infants. In order to meet the Step Up to Quality requirements of not exceeding a group size of 10 infants programs can:**

- Divide the group into two groups of six infants and maintain required staff/child ratios. This would require two teachers per group.
- Reduce the group by two infants to have a group of ten.

When creating separate play areas it is important to keep in mind how the program will maintain compliance with ratios while diapering infants. If hand washing facilities are located in another space staff/child ratios must be maintained at all times with the infants taken to be diapered and in the area from which they were removed. If more than one infant at a time is removed for diapering the infants must be engaged in safe, sanitary and age appropriate activities while diapers are being changed. They may not be placed directly on the restroom floor and have to remain within sight and hearing of a child care staff member who can intervene if unsafe or unsanitary conditions occur. Infants may not be left unattended on the changing table. The program could consider having a floater come into the area when a child needed to be diapered or if feasible additional hand washing facilities could be added.

If the program has additional questions, contact your Step Up To Quality Licensing Specialist (SULS).

## Guidance for Evening / Overnight / Weekend Care

Indicators	Evening	Weekend
Ratio/Group Size	No Change from Benchmarks As Always, the youngest child in the group determines staff/child ratio requirements & maximum group size. Applicable SUTQ ratio requirements apply.	Same as Weekdays
Education	No Change from Benchmarks Education requirements for Lead Teachers remain the same. The Lead Teacher needs to be with their assigned group of children for a minimum of 3.5 hours during the programs established Core Evening Hours*	Same as Weekdays
Specialized Training	No Change from Benchmarks Note: Family or mixed age groups that include infants/toddlers, requires that staff complete Infant/Toddler Guidelines training as their pre-requisite.	Same as Weekdays Note: Family or mixed age groups that include infants/toddlers, requires that staff complete Infant/Toddler Guidelines training as their pre-requisite.
Administrative Practices	No Change from Benchmarks	Same as Weekdays
Early Learning	No Change from Benchmarks	Same as Weekdays

- Core Evening Hours – begin when children are re-grouped for the purpose of providing evening care and continues until children complete their bedtime routine. The Lead Teacher needs to be with their assigned group of children for a minimum of 3.5 hours during the programs established Core Evening Hours. For example: Program is open until 11:00 pm. The children are regrouped at 5:30 pm. At a minimum the lead needs to be present with the children from 5:30 to 9:00 pm.
- Overnight care (the hours of program operation beyond the time that children have completed their bedtime routines) is not assessed for meeting SUTQ benchmark indicators.

# Career Pathways Model for Ohio Early Childhood & Afterschool Professionals

Revised October 2011

## **I. Overview**

This model provides a common system for all Ohio early care and education and afterschool professionals to document and quantify their professional growth and accomplishments, and by doing so to define and advance the profession. The model uses one framework to integrate the pathways of formal education, training, experience, and specialized credentials and certifications. Individuals accumulate points along each of four pathways-- formal education, inservice training and continuing education, experience, and credentials and certifications. Total points assign one of 6 professional designations.

## **II. Pathways**

### **A. Formal Education**

#### **1. Degrees**

Points are awarded for the **highest degree attained**, regardless of major course of study.

High School or GED = 5 points; Associates degree = 10 points; Bachelors degree = 20 points; Masters degree = 30 points; PhD, Ed.D. = 40 points.

#### **2. Area of Study**

Points are awarded to a professional that has majored in Early Childhood Education, Human Development/Ecology, Child Development, Family Studies or Child Development and Family Community Studies. 30 points are awarded for each degree earned in those specific areas of study.

#### **3. Credit Hours**

Points are awarded for all credits completed, including those completed for a degree. One quarter hour is equal to 1 point; one semester hour is equal to 1.5 points.

