QUALITY COUNTS

Palm Beach County's Quality Rating Improvement System

Children's Services Council
PALM BEACH COUNTY

Expect Success® | Quality Rating Improvement System

CENTER MANUAL

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Funded by Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County
In Cooperation with the Early Learning Coalition, Inc. of Palm Beach County
In Partnership with Family Central, Inc., Palm Beach State College Institute of Excellence, and the School District of Palm Beach County

Quality Counts, a quality rating improvement system, was created in collaboration with the following participants:

QUALITY COUNTS Florida Multi-County Collaborative
Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County
Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County
Palm Beach State College Institute of Excellence
School District of Palm Beach County
Family Central, Inc.
Palm Beach County Health Department
Parent-Child Center, Inc.
Profit and non-profit child care providers

The group incorporated lessons learned from a local pilot project and a number of national quality initiatives.

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1.0 QUALITY COUNTS OVERVIEW

Quality Counts is a comprehensive, voluntary early care and education quality rating improvement system which seeks to enhance the quality of child care so that children from birth to age five will enter school eager and ready to learn. Child care centers, school based sites, and family child care homes that hold a current service agreement with Family Central, Inc., and have been licensed for at least one year are eligible to participate.

Why Quality Counts was created

A number of recent studies have proven that high quality early childhood experiences are a major factor in children's development and ability to succeed once they reach school, and later in life.

One such study, the High/Scope Perry Preschool Study, found that at-risk children who experienced high quality early care had reduced incidences of criminal arrests, higher earnings, higher graduation and attendance rates, and were more committed to marriage. The study's authors concluded that high quality early childhood education is the most cost effective way to ensure our future economic development and prosperity. Some studies show that quality early childhood programs can generate a return on investment ranging from $1.80 to $17.07 for each dollar spent (Karoly, Kilburn & Cannon, 2005).

Other studies demonstrated that positive child outcomes are related to high quality care. The *Cost, Quality and Outcomes Study* found that quality of care in most child care centers is often only mediocre. Of the more than 400 centers studied in four states, only 8% of infant classrooms and 24% of preschool classrooms were of good to excellent quality. This study also found that 10% of the preschool sites and 40% of the infant sites were rated as having poor quality.

Taking into account this and other research, as well as the large number of working families needing child care, a group of local early childhood advocates worked for over a year to design a comprehensive, customized early care and education quality rating improvement system.

Quality rating improvement systems are becoming the best-practice model for supporting quality early learning programs. The first statewide quality rating improvement system was created in 1998 in Oklahoma. Since then the momentum has been growing. Currently, 22 states have statewide quality rating systems. An additional 28 states are in some phase of development.

In July 2006, Palm Beach County, along with 11 other counties in Florida, came together to form the Multi-County Collaborative in order to align the standards of their respective systems to ensure consistency in measuring program quality, and to articulate the standards for quality to child care providers and parents throughout Florida. With such positive momentum, counties in Florida currently developing/implementing quality rating improvement systems have an advantage should the State move in the same direction as many others have done.

Goals of Quality Counts:

1. To produce positive outcomes for children.
2. To provide consumer education to help parents recognize, expect and seek out quality in a child care setting and to articulate the standards for quality to child care providers and parents.
3. To define, advocate for and obtain the resources necessary to encourage, support and promote quality early care and education.

Benefits of Participation in Quality Counts for Directors/Owners

A program Director or Owner sets the course for the level of quality in a program; this course includes every aspect of the program from staff, to child, to families. The level of quality in a child care setting affects the life of every child that comes through its door, and, as research has shown, this impact lasts a lifetime.

Achieving and maintaining high quality in the areas of early care and education, while at the same time being responsible for the business aspects of a program, can be challenging. However, for those program directors and owners who choose to participate in Quality Counts, invaluable resources and supports will be available.

What a program can expect from Quality Counts

There are a number of benefits for programs that participate in Quality Counts, the fundamental being the knowledge that they will be working to improve the quality of their program so that the children they serve enter school eager and ready to learn.

Quality Counts offers:

- ★ Program standards and environment rating scales to help programs target areas for improvement
- ★ On-site technical assistance to support quality improvement efforts
- ★ On-site career advising for individual practitioners
- ★ Scholarship opportunities for practitioners to achieve professional development goals
- ★ Financial incentive opportunities for practitioners
- ★ Training opportunities
- ★ Mini-grant opportunities
- ★ Funding to support quality improvement
- ★ Marketing materials
- ★ Use of the program's Star Rating as a marketing tool
- ★ Networking opportunities
- ★ Access to the Director's Portal

Expectations of Quality Counts System Partners

- ★ Usage of the Quality Counts standards to help determine a program's needs and to provide assistance in the development of an improvement plan
- ★ Support the quality improvement efforts of programs
- ★ Follow through on all agreed upon commitments
- ★ Conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner at all times
- ★ Respect a program ownership of the quality improvement work

Expectations of Participating Programs

- ★ Maintain its service agreement and licensure status and comply with licensing standards
- ★ Ensure that designated staff complete training course on the Environment Rating Scales, both ECERS and ITERS, and/or related Quality Counts trainings Roadmap to Quality within 18 months of the facility's baseline assessment
- ★ Allow program assessors to conduct the appropriate Environment Rating Scale assessments for the baseline and annual assessments and agree to provide information on staff development, family engagement, program implementation and administration
- ★ Allow program Assessors to conduct on-site observations and data collection.
- ★ Agree to have an Early Learning Coach on-site to provide technical assistance to the Director and/or staff for up to three days a week for a period of 18 months. After this period, accept maintenance visits up to 9 hours per month for as long as they are a participant
- ★ Agree to meet with a Career Advisor to develop a center professional development improvement plan
- ★ Agree to provide access for individual career advising for all Professional Staff
- ★ Create program improvement plans with their Early Learning Coach to set benchmarks and meet those benchmarks with Practitioners
- ★ Support the implementation of a developmentally appropriate, research-based, active learning curriculum
- ★ Attend all meetings, such as regular Director/Owner meetings, required by Quality Counts or send a representative
- ★ Join the Palm Beach County (PBC) Early Childhood Registry (Director and all Practitioners)
- ★ Notify Family Central, Inc. in writing within two weeks of any change in Owner and/or Director

A program participating in Quality Counts is expected to commit to continuous quality improvement at all levels of the organization and is responsible for making necessary changes to enhance the quality of their program. A program's commitment to continuous improvement is the key to success and upward progress through Quality Counts.

2.0 GETTING STARTED: THE QUALITY COUNTS PROCESS Part 1

The Quality Counts process includes 12 steps. An overview is provided below and each step is explained in detail on the following pages.

Step 1: Attend Orientation

All programs that would like to participate in Quality Counts are invited to attend an orientation overview. This overview will explain the goals, improvement process, and supports that are available upon acceptance. Attendees will receive a letter of interest and an application. For upcoming orientations, please visit www.cscpbc.org/QualityCounts.

Step 2: Liaison Visit

Once a program has submitted a letter of interest, it will be contacted by a Children's Services Council Liaison to schedule an appointment to visit the program's Director and Owner/Board Chair. The purpose of this visit is to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the level of commitment and expectations and to answer any questions the Director or Owner/Board Chair may have about Quality Counts.

Step 3: Application

All interested, licensed programs holding a service agreement with Family Central, Inc. must complete an application. The application is included as *Appendix 1*. or can be accessed on-line at www.cscpbc.org/QualityCounts. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

Step 4: Application Review and Selection

Quality Counts accepts a minimum of 30 programs each year which includes centers, school-based sites and family child care homes. A committee will review all applications. Programs will be informed of the status of their application within 30 days of submission. Complete applications are valid for one year and programs will be automatically reconsidered for selection every selection round using the information in their application. Applicants will be placed in a cue and as the system is able to serve additional sites, you will be notified of your acceptance.

Criteria for selection includes:

- ★ Program's ability to serve infants and toddlers
- ★ Percentage of subsidized children enrolled
- ★ Geographic location serving high poverty zip codes
- ★ Satisfactory licensing inspections and service agreement monitoring
- ★ Completion of Registry applications for all Practitioners

THE QUALITY COUNTS PROCESS Part 2

Step 5: Roadmap to Quality Counts Training

This 12 hour series gives participants an overview of the Palm Beach County Quality Counts purpose, pathway requirements, and available resources. Roadmap to Quality Counts is open for enrollment from directors, owners and teaching staff at sites that are interested in joining, newly accepted, or already actively involved in Quality Counts. For more information to please call Family Central, Inc. at 514-3353.

Step 6: Introductory visit by Early Learning Coach and Career Advisor

Within 30 days of acceptance into Quality Counts, programs will be contacted to schedule introductory visits with the Early Learning Coach and the Career Advisor.

Step 7: Baseline ERS Assessment

Using the Environment Rating Scales (ERS), the baseline assessment will be conducted within three months of acceptance into Quality Counts. Programs will be notified by mail of the month that their baseline assessment will be conducted. Pre-assessment paperwork to be returned to Family Central, Inc. will be included with the notification letter. (See *Appendix 2*) The actual assessment date will be an unannounced visit. All classrooms will be assessed during the baseline assessment, and will be completed in one day. When all classroom assessments are complete, the Early Learning Coach will receive the written assessment reports and will review them with the program's Director. Programs will not be assigned a Star Rating at this time.

Step 8: 18 Month Intensive Phase

The intensive phase begins with relationship building. This is a collaborative process where parameters are established and reasonable goals and target dates are set based on the priorities of the Director. The review of the baseline assessment report with the Director helps to identify the factors relevant to the Provider's initial concern for change.

THE QUALITY COUNTS PROCESS Part 3

Step 9: Formal Annual Assessment

The formal annual assessment process consists of two parts:

- After 18 months, programs will be notified by mail of the month and the two week window that the formal annual assessment will take place. Pre-assessment paperwork (*Appendix 2*) to be returned to Family Central, Inc. will be included with the notification letter. The actual assessment date will be an unannounced visit. All formal assessments will be conducted in one day. During the formal assessment, the assessor(s) will randomly select at least 50% of a program's ITERS classrooms and at least 50% of the ECERS classrooms and will formally assess those classrooms with the appropriate Environment Rating Scale (ERS) assessment tool. Informal assessments are done as the assessment schedule allows and may occur at a later visit.
- During the assessment month an Assessor will collect Quality Counts data on site. The exact date will be indicated on the notification letter. Information concerning the remaining Pathways to Quality: Professional Development, Curriculum, Ratios, Administration and Family Engagement will be collected.
- Formal assessments will occur every 13 months thereafter. Programs will be notified of the month that the assessments will take place; however, the actual visits will be unannounced.

Step 10: Star Rating

Upon completion of the formal annual assessment, programs will receive an overall Star Rating based on the Star Rating on the individual pathways. Section 5.0-Star Rating Process provides an explanation as to how the Star Rating is calculated.

Step 11: Maintenance Phase

The review of the formal assessment with the program Director and Early Learning Coach begins the maintenance phase of Quality Counts. This phase includes continued setting of target dates, and up to nine-hours per month of coaching support. At this time, the Provider assumes responsibility for maintenance and sustaining quality at their site.

3.0 COMPONENTS OF QUALITY COUNTS

Quality Counts consists of a number of components which work together to create a supportive Quality Rating Improvement System that leads to positive outcomes for children.

1) The **Pathways to Quality,** which are proven predictors of Quality, are as follows:

- ★ Environment (40%)
- ★ Staff Qualifications/Professional Development (20%)
- ★ Staff to Child Ratio and Group Size (10 %)
- ★ Curriculum (15%)
- ★ Program (15%)
  - ⋆ Administration
  - ⋆ Family Engagement

The Pathways to Quality each have achievable standards that are assessed and reported using a weighted formula that gives a program its "Star Rating". The assessment results are used to develop classroom activity records and set target dates.

2) Achievable Standards that define each of the Pathways to Quality. Each of the Pathways has five levels of achievable standards (*Appendix 3)* that correlate with the one- to five-star ratings. These standards provide a fair system for assessing and rating a program, as well as a roadmap for achieving high quality.

3) Star Ratings that can increase as a program meets higher standards, up to a 5-Star Rating. A 1-Star rating means that a program has met minimal licensing standards. A program will be awarded an overall Star Rating after each formal assessment.

4) Reliable Assessments that ensure a fair, consistent and accurate assessment process for each participating child care program. Internationally recognized, research-based program assessment tools called the Environment Rating Scales are used to assess and rate a program's environment. To assess the other Pathways, qualified and highly reliable program Assessors use on-site observations as well as documentation provided by the program.

The results of the baseline assessment are used by the Early Learning Coach and the Director to create a program's individual quality improvement plan(s). After 18 months, a program receives their first formal assessment. Results from this assessment are used to determine a Star Rating.

5) Quality Improvement Supports are available to child care programs participating in Quality Counts. Services and supports are provided by highly trained and experienced System Partner Staff. Services and supports include, but are not limited to: On-site technical assistance, reliable assessments, Director and staff Professional Development opportunities, scholarships, mini-grants, peer networking opportunities, quality enhancement payments to programs, educational incentive awards, WAGE$ supplements and individual career advising for Directors and Staff.

6) Consumer Education Opportunities inform current and future parents and staff of a program's commitment to enhanced quality. Participation in Quality Counts demonstrates that a program cares about quality. These ratings help parents recognize, expect, and seek out quality in an early care and education setting. A program is eligible to promote its Star Rating after receiving its first formal assessment.

4.0 PATHWAYS TO QUALITY

4.1 Environment

Environmental structure includes health and safety standards, classroom environment, the daily schedule and interactions between adults and children. Positive relationships are essential for the development of personal responsibility, capacity for self regulation, and for constructive interactions with others. Warm, sensitive and responsive interactions help children develop a secure, positive sense and encourage them to respect and cooperate with others. Children who see themselves as highly valued are more likely to feel secure, thrive physically, get along with others, learn well and feel part of the community.

Design and maintenance of the physical environment supports high-quality program activities and services, and allows for optimal use and operation. Well-organized, equipped, and maintained environments support program quality by facilitating the learning, comfort, health, and safety of those who use the program. By also creating a welcoming and accessible setting for children, families, and staff, program quality is enhanced. *(NAEYC 2004)*.

Environment Pathway Assessment Process

Due to its major influence on positive outcomes for children, Environment is one of the Pathways to Quality that is assessed to determine a child care setting's overall Star Rating, and it accounts for 40% of a program's Star Rating.

- ★ The Environment is assessed using the Environment Rating Scales (ERS). The ERS are internationally known and respected assessment tools for measuring "process quality" within an early care and education setting. The Environment Rating Scales look at the indoor and outdoor space, materials, activities, interactions, schedules and other areas of the classroom and program. For more information on the Environmental Rating Scales, visit **www.fpg.unc.edu**.

The day of assessment, staffing patterns must reflect a typical day. A typical day is one in which the only staff members present in the classroom are the ones present in the classroom on a daily basis. Directors must list these staff members on the Section A: Classroom Information paperwork.

The Lead Teacher must be present for the assessment. If the Lead Teacher is absent on the day of assessment, the classroom will not be assessed that day. The classroom will be designated as Formal or Informal during the random selection process and will be assessed as such at a later date, within the assessment window.

If the Associate Teacher assigned to a classroom is absent on the day of assessment the classroom will be assessed. A Floater or Substitute may be present *in place* of the assigned Associate Teacher.

Support staff members that assist with various tasks (such as toileting, meals) should be listed on the classroom paperwork. In order to maintain a valid and accurate assessment of a typical day, no other staff may be present during the assessment.

Sites with multiple locations: Floaters and Substitutes may count for Professional Development at more than one location in the event that they substitute for an Associate Teacher who was absent on the day of assessment.

★ At least 50% of a program's classrooms will be assessed formally. On the day of assessment, a Program Assessor will randomly choose a classroom to be assessed. The Program Assessor will use the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ITERS-R) to assess classrooms in which the majority of children are ages 0 to 30-months. For classrooms in which the majority of children are ages 30 months and above, the Program Assessor will use the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R). A program's average ITERS and/or ECERS classroom score becomes the Environment Pathway Score.

