

WELCOME



Welcome to Learn & Grow! We are happy you're here.

Learn & Grow, Alaska's Quality Recognition and Improvement System (QRIS), is a system designed to improve and foster the success of children through high-quality child care. Learn & Grow helps early childhood education programs and providers – like you – improve quality of care.

This Learn & Grow e-portfolio serves as a resource guide for your Learn & Grow journey, showing you how to successfully advance in the Learn & Grow program. It is designed to be used by you and your program team only, and in consultation with your **thread** Specialist.

In this e-portfolio you will find detailed information about the Learn & Grow 5-level framework, including the standards and activities you'll be working on at each level. Once you've completed the activities, you'll find instructions for how to achieve verification at each level.

In addition to this portfolio, Learn & Grow offers many supports and resources to help you:

- **thread** Specialist – Your support partner in this journey
- Development of a Quality Improvement Plan
- Coaching, Technical Assistance, and Specialized Training
- Quality Recognition Awards (financial support)
- **thread** Tools - Online Resource Tools
- Peer to peer support and learning through cohorts

For questions about your Learn & Grow participation, please contact Mischellean Smith, Learn & Grow's Quality Services Manager, at info@aklearnandgrow.org or 907.265.3116.

Thank you for choosing to participate in Learn & Grow and helping children thrive! We look forward to supporting you and your program.

Meghan Johnson

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Early Childhood System Director

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Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

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LEVEL 1

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Level 1

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Developing a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP)

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity A: Program uses program assessment/planning tool(s) and classroom data to develop a continuous quality improvement plan (CQIP).

Purpose

The purpose of an annual planning document is to guide the short and long-term work and budget of a child care program. The development of annual planning documents is a standard practice of many organizations including for-profit, non-profit, and state organizations, as well as private foundations. Programs that develop these plans and consistently monitor their annual plans are able to engage in continuous quality improvement activities. Learn & Grow uses an annual program plan called a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP).

Continuous means ongoing, repeating the process cycle as described below.

There are four parts of a continuous quality improvement process.

- **Plan:** Observe and interview teachers and administrators. Gather data to identify goals.
- **Do:** Implement activities to accomplish goals.
- **Study:** Continue observing and checking in: "How are things going?"
- **Act:** Modify and try a different way. Plan for the next goal.

Requirements

thread Specialist will support programs with use of appropriate assessment/planning tool and facilitating discussions to identify individual program goals. The **thread** Specialist will then document these goals in a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP) and support the program's ongoing CQIP process.

Level 1: Assessment/planning tool: Alaska Early Childhood Administrator Core Knowledge and Competency

Level 2-5 Assessment/planning tool: Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) for Pyramid Model Implementation

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Supplemental Assessment/planning tools: Business Administration Scale (BAS) for Homes and Group Homes, Program Administration Scale (PAS) for Centers, Strengthening Families Self-Assessment, Program Inclusion Checklist (PIC)

Programs may already have and use annual plans and assessment/planning tools. In this case, the **thread** Specialist will review the existing documents and determine if any additional information is needed.

Resources

- **Alaska's Early Care and Learning Core Knowledge and Competencies:** <https://www.threadalaska.org/seed/career-pathways/core-competencies> -
- **Business Administration Scale (BAS) and Program Administration Scale (PAS) information:** <https://mccormickcenter.nl.edu/services/program-evaluation/>
- **Pyramid Model implementation information:** https://challengingbehavior.orghttps://www.threadalaska.org/wp-content/uploads/imported_files/docs/CKC_2nd_Edition_Apr_2018_digital.pdf
- **National information about Strengthening Families:** <https://cssp.org/our-work/project/strengthening-families/> -
- **Alaska information about Strengthening Families:** <https://www.alaskachildrenstrust.org/strengthening-families> -
- **Inclusion Checklist:** <https://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/resource-files/local-inclusion-self-assessment.pdf>
- **Resources for Supporting Inclusive Practices:** https://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/presentations-and-webinars/Resources%20to%20Support%20Inclusive%20Practices%20March%202020_1.pdf

Verification Documentation

The Continuous Quality Improvement Plan must be reviewed and updated within six months of the date of submitting for verification/renewal. (please make sure your document is dated)

When creating a Learn & Grow Continuous Quality Improvement Plan with a **thread** specialist, no other documentation is needed. The **thread** specialist will create and update your plan in the ServicePortal where you will have access to view it in the Learn & Grow section.

When using an alternative annual plan, it must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose the appropriate level from drop-down menu (level you are renewing or

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applying for) and then select “Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP)”.

Pyramid Model Alignment

Programs implementing Pyramid Model in their program will use the Benchmarks of Quality to inform their program goals.

Center Benchmarks of Quality

- #6 Team develops an implementation plan that includes all critical elements. A written implementation plan guides the work of the team. The team reviews the plan and updates their progress at each meeting. Action steps are identified to ensure achievement of the goals.
- #7 Team reviews and revises the plan at least annually.

Home/Group Home Benchmarks of Quality

- #3 An implementation plan that includes all critical elements is established. A written implementation plan guides the work of the FCCH. The plan is reviewed and updated on a regular basis (planning with staff in large FCCH). Action steps are identified to ensure achievement of the goals.

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Level 1

Early Childhood Educator Qualifications & Professional Development



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All Staff Have Active Alaska SEED Registry Accounts

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity B: All early childhood educators who work directly with children or supervise individuals who work with children are in the Alaska System for Early Education Development (SEED) Registry.

Purpose

An early childhood educator's qualifications and professional development are key indicators of high quality. Alaska System for Early Education Development (SEED), housed and managed by **thread**, helps early childhood educators track their ongoing education and training progress.

Staff education and training requirements will increase throughout the levels of Learn & Grow, requiring staff to complete specific training and advance on the Alaska SEED Career Ladder. Joining the Alaska SEED registry enables individuals to record and track their training and education and be evaluated for placement on the career ladder. Additionally, Alaska SEED provides financial support for ongoing education and training through:

- Professional Development Reimbursement (PDR) - For trainings taken through Alaska SEED-approved training organizations, conferences or accredited universities
- Pre-Travel Reimbursement - For travel to approved training opportunities within Alaska
- Child Development Associate (CDA) Application/Renewal - Covers the cost of the CDA application or renewal fees

Requirements

All early childhood educators working directly with children or supervising those working directly with children must join the Alaska SEED registry and maintain active status by renewing annually.

Support staff (i.e. bus drivers, cooks, secretarial/financial positions, etc.) and staff working less than 400 hours per year are exempt from this requirement. However, they may still benefit from joining the Alaska SEED registry and are encouraged to join!

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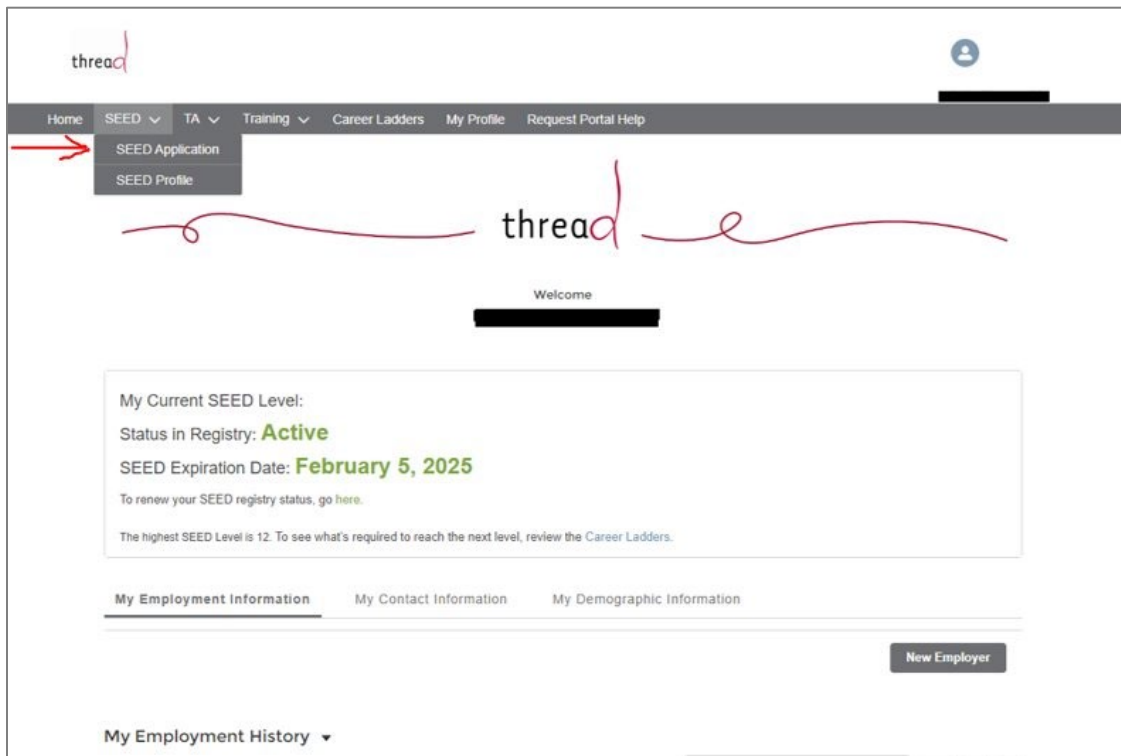
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To join the Alaska SEED Registry, complete an application via the ServicePortal.
<https://thread-alaska.my.site.com/portal/s/login/>



Resources

- **ServicePortal Login:** <https://thread-alaska.my.site.com/portal/s/login/>
- **Instructions for submitting an Alaska Seed Registry Application:** <https://www.threadalaska.org/thread/serviceportal-help/#SEED>
- **Alaska SEED Home Page:** <https://www.threadalaska.org/seed/>
- **Alaska SEED Financial Support page:** <https://www.threadalaska.org/seed/financial-support>

Verification Documentation

Active Alaska SEED registry information for all staff will be verified through the ServicePortal and no additional documentation is required.

Level 1

Early Childhood Educator Qualifications & Professional Development



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Learn & Grow 101 Training

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity C: 50% of all teaching staff, including administrators, complete Learn & Grow 101 Training.

Purpose

An early childhood educator's qualifications and professional development are key indicators of high quality. At each level of Learn & Grow there is training that administrators and all teaching staff must complete. The Learn & Grow 101 training provides an overview of the Learn & Grow framework, supports and resources, benefits, and what a child care program's journey with Learn & Grow could look like.

Requirements

Administrators and 50% of teaching staff must complete Learn & Grow 101 training for Level 1 Verification.

Administrators = staff who regularly supervise and/or support teaching staff. (i.e. assistant administrators, education coordinators, family services coordinators)

All staff in an administrative-type role within their program are required to have this training on file. This includes (but is not limited to) staff with titles/positions such as assistant administrator, education director/ coordinator, family services director/coordinator, and all those on the administrative team.

Note: Staff turnover and retention are ongoing challenges for most programs. To accommodate/address this potential barrier, teachers new to programs within 2 months of submitting for Level 1 verification are exempt and not included in percentage calculation. Staff exemptions cannot apply to more than 50% of all teaching staff.

Planning Ahead: At Learn & Grow Level 2, all teaching staff will be required to complete this training.

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Resources

The administrator will complete the Learn & Grow 101 training as part of the Working on Level 1 enrollment cohort.

All other staff can access the training online at learn.dhss.alaska.gov. Please refer to the Learn & Grow Training List [Training List – Learn and Grow](#) for further instructions on accessing this training.

Verification Documentation

Individual staff must upload the Learn & Grow 101 training certificate to their SEED profile in ServicePortal.

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Creating a Meaningful Philosophy Statement

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity A: Program has a written philosophy statement.

Purpose

An Early Childhood program's philosophy, mission, and vision guide almost all aspects of a program's action. A program philosophy can help when hiring staff to assure a "goodness of fit". It also guides curriculum selection and how teachers interact with children to support their learning. Throughout a program's continuous quality improvement process with Learn & Grow, the **thread** Specialist may ask you to think about how policies and procedures align with your program's philosophy. A strong indicator of quality is solid staff communication and buy-in. Staff who indicate they know their program's philosophy, mission, and vision are more likely to see the connection to program activities, policies, and procedures and are more likely to "get on-board" with the program's strategic direction.

A program philosophy can also help market a program to families to help them decide "goodness of fit" between a program and their family. When a program markets their philosophy to families, it is like an elementary school hosting an open house. Parents can tour the school, chat with the principal, and determine if the school is the right fit for their children. Some parents really believe in the Montessori approach, while others may feel a more traditional approach is best for their child. Some families may have a child with special needs and want a program that focuses on inclusion for all children.

When creating your philosophy statement, reflect on your core beliefs and values, as well as the services your program provides. Consider the essential elements that distinguish your program from others. Additionally, think about the desired outcomes for the children who participate—what experiences and knowledge do you want them to gain? This approach will help you create a comprehensive statement that clearly articulates your program's goals and identity.

The program's leadership team may consider reviewing the program's philosophy statement annually to ensure continued alignment with program practices.

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Requirements

The child care program must have a written philosophy statement.

Resources

See the resources section for a template to guide the development of the program's philosophy statement.

Verification Documentation

Your Philosophy Statement must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose Level 2 from drop-down menu and then select "Philosophy Statement".

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Establishing a Leadership Team (Centers Only)

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity B: Program establishes a Leadership Team

Purpose

The leadership team supports staff, engages families, encourages shared decision-making, and helps develop leadership skills. Team members work together as "thought partners." Each leadership team may look different depending on the program. The leadership team also helps assess strengths, identify needs, and track progress on improvement goals for the program, organization, or school district.

Leadership team members are responsible for utilizing program assessment/planning tools to establish goals and develop a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP). Leadership team members also assist with activities that help achieve those goals, including budgeting, staffing, policy development, and purchasing. Team members may include the program administrator, assistant administrators, coordinators, directors, parents, staff, or the school principal.

It is highly recommended that at a minimum all Leadership Team members complete the Learn & Grow 101 training to understand the focus of the leadership team.

Leadership Team Examples by Program Type:

- **Pre-Elementary and Preschool Special Education Programs:** Each pre-elementary school has its own program, but there may only be one leadership team per school district. The district's leadership team might include district administrator(s), building principal(s), staff or program coordinators, teachers, support staff, family members, and community members.
- **Head Start Programs:** Head Start grantees typically have a leadership team required by the Office of Head Start.
- **Licensed Center Child Care Programs:** Leadership teams at licensed childcare programs may include the administrator, assistant administrator, education coordinator, family member, lead and/or assistant teachers.

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Requirements

- Each program participating in Learn & Grow must create a leadership team to support them with the implementation of Learn & Grow. The team must consist of, at minimum, the administrator and one additional person.
- A Head Start or pre-elementary administrator can choose someone to serve as the early childhood administrator on the leadership team. (i.e. Principals, Superintendent, Early Childhood Administrator, Teacher, etc.) Please work with your **thread** specialist to identify the right person to fill this role.

Resources

- Leadership Team Implementation Manual: bit.ly/3Gql6mC
- Leadership Team Roles: bit.ly/3Gp38kn
- Whole Leadership: A Framework for Early Childhood Programs: bit.ly/3VNDDOd

Verification Documentation

Complete form: thread.tfaforms.net/99

Once completed, this form must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose the appropriate level from drop-down menu (level you are renewing or applying for) and then select "Leadership Team".

Pyramid Pathway Alignment:

- Programs leadership team must include at minimum three of the following positions:
 - o Administrator
 - o Teacher
 - o Member with expertise in behavior support
 - o Family Member

Center Benchmarks of Quality

- #1 Team has broad representation that includes at a minimum a teacher, administrator, a member who will provide coaching to teachers, a member with expertise in behavior support, and a family member. Other team members might include a teaching assistant, related service specialists, a community member, and other program personnel.

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Alaska Early Childhood Administrator Credential (Centers Only)

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity C: The center program administrator completes the Alaska Early Childhood Administrator Credential (or equivalent based on the personnel of the program).

Purpose

The Alaska Early Childhood Administrator Credential (AK-ECAC) requires administrators to complete a series of content-specific training sessions designed to provide them with knowledge in various areas. These content areas have been identified by a statewide advisory panel of early childhood professionals as foundational to any childcare program administrator in order to help provide a quality early childhood education program. The training requirements for this credential match the Learn & Grow Level 2 training requirements, plus additional training in Human Resources and Fiscal Management.

Benefits of Earning the AK-ECAC include:

- Career advancement
- Meet job requirements
- Reinforce commitment to early childhood education
- Provide parents with peace of mind.
- Understand developmentally appropriate practice
- Increase confidence

Please note: The AK-ECAC is a stand-alone credential.

AK-ECAC Requirements:

1. Fiscal Management
2. Human Resources/Personnel Development (Center only)
3. Family Engagement: Strengthening Families Training
4. Social Emotional Development: Pyramid Model Foundations Training
5. Professionalism: Introduction to the Alaska Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies
6. Child Development: Alaska Early Learning Guidelines

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7. Administrator Education Level:

- Child Care Center, Early Head Start, Head Start, or Pre-Elementary Administrator: Alaska SEED Level 7
- Home/Group Home: Alaska SEED Level 6

AK-ECAC Application Steps:

1. Ensure you are meeting the required Alaska SEED Level
2. Work with a **thread** Specialist who will help review your transcripts and determine what AK-ECAC content areas have been completed.
3. Complete any additional training required
4. Upload training certificates and/or transcripts to the ServicePortal (for university transcripts, including course descriptions/syllabi).
5. Complete application: [Alaska Early Childhood Administrator Credential Application](#)

Requirements

Center Administrators must have a current Alaska Early Childhood Administrator's Credential.

Programs that have full-time positions dedicated to Human Resources and/or Finance are exempt from this requirement. However, the administrator is still responsible for completing Level 2 training. If the program only has one of these two positions, then the administrator is also responsible for taking training to fill the gap.

- If the program does not have a Human Resources full-time position, then the administrator must complete Human Resources training.
- If the program does not have a full-time Finance position, then the administrator must complete Fiscal Management training.

Resources

Refer to Level 2 Training and Appendix D on the Learn & Grow Training List to find training options. [Training List – Learn and Grow](#)

Verification Documentation

Current Alaska Early Childhood Administrator Credentials will be verified through the ServicePortal and no additional documentation is required.

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Level 2

Early Childhood Educator Qualifications & Professional Development



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Alaska SEED Career Ladder Administrator Requirements

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity D:

- Center administrator is an Alaska SEED Level 7
- Group Home and Home Administrator are Alaska SEED Level 5

Purpose:

Advancement in early childhood administrator skills and knowledge is a critical component to advancing a program's level of quality. Minimum Alaska SEED Career Ladder levels for early childhood administrators begin at Learn & Grow Level 2. For reference, the minimum Alaska SEED Career Ladder levels for all staff will begin at Learn & Grow Level 3.

