

QUALITY COUNTS

Palm Beach County's 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 Community 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 Community 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 OVERVIEW

What is Quality Counts?

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 rate agreement with Family Central, Inc., and have been licensed for at least one year are eligible to participate.

Why was Quality Counts 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. They further predicted that every dollar spent initially on high quality early childhood education will save more than seven dollars later in reduced special education, welfare, and prison costs.

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, 17 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.

Why should a program director/owner participate in Quality Counts?

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 can a program 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 staff members
- ★ Scholarship opportunities for staff to achieve professional development goals
- ★ Financial incentive opportunities for staff
- ★ Training opportunities
- ★ Mini-grant opportunities
- ★ Funding to support quality improvement
- ★ Marketing materials
- ★ Use of the program's rating as a marketing tool
- ★ Networking opportunities

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's ownership of the quality improvement work

Expectations of Participating Programs

- ★ Maintain its rate 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 within 18 months of the facility's baseline assessment
- ★ Allow a program assessor to conduct the appropriate Environment Rating Scale assessments for the initial and annual assessments, and agree to provide information on staff development, family engagement, and program implementation
- ★ 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
- ★ Create program improvement plans with their early learning coach to set benchmarks and meet those benchmarks with staff
- ★ Support the creation of a professional development plan(s) for the program and individual staff members with the career advisor
- ★ 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 PBC Early Childhood Registry (director and all staff)
- ★ 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

The Quality Counts process includes 10 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.cscpbcc.org/QISproviders.

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 rate agreement with Family Central, Inc. must complete an application. The application is included as *Appendix 1*. or can be accessed on-line at www.cscpbcc.org/QISproviders. 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.

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 rate agreement monitoring
- ★ Completion of Registry applications for all professional staff

Step 5: 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 6: 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 this notification letter. (See *Appendix 2*) The actual assessment dates will be unannounced visits. All classrooms will be assessed during the baseline assessment, and most assessments will take more than one day to complete. When all classroom assessments are complete, the early learning coach will receive the assessment reports and will review them with the program's director. Programs will not be assigned a star rating at this time.

Step 7: 18 Month Intensive Phase

The review of the baseline assessment with the program director and early learning coach begins the intensive phase of Quality Counts. This phase includes establishing goals and benchmarks, intensive on-site coaching, and individual career advising.

Step 8: Formal Assessment

After 18 months, programs will be notified by mail of the month that the formal assessment will take place. Pre-assessment paperwork (*Appendix 2*) 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.

Step 9: Star Rating

Upon completion of the formal assessment, programs will receive an overall star rating. Section 5.0-Star Rating Process provides an explanation as to how the star rating is calculated.

Step 10: 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.

Step 11: Annual assessment

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.

3.0 COMPONENTS OF QUALITY COUNTS

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.

1) 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

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 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. These include, but are not limited to; on-site technical assistance provided by highly trained and experienced early learning coaches, reliable assessments done by qualified program assessors, 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).*

How is Environment assessed?

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.
- ★ 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 quality score.

<p>Learning Environment – Environment Rating Scales-Revised (ECERS,ITERS) – 40%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>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.</p> <p>If the average score is below 3.0, “0” points will be awarded for the Average Overall Score for that Pathway.</p>				

Overview of the Environment Rating Scales ¹

	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	<p>Subscales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Space and Furnishings ▪ Personal Care Routines ▪ Listening and Talking ▪ Activities ▪ Interaction ▪ Program Structure <p><i>The subscale Parents and Staff is not completed for the formal rating</i></p>	<p>Subscales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Space and Furnishings ▪ Personal Care Routines ▪ Language-Reasoning ▪ Activities ▪ Interactions ▪ Program Structure <p><i>The subscale Parents and Staff is not completed for the formal rating</i></p>
Requirements	An assessment of at least 3 hours for each classroom, followed by a 30 minute interview with the lead teacher.	

¹ 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.

4.2 Professional Development

Children benefit most when teachers are knowledgeable and educated in early childhood development, and provide age-appropriate activities based on the individual needs of the children. Teachers with high levels of formal education and specialized early childhood professional preparation are more likely to engage in warm, positive interactions with children, offer richer language experiences, and create more high-quality learning environments (*NAEYC 2004 policy recommendations*).

How is Professional Development assessed?

Professional Development is one of the pathways to quality that is assessed to determine a child care setting's overall Star Rating, and it accounts for 20% of a program's Star Rating.