Learning Environment – Environment Rating Scales-Revised (ECERS-R,ITERS-R) – 40% • Subscales: Space-Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interaction, Program Structure • Based on average scores of sample of classrooms • Scored on 7-point scale: 1=Inadequate, 3=Minimal, 5=Good, 7=Excellent				
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
ECERS-R 3.0 – 3.49	ECERS-R 3.5 – 3.99	ECERS-R 4.0 – 4.49	ECERS-R 4.5 – 5.49	ECERS-R 5.5 – 7.0
ITERS-R 3.0 – 3.49	ITERS-R 3.5 – 3.99	ITERS-R 4.0 – 4.49	ITERS-R 4.5 – 5.49	ITERS-R 5.5 – 7.0
Assessor will randomly select at least 50% of a program's classrooms within each age group and will assess those classrooms with either the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale - Revised (ITERS-R) or the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R). A program's average ITERS-R and/or ECERS-R classroom score becomes the Environment quality score. **If the score is below 3.0, "0" points will be awarded for the Overall Score for the Environment Pathway.**				

Overview of the Environment Rating Scales [2]

	ITERS-R	ECERS-R
Title	Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition	Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition
Focus	Classroom environment	
Ages	Infants and Toddlers (0 – 30 months)	Preschool (30-60 months)
Indicators	Subscales: ▪ Space and Furnishings ▪ Personal Care Routines ▪ Listening and Talking ▪ Activities ▪ Interaction ▪ Program Structure *The subscale Parents and Staff is not completed for the formal rating*	Subscales: ▪ Space and Furnishings ▪ Personal Care Routines ▪ Language-Reasoning ▪ Activities ▪ Interactions ▪ Program Structure *The subscale Parents and Staff is not completed for the formal rating*
Requirements	An assessment of at least 3 hours for each classroom, followed by a 30 minute interview with the Lead Teacher.	

4.2 Professional Development

Professional Development is an ongoing process of continuous improvement that increases job related knowledge and skills. Children benefit most when teachers are knowledgeable and educated in early childhood development and provide developmentally appropriate activities based on the individual needs of children.

Quality Counts Professional Development includes structured teaching and learning experiences for Practitioners to support their acquisition and implementation of knowledge and skills in the classroom.

Professional Development opportunities are available through formal credit and informal non -credit education and training. Courses and trainings are developed using the Florida Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Practitioners, which identify the knowledge and skills needed to provide high quality programs and services that support children and their families.

Courses and trainings are designed to support the development of competencies in the following seven Core Knowledge Areas:

- Health, Safety and Nutrition
- Child Development and Learning
- Building Family and Community Relationships
- Teaching and Learning Environments and Interactions

[2] Harms, T., Clifford, R., & Cryer, D. (2005). Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition. New York: Teachers College Press.
Harms, T., Clifford, R., & Cryer, D. (2006). Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition. New York: Teachers College Press.

- Curriculum
- Observing, Documenting, Screening and Assessing to Support Young Children and Their Families
- Professionalism

Practitioners who participate in Professional Development will enhance their knowledge and skills in these seven Core Knowledge Areas. Practitioners can pursue training and education through a formal credit or informal non-credit Career Pathway. The Florida Core Competencies are embedded in both Career Pathways thus providing a link between the two pathways, enabling practitioners to transition between informal and formal Career Pathways as they strengthen their early childhood classroom practices. For more information on Florida Core Competencies visit www.floridajobs.org/earlylearning/index.html

Informal non-credit training that supports Quality Counts Professional Development must be Registry Approved. Formal credit education or informal non-credit credit training taken for CEUs through colleges or universities is also accepted for Quality Counts Professional Development.

Role of Registry in Assessing Professional Development

The Registry provides the means to document education, training and professional achievements attained by Quality Counts Professional Staff. All Quality Counts Professional Staff are required to be members of the Registry and to keep their individual records up to date and accurate.

Documentation maintained by the Palm Beach Early Childhood Registry is used to complete the Professional Development Pathway assessment and determine the Star Rating for the Professional Development Pathway. All Professional Development achievements must be documented in the Registry in order for them to count towards the assessment. Professional Development achievements not documented in the Registry prior to assessment will not be counted towards the assessment.

Center Trainer Option:
Directors are a great resource for training Professional Staff. Directors, Curriculum Specialists and Assistant Directors have the option to provide up to 15 hours of Registry approved training per assessment cycle to their centers' Professional Staff, provided they meet the requirements established to become a Registry Approved Center Trainer.

A Registry Approved Center Trainer may either submit training for Registry approval or use the Center Trainer Manuals that have been created by the Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education and approved by the Registry. Center Trainer Manuals are multimedia trainings which include a training script, materials for activities and exercises, and an observation tool so that trainers can ensure that what has been learned in the training transfers to the classroom.

A Registry Approved Center Trainer is any center Director, Assistant Director, and/or Curriculum Specialist, who holds a minimum of a valid DCF Staff Credential, and has completed Foundations of Outcomes Driven Training or Outcomes Driven Training.

For information on becoming a Registry Approved Center Trainer or on the Center Trainer Manuals please contact the Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education at 561-868-3669. Director created training must be Registry approved. For information on this process, call 561-868-3671.

Professional Development Pathway Assessment Process

Professional Development is one of the Pathways to Quality that is assessed to determine a child care setting's overall Star Rating; it accounts for 20% of a program's Star Rating. All professional staff employed at the center are included in the professional development assessment and scoring.

The **level of Professional Staff education** and **Annual 50 Points** for all professional staff at the center is reviewed to determine the Professional Development Star Rating. The Star Rating is based on the percentage of Professional Staff achieving specified educational levels (staff qualifications) and the Annual 50 Points. The percentage of Professional Staff required to attain specific levels of education increases as a program moves up the Star Ratings. Staff education levels and Annual 50 Points requirements for each star level are listed on the Quality Counts Benchmark and Staff Qualifications Form. (*Appendix 4)*

In order for Professional Development achievements to be considered for the assessment, the achievements must be completed within the 13 months prior to, but not including, the assessment month. For programs in the 18 month intensive phase, professional development will be accepted 18 months prior to, but not including, the assessment month. Professional Development completed in the assessment month will count toward the next assessment cycle.

The Staff Qualifications and Professional Development Pathway has a weight of 20%. The star rating is calculated based on 3 categories of Professional Staff: Director, Lead Teacher, and Associate Teacher as well as the Annual 50 In-service Points, which is based on a percentage of all professional staff.

- **Professional Staff:** includes facility director and assistant director; lead teachers; associate teachers, curriculum/education specialists, floaters, and subsitutes**.**
- **Facility Director:** the full-time administrative person at a single site.
- **Lead Teacher:** (1 per classroom) person primarily responsible for a group of chidlren for the majority of the day, duties may vary by site. Lead teacher category requirements apply to certain other professional staff - assistant director and curriculum/education specialists.
- **Associate Teacher:** teaching personnel other than the lead teacher needed to meet the minimum ratio requirements; does not require an associate's degree. Associate Teacher category requirements apply to certain other professional staff – floaters and substitutes.

Scoring Professional Development: 2 components tdetermine the star rating for Professional Develeopment

1. Averaging star ratings of each category of Professional Staff

a. Each job category receives a star rating based on professional development benchmarks. Percentages shown for each star level, in Appendix 4, are the **minimum percentages** required to meet that star rating. In order to reach a star rating, *each benchmark must be met by meeting the minimum percentage*.

Minimum Percentages Example

This example looks at Associate Teachers and the Staff Credential Benchmark:

A site has 7 Associate Teachers; three have their Staff Credential. This site would be a 2 star for Associate Teachers because 43% of Associate Teachers met the requirement for the Staff Credential.

To meet the requirements for 3 star Staff Credential benchmark, a **minimum** of 50% of Associate Teachers must have a Staff Credential.

b. The star rating for each category of Professional Staff is averaged by adding the star ratings and dividing by the total number of job titles at the site. Below are the ranges for each star rating.

1 star	2 star	3 star	4 star	5 star
0-1.99	2-2.99	3-3.99	4-4.99	5

For example:

Director: 5 Star

Lead Teachers: 3 Star

Associate Teachers: 3 Star

Average Star Rating: 5+3+3=13, 13 / 3 job categories = 4.33 = 4 star

2. 50 In-service Points

The 50 in-service points are calculated based on ALL Professional Staff as 1 group. The percentage of Professional Staff with the 50 in-service points can determine the star rating for a site.

Minimum requirements for 50 Points:

2 Star: 25% of all Professional Staff

3 Star: 50% of all Professional Staff

4 Star: 75% of all Professional Staff

5 Star: 100% of all Professional Staff

For example: (Using the same information as the previous example)

Average Star Rating based on 3 job categories: 4 Star

Here is how the 50 In-Service Points can affect the Star Rating for Professional Development:

In order to achieve a 4 star rating using the previous example, a minimum of 75% of ALL Professional Staff must meet the 50 In-Service Point requirement. If less than 75% meet the requirement, then the PD star rating will be based on the percentage of staff that met the requirement.

Staff Qualifications/Professional Development – 20%				
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Same as FL Licensing: - All staff have completed 40-hour DCF training within 90 days of hire - 40 hours certification completed within one year of hire - 5-hour Early Literacy completed - 1 staff per 20 enrolled children have DCF Staff Credential -Facility Director holds level I or II Director Credential	- Associate teachers: 25% have HS diploma/GED, 25% have DCF Staff Credential, 25% have one 3 credit ECE class or 45 hours informal ECE training annually, if higher benchmarks are not met. - Lead teachers: All have HS diploma/GED, 75% have DCF Staff Credential and 75% have one 3 credit ECE class or 45 hours informal ECE training annually, if higher benchmarks are not met. - Facility Director has HS diploma/GED, DCF Staff Credential and one 3 credit ECE class or 45 hours informal ECE training annually, if higher benchmarks are not met	- Associate teachers: 50% have HS diploma/GED, 50% have DCF Staff Credential, 50% have one 3 credit ECE class or 45 hours informal ECE training annually, if higher benchmarks are not met. Lead teachers: All have HS diploma/GED, 90% have DCF Staff Credential and 90% have one 3 credit ECE class or 45 hours informal ECE training annually, if higher benchmarks are not met. - Facility Director has HS diploma/GED, DCF Staff Credential or and one 3 credit ECE class or 45 hours informal ECE training annually, if higher benchmarks are not met	- Associate teachers: 75% have HS diploma/GED, 75% have DCF Staff Credential, 75% have one 3 credit ECE class or 45 hours informal ECE training annually, if higher benchmarks are not met. -Lead teachers: All have HS diploma/GED, DCF Staff Credential, 90% have one 3 credit ECE class or 45 hours informal ECE training annually, if higher benchmarks are not met. 25% have completed 12 ECE credit hours 25% will hold an Associate degree or higher with 12 ECE credits or 60 credits with 12 ECE credits (effective 10/1/2012) - Facility Director has HS diploma/GED, DCF Staff Credential, completed 12 ECE credit hours, and holds FL Advanced level credential Associate degree or higher with 12 ECE credits or 60 credits with 12 ECE credits (effective 10/1/2012)	- Associate teachers: All have HS diploma/GED, DCF Staff Credential, 75% have one 3 credit ECE class or 45 hours informal ECE training annually if higher benchmarks are not met and 25% have completed 12 ECE credit hours Lead teachers: All have; HS diploma/GED, DCF Staff Credential, and completed 12 ECE credit hours, if higher benchmarks are not met. 50% will hold an Associate degree or higher with 12 ECE credits or 60 credits with 12 ECE credits (effective 10/1/2012) - Facility Director has HS diploma/GED, DCF Staff Credential, completed 12 ECE credit hours, and holds FL Advanced level credential Associate degree or higher with 12 ECE credits or 60 credits with 12 ECE credits (effective 10/1/2012)
10 hr State In-service Requirement	25% Professional Staff completed annual 50 points	50% Professional Staff completed annual 50 points	75% Professional Staff completed annual 50 points	100% Professional Staff completed annual 50 points

- 100% of professional staff at the 2,3,4, and 5-star level meets the 40-Hour Certification + 5-Hour Literacy requirement.
- DCF Staff Credential requirement – includes the Birth-Five Florida Child Care Professional Credential (FCCPC) – formerly the FL CDA-Equivalent, the DOE Early Childhood Professional Certificate (ECPC), national CDA or equivalent national early childhood credential, Associate degree or higher in ECE or related field, Associate degree or higher out of field with 6 credits in ECE plus 480 hours experience. See the website of the Department of Children and Families-DCF child care training: www.myflorida.com/childcare/training. For a detailed description of requirements please refer to the Quality Counts Professional Development Form.
- At the 2 and 3-star level, associate teachers without staff qualifications, hired six months prior to assessment may or may not be counted in Professional Development assessment, to be assessed to the advantage of the PD star rating.

4.3 Staff-to-Child Ratio and Group Size

Smaller group size is associated with greater child initiations, opportunities to work on extending language, mediation of children's social interactions, and support exploration and problem solving *(NAEYC, 1994)*. Programs with lower adult-to-child ratios individualize experiences based on a child's needs, provide appropriate care, stimulating learning activities, and a safe environment.

Staff-to Child Ratio and Group Size Assessment Process

Staff-to-Child Ratio and Group Size is assessed to determine a child care setting's overall star rating, and it accounts for 10% of a program's star rating. During the assessment month on a separate unannounced visit, an assessor will conduct a staff-to-child ratio and a group size observation on all birth to five classrooms. The assessor will record the number of staff and the number of children **present** in each classroom on the Staff: Child Ratio and Group Size Form (*Appendix 5)*. The director, or person in charge, will be asked to sign off on the documentation. An assessor will use this information in conjunction with birthdates provided on pre-assessment paperwork and/or most recent classroom roster to calculate the Ratio and Group Size Star Rating. Scores may be affected by ratio and group size information from ITERS and ECERS assessments.

Ratios – Group Sizes – 10%										
	1		2		3		4		5	
Age	Ratio	Group	Ratio	Group	Ratio	Group	Ratio	Group	Ratio	Group
Infant	1:4	n/a	1:4	12	1:4	8	1:4	8	1:4	8
One	1:6	n/a	1:6	12	1:6	12	1:5	10	1:5	10
Two	1:11	n/a	1:9	18	1:8	16	1:7	14	1:6	12
3	1:15	n/a	1:13	26	1:12	24	1:10	20	1:9	18
4-5	1:20	n/a	1:16	32	1:13	26	1:10	20	1:10	20

4.4 Program

The Program Pathway consists of two components: Family Engagement and Administration. The Program Pathway accounts for 15% of the Quality Counts Star Rating.

a. Family Engagement

Programs that effectively involve families are more successful in meeting the needs of children. Quality programs recognize the primacy of children's families and establish respectful relationships to support and promote children's optimal learning and development *(NAEYC).* Family engagement occurs in a variety of ways as an ongoing process i.e. Parent/Teacher meetings, family events, newsletters, etc.

Family Engagement Pathway Assessment Process

1. The Family Engagement Checklist *(Appendix 6*) lists all requirements for each star level.
2. Unless otherwise indicated, all items in each star level must be checked off to achieve that level and move on to the next star level.
3. Checklists items should be added to the Quality Counts binder with the exception of items checked onsite (see Appendix 9)
4. Many items are located in the program handbook or manual.
    a. The entire handbook/manual must be submitted. Please note this is a requirement for the Family Engagement pathway as parents are required to sign off on receipt of handbook.
    b. Appropriate headings must be highlighted and page numbers must be indicated on the checklist.

b. Administration

Research has found that overall administrative practices are crucial for ensuring high-quality outcomes for children and families. The purpose of the Administration Pathway is to measure early childhood leadership, management, and administrative practices. Without quality systems in place at the organizational level, high quality interactions and learning environments at the classroom level cannot be sustained.

Administration Pathway Assessment Process

1. The Administration Checklist *(Appendix 6*) lists all requirements for each star level.
2. Unless otherwise indicated, all items in each star level must be checked off to achieve that level and move on to the next star level.
3. Checklists items should be added to the Quality Counts binder with the exception of items checked onsite (see Appendix 9)
4. Monthly Staff Turnover

    Tracking practitioner turnover is a function of the Registry. This is accomplished through the Monthly Staff Turnover Report, which is completed by site Directors. Directors submit a Monthly Staff Turnover Report every month using either the paper Monthly Staff Turnover Report or via email utilizing the electronic version of the Monthly Staff Turnover Report. (Appendix 14)

http://www.pbcregistry.org/resources/MonthlyStaffTurnoverReportPaper.pdf

The Monthly Staff Turnover Report is due by the last day of the month, but a 10 calendar day grace period is in place to account for times in which the Monthly Staff Turnover Report cannot be submitted by the last day of the month. After the 10 calendar day grace period has passed, the Monthly Staff Turnover Report submission will be considered late. Timely submission of Monthly Staff Turnover Reports directly impacts the scoring of the Program Pathway's Administration Checklist. Monthly Staff Turnover Reports must be submitted to the Registry each month for the 13 months prior to, but not including the assessment month. (See Appendix 7- Administration Checklist).