#### **4. Related Coursework**

Points are awarded for college coursework from an accredited institution that has specific application to the care and education of children age birth through fourteen years, and a concentration in one or more of the following subject areas:

- Growth and development of children
- Assessment and instructional methods
- Content-specific courses that directly support instruction
- Children with special needs
- Developmentally appropriate equipment and classroom arrangement
- Working with parents and families
- Nutrition
- Community health, pediatrics or social services resources for children and families
- Planning child care, recreational, or educational programs and activities for children
- Developmentally appropriate child guidance and management techniques

- Administration of child care, educational and recreational activities
- Ethics and professionalism in child care
- National child care standards as published by American Academy of Pediatrics

Professionals will receive 1 additional point per credit hour of Related Coursework for which the professional has received a passing grade of “C” or better.

***B. Inservice Training and Continuing Education Units (CEUs)***

1. 1 point is awarded for every 10 hours of training that is either State Agency\* approved or training that is granted CEUs from an accredited CEU provider
2. 1 point is awarded for every 20 hours of community based, inservice level training
3. 5 additional points awarded for the completion of a State Agency approved series training\*\*
4. 5 additional points awarded for the completion of a project associated with a State Agency approved series training\*

**C. Experience**

Experience awards three points for every year worked in the field. “Experience” for purposes of this model includes:

**1) direct work\* with young children (birth - 14) and families, includes field experiences;**

- 2) *supervision, leadership, or management of programs;*
- 3) *program coordination, development, or regulation;*
- 4) *training, instruction, or technical assistance of programs;*
- 5) *evaluation or research in the field.*

**\* must be 18 years of age or have senior standing in Career Tech or JVS program.**

***D. Credentials and Certifications***

Points are awarded for all of the following credentials. Credentials must be “current” (not expired) in order to count in your Career Pathways score.

1	Family Child Care PPI
2	Family Child Care Limited Certification
2	Child and Youth Care Worker Registration
2	Parents as Teachers Supervisor
2.5	Program for Infant & Toddler Caregivers Modules I, II, III, IV, or V Certification
5	Family Child Care Professional Certification
5	Youth Development Certificate
5	Help Me Grow Project Directors
5	Parents as Teachers Parent Educators
5	Early Intervention Program Assistant
10	American Montessori Society Infant/Toddler Credential
10	Child and Youth Care Worker Administrator/Supervisor Certification
10	Military School-Age Child Care Credential
10	Certified Parks and Recreation Professional
10	Ohio Certified Prevention Specialist I
10	Child and Youth Care Certification
10	Clinical Supervisor of Service Coordinators/Home Visitors
10	Help Me Grow Service Coordinator

10	Help Me Grow Home Visitor
10	Educational Paraprofessional/Educational Aide
15	National Association for Family Child Care Accreditation
15	AMS (American Montessori Society) Early Childhood Credential
15	AMI (Association Montessori Internationale) Certification
15	CDA (Family Child Care, Infant/Toddler, Preschool, Bilingual, Home Visitor)
15	Ohio Certified Prevention Specialist II
15	Occupational Therapist Assistant (OTA)
15	Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA)
15	Child Life Specialist
25	Pre-Kindergarten Validation
25	Early Education of the Handicapped (EEH) Validation
30	Pre-Kindergarten Associates Teacher License
30	Early Childhood Teacher License
30	Early Childhood Intervention Specialist (ECIS)
30	Alternative Intervention Specialist License (Adolescence to Young Adult 7-12; Intervention Specialist K-12)
30	Provisional Alternative Educator License
30	School Psychologist
30	Teaching license/Any Professional Certificate (K-12)
30	Early Intervention Specialist
30	Early Intervention Supervisor
30	Speech/Language Pathologist
30	Occupational Therapist (OT)
30	Physical Therapist (PT)
30	Licensed Social Worker (LSW)
TBD	Ohio Administrator Credential (pending)

### III. Early Childhood & Afterschool Professional Designations

“Points” are totaled across **Formal Education, Inservice Training and Continuing Education Units, Experience, and Credentials and Certifications.**

The total points place a professional within one of the following designations:

<b>Level I. Early Childhood &amp; Afterschool Professional Level I</b>	<b>(1-49 points)</b>
<b>Level II. Early Childhood &amp; Afterschool Professional Level II</b>	<b>(50-149 points)</b>
<b>Level III. Early Childhood &amp; Afterschool Professional Level III</b>	<b>(150-249 points)</b>
<b>Level IV. Early Childhood &amp; Afterschool Professional Level IV</b>	<b>(250-349 points)</b>
<b>Level V. Early Childhood &amp; Afterschool Professional Level V</b>	<b>(350-449 points)</b>
<b>Level VI. Early Childhood &amp; Afterschool Professional Level VI</b>	<b>(450+ points)</b>

### IV. Advancement

Early childhood and afterschool professionals will advance to higher levels as they obtain more education, training, experience, and credentials. Use the attached worksheet to find your place on the Career Pathways.

\* State Agencies providing approval include the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Health. Information on approvals can be found at opdn.org.

\*\*For training to be considered a series, it must first meet criteria as a series. All series must be approved through the Professional Development Registry at opdn.org. Submission for series approval by training organizations will be opened on the Registry, spring 2012.

## Career Pathways Worksheet

### Formal Education

**POINTS**

#### Degree/Completion

- Enter points for highest degree attained  
*High School or GED = 5 points; AA/AS = 10 points; BA/BS = 20 points  
MA, MS, M.Ed. = 30 points; Ph.D., Ed. D. = 40 points*

#### Credit Hours

- Enter total number quarter hours completed  x 1 =
- and/or
- Enter total number semester hours completed  x 1.5 =  
*(Normally AA = 90 qtr/60 sem.hrs; BA = 180 qtr/120 sem.hrs; MA = 50 qtr/30 sem.hrs; PhD = 80 qtr/60 sem.hrs.)*
- Enter total number of "related coursework" hours completed (quarter and semester)  x




1=

#### Area of Study

- Enter total number completed degrees with majors in ECE, HD/Ecology, CD, Family Studies, or CD Family & Community Studies  x 30 =

### Credentials

Total points for all credentials and certifications currently held  
*See list in section D "Credentials and Certifications" for point values*

### Training Information

- Enter total number in-service hours  Divide by 20 =
- Enter total number Approved hours  Divide by 10 =
- Enter total number CEUs earned  x 1 =  
*Do not count hours & CEUs for the same training*
- Enter total number of Series (no final project)  x 5 =
- Enter total number of Series (with final project) x  10 =






### Experience

Enter number of years worked in field  x 3 =

### Total Points

Add all points in boxes together

### Early Childhood Professional Designation

- \_\_\_\_\_ Early Childhood & Afterschool Professional Level I (1-49 points)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Early Childhood & Afterschool Professional Level II (50-149 points)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Early Childhood & Afterschool Professional Level III (150-249 points)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Early Childhood & Afterschool Professional Level IV (250-349 points)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Early Childhood & Afterschool Professional Level V (350-449 points)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Early Childhood & Afterschool Professional Level VI (450+ points)

# Guidance for Selection of a Comprehensive Early Childhood Curriculum

Office of Early Learning and School Readiness – Ohio Department of Education

## Definition of Curriculum

A curriculum is a written set of materials that provides an integrated framework to guide decisions adults make about experiences provided for children and includes the following:

- a theoretical, philosophical and/or research basis to guide the approach to nurturing and facilitating children's development;
- goals and objectives for children's learning and development that the curriculum seeks to foster;
- experiences that will be provided to support diverse learners and facilitate each child's progress toward the expressed goals and objectives (including features of the physical environment, scheduling, specific experiences, and adult-child interactions);
- a process through which adults will plan and implement experiences to facilitate each child's progress toward the goals and objectives, including avenues for collaboration with families and members of the larger community to guide decisions made about children's experiences;
- a means to assure that the environment, activities and interactions children experience are appropriate for individual children by collecting on-going information on individual children that is used to gauge how each child is making progress toward the curriculum's stated goals and objectives for children's development and learning, and to plan experiences that facilitate individual children's growth and development.

