Alabama Quality STARS: Quality Rating and Improvement System
Best Practice Rubric
Day Care Center Verification Manual

The Best Practice Rubric is designed to be cumulative, so that programs can choose only the indicators that fit their program structure. The Best Practice Rubric Verification Manual is utilized by Alabama Quality STARS Specialists during the Assessment visit, and it should be completed by programs as a self-evaluation to prepare for Assessment.

Instructions:
- For each indicator, select yes or no (Y/N) to indicate whether your program meets the criteria for the indicator.
- Gather documents needed to verify that your program meets the indicator and make note of your supporting evidence for later reference.
- Block out children's names/personally identifying information on all documents presented. Identify children by initials, number, symbol, etc.
- Documents should be organized, labeled, and gathered in one location (binder, file box) prior to an Assessment visit. Only the documents presented at the time of the Assessment will be considered. If no documentation is prepared at the time of the Assessment visit, no further review or observation(s) will be conducted, and the Assessment will result in an automatic denial (no new STAR rating awarded).

Indicators with special instructions are noted at the top of the domain. Definitions are noted at the end of the manual. For indicators that require a supporting document, those may be viewed at https://alabamaqualitystars.org/assessment-criteria/.

Disclaimers:
- All required documentation listed is a _minimum_ requirement to fulfill the indicator. Additional documentation may be requested for verification while on-site.
- If contradictory evidence is observed during the Assessment visit for any indicator, credit will **not** be awarded.
- Any documentation that must be dated must include the full date (month, date, **_and_** year).

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN RESOURCES

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
Early Childhood Education

Domains:

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Domain 1: Curriculum and Instruction

	Description	Point Value	Y/N	Required Documentation	Resources/ References	Recommendations/ Examples
1.1A	A written plan for daily activities is in place and posted in the learning environment.	2		Copy of completed, developmentally appropriate lesson/activity plan with current dates, posted in each classroom • May be observed on-site, *or* for document upload, evidence must be presented that plan is posted in each classroom (1 photo per class)	• HSPPS 1302.31 and 1302.32 • CFOC (4th Ed.) 2.1.1.1	Quality early education curricula provide guidance on all practices addressed in the indicators of Domain 1. Recommended curricula include, but are not limited to:
Notes:						• Creative Curriculum
1.1B	A written plan for individualized instructional activities for each child is in place.	2		Copy of current lesson/activity plan (from each classroom) which includes section for individualized instructional/learning activities for individual children and/or small groups	• HSPPS 1302.31 and 1302.32 • CFOC (4th Ed.) 2.1.1.1	• Frog Street • Highscope • Learn Every Day • Early Learning Matters (ELM) • Mother Goose
Notes:						Time
1.1C	A written plan for serving children with additional/special needs (including diagnosed disability, challenging behavior, medical/health needs, developmental delays, social-emotional needs, trauma, etc.) is in place.	2		• Written policy explaining how program provides (or plans to provide) services for children with additional/special needs, **AND** • If applicable, for any currently enrolled children with additional/special needs, evidence should include: written plan for each child with dates of service, needs of child, goals, and supporting activities to meet the goals for each child	• HSPPS 1302 • CFOC (4th Ed.) 2.1.1.1 and 3.5.0.1	• Red Leaf Press
Notes:						

***For indicators 1.2A-C, select the one option that best fits.**

1.2A	Screen time is not planned or utilized in the program.	4		Written policy stating screen time is not used within the program	• CFOC (4th Ed.) 2.2.03

Notes:

1.2B	When screen time is planned, it is educational and limited to 30 minutes daily for children over 2 years of age (children younger than 2 years are not allowed screen time); screen time is not utilized during mealtime.	2		Written policy must specify how screen time may be planned and utilized; policy must indicate that: • Screen time may only be educational in nature, and • Screen time must be limited to 30 minutes daily for children over 2 years of age. (Children younger than 2 years of age are not allowed screen time.)	• CFOC (4th Ed.) 2.2.03

Notes:

1.2C	Neither 1.2A or 1.2B apply.	0		*Select 1.2C only if the program does not meet 1.2A OR 1.2B*	

Notes:

1.3A	A routine daily schedule (specific to each class) with clip art or photographs is posted in each learning environment for children's use.	2		Visual schedule utilizing clip art or photographs must be posted in each classroom at children's eye level • May be observed on-site *or* for document upload, evidence must be presented that schedule is posted in each classroom (1 photo per class) *For infants, visuals may be routine-based and posted in the related area(s) of the classroom.*	• HSPPS 1302.31 • CSEFEL

Notes:

1.3B	The daily schedule includes a combination of teacher- and child-led activities, structured and unstructured time, and includes opportunities for free play and exploration.	2		Copy of current daily schedule (from each classroom) that includes all required components and is developmentally appropriate to the age of the enrolled children	• HSPPS 1302.31 • CSEFEL • Individualized Care and Daily Routines for Infants and Toddlers	
Notes:						
1.4	A system is in place to share planned and/or completed activities with families at least weekly.	2		Evidence must be presented for each classroom and may include any of the following: • Family information board located where all families can visit to see posted current activities • Child take home folder including current planned activities • Classroom social media page updated to reflect current planned and/or completed activities • Parent communication app (Remind, Class Tag, etc.) used to send notifications about current planned and/or completed activities	• HSPPS 1302.34 • CFOC (4th Ed.) 2.4.3.1. and 2.4.3.2	
Notes:						
1.5A	System is in place to rotate available materials in learning environment to sustain children's interest in items.	1		• Copy of policy stating how the program rotates materials, **AND** • Current, dated lesson/activity plan from each classroom that includes when materials are rotated (rotating materials must involve the addition of materials that are not always present in the classroom)	• HSPPS 1302.31(d)	
Notes:						

1.5B	System is in place to routinely (at least once per month) rotate materials in the learning environment to enhance planned learning activities.	1		• Copy of policy explaining how often and for what reasons program rotates materials, **AND** • Current, dated lesson plans from each classroom that include materials to be rotated <u>and</u> how the rotation relates to planned activities	• HSPPS 1302.31(d)	
Notes:						
1.6A	A positive discipline policy that promotes realistic, age-appropriate, positive behavioral expectations is in place.	2		Copy of policy including specific explanation for how the program promotes positive discipline • Policy must be distinct from a suspension/expulsion policy (may not use time out)	• HSPPS 1302.31 and 1302.45	
Notes:						

1.6B	A policy or system to respond to challenging behaviors is in place and includes tools/strategies to be used when behaviors do arise.	2		Copy of written procedure explaining how the program responds to challenging behaviors and the steps that are taken, **AND**
				• If applicable, evidence of implementation such as:
				  o Documented instance that details steps/actions taken by the program
				  o Action plan that includes the tools/strategies the program uses to address challenging behaviors
					• HSPPS 1302.31 and 1302.45
					• CFOC (4th Ed.) 2.2.0.7	

Notes:						
Points Earned: _____ of 22						

Domain 2: Screening and Assessment

	Description	Point Value	Y/N	Required Documentation	Resources/ References	Recommendations/ Examples
2.1A	Provider collects anecdotal notes/observations as a basis for teaching each child.	2		Documentation of **5** current notes/observations must be provided for <u>3 children per classroom</u>	• HSPPS 1302.33 • [Anecdotal Notes Summary](#)	
Notes:						

2.1B	Provider shares anecdotal notes/observations with all families.	2		Current documentation of how the program shares notes/observations with families for <u>3 children per classroom</u>
				• Documentation may include: Family-Teacher Conference, Home Visit forms, take-home folders, etc.
				  • Documentation **must** include dates and signatures/ responses
				  • Information can be shared face-to-face, electronically, or via phone; remote communication methods **must** indicate acknowledgment with dates and signatures/responses
					• HSPPS 1302.33
					• CFOC (4th Ed.) 2.1.1.4	