There are many benefits to collecting practitioner turnover information. The national early childhood workforce is estimated to have an annual turnover rate between 25 and 40 percent (Center for the Child Care Workforce, June 2004). Quality Counts turnover is estimated to be between 4 and 26 percent. Turnover data provides information to Directors and Quality Counts System Partners on the early childhood education workforce as it pertains to longevity of employment and creating and implementing new strategies and programs to encourage practitioners to remain employed at their sites.

When analyzed by Directors, turnover information can encourage Directors to evaluate employer/employee satisfaction in the workplace. The information can prompt Directors to ask themselves questions such as: Did turnover create concerns for me in running my center? Did I hire the right person for my staff ? Is the staff adequately trained? What will I look for when I hire the next staff person? These questions are very important as they can aid in determining how to decrease the level of turnover that occurs in a site.

The Monthly Staff Turnover Report can be submitted to the Registry via email, mail or fax. Please note that even if there are no staff changes, the Monthly Staff Turnover Report, must still be submitted to the Registry each and every month. The process used to track the Monthly Staff Turnover is available for reference in Appendix 13.

5. Many items may be located in the staff handbook or manual.
    c. The entire handbook/manual can be submitted
    d. Appropriate headings must be highlighted and page numbers must be indicated on the checklist.

Program – 15%				
Family Engagement (All of the previous levels required)				
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
- Family Handbook is written and includes parental rights and responsibilities - Signed acknowledgement of receipt of handbook by parent	Minimum of 3 modes of communication are used to share child and program information with families	At least 2 family activities per year provided	-Families are invited to scheduled family-teacher conferences to review child's progress and needs and to set goals, 2x/ year - Activities provided for children and families to assist with transition to new settings within the child care program and/or to kindergarten	- Families have opportunity to evaluate the provider in writing at least annually - Resources are available to communicate with families in the family's primary language - Developmental screening and referral process is in place for 90% of all children, and results are shared with staff and families - Activity suggestions are developed with staff and families for children identified with delays
Program Administration (All of the previous levels required)				
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Risk management plan is in place (written action plan for emergencies such as hurricanes, fire, flood, etc. including evacuation routes identified and practice drills)	-Personnel policy manual includes written staff orientation procedures and job descriptions -Monthly staff turnover report submitted to Registry 13 months prior to, but not including the assessment month.	- Staff meetings are held at least quarterly - Written performance evaluations are completed annually	- Written operating policies & procedures include standard business and fiscal management practices - Marketing plan is in place to maximize full enrollment - Performance evaluations include classroom observation	- Salary scale is in place and is differentiated by education, experience - Financial recordkeeping system provides quarterly reports and analysis and 1-year projected budget - Performance evaluations include professional development plans

4.5 Curriculum Pathway Assessment Process

All programs must choose a developmentally appropriate curriculum approved by the Early Learning Coalition. Programs may select a curriculum from the Coalition's list or submit their curriculum for approval. A list of pre-approved curricula can be accessed via the Coalition's website at www.elcpalmbeach.org/curriculum

Please note, to achieve a 1 Star level, a program must have proof of the site's approved curriculum for each age group onsite during the data collection visit.

The three Environment Rating Scale subscales Language and Reasoning, Activities, and Program Structure are used to report on a program's "developmentally appropriate practice." In the ECERS, the subscales are Language-Reasoning, Activities, and Program Structure. In the ITERS, the subscales are Listening and Talking, Activities, and Program Structure. The scores for each of these subscales are listed on the Summary Assessment Report and the average classroom score for these subscales is the Program score.

Please note, to achieve the 4 and 5-Star levels, a program must attain the required average score as specified for levels 4 and 5 and provide additional documentation which includes:

- ★ Written lesson plans (past 6 weeks) that reflect goals and objectives (Level 4)
- ★ Sample of child observations, anecdotal notes/child portfolios or child assessments that guide individualized program planning and communication with families (Level 5)

Some documentation may be checked on site. Please refer to the Curriculum Checklist *(Appendix 8)*

Curriculum (All previous levels required) – 15%				
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Compliance with the Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County's rate agreement process for curriculum implementation. ● Copy of curriculum ● Curriculum is on Coalition's list OR program has successfully completed Coalition review process. - On the applicable Environment Rating Scales, the program has achieved average scores of 3.0 – 3.49 (Level 1) on the following subscales. ● Activities ● Language-Reasoning – ECERS, Listening and Talking – ITERS ● Program Structure	- On the applicable Environment Rating Scales, the program has achieved average scores of 3.5 – 3.99 (Level 2) on the following subscales. ● Activities ● Language-Reasoning – ECERS, Listening and Talking – ITERS ● Program Structure	- On the applicable Environment Rating Scales, the program has achieved average scores of 4.0 – 4.49 (Level 3) on the following subscales. ● Activities ● Language-Reasoning – ECERS, Listening and Talking – ITERS ● Program Structure	- On the applicable Environment Rating Scales, the program has achieved average scores of 4.5 – 4.99 (Level 4) on the following subscales. ● Activities ● Language-Reasoning – ECERS, Listening and Talking – ITERS ● Program Structure - Written lesson plans that reflect goals and objectives set by the approved developmentally appropriate curriculum for (see 6 weeks of past lesson plans) that highlight curriculum area for ages birth to five. - An approved developmentally appropriate curriculum is fully implemented (effective 10/1/2011)	- On the applicable Environment Rating Scales, the program has achieved average scores of 5+ (Level 5) on the following subscales. ● Activities ● Language-Reasoning – ECERS, Listening and Talking – ITERS ● Program Structure - A system is in place for ongoing child observations, individualized program planning and family communication. ● Process of completing ongoing child observations at least three times per year is described in writing (may be in the personnel policies and/or the family handbook). ● Samples of child observation form, anecdotal notes, and/or child portfolios that reflect goals and progress for each individual child observed for at least 30% of children enrolled (names deleted) Evidence that progress is shared with families. - Child assessment guides individualized program planning and communicating with families. Lesson planning forms in use include a section for activities targeted towards meeting identified needs of individual children.
Florida Early Learning Coalitions are directed by the state Office of Early Learning to establish lists of appropriate curricula and to establish a procedure for reviewing-approving other curricula. **If the average score is below 3.0, "0" points will be awarded for the Average Overall Score for that Pathway.**				

4.6 Onsite Data Collection Assessment Process

The Family Engagement, Administration, and Curriculum Pathways all have checklist items that are checked onsite during the data collection visit. The data collection visit date is included in the assessment notification letter. The Data Collection Assessor must observe all items on the Onsite Data Collection Checklist at the onsite visit in order to receive credit.

Checklist items, when applicable, are required for all children/staff however, the assessor will check a percentage of files during the onsite visit. The Data Collection Assessor will randomly choose a percentage of files, depending on the item.

Family Engagement

- Signed acknowledgement of receipt of parent handbook: 10% of total enrollment, based on updated classroom rosters. The Assessor will randomly highlight or circle the names of 10% of the children and the assessor will check those files. All files randomly must have appropriate documentation in order to receive credit.

- Completed Parent Surveys: 10% of enrollment at the time of survey distribution. Parent surveys are typically anonymous, so the assessor will check to see that a minimum of 10% were returned.

Curriculum

- Child Observation Forms, anecdotal notes and/or child portfolios: 30% of total enrollment, based on updated classroom rosters. The assessor will randomly highlight or circle the names of 30% of the children and those files will be checked. All files randomly selected must have appropriate documentation in order to receive credit. If portfolios are in use, they do not actually have to be located ‘in’ children’s files.

Data Collection Assessment Process

1. The Data Collection Assessor will verify current enrollment with the Director or person in charge. The Assessor will calculate percentages based on total enrollment.
    a. Children no longer enrolled will be removed from the roster
    b. New children will be added to the roster
    c. The Assessor will add the number of children on each classroom roster together to reach the total number of children enrolled. Total enrollment is noted on the Data Collection Checklist
    d. Percentages (10% and 30%) of total enrollment will be calculated by the Assessor and noted on the Data Collection Checklist
2. The Assessor will talk to the Director about where checklist items are located (classroom, office, etc).
3. The Assessor will check for each item on the checklist.
4. The Assessor will collect the Quality Counts Binder, the sign in/out sheets, and accreditation information, if applicable.
5. The Director will sign off on the checklist at the completion of the data collection visit. The form will clearly state which items were met and which were not, if any. A copy of the form will remain with the Director.

Onsite Data Collection Notes

1. Checklist items, when applicable, are required for all children/staff however, the Assessor will check a percentage of files during the onsite visit.
2. The Assessor always performs the random selection.
3. In order to receive credit, the Assessor must observe items on the day of the data collection visit. Programs cannot submit documentation after the visit

5.0 STAR RATING PROCESS

Calculating the Overall Star Rating
A program's Star Rating, which ranges from a 1-Star rating to a 5-Star Rating, is determined by the combined assessment, scoring, and weighting of each of the pathways to quality. Ratings for each pathway are based on five levels of standards, ranging from 1-Star standards to 5-Star standards, and are used to both assess quality and serve as a roadmap to improve quality. These standards were created to positively influence child outcomes.

The Star Rating for each pathway is multiplied by the weight assigned for that pathway. The Star Rating times the weight assigned equals points. The maximum points that a program can earn is 53 total points. The total points earned determines the programs overall Star Rating.

Appendix 10 (See Sample) This program has both ITERS and ECERS classrooms. The average ITERS score of 3.99 translates to a star rating of 2. The average ECERS score of 4.49 translates to a star rating of 3. The program has earned 10 points for the environment pathway.

This same process is completed for the remaining pathways and points are determined for each. Upon completion, all points are added together and subtotaled. The program has a subtotal of 28.75 points. The next step is to determine if the program is eligible for *Bonus Points.

***Programs can earn up to three bonus points if they meet the following criteria:**

One (1) Bonus point will be awarded to programs that have at least 25% of Professional Staff with a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development.

Two (2) Bonus points will be awarded to programs that have 50% or more of Professional Staff with a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development.

One (1) Bonus point will be awarded to programs that have a designated Curriculum Specialist with a Bachelor's degree and a minimum of 12 credits in ECE who oversees a center's educational program for at least 50% of the time.

If applicable, bonus points will be added to the subtotal to determine the total points earned for a program. A program's overall Star Rating is determined by the total points earned. Our sample program earned an additional 3 Bonus points. This increases their total to 31.75 points= 3 star. Our sample program did hold a Gold Seal designation and received a "plus" designation and their final Star Rating is a 3+.

Star Plus designation: Programs that hold a Gold Seal designation will earn a Star Rating "plus".

6.0 QUALITY SUPPORTS

6.1 Early Learning Coaches (Technical Assistance)

One of the most valuable services the Quality Counts program receive is coaching onsite technical assistance by certified teachers employed by the School District of Palm Beach County. Each Coach has had specialized training in quality improvement and consultation. Initially, the Coach will spend time learning about the culture of the program and building relationships with the director and staff.
The Coach will work with Providers to develop and implement quality improvement plans that focus on the Six Pathways to Quality.

The coaching process is an evidence-based approach utilizing *8 Stages of the Consultation Process* (Buysse & Wesley). This dynamic process engages providers in a collaborative working relationship designed to promote growth and positive change. The 8 Stages provide a framework for the change process in early childhood settings.

Stages may be linear, skipped and revisited depending on the program or the nature of the situation being addressed. Equipped with the stages of consultation, the Early Learning Coaches and the Providers will have a firm foundation to achieve shared goals for positive change. (See Stages of the Coaching & Consultation Process Page 25)

Stages of the Coaching & Consultation Process				Activities		Timeline
1	Entry	•	Establish general purpose for coaching.	Initial Site Visit- Site visit, miracle question, explain role of coach/consultation model		1 to 2 days
		•	Assess provider's willingness & commitment to participate.	Develop schedule of visits		
2	Building a Relationship with the Consultee	•	Form open & trusting relationship.	Spend time with director, in classrooms (helping, observing, learning)		2-3 months; ongoing
		•	Establish parameters of coaching.	Introduce Consultation model, collaborative process		2 days; ongoing
		•	Discuss general coaching roles & goals.	Solicit needs and goals of program and staff Provide overview of Quality Counts, Pathways, Partners, resources		2-3 weeks; ongoing
3	Gathering Information through Assessment	•	Identify factors relevant to provider's initial concern for change.	ERS Assessment, review report & tools Discuss standards for Quality Counts Pathways		Up to 1 month
4	Setting Goals	•	Reach consensus on concrete goals for change.	Develop an Improvement Plan with intensive sites Set reasonable goals and target dates based on the priorities of the provider Identify any other goals provider may have for the program not addressed in the assessment and other observed needs		Up to 1 month; ongoing
				Pacing chart may be developed		
5	Selecting Strategies	•	Reach consensus on a plan to address the goals.	Develop activity records detailing strategies, resources, people, and status Consider strategies that: a) provide the broadest impact for the effort; b) cause the least strain on resources; c) address the provider's "immediate pain"; d) items the provider is motivated to change; and/or e) ensure high likelihood of success		Ongoing/repeatedly
6	Implementing the Action Plan	•	Provider implements the plan with assistance and support from the coach.	Clarify roles Observation and feedback Discuss effectiveness of strategies Problem solving Document successes and completion of target dates		12 to 15 months
7	Evaluating the Plan	•	Assess the match between desired and actual outcomes as well as the consultation process and relationship.	Opportunities: Monthly meetings with the director 9 month review Formal Assessment Provider's Feedback of Consultation		Ongoing
				Review the pacing chart, if applicable		
8	Holding a Summary Conference	•	Provider assumes responsibility for maintenance of current plan.	Review of Formal Assessment Reflection		Up to 1 week
		•	New goals may be considered.	Priorities going forward		
		*	Stages may be linear, skipped and revisited depending on the program or the nature of the situation being addressed.			
			Adapted from: Buysse, V., & Wesley, P. (2005). Consultation in Early Childhood Settings. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing.			

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Intensive Phase

For the first 18 months, a program receives intensive, onsite coaching. Jointly, the Coach and Director/Owner produce an achievable program improvement plan with benchmarks and target dates based on the strengths and challenges identified in the assessment. Individual classroom and staff development plans may also be produced. The Coach will meet with the Director regularly. The ultimate goal for this phase is to prepare the director to gain all the necessary knowledge to become self sufficient and implement and sustain quality improvements as they move on to the maintenance phase.

Maintenance Phase

Following the first annual assessment a program moves from the Intensive Phase into the Maintenance Phase. The Early Learning Coach will spend up to nine hours a month in the program to provide maintenance support. During the Maintenance Phase, the Early Learning Coach and the Director develop classroom activity records and set target dates for continued improvements in all the Pathways to Quality. In order to ensure a program's progress towards quality improvement, target dates are monitored.

Compliance Plan

A program may be placed on a compliance review plan if:

- ★ Target dates are consistently not being met
- ★ Target dates are met for only a short period of time
- ★ Quality improvements are not maintained and must be consistently re-addressed by the Coach
- ★ Program is cited for having a recurring licensing violation in a three month period
- ★ Program turns an Assessor away at the time of assessment
- ★ A program may not be on more than one compliance plan per year

If after three months improvement is not evident as documented on activity or maintenance records, a recommendation will be made to the Quality Counts Leadership Committee that the program not continue its participation at this time. In such a case, a program may re-apply after one year.

Accreditation Support

An Early Learning Coach has been designated to provide accreditation support for programs going through the APPLE, NAEYC, or NAC accreditation or reaccreditation process. Support will be individualized, based on the needs of the program and the availability of the coach. The coach will work collaboratively with the director throughout the process. This support is in addition to the services provided by the assigned coach.

6.2 Quality Assessments

All classrooms are assessed by highly trained and qualified program Assessors employed by Family Central, Inc. Assessors attend Environment Rating Scale training at the internationally renowned Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina. This training is conducted by the authors of the scales. In order to ensure reliable assessments and inter-rater reliability more than one Assessor may observe a classroom at the same time.
On the day of assessment Assessors will arrive at the center between 8:00 – 8:30 a.m.

- ★ At least 50% of ITERS and/or ECERS classrooms will be randomly selected for formal assessment. The assessment will last approximately 3-4 hours per classroom.
- ★ To ensure reliable assessments, the Assessors may not interact with staff or the children during the assessment, and will observe anything that is accessible to the children.
- ★ After each classroom assessment, Assessors will need to meet with the Lead Teacher for approximately 30 minutes in a private place to conduct an exit interview.