## Criteria for Curriculum Approval

**1. Evidence Based:** The curriculum must articulate a theoretical and/or research-base for the approach and clearly demonstrate how the curriculum utilizes the theory and/or research as a basis for making decisions about experiences provided for children. The curriculum may also have empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the curriculum collected with sound research methodology.

**2. Planning Process:** The curriculum must have a process to guide adults in making decisions about experiences provided for children. The curriculum describes the intent or developmental goals of given experiences and the environment. The curriculum includes an ongoing process for observing and documenting information related to individual children's level of development, current skills, and interests, and using that information to develop plans. Experiences provided for children should be derived from each child's needs, abilities and interest with appropriate teacher/caregiver input and facilitation. The curriculum should include plans for a variety of types of experiences and activities, including large group, small group, individual, child initiated, and teacher initiated.

**3. Area of Children's Development and Learning:** The curriculum must include a balance of experiences that address all areas of children's development and learning – physical, social and emotional, approaches toward learning, language and communication, and cognitive development and general knowledge, integrating content areas such as early literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, creative arts, and technology as appropriate for the age of the children in the

group. Preschool curricula must provide opportunities for children to develop the knowledge, behaviors, and competencies defined in [Ohio's Early Learning Content Standards].

**4. Scheduling and Routines:** The curriculum must include a schedule that is age appropriate, predictable but flexible, and responsive to the needs of individual children. The schedule must include an appropriate balance of teacher/caregiver initiated and child-initiated experiences, and large blocks of time for play and exploration with appropriate facilitation from the adult. Routines such as feeding and toileting should be age appropriate and included as an integral part of children's experiences.

**5. Physical Environment:** The curriculum must provide appropriate guidance for teachers and caregivers on the physical environment, including guidance on room/home space arrangement, furnishings, equipment, and other aspects of the physical environment that reflects an understanding of child development and supports children's learning and development.

**6. Social Environment:** The curriculum must provide appropriate guidance on how teachers/caregivers can facilitate children's social-emotional development, including guidance on adult-child interactions, promoting children's peer relationships, and managing children's behavior.

**7. Materials and Experiences:** The materials and experiences used in the curriculum must be appropriate for the age and developmental level of children targeted and should include both child-directed and teacher/caregiver-directed activities. They should be engaging for children, play-based, and present concepts that are concrete and relevant to children's everyday development and learning in both indoor and outdoor settings, and provide a variety of experiences that support children in making choices, exploring and demonstrating independence. Materials and experiences must be free of bias, violent and otherwise unacceptable content.

**8. Diversity:** The curriculum should support the development and learning of children from diverse backgrounds and explicitly address how adults can provide experiences that are culturally relevant and sensitive for children and families who reflect a variety of cultures, languages, socio-economic status, and structures.

**9. Inclusion of Children With Diverse Developmental/Ability Levels:** The curriculum should include provisions for modifications/adaptations as appropriate to include children with varying developmental/ability levels, including children with disabilities, children who speak languages other than English, gifted children, etc.

**10. Family Involvement:** The curriculum must include a plan for how teachers/caregivers will collaborate with families in a shared decision-making process and promote two-way communication between teachers/caregivers and families. Collaboration with families should be an integral part of the curriculum at the classroom/group level, and families should be included as collaborators in planning individualized experiences for their own children.

**11. Implementation Guides:** Curricula must provide adequate and appropriate explanatory materials for adults to support implementation of the curriculum. The materials should include guidance on how to set up the environment, how to plan individualized and group instruction, how to implement activities, and how to interact with children. The curriculum may include resources or tools that facilitate teacher/caregivers' ability to assess the extent to which they are implementing the curriculum as it is designed.