Requirements:

- State, Municipality of Anchorage, or Tribal licensed Child Care Centers Administrators must be at least an Alaska SEED Level 7.
- Head Start Administrators and Pre-elementary Administrators must be at least an Alaska SEED Level 7.
- Home and Group Administrators must be at least an Alaska SEED Level 5.

Resources

- The Alaska SEED Career Ladders can be found on the Alaska SEED website: bit.ly/3C476ws
- Financial support for professional development: bit.ly/3Gv5T3J

Verification Documentation

Administrator Alaska SEED levels will be verified through the ServicePortal and no additional documentation is required.

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Level 2

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Level 2 Training Requirements

Learn & Grow Quality Activity:

Quality Activity E: 40% of all teaching staff, including the designated administrator, completed all Level 2 training; and all teaching staff have completed the Learn & Grow 101 training

Purpose

Early childhood educator qualifications and their professional development are key indicators of high quality. At each level of Learn & Grow there are specific training courses and/or training topics that staff must complete.

Learn & Grow Level 2 training was identified by a group of early childhood educators and administrators as a foundation to Alaskan child care programs building quality. A brief overview of each training is provided below:

- **Introduction to Alaska Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies:** This document is designed to provide information about what early childhood professionals who work with young children need to know, understand and demonstrate to best facilitate children's learning and development. It is also a resource document for early childhood professionals who work in administrative, policy, higher education, and teaching roles.
- **Introduction to the Alaska Early Learning Guidelines:** Alaska's Early Learning Guidelines were developed to help families, early educators, and communities work together to support children's early learning and growth.
- **Introduction to the Pyramid Model:** Alaska became a Pyramid demonstration state in 2008 and Learn & Grow would like to continue this great work. The Pyramid Model is a framework of evidence-based practices for promoting young children's healthy social and emotional development.
- **Strengthening Families:** Alaska started implementing Strengthening families in 2005 and it has grown since then being utilized by several state, tribal and non-profit organizations. Strengthening Families™ is a research-informed, strength-based approach to helping families reduce stress, address risk factors, and promote healthy development. The overarching goal is the promotion of child and family well-being. It is based on engaging families, programs and communities in building five protective factors that help families succeed and thrive, even in the face of risk and challenges.

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Requirements

- 40% of all teaching staff, including the designated administrator, must complete all Level 2 training.

Level 2 training:

- Introduction to Alaska Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies
 - Introduction to the Alaska Early Learning Guideline
 - Introduction to the Pyramid Model
 - Strengthening Families
- All teaching staff must complete Learn & Grow 101 training

Note: Staff turnover and retention are ongoing challenges for most programs. To accommodate/address this potential barrier, teachers new to programs within 6 months of submitting for Level 2 verification are exempt and not included in percentage calculation. Staff exemptions cannot apply to more than 50% of all teaching staff.

Planning Ahead: At Learn & Grow Level 3, all teaching staff will be required to complete these trainings.

Resources

- Learn & Grow Training List provides training length, locations, and cost: [Forms - Learn and Grow](#)
- Alaska Core Knowledge and Competencies: [CKC 2nd Edition Apr 2018 digital.pdf](#)
- Alaska Early Learning Guidelines: [Alaska Early Learning Guidelines](#)
- National Center for the Pyramid Model Innovations: [National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations](#)
- Alaska Early Childhood Pyramid Model Partnership: [Alaska - Pyramid Model Consortium](#)
- Strengthening Families Alaska: [Strengthening Families Alaska](#)
- Strengthening Families Framework: [Strengthening Families - Center for the Study of Social Policy](#)

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Verification Documentation

No documentation is required for training completed with **thread**. Individual staff must upload training certificates from other approved organizations to their SEED profile in the ServicePortal.

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Level 2

Learning Environments, Adult-Child Interactions & Child Outcomes



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Classroom Action Plans

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity F: Each classroom completes a pre-assessment, at least annually, with a Relationship Based Professional Development (RBPDP) specialist and develops a Classroom Action Plan (CAP) that is updated at least quarterly.

Purpose

The goal of this activity is for educators to become familiar with using assessment/planning tools to guide continuous classroom improvements. Some assessment/planning tools include:

- Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT)
- Teaching Infants and Toddlers Observation Scale (TPITOS)
- Inventory of Practices (IOP)
- Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

These tools provide high quality indicators that help educators reflect on their learning environments and teaching strategies. Safe, nurturing and enriching environments strengthen early brain development and thus support positive outcomes in life.

Indicators of a high-quality learning environment include:

- Space and furnishings promote independent use and cooperation.
- Activities help children with personal care routines in safe and healthy ways.
- A prominent language rich environment (print and positive verbal interactions).
- The classroom is organized and has developmentally appropriate learning centers/areas.
- Schedules, routines, and transitions promote positive structure for children and staff.
- Activities and strategies encourage and promote positive adult-child, child-child interactions.
- Early childhood educators use strategies to foster children's social emotional development and adapt learning environments and lesson plans to meet the individual needs of all children.

The TPOT, TPITOS and CLASS tools are also used to assess classrooms at Levels 3-5 of Learn & Grow. Head Start and Pre-Elementary programs are required from their federal or state granting agency to use the CLASS.

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Level 2

Learning Environments, Adult-Child Interactions & Child Outcomes



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Classroom Action Plans (CAPs) help educators set feasible and achievable goals for strengthening, implementing or increasing use of effective teaching practices. As a program approaches Level 2 verification, the **thread** specialist will begin supporting educators using Practice Based Coaching (PBC) cycles. PBC uses collaborative partnerships to work through cycles of:

- Goal setting & action planning
- Focused observation
- Reflection and feedback

Requirements:

- Every classroom must work with a Relationship Based Professional Development II (RBPDI) specialist to complete an annual classroom pre-assessment
- Every classroom must have a current Classroom Action Plan (CAP) with goals that align with a classroom assessment/planning tool.
- Classroom Action Plans (CAP) must be reviewed and updated (if needed) quarterly

Verification Documentation

Programs working with a **thread** specialist do not need to complete additional documentation.

Programs working with an RBPDI specialist from another organization must provide:

- Current Classroom Action Plans for every program
 - o Name of RBPDI specialist supporting each classroom must be included
- Annual pre-assessment completed for each classroom

Combine all documents and upload them to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose the appropriate level from drop-down menu (level you are renewing or applying for) and then select "Classroom Action Plans (CAPs)"

Level 2

Learning Environments, Adult-Child Interactions & Child Outcomes



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Pyramid Pathway Alignment:

Programs implementing Pyramid use pre-assessments and coaching practices related to Pyramid (TPOT/TPITOS/Family Child Care Pyramid Practices Checklist/PBC Coaching/etc.)

Center Benchmarks of Quality

- #21 A plan for providing ongoing support, training, and coaching in each classroom on the Pyramid Model including culturally responsive practices and implicit bias is developed and implemented
- #22 Practice-based coaching is used to assist classroom staff with implementing the Pyramid Model practices to fidelity
- #24 A needs assessment and/or observation tool is used to determine training needs on Pyramid Model practices.

Home/Group Home Benchmarks of Quality

- #15 Practice-based coaching is used to assist providers with implementing Pyramid Model practices to fidelity.
- #16 A plan for providing ongoing support, training, and coaching in the FCCH on the Pyramid Model including culturally responsive practices and implicit bias is developed and implemented.
- #17 A needs assessment and/or observation tool is used to determine training needs on Pyramid Model practices.

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Level 3

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Sharing the Program's Philosophy Statement

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity A: The program's philosophy statement is shared with families and all staff.

Purpose

An Early Childhood program's philosophy, mission, and vision guide almost all aspects of a program's action. A program philosophy can help when hiring staff to assure a "goodness of fit". It also guides curriculum selection and how teachers interact with children to support their learning. A strong indicator of quality is solid staff communication and buy-in. Staff who indicate they know their program's philosophy, mission, and vision are more likely to see the connection to program activities, policies, and procedures and are more likely to "get on-board" with the program's strategic direction.

A program philosophy can also help market a program to families to help them decide "goodness of fit" between a program and their family. When a program markets their philosophy to families, it is like an elementary school hosting an open house. Parents can tour the school, chat with the principal, and determine if the school is the right fit for their children. Some parents really believe in the Montessori approach, while others may feel a more traditional approach is best for their children. Some families may have a child with special needs and want a program that focuses on inclusion for all children.

Requirements

The program has a process for sharing the philosophy statement with families and if applicable staff. (i.e. it is included in onboarding, part of the parent handbook, etc.)

Resources

threadTools has many resources to support communicating with staff, families and potential clients.

- Workplace Culture: [thread Alaska | Workplace Culture](#)
- Engaging Families: [thread Alaska | Engaging Families](#)
- Marketing Your Program: [thread Alaska | Marketing Your Program](#)

If you would like to register for **threadTools**, click the "Register" button on the **threadTools** homepage: [thread Alaska | Log In](#). **thread** provides one free account per program.

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Verification Documentation

Complete form: [AL1b: Shared Philosophy Statement](#)

Once completed, this form must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose Level 3 from drop-down menu and then select "Shared Philosophy Statement".

Pyramid Alignment

Implementation of the Pyramid Model should align with the program's philosophy statement.

Center Benchmarks of Quality

#4 Team has established a clear mission/purpose. The team purpose or mission statement is written. Team members are able to clearly communicate the purpose of the leadership team.

Home/Group Home Benchmarks of Quality

#2 Provider has established a clear mission or purpose related to the Pyramid Model and developed a written mission statement. All staff (when applicable in large FCCH) can clearly communicate the purpose of the Pyramid Model.

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Level 3 Required Policies & Procedures

Learn & Grow Level 3 Quality Activity

Quality Activity B: Develop policies and/or procedures that address the use of developmental screening, child assessment, curriculum, inclusionary practices, and expulsion/suspension reduction practices.

Purpose

The purpose of early childhood program policies and/or procedures is to help inform program staff of their responsibilities. A program's policies and/or procedures must align with the program's philosophy. Before writing program policy and procedures, it is recommended the program leadership team members have completed training and/or understand the purpose of each required topic.

Developmental and Social Emotional Screening

Developmental and Social-Emotional Screenings help increase awareness of a child's development and can assure children are on track. Developmental and Social Emotional Screening tools are not to be used for classroom planning. Screenings are "quick snap shots" and do not provide enough detail to inform the development of curriculum and lesson plans. Screening and monitoring procedures help:

- foster parent and educator relationships
- inform parents about their child's development
- identify the need for additional support if a child is not meeting developmental milestones

Screening tools and monitoring procedures **do not** identify a developmental delay but rather identify if a referral to outside experts (clinical, early intervention, or special education) is recommended.

Formal Child Assessment & Ongoing Observation

Formal child assessment tools in combination with ongoing observation provide a more comprehensive process that helps early educators know a child's strengths and next areas of development. Child assessment and observation tools should be used to inform and develop meaningful lesson plans. Learn & Grow, through a partnership with the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), provides FREE access to and requires programs to use the GOLD assessment tool (housed in the TeachSmart online platform) Training and coaching are available to help teachers use this online assessment tool to record/monitor children's development, inform lesson plans and communicate with families.

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Programs must consider and plan for teacher's time to completing related training, entering child observation and complete regular child assessments.

Curriculum and Lesson Planning

Curriculum and lesson planning are driven by information collected from the child's assessment and observation process. Early educators make connections between the child's assessment results and the design of the learning environment and lesson plans to provide learning opportunities that meet the child where they are and encourage them to meet the next developmental milestones. Early educator planning time is the largest consideration for an administrator. Dedicated uninterrupted time is critical for at least leading early educators to complete lesson plans; however, the ideal is for a classroom team to work together for meaningful planning of purposeful activities.

Inclusionary Practices

Every child has different ways to learn. Child assessment and observation results help to identify each child's strengths and next areas of development. Some children need adaptations to the learning environment and the way teachers support and guide their learning. For example:

- some children may have limitations with their small muscles used for writing and may need a special grip on pencils and crayons.
- some children may have delays with their speech and may need visual cards/ pictures to help with communication
- other students may be sensitive to noise and light and need areas where they can calm down and work with less distractions

Teachers can make adaptations to the learning environment and the way they interact with children to support individualized needs by considering:

- Child assessment results
- Parent intake information
- Goals from Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) or Individualized Education Plans (IEP) if applicable
- Guidance from coaches and specialist, if needed (i.e. speech pathologist, occupational and/ or physical therapist, and I/EC mental health consultants)

Programmatic implications for an administrator to consider include time and access to specialists for teachers to identify the individual needs, modify the learning environment and monitor progress.

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Reduction of Expulsion/ Suspension

Unfortunately, there is a growing number of children under the age of 6 who have experienced expulsion, in-school or out of school suspension because of challenging behaviors. Research has shown that more children in 0-5 programs are expelled than K-12 combined.

<https://preventexpulsion.org/> The primary reasons for the exclusionary actions are teacher stress, lack of skills and knowledge, and implicit bias. Having inclusionary practices and access to coaching and Infant Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) consultants, programs can reduce teacher stress, increase skills and knowledge and help teachers unpack and respond differently to any biases in their interactions toward young children in their classrooms. The Pyramid Model is an evidence-based early childhood positive behavioral support framework that focuses on promotion and prevention strategies that also help reduce exclusionary practices. The Pyramid Model also uses data collection and review processes to help programs reflect and adjust practices as needed:

- Benchmarks of Quality - Program assessment tool
- Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) and Teaching Pyramid Infant/Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS0 – Classroom assessment tool
- Behavior Incident Reports (BIRs) – Child behavior tracking tool

If a program uses the practices described above under developmental screening, child assessment, curriculum/ lesson planning and access to training and coaching, programs will reduce expulsion and suspension and have a high-quality program. Considerations for program administration are the time for teachers to meet with coaches, make adaptations, complete training, and access Infant Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) consultants.

Requirements

Please refer to the Learn & Grow Policies & Procedures Minimum Requirements document, in the resources section of this portfolio, for information about what is recommended and required for each topic.

Learn & Grow Level 3 requires a solid draft of policies and/or procedures.

Level 3 Renewal Requirements: At Level 3 renewal (as well as Levels 4 & 5), programs must be using and adapting those policies and/or procedures based on what is realistic for the program.

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Resources

- Access to the Ages and Stages Questionnaire kit & online account – provided after a program completes ASQ training
- SmartTeach online assessment tool “GOLD” – provide once a program achieves Learn & Grow Level 3
- See the resources section for Policies & Procedures template and additional guidance documents.

Verification Documentation

Upload related policies and/or procedures to the Learn & Grow section of the Service Portal. Choose Level 3 from drop-down menu and then select “L3 Policies & Procedures”.

Pyramid Model Alignment

Center Benchmarks of Quality

- #5 Program has a child discipline policy statement that includes the promotion of social and emotional skills, use of positive guidance and prevention approaches and eliminates the use of suspension and expulsion.
- #13 Families are involved in planning for individual children in a meaningful and proactive way. Families are encouraged to team up with program staff in the development of individualized plans of support for children, including the development of strategies that may be used in the home and community.
- #30 A process for responding to crises situations related to problem behavior is developed. Teachers can identify how to request assistance when needed. A plan for addressing the child's individual behavior support needs is initiated following requests for crisis assistance.
- #32 A team-based process for addressing individual children with persistent challenging behavior is developed. Teachers can identify the steps for initiating the team-based process, including fostering the participation of the family in the process.

Home/Group Home Benchmarks of Quality

- #5 Provider has a child discipline policy that includes the promotion of social and emotional skills, the use of positive guidance and prevention practices and makes a commitment to the elimination of suspension and expulsion.
- #8 Families are involved in planning for individual children in a meaningful and proactive way. Families are encouraged to team with FCCH staff in the development of individualized plans of support for children, including the development of strategies that might be used in the home and community.

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- #21 Strategies for responding to children's challenging behavior are developed. Provider and staff use evidence-based approaches that are positive, sensitive to family values, culture, and home language, and provide the child with guidance about the desired appropriate behavior and program-wide expectations.
- #23 A process for responding to crisis situations related to challenging behavior is developed.
- #24 A team-based process for addressing individual children with persistent challenging behavior is developed. Provider and staff can identify the steps for the process, including fostering the participation of the family in the development of a plan.
- #25 Provider and program staff develop an individualized plan of behavior support for children with persistent challenging behavior.

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Utilizing an Annual Staff Feedback Survey (Centers Only)

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity C: Complete an annual early childhood educator feedback survey.

Purpose

High-quality early childhood education programs support the professional growth of their educators. This includes helping them advance in their careers, offering coaching and planning support, and focusing on teacher wellness. Staff can also provide unique insight and feedback to inform a program's Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP). Conducting an annual staff survey is an effective way to gather feedback and improve quality.

Requirements

The program must conduct an annual survey to gather feedback from staff about various aspects of their work experiences, including professional development, support systems, and wellness.

Survey Summary must include the date the survey was completed.

Resources

Free Survey Tools:

- **threadTools:** Staff Assessment bit.ly/3Q3XyXP
- Airtable try.airtable.com
- SurveyMonkey (free for 10 questions or less) surveymonkey.com

Survey Tools at a Cost:

- Employee Survey
 - Lattice lattice.com/lp/employee-survey
 - Gallup Employee Survey bit.ly/3WRpQqM
- SurveyMonkey surveymonkey.com/ (more than 10 questions)

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Verification Documentation

Complete form: [AL2h: EC Educator Feedback Survey](#)

Once completed, this form must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose the appropriate level from the drop-down menu (the level you are renewing or applying for) and then select "Educator Feedback Survey".

Pyramid Model Alignment

Programs may want to consider asking for feedback on Pyramid Implementation as one method for gathering ongoing input/feedback.

Center Benchmarks of Quality

#9 Staff input and feedback is obtained throughout the process – coffee break with the director, focus group, suggestion box. The leadership team provides updates on the process and data on outcomes to program staff on a regular basis.

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Alaska Early Childhood Administrator Credential (Homes/Group Homes Only)

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity D: Home & Group Home Administrators complete the Alaska Early Childhood Administrator Credential.

Purpose

The Alaska Early Childhood Administrator Credential (AK-ECAC) requires administrators to complete a series of content-specific trainings designed to provide them with knowledge in numerous areas. These content areas have been identified by a statewide advisory panel of early childhood professionals as foundational to any child care program administrator in order to help provide a quality early childhood education program. The training requirements for this credential match the Learn & Grow Level 2 training requirements, plus additional training in Human Resources and Fiscal Management.

Benefits of Earning the AK-ECAC include:

- Career advancement
- Meet job requirements
- Reinforce commitment to early childhood education
- Provide parents with peace of mind.
- Understand developmentally appropriate practice
- Increase confidence

Please note: The AK-ECAC is a stand-alone credential.