Notes:						

2.2A	Complete developmental screening annually on each child.	2		• Copy of policy/procedures for developmental screenings that state what screenings are used, when screenings are completed, and that all children are screened, **AND** • Copies of dated, completed screening tool for <u>3 children per classroom</u>	• HSPPS 1302.33 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 10 • CFOC (4th Ed.) 2.1.1.4	• <u>Pathways Milestones Checklist</u>
Notes:						
2.2B	Complete the ASQ-3 developmental screening annually on each child.	2		• Copy of policy/procedures that state that the ASQ-3 screening tool is used, detailing when screening is completed and that all children are screened, **AND** • Copies of dated, completed ASQ-3 for <u>3 children per classroom</u>	• HSPPS 1302.33 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 10	• <u>Help Me Grow Alabama</u> • <u>Ages and Stages Questionnaire</u> • <u>Sample ASQ-3</u>
Notes:						
2.2C	Provider uses results from screening tool to provide individualized instruction and/or provide community resources and/or referral information if concerns are identified.	2		• Copy of policy/procedures for following up with services/supports for children, **AND** • Provide documentation that individualized instruction is adapted from screening results, **AND/OR** • Provide a list of agencies and/or resources that the program shares with families	• HSPPS 1302.33 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 10 • CFOC (4th Ed.) 10.7.0.1	
Notes:						

2.3A	Use an assessment tool aligned with the Alabama Early Learning Guidelines (AELG) to assess children's learning and development.	2		• Copy of policy/procedures for assessing children's learning and development, **AND** • Copies of dated, completed assessments for 3 children per classroom (must be completed within the last year) • Assessment tool must assess children on a minimum of 3 developmental domains; developmental domains **must** align with the AELG	• HSPPS 1302.33 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 11 • Alabama Early Learning Guidelines	• AELG Developmental Checklist • ChildFolio Assessment
Notes:						
2.3B	Use a valid, reliable assessment tool at least two times per year.	4		• If the assessment tool used is not listed in the Recommendations/ Examples column, provide documentation that the tool is research-proven to be valid and reliable, **AND** • Copies of dated, completed assessments for 3 children per classroom (must be completed within the last year) ○ When possible, records of assessments completed within the past year should be provided; if past records are not available, an assessment calendar/schedule may be presented as evidence	• HSPPS 1302.33 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 11	• Teaching Strategies GOLD • AIM Observational Assessment • Child Observation Record (COR) • LAP B-K
Notes:						

2.3C	Use assessment results to inform lesson or activity planning.	2		Evidence of how assessment results are used to inform planning must be provided <u>for each classroom</u> and may include the following: • Lesson/activity plan with goals for children listed <u>and</u> activities used to meet listed goals • Completed assessment report with goals for children listed	• HSPPS 1302.33 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 11	
Notes:						
Points Earned: _____ of 18						

Domain 3: Family Engagement

	Description	Point Value	Y/N	Required Documentation	Resources/ References	Recommendations/ Examples
3.1	Holds a family orientation that includes program mission, goals, and policies/ expectations; provides families with an explanation of program (or classroom) curriculum.	2		• Copy of orientation plan/packet (examples may include: family handbook, presentation, agenda, etc.) that includes all required components, **AND** • Signed document to verify that families have received information (examples may include: signed family handbook or acknowledgement page, sign-in/-out form from orientation, etc.) • Plan and signed documents **must** include families <u>from all classrooms</u>	• CFOC (4th Ed.) 2.3.1.1 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 16	• [Program philosophy example] • [Program goals and objectives example]
Notes:						

3.2	Holds two family conferences per child annually to include family on each child's plan to meet goals in the classroom and at home.	4		• Copy of policy and/or Family Handbook stating that the program conducts at least two parent/family conferences each calendar year, **AND**
				 • Documentation of signed and dated conference form for <u>at least 3 children per classroom</u>
				   • Two conference forms from the last calendar year may be presented, <u>or</u>
				   • If all children in a classroom are newly enrolled in the program and no past records are available, a conference calendar/schedule may be presented as evidence
					• HSPPS 1302.34
					 • CFOC (4th Ed.) 2.3.2.1
					 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 16	