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## Guidance for Selection of a Comprehensive Early Childhood Curriculum Checklist

Directions: Use this companion document to quickly evaluate the components of the curriculum under review or describe how you will address each in developing a 'self-created' curriculum. Indicate title of each curriculum, mark whether each of the following elements are present, and record any relevant comments or notes.

Curriculum Components	Notes
<b>Evidence-based</b> (Theoretical and /or research base)	
<b>Planning Process</b> (Guidance in making decisions about experiences for children: Observing, documenting, using information to inform instruction)	
<b>Areas of Children's Development and Learning</b> (Physical, social, emotional, approaches toward learning, language and cognitive)	
<b>Scheduling and Routines</b> (Age/developmentally appropriate, flexible and balanced)	
<b>Physical Environment</b> (Guidance on developmentally appropriate (Developmentally Appropriate) furnishings, equipment and space arrangement)	
<b>Social Environment</b> (Social-emotional development and guiding behavior)	
<b>Materials and Experiences</b> (Engaging, play-based and relevant)	
<b>Diversity</b> (Culturally and linguistically relevant and responsive)	
<b>Inclusion of Children with Diverse Developmental/Ability Levels</b> (Modifications/adaptations as appropriate including English language learners)	
<b>Family Involvement</b> (Two-way communication & shared decision-making)	
<b>Implementation Guides</b> (Guidance, resources and tools necessary to support implementation of the curriculum)	

## Commonly Used Objective Screening Tools for Young Children

There are many objective developmental and social-emotional screening tools available. No one tool is appropriate for all settings. When choosing a tool, consider its type (staff-administered or parent-report), its scientific rigor (reliability, validity, sensitivity, and specificity), and its cultural and age appropriateness. With newer tools that show scientific rigor, best standards recommend that their reliability and validity values should be .80 or higher. The following chart lists some of the more commonly used tools.

### General Developmental Screening Tools

#### **Tool & Publisher**

- Parent-report tool ongoing relationship
  - For ages three months to five years development
  - Available in English, Spanish, French, Korean and Norwegian, with Mandarin and Arabic under development
- Paul Brookes Publishing Company  
(800) 638.3775

#### **Considerations: Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ)**

- Best used to engage parents and provide anticipatory guidance in the context of an ongoing relationship
- Specific parent forms for every three months of development
- High percentage of correct identifications of children with a delay and those with normal development
- The normative sample was representative of risk and non-risk populations
- Reliability: Inter-rater .94, Test-Retest .94, Validity (concurrent) .96, Sensitivity .75, Specificity, 86
- Parent forms written at a sixth grade reading level
- Approximately 15 minutes to administer

[www.brookespublishing.com](http://www.brookespublishing.com)

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#### **Battelle Developmental Inventory Screening Test**

- Staff-administered tool
- For ages birth to eight years
- Available in English

Riverside Publishing Company  
(800) 313.9540, [www.riverpub.com](http://www.riverpub.com)

- Commonly used by infant and preschool teachers
  - Best used with other sources of information
  - Use of cut off scores results in errors in identifying children with delays
  - The normative sample was stratified by region, age, race and gender
  - Reliability: Test-Retest .98, Validity (overall) .99
  - Approximately 15 minutes to administer for children under age three and over age five
  - Approximately 30 minutes to administer for children ages three to five
- 

#### **Bayley Scale for Infant Development, 3rd Edition Screening Tool (Bayley-III)**

- Staff-administered tool
- For ages one month to three and a half years
- Available in English

The Psychological Corporation  
(800) 872.1726, [www.psychcorp.com](http://www.psychcorp.com)

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- Best used by a skilled screener who is able to engage parents and child care providers
  - The normative sample was a national, stratified random sample
  - Reliability: Test-Retest .55 -.96, Validity (concurrent) .66 .
  - Approximately 10 to 20 minutes to administer
- 