Clarification Policy

Should a Provider have a question about how formal Star Ratings were determined, first contact your Early Learning Coach or Career Advisor. If clarification is not obtained, submit a request for review.

Request for Review

a. The program Director, Owner or Board must submit a request for clarification in writing to Family Central, Inc. within 10 business days of the provider receiving its Star Rating and Summary Assessment Report. Please send requests to: Early Care and Education Manager; Family Central, Inc., 3111 South Dixie Highway, Suite 217, West Palm Beach, FL 33405-1557.

b. The written request for review must include a statement that identifies the specific information and/or rating that needs clarification.

c. The Provider may submit additional supporting documentation along with the written request for review.

d. The Assessor will respond in writing within 30 days of receiving the request.

Postponement of Assessment:

a. A program requesting a postponement of its annual assessment may do so in writing to Family Central, Inc.

b. A program may be granted a postponement of its scheduled assessment for up to 30 days or as assessment schedule allows. Quality Counts programs are permitted a postponement once every other year for extenuating circumstances.

c. The professional development cycle will not be adjusted due to the program's decision to request a postponement of assessment. Professional development will be calculated based on 13 months prior to the program's originally scheduled annual assessment date.

d. All Professional Staff employed at the site at the time the assessment takes place will be counted in the original assessment cycle with the exception of Associate Teachers hired six months before the assessment. Staff no longer employed at your site will not count in the Professional Development assessment.

Request for Advance Assessment

Quality Counts programs that have completed their first formal assessment may request an advance assessment for their subsequent assessments in writing to Family Central, Inc. All requests will be reviewed and a decision will be made on an individual case by case basis. The professional development cycle will not be adjusted due to the program's decision to request advance assessment. Professional development will be calculated based on 13 months prior to the program's scheduled annual assessment date.

Hiatus Policy for Quality Counts sites facing unusual circumstances

Quality Counts programs may request a hiatus for a period of 90 days due to unusual circumstances. All requests for hiatus will be reviewed and decisions will be made on a case by case basis inclusive of a 90 day exception for extreme situations. If the hiatus is approved, the following supports will remain in place; WAGE$, SEEK, Educational Incentive Awards, and career advisement. Sites on hiatus will not receive the support of an Early Learning Coach or quality enhancement payments for that period. Quality enhancement payments will be prorated. Upon return from hiatus, the Quality Counts program will continue from the point where it left off prior to the hiatus. The professional development cycle will not be adjusted due to the program's decision to request hiatus. Professional Development will be calculated based on 13 months prior to the program's previously scheduled annual assessment date.

Any Quality Counts provider that knowingly attempts to defraud the system by intentionally misrepresenting or falsifying information or documentation for assessment purposes will be subject to review by QC Leadership and could result in termination from Quality Counts.

6.3 Mini-Grants

Quality Counts has one-time mini-grant opportunity which is available during the intensive phase of Quality Counts. Mini-grants help programs pay for some of the costs associated with improving quality and doing business at a higher quality level. Many activities necessary to improve and maintain quality do not typically cost money.

Questionable Documentation

The amount of the mini-grant is related to the program size and the actual enrollment (less school age children) at the time of entry into Quality Counts. A participating program may be eligible for up to $5,000 in mini-grant money (these dollars will be granted in accordance with benchmarks, timelines, and expenditure budget (see schedule)

Quality Counts Mini-grant Schedule

Based on attendance at Baseline (less school age children)	Annual amount of Mini Grant
1-50 children	$2,000
51-100 children	$3,000
101-150 children	$4,000
151+ children	$5,000

If a program should choose to withdraw from Quality Counts and re-apply later, it will not be eligible to receive additional mini-grant money.

A program may build up its mini-grant dollars by delaying receipt of the grant. Accumulating mini-grant dollars may be beneficial if the director and coach have targeted a major purchase to assist with quality improvement. For example, if a program needs child size furniture and that furniture purchase exceeds the amount of their first distribution amount, a program may hold onto its three-month grant allocation. This amount can be added to either or both of the six and nine month allocations, respectively. However, since mini-grant money is only meant to supplement expenditures, a program may choose to make other purchases on a timelier basis. If extra time is needed to meet benchmarks, the coach may extend the mini-grant opportunity up to 18 months, depending on the program's achievement of benchmarks. ***Capital improvements cannot be funded with mini-grant dollars.***

6.4 Career Advisors, Professional Development, Scholarships and Awards

Career advisors provide a critical service to Quality Counts programs. Each site receives guidance and advisement from an assigned Career Advisor employed by Palm Beach State College Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education. The Advisor will work with Providers to develop a Center Professional Development Plan focused on the Professional Development Pathway. The Advisor also works one-on-one with each Professional Staff employed at the center. Practitioners develop an Individual Development Plan identifying training and education that moves them along a Career Pathway.

Career Advisors schedule visits to each site at various points during each Quality Counts assessment cycle. The purpose of the site visit is for Career Advisors to work jointly with the Director to develop, review, or revise the Center Professional Development Plan as needed over time. Many variables can affect a Center Professional Development Plan including staff turnover, as well as education and training achievements attained by practitioners. The goal is for Directors to gain an understanding of the Professional Development Pathway thus allowing them to use that information to help guide their Professional Staff toward a mutually agreed upon Quality Counts outcome.

Career Advisors provide individual practitioners with career advisement sessions. These sessions may be conducted at the center, or may also be provided at the Institute of Excellence or other agreed upon locations. Depending on the career goal of the practitioner, the Career Advisors can assist the practitioner in selecting formal credit education or informal non-credit training that moves the practitioner along a career pathway.

S.E.E.K. Scholarships [Seeking **E**xcellence in **E**ducation and **K**nowledge**]**

Quality Counts practitioners who are active members of the Registry are eligible for S.E.E.K. Scholarships for formal credit and Registry approved informal non-credit courses, education and approved training, and conferences specific to the field of early care and education. Scholarships may also cover textbooks and additional fees associated with college enrollment. SEEK Scholarships are available on a first come, first served basis, and based upon availability of funds. http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/x4264.xml .

The S.E.E.K. Incentive Awards

The **S.E.E.K. Scholarship** Incentive Award Programs provide monetary awards to Quality Counts practitioners completing specific education or training requirements. The awards are distributed annually and require submission of applications within designated time periods. Two award programs currently available include the **E**ducation **I**ncentive **A**ward (EIA) and the **I**nformal **T**raining **I**ncentive **A**ward (ITIA).

Educational **I**ncentive **A**wards and **I**nformal **T**raining **I**ncentive **A**wards recognizes Practitioners employed by participating Quality Counts programs as they achieve specific education or training benchmarks as they advance within their career in early childhood education. The monetary awards are distributed annually to qualifying Quality Counts Practitioners.

Child Care WAGE$ Florida Salary Supplement Program

The WAGE$ program is designed to assist Directors and Owners with staff retention by rewarding educational achievement and longevity. The WAGE$ Supplement program provides education-based wage supplements to early childhood Practitioners working with children birth to five years of age. WAGE$ Supplements are based on the level of education already attained and continued employment at a Quality Counts program. Payments are distributed in six-month increments after the Practitioner has been employed for one year in the same Quality Counts program. The WAGE$ program is fully funded by the Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County and administered through the Institute of Excellence. Career Advisors will provide practitioners with applications and supplemental information on the program.

Translation and Evaluation of Foreign College Degrees

Translation and Evaluation of foreign college degrees is available to Quality Counts Practitioners who have been employed at the same program for six months and have completed the 45-hour Department of Children and Families (DCF) certification. Applications for the Translation and Evaluation service are available on a year round basis. Contact your Career Advisor for more information.

6.5 Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry

A Registry is an element common to most professional development systems and generally addresses aspects of both Practitioners and Trainers/Training.

A Registry provides the means to document and acknowledge education, training, and professional achievements of individuals working within the field of early childhood.

The Registry database provides a system for collecting, storing, and reporting data about the early childhood education field which supports ongoing community planning for professional development efforts and initiatives.

The Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry serves the local early care and education community in many ways: elevating the status of the profession, aiding in planning education and training opportunities, raising parent awareness about the professional development of their children's caregivers and raising public awareness about the critical importance of quality early childhood care and education.

Components of the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry:

- Training Calendar
- Trainer/Training Approval
- Practitioner Achievement and Recognition

Training Calendar:

- Maintains a comprehensive list of Registry approved training events for the early care and education workforce offered by various Registry approved trainers/training organizations. www.pbcregistry.org

Training and Trainer Approval:

- Establishes standards and criteria for evaluating training
- Verifies core knowledge and content areas
- Establishes standards and verifies qualifications of trainers
- Promotes and increases quality of training

Practitioner Achievement and Recognition:

- Maintains records and documentation on professional development
- Provides basis for career advising and determining future education and career goals
- Recognizes professional achievements, providing a psychological "paycheck" to providers who are committed to career path and professional development

Role of the Registry in the Quality Counts (QC) System:

Membership in the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry is a requirement for all Quality Counts professional staff. The Registry provides the means to document and acknowledge education, training, and professional achievements of Quality Counts staff. It supports career advising by providing a basis for determining future education and career goals. The Registry is an important tool you can access and use as you continue in Quality Counts.

The Registry provides both Trainer and Practitioner reports to Registry members through secure personal login at www.pbcregistry.org.. Registry reports include formal and informal professional development accomplishments, as well as DCF licensing requirement trainings. In order for the Registry report to display the most current information, it is imperative for Registry members to continuously update the Registry as professional development accomplishments are made. The Registry Update form can be found at www.pbcregistry.org. For Quality Counts participants, keeping the Registry report updated and complete is essential, as the information contained in the Registry is used by the Quality Counts assessment team to conduct the formal assessment of the Quality Counts Professional Development Pathway.

Please note: Newly employed practitioners at existing Quality Counts sites who are not active Registry members, must complete, sign and submit the Registry Practitioner application with supporting documentation to the PBC Registry and become an active Registry member within thirty (30) days from the date of hire. A Registry Practitioner application can be found at www.pbregistry.org.

6.6 Quality Enhancement Payments

Programs that exceed the 1-Star level (minimal) standards receive Quality Enhancement Payments. Payments are designed to help with costs associated with providing care that goes beyond basic licensing requirements. Enhancement payments are made for ratings at the 2-Star through the 5-Star levels at gradually increasing rates.

Children's Services Council strongly encourages programs participating in Quality Counts to utilize their Quality Enhancement Payments to support continued quality improvement activities to include, but are not limited to**:**

- ★ Staff retention activities
- ★ The establishment of a budget to support staff training and education including an allocation of dollars for substitute teachers
- ★ The purchase of developmentally appropriate materials for use by the children in care, especially for those children with special need

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PAYMENT GUIDELINES				
1. Quality Enhancement Payments are based on the overall star rating and attendance counts (excluding school-age children). 2. A site is eligible to receive payments after it has been in the Quality Counts for at least 18 months and has been awarded an overall star rating based on its first formal assessment. 3. A program's overall star rating is based on the weighting of the pathways. 4. Quality Enhancement Payments will be provided for star ratings of 2-Stars and above as shown in the chart below 5. A program's attendance count will be based on sign-in and out sheets from the same weeks that the School District of Palm Beach County selects for its October and February FTE counts. a. If a program is re-assessed during the months of November through February, that program's attendance count will be based on sign-in and out sheets taken during the same week the School District selected for its October FTE count. b. If a program is re-assessed during the months of March through October, that program's attendance count will be based on sign-in and out sheets taken during the same week the School District selected for its February FTE count. 6. Quality Enhancement Payments will be distributed on a quarterly basis and payments will be prorated. (The chart below lists the annual quality enhancement payment schedule, not the quarterly schedule.) 7. Quality Enhancement Payments can only be made to those programs that have current enrollment and attendance.				
ATTENDANCE COUNT	2-Star Level	3-Star Level	4-Star Level	5-Star Level
1 – 50 Children	$3,000	$12,000	$18,000	$21,000
51 – 100 Children	$5,000	$14,000	$20,000	$23,000
101 – 150 Children	$6,500	$16,000	$22,000	$25,000
151+ Children	$8,000	$18,000	$24,000	$27,000

To ensure that Children's Services Council funding for the Quality Enhancement Payments, which are dollars that come from public funding, are used appropriately and not used for private purposes, designated staff from Children's Services Council will visit programs throughout the year to review documentation regarding payment utilization.

7.0 Additional Information

7.1 Roadmap to Quality Counts: Navigating Palm Beach County's Quality Rating Improvement System

Do you wish you and/or the staff at your site had more information about the national movement of quality improvement systems? This 12 hour series gives participants an overview of the Palm Beach County Quality Counts purpose, pathway requirements, and available resources. Participants will be actively engaged in learning more about the importance of quality childcare and how it applies to their program, classroom, and the benefits to the children in our community.

The course is divided into 3 sessions and participants will earn 1.2 Continuing Education Units (CEU). Each session has a guest speaker which enhances the understanding of Quality Counts and the partners involved in this voluntary program. In this course participants will learn more about the history, incentives, benefits and assessment process. In addition a review of each pathway standards for the early childhood environment, curriculum, ratio & group size, professional development and program requirements. Attendance is required in all 3 sessions.

Roadmap to Quality Counts is open for enrollment from directors, owners and teaching staff at sites that are interested in joining, newly accepted, or already actively involved in Quality Counts. For more information to please call Family Central, Inc. at 514-3353.

7.2 Director Portal

The Director's Portal is a tool that was designed for all Directors and Family Child Care Providers to use as a valuable resource to assist in managing their participation in Quality Counts.

Programs who use the Portal are able to access their site's assessment reports, current star ratings and past historical star ratings, professional development plans and Registry information. There is also an email feature that allows programs to communicate with their Early Learning Coach and Career Advisor through the Portal.

To access the Portal, programs will need a functional computer with internet access. Each program will be assigned a user name and password.

To register for a Director Portal training, please visit www.cscpbc.org or contact Amanda Scott at (561) - 374-7577 for any technical difficulties with the Director Portal, i.e. log-in problems, forgot user name or password, etc.

8.0 Appendix

Appendix 1: Application Form

Appendix 2: Pre-Assessment Paperwork

Appendix 3: Pathways Standards

Appendix 4: Quality Counts Benchmarks and Staff Qualifications Form

Appendix 5: Staff: Child Ratio and Group Size

Appendix: 6: Family Engagement Checklist

Appendix: 7: Administration Checklist

Appendix: 8: Curriculum Checklist

Appendix 9: Pathway Documents Onsite Data Collection Checklist

Appendix 10: Sample Star Rating Certificate

Appendix 11: Final Star Rating Form

Appendix 12: Quality Counts Organizational Chart

Appendix 13: Registry Turnover Procedures

Appendix 14: Monthly Turnover Report

Appendix 15: Quality Counts Contact List

Appendix 16: Glossary

Appendix 1

QUALITY COUNTS

CENTER APPLICATION FORM

Section 1: Center Information (Please Print)

Center Name		License Number	
Corporate Name		Email Address	
Address	City	State	Zip
Owner		Center Phone	
Director		Fax	
Is Your Center Accredited? If so, by whom?		Is Center Exempt from Licensing?	
If licensed, How long has this center been licensed by current owner?		Subsidized Service Agreement with Family Central: Yes_____ No_____	

Licensed Capacity _____	Current Enrollment (Birth-5) _____	Num. of Subsidized Children: (Birth – 5 years) _____	Hours of operation _____AM to _____PM

Please list number of classrooms by age groups: (Example: 1- Infant class, 4- Two year old classes, etc)

Section 2: Center Agreements

If admitted into Quality Counts, We (on behalf of _____) will agree to the following:

Legal entity or business name if not incorporated

1. As director/owner/ board chairperson, we understand that our facility must maintain its licensure status and compliance with licensing standards, have held a valid license for a year, and have a valid service Agreement with Family Central.
2. We agree that a designated staff person will complete a training course on the Environment Rating Scales, both ECERS and ITERS, The Roadmap to Quality and/or related Quality Counts trainings within one year of our facility's baseline assessment.
3. We agree to allow a Program Assessor to conduct the appropriate Environment Rating Scale assessments at our facility for our initial and annual assessments and agree to document and provide information on staff development, parent involvement, and program implementation for those assessments.
4. We will have an early learning coach on-site to provide technical assistance to the director and/or staff for up to 3 days a week for a period of 18 months, after this period we will accept maintenance visits by an early learning coach up to 9 hours per month, for as long as we choose to be a participant of Quality Counts.
5. We agree to create improvement plan(s) with our early learning coach that set benchmarks, and we agree to meet those benchmarks with staff.
6. We agree to support the creation of professional development plan(s) for the center and individual staff members with a career advisor, and to support staff's efforts to attend trainings, classes and workshops to the fullest extent possible.
7. We support the implementation (or maintenance, if existing) of a developmentally appropriate, research based, active learning curriculum at our center.
8. We agree to attend all meetings, such as regular director/owner meetings, required by Quality Counts or to send a representative if we are unable to attend, due to illness, vacation, etc.
9. We understand that the purpose of Quality Counts is to enhance quality in child care settings to improve child outcomes and that we may be eligible for quality enhancement payments if we attain a 2-Star rating or above after our 18-month assessment.
10. We agree to join the PB State Early Childhood Registry (director and all staff).
11. We understand that if there is a change in owner and/or director we will notify Family Central, Inc. in writing, within two weeks.
12. We understand that no one answer on this Application Form will disqualify our center from participation in Quality Counts and agree to answer all questions, including those on the attached pages accurately.