Notes:					
3.3A	Has a resource area that meets the needs and interests of the families served and has a parent lending library; resources are centered on health and well-being of the family.	2		May be observed on-site, *or* for document upload, photo documentation of the resource area must be included. • Resource area <u>must</u> include a lending library with materials/resources that families can check out/take home, **AND** • Resources related to: health & development, child development, and/or community resources (i.e. flyers, handouts, booklets, etc.) *Supplemental documentation may also include surveys of family interests/needs, family handbook with information about the resource area, etc.*	• CFOC (4th Ed.) 2.4.3.1, 2.4.3.2, and 9.4.1.19 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 17 • <u>Lending library information</u>	
Notes:					
3.3B	Family resource area provides parents with allotted times to use necessary technology.	1		Documentation may include any of the following: • Policy in family handbook explaining how and when families can access the program's technology resources • Sign-up sheet for family members to sign up for time slots		
Notes:					

3.4	Provides and/or connects families to training opportunities related to topics that address family needs.	3		Documentation may include any of the following (within the last year): - Flyers with training opportunities available for families - Announcements (written or electronic) provided to families about current trainings - Sign-up sheet, with date and title of trainings provided, that families attended - Completed family needs survey/assessment and planned training(s) from results	- HSPPS 1302.50 - CFOC (4th Ed.) 2.3.1.1 - PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 17	
Notes:						
3.5	Family communication board per classroom is available and includes specific classroom information for families.	2		Documentation should include a photo/screenshot of each classroom board - Physical boards may be located inside classroom, in the hallway directly outside the classroom, or in a communal area with dedicated space for each classroom - Electronic communication boards may include apps (Remind, Class Tag, etc.) or social media pages Examples of information shared must include <u>more than 1</u> of the following: lesson plans, schedule, menus, classroom news/announcements, etc.	PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 16	
Notes:						
Points Earned: _____ of 14						

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Revised June 25, 2025

Domain 4: Professional Credential

	Description	Point Value	Y/N	Required Documentation	Resources/ References	Recommendations/ Examples
				For indicators 4.1A-F, select the one option that best fits.		
4.1A	At least one teacher per classroom has a minimum of the AELG Credential.	4		Verified through audit of staff files (certificates, degrees, and/or transcripts) • Copy of AELG Credential certificate(s) of completion	• CFOC (4th Ed.) 1.3.2-3 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Items 23-25 • Alabama Pathways (page 9)	
Notes:						
4.1B	50% of classrooms have an assigned teacher with at least Alabama Pathways Professional Lattice Level 2 or a CDA in childcare/early care and education.	6		Verified through audit of staff files (certificates, degrees, and/or transcripts) • Copy of Alabama Pathways Lattice letter or current CDA(s)	• CFOC (4th Ed.) 1.3.2-3 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Items 23-25 • Alabama Pathways (page 9)	
Notes:						
4.1C	50% of classrooms have an assigned teacher with at least Alabama Pathways Professional Lattice Level 3 or a short certificate in Child Development/Early Care & Education or related field.	8		Verified through audit of staff files (certificates, degrees, and/or transcripts) • Alabama Pathways Lattice letter or • Transcript must include a total of at least 18 hours of CD/ECE credits	• CFOC (4th Ed.) 1.3.2-3 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Items 23-25 • Alabama Pathways (page 9)	
Notes:						