Both the **level of staff education** and **annual in-service** are reviewed to determine the Professional Development Star Rating. The Star Rating is based on the percentage of staff achieving specified educational levels (staff qualifications) and in-service hours. The percentage of staff required to attain specific levels of education increases as a program moves up the star ratings. Staff education levels and annual in-service requirements for each star level are listed on the Quality Counts Benchmark and Staff Qualifications Form. (*Appendix 4*)

Professional Development is assessed using documentation provided by the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry report. The information is used to assess an individual program's staff professional qualifications and annual in-service achievements and to determine the Star-level Rating achieved on the Professional Development pathway. A program assessor will collect compiled registry reports on the first day of a program's assessment.

Professional development hours will be accepted thirteen months prior to, but not including, the assessment month. For programs in the 18 month intensive model, professional development will be accepted 18 months prior to, but not including, the assessment month. Hours received in the current assessment month will count toward the next year's professional development.

Directors are a great resource for training staff. Facility directors have the option to provide up to 15 hours of in service training annually to staff.

- ★ What is meant by "Director Provided Training?"

Directors must be Palm Beach County Registry approved trainers to provide training for Quality Counts professional development.

Training must be at least two hours in length, have a minimum of two learning objectives, and be pre-approved by the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry. To have director training approved, the director must complete and submit a Training Approval Request Form 30 days prior to delivering the training. This form can be accessed at www.pbcregistry.org. Upon completion of the training, the director must submit a staff sign-in sheet so that certificates of attendance may be issued to attendees.

- ★ 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. For more information regarding the Registry go to www.pbcregistry.org.

Staff Qualifications/Professional Development – 20%

1	2	3	4	5
<p>Same as FL Licensing: - All staff have completed 40-hour DCF training within 90 days of hire</p> <p>- 40 hours certification completed within one year of hire</p> <p>- 5-hour Early Literacy completed</p> <p>- 1 staff per 20 enrolled children have DCF Staff Credential</p> <p>-Facility Director holds level I or II Director Credential</p>	<p>- 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.</p> <p>- 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.</p> <p>- 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</p>	<p>- 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>- 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</p>	<p>- 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.</p> <p>-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</p> <p>25% will hold an Associate degree or higher with 12 ECE credits or 60 credits with 12 ECE credits(effective 10/1/2010)</p> <p>- Facility Director has HS diploma/GED, DCF Staff Credential, completed 12 ECE credit hours, and holds FL Advanced level credential</p> <p>Associate degree or higher with 12 ECE credits or 60 credits with 12 ECE credits (effective 10/1/2010)</p>	<p>- 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</p> <p>Lead teachers: All have; HS diploma/GED, DCF Staff Credential, and completed 12 ECE credit hours, if higher benchmarks are not met.</p> <p>50% will hold an Associate degree or higher with 12 ECE credits or 60 credits with 12 ECE credits (effective 10/1/2010)</p> <p>- Facility Director has HS diploma/GED, DCF Staff Credential, completed 12 ECE credit hours, and holds FL Advanced level credential</p> <p>Associate degree or higher with 12 ECE credits or 60 credits with 12 ECE credits (effective 10/1/2010)</p>
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 (EPC), 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.

How is Staff-to Child Ratio and Group Size Assessed?

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 ratio 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.

How is Family Engagement Assessed?

1. The minimum number of items, listed at the beginning of each level on the Family Engagement Checklist (*Appendix 6*) must be checked off to achieve that level and move on to the next star level
2. Place all documentation in a Family Engagement Binder

3. Some items may be checked on site
4. Many items may be located in the program handbook or manual
 - a. The entire handbook/manual can be submitted in the Family Engagement Binder
 - b. Any items that are located in the handbook must have the handbook page listed in the space next to the item. If more than one handbook is submitted, please indicate which handbook the page number refers to
 - c. For items not in the handbook/manual, a copy of each must be added to the Family Engagement Binder

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.

How is Administration Assessed?