***Signature of Owner (if unincorporated) or President/Board Chairperson (if incorporated)**

Printed name	Title	Date
*Signature of Center Director		Date

*** Owner and Director must sign this application.**

DM# 56713

Section 3: Staff Tenure and Education

Center Name

1. List all professional personnel. For categories of Personnel, see column listed as "Professional Staff." List staff by group in the order given under Professional Staff. Run off additional sheets if needed. Put center name on each sheet.
2. Check above each box for all items that apply to the each staff member.

List all professional staff members

Mark:
Full Time = FT (20+ hrs per week)
Part Time = PT (Less than 20 hrs per week)

Professional Staff
List staff by **group in the following order:**

D=Director
AD=Asst. Director
LT= Lead Teachers
AT=Associate Teachers
ES=Education (Curriculum) Specialists

Primary Language Spoken

E=English
S=Spanish
C=Creole
O=Other

Credentials and Degrees (
HS= High School Diploma
GED= Valid Diploma Credential
CDA= National or Equivalency Credential
Foun Dir.= Foundation Level Director's Credential
Adv Dir.= Advanced Level Director's Credential
AA/AS= Two Year Degree
BA, MA =Bachelor's Degree or Master's Degree
Major= Write in Degree Major

Check/Complete all that apply)

Name	FT or PT	D	AD	LT	AT	ES	Age Group of Class Assignment	E	S	C	O	Years or Months at this Site	HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
Ex. Jan Smith	FT	√					No Classes		√			2 yr.		√	√		√		√	Business				
Ex. Ann Casey	PT			√			0-12 mo.	√				8 mo.	√			√					√	History		
1.																								
2.																								
3.																								
4.																								
5.																								
6.																								

DM# 56713

Section 3: Staff Tenure and Education

Center Name

7.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
8.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
9.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
10.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
11.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
12.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
13.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
14.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
15.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
16.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
17.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
18.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major

DM# 56713

Section 3: Staff Tenure and Education

Center Name

19.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
20.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
21.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
22..		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
23.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
24.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
25.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
26.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
27.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
28.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
29.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major
30.		D	AD	LT	AT	ES		E	S	C	O		HS	GED	CDA National	CDA Equiv	Foun Dir	Adv Dir	AA AS	AA or AS Major	BA BS	BA or BS Major	MA MS	MA or MS Major

DM# 56713

Section 4: Current and Future Quality

Please **briefly** answer the questions below. You may use additional sheets of paper if needed. *Make certain your center's name is on each additional sheet*.

1. **Does the director or director/owner have teaching and/or other school responsibilities on a daily basis, such as after school pick-up, early morning care, substitute duties, etc.? If yes, please explain.**

2. **List and explain the strengths and growth areas of the director.**

3. **List and explain the strengths and growth areas of your program (center).**

Name of Center: _____

DM# 56713

4. **In what areas do you feel your staff members need training?**

5. **In what areas do you (as the facility director) feel you need training?**

6. **Describe how you (as the facility director) have made or will make arrangements to allow staff members to attend trainings, classes and/or workshops.**

Name of Center:

DM# 56713

7. ***How do you define and measure quality in early care and education?***

8. ***What have you done to improve quality at your site?***

9. ***Have you informed your staff about Quality Counts? If yes, please explain. If no, how do you plan to inform your staff?***

10. ***Please attach your center's current license and last two Licensing Inspection Reports, if your center is not currently in compliance, please explain.***

Name of Center: _____

DM# 56713

11. In what areas do you (as the facility director) see room for change or improvement?

By 5:00 p.m., mail, hand-deliver, or fax this completed form and all required documents to:

Mr. Barry Miller
Director of Early Childhood Education
Family Central, Inc.
3111 South Dixie Highway, Suite 222
West Palm Beach, FL 33405-1557
Fax: 561-514-3353

If you have questions about this Application Form or Quality Counts, please contact Melinda Cato, Quality Counts Liaison, at (561) 374-7633.

Checklist:

_____ **I have completed all questions on this form.**

_____ **I have written my Center's name on all attached sheets of paper.**

_____ **I have attached a copy of my last two Licensing Inspection Reports.**

_____ **I have submitted a copy of my current License.**

_____ **I have attached a copy of my accreditation, if applicable.**

Signature of Director	Title	Date
Signature of Owner or President/Board Chair	Title	Date

A program's application will be considered valid for one year and programs will be automatically reconsidered for selection every selection round using the information in their application.

Name of Center:

DM# 56713

Appendix 2

PRE-ASSESSMENT PAPERWORK

INFORMATION LIST FOR PROGRAM ASSESSORS

Section I

Please complete and return to Family Central within 5 working days. Thank you.

Center: _____

Address/Street: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip Code:** _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Fax: _____

Owner: _____

Director: _____

Assistant Director: _____

Center Hours: _____

Significant changes in schedule within the next 30 days (Holidays, Special Events, Field Trips, Early Dismissal etc):

_____

_____

Please list all possible classrooms that can be assessed with the ITERS (Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale): This includes classrooms in which the majority of the children are younger than 30 months.

_____

_____

Please list all possible classrooms that can be assessed with the ECERS (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale): This includes classrooms in which the majority of the children are older than 30 months.

_____

_____

DM # 90847

Please complete the following sections A, B, C, & D for each ITERS classroom in your center:

Section A: Classroom Information

Center Name: _____

Classroom Name:_____

Age range of children in classroom:

_____

Name of Lead Teacher and Primary Language:

Check if a translator is needed for the interview: ____

Days/Hours the Lead Teacher Works:

_____

Name of Assistant or Aide and Primary Language:

_____

Days/Hours the Assistant works:

_____

List any other staff & their titles that are in the classroom & work with the children daily (or almost daily)

Name/Title: _____

Days/Hours Works: _____

Number of children in the group with an identified & diagnosed disability, with a complete assessment: _____

Check type(s) of disability:

- **Physical/sensory** _____ **Cognitive/language**_____
- **Social/emotional** _____ **Other (list)** _____

List number of children speaking:

- **English** _____ **Spanish** _____
- **Creole** _____ **Other** _____

DM # 90847

Section B: Class List

Please list children youngest to oldest

Name	Birthdate	*FT/PT
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		
16.		
17.		
18.		
19.		
20.		

FT (fulltime)/PT (part-time) If part-time, list days and time child attends.

Number of children currently enrolled: _____

Highest number of children allowed to be enrolled in this class: _____

Section C: Class Schedule

DM # 90847

Section D: Staff Information

Name:

Title:

Length of employment at this center: _____ years _____ months

Length of service in Child Care field: _____ years _____ months

Highest level of education: Please circle and indicate major if applicable.

GED

HS Diploma

CDA

Associates Degree major _____

Bachelors Degree major _____

Masters Degree major _____

Please mail or fax (561)-514-3381 the top sheet, Sections A and B for each classroom, class schedules, and Section D for all staff to:

Ms. Cindy Phillips
Family Central, Inc.
Early Care and Education Manager
3111 S. Dixie Hwy., Suite 222
West Palm Beach, FL 33405
561-514-3381

DM # 90847

Appendix 3

QUALITY COUNTS

Palm Beach County's Quality Rating Improvement System

Children's Services Council
PALM BEACH COUNTY

Expect Success® | Quality Rating Improvement System

Quality Standards for Child Care Centers and School Based Sites

Learning Environment – Environment Rating Scales-Revised (ECERS,ITERS) – 40%

- Subscales: Space-Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interaction, Program Structure
- Based on average scores of sample of classrooms
- Scored on 7-point scale: 1=Inadequate, 3=Minimal, 5=Good, 7=Excellent

1	2	3	4	5
ECERS-R 3.0 – 3.49	ECERS-R 3.5 – 3.99	ECERS-R 4.0 – 4.49	ECERS-R 4.5 – 5.49	ECERS-R 5.5 – 7.0
ITERS-R 3.0 – 3.49	ITERS-R 3.5 – 3.99	ITERS-R 4.0 – 4.49	ITERS-R 4.5 – 5.49	ITERS-R 5.5 – 7.0

Assessor will randomly select 50% of a program's classrooms within each age group and will assess those classrooms with either the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) or the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS). A program's average ITERS and/or ECERS classroom score becomes the Environment quality score.

If the average score is below 3.0, "0" points will be awarded for the Environment Pathway Overall Score.

DM # 89399

Staff Qualifications/Professional Development – 20%				
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Same as FL Licensing: - All staff have enrolled in the 40-hour DCF training with ***DM # 89399*** ire - 40 hours certification completed within one year of hire - 5-hour Early Literacy completed - 1 staff per 20 enrolled children have DCF Staff Credential -Facility Director holds level I or II Director Credential	- Associate teachers: 25% have HS diploma/GED, 25% have DCF Staff Credential, 25% have one 3 credit ECE class or 45 hours informal ECE training annually, if higher benchmarks are not met. - Lead teachers: All have HS diploma/GED, 75% have DCF Staff Credential and 75% have one 3 credit ECE class or 45 hours informal ECE training annually, if higher benchmarks are not met. - Facility Director has HS diploma/GED, DCF Staff Credential and one 3 credit ECE class or 45 hours informal ECE training annually, if higher benchmarks are not met	- Associate teachers: 50% have HS diploma/GED, 50% have DCF Staff Credential, 50% have one 3 credit ECE class or 45 hours informal ECE training annually, if higher benchmarks are not met. Lead teachers: All have HS diploma/GED, 90% have DCF Staff Credential and 90% have one 3 credit ECE class or 45 hours informal ECE training annually, if higher benchmarks are not met. - Facility Director has HS diploma/GED, DCF Staff Credential or and one 3 credit ECE class or 45 hours informal ECE training annually, if higher benchmarks are not met	- Associate teachers: 75% have HS diploma/GED, 75% have DCF Staff Credential, 75% have one 3 credit ECE class or 45 hours informal ECE training annually, if higher benchmarks are not met. Lead teachers: All have HS diploma/GED, DCF Staff Credential, 90% have one 3 credit ECE class or 45 hours informal ECE training annually, if higher benchmarks are not met.25% have completed 12 ECE credit hours 25% will hold an Associate degree or higher with 12 ECE credits or 60 credits with 12 ECE credits (effective 10/1/2012) - Facility Director has HS diploma/GED, DCF Staff Credential, completed 12 ECE credit hours, and holds FL Advanced level credential Associate degree or higher with 12 ECE credits or 60 credits with 12 ECE credits (effective 10/1/2012)	- Associate teachers: All have HS diploma/GED, DCF Staff Credential, 75% have one 3 credit ECE class or 45 hours informal ECE training annually if higher benchmarks are not met and 25% have completed 12 ECE credit hours Lead teachers: All have; HS diploma/GED, DCF Staff Credential, and completed 12 ECE credit hours, if higher benchmarks are not met. 50% will hold an Associate degree or higher with 12 ECE credits or 60 credits with 12 ECE credits (effective 10/1/2012) - Facility Director has HS diploma/GED, DCF Staff Credential, completed 12 ECE credit hours, and holds FL Advanced level credential Associate degree or higher with 12 ECE credits or 60 credits with 12 ECE credits (effective 10/1/2012)
10 hr State In-service Requirement	25% Professional Staff completed annual 50 points	50% Professional Staff completed annual 50 points	75% Professional Staff completed annual 50 points	100% Professional Staff completed annual 50 points

- 100% of professional staff at the 2, 3, 4, and 5-star level meet the 40-Hour Certification + 5-Hour Literacy requirement.
- DCF Staff Credential requirement – includes the Birth-Five Florida Child Care Professional Credential (FCCPC) – formerly the FL CDA-Equivalent, the DOE Early Childhood Professional Certificate (ECPC), national CDA or equivalent national early childhood credential, Associate degree or higher in ECE or related field, Associate degree or higher out of field with 6 credits in ECE plus 480 hours experience. See the website of the Department of Children and Families-DCF child care training: www.myflorida.com/childcare/training. For a detailed description of requirements please refer to the Quality Counts Professional Development Form.
- At the 2 and 3-star level, associate teachers without staff qualifications, hired six months prior to assessment may or may not be counted in Professional Development assessment, to be assessed to the advantage of the PD star rating.

- **Professional Staff:** includes facility director and assistant director; lead teachers; associate teachers; and curriculum/education specialists, "floater", permanent substitute
- **Facility Director:** the full-time administrative person at a single site
- **Lead Teacher:** (a minimum of one per classroom) person responsible for a group of children for the majority of the day, duties may vary by site. Lead teacher category requirements apply to certain other professional staff – assistant director and curriculum/educational specialists.
- **Associate Teacher:** teaching personnel other than the lead teacher needed to meet the minimum ratio requirements; does not require an associate's degree.
- **In-service Education and Training:** includes GED, ESOL, preparatory courses, credit and non-credit college classes, and approved related workshops and conferences successfully completed with an "S", "P", or "C" and better. First aid and CPR are not counted as in-service hours.
- **Education and Training Hours:** 3 credit hours = 45 clock hours; 1 CEU = 10 clock hours; and each clock hour = 1 hour

Ratios – Group Sizes – 10%										
	1		**2**		**3**		**4**		**5**	
Age	**Ratio**	**Group**	**Ratio**	**Group**	**Ratio**	**Group**	**Ratio**	**Group**	**Ratio**	**Group**
Infant	1:4	n/a	1:4	12	1:4	8	1:4	8	1:4	8
One	1:6	n/a	1:6	12	1:6	12	1:5	10	1:5	10
Two	1:11	n/a	1:9	18	1:8	16	1:7	14	1:6	12
3	1:15	n/a	1:13	26	1:12	24	1:10	20	1:9	18
4-5	1:20	n/a	1:16	32	1:13	26	1:10	20	1:10	20

Program – 15%				
Family Engagement (All of the previous levels required)				
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
- Family Handbook is written and includes parental rights and responsibilities - Signed acknowledgement of receipt of handbook by parent	Minimum of 3 modes of communication are used to share child and program information with families	At least 2 family activities per year provided	-Families are invited to scheduled family-teacher conferences to review child's progress and needs and to set goals, 2x/year - Activities provided for children and families to assist with transition to new settings within the child care program and/or to kindergarten	- Families have opportunity to evaluate the provider in writing at least annually - Resources are available to communicate with families in the family's primary language - Developmental screening and referral process is in place for 90% of all children, and results are shared with staff and families - Activity suggestions are developed with staff and families for children identified with delays
Program Administration (All of the previous levels required)				
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Risk management plan is in place (written action plan for emergencies such as hurricanes, fire, flood, etc. including evacuation routes identified and practice drills)	- Personnel policy manual includes written staff orientation procedures and job descriptions - Staff Turnover Reports submitted to Registry monthly	- Staff meetings are held at least quarterly - Written performance evaluations are completed annually	- Written operating policies & procedures include standard business and fiscal management practices - Marketing plan is in place to maximize full enrollment - Performance evaluations include classroom observation	- Salary scale is in place and is differentiated by education, experience - Financial recordkeeping system provides quarterly reports and analysis and 1-year projected budget - Performance evaluations include professional development plans