4.1D	50% of classrooms have an assigned teacher with at least Alabama Pathways Professional Lattice Level 4 <u>or</u> an Associate Degree in Child Development/Early Childhood Education or related field.	10		Verified through audit of staff files (certificates, degrees, and/or transcripts) • Alabama Pathways Lattice letter <u>or</u> • Transcript must include a total of at least 18 hours of CD/ECE credits	• CFOC (4th Ed.) 1.3.2-3 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Items 23-25 • [Alabama Pathways (page 9)](#)	
Notes:						
4.1E	50% of classrooms have an assigned teacher with at least Alabama Pathways Professional Lattice Level 5 <u>or</u> a bachelor's degree in Child Development/Early Childhood Education or related field.	12		Verified through audit of staff files (certificates, degrees, and/or transcripts) • Alabama Pathways Lattice letter <u>or</u> • Transcript must include a total of at least 30 hours of CD/ECE credits	• CFOC (4th Ed.) 1.3.2-3 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Items 23-25 • [Alabama Pathways (page 9)](#)	
Notes:						
4.1F	Indicators 4.1A-4.1E do not apply.	0		*Select 4.1F only if none of the above requirements (4.1A-4.1E) are met.*		
Notes:						

4.1G	Staff and/or Director have an advanced credential, including: CLASS certified observer, CDA PD Specialist, PITC, IECMH, Montessori, NPPS, CCEI, or CCP. (*1 point per unique credential, up to 3 points.*)	3		Current certificate(s) of credential to include any of the following: • CLASS: Classroom Assessment Scoring System • CDA PD Specialist: Child Development Associate Professional Development Specialist • PITC: Program for Infant Toddler Care • IECMH: Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health • NPPS: National Program for Playground Safety • CCEI: ChildCare Education Institute • CCP: Certified Childcare Professional	• CFOC (4th Ed.) 1.3.2-3 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Items 23-25	
Notes:						
4.2A	Director has completed 3 modules of the Aim4Excellence Credential.	1		Certificate(s) of completion	• CFOC (4th Ed.) 1.3.1.1 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Items 22	• McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership
Notes:						
4.2B	Director has completed 6 modules of the Aim4Excellence Credential.	2		Certificate(s) of completion	• CFOC (4th Ed.) 1.3.1.1 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Items 22	• McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership
Notes:						
4.2C	Director has completed 9 modules of the Aim4Excellence Credential.	2		Certificate(s) of completion	• CFOC (4th Ed.) 1.3.1.1 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Items 22	• McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership

Notes:						

*For indicators 4.2D-F, select the one option that best fits.						
4.2D	Director has at least Alabama Pathways Professional Lattice Level 6 or a master's degree in Child Development/Early Childhood Education or related field.	2		Verified through audit of staff files (certificates, degrees, and/or transcripts) • Alabama Pathways Lattice letter or • Transcript must include a total of at least 15 hours of CD/ECE credits		

Notes:						

4.2E	Director has at least Alabama Pathways Professional Lattice Level 7 or an Education Specialist (Ed.S.) Degree in Child Development/Early Childhood Education or related field.	4		Verified through audit of staff files (certificates, degrees, and/or transcripts) • Alabama Pathways Lattice letter or • Transcript must include a total of at least 15 hours of CD/ECE credits		

Notes:						

4.2F	Indicators 4.2D and 4.2E do not apply.	0		*Select 4.2F only if none of the above requirements (4.2D-4.2E) are met.*		

Notes:						

Points Earned: _____ of 24

Domain 5: Environment

	Description	Point Value	Y/N	Required Documentation	Resources/ References	Recommendations/ Examples
***For indicators 5.1A-E, select the one option that best fits.**
5.1A	Each classroom scores at least 30% on the Environment Checklist.	4		Environment Checklist (completed by Alabama Quality STARS Specialist)	• ITERS-R • ECERS-R	
**Notes:**
5.1B	Each classroom scores at least 50% on the Environment Checklist.	6		Environment Checklist (completed by Alabama Quality STARS Specialist)	• ITERS-R • ECERS-R	
**Notes:**
5.1C	Each classroom scores at least 70% on the Environment Checklist.	8		Environment Checklist (completed by Alabama Quality STARS Specialist)	• ITERS-R • ECERS-R	
**Notes:**
5.1D	Each classroom scores at least 90% on the Environment Checklist.	10		Environment Checklist (completed by Alabama Quality STARS Specialist)	• ITERS-R • ECERS-R	
**Notes:**
5.1E	Indicators 5.1A-5.1D do not apply.	0		*Select 5.1E only if none of the above requirements (5.1A-5.1D) are met.*		
**Notes:**