1. Each item on the Administration Checklist (*Appendix 7*), unless otherwise indicated, in each star level must be checked off to achieve that level and move on to the next star level.
2. Place all documentation in an Administration Binder
3. Some items will be checked on site
4. Many items may be located in the center handbook or manual
 - a. The entire handbook/manual can be submitted in the Administration Binder
 - b. Any items that are located in the handbook must have the handbook page listed in the space next to the item. If more than one handbook is submitted, please indicate which handbook the page number refers to
 - c. For items not in the handbook/manual, a copy of each must be added to the Administration Binder

Program – 15%				
Family Engagement (All of the previous levels required)				
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family Handbook is written and includes parental rights and responsibilities - Signed acknowledgement of receipt of handbook by parent 	<p>Minimum of 3 modes of communication are used to share child and program information with families</p>	<p>At least 2 family activities per year provided</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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
<p>Risk management plan is in place (written action plan for emergencies such as hurricanes, fire, flood, etc. including evacuation routes identified and practice drills)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff meetings are held at least quarterly - Written performance evaluations are completed annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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

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*).

The curriculum pathway counts for 15% of the Quality Counts Star Rating.

How is Curriculum Assessed?

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.

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 and 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
<p>Compliance with the Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County's rate agreement process for curriculum implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of curriculum • Curriculum is on Coalition's list OR program has successfully completed Coalition review process. <p>- On the applicable Environment Rating Scales, the program has achieved average scores of 3.0 – 3.49 (Level 1) on the following subscales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities • Language-Reasoning – ECERS, Listening and Talking – ITERS • Program Structure 	<p>- On the applicable Environment Rating Scales, the program has achieved average scores of 3.5 – 3.99 (Level 2) on the following subscales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities • Language-Reasoning – ECERS, Listening and Talking – ITERS • Program Structure 	<p>- On the applicable Environment Rating Scales, the program has achieved average scores of 4.0 – 4.49 (Level 3) on the following subscales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities • Language-Reasoning – ECERS, Listening and Talking – ITERS • Program Structure 	<p>- On the applicable Environment Rating Scales, the program has achieved average scores of 4.5 – 4.99 (Level 4) on the following subscales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities • Language-Reasoning – ECERS, Listening and Talking – ITERS • Program Structure <p>- 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.</p> <p>- An approved developmentally appropriate curriculum is fully implemented (effective 10/1/2011)</p>	<p>- On the applicable Environment Rating Scales, the program has achieved average scores of 5+ (Level 5) on the following subscales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities • Language-Reasoning – ECERS, Listening and Talking – ITERS • Program Structure <p>- A system is in place for ongoing child observations, individualized program planning and family communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>- 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.</p>

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.

5.0 STAR RATING PROCESS

How is a program's star rating calculated?

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 9 (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 29 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 32 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 programs receive is coaching and onsite technical assistance by certified teachers employed by the School District of Palm Beach County. Each coach has a degree in Early Childhood Education 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 Six Pathways to Quality. The coach's role includes modeling, scaffolding, demonstration lessons, plan development, and observation and feedback.

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. During the maintenance visits, the director and the early learning coach develop improvement plans. 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

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. A program may not be on more than one compliance plan per year.

6.2 Quality Assessments

All classrooms are assessed by highly trained and qualified program assessors employed by Family Central, Inc. Assessors attend Environmental 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 an assessor(s) will arrive at the center between 8:00 – 8:30 a.m.

- ★ 50% of ITERS and/or ECERS classrooms will be randomly selected for assessment. Typically, one classroom is assessed a day.
- ★ The assessment will last approximately 3-4 hours per classroom.
- ★ To ensure a reliable assessment, the assessor(s) 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, an assessor may need to meet with the lead teacher for approximately 30 minutes in a private place to conduct an exit interview.

Clarification Policy for Assessments

The Environment Rating Scales are an internationally known, respected, and widely used assessment tool. The program assessors using this tool have been trained, and the creators of the ERS tools have verified their reliability. It is not anticipated that facility directors or owners will question the assessment process or the results of an assessment. Should you have a question, a clarification policy has been created and is included below. Other questions should be directed to your early learning coach. If you have further questions, please contact the Department of Early Childhood- Program Manager, School District of Palm Beach County, 3310 Forest Hill Boulevard, Suite C-236, West Palm Beach, Florida 33406.

Request for Review

- a. If upon receiving its Star Rating, a child care provider needs clarification as to how the rating was determined, 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 program 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 three years 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.

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 advanced scheduled annual assessment date. The annual assessment will be conducted within 90 days of the original 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.

6.3 Mini-Grants

Quality Counts has one-time mini-grant opportunities available during the first year of participating in 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.