AK-ECAC Requirements:

8. Fiscal Management
9. Human Resources/Personnel Development (Center Administrators ONLY)
10. Family Engagement: Strengthening Families Training
11. Social Emotional Development: Pyramid Model Foundations Training
12. Professionalism: Introduction to the Alaska Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies
13. Learning Environment/Adult-Child interactions: Introduction to the Environment Rating Scales, or CLASS
14. Child Development: Alaska Early Learning Guidelines

Level 3

Administration & Leadership



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15. Administrator Education Level:

- Child Care Center, Early Head Start, Head Start, or Pre-Elementary Administrator: Alaska SEED Level 7
- Home/Group Home: Alaska SEED Level 6

AK-ECAC Application Steps:

6. Ensure you are meeting the required SEED Level
7. Work with a **thread** Specialist who will help review your transcripts and determine what AK-ECAC content areas have been completed.
8. Complete any additional training required
9. Upload training certificates and/or transcripts to the ServicePortal (for university transcripts, including course descriptions/syllabi).
10. Complete application: [Alaska Early Childhood Administrator Credential Application](#)

Requirements

Home/Group Home Administrators must have a current Alaska Early Childhood Administrator's Credential.

Resources

Refer to Level 2 Training (page 2) and Appendix D (pages 12-13) on the Learn & Grow Training List to find training options. [LG-Trainings-List Jan2025.pdf](#)

Verification Documentation

Current Alaska Early Childhood Administrator Credentials will be verified through the ServicePortal and no additional documentation is required.

Level 3

Administration & Leadership



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Staff Professional Development Plans

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity E: Dedicate time annually to develop and review professional development plans with each early childhood educator (ECE).

Purpose

The purpose of this quality activity is to ensure that programs set aside time to intentionally plan for ongoing professional growth of all program staff. A program's early childhood educators are the most critical component of implementing high-quality early childhood programming. Early educators with foundational knowledge of child development are more likely to create enriched learning opportunities for young children. Professional development plans are an opportunity to set long-term, mid-term, and short-term professional goals to help a program's educators strive toward and take ownership of their own professional development. Goals might be to obtain a certification or degree, complete a class, obtain a certain Alaska SEED Level, or to meet a specific core knowledge and/or competency.

Professional development plans and conversations can help educators and administrators to:

- Assess current interests, knowledge, and skills.
- Recognize and build on strengths, as well as prioritize specific areas for growth.
- Clarify strategies and identify resources to support plans for action.
- Reflect on progress and professional growth.

Creating a professional development plan is a reflective process, and the more time spent with it, the more meaningful it will be. It is recommended that administrators spend time with staff regularly to revisit and update these plans.

Requirements

Professional development plans must be reviewed and/or revised annually.

At minimum, professional development plans must include the following:

- Date
- Staff and Supervisor(s) signatures
- The educator's Alaska SEED Level
- Long-term early childhood career goal

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- Short-term early childhood career goal
- A way to monitor progress toward goals (i.e. met, not met, in progress)
- Activities and resources needed and available to accomplish goals

Educator goals must align with competencies from the Alaska Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKCs).

- Acceptable alternatives for goal alignment:
 - Head Start Programs: Head Start Core Knowledge ® Preschool Sequence
 - Pre-Elementary Programs: Danielson Framework, Marzano Teacher Evaluation or similar tools.
 - Consult with your **thread** specialist to discuss other options.

Resources

- Report: Identifying the Core Components of a High-Quality Early Childhood Program ampr.gs/3Vurc9S
- Alaska Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKC): bit.ly/3Qc983h
- See the resources section for professional development plan template

Verification Documentation

Programs must provide:

- Blank copy of the Professional Development Plan template used at the program
- Documentation that they have met and reviewed these plans with each staff member in the last year.

Combine all documents and upload them to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose the appropriate level from the drop-down menu (the level you are renewing or applying for) and then select Professional Development Plans

Pyramid Model Alignment

Center Benchmarks of Quality

- #25 All teachers have an individualized professional development or action plan related to implementing Pyramid Model and culturally responsive practices with fidelity.

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Level 3

Early Childhood Educator Qualifications & Professional Development



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Level 3 Alaska SEED Career Ladder Requirements

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity F:

- A child care center, school district, Early Head Start or Head Start admin is an Alaska SEED Level 8.
- Group Home and Home Administrator is an Alaska SEED Level 6
- 40% of all teaching staff are an Alaska SEED Level 6
- Remaining teaching staff are an Alaska SEED Level 2

Purpose

Developing educator's skills and knowledge is a critical component to advancing a child care program's level of quality. Research tells us that early childhood educators with strong backgrounds that include training & rich teaching experience are a strong indicator of high-quality programming and teacher-child interactions. Learn & Grow measures this element of quality by using the Alaska SEED Career Levels. At Level 3 of Learn & Grow, there are minimums placed on Alaska SEED Career Ladder levels for early childhood educators to promote workforce quality.

Requirements

- State, Municipality of Anchorage, or Tribal licensed Child Care Centers Administrators must be at least an Alaska SEED Level 8.
- Head Start Administrators and Pre-elementary Administrators must be at least an Alaska SEED Level 8.
- Home and Group Administrators must be at least an Alaska SEED Level 6.
- 40% of all teaching staff are an Alaska SEED Level 6
- Remaining teaching staff are an Alaska SEED Level 2

Note: Staff turnover and retention are ongoing challenges for most programs. To accommodate/address this potential barrier, teachers new to program within 12 months of submitting for Level 3 verification are exempt and not included in percentage calculation (this exemption cannot apply to more than 50% of your staff).

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Early Childhood Educator Qualifications & Professional Development



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Resources

- The Alaska SEED Career Ladders can be found on the Alaska SEED website: bit.ly/3C476ws
- Financial support for professional development: bit.ly/3Gv5T3J

Verification Documentation

Staff Alaska SEED levels will be verified through the ServicePortal and no additional documentation is required.

Level 3

Early Childhood Educator Qualifications & Professional Development



Learn & Grow
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Level 3 Training Requirements

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity G: 40% of all teaching staff, including the designated administrator, complete all Level 3 training; and all teaching staff have completed Level 2 training.

Purpose

Early childhood educator qualifications and their professional development are key indicators of high quality. At each level of Learn & Grow there are specific trainings and/or training topics that staff must complete.

Level 3 training topics build on the foundational training required at Level 2 and address the skills and knowledge needed by early child care educators to increase the quality of their program. The nine training topics required at Level 3 are: curriculum, observation/assessment, inclusion practices, coaching, culturally responsive practices, implicit bias, and reduction of exclusionary practices.

Requirements

- 40% of all teaching staff, including the designated administrator, must complete all the training in each of the Level 3 topic areas.

Level 3 trainings topics:

- Curriculum (2hrs minimum)
 - Observation/assessment (2hrs minimum)
 - Inclusion practices (3hrs minimum)
 - Introduction to coaching (2hrs minimum)
 - Culturally responsive practices (2hrs minimum)
 - Implicit bias (2hrs minimum)
 - Reduction of exclusionary practices (2hrs minimum)
- All teaching staff must complete Learn & Grow Level 2 trainings

Note: Staff turnover and retention are ongoing challenges for most programs. To accommodate/address this potential barrier, teachers new to program within 12 months of submitting for Level 3 verification are exempt and not included in percentage calculation (this exemption cannot apply to more than 50% of your staff).

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Planning Ahead: At Learn & Grow Level 4, all teaching staff will be required to complete training in these topics.

Resources

- [The Learn & Grow Training List](#) provides a list of pre-approved trainings that meet the Level 3 topic requirements.
- [Request for Training Review](#): Staff may submit other training/courses related to these topics for approval

Verification Documentation

No documentation is required for training completed with **thread**. Individual staff must upload training certificates from other approved organizations to their SEED profile in the ServicePortal.

Pyramid Model Alignment

Center Benchmarks of Quality

#21 A plan for providing ongoing support, training, and coaching in each classroom on the Pyramid Model, including culturally responsive practices and implicit bias, is developed and implemented.

#26 A process for training new staff in Pyramid Model and culturally responsive practices is developed.

#28 Teachers have received training related to potential bias when responding to behavior challenges and have strategies to reflect on their responses to individual children.

Home/Group Home Benchmarks of Quality

#16 A plan for providing ongoing support, training, and coaching in the FCCH on the Pyramid Model including culturally responsive practices and implicit bias is developed and implemented.

#22 Provider has received training related to potential bias when responding to behavior challenges and has strategies to reflect on their responses to individual children.

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Level 3

Early Childhood Educator Qualifications & Professional Development



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Systems Training (ASQ & PIDS)

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity H: Designated staff have completed training on the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and Pyramid Implementation Data System (PIDS)

Purpose

At Level 3 programs are required to begin using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) screening tool and online system as well as the online Pyramid Implementation Data System (PIDS).

There must be one designated staff member to oversee the implementation and use of each of these tools. It may be the same staff member or two different staff members. For each tool, the designated staff member must complete the related training.

ASQ training covers:

- Overview of the screening tool
- How to use/complete the screening
- Interpretation of results
- How to communicate screening results to families
- Guidance on next steps when there are recommendations for referrals

PIDS training covers:

- How to input data from the following tools:
 - Benchmarks of Quality (BOQ)
 - Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT)
 - Teaching Pyramid Infant/Toddler Scale (TPITOS)
 - Behavior Incident Reports (BIRs)
- How to generate reports

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Level 3

Early Childhood Educator Qualifications & Professional Development



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Requirements

At least one staff member must complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) training. This training must cover how to use the screening tool and online platform, as how to communicate results to families. Additional staff who use the online system or communicate screening results with families must also complete the ASQ training.

At least one staff member must complete the Pyramid Implementation Data System (PIDS) training.

Planning ahead: At Level 4 teachers should start communicating screening results with families and will need to complete ASQ training.

Resources

- [The Learn & Grow Training List](#) provides a list of pre-approved trainings that meet the Level 3 topic requirements.
- [Request for Training Review](#): Staff may submit other training/courses related to these topics for approval

Verification Documentation

No documentation is required for training completed with **thread**. Individual staff must upload training certificates from other approved organizations to their SEED profile in the ServicePortal.

Pyramid Model Alignment

Center Benchmarks of Quality

#35 Data are collected, summarized with visual displays, and reviewed by the Implementation Team on a regular basis

#36 The program leadership team monitors implementation fidelity of the components of program-wide implementation and uses data for decision making about their implementation goals.

#37 The program measures implementation fidelity of the Pyramid Model practices by classroom teachers and uses data on implementation fidelity to make decisions about professional development and coaching supports.

#38 The program collects data on behavior incidents and program actions in response to behavior and uses those data to address child and teacher support needs

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#39 Behavior incident and monthly program action data are analyzed on a regular basis to identify potential issues related to disciplinary action bias

#40 Program-level data are summarized and shared with program staff and families on a regular basis

#41 Data are used for ongoing monitoring, problem solving, ensuring child response to intervention, and program improvement.

Home/Group Home Benchmarks of Quality

#27 Implementation fidelity is measured regularly using the Benchmarks of Quality and a practice fidelity self-assessment or observation.

#28 The provider collects data on child outcomes (e.g. behavior incidents, child engagement)

#29 Data are collected and summarized

#30 Data are shared with program staff and families

#31 Data are used for ongoing monitoring, problem solving, ensuring child response to intervention, and program improvement.

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Level 3 Classroom Assessments

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity I: Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT)/Teaching Pyramid Infant & Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS) average score of 60% across all key practices and no red flags in each classroom assessed. **–OR–** Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) score of 3.0 in 2 of 3 subdomains in each classroom assessed.

Purpose

High-quality learning environments are critical to help children learn and achieve positive outcomes. Indicators of a high-quality learning environment include:

- Engaged and responsive early childhood educators
- Environments that use space and furnishings to promote various types of play, independence, cooperation and quiet spaces
- Promotion of language-rich environments
- Developmentally appropriate learning activities that address all domains of learning
- Schedules, routines, and transitions that promote positive guidance for children and staff
- Positive adult-adult, adult-child and child-child interactions
- Consistent and ongoing communication and collaboration with families

Requirements

One classroom in each age group will be randomly selected for assessment. Each classroom assessed must meet the minimum assessment score requirements as outlined below:

- TPOTs/TPITOS: Must have an overall score of 60% in each infant, toddler, and preschool classroom assessed
- CLASS: Must score 3.0 in 2/ 3 subdomains for each classroom assessed

Assessments must be conducted by an inter-rater, reliable external assessor. **thread** maintains a cadre of reliable inter-rater assessors for TPOT & TPITOS and CLASS, available to licensed child care programs, Head Start, or Pre-elementary programs.

The assessments must be conducted no more than 6 months before Level 3 verification submission.

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Resources

To request a classroom assessment, complete this electronic form: Program Assessment Request thread.tfaforms.net/144

Verification Documentation

No documentation is required for assessments completed with **thread**.

Assessments completed by other reliable assessors must be combined and uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose Level 3 from the drop-down menu and then select "Classroom Assessments". Please ensure that each assessment includes the classroom name, teacher(s) being assessed, date of the assessment and name of the assessor.

Pyramid Model Alignment

Center Benchmarks of Quality

- #35 Data are collected, summarized with visual displays, and reviewed by the Implementation Team on a regular basis
- #37 The program measures implementation fidelity of the Pyramid Model practices by classroom teachers and uses data on implementation fidelity to make decisions about professional development and coaching supports.

Home/Group Home Benchmarks of Quality

- #18 Provider and program staff are proficient at teaching social and emotional skills within daily activities in a manner that is meaningful to children and promotes skill acquisition.
- #29 Data are collected and summarized

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Use of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity J: Program provides families with access to the ASQ Screening tool within 45 days of enrollment and as needed.

Purpose

Developmental and social-emotional screenings help increase awareness of a child's development and can assure children are on track. Screening tools should not be used for classroom planning because they only provide a "quick snapshot"; not enough detail to inform the development of curriculum and lesson plans.

Use of screening tools such as the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) help:

- foster parent and educator relationships
- inform parents about their child's development
- identify the need for additional support if a child is not meeting developmental milestones

Screening tools and monitoring procedures **do not** identify a developmental delay but rather identify if a referral to outside experts (clinical, early intervention, or special education) is recommended.

The ASQ was designed to be completed by parents. No matter what the parent's situation is, parents know their children best. It is optional for the classroom teacher to complete a screening tool, as it could be helpful to students. A child may show different skills in a classroom setting than at home, and that is perfectly fine. However, if there are differences between the teacher's and parent's screening results, this could explain the variation. This can also help promote a positive conversation between the teacher and parent to work toward strategies to assist in meeting the milestones.

Learn & Grow programs working toward Level 3, will be provided on the ASQ Kit and online screening portal.

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Requirements

- Within 45 days of enrollment, the program provides families with an electronic link or a paper copy of the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ).
 - If a paper copy is used, programs must upload the results to the program's online ASQ profile.
- A program staff communicates screening results within 10 business days of receiving completed screenings.
 - Staff must have completed ASQ training before communicating results to families.

Note: Programs do not need to receive completed screenings from all families but should have policies/procedures in place to promote and encourage completion of the tool at enrollment. Families who have completed an ASQ with their physician or other agency within the last 6 months should not complete another screening, but be encouraged to share that screening with the program.

Resources

- [Home - Ages and Stages](#)
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Screening Tool Finder: bit.ly/3ibrp4c

Verification Documentation

Complete form: thread.tfaforms.net/101

Once completed, this form must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose the appropriate level from drop-down menu (level you are renewing or applying for) and then select "Use of Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)".

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Pyramid Implementation Data System (PIDS)

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity K: Program uses Pyramid Implementation Data System (PIDS) to record behavior incident reports and expulsion/suspensions.

Purpose

The Pyramid Implementation Data System (PIDS) helps programs collect, record, view, and analyze program data to inform continuous quality improvement. Programs can input data from the following tools:

- Benchmarks of Quality (BOQ) – Program assessment tool
- Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) – Preschool classroom assessment tool
- Teaching Infant/Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS) – Infant/Toddler classroom assessment tool
- Behavior Incident Reports (BIRs)
 - Including tracking expulsion/suspension data

This quality activity is focused on tracking and reducing the use of suspension and expulsion practices in early childhood and requires programs to enter related data into the online system.

A strong indicator of quality is how well a program has supports, resources, and procedures in place to assist young children and their families with behaviors perceived as challenging. Behavior Incident Reports (BIRs) provide data about behavior such as frequency, time of day, possible motivation, follow-up processes used, and potential action bias. This information helps the program; teachers and families determine the best ways to support the child moving forward. For example: If a child's perceived challenging behavior mostly occurs during transitions, the child may need additional support during these times of day.

The type of BIR mentioned here is different from an injury report. BIRs are specific to behaviors and help programs and classroom teachers to identify the function, description, and consequence of the behavior.

Completion of BIRs may require training on how to complete and interpret data. This is a specialized skill set. **thread** specialists can assist programs to complete a BIR. Head Start and pre-elementary programs may have a behavioral health or education specialist who can assist.

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Requirements

- Programs must use Behavior Incident Reports (BIRs) when challenging behaviors occur and must input the information from those reports in the online Pyramid Implementation Data System (PIDS).
 - Programs may use their own BIRs, or the one provided from **thread**/Pyramid. At minimum, the report must contain the following data points:
 - Problem Behavior
 - Activity
 - Others Involved
 - Possible Motivation
 - Response
 - Administrative Follow-Up
 - Child Demographics
- Programs must also log any child suspension/expulsion into PIDS
 - Exclusionary Practices Defined:
 - In-school suspension: Practices that involve removing or excluding the child from the classroom.
 - Out-of-school suspension: Practices that involve temporarily removing the child from the program.
 - Expulsion: Permanent removal or dismissal of the child from the program.
 - Soft expulsion: Practices that make it so that the program is not a viable or welcoming care arrangement for the family and leaves the family with little choice but to withdraw their child
 - Note: Facilitated transfers from one program to the next, where a program assists a family in finding a new placement for their child with minimal or no interruption of continuity of care are not considered expulsion.
 - From Preventing Suspensions and Expulsions in Early Childhood Settings: An Administrator's Guide to Supporting All Children's Success (2016).

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Resources

- National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations' (NCPMI) Behavior Incident Report System (BIRS)
bit.ly/3Ik4XR2
- [Program Leader's Guide | Preventing Suspensions and Expulsions in Early Childhood Settings](#)
- Process for responding to challenging behavior graphic from Reducing Early Childhood Exclusionary Practices white paper bit.ly/3IIFAOJ
- State of Alaska Child Care Licensing Regulations
bit.ly/3ChNgxS
- MOA Licensing Regulations
bit.ly/3Qk0iR5
- Head Start Regulations regarding expulsion or suspension
bit.ly/3vxl862
- See the resources section for the following documents:
 - BIR Overview Factsheet
 - NCPMI BIR Training Instructions and Definitions
 - NCPMI BIR Form
 - BIR Teacher Factsheet

Verification Documentation

Learn & Grow will verify program data through the PIDS system, and no additional documentation is required.