| 5.2 | Outside environment/ playground has a completed playground assessment report by a certified National Program for Playground Safety (NPPS) Playground Inspector or Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI). | 4 | | Copy of playground assessment report completed by certified NPPS or CPSI playground inspector • Inspector must be an outside source | • CFOC (4th Ed.) 10.3.4.7 | • National Program for Playground Safety • Certified Playground Safety Inspector |

Notes:

Points Earned: _____ of 14

Domain 6: Program Design

	Description	Point Value	Y/N	Required Documentation	Resources/ References	Recommendations/ Examples

6.1A	Program builds time into the daily work schedule for teachers to have planning time of a minimum of 1 hour per week to complete paperwork associated with classroom and children.	2		• Program must provide a <u>minimum of 1 hour per week</u> of planning time for <u>at least one teacher per classroom</u>
				• Planning time must be free of child responsibility
				• Documentation may include:
				  • Policy providing information about teachers' planning time
				  • Copy of teacher schedule indicating when planning time occurs
				  • Completed teacher planning notes/checklist with dates listed
					• CFOC (4th Ed.) 9.4.3.1
					• PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 6	

Notes:						

6.1B	Program has a plan in place to address teacher turnover.	2		• Copy of policy and/or plan that addresses ways to prevent teacher turnover and/or recruit staff in the event of turnover
				• Examples may include:
				  o Plan that maps out incentives for teachers based on years of service, credentials earned, etc.
				  o Plan for recruiting/hiring qualified staff
					• CFOC (4th Ed.) 1.7.0.5 and 1.8.1	

Notes:						

6.1C	Program has a plan in place to achieve continuity of care (children have consistent caregivers).	2		• Copy of policy about how staffing/scheduling of classroom staff is handled
				• Policy must address continuity of care in one of the following ways:
				   o Over the course of the day (children are with the same caregivers/class throughout the day)
				   o Day-to-day (children have the same caregivers every day)
				   o Year-to-year (children are with the same caregivers for their entire tenure in the program)
				• Supporting evidence may include: teacher schedules, staff attendance policy, classroom rosters with assigned caregivers, sign-in/-out sheets
					• CFOC (4th Ed.) 1.8.1, 2.1.1.1, 2.1.2.1, and 9.3
					• PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 6	

Notes:						
6.1D	Program provides benefits to staff (insurance, paid time off, paid holidays, retirement, tuition benefits, wellness programs).	2		Copy of policy/statement listing benefits provided for all full-time staff • Program must provide <u>at least one</u> of the listed benefits • At least one benefit **must** begin at the time of employment	• CFOC (4th Ed.) 1.8.1.1 and 9.3.0.1 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 5	
Notes:						

6.1E	Program offers an orientation process for onboarding new staff.	2		• Policy explaining the orientation process, **AND** • Signed and dated employee orientation form/packet, program handbook, acknowledgement page, etc.	• HSPPS 1302.92 • CFOC (4th Ed.) 1.4.2.1 and 9.3.0.1 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 1	
Notes:						
6.2A	Program has a routine maintenance checklist for indoors.	1		Copy of completed checklist (must include specific tasks) with date completed from each classroom	• HSPPS 1302.47 • CFOC (4th Ed.) 3.3.0.1 and 5.7.0 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 7	
Notes:						
6.2B	Program has a routine maintenance checklist for outdoors.	1		Copy of completed checklist (must include specific tasks) with date completed • Outdoor checklist may be program-level or classroom-specific	• HSPPS 1302.47 • CFOC (4th Ed.) 5.7.0 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 7	
Notes:						
6.3	Program has a means to evaluate impact of program (i.e. staff survey, family survey).	2		Copy of completed survey by family and/or staff (within the last year)	• PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 14	
Notes:						

