Rationale for MA QRIS Draft Standards, August 2017

Community Center-Based Programs

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| STANDARD 1: CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT, AND INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE | | | |
| Criterion | | | Rationale |
| 1A. Curriculum: Program uses a developmentally appropriate curriculum that supports children in all learning domains | | | **NAEYC Position Statement,** 2009: In high quality early childhood programs, teachers implement developmentally appropriate curriculum to help young children achieve goals that are developmentally and educationally significant. Because children learn more in programs where there is a well-planned and implemented curriculum, it is important for every school and early childhood program to have its curriculum in written form. Teachers use the curriculum and their knowledge of children’s interests in planning relevant, engaging learning experiences, and they keep the curriculum in mind in their interactions with children throughout the day.  This is supported by research which indicates that when teachers use more explicit techniques for promoting children language and literacy, children exhibit stronger concept and language development (**Girolametto et al.,** 2000**; Girolametto & Weitzman,** 2002**; La Paro et al.,** 2004**; Meisels,** 2006). Additionally, the ECE literature supports the notion that a research-based curriculum model supports child-initiated learning, which supports child's outcomes in both the short and long term (**Schweinhart & Weikart,** 1997). |
| Indicator | **Level 2** | Program uses an intentional, documented curriculum that reflects developmentally appropriate practices |
| **Level 3** | Program uses an intentional, documented curriculum that reflects understanding and use of EEC standards and guidelines |
| **Level 4/5** | Program effectively and consistently implements: differentiated curriculum; or emergent curriculum; or specialized curriculum; or evidence-based general curriculum |

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| 1B. Assessment: Program uses observation and documentation practices to assess children in the program. 1B.i: Program uses screening tools to assess all children in all developmental domains. | | | **Shonkoff & Meisels,** 1996**:** Developmental outcomes for young children with delays and disabilities are improved with early identification and intervention.  **Squires et al.,** 1996: 70-80% of children with developmental disabilities can be correctly identified with the use of a standardized, valid, reliable screening tool. |
| Indicator | **Level 2a** | For all children, program conducts annual developmental screenings using a valid, reliable screening tool |
| **Level 2b** | Program shares screening data with families for potential follow-up or referral |
| **Level 3** | For all children, program documents children’s development across developmental domains using a valid, reliable screening tool and shares data with families |
| **Level 4/5** | Program shares data regarding children’s development to ensure smooth transitions between program and Early Intervention and/or public school |

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| Criterion | | | Rationale |
| 1B. Assessment: Program uses observation and documentation practices to assess children in the program. 1B.ii: Program uses formative assessment with all children in all early learning domains. | | | **NAEYC and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE)**: High-quality programs are informed by ongoing systematic, formal, and informal assessment approaches to provide information on children’s learning and development. These assessments occur within the context of reciprocal communications with families and with sensitivity to the cultural contexts in which children develop. |
| Indicator | **Level 2** | For all children, program conducts formative assessments |
| **Level 3** | For all children, program integrates formative assessments into daily activities |
| **Level 4/5** | Program documents children’s development across early learning domains; Program uses formative assessment that is responsive to the diverse cultural, linguistic, and developmental needs of children |

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| 1C. Instructional Practice: Program uses strategies to engage and meet goals for diverse learners. | | | **NAEYC and National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education’s (NAECS/SDE), 2003**: A primary purpose of assessing children or classrooms is to improve the quality of early childhood care and education by identifying where more support, professional development, or funding is needed, and by providing classroom personnel tools to track children’s growth and adjust instruction. |
| Indicator | **Level 2** | Program identifies patterns in assessment data to inform curriculum |
| **Level 3** | Program demonstrates use of assessment data to differentiate instruction |
| **Level 4/5** | Program develops continuous individual learning goals for all children that are informed by formative assessment process; Program shares data regarding children’s development to ensure smooth transitions between program and Early Intervention and/or public school |