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Choosing a Curriculum

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity L: Program has completed a curriculum review and selection process and created a plan for implementation of selected curriculum.

Purpose

Curriculum is what children are expected to learn and how they will learn it. It includes both knowledge and skills, as well as the planned experiences that help children grow. According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), curriculum includes what children will learn and the teaching strategies used to support their learning.

At its core, the curriculum is a plan. It shows what learning goals children should reach and how teachers can help them get there. A good curriculum is based on what we know about child development, making sure the learning is right for each age group. It should clearly describe what children should know and be able to do. Writing down the curriculum helps teachers plan and stay on track.

Curriculum should also be connected to what teachers know about each child. Before making lesson plans, teachers gather information about children's strengths and needs. This helps them adjust the curriculum to fit each child, so every child gets the support and challenge they need. Teaching methods and materials must also be appropriate for the age group. This is called *Developmentally Appropriate Practice*—teaching that matches where children are developmentally and helps them grow from there.

A strong curriculum gives teachers a clear path. It helps children move step-by-step toward learning goals. But the curriculum isn't just used in the classroom. It should also be part of what happens during playtime, routines, and even at home.

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Common ways to deliver curriculum include:

- Scaffolding (supporting children as they learn new things)
- Thoughtful classroom design
- Play-based learning
- Activities children choose themselves
- Teacher-led lessons
- Family involvement
- Using routines to teach
- Modeling behaviors
- Peer learning
- Reading together and having conversations

NAEYC says curriculum should support the program's goals and help children grow in all areas.

A good curriculum includes:

- Clear goals
- Activities linked to those goals
- Daily schedules and routines
- Materials that support learning

Curriculum should help support the "whole child," meaning all areas of development. These are shown in the **Alaska Early Learning Guidelines**: <https://www.alaskaelg.org/>

- Domain 1: Physical Well-Being
- Domain 2: Social and Emotional Development
- Domain 3: Approaches to Learning
- Domain 4: General Knowledge and Cognition
- Domain 5: Communication, Language, and Literacy

In some cases, using multiple curricula may be necessary to address all areas of a child's development effectively.

Requirements

Learn & Grow does not require the use of a specific curriculum. Instead, at Level 3 programs who have not already selected a curriculum must review and assess various curriculum and select the one that is the best fit for their program and students. Home/Group Homes do not need to purchase a curriculum but must select a lesson plan format that includes the following: Learning environment plans, learning activities, individual child goals, all Early Learning Guideline (ELG) domains, and modifications for individual child needs.

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Level 3 Renewal Requirements: Every time a program renews at Level 3, they will need to show progress on their implementation plan and increased use of their selected curriculum. Once a program has fully implemented their selected curriculum, they will no longer need to provide updates.

Resources

- HeadStart Curriculum Resources: [Curriculum Basics | HeadStart.gov](#)
- NAEYC Curriculum Resources: [Global Search | NAEYC](#)
- NAEYC Position Statement: [NAECYC Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment & Program Evaluation Statement bit.ly/3jN5u3V](#)
- DEED Approved Curriculum List (found on Alaska's Early Education Program Standards) [EEP-Standards-SBOA-APPROVED.pdf](#)
- See the resources section for Home/Group Home Lesson Plan templates

Verification Documentation

Complete form: [Level 3: LE12a - Curriculum Review & Selection Process](#)

Once completed, this form must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose Level 3 from the drop-down menu and then select "Curriculum Review & Selection".

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Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) Child Assessments

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity M: Program has created a plan for implementation of Teaching Strategies Gold.

Purpose

Formal child assessment tools in combination with ongoing observation provide a comprehensive process that helps early educators know a child's strengths and next areas of development. This information is essential to guiding a teacher's lesson plan development and monitoring children's progress toward meeting developmental milestones.

To support this process, **Learn & Grow** partners with the **Department of Education and Early Development (DEED)** to provide child care programs access to the GOLD assessment tool (housed in the TeachSmart online platform). This is a secure, cloud-based child assessment and monitoring system designed to streamline and support observation and assessment practices. Teachers can upload documentation, pictures, and observations throughout the year using this platform. That data can then be used to complete regular child assessments and track children's developmental progression.

Learn & Grow requires programs to sign an assurance page before using Teaching Strategies Gold. This page signifies the program's commitment to meeting the required standards for child assessment.

Requirements

Programs must complete an implementation plan for how they will start using this platform and begin completing annual child assessments.

Level 3 Renewal Requirements: Every time a program renews at Level 3, they will need to show progress on their implementation plan and increased use of TSG Assessments. (i.e. train staff, slowly add child profiles to one classroom, then all classrooms). Once a program is completing annual child assessments for all students, they will no longer need to provide implementation updates.

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Note: Once a child profile is created, that child must have at least one checkpoint completed annually

Resources

- thread.tfaforms.net/173 - Memorandum of Assurance
- [Observational Assessment System - Teaching Strategies GOLD](#)
- NAEYC Article “DAP: Observing, Documenting, and Assessing Children’s Development and Learning”: bit.ly/3CkKhoq
- HeadStart Ongoing Child Assessment: A Guide for Program Leaders: bit.ly/3GzabXP

Verification Documentation

Complete form: <https://thread.tfaforms.net/258>

Once completed, this form must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose Level 3 from the drop- down menu and then select “TSG Implementation Plan”.

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Level 3

Family & Community Engagement



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Learning About Families & Children

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity N: At enrollment, the program provides families with opportunities to tell the program about their family and their children (ethnicity, culture, language, abilities, preferences, etc.).

Purpose

Families are a child's first and most important teachers. They have a deep understanding of their child's likes, dislikes, routines, strengths, and unique needs. Having and sharing this knowledge is essential for fostering a child's development in an early childhood education (ECE) program. Enrolling a child in an ECE program can be a stressful experience for children and their families. To ease this transition and build a strong relationship between the program and the family, it's important to create opportunities for families to share key information about their child. This helps the program understand the child better and reassures families that their perspectives are valued. It emphasizes the importance of families and programs working together in the child's educational experience.

This is also a great time to learn more about a family's culture and practices. Children development and how they connect with others varies greatly between cultures and this information can play a crucial part in understanding and meeting children where they are. Additionally, infusing cultural elements into the curriculum fosters inclusion, respect, and strengthens the sense of belonging for children and families. It creates an environment where every child/family feels seen, valued, and celebrated for who they are.

Requirements

The program must have a consistent process for gathering information (ethnicity, culture, language, abilities, preferences) from families as children enroll. This could be a meet-and-greet verbal conversation, an in-take survey, or a combination of both.

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Level 3

Family & Community Engagement



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Resources

The enrollment section of **threadTools** has a sample “Getting to Know You Questionnaire”:

- Enrollment: [thread Alaska | Enrollment](#)

If you would like to register for **threadTools** click the “Register” button on the **threadTools** homepage: [thread Alaska | Log In](#). **thread** provides one free account per program.

Verification Documentation

Complete form: thread.tfaforms.net/103

Once completed, this form must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose the appropriate level from the drop-down menu (the level you are renewing or applying for) and then select “Family/Child Information at Enrollment”

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Level 3

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Annual Family Surveys

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity O: Program conducts an annual family survey.

Purpose

Family surveys are helpful to collect feedback from families about their experiences and perspectives. This feedback helps programs identify strengths and areas for improvement, ensuring that the program better meets the needs of the families and children it serves. Family surveys also support continuous improvement and help make informed decisions about program practices.

When designing a family survey, consider program goals to determine what information you need from families to help you work towards those goals. 10 questions is a good length for surveys without being too burdensome for families.

Requirements

The program must conduct an annual survey to gather feedback from families.

The family survey must include the date the survey was completed.

It's recommended that programs use this opportunity to ask families about Learn & Grow Implementation (i.e. Are they familiar with Learn & Grow? Do they have any questions? Do they see program improvements?).

Resources

Below are links to different family/parent surveys. Consider using Survey Monkey or Google Sheets to develop your survey. These platforms allow you to send the survey via a link and then automatically summarize the results.

- **threadTools:** bit.ly/3vGw01v
- [SurveyMonkey - Free online survey software and questionnaire tool](#)
- [Google Sheets: Online Spreadsheets & Templates | Google Workspace](#)
- <https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/familysurveys.asp>

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Verification Documentation

Complete form: bit.ly/3VMYw2

Once completed, this form must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose the appropriate level from the drop-down menu (the level you are renewing or applying for) and then select "Annual Family Survey"

Pyramid Model Alignment

Programs may want to consider asking for feedback on Pyramid Implementation as one method for gathering ongoing input/feedback.

Center Benchmarks of Quality

- #10 Family input is solicited as part of the planning and decision-making process. Families are informed of the initiative and asked to provide feedback on program-wide adoption and mechanisms for promoting family environment in the initiative (e.g. suggestions box, focus group)

Home/Group Home Benchmarks of Quality

- #6 Family input is solicited as part of the planning and decision-making process. Families are informed of the initiative and asked to provide feedback on the Pyramid Model implementation.

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Classroom Transition Plans (Centers Only)

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity P: In partnership with families, a program develops a transition plan for a child any time they move to a different classroom.

Purpose

Transitioning into a new program or classroom can be an exciting, but also a challenging and stressful experience for children and families. An indicator of high-quality is how well a program intentionally plans for transitions between classrooms, other programs, and into kindergarten. The purpose of this quality activity is for programs to start the process of reviewing and/or creating policies and procedures specific to classroom transitions. At level 4 you can build on these policies and procedures to include transitioning children to a new program and preparing older children for kindergarten.

Transitions plans might include some of the following:

- Meet and greet with new teachers
- Tour of the new classroom
- Schedule of short times for the child to visit the new classroom before the full transition
- Copy of the new classroom's schedule
- Information about Developmentally Appropriate Practices specific to the age group served in the new classroom
- Time for parents to review/update their enrollment information
- Shared planning for the child's next developmental milestones

Requirements

Programs must have a plan for how they support children and families when children transition from one classroom to another. This should include how/what they communicate with families about the transition, as well as a schedule for when the child will transition.

Small programs that do not transition children between classrooms are exempt from this activity.

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Resources

threadTools has many resources for supporting transitions including meeting agendas, transition planning documents, etc.

- Transitions: [thread Alaska | Transitions](#)

If you would like to register for **threadTools** click the “Register” button on the **threadTools** homepage: [thread Alaska | Log In](#). **thread** provides one free account per program.

Verification Documentation

Combine all documents related to Classroom Transitions Plans (template, forms, plans, policies, procedures, etc.) and upload them to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose Level 3 from the drop-down menu and then select “Classroom Transition Plans.”

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Family & Community Engagement



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Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Providing Resources and Referrals for Families

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity Q: Program provides community resources or makes referrals to address family needs.

Purpose

Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs are invaluable resources for families, providing connections to community services. The Strengthening Families framework emphasizes how programs can:

- Help families build connections
- Enhance parental skills and knowledge about child development
- Provide access to necessary supports and resources.

Given their regular contact with children and families, ECE programs are uniquely positioned to serve as vital resources. The purpose of this quality activity is to assess how robust your program is at providing families with a connection to support and resources. Your program doesn't need to have all the answers but should act as a "connector" for families.

ECE programs should not diagnose children with disabilities. Instead, through conversations with families and developmental screenings, they can refer or connect families to infant learning programs or preschool special education for further assessment.

Resources

- **Help Me Grow Alaska:** helpmegrowak.org/
 - Provides support to families to complete developmental screenings and access health care professionals, including mental health and more.
- **thread:** threadalaska.org
 - Alaska's Child Care Resource Referral Network works to connect families to parenting classes, support for children with special needs, and more.
- **Alaska 211:** [Alaska 2-1-1](http://Alaska2-1-1)
 - Provides free and confidential resources to families regarding life challenges and everyday needs. (resources address: Housing, income support, health care, transportation, legal services, education, and more!)

Level 3

Family & Community Engagement



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Verification Documentation

Complete form: bit.ly/3WN8Xhj

Once completed, this form must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose level 3 from the drop-down menu and then select "Family Resources/Referrals"

Pyramid Model Alignment

Programs may want to consider how they provide resources to families specifically related to the development of social/emotional skills and addressing challenging behavior.

Center Benchmarks of Quality

- #12 Family involvement in the initiative is supported through a variety of mechanisms including home teaching suggestions, information on supporting social development, and the outcomes of the initiative. Information is shared through a variety of formats (e.g., meetings, home visit discussions, newsletters in multiple languages, open house, websites, family friendly handouts, workshops, rollout events, access to staff with bilingual capacity).

Home/Group Home Benchmarks of Quality

- #7 Family engagement is supported through a variety of mechanisms including home teaching suggestions, information on supporting social-emotional development, and the strategies used in the program. Information is shared through a variety of formats (e.g., meetings, home visits, discussions, newsletters, open house, websites or social media, family friendly handouts, workshops, roll-out events).

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Level 4

Administration & Leadership



Learn & Grow
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Level 4 Policy and/or Procedures Requirements

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity A: Has policies and procedures in place for how they will support Multiple Language Learners, family engagement practices, and teacher support.

Purpose

The purpose of early childhood program policies and/or procedures is to help inform program staff of their responsibilities. A program's policies and/or procedures must align with the program's philosophy. Before writing program policy and procedures, it is recommended the program leadership team members have completed training and/or understand the purpose of each required topic.

Supporting Multi-Language Learners

There is a steadily increasing population of Multiple Language Learners (MLLs). Young children who are acquiring English while also developing proficiency in their home language(s). This growing diversity presents both a significant opportunity and a responsibility for early childhood education programs. To support MLLs effectively, programs must adopt high expectations for all learners, recognizing that multilingualism is an asset rather than a barrier. Educators should intentionally build on the cultural and linguistic strengths each child brings to the classroom, fostering an inclusive environment that values their identities. Additionally, tailored, developmentally appropriate learning support should be provided to meet each child's unique language needs and learning trajectory. When these elements are integrated, MLLs are more likely to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally, setting a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

Reference (non-journal): [Policy Statement on Supporting the Development of Children Who Are Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs](#)

Family Engagement Practices

Families are their children's first teachers, and partnering with them is essential to providing the best possible care and education for that child. Family engagement includes everything from day-to-day communications to more deliberate activities such as classroom/school events and parent-teacher conferences. Programs should consider how to adjust engagement practices to meet all families. (i.e. offering events at varied times of day for parents who work different shifts, having materials available in a family's home language, etc.) Programs regular and ongoing contact with families also puts them in a prime position to be a conduit for sharing resources and supports with these families.

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Teacher Supports

Providing care and education for children every day is a rewarding and challenging job. This role also plays a significant role in the lives and education of the children they serve. Programs need to ensure that they are providing supports and resources to help teachers both with increasing their knowledge and skills as well as maintaining healthy well-being. Providing benefits, well-being activities, access to on-going coaching/education, and regular staff check-ins are some examples of teacher support.

Requirements

Please refer to the Learn & Grow Policies & Procedures Minimum Requirements document, in the resources section of this portfolio, for information about what is required for each topic.

Resources

- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services & U.S. Department of Education: Policy Statement on Supporting the Development of Children Who Are Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs (dll-policy-statement-2016.pdf) [ERIC - ED566723 - Policy Statement on Supporting the Development of Children Who Are Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs, US Department of Health and Human Services, 2016-Jun-2](#)
- NAEYC: [Dual Language Learners Resources](#)
- NAEYC: [Family Engagement | NAEYC](#)
- ECLKC (Head Start): [Dual Language Learners Support](#)
- Colorín Colorado: [State Policies for Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood](#)
- Federal Policy Statement on Dual Language Learning: [White House Fact Sheet](#)
- National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI) [Family Engagement - National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations](#)
- Strengthening Families Alaska: [Strengthening Families Alaska](#)
- Strengthening Families Framework: [Strengthening Families - Center for the Study of Social Policy](#)
- ZERO to Three: [Nurturing the Nurturer: Elevating Educator Well-Being and Competencies Through Comprehensive Wellness Programs | ZERO TO THREE](#)
- threadTools: [thread Alaska | Workplace Culture](#)

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Verification Documentation

Combine and upload related policies and/or procedures to the Learn & Grow section of the Service Portal. Choose Level 4 from drop-down menu and then select “L4 Policies & Procedures”

Pyramid Model Alignment

Center Benchmarks of Quality

- #9 Staff input and feedback is obtained throughout the process - coffee break with the director, focus group, suggestion box. Implementation Team provides updates on the process and data on the outcomes to program staff on a regular basis.
- #10 Family input is solicited as part of the planning and decision-making process. Families are informed of the initiative and asked to provide feedback on program-wide adoption and mechanisms for promoting family involvement in the initiative (suggestions box, focus group).
- #11 There are multiple mechanisms for sharing the program wide plan with families including narrative documents, conferences, and parent meetings to ensure that all families are informed of the initiative.
- #12 Family involvement in the initiative is supported through a variety of mechanisms including home teaching suggestions, information on supporting social development, and the outcomes of the initiative. Information is shared through a variety of formats (e.g., meetings, home visit discussions, newsletters, open-house, websites, family friendly handouts, workshops, rollout events).
- #13 Families are involved in planning for individual children in a meaningful and proactive way. Families are encouraged to team up with program staff in the development of individualized plans of support for children, including the development of strategies that may be used in the home and community.
- #18 Expectations are shared with families and staff to assist families in the translation of the expectations to rules in the home.
- #21 A plan for providing ongoing support, training, and coaching in each classroom on the Pyramid Model including culturally responsive practices and implicit bias is developed and implemented
- #27 Incentives and strategies for acknowledging staff effort in the implementation of Pyramid Model practices are implemented.

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- #31 Teachers have opportunities to solve problems with colleagues and family members around problem behavior. Teachers are encouraged to gain support in developing ideas for addressing problem behavior within the classroom
- #34 Strategies for partnering with families when there are problem behavior concerns identified. Teachers have strategies for initiating parent contact and partnering with the family to develop strategies to promote appropriate behavior.
- #40 Program-level data are summarized and shared with program staff and families on a regular basis.

Home/Group Homes Benchmarks of Quality

- #6 Family input is solicited as part of the planning and decision-making process. Families are informed of the inactive and asked to provide feedback on the Pyramid Model implementation.
- #7 Family engagement is supported through a variety of mechanisms, including home teaching suggestions, information on supporting social-emotional development, and the strategies used in the program. Information is shared through a variety of formats (e.g. meetings, home visits, discussions, newsletters, open house, websites or social media, family friendly handouts, workshops, roll-out events).
- #8 Families are involved in planning for individual children in a meaningful and proactive way. Families are encouraged to team with FCCH staff in the development of individual plans of support for children, including the development of strategies that might be used in the home and community.
- #16 A plan for providing ongoing support, training, and coaching in the FCCH on the Pyramid Model including culturally responsive practices and implicit bias is developed and implemented.
- #26 Provider and staff initiate family contact and partner with the family to develop strategies to prevent challenging behavior and promote social-emotional skills.
- #30 Data are shared with program staff and families

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Level 4

Early Childhood Educator Qualifications & Professional Development



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Level 4 Alaska SEED Career Ladder Requirements

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity B:

- A child care center, school district, Early Head Start or Head Start admin is an Alaska SEED Level 9.
- Group Home and Home Administrator is an Alaska SEED Level 7.
- 40% of all teaching staff are an Alaska SEED Level 7
- Remaining teaching staff are an Alaska SEED Level 3

Purpose

Developing educator's skills and knowledge is a critical component to advancing a child care program's level of quality. Research tells us that early childhood educators with strong backgrounds that include training & rich teaching experience are a strong indicator of high-quality programming and teacher-child interactions. Learn & Grow measures this element of quality by using the Alaska SEED Career Levels. Starting at Level 3, each level of Learn & Grow requires higher Alaska SEED levels for administrators and teaching staff.