Curriculum (All previous levels required) – 15%				
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Compliance with the Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County's rate agreement process for curriculum implementation. ● Copy of curriculum ● Curriculum is on Coalition's list OR program has successfully completed Coalition review process. - On the applicable Environment Rating Scales, the program has achieved average scores of 3.0 – 3.49 (Level 1) on the following subscales. ● Activities ● Language-Reasoning – ECERS, Listening and Talking – ITERS ● Program Structure	- On the applicable Environment Rating Scales, the program has achieved average scores of 3.5 – 3.99 (Level 2) on the following subscales. ● Activities ● Language-Reasoning – ECERS, Listening and Talking – ITERS ● Program Structure	- On the applicable Environment Rating Scales, the program has achieved average scores of 4.0 – 4.49 (Level 3) on the following subscales. ● Activities ● Language-Reasoning – ECERS, Listening and Talking – ITERS ● Program Structure	- On the applicable Environment Rating Scales, the program has achieved average scores of 4.5 – 4.99 (Level 4) on the following subscales. ● Activities ● Language-Reasoning – ECERS, Listening and Talking – ITERS ● Program Structure - Written lesson plans that reflect goals and objectives set by the approved developmentally appropriate curriculum for (see 6 weeks of past lesson plans) that highlight curriculum area for ages birth to five. - An approved developmentally appropriate curriculum is fully implemented (effective 10/1/2011)	- On the applicable Environment Rating Scales, the program has achieved average scores of 5+ (Level 5) on the following subscales. ● Activities ● Language-Reasoning – ECERS, Listening and Talking – ITERS ● Program Structure - A system is in place for ongoing child observations, individualized program planning and family communication. ● Process of completing ongoing child observations at least three times per year is described in writing (may be in the personnel policies and/or the family handbook). ● Samples of child observation form, anecdotal notes, and/or child portfolios that reflect goals and progress for each individual child observed for at least 30% of children enrolled (names deleted) Evidence that progress is shared with families. - Child assessment guides individualized program planning and communicating with families. Lesson planning forms in use include a section for activities targeted towards meeting identified needs of individual children.
Florida Early Learning Coalitions are directed by the state Office of Early Learning to establish lists of appropriate curricula and to establish a procedure for reviewing-approving other curricula. **If the average score is below 3.0, "0" points will be awarded for the Curriculum Pathway Overall Score.**				

Quality Counts Benchmarks/Staff Qualifications Form

1-Star ☐	QC Benchmarks and Staff Qualifications	2-Star ☐			3-Star ☐			4-Star ☐			5-Star ☐		
Licensing Standards For Teaching Staff and Facility Director		*Assoc. Teacher	Lead Teacher	Facilty Director	*Assoc. Teacher	Lead Teacher	Facilty Director	Assoc. Teacher	Lead Teacher	Facilty Director	Assoc. Teacher	Lead Teacher	Facilty Director
Teaching Staff • Registered for the 40-hour training within 90 days of hire • 40-hour certification completed within one year of hire • 5 Hour Literacy completed • Current & Valid Staff Credential issued by DCF for 20 to 39 children & a second for each additl. 20 children **Facility Director** • Level I or II director credential	**40-Hour Certification + 5 Hour Literacy or Approved Equivalent**	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	HS Diploma or GED	25%	√	√	50%	√	√	75%	√	√	√	√	√
	Current & Valid Staff Credential issued by DCF	25%	75%	√	*50%	90%	√	75%	√	√	√	√	√
	One 3 credit ECE class or 45 hours informal ECE training * **	25%	75%	√	50%	90%	√	75%	90%	√	75%	√	√
	12 ECE Cr. Hrs								25%	√	25%	√	√
	Advanced Dir. Credential									√			√
	• **Associate degree with 12 ECE credits or** • **60 credits with 12 ECE credits or** • **Bachelor degree or higher with 12 ECE credits**								**25%	**√		**50 %	**√
10 Hr State In-service Requirement	**Annual 50 Points**	**25 % Professional Staff**			**50 % Professional Staff**			**75 % Professional Staff**			**100 % Professional Staff**		

* At the 2 and 3 star level, associate teachers without staff qualifications, hired six months prior to assessment may or may not be counted in Professional Development assessment, to be assessed to the advantage of the PD star rating.

** By October 1, 2012 the 4-Star and 5-Star levels will require an Associate Degree or higher with 12 ECE credits or 60 credits with 12 ECE credits for the percentage (%) of Lead Teachers and Directors as indicated in Staff Qualifications.

*** One formal 3 credit ECE class or 45 hours informal ECE training, to be met annually for each assessment cycle for staff that do not meet the 12 ECE credit hours or higher.

- **Professional Staff:** includes facility director and assistant director, lead teachers, associate teachers, and curriculum/education specialists, floater, substitute.
- **Facility Director:** the full-time administrative person at a single site.
- **Lead Teacher:** (a minimum of 1 per classroom) person primarily responsible for a group of children for the majority of the day, duties may vary by site. Lead teacher category requirements apply to certain other professional staff - assistant director and curriculum/education specialists.
- **Associate Teacher:** teaching personnel other than the lead teacher needed to meet the minimum ratio requirements.
- **Inservice education and training** includes GED, ESOL, preparatory courses, credit and non-credit college classes, and approved related workshops and conferences successfully completed with an "S", "P", or "C" and better. First aid and CPR are not counted as inservice hours.
- **Education and Training Hours**: 3 credit hours = 45 clock hours; 1 CEU = 10 clock hours; and each clock hour = 1 hour.

A. EDUCATION POINTS ACHIEVED		B. POINTS REQUIRED
Highest Level of Ed.	**Points**	**POINTS**
Entry	0	**50**
40-Hour + 5 hour Literacy	5	**45**
Current and Valid Staff Credential as issued by DCF	15	**35**
Advanced Director Credential	20	**30**
College Credit Certificate /12 ECE Credits	25	**25**
AA/AS	30	**20**
BA/BS	40	**10**

C. EXPERIENCE BONUS REDUCES TOTAL REQUIRED POINTS

1. 5 points for three years of documented full time service in current setting.

2. 5 Points maximum per assessment period for approved professional contributions experience.)

3. 5 points will be awarded to the Director for completing the Trainer Approval Series.

Appendix 5

STAFF: CHILD RATIO AND GROUP SIZE

CENTER:
REVIEWER:
DATE:

NAME OF ROOM	LEAD TEACHER	NAMES OF ADDITIONAL STAFF PRESENT	# OF STAFF PRESENT	# OF CHILDREN PRESENT	MAX. GROUP SIZE/# ALLOWED BY DIRECTOR

SIGNATURE_____ **DATE**_____
(Director or Person in Charge)

Print Name_____ ***Revised:*** ***6/2/2009***

DM # 90851

Appendix 6

Family Engagement Checklist

1 Star	**Family Handbook is written and includes all of the following (Please highlight areas in handbook and indicate page numbers):** ____ Schedule of operations ____ Daily opening-closing hours ____ List of holidays ____ Payment policies regarding ____ Payment due dates ____ Fees for late pick-up, if any ____ Nutrition policies and procedure regarding ____ Food provided by the center ____ Food brought from home, if any ____ Allergy precautions ____ Illness policy ____ Medication policy ____ Emergency procedures: procedure for notifying families in the case of an emergency (i.e. power outage, hurricane, injured child, etc) ____ Signed acknowledgement of receipt of handbook (upon enrollment or annually). 100% of children enrolled are expected to have a signed acknowledgement. 10% of files will be randomly checked by the assessor during the data collection visit.
2 Star	**A minimum of 3 modes of communication are used to share child and program information with families. Documentation may be classroom specific or center based. At least 3 items below must be checked.** ____ Daily or weekly individual written reports for children (2 different samples, can be blank) ____ Newsletters (4 examples) ____ Letters, flyers, or invitations announcing projects or events (2 examples) ____ Bulletin board designed to share information with families. Must be current information and all areas listed below must be observed during the on-site data collection visit. ____Health ____Parent information ____Community involvement ____ Log of informal communications for assessment period (phone, email, written notes) ____ Monthly calendar (4 examples)
3 Star	**At least 2 different family activities are provided per year. Documentation for items below can be in the form of a sign-in sheet, announcement, or photos. Documentation may be classroom specific or center based. Name of activity and date must be included. At least 2 items below must be checked.** ____ Open house ____ Holiday celebration ____ Volunteer or center based service activities ____ Family classroom participation ____ Field trips designed for families ____ Group family meetings ____ Classes for families such as positive discipline, nutrition, etc. ____ Lending library ____ Family or child journaling activities

DM* #90554 *v5

4 Star	**Families are invited to schedule family-teacher conferences to review child's progress and needs, and to set goals, twice a year.** ____ Policy stating families are offered 2 conference opportunities twice a year ____ Conference summary report form that includes goals, parent signature, and staff signatures *10/2012 sign-in sheets/logs will be verified **Activities are provided for children and families to assist with transition to new settings within the child care program and/or to kindergarten.** ____ Written description of procedures for transitioning a child from one group to another ____ Evidence of transition activities (can include a transition schedule, photos, letter to families)
5 Star	**Families have an opportunity to evaluate the provider in writing at least annually** ____ Completed surveys representing 10% of families enrolled at the time of survey distribution. ____ Summary of completed surveys **Resources are available to communicate with families in the family's primary language** ____ Written list of primary languages spoken by families currently enrolled **Requirements for families who *do not* communicate in English: (can be NA)** ____ Plan of communication for each language spoken: contact information of adult interpreter ____ Written communications (at least 1 per language) of any kind are provided in all languages identified as primary language of families **Developmental screening and referral process is in place** ____ Sample developmental screening form (the first page of each age group may be submitted) ____ Written statement describing the screening process including ____ referral process ____ dissemination of information to staff and parents ____ All children have the opportunity to be screened (Compliance records will be verified through Family Central, Inc.)Screenings conducted in accordance with School Readiness guidelines (Review compliance for 3 months). ____ Activity suggestions provided by specialists for any child with a diagnosed disability (child has IFSP or IEP), are developed with staff and families.

DM* #90554 *v5

Appendix 7

Administration Checklist

1 Star	**Risk Management Plan** **Action steps for emergencies per Health Department Requirements** ____ Fire ____ Severe Weather **Risk management plan and system that includes documentation of:** ____Posted Evacuation Plans in each classroom (checked onsite) ____Monthly Evacuation Drills (fire drill logs will be verified) ____Annual review of the Risk Management Plan and emergency procedures (dated staff meeting agenda or minutes)
2 Star	**Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual:** The program's Personnel Policy and Procedures manual should be included in the Quality Counts Binder. For this section, highlight areas in the manual or indicate the page number on which the item can be found. **Job descriptions for all positions at the site. Mark NA for those positions that do not apply.** ____Director ____Floater ____Assistant Director ____Curriculum Specialist ____Lead Teacher ____Other ____Associate Teacher **Staff Orientation must include at least 8 of the following:** ____Center philosophy and goals ____Attendance policy ____Staff training requirements ____Ethical conduct policy ____Resignation or termination policy ____Child abuse and neglect reporting procedures ____Health and safety procedures ____Discipline policy ____Insurance (health, life, dental, vision, etc) ____Retirement and/or annuity plan ____Child care discount for staff ____Tuition reimbursement ____Paid leave time ____Paid time for professional development **Staff turnover** ____Monthly Staff Turnover Reports submitted to Palm Beach State College Early Childhood Registry during assessment year (13 months prior to, but not including, the assessment month)
3 Star	**Staff Meetings** ____Dated agendas and sign-in sheets to document that meetings are held at least quarterly **Annual Performance Evaluations** (checked on site during the data collection visit) ____Written performance evaluations signed by employees and an administrator for all teaching staff employed for at least one year

DM # 90846 v4

4 Star	**Operating Policies and Procedures** ____Health and safety procedures (optional for 2 star, required for 4 star) ____Hiring procedures ____Organizational chart **Marketing Plan** ____Written action steps for ____Recruiting families with children, ____Providing visibility in the community ____Advertising **Documentation of a Marketing Plan must include at least 4 of the following (actual items or photos of items must be placed into the Administration binder).** ____Public relations tools (ads, newsletters, letterhead stationery, business cards) ____Promotional items (clothing, mugs, pens, etc) ____Professional, consistently-used logo ____Signage ____A referral rewards program ____Partnership with businesses ____Membership in a Chamber of Commerce ____Advisory Board or other staff meeting minutes that show a review of recommendations for the marketing plan **Annual Performance Observation** (checked on site during the data collection visit) ____ Written performance evaluations include observation by an administrator for all teaching staff employed for at least one year.
5 Star	**Salary Scale** ____Written salary scale is used, showing differentiation by job title, education or experience **Financial Reports and Budget (checked on site)** ____Quarterly financial statements (4) or 1 annual statement for the last fiscal year (can be in the form of a bank statement reconciliation or a profit and loss statement) ____Projected budget for next fiscal year **Professional Development Plans** (checked on AQUARIUS by Assessor) ____Each program has a Center Professional Development Plan (Facility Director can access the plan on the Director's Portal or have a hard copy from the program's Career Advisor) which includes all current Professional Staff with the practitioner's goal indicated on the plan.

DM # 90846 v4

Appendix 8

Curriculum Checklist

1 Star	**On the applicable Environment Rating Scale, the center has achieved average score of 3.0-3.49 on the following subscales:** • Activities • Language-Reasoning (ECERS), Listening-Talking (ITERS) • Program Structure If the average score is below 3.0, "0" points will be awarded for the Curriculum Pathway **Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum** ____Copy/evidence of approved curriculum
2 Star	**On the applicable Environment Rating Scale, the center has achieved average score of 3.5-3.99 on the following subscales:** • Activities • Language-Reasoning (ECERS), Listening-Talking (ITERS) • Program Structure
3 Star	**On the applicable Environment Rating Scale, the center has achieved average score of 4.0-4.49 on the following subscales:** • Activities • Language-Reasoning (ECERS), Listening-Talking (ITERS) • Program Structure
4 Star	**On the applicable Environment Rating Scale, the center has achieved average score of 4.5-4.99 on the following subscales:** • Activities • Language-Reasoning (ECERS), Listening-Talking (ITERS) • Program Structure **Developmentally appropriate curriculum and lesson plans for ages birth to five** ____ Lesson plans, for each classroom, for the 6 weeks prior to the assessment month 10/2012 Will verify goals and objectives/Early Learning Coalition guidelines
5 Star	**On the applicable Environment Rating Scale, the center has achieved average score of 5.0+ on the following subscales:** • Activities • Language-Reasoning (ECERS), Listening-Talking (ITERS) • Program Structure **A system is in place for ongoing child observations** ____ Process of completing ongoing child observations at least 3 times a year is described in writing ____ Child observation form, anecdotal notes, or child portfolios observed for at least 30% of children enrolled (portfolios will be reviewed on-site) **Child assessment guides individualized program planning and communicating with families** ____ Lesson planning form includes activities targeted towards meeting identified needs of any individual children, as identified by teaching staff. For example, J.R. (or Johnny, or Child 7) will pick a song to sing during transition from outside to the bathroom)

***DM # 90842* v4**

Appendix 9

Quality Counts
Pathway Documents Onsite Data Collection Checklist

Site:	Total Enrollment:
Date:	10% of Enrollment
Data Collector(s):	30% of Enrollment

Item	Item met Y/N	Notes										
Curriculum Books												
Child observation forms, anecdotal notes or child portfolios (random 30%)												
Emergency phone numbers posted												
Evacuation maps posted (in each classroom)		Room name										
Bulletin Board: health, parent info and community involvement												
Parent Surveys (any 10%)												
Signed acknowledgement of receipt of handbook (random 10%)												
Annual Performance Evaluations												
Annual Performance Observation												
Projected Annual Budget												
Quarterly (4) or Annual (1) financial statement(s)												

Accrediting body: Exp Date:	# of binders collected:
Sign in/out sheets collected:	Sign in/out sheets tallied/ signed:

Director or person in charge:

Print name:_____

Signature:_____ Date:_____

Title:_____

DM # 112522

Appendix 10

Quality Counts							
Quality Rating Improvement System							
Sample Final Star Rating Form							
Assessment Date:	October 1, 2010						
Site Name:	Eager and Ready to Learn Center						
Pathway		**Score**	**Star Rating**	**x Weight**	**Equals Total Points**	**Bonus Points**	
Learning Environment - Environment Rating Scales (40%)	ITERS	3.99	2	2	4.00		**Bonus Points:** 1 -2 Bonus Points will be given to centers based on the percentage of professional staff with a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development. ● At least 25% = 1 Bonus Point ● 50% or more = 2 Bonus Points 1 Bonus Point will be given to centers if they have a designated Curriculum Specialist with a Bachelor's degree and a minimum of 12 credits in ECE who oversees a center's educational program for at least 50% of the time.
	ECERS	4.49	3	2	6.00		
	*ITERS OR ECERS Only			4	0.00		
Staff Qualifications and Professional Development (20%)		**Star Rating**	3	2	6.00		
	Director	4					
	Lead Teacher	3					
	Asst. Teacher	2					
	Total	9					
	Average Total/3)	**3**					
Ratios - Group Size (10%)		3	3	1	3.00		
Curriculum (15%)		3	3	1.5	4.50		
Program Operations (15%)	Family Engagement	4	4	0.75	3.00		
	Administration	3	3	0.75	2.25		
Final Star Rating Points: * 43 - 50 points = 5 star rating * 37 - 42.99 points = 4 star rating * 25 - 36.99 points = 3 star rating * 13 - 24.99 points = 2 star rating * 4 - 12.99 points = 1 star rating **Star Rating+**: Programs holding a Gold Seal designation will earn a star rating "plus".							**Bonus Point Designation:**
				Subtotal	28.75		
							2 bonus points for 50% or more and one bonus point for designated curriculum specialist
				Bonus Points	3		
				Total Points Earned	31.75		
				Gold Seal Designation	YES		
				Final Star Rating	**3**	**+**	

DM # 90267

Appendix 11

Quality Counts

Quality Rating Improvement System

Final Star Rating Form

Assessment Date:	
Site Name:	

Pathway	Score		Star Rating	x Weight	Equals Total Points	Bonus Points
Learning Environment - Environment Rating Scales (40%)	ITERS			2		
	ECERS			2		
	*ITERS OR ECERS Only			4		
Staff Qualifications and Professional Development (20%)		**Star Rating**		2		
	Director					
	Lead Teacher					
	Asst. Teacher					
	Total					
	Average Total/3)					
Ratios - Group Size (10%)				1		
Curriculum (15%)				1.5		
Program Operations (15%)	Family Engagement			0.75		
	Administration			0.75		

Bonus Points:
1 -2 Bonus Points will be given to centers based on the percentage of professional staff with a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development.
- At least 25% = 1 Bonus Point
- 50% or more = 2 Bonus Points

1 Bonus Point will be given to centers if they have a designated Curriculum Specialist with a Bachelor's degree and a minimum of 12 credits in ECE who oversees a center's educational program for at least 50% of the time.