6.4	Program has an operating budget that includes income and expenses.	2		Copy of current center-specific budget showing income and expenses	• PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 12 and 13	
Notes:						
6.5A	Program has a policy describing staff's acceptable use of technology during work hours.	1		Copy of policy with details on how the program handles staff use of technology during working hours • Must include staff signatures	• PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 21	
Notes:						
6.5B	Program has a policy in place describing staff's acceptable use (professional and/or personal) of social media.	1		Copy of policy with details on how the program handles staff use of social media (personal or business use) • Must include staff signatures	• PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 21	
Notes:						
6.6A	Program establishes partnerships with local community service agencies to connect families to services.	2		Documentation of current partnerships with listed services provided • May include a list of partnerships and/or evidence of implementation (i.e. signed agreement, memorandum of understanding, etc.) • Examples of service agencies/ resources may include: early intervention, dentist/vision/ pediatric screening, mental health services, transportation, adult education resources, local libraries/community centers, food or clothing donation services, etc.	• PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 17 and 19	Alabama Family Central
Notes:						

6.6B	Program has a transition plan and partnerships with feeder schools/programs into which children will transition.	1		• Copy of policy/statement in family and/or staff handbook of how the program handles transitions (internal or external) and/or partnerships to schools, **AND**
				 • Documentation of how the transition plan is implemented, which may include:
				     o List of feeder schools, registration dates, and/or kindergarten assessment samples
				     o Informational flyers from feeder schools
				     o Individual transition plans
				     o School readiness plans
					• HSPPS 1302 Subpart G
					 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 19
					 • CFOC (4th Ed.) 9.2.2.1
						[Alabama Transition to Kindergarten Toolkit](#)
						 [Transition Tips for Early Head Start](#)

Notes:						
6.6C	Director participates in community and/or state level committees.	1		Committees may be focused on early care and education or a business, civic, or faith-based organization • Examples may include: Children's Policy Council, educational advisory council, United Way, chamber of commerce, church/synagogue/mosque/temple, etc. Must document director's attendance and participation (minutes, notes, agenda, sign-in sheet) from meetings with dates of attendance	• PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 19	
Notes:						

6.7A	Program has a structure in place to actively recruit children and families with diverse demographics and/or needs.	1		• Copy of policy/plan that details the steps taken to recruit children and families with diverse demographics/needs into the program, **and/or** • Evidence of recruitment efforts (may include: flyers, partnerships with community resources, offering scholarships, advertising, etc.)	• CFOC (4th Ed.) 2.1.1.8	
Notes:						
6.7B	The demographics and/or diverse needs of children do not exclude them from acceptance into the program if reasonable accommodations can be made.	1		• Copy of policy of acceptance that states that children will not be excluded if reasonable accommodations can be made, **AND** • Plan for how the program will accommodate the diverse needs of children and families	• HSPPS 1302.90(c) • CFOC (4th Ed.) 2.1.1.8, 3.5.0.1, 5.3.2, 6.2.5.1, 9.2.1.5, and 10.3.4.7	
Notes:						
6.7C	Program provides or connects staff to training opportunities to equip them to meet the (social-emotional, cognitive, developmental, physical) needs of all children.	2		Documentation may include: • Current training log with dates and type of training (within the last year) • Copy of trainings offered/available to staff from community agencies • Training policy specific to needs of staff with details about how the program determines needs	• CFOC (4th Ed.) 3.5.0.1 and 6.2.5.1 • PAS (2nd Ed.) Item 3	
Notes:						