Requirements

- State, Municipality of Anchorage, or Tribal licensed Child Care Centers Administrators must be at least an Alaska SEED Level 9.
- Head Start Administrators and Pre-elementary Administrators must be at least an Alaska SEED Level 9.
- Home and Group Administrators must be at least an Alaska SEED Level 7.
- 40% of all teaching staff are an Alaska SEED Level 7
- Remaining teaching staff are an Alaska SEED Level 3

Note: Staff turnover and retention are ongoing challenges for most programs. To accommodate/address this potential barrier, teachers new to program within 12 months of submitting for Level 4 verification are exempt and not included in percentage calculation (this exemption cannot apply to more than 50% of your staff).

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Resources

- The Alaska SEED Career Ladders can be found on the Alaska SEED website: bit.ly/3C476ws
- Financial support for professional development: bit.ly/3Gv5T3J

Verification Documentation

Staff Alaska SEED levels will be verified through the ServicePortal and no additional documentation is required.

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Early Childhood Educator Qualifications & Professional Development



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Level 4 Training Requirements

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity C: 40% of all teaching staff, including the designated administrator, complete all Level 4 training; and all teaching staff have completed Level 3 training.

Purpose

Early childhood educator qualifications and their ongoing professional development are key indicators of high-quality care. Each level of Learn & Grow includes specific training requirements that educators must complete.

At Level 4, these requirements expand to include both general and specialized training. Staff must receive training in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma-informed care. Additionally, once the program implements a curriculum and begins using the GOLD assessment tool, teachers are required to complete related training. They must also be trained on the Ages & Stages Questionnaire, as they will now be responsible for sharing those results with families.

Requirements

- 40% of all teaching staff, including the designated administrator, must complete all Level 4 training requirements.

Level 4 trainings topics:

- Introduction to ACES (1hr minimum)
- Early Childhood Trauma Informed Care (5hrs minimum)

Level 4 specific trainings:

- Training on Specific Curriculum used by the program
- Ages & Stages Questionnaire
- Teaching Strategies Gold Training (one of the following options)
 - “Introducing My Teaching Strategies” and “The Power of Gold”
 - Inter-Rater Reliability (must be current) *

*Staff entering child assessment information into TSG must have current Inter-Rater Reliability

- All teaching staff must complete Learn & Grow Level 3 trainings

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Note: Staff turnover and retention are ongoing challenges for most programs. To accommodate/address this potential barrier, teachers new to program within 12 months of submitting for Level 4 verification are exempt and not included in percentage calculation (this exemption cannot apply to more than 50% of your staff).

Planning Ahead: At Learn & Grow Level 5, all teaching staff will be required to complete all Level 4 training.

Resources

- [The Learn & Grow Training List](#) provides a list of pre-approved trainings that meet the Level 4 topic requirements as well as information about the required training.
- [Request for Training Review](#): Staff may submit other training/courses related to Level 4 topics for approval

Verification Documentation

No documentation is required for training completed with **thread**. Individual staff must upload training certificates from other approved organizations to their SEED profile in the ServicePortal.

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Early Childhood Educator Qualifications & Professional Development



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Level 4 Classroom Assessments

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity D: Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT)/Teaching Pyramid Infant & Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS) average score of 70% across all key practices and no red flags in each classroom assessed. **–OR–** Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) score of 4.0 in 2 of 3 subdomains in each classroom.

Purpose

High-quality learning environments are critical to help children learn and achieve positive outcomes. Indicators of a high-quality learning environment include:

- Engaged and responsive early childhood educators
- Environments that use space and furnishings to promote various types of play, independence, cooperation and quiet spaces
- Promotion of language-rich environments
- Developmentally appropriate learning activities that address all domains of learning
- Schedules, routines, and transitions that promote positive guidance for children and staff
- Positive adult-adult, adult-child and child-child interactions
- Consistent and ongoing communication and collaboration with families

Requirements

One classroom in each age group will be randomly selected for assessment. Each classroom assessed must meet the minimum assessment score requirements as outlined below:

- TPOTs/TPITOS: Must have an overall score of 60% in each infant, toddler, and preschool classroom assessed
- CLASS: Must score 3.0 in 2/ 3 subdomains for each classroom assessed

Assessments must be conducted by an inter-rater, reliable external assessor. **thread** maintains a cadre of reliable inter-rater assessors for TPOT & TPITOS and CLASS, available to licensed child care programs, Head Start, or Pre-elementary programs.

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The assessments must be conducted no more than 6 months before Level 3 verification submission.

Resources

To request a classroom assessment, complete this electronic form: Program Assessment Request thread.tfaforms.net/144

Verification Documentation

No documentation is required for assessments completed with **thread**.

Assessments completed by other reliable assessors must be combined and uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose Level 4 from the drop-down menu and then select "Classroom Assessments". Please ensure that each assessment includes the classroom name, teacher(s) being assessed, date of the assessment, and name of the assessor.

Pyramid Model Alignment

Program implementing Pyramid practices will be assessed using TPOT/TPITOS

Center Benchmarks of Quality

- #35 Data are collected, summarized with visual displays, and reviewed by the Implementation Team on a regular basis.
- #37 The program measures implementation fidelity of the Pyramid Model practices by classroom teachers and uses data on implementation fidelity to make decisions about professional development and coaching supports.

Home/Group Home Benchmarks of Quality

- #18 Provider and program staff are proficient at teaching social and emotional skills within daily activities in a manner that is meaningful to children and promotes skill acquisition.
- #29 Data are collected and summarized.

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Level 4

Learning Environments,
Adult-Child Interactions & Child Outcomes



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Teachers Communicate ASQ Results (Centers Only)

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity E: Each classroom has at least one teaching staff who communicates screening results with families.

Purpose

The best outcomes for children come when teachers and families partner together. One way this can happen is when teachers communicate and share screening results with families. Teachers will likely already have an established relationship with families and know how to best communicate these results. Additionally, they will have more day-to-day information about the child's behavior and development in the classroom, which can add another dimension to follow-up conversations with families. Many times, what families observe at home looks different than what teachers see at school, when children are in a group setting. When teachers lead these conversations, they can also begin planning with the families for the best next steps and support in the classroom at home.

Requirements

Each classroom must have at least one teacher who has completed the Ages & Stages Questionnaire training and is responsible for communicating screening results to families in that classroom.

Note: Staff turnover and retention are ongoing challenges for most programs. To accommodate/address this potential barrier, if the teacher who filled this position for a classroom left the program within 12 months of submitting for Level 4 verification, the classroom is exempt from meeting this requirement.

Resources

- ASQ Website: <https://agesandstages.com/asq-online/>

Level 4

Learning Environments,
Adult-Child Interactions & Child Outcomes



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Verification Documentation

Complete form: <https://thread.tfaforms.net/260>

Once completed, this form must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose the appropriate level from the drop-down menu (the level you are renewing or applying for) and then select “Teaching Staff Communicate ASQ results”

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Level 4

Learning Environments,
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Connection to Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Resources

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity F: Program has identified local resource agencies and/or Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant to support early childhood professionals and families to develop a plan to meet the individual needs of all children but particularly children with identified special needs (social emotional, cognitive, physical, etc.).

Purpose

A program engaging with community agencies aims to establish strong connections with local, statewide, and national resources. support in areas such as mental health, special education, and disability services. By fostering these connections, the program aims to create relationships that support families on achieving goals centered on family well-being, including parental education, economic supports, and other individual goals that families may have for themselves and their children. Accessing resources also allows programs and families to address issues early and assist in prevention efforts, focusing on identifying and modifying risk factors and promoting protective factors.

Requirements

Programs must have contact information for local agencies and/or Infant/Mental Health Consultants as well as processes for connecting families with these supports.

Resources

- Statewide / National:
 - PIC: [Program for Infants and Children \(picak.org\)](http://picak.org)
 - ChildFind: Each school district has their own Child Find support. Check with your local district.
 - Help Me Grow: [Help Me Grow Alaska | A2P2 : A2P2](#)
 - Alaska Special Education Parents' Guide: [Alaska Special Education Parents' Guide](#)

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- Regional
 - Anchorage: FOCUS [Pediatric Therapy in Eagle River, Alaska, Focus Outreach](#)
 - Anchorage: School District Special Education [Early Learning Department / Overview & Services \(asdk12.org\)](#)
 - Fairbanks: [Special Education - Fairbanks North Star Borough School District \(k12northstar.org\)](#)
 - Fairbanks: [Finding the Ability in Disability - Alaska Center, Fairbanks](#)
 - Fairbanks: [Pediatric therapy Fairbanks, AK - Building Blocks Rehab \(bbrehabak.com\)](#)
 - Juneau: [Student Services - Juneau School District \(juneauschools.org\)](#)
 - Juneau: [Pediatric Primary Care – SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium – SEARHC](#)

Verification Documentation

Complete form: <https://thread.tfaforms.net/278>

Once completed, this form must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose the appropriate level from the drop-down menu (the level you are renewing or applying for) and then select “Identified Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant”.

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Learning Environments, Adult-Child Interactions & Child Outcomes



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Curriculum Implementation

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity G: Program uses a developmentally appropriate evidence-based early childhood curricula, including additional curricular enhancements, as appropriate, that: 1) are based on evidence and standardized training, 2) align with all five domains of the Alaska Early Learning Guidelines, and 3) have developmental scope and sequence.

Purpose

Curriculum is what children are expected to learn and how they will learn it. It includes both knowledge and skills, as well as the planned experiences that help children grow. According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), curriculum includes what children will learn and the teaching strategies used to support their learning.

At its core, the curriculum is a plan. It shows what learning goals children should reach and how teachers can help them get there. A good curriculum is based on what we know about child development, making sure the learning is right for each age group. It should clearly describe what children should know and be able to do. Writing down the curriculum helps teachers plan and stay on track.

Curriculum should also be connected to what teachers know about each child. Before making lesson plans, teachers gather information about children's strengths and needs. This helps them adjust the curriculum to fit each child, so every child gets the support and challenge they need. Teaching methods and materials must also be appropriate for the age group. This is called *Developmentally Appropriate Practice*—teaching that matches where children are developmentally and helps them grow from there.

A strong curriculum gives teachers a clear path. It helps children move step-by-step toward learning goals. But the curriculum isn't just used in the classroom. It should also be part of what happens during playtime, routines, and even at home.

Common ways to deliver curriculum include:

- Scaffolding (supporting children as they learn new things)
- Thoughtful classroom design
- Play-based learning
- Activities children choose themselves
- Teacher-led lessons

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- Family involvement
- Using routines to teach
- Modeling behaviors
- Peer learning
- Reading together and having conversations

NAEYC says curriculum should support the program's goals and help children grow in all areas.

A good curriculum includes:

- Clear goals
- Activities linked to those goals
- Daily schedules and routines
- Materials that support learning

Curriculum should help support the "whole child," meaning all areas of development. These are shown in the **Alaska Early Learning Guidelines**: <https://www.alaskaelg.org/>

- Domain 1: Physical Well-Being
- Domain 2: Social and Emotional Development
- Domain 3: Approaches to Learning
- Domain 4: General Knowledge and Cognition
- Domain 5: Communication, Language, and Literacy

In some cases, using multiple curricula may be necessary to address all areas of a child's development effectively.

Requirements

Learn & Grow does not require the use of specific curriculum(s). Instead, programs must implement a selected curriculum that meets the following requirements:

- Are based on evidence and standardized training
- Align with all five domains of the AK EL Guidelines
- Have developmental scope and sequence.

Level 4

Learning Environments, Adult-Child Interactions & Child Outcomes



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Resources

- NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards: [position_statement_ec_standards.pdf \(naeyc.org\)](https://www.naeyc.org/standards/position-statement-ec-standards.pdf)
- [Curriculum Consumer Report | ECLKC \(hhs.gov\)](https://www.hhs.gov/eclkc/curriculum-consumer-report)

Verification Documentation

Combine and upload one lesson plan from each age group served in your program to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose Level 4 from the drop-down menu and then select “Curriculum Usage”.

Level 4

Learning Environments, Adult-Child Interactions & Child Outcomes



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Twice Annual Child Assessments

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity H: Early childhood educators complete a full child assessment twice a year to monitor all children's progress towards meeting developmental outcomes.

Purpose

Formal child assessments in combination with ongoing observation provide a comprehensive process that helps early educators know a child's strengths and next areas of development. The GOLD assessment tool assesses children's development across nine areas:

1. Social-Emotional
2. Physical
3. Language
4. Cognitive
5. Literacy
6. Mathematics
7. Science and Technology
8. The Arts
9. English Language Acquisition

Using the GOLD assessment tool educators and families can upload observations throughout the year (photos, anecdotal notes, work samples, etc.) allowing for collaboration and sharing of information about individual children. Educators then use this observational data to complete assessments or "checkpoints" throughout the year to look at a child's development in all areas. This information helps educators adjust their lesson planning based on each child's unique stage of development and the next steps. Additionally, GOLD provides resources related to assessment data to help teachers plan engaging activities to target specific learning areas. Easy to understand reports from the online system can also be shared with families!

Requirements

Teachers must complete a full assessment (checkpoint) for each child at least twice a year.

To support state-wide data about child outcomes in Alaska, it is recommended that these assessments are completed by November 30th and August 15th each year.

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Resources

- Teaching Strategies Home Page: [Teaching Strategies - Early Childhood Education Solutions](#)
- NAEYC Article: [DAP: Observing, Documenting, and Assessing Children's Development and Learning | NAEYC](#)
- HeadStart Assessment Resources: [Ongoing Child Assessment: A Guide for Program Leaders | ECLKC \(hhs.gov\)](#)

Verification Documentation

Learn & Grow will verify that this requirement is being met through the TeachSmart online platform. No additional documentation is necessary.

Address

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Level 4

Learning Environments, Adult-Child Interactions & Child Outcomes



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Annual Family Teacher Conferences

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity I: Program shares child assessment results with families at least 1 time a year at a family-teacher conference.

Purpose

Engaging families, who are children's first teachers, is essential to the success of teachers and children. Family teacher conferences provide a dedicated opportunity for teachers and family members to collaborate. Conferences allow teachers to:

- Connect with families about a child's current development
- Share information about what's happening at school
- Listen to what's happening at home for the child/family
- Develop goals and plans to help the child succeed and progress
- Provide resources about incorporating learning activities at home and in the community.
- Gather feedback from families about what is working well and suggestions for adjustments
- Collaborate with families on ways to incorporate their families' culture and/or language into the classroom
- Invite families to participate in the classroom regularly and during special events

Requirements

Every family must be invited to participate in family-teacher conferences for each of their children at least once a year. Programs should make a reasonable attempt to be flexible in scheduling to meet parents' needs.

Resources

- **threadTools** has many resources to support Family Teacher Conferences: [thread Alaska | Family Teacher Conferences](#)
 - If you would like to register for **threadTools** click the "Register" button on the **threadTools** homepage: [thread Alaska | Log In](#). **thread** provides one free account per program.
- NAEYC Resource: [Message in a Backpack™ It's Conference Time! | NAEYC](#)

Level 4

Learning Environments, Adult-Child Interactions & Child Outcomes



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

- NAEYC Article: [NAEYC Conferencing](#)
- NCPMI Resources: [Family Engagement - National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations](#)

Verification Documentation

Combine and upload documentation to show that child assessment results are shared with families at least once a year during family-teacher conferences to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose the appropriate level from the drop-down menu (the level you are renewing or applying for) and then select “Family - Teacher Conference”.

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Level 4

Family & Community Engagement



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Family Input on Program Activities

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity J: Families are invited at least 2 times a year to provide information and/or participate in the development of program activities to provide opportunities for the family's culture to be infused in the program.

Purpose

Partnering with families helps strengthen the school/home connection and supports building a care and learning community. When planning program activities, it is important to engage families in the process so they can provide information, feedback, and support, not only around logistics but also around cultural values, traditions, and perspectives that shape their children's experiences. Understanding and honoring each family's unique culture allows programs to be more inclusive, responsive, and relevant. Families bring essential insight into how activities align with their beliefs, customs, and ways of learning. By centering family culture in planning, programs ensure that activities are not only welcoming but also affirming of each child's identity and background.

The family perspective provides unique insight into how these activities impact families.

- What days/times work best for families?
- How/when to provide information to families?
- How do families define and celebrate culture?
- What cultural traditions or values do families want reflected in the program?
- What holidays, practices, or stories are meaningful to families?
- Are there cultural or linguistic barriers to participation?
- What activities are most beneficial to families?
- How to make sure activities are accessible and welcoming to all families?
- How to help families understand the intent of various activities?

When families are part of the planning process, they can also bring new opportunities, resources, and ideas to the program.

- Exploring and celebrating diverse cultures/holidays
- Supporting translation of information to different languages
- Connections to various agencies, businesses or organizations in the community
- Providing expertise about various topics (careers, hobbies, interests)

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Family & Community Engagement



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Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Rather than planning for families, programs should consider how they plan with families.

Resources

- **Head Start | ECLKC:** <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement>
- **NAEYC:** <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/family-engagement>
- **Start Early:** <https://www.startearly.org/post/importance-of-family-engagement/>
- **NCPMI:** [Family Engagement - National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations](#)
- **Be Strong Families:** [Overview — Be Strong Families](#)

Verification Documentation

Complete form: <https://thread.tfatforms.net/261>

Once completed, this form must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose the appropriate level from the drop-down menu (the level you are renewing or applying for) and then select “Family Cultural Information Gathered”

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Level 4

Family & Community Engagement



Learn & Grow
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Plans for Children Leaving the Program

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity K: In partnership with families, a program develops a transition plan for a child any time they move to a different program or school; including preparing 4-year-old children and their families for the transition to kindergarten.

Purpose

Children experience many transitions in their early years. Some of those high-impact transitions include the shift from home to an early care & education setting, moving between age groups or program settings, and transitioning from preschool to kindergarten. Supporting these transitions for children, families, and staff is critically important because even positive changes can be challenging. Helping children, families, and staff through transitions is a big task for everyone. When done well, it helps maintain children's well-being and educational success.