Final Star Rating Points:
* 43 - 50 points = 5 star rating
* 37 - 42.99 points = 4 star rating
* 25 - 36.99 points = 3 star rating
* 13 - 24.99 points = 2 star rating
* 4 - 12.99 points = 1 star rating

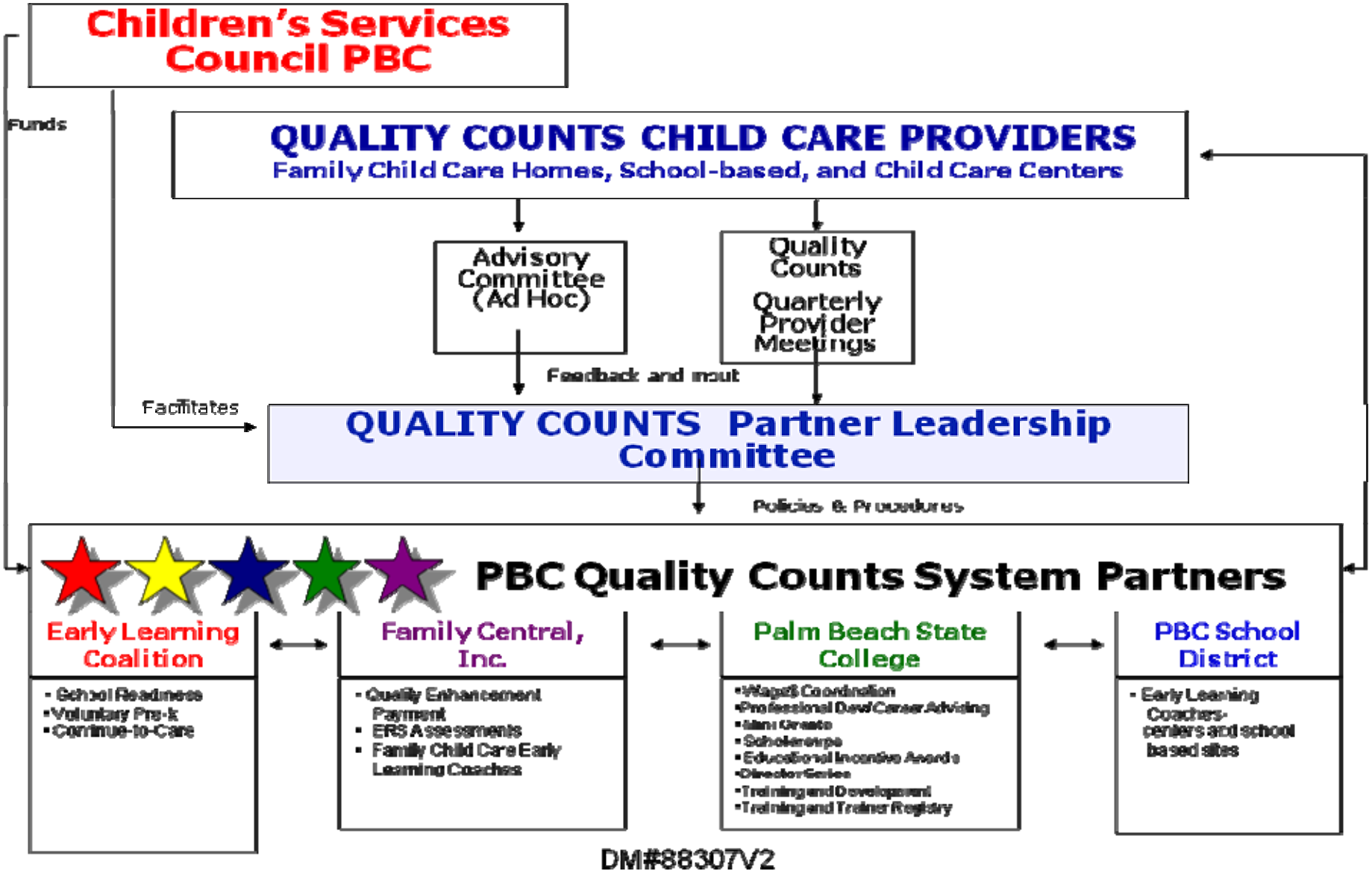
Star Rating+:
Programs holding a Gold Seal designation will earn a star rating "plus".

			Bonus Point Designation:
	Subtotal		
	Bonus Points		
	Total Points Earned		
	Gold Seal Designation		
	Final Star Rating		

DM # 88955

Appendix 12

Palm Beach County Quality Counts Organizational Chart



DM # 88955

Appendix 13

Registry Turnover Procedures

A. Registry staff will send an email reminder to Directors on the 20th of each month using the contact information supplied at the Quality Counts Quarterly Directors' meeting. This email reminder will contain an emailable version of the Monthly Staff Turnover Report that can be submitted electronically.

B. If Directors choose not to submit the Monthly Staff Turnover Report electronically via email, a fillable version of the Monthly Staff Turnover Report is available on the Registry website, www.pbcregistry.org under 'Forms'. The Registry can also mail or fax the Monthly Staff Turnover Report to Directors by request if they do not have access to the website.

C. Directors may mail, fax, or e-mail, the Monthly Staff Turnover Report to the Registry by the last day of each month. Please see contact information below.

D. Registry staff will send an e-mail to confirm receipt of the Monthly Staff Turnover Report within 24 business hours using the contact information supplied by the directors at the Quality Counts Quarterly Directors' meeting.

E. Quality Counts Directors are granted a 10 calendar day grace period following the last day of each month before Monthly Staff Turnover Forms are considered late.

F. Forms received after the10 calendar day grace period will be considered late and recorded as such. **Please note**: Late, incomplete and/or non-submitted forms may negatively affect the site's Quality Counts assessment of the Administration checklist component of the Program Pathway.

G. Quality Counts Directors are allowed one late submission of the Monthly Staff Turnover Report per assessment year that will not negatively affect the Administration checklist component of the Program Pathway. Please note that the one late submission must be received within 30 calendar days from the original due date.

H. If there are any questions regarding how Monthly Staff Turnover Report submission will affect the site's Quality Counts assessment, please direct these questions to the site's assigned Early Learning Coach.

For more information about the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry, please visit our website at www.pbcregistry.org or email us at ecregistry@palmbeachstate.edu. You may also contact us via mail. Our mailing address is:

Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry
Palm Beach State College Institute of Excellence for Early Care and Education
812 Fern Street
West Palm Beach, Fl 33401
Fax Number: (561)868-7042

DM # 112430

Appendix 14

Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry

PALM BEACH STATE COLLEGE

MONTHLY STAFF TURNOVER REPORT

Month: _____ **Year:** _____

Site Name: _____ **Site Address:** _____

Director's Name: _____ **Site Type:** **Center** **FCCH** **School Site**

Please check the appropriate box and complete the requested information:

☐ This Site has **no** practitioner turnover to report this month. **(No one left and/or no one is new at the site)**

☐ Practitioner(s) **no** longer employed at this Site during this month:

PRACTITIONER*

Name	Position Title	Employment Start Date	Employment End Date
1.			
2.			
3.			

*To report additional **former** employees, please use back of form.

☐ Practitioner(s) **new** at this Site during this month:

PRACTITIONER**

Newly employed practitioners must complete and return a Registry Practitioner Application.

Name	Position Title	Employment Start Date
1.		
2.		
3.		

To report additional **new employees, please use back of form.

Director Signature_____ **Date**_____

Please complete and return completed form by the **30th** of each month to:

PBC Early Childhood Registry, 812 Fern Street, West Palm Beach, Fl 33401
Or Fax to (561)868-7042 ATTN: PBC Registry
Or email to ecregistry@palmbeachstate.edu

DM # 112423

Appendix 15

Quality Counts Contact list

Contact	Organization	Phone # /email
Assessment:		
Barry Miller- Early Care and Education Director	Family Central, Inc.	561-514-3353 bmiller@familycentral.org
Cindy Phillips- Early Care and Education Manager	Family Central, Inc.	561-514-3381 cphillips@familycentral.org
Early Learning Coaches:		
Stacy Scott, Manager, Department of Early Childhood Education, SDPBC	School District of Palm Beach County	561-629-8516 scottst@palmbeach.K12.fl.us
Sandra Tucker, Instructional Specialist, Department of Early Childhood Education, SDPBC	School District of Palm Beach County	561-629-8582 tuckersa@palmbeach.K12.fl.us
Professional Development:		
Rose Clements – Assistant Director, Professional Development, Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education	Palm Beach State College	561-868-3653 clementr@palmbeachstate.edu
Debra Strange - Professional Development Coordinator, Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education (WAGE$, Translation/Evaluation, FAU, BECE and Career Advisors)	Palm Beach State College	561-868-3670 mazzotad@palmbeachstate.edu
Christina Valdes - SEEK Career Advisor, Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education (SEEK Scholarships)	Palm Beach State College	561-868-3828 valdesc@palmbeachstate.edu
Edwiygh Franck, Registry Coordinator, Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education (Registry)	Palm Beach State College	561-868-3664 francke@palmbeachstate.edu
Continue to Care Scholarships:		
Karen Knowles, Parent Counselor	Family Central, Inc.	561-653-2467 kknowles@familycentral.org
Sally Patterson, Director of VPK and Scholarships Services	Family Central, Inc.	561-653-2469 spatterson@familycentral.org
Quality Counts:		
Amanda Scott, Administrative Assistant III	Children Services Council	561-740-7000 ext. 2177 Amanda.scott@cscpbc.org
Karen Brandi, System Manager	Children's Services Council	561-740-7000 ext. 2206 Karen.brandi@cscpbc.org
Melinda Cato, Quality Counts Liaison/System Coordinator	Children's Services Council	561-740-7000 ext. 2233 Melinda.cato@cscpbc.org

Appendix 16

Quality Counts Words and Acronyms

Word or Acronym	Definition and/or The Bottom Line
Achievable Standards	Term used to define each of the Pathways to Quality. Each of the Pathways has five levels of achievable standards that correlate with the one- to five-star ratings. These standards provide a fair system for assessing and rating a program, as well as a roadmap for achieving high quality. **Bottom line:** The 1-5 levels reviewed for each indicator of quality
Activity Records	This term when used by the ELC refers to documentation of the coach's activities at a site. Detailed observations and/or areas of focus in the six Pathways to Quality with a plan of action, target dates, and expected completion dates.
Anecdotal Notes	Written observations about what children do and say.
AQUARIUS	Aquarius is a custom-built information system for the Quality Counts System in Palm Beach County with the main units of analysis being child care centers and child care homes. Functionality includes a star rating calculator, site and individual professional development plans, a director's portal which allows the child care center directors to view pertinent information about their sites. Built in 2008, Aquarius has become a tool for system management, program management, and research and evaluation for the Quality Counts System. There is a comprehensive set of reports on the data system a robust reporting tool which allows program managers and system coordinators to create and extract unique sets of data. **Bottom Line: AQUARIUS** is an acronym **A QUA**lity **R**ating **I**mprovement **U**ser **S**ystem. This is the on-line database system used by all system partners (PBC School District, CSC, Palm Beach State College and Family Central) to document & collect data/communications with Quality Counts sites.
Assessor or Program Assessor	Program assessors employed by Family Central, Inc. Assessors attend Environment Rating Scale training at the internationally renowned Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina. This training is conducted by the authors of the scales. In order to ensure reliable assessments and inter-rater reliability more than one assessor may observe a classroom at the same time. **Bottom line:** the person/people who objectively evaluates the programs in Quality Counts
Baseline Assessment	Using the Environment Rating Scales (ERS), the baseline assessment will be conducted within three months of acceptance into Quality Counts. Programs will be notified by mail of the month that their baseline assessment will be conducted. Pre-assessment paperwork to be returned

	to Family Central, Inc. will be included with this notification letter. The actual assessment dates will be unannounced visits. All Quality Counts classrooms servicing children Birth to 5 years of age will receive a baseline assessment (100% Headstart enrollment rooms are determined on an individual basis) **Bottom line:** The first assessment done on a program joining the system
CA: Career Advisor	Career Advisors are available to support the professional development of individuals that are employed by participating Quality Counts programs. Career Advisors, employed by Palm Beach State College Institute of Excellence, offer guidance in selecting high-quality early childhood training and education to broaden career pathway options. They provide on-site guidance to individuals in a variety of areas and assist with developing individual professional goals and objectives. **Bottom Line:** The person who guides teachers in their professional growth, goals and plans
CDA	Child Development Associate (CDA) is a commonly used term for various types of certifications such as the FCCPC, ECPC and CDA-E (see definitions below). However, CDA actually refers to the Council for Professional Recognition's credential which is commonly known as the "National CDA" http://www.cdacouncil.org
Center, Site, Program	Various terms used when referring to a childcare center, preschool, or day care center. All interchangeable.
Compliance Plan	A program may be placed on a compliance review plan if: Target dates are consistently not being met; Target dates are met for only a short period of time; Quality improvements are not maintained and must be consistently re-addressed by the coach; Program is cited for having a recurring licensing violation in a three month period; Program turns an Assessor away at the time of assessment **Bottom Line:** a center should be meeting goals that have been set with the Early Learning Coach, or participation in QC is reviewed. In other words, accountability!
Consultation Model	An 8 stage framework of collaboration and problem solving used by Early Learning Coaches with directors & teachers. This model allows for directors/teachers to be empowered to deal with changes and problems within their own programs which lead to quality improvements.
Content Areas (also known as Core Competencies	The specific knowledge, competencies, and characteristics needed by early care and education practitioners to work effectively with young children and their families. Each subject area describes the knowledge and skills that practitioners need in order to work with children birth through age five and their families. The Florida Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Practitioners includes the following knowledge and subject base areas: Health, Safety & Nutrition; Child Development and Learning; Building Family and Community Relationships; Teaching and Learning Environments and Interactions; Curriculum; Observing, Documenting Screening, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Their Families; and Professionalism. http://www.floridajobs.org/earlylearning/index.html
Credit/Non-credit classes	Credit courses are those college or university courses that apply toward a certificate or degree program or are those courses that prepare students ("Prep" Courses) for the courses that apply toward a certificate or degree

	program. A Non-Credit course refers to a Registry Approved Palm Beach State College early childhood course that is offered as a series training in various subject areas and that provides CEUs (continuing education units) on completion.
CSC: Children's Services Council	**Children's Services Council** is the agency which monitors, and funds Quality Counts, as well as many other children's services in Palm Beach County. www.cscpbc.org
Curriculum	"A well-articulated curriculum guides teachers so they can provide children with experiences that foster growth across a broad range of developmental and content areas. It also brings intentionality to planning a daily schedule that incorporates time and materials for play, self-initiated learning, creative expression, and provides opportunities for children to learn individually and in groups according to their developmental needs and interest *(NAEYC, 2003 policy recommendations)*." **Bottom Line:** Teaching to meet the needs of each individual child at his/her own developmental level. This can include: Environment, Daily Routine, Activities, Adult Child Practices.
DAP: Developmentally Appropriate Practice	**Developmentally Appropriate Practice:** meeting the children where they are and help each child reach challenging and achievable goals (Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice, by Copple and Bredekamp, pg. 3)
Director's Portal	The Director's Portal is an extension of the Aquarius Data System that is used to collect and compile information about quality child care centers in Palm Beach County. The portal allows directors to access pertinent information about their sites and provides an easy way to communicate with Quality Counts System partners. Using the tool, directors can view professional development information about their staff and star rating calculations on their centers. It has proven to be an effective tool for open communication with valued members of Quality Counts. **Bottom Line:** A website designed for each Quality Counts Director/Owner to log onto and view site specific information regarding assessments and status. It is a communication portal for Directors/Owners to all system agencies and resources available. Launched in March 2010. www.qualitycountspbc.org
Director Provided Training	Up to 15 hours of Registry approved training per assessment year, per center provided by a ***Registry Approved Center Trainer***
ECE: Early Childhood Education	An educational background/coursework in the studies of early childhood, ages birth to five years.
ECERS or ECERS-R (revised) Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales	Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale used for classrooms with children ages ***2 ½ to 5 years of age***. "This widely used program quality assessment instrument can be used by program directors for supervision and program improvement, by teaching staff for self assessment, by agency staff for monitoring and in teacher training programs. The established reliability and validity of the ECERS-R make it particularly useful for research and program evaluation." (*Early Childhood Environment Scale-Revised Edition*, Harms, Clifford, Cryer)