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).

One-fourth of the grant may be granted at the end of a program's first three months. The second fourth of the grant may be granted at the end of six months. The remaining balance may be granted at the end of nine months.

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.

To be eligible to receive grant dollars, a program must:

- ★ First have its expenditure budget approved by the Expenditure Budget Review Panel (comprised of a team of early learning coaches)
- ★ Meet benchmarks set jointly with the assigned coach

Quality Counts Mini-grant Schedule

Enrollment at time of entry into Quality Counts (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

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 Director/Staff Professional Development Scholarships and Opportunities

Career Advising

Career advisors are available to support the professional development of individuals that are employed by participating Quality Counts programs. Career advisors, employed by PBCC 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.

S.E.E.K. Scholarships

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.

The S.E.E.K. Educational Incentive Awards (EIA)

The S.E.E.K. 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.

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 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.

Translation and Evaluation of foreign college degrees

Translation and evaluation is available to Quality Counts practitioners who have been employed at the same program for six months and have completed the 45-hour DCF certification.

6.5 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 needs

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.

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

7.0 Additional Information

7.1 Staff Retention

According to The Family Center of Tampa Bay at Nova Southeastern University, staff retention is a significant issue for early care and education. Most studies indicate that:

- ★ Employee turnover in America's high quality child care programs is three times higher than in business and five times higher than in the nation's public schools.
- ★ Employee turnover rate in low quality programs is around 55%, while high quality programs typically average 28%. The highest-paid workers in child care programs today make less in inflation-adjusted dollars than they did almost three decades ago.
- ★ Child care worker turnover is hardest on younger children.
- ★ Current brain research shows that the experiences and attachments formed in the first three years of life have long lasting affects on learning.

Recommendations to increase staff retention include:

1. Participation in Quality Counts which offers professional development through scholarships, educational incentive awards, WAGE\$ supplement, continuing education opportunities, and individual personal professional development advice with a career advisor. These professional development opportunities are provided to help increase the education and skill levels of a program's current employees.

2. Higher staff salaries are linked to higher staff retention, and it is recommended that staff raises be linked to higher education levels. Programs that have achieved a two star level or higher have the opportunity of using their Quality Enhancement Payment to provide staff with increased salaries or bonuses. This benefit to Quality Counts participating programs will assist them in decreasing staff turnover and in recruiting a more qualified and educated workforce.

3. Other staff benefits and work environment issues that might help reduce turnover, include:

- ★ Employee benefits, especially health care
- ★ Written job descriptions
- ★ Salary information
- ★ Resignation and termination policies
- ★ Grievance procedures
- ★ Paid leave (annual, sick, personal)
- ★ Retirement plan
- ★ Subsidized child care
- ★ Educational benefits
- ★ Space to store personal things
- ★ Staff lounge/break area
- ★ Time for breaks
- ★ Paid planning time
- ★ On-site resources

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: Sample Star Rating Certificate

Appendix 10: Final Star Rating Form

Appendix 11: Quality Counts Organizational Chart

Appendix 12: Quality Counts Contact List

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 Rate 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: <small>Legal entity or business name if not incorporated</small>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Rate 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, 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 PBC 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.

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					Age Group of Class Assignment	Primary Language Spoken E=English S=Spanish C=Creole O=Other				Years or Months at this Site	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 <u>Check/Complete all that apply)</u>										
Name	FT or PT	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
Ex. Jan Smith	FT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Business					
Ex. Ann Casey	PT			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	History			
1.																							
2.																							
3.																							
4.																							
5.																							
6.																							

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

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

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: _____

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: _____

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: _____

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: _____

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.

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 _____
- Social/emotional _____
- Cognitive/language _____
- Other (list) _____

List number of children speaking:

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

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

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**

QUALITY COUNTS

STRIVING FOR FIVE STAR EARLY LEARNING

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 Average Overall Score for that Pathway.