Plans that support children and families leaving the program might include:

- Using a warm hand off that allows families time to talk to their current child's care providers to discuss concerns/feelings around the upcoming transition as well as share photos and memories of the child's time at the program.
- Providing Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agency information
- Giving families copies of the child's latest screening, observation and assessment information to share with the new program/school
- Sharing talking points/books/resources to help families have conversations with their children about upcoming changes
- Connecting families to appropriate resources in the community
- Forms that allow the new program/school to communicate with the current program
- Facilitating discussions with families about what school readiness looks like in their culture and what they value most from the new learning environment
- Offering guidance around how families can advocate for themselves and their child

The transition from early childhood education programs to public/private kindergarten programs offers many changes for families and children. Some major changes include school busing systems, cafeteria and lunch processes, different frequency and process for family-teacher communications, larger teacher-child ratio, grading systems, and the need for before/after school care. Programs can help ease this transition by providing information to families and helping children practice some foundational skills before kindergarten.

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Level 4

Family & Community Engagement



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Ways to prepare children/families for the transition to kindergarten:

- Share key information about local Kindergartens
 - Contact information
 - Charter school application & lottery process
 - Registration processes and deadlines
 - Open-house dates
 - Supply lists
- Practice and share kindergarten routines & learning activities (lining up, packing a backpack, carrying lunch on a tray, reducing/delete nap time, etc.)
- Invite past children/families to share their transition experiences
- Connect families of children going to the same elementary school
- Offer opportunities for parent-teacher conferences prior to the transition
- Helping families understand IEP and 504, as appropriate

Requirements

Programs must have a plan for how they support children and families when children transition out of the center, including preparing children and families for kindergarten. This should include how/what they communicate with families about the transitions, as well as what support is provided to prepare the child.

Resources

- **threadTools:** [thread Alaska | Transition Management](#)
- ECKLC (Head Start): <https://ecklc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/transitions>
- Teaching Strategies: https://teachingstrategies.com/blog/kindergarten-transition-plans/?_bt=673935759726&_bk=&_bm=&_bn=g&_bg=153096643826&gad_source=1&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIIncre9KP8gwMVEgGtBh2K_AMREAMYASAAEgLovPD_BwE
- NAEYC: <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/feb2014/transitions-kindergarten>
- ASD Kindergarten Parent Resources: [Preschool Materials Packet](#)

Level 4

Family & Community Engagement



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Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Verification Documentation

Complete form: <https://thread.tfaforms.net/262>

Once completed, this form must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose the appropriate level from the drop-down menu (the level you are renewing or applying for) and then select "New School & Kindergarten Transition Plans"

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LEVEL 5

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to alaska

Level 5

Administration & Leadership



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Direct Access to Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity A: Program has direct access to an infant/early childhood mental health consultant (IECMHC) for teachers and families. (*contract or staff positions*)

Purpose

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) is an evidence-based approach that pairs mental health professionals with people who work with young children and their families. Mental health consultation is not about “fixing kids,” nor is it therapy. Mental health consultation equips caregivers to facilitate healthy social and emotional development in children.

Infant and early childhood mental health consultants are highly trained licensed or license-eligible professionals with specialized knowledge in childhood development, the effects of stress and trauma on families, the importance of attachment for young children, and the impacts of adult mental health on developing children. Unlike other mental health professionals, IECMH consultants do *not* provide direct mental health treatment to young children or the adults who surround them. Instead, the consultant works *indirectly* by developing relationships with the adults in young children’s lives to build adults’ capacity to support children’s healthy social and emotional development. IECMHC work is meant to be conducted early on in a child’s life and before formalized intervention for the child is needed.

Explore the resources listed below to learn about IECMHC, how to choose and use a consultant, and how to deliver effective IECMHC services. You can also explore resources from the Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation to learn more about how to connect with other mental health consultants.

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Requirements

Program must have an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant on staff or have an identified IECMHC with whom they have a contract, or would contract with as needed to support children, families and staff.

Resources

Learn more about the skills, competencies, and tasks of IECMH Consultants here:

Center of Excellence for IECMHC: <https://www.iecmhc.org/resources/>

Explore these resources to learn how to choose a consultant and deliver services:

- **Head Start ECLKC:** <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/mental-health/article/infant-early-childhood-mental-health-consultation-your-program>
- **Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation:** <https://www.ecmhc.org/>
- **Pairing Mental Health Consultation with Pyramid at National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations:** <https://challengingbehavior.org/implementation/early-childhood-mental-health-consultation/>
- **Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation: A Briefing Paper by ZERO TO THREE (PDF):** [Infant-and-Early-Childhood-Mental-Health-Consultation -A-Briefing-Paper.pdf](#)
- **Scenarios/Suggestions/Strategies on Mental well-being from NAEYC:** <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/spring2021/mental-health-infants-toddlers>

Verification Documentation

Complete form: <https://thread.tfaforms.net/279>

Once completed, this form must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose Level 5 from the drop-down menu and then select “Identified Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant.”

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Level 5

Administration & Leadership



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Direct Access to an Alaska certified Relationship Based Professional Development Specialist (Centers Only)

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity B: Program has direct access to an Alaska certified Relationship Based Professional Development (RPBD) III A Specialist to support classroom coaching (*contract or staff position*).

Purpose

“Coaching is all about having someone believe in you and encourage you, about getting valuable feedback, about seeing things from new perspectives, and setting your sights on new horizons” – Elena Aguilar

Relationship Based Professional Development encompasses all types of supports, including coaching, that might support an early childhood educator. The emphasis being that the support is based on a collaborative relationship between the person providing the support and the educator receiving the support.

Research shows that training alone does not lead to a change in practice. Rather educators need support to reflect on what they’ve learned, consider how it might apply to their setting, try it out, reflect on outcomes, adjust and try again until they achieve a successful outcome. RBPD specialists support educators through this process by engaging educators in planning conversations, observing, collecting data, sharing feedback, and facilitating reflective conversations. They help educators connect best practices and educational philosophy with concrete strategies that can be applied to the classroom.

The benefits for teachers who have regular access to an RBPD specialist include:

- Building strengths to enhance teacher-child interactions
- Time to reflect and problem-solve around challenging classroom situations
- Increase ability to use high-quality teaching practices with confidence and competence
- Personal and professional growth

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Level 5

Administration & Leadership



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Additionally, these supports can increase teacher wellbeing which leads to job satisfaction, retention and increased positive outcomes for children.

Requirements

Program must have an Alaska Certified Relationship Based Professional Development IIIa on staff or have an active contract with an RBPD IIIa who provides coaching support for all classrooms.

Resources

- Practice Based Coaching Overview: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/professional-development/article/practice-based-coaching-pbc>
- ECE Coaching Article: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/early-care-education-coaching.pdf>
- RBPD Credential Information: [RBPD Specialist Credential - SEED](#)

Verification Documentation

Complete form: <https://thread.tfaforms.net/263>

Once completed, this form must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose level 5 from the drop-down menu and then select “Program’s Relationship Based Professional Development (RBPD) Specialist”

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Level 5

Early Childhood Educator Qualifications & Professional Development



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Level 5 Alaska SEED Career Ladder Requirements

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity C:

- Center administrator is an Alaska SEED Level 10
- Home and Group Home Administrator is an Alaska SEED Level 9
- 40% of all teaching staff are an Alaska SEED Level 9
- Remaining teaching staff are an Alaska SEED Level 4

Purpose

Developing educator skills and knowledge is a critical component to advancing a child care program's level of quality. Research tells us that early childhood educators with strong backgrounds that include training & rich teaching experience are a strong indicator of high-quality programming and teacher-child interactions. Learn & Grow measures this element of quality by using the Alaska SEED Career Levels.

Requirements

- State, Municipality of Anchorage, or Tribal licensed Child Care Centers Administrators must be at least an Alaska SEED Level 10.
- Head Start Administrators and Pre-elementary Administrators must be at least an Alaska SEED Level 10.
- Home and Group Administrators must be at least an Alaska SEED Level 9.
- 40% of all teaching staff are an Alaska SEED Level 9
- Remaining teaching staff are an Alaska SEED Level 4

Note: Staff turnover and retention are ongoing challenges for most programs. To accommodate/address this potential barrier, teachers new to program within 12 months of submitting for Level 5 verification are exempt and not included in percentage calculation (this exemption cannot apply to more than 50% of your staff).

Resources

- The Alaska SEED Career Ladders can be found on the Alaska SEED website: bit.ly/3C476ws
- Financial support for professional development: bit.ly/3Gv5T3J

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Level 5

Early Childhood Educator Qualifications & Professional Development



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Verification Documentation

Staff Alaska SEED levels will be verified through the ServicePortal and no additional documentation is required.

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Level 5

Early Childhood Educator Qualifications & Professional Development



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Level 5 Training Requirements

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity D: All teaching staff have completed Level 4 trainings.

Purpose

Early childhood educator qualifications and their professional development are key indicators of high quality. At each level of Learn & Grow there are specific trainings and/or training topics that staff must complete.

At Level 5, programs have processes in place to ensure all teaching staff have time and can complete all Learn & Grow training required.

Requirements

All teaching staff have completed Level 4 trainings.

Note: Staff turnover and retention are ongoing challenges for most programs. To accommodate/address this potential barrier, teachers new to program within 12 months of submitting for Level 5 verification are exempt and not included in percentage calculation (this exemption cannot apply to more than 50% of your staff).

Resources

- The Learn & Grow Training List provides a list of pre-approved trainings that meet the Level 3 topic requirements.
- Request for Training Review: Staff may submit other training/courses related to these topics for approval

Verification Documentation

No documentation is required for training completed with **thread**. Individual staff must upload training certificates from other approved organizations to their SEED profile in the ServicePortal.

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Level 5

Learning Environments,
Adult-Child Interactions & Child Outcomes



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Level 5 Classroom Assessments

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity E: Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT)/Teaching Pyramid Infant & Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS) has an average score of 80% across all key practices and no red flags in each classroom assessed. –OR– Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) score of 5.0 in 2 of 3 subdomains in each classroom.

Purpose

High-quality learning environments are critical to help children learn and achieve positive outcomes. Indicators of a high-quality learning environment include:

- Engaged and responsive early childhood educators
- Environments that use space and furnishings to promote various types of play, independence, cooperation and quiet spaces
- Promotion of language-rich environments
- Developmentally appropriate learning activities that address all domains of learning
- Schedules, routines, and transitions that promote positive guidance for children and staff
- Positive adult-adult, adult-child and child-child interactions
- Consistent and ongoing communication and collaboration with families

Requirements

One classroom in each age group will be randomly selected for assessment. Each classroom assessed must meet the minimum assessment score requirements as outlined below:

- TPOTs/TPITOS: Must have an overall score of 60% in each infant, toddler, and preschool classroom assessed
- CLASS: Must score 3.0 in 2/ 3 subdomains for each classroom assessed

Assessments must be conducted by an inter-rater, reliable external assessor. **thread** maintains a cadre of reliable inter-rater assessors for TPOT & TPITOS and CLASS, available to licensed child care programs, Head Start, or Pre-elementary programs.

The assessments must be conducted no more than 6 months before Level 3 verification submission.

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Level 5

Learning Environments, Adult-Child Interactions & Child Outcomes



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Resources

To request a classroom assessment, complete this electronic form: Program Assessment Request thread.tfaforms.net/144

Verification Documentation

No documentation is required for assessments completed with **thread**.

Assessments completed by other reliable assessors must be combined and uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose Level 5 from the drop-down menu and then select "Classroom Assessments". Please ensure that each assessment includes the classroom name, teacher(s) being assessed, date of the assessment and name of the assessor.

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Learning Environments,
Adult-Child Interactions & Child Outcomes



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Thrice Annual Child Assessments

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity F: Early Childhood Educators complete a full child assessment **3 times a year** to monitor all children's progress towards meeting developmental outcomes.

Purpose

Formal child assessments in combination with ongoing observation provide a comprehensive process that helps early educators know a child's strengths and next areas of development. The GOLD assessment tool assesses children's development across nine areas:

10. Social-Emotional
11. Physical
12. Language
13. Cognitive
14. Literacy
15. Mathematics
16. Science and Technology
17. The Arts
18. English Language Acquisition

Using the GOLD assessment tool educators and families can upload observations throughout the year (photos, anecdotal notes, work samples, etc.) allowing for collaboration and sharing of information about individual children. Educators then use this observational data to complete assessments or "checkpoints" throughout the year to look at a child's development in all areas. This information helps educators adjust their lesson planning based on each child's unique stage of development and the next steps. Additionally, GOLD provides resources related to assessment data to help teachers plan engaging activities to target specific learning areas. It has easy to understand reports from the assessments and can also be shared with families!

Requirements

Teachers must complete a full assessment (checkpoint) for each child at least three times a year.

To support state-wide data about child outcomes in Alaska, it is recommended that two of these assessments are completed by November 30th and August 15th each year.

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Level 5

Learning Environments, Adult-Child Interactions & Child Outcomes



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Resources

- Teaching Strategies Home Page: [Teaching Strategies - Early Childhood Education Solutions](#)
- NAEYC Article: [DAP: Observing, Documenting, and Assessing Children's Development and Learning | NAEYC](#)
- HeadStart Assessment Resources: [Ongoing Child Assessment: A Guide for Program Leaders | ECLKC \(hhs.gov\)](#)

Verification Documentation

Learn & Grow will verify that this requirement is being met through the TeachSmart online platform. No additional documentation is necessary.

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Level 5

Learning Environments,
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Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Twice Annual Parent Teacher Conferences

Learn & Grow Quality Activity

Quality Activity G: Program shares child assessment results with families at least 2 times a year at a family-teacher conference.

Purpose

Engaging families, who are children's first teachers, is essential to the success of teachers and children. Family teacher conferences provide a dedicated opportunity for teachers and family members to collaborate. Conferences allow teachers to:

- Connect with families about a child's current development
- Share information about what's happening at school
- Listen to what's happening at home for the child/family
- Develop goals and plans to help the child succeed and progress
- Provide resources about incorporating learning activities at home and in the community.
- Gather feedback from families about what is working well and suggestions for adjustments
- Collaborate with families on ways to incorporate their families' culture and/or language into the classroom
- Invite families to participate in the classroom regularly and during special events

Requirements

Every family must be invited to participate in family-teacher conferences for each of their children at least twice a year. Programs should make a reasonable attempt to be flexible in scheduling to meet parents' needs.

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Learning Environments, Adult-Child Interactions & Child Outcomes



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Resources

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 - If you would like to register for **threadTools** click the “Register” button on the **threadTools** homepage: [thread Alaska | Log In](#). **thread** provides one free account per program.
- NAEYC Resource: [Message in a Backpack™ It's Conference Time! | NAEYC](#)
- NAEYC Article: [NAEYC Conferencing](#)
- NCPMI Resources: [Family Engagement - National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations](#)

Verification Documentation

Combine and upload documentation to show that child assessment results are shared with families at least once a year during family-teacher conferences to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose Level 5 from the drop-down menu and then select “Family - Teacher Conference”.

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Learn & Grow
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POINTS

LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED

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LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



Learn & Grow
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Context Aware Practices

Learn & Grow Points

Quality Activity	Points
In addition to lesson plans informed by child assessment results, lesson plans reflect family/community contextual differences, values, and beliefs in their program (in every classroom).	3
The program uses all-encompassing practices and policies to recognize, understand, and embrace differences.	2
The program makes significant adaptations to the curriculum to meet the needs of a specific student population.	5
The program makes significant policies and procedural adaptations to meet the needs of a specific student population. (ie. Children with disabilities, regional customs/backgrounds, etc)	3
Program and/or curriculum adaptations to support specific student populations are made in partnership with external evaluators to assess their effectiveness.	2
The program provides at least one staff member who speaks the same language as the majority of Multi-Language Learners (MLL) at the program.	5
The program has staff who are bilingual or multilingual. (1 point per staff for maximum of 5 points)	Maximum 5
The program provides information to families and/or staff in their home/first language.	2
All classrooms use the Alaska Cultural Standards, or equivalent tools, to inform their professional development and teaching practices.	2
The program completes the Culturally Responsive Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) to inform the program's annual Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP)	3

Purpose

The purpose of these items on the points menu is to ensure that our diverse population receives the support they may need to access and thrive in educational settings. Research suggests adults who engage children in context aware educational experiences, including celebrating and acknowledging cultural diversity of children and families help to:

- Build young children's self-confidence and skills.
- Increase children's awareness, appreciation, and inclusion of diverse beliefs and cultures.
- Maximize children's academic achievement and educational success.

LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Alaska is an extremely diverse state with a wide range of cultures and ethnicities represented in the population. Alaska's land is home to a variety of Alaska Native groups, each with their own regional, spiritual, and indigenous practices. In addition to Alaska Native cultures, Alaska is also home to individuals from Latinx, Filipino, Samoan, Black, and multiple cultures and races from a variety of African, Middle Eastern, Latin and Central America, Eastern European, and other countries. Alaska's diversity is something to celebrate and be proud of, and to leverage in all educational settings.

In addition to race and culture, diversity includes sexual orientation, language (Dual or Multi-Lingual Learners), and abilities (children with identified or unidentified special needs). To promote equitable access to educational settings and learning materials, modifications and adaptations must be provided to ensure that children of all language levels and abilities are equitably integrated into all programs.

There are many resources available to programs to ensure linguistic and contextual responsiveness to the diverse populations served. For example, the Alaska Cultural Standards are a great starting point for considering how to create a culturally responsive learning environment ([Cultural - Education and Early Development](#)). NAEYC is another great place to consult for supporting DLLs in your program: [Dual Language Learners | NAEYC](#).

Diversity surrounds us. Celebrating all the diverse cultures that represent our classrooms means doing more than hanging a calendar with different events on the wall and using "flags of the world" worksheets. As early childhood educators, we know it means valuing and including all families and staff involved in your early childhood program service. It also means participating in the wider community to share authentic cultural activities with children and families.