	"…tool used for measuring 'process quality' within an early care and education setting. The ERS look at the indoor and outdoor space, materials, activities, interactions, schedules, and other areas of the classroom and program." (QCM, pg. 11) www.fpg.unc.edu
EIA: Educational Incentive Award	Educational Incentive Awards (EIA) provides monetary awards for individuals who are employed by participating Quality Counts programs as they achieve specific educational goals throughout their career in early childhood education. The Educational Incentive Awards are distributed annually to qualifying Quality Counts participants. **Bottom Line:** Annual bonus awarded for professional training accomplishments .
ELC ** Has 2 meanings. (see below)	**Early Learning Coach** which is a School District Employee OR **Early Learning Coalition**. In this program, it is usually referencing the "Coach," or employee from the School District supporting a center in this rating process. **Early Learning Coaches** are certified teachers employed by the School District of Palm Beach County. Each coach has an education degree and specialized training in quality improvement and consultation. Initially, the coach will spend time learning about the culture of the program and building relationships with the director and staff. The coach will work with providers to develop and implement quality improvement plans that focus on the five Pathways to Quality. The coach's role includes modeling, scaffolding, demonstration lessons, plan development, and observation and feedback.
Early Learning Coalition	**Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County:** Mission is To manage, improve and evaluate an integrated and quality seamless service delivery system for all publicly funded early care and education programs serving children from birth to five years of age, or until the child enters kindergarten. Meeting the First Education Goal: School Readiness The intent of the School Readiness Act was to create a locally designed, operated, and managed system of fully integrated and coordinated school readiness programs with a state-level partnership providing overall leadership for coordinating programmatic, administrative, and fiscal policies and standards. Local coalitions are required to develop strategies to bring school readiness partners together, develop concrete steps to integrate services, identify mechanisms to increase efficiencies, and implement quality improvement activities. http://www.elcpalmbeach.org
ERS: Environment Rating Scales	Also known as "The Scales," The Spiral" "or "The Tool" or ITERS or ECERS. "…tool used for measuring 'process quality' within an early care and education setting. The ERS look at the indoor and outdoor space, materials, activities, interactions, schedules, and other areas of the classroom and program." **Bottom Line**: the "yellow book" and "blue book" used to assess the classroom environment. www.fpg.unc.edu
Facility Director	Has a valid Director Credential and is the full time administrative person responsible for the daily operations of one designated (on file with Family

	Central- Service Agreement) Child Care Program
FCI: Family Central Inc.	Family Central's mission is to promote children's success by providing quality family support and educational services. Family Central conducts the Quality Counts site Assessments and the Early Learning Coaching for Family Child Care Homes as well as administers the county's child care subsidy funds. www.familycentral.org
Formal and Informal Training	Formal Training refers to Early Childhood Education credit courses offered by colleges and universities. Informal Training refers to various early childhood trainings such as non-credit courses, registry approved trainings, DOE and DCF trainings, local conferences, and online trainings (IACET approved CEUs). **Bottom Line**: Practitioners are strongly encouraged to pursue early childhood courses from regionally accredited colleges for formal training and Registry Approved-Quality Assured trainings for informal training.
Formal Assessment/ Annual Assessment	After 18 months, programs will be notified by mail of the month that the formal assessment will take place. Pre-assessment paperwor to be returned to Family Central, Inc. will be included with this notification letter. The actual assessment dates will be unannounced visits. During the formal assessment, the assessor(s) will randomly select at least 50% of a program's classrooms within each age group and will formally assess those classrooms with the appropriate Environment Rating Scale (ERS) assessment tool. Informal assessments are done as assessment schedule allows **Bottom Line:** The first assessment done on a program after they have been through the "Intensive Phase" and then completed every 13 months after that assessment.
Gold Seal	In 1996, the Florida Legislature established the Gold Seal Quality Care program to acknowledge child care facilities and family day care homes that are accredited by nationally recognized agencies and whose standards reflect quality in the level of care and supervision provided to children. For a current list of approved agencies participating in the Gold Seal Quality Care Program, please visit http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/childcare/goldseal.shtml
Group Size	According to the Palm Beach County Rules and Regulations Governing Child Care Facilities the maximum number of children permitted in a group is determined by the square footage of a room and identified by the license. There are no limits placed on numbers of children with in an age group (infants/toddlers are given a capacity). For Quality Counts, the maximum number of children enrolled, or permitted to be enrolled by a Director, is the "group size" for that age group. This number could be different than what Palm Beach County Licensing allows (usually lower). **Bottom Line:** Group size is the maximum number of children allowed to be enrolled in a certain age group (not how many children are present or how many licensing allows). For example, a director might choose to enroll 20, three year olds into the 3's Classroom. The group size is 20.
Improvement	Improvement plans are developed by the coach with input from the

Plan	director. This plan includes strategies and activities for items to be addressed from the baseline assessment and includes target dates.
Intensive Phase	The 18 month period following the completion of the program's baseline assessment. This phase includes the program director/staff, career advisor and early learning coach working toward establishing goals and benchmarks, intensive on-site coaching, and individual career advising. An Early Learning Coach could be supporting the program in this phase for up to 2 days per week. **Bottom Line:** a program's first 18 months in QC.
Inter-Rater Reliability	The consistency of the assessors in scoring the items of the Environment Rating Scales when two assessors observe the same classroom at the same time. Assessors who have been trained to a high level of inter-rater reliability are able to use the scales accurately and consistently, ensuring that no matter where the provider is located and which assessor is doing the observation, the results are consistent.
IPDP: Individual Professional Development Plan	An educational planning tool used by Palm Beach State College Career Advisors to assist practitioners in planning their career and educational goals and the action steps needed to accomplish those goals.
ITERS or ITERS-R (revised): Infant and Toddler Environment Rating Scales	"Infant and Toddler Environment Rating Scale (Revised) is designed for use in center-based child care programs for infants and toddlers up to 30 months of age, the ITERS-R can be sued by program directors for supervision and program improvement, by teaching staff for self assessment, by agency staff for monitoring, and in teacher training programs. The established reliability and validity of the scale make it particularly useful for research and program evaluation." (*Infant and Toddler Environment Rating Scale Revised Edition*, Harms, Cryer, and Cifford) "…tool used for measuring 'process quality' within an early care and education setting. The ERS look at the indoor and outdoor space, materials, activities, interactions, schedules, and other areas of the classroom and program." (QCM, pg. 11) **Bottom Line:** the "blue book" or "the spiral" used to assess the classrooms of Infants, Toddlers and Young Two's. www.fpg.unc.edu
ITIA: Informal Training Incentive Award	The **Informal Training Incentive Award (ITIA)** is a monetary award program for practitioners employed at Quality Counts programs in Palm Beach County who work directly with children from birth to age five. The ITIA is awarded annually to qualifying Quality Counts participants who complete the preschool or infant/toddler non-credit course track. **Bottom Line:** Annual bonus awarded for professional training accomplishments.
Liaison Visit	A site visit conducted by the Quality Counts Liaison to programs that have expressed an interest in participating in Quality Counts and have submitted a Letter of Interest. The purpose of the visit is to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the level of commitment and expectations and to answer any questions that the program may have about Quality Counts.

Maintenance Phase	The review of the formal assessment with the program director and early learning coach begins the maintenance phase of Quality Counts. This phase includes continued setting of target dates, up to nine-hours per month of coaching support, and individual career advising. The Early Learning Coach who supports this phase may only be at the site 1-2 times per month. **Bottom Line:** the time between annual assessments, excluding the first 18 months in QC. That is known as the ***intensive*** phase.
Mini-Grant Dollars	One time mini-grant opportunity during the first year of participating in Quality Counts based on enrollment.
Multi-County Collaborative	A group of 15 communities within the state of Florida that came together with the goal of supporting the forward movement of the quality initiative of the Office of Early Learning and the Early Learning Advisory Council for a statewide quality rating improvement system. Palm Beach County is a member of this Collaborative. This group worked as a team to align the standards of their respective systems and developed a 5 level QRIS system. The work of this group resulted in Palm Beach County creating the Quality Counts system. **Bottom Line**: The work of this group led to the creation of the new Quality Counts 5 level standards.
ODT: Outcomes Driven Training	The training series is offered for professionals who design instruction for the adult learners. The courses demonstrate professional presentation and training skills based on best practices in business and education. The series focuses on principles of adult learning, transferring learning to the workplace, and the backward design.
Overall star Rating	Determined by using a weighted formula and star ratings for each Pathway to Quality plus any earned bonus points. The overall star rating determines the amount quality enhancement payment.
Palm Beach State College	Palm Beach Community College is now **Palm Beach State College**. Palm Beach State College's Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education provides the child care workforce of Palm Beach county with a comprehensive approach to career development in the field of early childhood education. The Institute of Excellence operates the SEEK scholarship program, the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry, and develops and approves quality assured early childhood series trainings. www.palmbeachstate.edu
Pathways to Quality	Quality Counts consists of a number of components which work together to create a supportive quality improvement system that leads to positive outcomes for children. The **Pathways to Quality, which are proven predictors of quality, are as follows:** ★ Environment (40%) ★ Professional Development/Staff Qualifications (20%) ★ Staff to Child Ratio and Group Size (10 %) ★ Curriculum (15%) ★ Program (15%) ⋆ **Administration** ⋆ **Family Engagement** **Bottom Line: The 5 *categories* of indicators of quality childcare identified in Quality Counts.**

PBCNC: Palm Beach County Notes for Clarification	This web link is found on the Family Central website (www.familycentral.org) on the Quality Counts page. These questions and answers were previously called the Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) which were generated for further clarification regarding the ITERS-R and ECERS-R. These questions are those that cannot be answered using the All About books, the ITERS-R/ECERS-R, Caring for Our Children, or the Handbook for Public Playground Safety. http://pbfciqc.wiki.zoho.com/HomePage.html
Practitioner, Teacher, Caregiver, or Provider	Terms all meaning the professional, classroom staff responsible for the education of young children ages birth to five.
Professional Development Plan (center)	A tool used to provide Quality Counts sites with a summation of the centers current status of the Staff Qualification Pathway rating. The plan is maintained in the Aquarius database and is updated through information provided by the practitioner to the PBC Registry. The initial plan is based on a combination of the practitioners education and training achieved and the position held at the center (director, Lead Teacher, Associate Teacher, etc.). Working in conjunction with Career Advisors, Directors and practitioners design a plan that will serve as a blueprint for attaining the desired Staff Qualification Pathway rating. Individual educational goals of the practitioner, staff stability, and director leadership play an important role in achieving the Staff Qualification Pathway star rating.
Professional Staff	Includes Facility Director, Assistant Director, Lead Teacher, Associate Teachers, Floaters, Substitute and Curriculum Specialist.
QC: Quality Counts	Quality Counts (QC) is the 5 Star quality improvement rating system established October 2009. www.cscpbc.org/bequality
QEP: Quality Enhancement Payments	Programs that exceed the 1-Star level (minimal) standards receive Quality Enhancement Payments. Payments are designed to help with costs associated with providing care that goes beyond basic licensing requirements. Enhancement payments are made for ratings at the 2-Star through the 5-Star levels at gradually increasing rates. **Bottom Line:** the money a site receives for achieving a 2 star or higher.
QRIS: Quality Rating Improvement System	According to National Association for the Education of Young Children, Quality Rating Improvement Systems are used to evaluate and observe, recognize and reward, and support and communicate the level of quality in early childhood programs. QRIS take a systems approach and uniformly address multiple aspects of early care and education. QRIS can include a broad range of early care and education programs (such as center-based child care, family child care, school-age, prekindergarten, and/or Head Start) and funding streams. QRIS are part of the quality improvement spectrum, and share five common elements: Standards Accountability Program and Provider Outreach and Support Financial Incentives Linked to Compliance with Standards Consumer Education Quality Counts is the name of Palm Beach County's QRIS.www.naeyc.org

Ratio	Is the calculation of how many teaching staff in direct supervision of a certain number of children. For example, there might be 2 teachers with 16 children, so the ratio would be 2:16. There are minimal ratio requirements in the Palm Beach County Rules and Regulations Governing Child Care Facilities which are the same requirements at the 1 star level for Quality Counts.
Registry	Membership in the Palm Beach County Registry is a requirement for all Quality Counts professional staff. The Registry provides the means to document and acknowledge education, training, and professional achievements of Quality Counts staff. It supports career advising by providing a basis for determining future education and career goals. www.pbcregistry.org
Registry Approved Trainer	A trainer that has filled out a Registry trainer application and met all applicable Registry requirements for approval. Must be leveled and approved in writing by the Registry prior to submitting training for approval.
Reliability	Reliable assessments that ensure a fair, consistent, and accurate assessment process for each participating child care program. Internationally recognized, research-based program assessment tools called the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) are used to assess and rate a program's environment. To assess the other pathways, qualified and highly reliable program assessors use on-site observations as well as documentation provided by the program.
SEEK: Seeking Excellence in Education and Knowledge	S.E.E. K., Seeking Excellence in Education and Knowledge: Quality Counts participants are eligible for S.E.E.K. Scholarships for credit and non-credit courses, workshops, and conferences specific to the field of early care and education. Scholarships also cover textbooks and additional fees associated with college enrollment.
Service Agreement	An agreement between Family Central and a child care provider to care for children in the School Readiness system.
Staff Credential	A Staff Credential is an official State of Florida designation that means an individual's professional education meets or exceeds the professional criteria set by the Department of Children and Families. A staff credential is used by Florida child care providers to validate credentials and experience for licensing compliance, and as a benchmark in the Quality Counts professional development pathway.
Star Rating	Rating assigned to each Pathway to Quality based on 5 level system in which 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest.
Subscale	**Bottom Line:** The seven categories(or subscales) used to group the items in the Environment Rating Scales (ITERS & ECERS).
Subsidized	Funding a parent qualifies for which pays for some or all child care tuition.
Substitute	Practitioner who meets licensing standards and works in a classroom or Family Child care program in the absence of a teacher or Family Child Care owner/operator.
Target Date	Term used for agreed-upon benchmarks and dates between an Early Learning Coach and Teacher/Director.
Technical Assistance	Support provided by the ELC to improve practices and ensure high-quality programming for children and families.

WAGE$	The WAGE$ program is designed to assist directors and owners with staff retention by rewarding educational achievement and longevity. The WAGE$ Supplement program provides education-based wage supplements to early childhood teachers working with young children birth to five years of age. WAGE$ Supplements are based on the level of education already attained and continued employment at a Quality Counts program. Qualified individuals receive payment in six-month increments after the recipient has been employed for one year in the same Quality Counts program. **Bottom Line:** A financial bonus to those who qualify.
Weighted Formula	Used to reflect the value of each Pathway to Quality. Each pathway is assigned a weight. The weighting determines the relative importance of each pathway in the overall star rating. Pathway weights are listed on the Final Star Rating Form