Rationale for MA QRIS Draft Standards, August 2017

Family Child CAre

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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. | | | According to the **National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)**, programs should provide a developmentally appropriate learning environment that addresses: social emotional growth, physical growth, cognitive and language development, math and science development, and creative development.  Additionally, most of the children’s activities should promote many kinds of development simultaneously – as such, the curriculum should be integrated and holistic rather than focused on one area of development at a time. In the updated 2017 NAFCC accreditation process, Updated Training Requirement Core Competencies for educators includes: Learning Environments and Curriculum which is defined by Curriculum and curriculum planning; Language and literacy, mathematics, science, technology, engineering, the arts, social studies; Culture, diversity, and equity inclusiveness; Dual language learners; Space, materials, activities, transitions; and Schedules and routines. |
| Indicator | Level 2 | Program uses an intentional, documented curriculum that reflects developmentally appropriate practices across the mixed-age group |
| Level 3 | Program uses an intentional, documented curriculum that reflects understanding and use of EEC standards and guidelines across the mixed-age group |
| 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. | | | As a brief assessment procedure, developmental screening are designed: to identify children who should receive more intensive diagnosis or assessment; to help children who are at-risk for developmental problems, and school failure; and to facilitate access to intervention services as early as possible (**Meisels**, 1988).  Current **NAFCC** accreditation standards requires that FCC providers gather information about children’s interests and needs through observation and conversations with parents; and that providers use this information to set goals that support children’s development. The 2017 revised NAFCC standards include Assessment and Screening as a professional development Core Competency requirement for educators. |
| 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 and tracks 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. | | | Research has indicated that formative assessment promotes student gains (**Black & Williams**, 1998; 2003).  Formative assessment can be used to support development as well as measure it through connecting the curriculum with teaching (**Scriven**, 1967; **Black & Wiliam**, 1998; 2003).  **NAEYC and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education** (NAECS/SDE) state that "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 |

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| Criterion | | | Rationale |
| 1C. Instructional Practice: Program uses strategies to engage and meet goals for diverse learners. | | | **National Center for Education Evaluation** (**Hamilton, et al.**, 2009) and the **National Research Council** (**Snow, et al**., 2008) advocate for the use of student and program data to inform teaching and practice.  Additionally, the **U.S. Department of Education** recently called upon educational programs to use assessment data to respond to students’ academic strengths and needs (**US DOE**, 2009).  The utilization of child assessments in early education programs is particularly important given the research on the importance of school readiness at kindergarten. The use of data to determine children’s progress and obtain insight regarding children’s development is a logical and efficient way to monitor continuous improvement and tailor practices and activities to meet student needs (**Hamilton, et al**., 2009).  Assessment data and the tools for interpreting the data can offer educators the means for improving practice such as: individualizing instruction (**Brunner et al,** 2005**; Supovitz & Klein,** 2003**; Wayman & Stringfield,** 2006); identifying individual strengths and instructional practices that promote progress (**Brunner et al.,** 2005**; Forman,** 2007**; Wayman & Stringfield,** 2006); assessing classroom effectiveness, refining lesson and practice (**Halverson, Pritchett & Watson,** 2007**; Supovitz & Klein,** 2003**; Fireman, 2007**); and adapting the curriculum based on students’ strengths and needs (**Marsh, Pane & Hamilton**, 2006**; Kerr et al.,** 2006). |
| Indicator | Level 2 | Program identifies patterns in assessment data for the purpose of providing diverse learning experiences across the mixed-age group |
| Level 3 | Program demonstrates use of assessment data to inform curriculum development and differentiate instruction across the mixed-age group |
| Level 4/5 | Program develops continuous individual learning goals for all children that are informed by the formative assessment process |