#### **Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS)**

- Parent-report tool
- Birth to eight years
- Available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese
- Available for licensing in Somali, Hmong, and Chinese.
- Parent forms also in Arabic, Indonesian, French, Malaysian, Portuguese, and Taiwanese.
- Ellsworth & Vandermeer Press, limited  
(615) 226.4460, [www.pedstest.com](http://www.pedstest.com)
- Commonly used by health care providers
- Physician required to interpret results, but not to administer screening
- Accurate identifications of children with a delay and normal development

- The normative sample involved over 2,800 families from representative backgrounds
- Reliability: Inter-rater .95, Test-Retest .88, Validity (concurrent) .60-.86,
- Sensitivity .79, Specificity .80
- Parent forms written at a fourth grade reading level
- Approximately 10 minutes to administer

## Social-Emotional Screening Tools

### Tool & Publisher

### Considerations

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#### **Ages and Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional (ASQ:SE)**

- Parent-report tool
- For ages three months to five years
- Available in English and Spanish

Paul Brookes Publishing Company  
(800)638.3775

[www.brookespublishing.com](http://www.brookespublishing.com)

- Best used to engage parents and provide anticipatory guidance in the context of an ongoing relationship
  - Specific parent forms for every three months of developmental
  - The normative sample under-represents Caucasians, over-represents individuals of mixed ethnicity, and has a higher percentage of well-educated mothers and low-income families
  - Reliability: Test-Retest .94, Validity (concurrent) .93, Sensitivity .82, Specificity .92
  - Parent forms written at a sixth grade reading level
  - Approximately 15 minutes to administer
- 

#### **Brief Infant and Toddler Social and Emotional Assessment (BITSEA)**

- Parent- and child care provider-report tool
- For ages twelve months to three years
- Available in English, Spanish, French, Hebrew and Dutch

Harcourt Assessment, Incorporated  
(800)211.8378 [www.harcourtassessment.com](http://www.harcourtassessment.com)

- Relies on observations made by parents and child care providers of the child in natural environments
  - Parent form is completed onsite or in home, and child care provider form assesses behavior across settings
  - The normative sample was a national sample of 600 children
  - Reliability: Inter-rater .85, Test-Retest .87, Validity .95 (with the clinical checklist)
  - Parent forms written at a fourth grade reading level
  - Approximately 30 to 45 minutes to administer
- 

#### **Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)**

- Parent- and teacher-report tool
- For ages two years to five years, with an infant/toddler version under development
- Available in English and Spanish

Kaplan Early Learning Company  
(800) 334.2014

[www.devereuxearlychildhood.org](http://www.devereuxearlychildhood.org)

- Strengths-based assessment of resilience and protective factors, and screener for behavioral concerns
  - Commonly used in an educational setting
  - The normative sample was a national sample of 2,000 children
  - Reliability: Parent raters .94, Teacher raters .7t, Test-Retest .74, Validity values, Sensitivity .67-.78, Specificity .65-.71
  - Parent forms written at a sixth grade reading level
  - Approximately 10 minutes to administer
- 

#### **Greenspan Social Emotional Growth Chart**

- Parent-report tool
- For ages birth to three and a half years
- Available in English

Harcourt Assessment, Incorporated  
(800) 211.8378,

[www.harcourtassessment.com](http://www.harcourtassessment.com)

- The normative sample was a national sample of 456 children
  - Reliability and Validity values not available
  - Approximately 10 minutes to administer
- 

#### **Temperament and Atypical Behavior Scale (TABS)**

- Parent-report tool
- For ages eleven months to six years
- Available in English

Paul Brookes Publishing Company

(800) 638.3775, [www.brookespublishing.com](http://www.brookespublishing.com)

- Designed for rapid identification of children who have issues related to temperament and self regulation
- The normal sample was 1,000 children who had typical and atypical development from 33 states
- Reliability: Inter-rater .64, Test-Retest .81-94, Validity (concurrent) .83
- Approximately 10 to 30 minutes to administer

## Research Base Supporting Step Up To Quality

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**Michael B. Colbert, Director  
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