Staff Qualifications/Professional Development – 20%

1	2	3	4	5
<p>Same as FL Licensing: - All staff have enrolled in the 40-hour DCF training within 90 days of hire</p> <p>- 40 hours certification completed within one year of hire</p> <p>- 5-hour Early Literacy completed</p> <p>- 1 staff per 20 enrolled children have DCF Staff Credential</p> <p>-Facility Director holds level I or II Director Credential</p>	<p>- 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.</p> <p>- 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.</p> <p>- 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</p>	<p>- 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>- 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</p>	<p>- 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.</p> <p>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</p> <p>25% will hold an Associate degree or higher with 12 ECE credits or 60 credits with 12 ECE credits (effective 10/1/2010)</p> <p>- Facility Director has HS diploma/GED, DCF Staff Credential, completed 12 ECE credit hours, and holds FL Advanced level credential</p> <p>Associate degree or higher with 12 ECE credits or 60 credits with 12 ECE credits (effective 10/1/2010)</p>	<p>- 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</p> <p>Lead teachers: All have; HS diploma/GED, DCF Staff Credential, and completed 12 ECE credit hours, if higher benchmarks are not met.</p> <p>50% will hold an Associate degree or higher with 12 ECE credits or 60 credits with 12 ECE credits (effective 10/1/2010)</p> <p>- Facility Director has HS diploma/GED, DCF Staff Credential, completed 12 ECE credit hours, and holds FL Advanced level credential</p> <p>Associate degree or higher with 12 ECE credits or 60 credits with 12 ECE credits (effective 10/1/2010)</p>
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%										
Age	1		2		3		4		5	
	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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family Handbook is written and includes parental rights and responsibilities - Signed acknowledgement of receipt of handbook by parent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum of 3 modes of communication are used to share child and program information with families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 2 family activities per year provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk management plan is in place (written action plan for emergencies such as hurricanes, fire, flood, etc. including evacuation routes identified and practice drills) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personnel policy manual includes written staff orientation procedures and job descriptions - Staff Turnover Reports submitted to Registry monthly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff meetings are held at least quarterly - Written performance evaluations are completed annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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
<p>Compliance with the Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County's rate agreement process for curriculum implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Copy of curriculum ● Curriculum is on Coalition's list OR program has successfully completed Coalition review process. <p>- On the applicable Environment Rating Scales, the program has achieved average scores of 3.0 – 3.49 (Level 1) on the following subscales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activities ● Language-Reasoning – ECERS, Listening and Talking – ITERS ● Program Structure 	<p>- On the applicable Environment Rating Scales, the program has achieved average scores of 3.5 – 3.99 (Level 2) on the following subscales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activities ● Language-Reasoning – ECERS, Listening and Talking – ITERS ● Program Structure 	<p>- On the applicable Environment Rating Scales, the program has achieved average scores of 4.0 – 4.49 (Level 3) on the following subscales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activities ● Language-Reasoning – ECERS, Listening and Talking – ITERS ● Program Structure 	<p>- On the applicable Environment Rating Scales, the program has achieved average scores of 4.5 – 4.99 (Level 4) on the following subscales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activities ● Language-Reasoning – ECERS, Listening and Talking – ITERS ● Program Structure <p>- 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.</p> <p>- An approved developmentally appropriate curriculum is fully implemented (effective 10/1/2011)</p>	<p>- On the applicable Environment Rating Scales, the program has achieved average scores of 5+ (Level 5) on the following subscales.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activities ● Language-Reasoning – ECERS, Listening and Talking – ITERS ● Program Structure <p>- A system is in place for ongoing child observations, individualized program planning and family communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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. <p>- 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.</p>

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.

Appendix 4

Quality Counts Benchmarks and Staff Qualifications Form

1-Star <input type="checkbox"/>	QRIS Benchmarks and Staff Qualifications	2-Star <input type="checkbox"/>			3-Star <input type="checkbox"/>			4-Star <input type="checkbox"/>			5-Star <input type="checkbox"/>		
		*Assoc. Teacher	Lead Teacher	Facility Director	*Assoc. Teacher	Lead Teacher	Facility Director	Assoc. Teacher	Lead Teacher	Facility Director	Assoc. Teacher	Lead Teacher	Facility 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 and a second for each additional 20 children Facility Director • Level I or level 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 Inservice 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 2010 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 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', permanent 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		C. EXPERIENCE BONUS REDUCES TOTAL REQUIRED POINTS
Highest Level of Ed.	Points	POINTS		
Entry	0	50		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.
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		

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 _____
 (Director or Person in Charge)