6.8A	Program maintains staff-to-child ratios accordingly: 0-18 months - 1:4 18 months-2.5 years - 1:6 24-36 months - 1:7 2.5-4 years - 1:10 4 years-school age - 1:16	3		• Copy of program policy stating staff to child ratios, **AND** • Copy of center staff list for each classroom with number of staff and <u>max number of children allowed</u> per classroom* ***This can be different than Licensing capacity**	• CFOC (4th Ed.) 2.2.0.1	
Notes:						
6.8B	Program maintains group size accordingly, with children allowed per group not to exceed: 0-18 months - 8 18 months-2.5 years - 12 24-36 months - 14 2.5-4 years - 20 4 years-school age - 32	3		• Copy of program policy stating staff to child ratios, **AND** • Copy of list for each classroom with <u>max number of children allowed</u> per classroom group* ***This can be different than Licensing capacity**	• HSPPS 1302.21 • CFOC (4th Ed.) 2.2.0.1	
Notes:						
6.9	Program has earned national early childhood accreditation and is active.	6		Copy of accreditation/certificate with current date		National accreditation organizations
Notes:						

Points Earned: _____ of 38

Definitions

- **Anecdotal notes** – Written observations of children's actions and behaviors that document their ability and progress in a developmental area; anecdotal notes may include pictures or videos, quotations, and/or written descriptions of children's actions, gestures, facial expressions, etc.
- **Assessment (*assessment tool*)** – On-going process of gathering information about children's developmental progress, interests, strengths, and needs; includes on-going observation and provides information about development over time
- **Child-led** – Play and/or learning that is initiated by children and follows their lead; children create their own play scenarios, explore, and try their own ideas
- **Current** – Unless otherwise specified, dated within the last six (6) months
- **Developmentally appropriate** – Practice of designing instruction, strategies, and teaching practice based on what children are developmentally able to do cognitively, physically, and emotionally
- **Free play** – Unstructured, child-initiated play in which children select and control the use of materials, create their own play scenarios, and try their own ideas
- **Individualized** – Tailored to a specific child; based on developmental, physical, social-emotional, or environmental need, unique interests, and abilities
- **Learning environment** – In a center setting, typically refers to the classroom; the area that children regularly utilize, are allowed to actively explore for the majority of the day, and have access to at all times
- **Policy** – System of rules or guidelines that govern how a program operates
- **Positive discipline** – Method of guiding children's behavior by explicitly teaching the social and emotional-regulation skills needed to meet behavioral expectations; teaches children what <u>to</u> do and employs logical consequences rather than punishment
- **Procedure** – The sequence of steps or actions detailing when and how a policy should be done and who is responsible
- **Routine** – Regularly occurring according to a fixed schedule (required frequency may be noted in indicator)
- **Screen time** – Any media content viewed on mobile phone, tablet, computer, television, video, film, and/or DVD
- **Screening (*developmental screening, screening tool*)** – Method of gathering information about children's developmental progress and provides information about whether a child's development is on track compared to widely-held expectations of typically developing peers
- **Structured** – *See Teacher-led*; time that it directed by the teacher
- **System** – A set of procedures and/or organized framework according to which something is done
- **Teacher-led** – Play and/or learning that is initiated by the teacher; time spent in direct instruction that is guided by the teacher
- **Time out** – Method of punishing child behavior, typically by removing the child from their current environment/activity and isolating them from interaction with caregiver(s) and peers
- **Unstructured** – *See Child-led*; time that is directed by the child
- **Valid and reliable** – Research-proven to measure accurately and consistently what the tool is intended to measure
    - **Reliability** – The extent to which a tool can be utilized accurately and consistently across users
    - **Validity** – The extent to which a tool measures what it is intended to measure

Referenced Documents and Links

- [Alabama Early Learning Guidelines](#)
- [Caring For Our Children (CFOC), 4th Edition](#)
- [Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Milestones Checklist](#)
- Harms, T., Cryer, D., & Clifford, R. M. (2005). *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale: Revised Edition*. Teachers College Press. https://www.ersi.info/iters.html
- Harms, T., Cryer, D., & Clifford, R. M. (2006). *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale: Revised Edition*. Teachers College Press. https://www.ersi.info/iters.html
- [Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS)](#)
- Talan, T.N. & Bloom, P.J. (2011). *Program Administration Scale (PAS) 2nd Edition: Measuring early childhood leadership and management*. Teachers College Press.