Resources

- <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/dual-language-learners>
- <https://extensionpublications.unl.edu/assets/pdf/g2242.pdf>
- <https://www.geteduca.com/blog/sharing-diverse-cultures-early-learning/>
- <https://www.threadalaskatools.org/engaging-families/admin-tools/cultural-responsiveness/>
- <https://www.tesol.org/media/rdxp3sse/5-dec-presentation-slides.pdf>

LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Verification Documentation

Complete form: <https://thread.tfaforms.net/305>

Once completed, this form must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose the appropriate level from the drop-down menu (the level you are renewing or applying for) and then select “Points”

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LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Health & Nutrition

Learn & Grow Points

Quality Activity	Points
Completed a GO NAPSACC module and achieved "Leading the Way" on post assessment	4
The program has a quiet and comfortable space, other than a bathroom, that is always available for mothers to breastfeed or express breast milk	1
The breastfeeding area is private and include an electrical outlet, comfortable seating and a sink with running water in the room or nearby	1
All classrooms use family style dining	5
Over the course of the year, the program offers a variety of <u>local</u> fruits, vegetables, herbs, grains, dairy products, and/or protein foods.	2
Program has an outdoor garden or green house that children regularly spend time in to learn about how food grows.	4
Program provides monthly cooking opportunities for children over the age of two to learn about health & nutrition	2
Programs gather information from families to create menus that include meals and/or snacks that reflect the traditions and values of enrolled families.	2
All classrooms promote and facilitate toothbrushing daily.	5
The program provides at minimum twice weekly planned physical activities for children over the age of two, focused on building gross motor skills.	2
During tummy time and other activities, teachers interact with infants to help them build motor skills.	2
All teaching staff have completed training in one of the following areas: Infant feeding (including Breastfeeding), Child Nutrition, Farm to ECE, Oral Health, Infant & Child Physical Activity, Outdoor Play & Learning, Screen Time.	1 per topic (maximum of 5 points)
Program provides families with resources or information about one or more of the following areas annually: Infant feeding (including Breastfeeding), Child Nutrition, Farm to ECE, Oral Health, Infant & Child Physical Activity, Outdoor Play & Learning, Screen Time.	1 per topic (maximum of 5 points)

LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



Purpose

To foster the physical, cognitive, and emotional development of young children by integrating regular physical activity and nutritious meals into daily routine. Educators play a key role in modeling healthy behaviors, creating supportive environments and establishing positive habits that contribute to lifelong health and learning.

By encouraging nutritious meals, active play, and emotional well-being, these tools help children build strong bodies, confident minds, and positive relationships. This approach not only supports child development but also strengthens family engagement — demonstrating your program's commitment to children's health and happiness.

The State of Alaska Department of Health provides programs with free access to GO NAPSACC (Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care). This platform provides programs with access to program-assessment tools, training, and additional support related to health and nutrition. Programs can use this online tool to enhance their programs by promoting healthy eating, physical activity, breastfeeding support, oral health, Farm to ECE and social-emotional development.

Resources

- Register with Go NAPSACC at <https://gonapsacc.org/register/program>
 - Use registration code: SBIDGAHG
- [GoNAPSACC](#)
- [PowerPoint Presentation](#)
- [GNS Provider How To Guide Tips & Materials \(English Computer\).pdf](#)
- APP Screen Time Guidelines: [Screen Time Guidelines](#)

Verification Documentation

Complete form: <https://thread.tfaforms.net/296>

Once completed, this form must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose the appropriate level from the drop-down menu (the level you are renewing or applying for) and then select “Points”

LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Home Visiting (Centers Only)

Learn & Grow Points

- Program conducts home visits for each family:
 - Once a year = 10 points
 - Twice a year = 20 points
 - Three times each year = 30 points

Purpose

Home visiting is a performance standard requirement for all Head Start programs. Learn & Grow Quality Standards were developed to align with the Head start performance standards. A home visit is intended to establish positive relationships with families and meet them in their own environments. Home visits are **not** intended to check up on home environments and things that may be “wrong”. Some families may not be comfortable with having someone in their home. It is critical to explain the purpose of the home visit to families to help reduce any tensions or apprehensions there may be about conducting a home visit. If a family does not agree to a home visit, perhaps suggest a location in the community. Here are a few guidance statements about the purpose of the home visit.

- Establishing a positive relationship with the parent, child, and other participating family members;
- Responding to each family's unique strengths and culture;
- Facilitating developmentally supportive parent-child interactions;
- Establishing a collaborative partnership with the parent to support the children's ongoing development;
- Using a strength-based approach in guiding parent-child interaction; and
- Using materials found in the home and daily routines for promoting parent-child interaction.

Quality, voluntary home visits lead to fewer children in social welfare, mental health, and juvenile corrections systems, with considerable cost savings for states. Research shows home visiting can be an effective method of delivering family support and child development services.

Home visits should (a) occur within the context of the family's routine activities, (b) promote child engagement, and build family capacity by (c) ensuring caregiver engagement in the home visit and (d) supporting caregiver confidence and competence in their use of the intervention strategies (Bailey, 2001; Bailey et al., 1998; Brooks-Gunn, Berlin, & Fuligni, 2000; Bruder, 2000; Dunst, 2000; Dunst, Bruder, et al., 2001; Kaiser & Hancock, 2003).

LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



Conducting a home visit requires specific skills and training. Before conducting a home visit, the individual conducting the home visit must meet the Home Visitor Qualifications, Knowledge and Skills outlined by Head Start.

It is highly recommended that providers conducting home visits complete the “Pyramid Model Practices in Early Intervention” training from the Pyramid Model Consortium.

While conducting a home visit is a great practice, it may not be feasible for all programs considering availability of staffing. If it is not feasible for your program to conduct a home visit, please pick another quality activity that is more feasible for your program to obtain.

Requirements

Home visits must be completed by individuals who meet the Home Visitor Qualifications, Knowledge and Skills outlined by Head Start

Points are allocated for the number of home visits attempted, not completed. Learn & Grow understands that there are often circumstances that the educators cannot control that prevent the home visit from being completed.

Resources

- Home Visitor Staff Qualifications, Knowledge, and Skills: [Home Visitor Staff Qualifications, Knowledge, and Skills | HeadStart.gov](#)
- <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/series/home-visiting-supporting-parents-and-child-development>
- https://www.cdd.unm.edu/ecln/ECN/common/pdfs/EI_Home%20Visting_Reflexive_Approach.pdf
- <https://www.cdacouncil.org/en/educator-pathways/home-visitor/>
- NAEYC Steps to Having Powerful Interactions
<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/aug2018/promoting-powerful-interactions>
- Family Support Competency Framework: https://cppr-institute-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/modules/Competencies/FSP%20Competencies_Complete_3.1.1.2022.pdf
- Pyramid Model Practices in Early Intervention Training: [Course Catalog - ePyramid Courses](#)

Professional Development and Training

- <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement/article/home-visiting-series>
- <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/professional-development/article/healthy-home-visiting-podcasts>

LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



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- <https://www.cdacouncil.org/credentials/apply-for-cda/home-visitor>
- https://www.carecourses.com/PublicPages/Set_CDA_Home_Visitor_Steps.aspx
- <http://homevisiting.org/>
- <https://institute4sp.org/>

Verification Documentation

Complete form: <https://thread.tfaforms.net/295>

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LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



Miscellaneous

Learn & Grow Points

Quality Activity	Points
Program has a data sharing agreement with the local school district to share year-end child assessment results for each four-year-old before transitioning to kindergarten, or a different program.	5
Program participates in the Child Care Assistance Program (State, tribal, or OCS) with good standing (actively serving children)	2
Program participates in the Child Care Food Program with good standing.	2
Program participates in the Child Care Grant Program.	2
Program has diversified and/or mixed revenue model, including grants, local business partnerships, and other fundraising opportunities.	3
Program prepares an annual budget and monitors quarterly (ie quick books, etc) demonstrating alignment with the program's annual goals as specified on CQIP or equivalent plan	5
All program classrooms meet or exceed national best practices for teacher: child ratios (centers only)	4

Purpose

These points include a variety of additional quality activities that programs may engage in.

The first two activities focus on ways to engage in and support communities:

- Sharing data from child observation, assessments, and individualized child plans with the child's upcoming Kindergarten teacher/program can increase continuity of care. It allows the incoming teacher/program to more intentionally plan for and support the child.
- Programs participating in Child Care Assistance provide care options for families who are struggling financially.

The next several activities help programs with financial stability:

- Participation in the Child Care Food Program and Child Care Grant provides programs with financial assistance that can be used to focus on quality improvements.
- Preparing an annual budget as well as using diversified/mixed revenue models allows programs to be financially strategic as they work on continuous quality improvement.

Maintaining low teacher: child ratios lead to increased safety and positive caregiving for children. Teachers are able to spend more quality one-on-one time with each child rather than needing to juggle the needs of too many children. NAEYC sets national best practices for teacher:child ratios for each age group.

LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



Resources

- State of Alaska Child Care Assistance Program: [Child Care Assistance Program | State of Alaska | Department of Health](#)
- State of Alaska Child Care Grant Program: [Child Care Grant Program | State of Alaska | Department of Health](#)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP): [Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\) - Education and Early Development](#)
- NAEYC Staff-to-child Ratio and Class Size Chart: [staff_child_ratio_0.pdf](#)

Verification Documentation

Complete form: <https://thread.tfaforms.net/294>

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LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

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LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Planning & Coaching Time

Learn & Grow Points

Quality Activity	Points
Program provides uninterrupted* <u>planning time</u> for at least one teacher per classroom:	
One hour a month	2
Two hours a month	3
Three hours a month	4
Four hours a month	5
Program provides uninterrupted* <u>team planning time</u> (time for both teachers in a classroom to collaborate and plan together)	
One hour a month	4
Two hours a month	8
Program provides uninterrupted** <u>coaching time</u> for at least one teacher per classroom:	
One hour a month	10
Two hours a month	20

*Uninterrupted Planning Time = Teachers are not in ratio

**Uninterrupted Coaching Time = Teachers are not in ratio and have a private place to meet with their RBPD specialist

Purpose

Planning time is very important for early childhood (EC) teachers so they can create fun and age-appropriate activities for their students. But it can be hard to find time to plan because of not having enough staff, time, or money. This activity asks program leaders to look at their schedules and budgets to make sure teachers, at least lead teachers, get paid planning time without interruptions. When possible, teaching teams should plan together.

For family or group home programs, finding time to plan may be easier, but it might cut into personal time and may not be paid. To meet this quality goal, programs must include paid planning time in their budgets for classroom staff or home program leaders.

Providing dedicated time for early educators to receive coaching is essential for their growth as professionals and directly enhances the quality of care and education they offer to young children.

LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Coaching offers a supportive space for reflection, skill-building, and problem-solving, empowering educators to implement best practices with confidence and consistency. When educators are given time to grow, their interactions with children become more intentional and developmentally appropriate, leading to stronger child outcomes. This not only benefits the children and families served by the facility but also strengthens the overall reputation and effectiveness of the child care program within the community. Investing time in coaching is an investment in high-quality early childhood education.

Requirements

Planning time must be paid and included in the program's schedule and budget.

Coaching must be done with someone certified in Relationship-Based Professional Development (RBPd).

Programs might miss some planning or coaching time during holidays, school breaks, or when short on staff. That's okay sometimes, but programs still need to show that they plan and budget for regular planning and coaching when things are running normally.

This should happen in most months when the program is open. If a program has had problems, like low staffing, for a long time (like over a year), and it keeps affecting planning/coaching time, the program won't earn credit for this quality standard.

Resources

- Practice Based Coaching Overview: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/professional-development/article/practice-based-coaching-pbc>
- ECE Coaching Article: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/early-care-education-coaching.pdf>
- RBPd Credential Information: [RBPd Specialist Credential - SEED](#)

Verification Documentation

Complete form: <https://thread.tfaforms.net/293>

Once completed, this form must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose the appropriate level from the drop-down menu (the level you are renewing or applying for) and then select "Points"

LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Program Accreditation or National Approval Status

Learn & Grow Points

Quality Activity	Points
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation	
Recognition	10
Accreditation	20
Accreditation +	30
National Association for Family Child Care Accreditation (NAFCC) Accreditation	
Self-Study Enrollment: Completed self-assessment	10
Accreditation	30
American Montessori Society Accreditation	
Self-Study	10
Accreditation	30
Association Montessori International (AMI) Recognition	
AMI/USA Associated	10
AMI/USA Affiliated	20
AMI Recognized	30
National Office of Head Start good standing	
Program has a HeadStart grant	10
Program maintains required HeadStart CLASS scores	10

Purpose

Accreditation processes play important roles in early childhood by supporting and recognizing national and state quality standards and their role in guiding programs. There are a handful of early childhood programs in Alaska who have engaged in national accreditation or follow Head Start standards. All of these are comprehensive and require dedication and additional resources to obtain and maintain. While Learn & Grow is aligned to many national accreditation standards and the Head Start performance standards, Learn & Grow has intentionally chosen to identify quality standards and activities that most associated with national research toward

LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



making the biggest impact on quality and child outcomes. QRIS likes to refer to these as the “few and the powerful”.

Early Childhood programs who choose to go above and beyond the Learn & Grow “few and the powerful” quality standards and work to achieve a national accreditation status can earn points toward their Level 3, 4 and/or 5 Learn & Grow level of quality.

HeadStart CLASS scores expectations that are higher than those outlined by Learn & Grow, programs may get points for meeting those higher requirements.

HeadStart CLASS expectations:

- Score of 6 in the Social-Emotional domain
- Score of 6 in the Classroom Organization domain
- Score of 3 in the Instruction Support domain

Requirements

- Program’s accreditation/recognition must be current.
- Programs only get points for completing the self-study portion of applicable accreditations once.
- Qualifying HeadStart CLASS assessments must have been completed within 6months of Learn & Grow renewal/verification submission.

Resources

- [NAEYC Accreditation Tiered Diagram 07](#)
- [naeyc accreditation process comparison chart final.pdf](#)
- [Accreditation – National Association for Family Child Care](#)
- [AMS School Accreditation | The American Montessori Society](#)
- [AMI Recognition and Consultation](#)
- <https://www.naeyc.org/accreditation>
- <https://necpa.net/>
- <https://nafcc.org/accreditation/>
- <https://www.macte.org/>
- <https://lifewaysnorthamerica.org/overview/>
- <https://www.waldorfearlychildhood.org/directory.php>

LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



Verification Documentation

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LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Pyramid Pathway

Learn & Grow Points

Program is meeting Pyramid Implementation Stage

- Installation = 10 points
 - 50% on Benchmarks of Quality
 - 60% in every classroom on the TPOT/TPITOS
- Initial Implementation = 20 points
 - 60% on Benchmarks of Quality
 - 70% in every classroom on the TPOT/TPITOS
- Full Implementation = 30 points
 - 80% on Benchmarks of Quality
 - 80% in every classroom on the TPOT/TPITOS

Purpose

Alaska became a Pyramid demonstration state in 2008, and Learn & Grow has continued this great work. The Pyramid Model is a framework of evidence-based practices for promoting young children's healthy social and emotional development.

While many Learn & Grow quality activities were influenced by quality indicators from the Pyramid Model, programs that wish to fully become a Pyramid Partnership site will need to take a few additional steps. These programs will use the Benchmarks of Quality (BOQ) to guide the creation of their Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP) and will have TPOT (Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool) and TPITOS (Teaching Pyramid Infant-Toddler Observation Scale) assessments completed in all classrooms.

Progression on BOQ and TPOT/TPITOS assessment scores determine a program's implementation stage as outlined above.

LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Requirements

- The Benchmarks of Quality must be completed with a thread specialist using the Learn & Grow rubric
- The TPOT/TPITOS assessment must be conducted by an inter-rater, reliable external assessor. **thread** maintains a cadre of reliable inter-rater assessors for TPOT & TPITOS, available to licensed child care programs, Head Start, or Pre-elementary programs.
- The assessments must be conducted no more than 6 months before verification submission.

Resources

- National Center for the Pyramid Model Innovations: [National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations](#)
- Alaska Early Childhood Pyramid Model Partnership: [Alaska - Pyramid Model Consortium](#)

Verification Documentation

Complete form: <https://thread.tfaforms.net/290>

Once completed, this form must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose the appropriate level from the drop-down menu (the level you are renewing or applying for) and then select “Points”

LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Staff Supports (Centers Only)

Learn & Grow Points

Quality Activity	Points
Program implements staff exit surveys to understand EC educators' job attitudes and turnover intentions.	2
Program's staff handbook includes information about how staff can locate resources that support them in stress management, prevention and treatment of depression, and/or general wellness	2
Program leadership provides an inviting space for EC educators to take a break outside of the classroom (The space cannot double as another space apart from the lunchroom)	3
Program leadership provides at least 1 staff wellness activities (Biannually = 2pts; Quarterly = 4 points; Monthly = 6 points; Weekly= 8 points)	Maximum 8
Program provides benefits for all staff (1 point per benefit with a maximum of 6 points)	Maximum 6
Program has a transparent pay scale	2
Program has a pay scale that reflects years of experience and education level in alignment with the Alaska SEED Career Ladder	5
Program provides monetary incentives and bonuses for all staff meeting individual professional development goals as specified on Professional Development Plans	6

Purpose

Providing benefits to early childhood educators is essential for attracting and keeping qualified, dedicated staff in childcare centers. These professionals play a critical role in supporting children's growth, learning, and development during the most important years of their lives.

Offering benefits such as health insurance, paid time off, retirement plans, and professional development opportunities shows educators are valued and respected. These supports not only improve staff well-being and job satisfaction, but also help reduce turnover, which creates more stability and stronger relationships for the children in their care.

Investing in benefits for early childhood educators leads to higher-quality programs, better outcomes for children, and a stronger, more sustainable early learning workforce.

LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



Applicable Staff Benefits (1pt each - max of 6)

- Health Insurance
- Dental Insurance
- Vision Insurance
- Retirement Plan
- Sick Days
- Vacation Days
- Mental Health support
- Life Insurance
- Gym membership/Calm App/Etc.

Resources

NAEYC Article: [Unlocking Equity: NAEYC's Benefits Brief on Fair Compensation in Early Childhood Education | NAEYC](#)

Verification Documentation

Complete form: <https://thread.tfaforms.net/289>

Once completed, this form must be uploaded to the Learn & Grow section of the ServicePortal. Choose the appropriate level from the drop-down menu (the level you are renewing or applying for) and then select “Points”

LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Strengthening Families Practices

Learn & Grow Points

- Program completes the Strengthening Families Self-Assessment = 2 points
- After completing the Strengthening Families or equivalent self-assessment, the program implements annual activities/events to help families build the five protective factors.
 - Three (3) activities/events = 5 points
 - Four (4) activities/events = 10 points
 - Five (5) activities/events = 15 points

NOTE: add home visiting- reference here as part of SF badge

Purpose

Alaska started implementing Strengthening Families in 2005 and it has since grown to be utilized by several state, tribal and non-profit organizations. Strengthening Families™ is a research-informed, strength-based approach to helping families reduce stress, address risk factors, and promote healthy development. The overarching goal is the promotion of child and family well-being. It is based on engaging families, programs and communities in building five protective factors that help families succeed and thrive, even in the face of risk and challenges.