DATE _____

Print Name _____

Revised: 6/2/2009

DM # 90851

Family Engagement Checklist

1 Star	<p>Family Handbook is written and includes all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule of operations including daily opening-closing hours and holidays <input type="checkbox"/> Payment policies including payment due dates and fees for late pick-up, if any <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition policies concerning food provided by the center, food brought from home, and allergy precautions <input type="checkbox"/> Illness policy <input type="checkbox"/> Medication policy <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency procedures (emergency phone numbers and evacuation maps posted, notification procedure for families) <input type="checkbox"/> Signed acknowledgement of receipt of handbook for at least 10% of children enrolled
2 Star	<p>A minimum of 3 modes of communication are used to share child and program information with families. At least 3 items below must be checked.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Daily/weekly individual written reports for children (2 samples) <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletters (4 samples) <input type="checkbox"/> Letters, flyers, or invitations announcing projects or events (2 samples) <input type="checkbox"/> Bulletin board designed to share health, parent information, and community involvement with families. Must be current. (photos may be submitted as documentation) <input type="checkbox"/> Log of informal communications (phone, email, written notes) <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly calendar (4 samples)
3 Star	<p>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. Name of activity and date must be included. At least 2 items below must be checked.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Open house <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday celebration <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer or service activities such as planting a garden or building a dramatic play stage, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Family classroom participation <input type="checkbox"/> Field trips designed for families <input type="checkbox"/> Group family meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Classes for families such as positive discipline, nutrition, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Lending library <input type="checkbox"/> Family/child journaling activities

DM #90554

Family Engagement Checklist

4 Star	<p>Families are invited to schedule family-teacher conferences to review child’s progress and needs, and to set goals, twice a year.</p> <p>____ Conference sign-up sheets/sign-in logs, with dates, showing 2 opportunities during the year OR process of 2 annual conferences opportunities is described in the family handbook (submit handbook and indicate page number)</p> <p>____ Conference summary report form that includes goals and parent/staff signatures for 10% of enrolled children. In order to receive credit for enrolled children whose parents choose not to participate, there must be a signed statement acknowledging that an attempt was made to schedule a conference and that the parent is choosing not to participate. (will be checked on site)</p> <p>Activities are provided for children and families to assist with transition to new settings within the child care program and/or to kindergarten.</p> <p>____ Written description of procedures for transitioning a child from one group to another</p> <p>____ Evidence of transition activities (can include a transition schedule, photos, letter to families)</p>
5 Star	<p>Families have an opportunity to evaluate the provider in writing at least annually</p> <p>____ Samples of completed forms representing 10% of families</p> <p>____ Summary of evaluation/surveys completed in the last year</p> <p>Resources are available to communicate with families in the family’s primary language</p> <p>____ Written list of primary languages spoken by families currently enrolled</p> <p>____ Plan of communication for each language spoken (contact information of interpreter)</p> <p>____ Written communications are provided in the primary language of families</p> <p>Developmental screening and referral process is in place</p> <p>____ Sample developmental screening form</p> <p>____ Written statement describing the screening process, including referral process and dissemination of information to staff and parents</p> <p>____ Activity suggestions are developed with staff and families</p>

DM #90554

Administration Checklist

<p>1 Star</p>	<p>Risk Management Plan Action steps for emergencies <input type="checkbox"/> Fire <input type="checkbox"/> Severe Weather</p> <p>Risk management plan and system that includes documentation of: <input type="checkbox"/> Posted Evacuation Plans (checked on site) <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly Evacuation Drills <input type="checkbox"/> Dated staff meeting agenda/minutes which includes a review of the Risk Management Plan and emergency procedures</p>
<p>2 Star</p>	<p>Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual: The program's Personnel Policy and Procedures manual should be included in the Administration Binder. For this section, indicate the page number on which the item can be found.</p> <p>Job descriptions for all positions at the site. Mark NA for those positions that do not apply.</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Director <input type="checkbox"/> Floater <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Director <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum Specialist <input type="checkbox"/> Lead Teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Teacher </p> <p>Staff Orientation must include at least 8 of the following:</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Center philosophy and goals <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance policy <input type="checkbox"/> Staff training requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Ethical conduct policy <input type="checkbox"/> Resignation/termination policy <input type="checkbox"/> Child abuse and neglect reporting procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Health and safety procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Discipline policy <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance (health, life, dental, vision, etc) <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement/annuity plan <input type="checkbox"/> Child care discount for staff <input type="checkbox"/> Tuition reimbursement <input type="checkbox"/> Paid leave time <input type="checkbox"/> Paid time for professional development </p> <p>Staff turnover</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly Staff Turnover Reports submitted to Palm Beach Community College during assessment year (13 months prior to, but not including, the assessment month) </p>
<p>3 Star</p>	<p>Staff Meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Dated agendas and sign-in sheets to document that meetings are held at least quarterly</p> <p>Annual Performance Evaluations (will be checked on site) <input type="checkbox"/> Written performance evaluations signed by employees for all teaching staff employed for at least one year</p>