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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. | | | Multiple studies have documented that the FCCERS-R can be used reliably and consistently across a range of setting and cultures (**Clifford & Rossbac**h, 2004; 2010).  Multiple studies have also documented the relationship between Environment Rating Scales (ERS) scores and child outcomes across a variety of settings (**Burchinal et al,** 1996**; Burchinal et al,** 2000**; Helburn,** 1995**; Peisner-Feinberg et al,** 2001).  Importantly, extensive research has indicated that high quality early childhood education experiences significantly predict children’s short- and long-term academic development, particularly for children from low-income families (**Barnett, Hustedt, Robin, & Schulman,** 2004**; Burchinal, Phillips & Lowenstein,** 2011**; Vandergrift, Pianta, & Mashburn,** 2010**; Lamb,** 1998**; Vandell,** 2004).  Many of the **NAFCC** standards for the home environment are consistent with requirements of the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS-R) including but not limited to: the environment includes a comfortable and cozy place for children, as well as a place for quiet time alone; all equipment, outdoors and indoors, is safe for the ability of the children who use it; there are enough toys and materials, home-made or purchased, to engage all the children in developmentally appropriate ways; outdoors, the play area has open space for active movement, some play equipment and materials, and places for open-ended explorations; and play space, including neighborhood playground if used, is free of animal feces, broken glass, paint chips, or trash. There is no flaking or peeling paint or bare soil within 15 feet of a structure. |
| Indicator | Level 2 | Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R) technical assistance consultation |
| Level 3 | FCCERS-R reliable rater visit |
| Level 4/5 | FCCERS-R reliable rater visit |

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| STANDARD 2: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND INTERACTIONS | | | |
| Criterion | | | Rationale |
| 2B. Interactions: Program implements strategies that promote high-quality interactions. | | | Multiple studies have documented that the FCCERS-R can be used reliably and consistently across a range of setting and cultures (**Clifford & Rossbach**, 2004; 2010).  Multiple studies have also documented the relationship between ERS scores and child outcomes across a variety of settings (**Burchinal et al,** 1996**; Burchinal et al,** 2000**; Helburn,** 1995**; Peisner-Feinberg et al,** 2001).  Importantly, extensive research has indicated that high quality early childhood education experiences significantly predict children’s short- and long-term academic development, particularly for children from low-income families (B**arnett, Hustedt, Robin, & Schulman,** 2004**; Burchinal, Phillips & Lowenstein,** 2011**; Vandergrift, Pianta, & Mashburn,** 2010**; Lamb,** 1998**; Vandell,** 2004).  Many of the **NAFCC** standards for the interactions are consistent with the FCCERS-R. These include, but are not limited to: The provider offers opportunities to practice and explore new skills in a range of developmental areas; the provider gives children the help they need to succeed in a range of activities and to feel comfortable trying new activities; provider adjusts communication to match the understanding of each child; the provider helps children resolve conflicts and disagreements in an appropriate manner; the provider extends children’s learning by describing what they are doing and asking open-ended question; the provider encourages children to express their thoughts and feelings and listens with interest and respect; the provider takes time every day for meaningful conversation with each child; and the provider takes an interest in and responds positively to babies' vocalizations and imitates their sounds. |
| Indicator | Level 2 | FCCERS-R technical assistance consultation |
| Level 3 | FCCERS-R reliable rater visit |
| Level 4/5 | FCCERS-R reliable rater visit |

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| STANDARD 3: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT | | | |
| Criterion | | | Rationale |
| 3A. Family Engagement: Program communicates and partners with families. | | | The **NAFCC** acknowledges the importance of parent communication and includes multiple elements of parent communication in the NAFCC accreditation process. According to the NAFCC, providers should maintain open and easy communication with each family. In addition to ongoing conversations, providers should have at least one conference per year with each child’s parent(s).  Additionally, providers should keep parents informed, by conversation or in writing about what their children do; daily for babies and at least weekly for older children.  Additionally, providers should encourage parents to visit any time their children are present and offer a variety of ways for parents to participate in the program’s activities with consideration is given to the parents’ interests and time availability. |
| Indicator | Level 2a | Program implements survey to determine how program can better support families |
| Level 2b | Business Administration Scale (BAS) score of 3 on Provider-Parent Communications Item |
| Level 3a | Program implements evidence-based family engagement assessment |
| Level 3b | BAS score of 4 on Provider-Parent Communications Item |
| Level 4/5 | BAS score of 5 on Provider-Parent 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 offers flexible programming to meet the needs of families |
| STANDARD 3: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT | | | |
| Criterion | | | Rationale |
| 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 has noted, many parents, particularly young and/or first time parents, look to early childhood education providers for advice and guidance and additional supports, even though they may not actively seek them (**Olson & Hyson**, 2005).  The **NAFCC** acknowledges the importance of FCC providers as resources. NAFCC accreditation standards require that the provider informs parents about tax credits, child care subsidies, and employer child care benefits, if available. Accreditation also requires that providers have information about community resources that offer services to parents and children. These resources may include, but not limited to health, mental health, nutrition/fitness, child care resources and referral, special needs, and care for infants. |
| 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 establishes ongoing communication with other FCC providers to exchange information and resources in support of children and families |