Early childhood programs can play an important part in helping families build the five protective factors:

- Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development
 - Provide parenting and child development resources to families
 - Offer parenting classes
 - Host events that share information about child development and learning
- Resilience
 - Offer self-care activities/events
 - Provide extended care hours outside of typical work hours
 - Validate parent's positive decisions
- Concrete Support
 - Connect parents with local resources based on their needs (i.e. food pantries, medical services, housing assistance, clothing drives, back-to-school giveaways, etc.)
 - Provide concrete support as possible (i.e. offer to wash the child's clothes)
 - Host materials drives/swaps and share with families in need

LEVEL 3 – 10 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 4 – 20 POINTS REQUIRED

LEVEL 5 – 30 POINTS REQUIRED



Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

- Social Connections
 - Host class/program events that allow parents to interact
 - Share information about social events happening in the community
 - Introduce families to one another
- Social and Emotional Competence
 - Share with families what you are doing to support children at school
 - Give parents tips/tricks to build social/emotional skills at home
 - Share Pyramid Model resources

Requirements

- Programs may only get points for completing the self-assessment once and cannot be counted for future Level 3 renewals.
- Strengthening families' activities/events must have happened within 12 months of submitting for Level 3 verification/renewal. These must be planned activities/events that are offered and beneficial to all families.

Resources

- Strengthening Families self-assessment [Strengthening Families](#)
- Strengthening Families Alaska: [Strengthening Families Alaska](#)
- [Research-Briefs-and-Action-Sheets-SF-CW.pdf](#)
- [Bringing the Five Protective Factors to Life | One Place](#)

Verification Documentation

Complete form: <https://thread.tfaforms.net/287>

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RESOURCES

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Learn & Grow
Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning

Level 2 Quality Activity A: Creating a Program Philosophy Statement

A philosophy statement should reflect the essence of the program's beliefs and values that brought you as an owner, administrator, teaching staff to open your heart to the children and families you care for and teach.

Use the prompts below to help you write a 5-6 sentence statement that reflects the how, why and what your program does, feels, and promotes to make a child and family's experience the best it can be.

We believe... (values)

Our program/teachers offers... (service provided)

Essential aspects of our program are... (what sets your program apart/additional values)

What we want for children is... (outcome for children who attend your program)



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Level 3 Quality Activity B: P&P Minimum Requirements

DEED Note: School District Pre-elementary programs should reference EEP standards for information on additional requirements for these procedures.

Developmental screening policy and/or procedure must include:

- Program uses the Ages and Stages Questionnaire for child screening.
- Why the program uses developmental screening
- Families receive access to the ASQ screening link within 45 days of enrollment
- Staff receive training before communicating results to families
- Results will be communicated to families within 10 business days
- When/how program will provide referrals, as needed, to outside agencies
- Confidentiality information

Sample language:

Within 45 days of enrollment every family with a child between birth-60 months of age will receive a link to complete the ASQ online developmental screening tool.

The results from this screening help (PROGRAM NAME) staff get to know your child better. Following the completion of the developmental screening, someone from (PROGRAM NAME) will contact you to discuss results within 10 business days. All staff members communicating results have completed ASQ training and will be able to support families with questions and concerns.

All screening results are confidential. Paper copies are stored (WHERE) and electronic copies are secure under the online Enterprise Account (PROGRAM NAME) uses. Only the program administrator and/or designated staff have access to the results.

Some pediatrician offices in Alaska also use developmental screening tools. If a parent/guardian has completed a developmental screening like the Ages and Stages Questionnaire within the last 6 months (from date of enrollment) parents/ guardians do not need to complete the screening tool at enrollment. If possible, please provide a copy of the last screening tool. Let (PROGRAM NAME) know if you would like to opt out of developmental screening.

To monitor a child's progress toward meeting developmental milestones and because children's development changes frequently, additional screening may be requested during the child's time at (PROGRAM NAME).

(PROGRAM NAME) partners with **thread**, Help Me Grow Alaska, local Infant Learning, public preschool special education, and local behavioral health organizations to assist teachers and families with additional resources a family may need to support their child's development.

Child assessment policies and/or procedure must include:

- Program uses Teaching Strategies Gold for child assessments
- Why the program completes child assessments
- How often children will be assessed
- Staff completing annual assessments/checkpoints are interrater reliable
- How/when assessment information will be shared with families
- Confidentiality information

Sample language:

Developmental and social emotional screening tools are a good start to understand a child's strengths and areas of need, however screening is only a "snap-shot" of development. To best inform the development of lesson plans and curriculum a more comprehensive child assessment tool is needed. (PROGRAM NAME) uses Teaching Strategies Gold, a valid, dependable and culturally responsive child assessment tool on the SmartTeach platform. Annual assessments are called "checkpoints".

(PROGRAM NAME) staff have received specific training and/or support in the use of this tool and have current Interrater Reliability Certification before completing checkpoints.

Teachers will complete formal and informal observations of children throughout the year, including taking pictures, making notes, and using work samples to show children's development. Full child assessments (checkpoints) will be completed X times a year. Information from child assessments will be shared with families during family-teacher conferences. During these conferences teachers will discuss results, talk about child strengths and work with families to set goals for the child. Teachers will also use information from observations and assessments to develop lesson plans and ensure the learning environment is supporting the child's development. Families will receive regular information about their child's ongoing learning experiences (frequency & method).



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Child observations and assessments are confidential. Paper copies are stored in a locked cabinet and electronic copies are secure under the online Enterprise Account (PROGRAM NAME) uses. Only the program administrator and designated staff have access to the results. Learn & Grow and DEED have access to aggregated state-wide child data from SmartTeach.

Curriculum policies and/or procedures must include:

- Name of curriculum(s) used and brief description
- How staff are trained to use the curriculum
- For Homes/Group Homes: Explain how you use lesson plans to cover all ELG domains and plan for individual children.

Sample language:

Curriculum and lesson plan development are based on child observations and assessment results. Child observations and assessments provide information about children's strengths and needs to help teachers develop comprehensive lesson plans. These lesson plans are designed to provide opportunities for new skills to be learned in a child-directed learning environment where adults are facilitating interactions and adjusting to meet children's individual needs.

For Programs using a specific Curriculum:

(PROGRAM NAME) uses _____ Curriculum as a foundation to our curriculum and lesson plan development. Teachers complete training on what and how to use curriculum and lesson planning as well as specific training on use of (CURRICULUM NAME). (PROGRAM NAME) also uses the Pyramid Model to specifically support children's social and emotional development. Teachers complete training on Pyramid Model practices and receive technical assistance and coaching from **thread**, through our program's Learn & Grow participation.

Other curriculums and information about your family's culture may also be used to ensure the lesson are meaningful, relevant, and developmentally appropriate for all children at (PROGRAM NAME).

For Homes and Group Homes using ELGs and Lesson Plans:

(PROGRAM NAME) uses a weekly/monthly lesson plan that includes activities to support development in all domains outlined in the Alaska Early Learning Guidelines (listed below). Lesson plans also include activities, materials, or experiences to support specific goals for individual children based on their current level of development. Information about your



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family's culture may also be used to ensure the lessons are meaningful, relevant, and developmentally appropriate for all children at (PROGRAM NAME).

Alaska Early Learning Guideline Domains:

1. Physical wellbeing, health, and motor development
2. Social and emotional development
3. Approaches to learning
4. Cognition and general knowledge
5. Communication, language, and literacy

Access and view the full document here: [State of Alaska Early Learning Guidelines](#)

Inclusionary Policies and/or Practices must include:

- What local resources/agencies the program uses for referrals/support for children with special needs
 - Local school district
 - Early intervention
 - Behavioral health
 - Mental Health Specialists
 - Etc.
- How programs connect parents to local resources/agencies
- How programs collaborate with local resources/agencies to support children when applicable
- Optional: How teachers are trained and supported

Sample language:

Child screening and assessments help individualize and plan for your child's specific needs. In addition to our behavior support process, we also partner with outside agencies when necessary to help children and families get the support they need. Below is a list of agencies/resources we commonly partner with to support children and families. (*Adjust list based on programs you partner with*)

- Local Infant Learning Program Information
 - Support for children 0-3 years
- Local School District(s) Special Education Department Information
 - Support for children over the age of 3



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- Help Me Grow [Help Me Grow Alaska | A2P2 : A2P2](#)
 - o Connects families with local services for their children
- Alaska Inclusive Child Care Program [Alaska Inclusive Child Care Program \(Alaska IN!\) | State of Alaska | Department of Health](#) (Only available to licensed child care)
 - o Provides additional subsidies to eligible families who have children who experience a diagnosed disability or special need
- [Alaska Infant/ Early Childhood Mental Health Association](#)
- **thread** [Supporting Your Child's Development](#)
 - o Alaska's Child Care Resource and Referral Agency

With parental permission, we are committed to maintaining open communication with any external resources/specialists as appropriate to support the child while they are in care. In partnership with you and other appropriate specialists, we will discuss possible modifications to support your child's success in our program and create a plan of care.

Expulsion & Suspension Reduction Policies and/or Practices Must Include:

(Note: This could be part/blended with of your Inclusionary Practices)

- Definitions of expulsion and suspension approved by State of Alaska
- How the program promotes social & emotional skills
- Positive guidance and preventative approaches used
- Intention to reduce or eliminate expulsions and suspensions
- Program's response to challenging behavior that is:
 - o Evidence-based
 - o Positive
 - o Sensitive to family values, culture and home language
 - o Provide the child with guidance about the desired behavior
- Overview of programs 2-5 positively stated program-wide expectations
- Process for supporting children with ongoing behavior that challenges adults that at minimum includes:
 - o Collecting data about the behavior using behavior incident reports (BIRs)
 - o Regular team meetings, that include families, to develop, monitor and adjust a written plan of support for the child.
 - o Written child support plans always include:
 - Prevention strategies
 - Social/emotional skills in development
 - Intervention strategies



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- Information for families about strategies they can use at home and in the community
 - Process to connecting families to additional resources/agencies as needed
- How program reports expulsion and suspension to regulatory bodies
- How program partners with community agencies or have internal staff to provide additional supports as needed:
 - Coaches
 - Mental Health Consultants
 - Early Learning Programs
 - etc.

Sample language:

Definitions

In-school suspensions: Practices that involve removing or excluding the child from the classroom.

Out-of-school suspensions: Practices that involve temporarily removing the child from the program.

Expulsions: Permanent removal or dismissal from the program.

Soft expulsions: Practices that make it so that the program is not a viable or welcoming care arrangement for the family and leaves the family with little choice but to withdraw their child.

Warm hand off: Program works to identify another EC programs that have the appropriate support and resources to serve the child and family. Warm hand offs help support continuity of care (no gap in care) and are not considered an expulsion.

From Preventing Suspensions and Expulsions in Early Childhood Settings: An Administrator's Guide to Supporting All Children's Success (2016).

(PROGRAM NAME) uses the Pyramid Model [National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations](#) to help children learn various social emotional skills such as emotional literacy, self-regulation, friendship skills and problem solving. We also use positive guidance and preventative strategies to minimize behaviors that adults find challenging. Pyramid Model Practices meet the State of Alaska and/or MOA childcare licensing regulation 7 AAC 57.535 (b) stating that a childcare facility's behavior guidance plan shall promote: positive reinforcement, redirection, setting of realistic expectations, and clear and consistent limits. Some strategies used in our program include: (ADD LIST or TABLE).

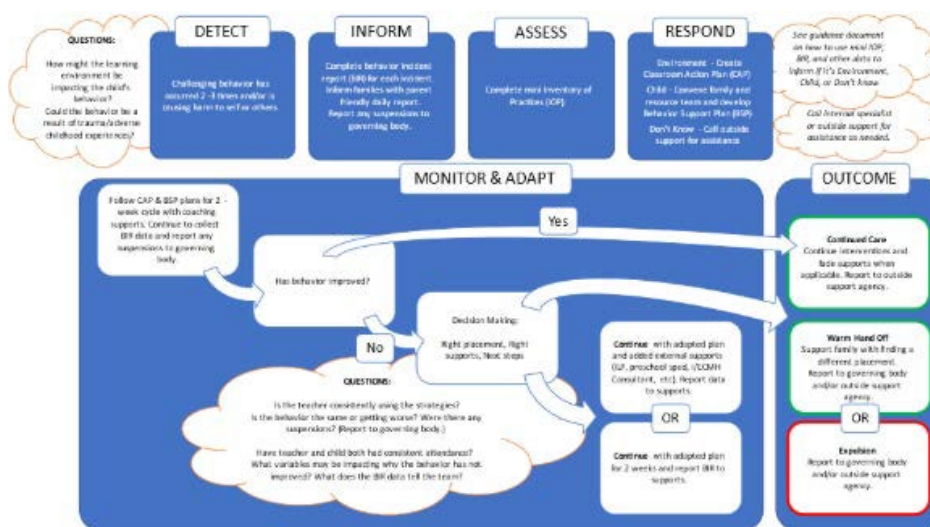


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If these strategies are not working, (PROGRAM NAME) will use an individualized child support process as outlined below:

1. Staff begin collecting data on the behavior using Behavior Incident Reports (BIRs)
2. Communicate regularly with families about the child's strengths and challenges
3. Engage in a program self-assessment and reflect on possible environmental and or teaching strategies adjustments
4. Meet with the family to create a written child support plan that includes:
 - Prevention strategies
 - Social/emotional skills in development
 - Intervention strategies
 - Information for families about strategies they can use at home and in the community
5. Connect with outside resources for support as appropriate and with family permissions (thread, Infant Mental Health Consultants, Early Learning Programs, etc.)
6. Schedule and complete regular team meetings with involved parties to monitor and adjust the plan as needed. The family is a mandatory member of this team which may also include teachers, administrators, and external supports as appropriate.
7. If it is determined by the team after consistent implementation of the behavior support plan that the program cannot meet the needs of the child, the program will support the family to find a different placement with no disruptions to care.

See Visual Below:





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Level 3 Quality Activity E: PD Plan Template

Name:

Current SEED Level:

My Short-Term Goal (next 6 months):	
CKC Standard:	
CDA Subject Area:	
Action Steps <i>(What concrete steps will I take to meet my goal?)</i>	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Resources Needed <i>(People, materials, financial support, etc.)</i>	
Resources Available <i>(Time, materials, financial support, etc.)</i>	
Potential Barriers or Solutions <i>(What challenges might I face and what resources are available to help me?)</i>	
Evidence of Accomplishment <i>(How will I show that I have done this?)</i>	
Timeframe: _____ Date Completed: _____	



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Name:

Current SEED Level:

My Mid-Term Goal (next 12 months):	
CKC Standard:	
CDA Subject Area:	
Action Steps <i>(What concrete steps will I take to meet my goal?)</i>	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Resources Needed <i>(People, materials, financial support, etc.)</i>	
Resources Available <i>(Time, materials, financial support, etc.)</i>	
Potential Barriers or Solutions <i>(What challenges might I face and what resources are available to help me?)</i>	
Evidence of Accomplishment <i>(How will I show that I have done this?)</i>	
Timeframe: _____ Date Completed: _____	



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Name:

Current SEED Level:

My Long-Term Goal (5+ years):	
CKC Standard:	
CDA Subject Area:	
Action Steps <i>(What concrete steps will I take to meet my goal?)</i>	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Resources Needed <i>(People, materials, financial support, etc.)</i>	
Resources Available <i>(Time, materials, financial support, etc.)</i>	
Potential Barriers or Solutions <i>(What challenges might I face and what resources are available to help me?)</i>	
Evidence of Accomplishment <i>(How will I show that I have done this?)</i>	
Timeframe: _____ Date Completed: _____	

Glossary of Terms

Alaska SEED Registry: The Alaska SEED Registry is a statewide database that assists early childhood and school-age professionals with tracking and planning their professional development. Joining the Alaska SEED Registry increases an individual's eligibility for professional development funding and allows the individual to be placed on the Alaska SEED Career Ladder. The registry also helps to gather accurate data about the early care and education workforce and its impact on the economy.

Classroom Action Plan (CAP): A plan that helps the classroom teachers and thread PDS identify goals and strategies to accomplish goals. A CAP provides timelines, roles and responsibilities, and monitors progress of goals. A CAP should be reviewed at least every 6 months, but quarterly is recommended to stay actively engaged in a continuous quality improvement process. CAPs are specific to each classroom. Home and group home programs can include classroom-based goals on their CQIP and are not required to complete a CAP.

Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP): CQIPs are designed to help a program identify its programmatic goals. A CQIP is not specific to classroom goals but may have administrative goals that align, and support goals identified in a CAP. Some programs have program plans that are called Annual Plans or Strategic Plans. If a program has one of these plans it is not required to complete the Learn & Grow CQIP. However, it must follow the same monitoring process of reviewing at least once every 6 months if not more frequently and contain similar areas as Learn & Grow's CQIP (Goals, strategies, resources needed, monitoring).

Leadership Team: Each program can define for themselves who is part of their leadership team. Something for programs to consider when creating/identifying a leadership team is: who has authority to make decisions about the day-to-day operations, funding, curriculum, development of policies/procedures, and/or staffing of a program. These individuals most likely could be part of a leadership team. At minimum the leadership team should include the administrator of the program who is indicated on the childcare license.

Pre-elementary: DEED certified program serving children 3-5. This includes Title I, migrant education, and preschool special education (619) classrooms. (Also referred to as pre-K, pre-kindergarten)

Program or Site: A program or site is defined as an early childhood education program and a single site. For instance, a childcare program may have several sites, but each site is considered a separate program with a separate childcare license. A Head Start grantee may have multiple sites, but similar to childcare, each location is a separate program. Finally, the same logic



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applies to school districts. Some districts have several schools. Each school is considered a program regardless of the number of pre-elementary programs at the school.

Relationship Based Professional Development (RBPd): A broad term used to refer to three types of professional assistance that use relationships as a foundation. RBPd is made up of differing relationship-based learning such as mentoring, coaching or consultation. Unlike other modes of professional development, RBPd emphasizes learning through interactions and relationships. The goal of RBPd is to improve the quality of early childhood education programs, increase the knowledge, skills & abilities of teachers and caregivers, and improve the outcomes of children. A key element differentiating RBPd from other modes of professional development is the emphasis on learning through interactions, relationships, and partnerships. This approach implements a reflective cycle of inquiry and uses an evidence-based adult-learning process of goal setting, observation, assessment, action planning, reflection, and feedback. (Abrams & Chu, 2016, p. 3)

ServicePortal: The ServicePortal is an online platform that allows child care programs and teachers access to all of **thread's** services in one place. It is also the hub for services provided by Alaska SEED and Learn & Grow.

Some activities child care professionals can do in the ServicePortal:

- Join or renew Alaska SEED Registry membership
- Register yourself or multiple staff for **thread** training
- Request technical assistance
- Print training transcripts
- Update contact information and opt-in to emails or text reminders
- View Learn & Grow status and related documents

For more information visit the [ServicePortal Help Center](#)

Teaching Staff: Teaching staff refers to staff who work directly with children as well as staff who support and/or supervise those working with children. Every program structure is different, and programs use a variety of titles for their staff, the use of the term “teaching staff” allows for consistency and flexibility for all program types. For Learn & Grow Quality Activity requirements, staff who work less than 400 hours annually in this capacity are exempt. They do not need to meet the requirements, and they are not included in the percentage calculations when applicable.