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| STANDARD 2: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND INTERACTIONS | | | |
| Criterion | | | Rationale |
| 2A. Learning Environment: Program demonstrates a safe and healthy environment that fosters learning, exploration, and play. | | | Child care quality has been a consistent positive predictor of children’s cognitive and language skills in large, multisite studies and smaller local studies (**Howes et al.,** 2008**; Lamb,** 1998**; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network,** 2006**; Peisner-Feinberg et al.,** 2001**; Vandell,** 2004) and a consistent predictor of children's social skills (**NICHD Early Child Care Research Network,** 2006**; Peisner-Feinberg et al.,** 2001**; Vandell,** 2004). |
| Indicator | **Level 2** | Environment Rating Scales (ERS) technical assistance consultation |
| **Level 3** | ERS reliable rater visit and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) technical assistance consultation |
| **Level 4/5** | ERS and CLASS reliable rater visit |

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| 2B. Interactions: Program implements strategies that promote high-quality interactions. | | | Effective teacher-child interactions and the social emotional climate of the classroom have been found to be significant predictors of children’s academic gains in language and literacy; and have been associated with higher scores in vocabulary and math, and key skills for children about to enter kindergarten (**Burchinal et. al.,** 2010**; Howes, et. al.,** 2008**; Mashburn et. al.,** 2008**).**  Additionally, both the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) have been extensively field tested and researched. Studies have found the measures to be reliable, valid and significant predictors of children's outcomes (**Clifford, Reszka & Rossbach,** 2010**; Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre,** 2008**; Burchinal, Howes, Pinata, Bryant, Early, Clifford, et al.,** 2008**; Mashburn, Pianta, Hamre, Downer, Barbarin, Bryant, et al.,** 2008**; Peisner-Feinburg, Burchinal, Clifford, Culkin, Howes, Kagan,Yazejian,** 2001**; Cost, Quality, & Child Outcomes Study Team,** 1995**; Bryant, Burchinal, Lau, & Sparling,** 1994). |
| Indicator | **Level 2** | ERS technical assistance consultation |
| **Level 3** | ERS reliable rater visit and CLASS technical assistance consultation |
| **Level 4/5** | ERS and CLASS reliable rater visit |

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| STANDARD 3: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT | | | |
| Criterion | | | Rationale |
| 3A. Family Engagement: Program communicates and partners with families. | | | Within **NAEYC**’s Early Childhood Program Standards and Criteria, Standard 7, “Families,” states, “The program establishes and maintains collaborative relationships with each child’s family to foster children’s development in all settings. These relationships are sensitive to family composition, language, and culture.” The criteria for family engagement are organized in 3 areas: A. Knowing and Understanding the Program’s Families, B. Sharing Information between Staff and Families, and C. Nurturing Families as Advocates for Their Children.  Substantial research underscores the importance of family involvement in early childhood education and ties family involvement with positive outcomes for young children and their school readiness (**Harvard Family Research Project,** 2006**; Jeynes,** 2005**; Sheridan et al.,** 2003).  Additionally, research on family engagement has underscored the importance of family engagement in early childhood education as a critical starting point to family-school relationship and children’s transition to Kindergarten (**Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta,** 2000**; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler,** 2004**; Weiss et al.,** 2009). |
| Indicator | **Level 2a** | Program Administration Scale (PAS) score of 3 on Family Communications Item |
| **Level 2b** | Program implements survey to determine how program can better support families |
| **Level 3a** | PAS score of 4 on Family Communications Item |
| **Level 3b** | Program implements evidence-based family engagement assessment |
| **Level 4/5** | PAS score of 5 on Family Communications Item; Program demonstrates individualized family support plans; Program implements family visiting model; Program encourages families to engage in enrichment activities that connect curriculum to home; Program invites family participation in program decision-making |

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| STANDARD 3: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT | | | |
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| 3B. Community Engagement: Program collaborates with community organizations to support children and families. | | | **Zero to Three** defines referrals as ensuring that young children and their families are connected to services that match their identified interests and needs. This involves referral and follow-up to ensure linkages to needed services, and efforts to support families if they are unable to receive additional services due to eligibility requirements or capacity issues.  As research notes, many parents, particularly young and/or first time parents, look to early childhood education teachers for advice and guidance and additional supports, even though they may not actively seek them (**Olson & Hyson**, 2005).  As noted by the **NAEYC**, early childhood professionals should provide appropriate information and referrals to community services and follow up to ensure that services have been provided (**NAEYC**, 1996, 2005). Families’ access to health care, housing, income support and other social services may help protect children from abuse and neglect. |
| Indicator | **Level 2** | Program provides information about community-based resources for children and families related to data collected in family survey |
| **Level 3** | Program provides individualized referrals for community-based resources to families and provides informal follow-up with families |
| **Level 4/5** | Program participates in community-based comprehensive service councils |