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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 on Family Child Care indicates that providers who use effective professional and business practices are more likely to view family child care as a career. Business Administration Scale (BAS) scores have also been linked to high quality learning environments and more sensitive educator-child interactions (**Bordin, Machida, Varnell**, 2000**; Burton et al.,** 2002**; Helburn, Morris & Modigliani**, 2002**; Kontos, Howes, Shinn & Galinsky,** 1995).  Research had found the BAS to be a reliable and valid measure of business practices in FCC. It can used to monitor and improve practice through self-study, technical assistance and training (**Talan & Bloom**, 2009). |
| Indicator | Level 2 | BAS score of 3 on the following items: Income and Benefits, Fiscal Management, Marketing and Public Relations |
| Level 3 | BAS score of 4 on the following items: Income and Benefits, Fiscal Management, Marketing and Public Relations |
| Level 4/5 | Level 4/5: BAS score of 5 on the following items: Income and Benefits, Fiscal Management, Marketing and Public Relations |

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| Criterion | | | Rationale |
| 4B. Professional Development: Program uses quality supports and professional development to increase knowledge and competency. | | | The knowledge, skills, and practices of early childhood educators are important factors in determining how much a young child learns and how prepared that child is for entry into school (**Sheridan et al**, 2009).  The NAFCC acknowledges the importance of professional development as an important aspect of building quality practices. For **NAFCC** accreditation, educators must complete at least 90 clock hours of documented family child care related education/training within the 3 years prior to submitting the accreditation documentation in the key content areas of: Relationships, Interactions and Guidance; Learning Environment and Curriculum; Assessment and Screening; Health and Safety; Special Needs and Inclusion; Child Growth and Development, and Professional and Business Practices. |
| Indicator | Level 2a | Program uses Individual Professional Development Plan to promote 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 uses Individual Professional Development Plan to set goals for Career Lattice advancement |
| Level 3b | Program uses quality supports and professional development opportunities in response to ERS reliable rater visit and internal observations |
| Level 4a | Program uses Individual Professional Development Plan to achieve Career Lattice advancement |
| Level 4b | Program uses quality supports and professional development opportunities in response to feedback from ERS reliable rater visit and internal observations |
| 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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| STANDARD 4: PROFESSIONAL CULTURE, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE | | | |
| Criterion | | | Rationale |
| 4C. Reflective Practice: Program engages in process of continuous quality improvement. | | | The primary benefit of reflective practice for teachers is a deeper understanding of their own teaching style and ultimately, greater effectiveness as a teacher (**Ferraro**, 2000). 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).  The **NAFCC** acknowledges the importance of self-reflection and study and includes an extensive self-study protocol as part of the accreditation process. The NAFCC notes that self-study provides educators with the big picture of their program and helps identify the need for improvements, plan for program modifications, consider resources needed to support change, and celebrate program strengths. |
| Indicator | Level 2 | Program develops Level 2 Continuous Quality Improvement Plan |
| Level 3 | Program develops Level 3 Continuous Quality Improvement Plan |
| Level 4/5 | Program develops Level 4/5 Continuous Quality Improvement Plans |

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