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| STANDARD 4: PROFESSIONAL CULTURE, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | | | |
| Criterion | | | Rationale |
| 4A. Professional Culture: Program policies encourage a professional work environment and program sustainability. | | | Research has highlighted the importance of effective leadership and management in the field of ECE (**Kagan, Kauerz, Tarrant,** 2008**; Lower & Cassidy,** 2007**; Rohacek, Adams & Kisker,** 2010).  Specifically, utilizing an assessment tool of leadership and management practices like the Program Administration Scale (PAS) provides structure and standards to guide directors, coaches, and peer mentors in identifying specific areas of strength and areas in need of improvement. Research has supported the used of the PAS as a reliable tool for measuring, monitoring and improving administrative practices (**Arend,** 2010**; Bloom & Talan,** 2006**; Kagan et al.,** 2008**; Mietlincki,** 2010).  Additionally, the PAS has been found to be positively and significantly associated with global classroom quality of programs (**Lower & Cassidy,** 2007**; MCECL,** 2007, 2010**).** |
| Indicator | **Level 2** | PAS score of 3 on the following items: Staff Orientation, Staff Development, Staffing Patterns and Scheduling, Budget Planning |
| **Level 3** | PAS score of 4 on the following items: Staff Orientation, Staff Development, Staffing Patterns and Scheduling, Budget Planning |
| **Level 4** | PAS of 5 on the following items: Staff Orientation, Staff Development, Staffing Patterns and Scheduling, Budget Planning |
| **Level 5** | Program gives quality support and professional development to programs at Levels 1-4 to promote their advancement in QRIS |

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| 4B. Professional Development: Program uses observation, quality supports, and professional development to increase knowledge and competency. | | | As noted by the **NAEYC**, programs should regularly engage in evaluation to determine the extent to which programs' expected standards of quality are being met. Additionally, program evaluation provides insight into professional development and resource needed to connect classroom practices with early learning standards and program goals.  The **NAEYC** advocates for multiple sources to be used as part of an effective evaluation system including: a review of program data, child demographic data, and information about staff qualifications, administrative practices, and classroom quality assessments. Directors should engage in program evaluation guided by program goals and using varied, appropriate, conceptually, and technically sound evidence to determine the extent to which programs meet: expected standards of quality; program supervision policies and procedures, and curriculum goals. | |
| Indicator | **Level 2a** | Program administrator provides educator observation and guidance to promote practice and foster Career Lattice advancement |
| **Level 2b** | Program uses quality supports and professional development opportunities in response to ERS technical assistance consultation and internal observations |
| **Level 3a** | Program administrator provides regular feedback to educators based on observation of practice and educators’ Career Lattice goals, which include experience, competencies, knowledge, and qualifications |
| **Level 3b** | Program uses quality supports and professional development opportunities in response to ERS reliable rater visit, CLASS technical assistance consultation, and internal observations |
| **Level 4/5a** | Program administrator develops program-wide professional development plan to assist staff in advancing in Career Lattice |
| **Level 4/5b** | Program uses quality supports and professional development opportunities in response to feedback from ERS/CLASS reliable rater visit and internal observations |

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| Criterion | | | | Rationale |
| 4C. Reflective Practice: Program engages in process of continuous quality improvement. | | | Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) is a process to ensure programs are systematically and intentionally improving services and increasing positive outcomes for the children and families they serve. CQI is a cyclical, data-driven process A CQI environment is one in which data is collected and used to makes positive changes – even when things are going well – rather than waiting for something to go wrong and then fixing it. (**BUILD**, 2013).  As the **NAEYC** notes, continuous quality improvement is one of the main focuses of accreditation, as well. | |
| Indicator | **Level 2** | Program staff collaborate to develop Level 2 Continuous Quality Improvement Plan |
| **Level 3** | Program staff collaborate to develop Level 3 Continuous Quality Improvement Plan |
| **Level 4** | Program staff collaborate to develop Level 4/5 Continuous Quality Improvement Plans |

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