Administration Checklist

<p>4 Star</p>	<p>Operating Policies and Procedures</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Health and safety procedures</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hiring procedures</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Salary and benefit structure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Organizational chart including staff schedules and staff meetings</p> <p>Marketing Plan</p> <p>Written action steps for recruiting families with children, providing visibility in the community, and advertising services provided. 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)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Public relations tools (ads, newsletters, letterhead stationary, business cards, logo)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Promotional items (clothing, mugs, pens, etc)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Professional, consistently-used logo</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Signage</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A referral rewards program</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Partnership with businesses</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Membership in a Chamber of Commerce</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Advisory Board or other staff meeting minutes that show a review of recommendations for the marketing plan</p> <p>Budget</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Current operating budget and budget projections (figures may be blacked out)</p> <p>Annual Performance Observation (will be checked on site)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Written evaluation includes form signed by observer and staff member. Form must include classroom teacher, date, and length of observation</p>
<p>5 Star</p>	<p>Salary Scale</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Written salary scale is used, showing differentiation by job title, education and experience</p> <p>Financial Reports and Budget (will be checked on site)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly financial statements (figures may be blacked out)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Policies and procedures for collection tuition and fees</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Process for informing parents of overdue fees and collection of late payments</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Payroll taxes, and insurance expenses are paid on time (a notarized letter from a CPA stating that quarterly reports have been filed with the IRS and that payroll taxes are current and up-to-date is acceptable)</p> <p>Professional Development Plans (will be checked on Aquarius)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Each staff member has a professional development plan on file which includes an annual goal. Names must be visible to ensure that plans are followed</p>

DM # 90846

Curriculum Checklist

1 Star	<p>On the applicable Environment Rating Scale, the center has achieved average score of 3.0-3.49 on the following subscales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities • Language-Reasoning (ECERS), Listening-Talking (ITERS) • Program Structure <p>If the average score is below 3.0, “0” points will be awarded for the Curriculum Pathway</p> <p>Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum ____ Copy/evidence of approved curriculum</p>
2 Star	<p>On the applicable Environment Rating Scale, the center has achieved average score of 3.5-3.99 on the following subscales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities • Language-Reasoning (ECERS), Listening-Talking (ITERS) • Program Structure
3 Star	<p>On the applicable Environment Rating Scale, the center has achieved average score of 4.0-4.49 on the following subscales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities • Language-Reasoning (ECERS), Listening-Talking (ITERS) • Program Structure
4 Star	<p>On the applicable Environment Rating Scale, the center has achieved average score of 4.5-4.99 on the following subscales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities • Language-Reasoning (ECERS), Listening-Talking (ITERS) • Program Structure <p>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</p>
5 Star	<p>On the applicable Environment Rating Scale, the center has achieved average score of 5.0+ on the following subscales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities • Language-Reasoning (ECERS), Listening-Talking (ITERS) • Program Structure <p>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, and/or child portfolios observed for at least 30% of children enrolled (portfolios will be reviewed on-site)</p> <p>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</p>

Appendix 9

Quality Counts
Quality Rating Improvement System
Sample Final Star Rating Form

Assessment Date: March 17, 2009

Assessor Name: Mary Jones

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	<p align="center">Bonus Points:</p> <p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At least 25% = 1 Bonus Point ● 50% or more = 2 Bonus Points <p>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.</p>
	ECERS	4.49	3	2	6	
	*ITERS OR ECERS Only			4	0	
Staff Qualifications and Professional Development (20%)	Star Rating		3	2	6	
	Director	4				
	Lead Teacher	3				
	Asst. Teacher	2				
	Total	9				
Average Total/3)	3					
Ratios - Group Size (10%)		3	3	1	3	
Curriculum (15%)		3	3	1.5	5	
Program Operations (15%)	Family Engagement	4	4	0.75	3	
	Administration	3	3	0.75	2	
<p>Final Star Rating Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 43 - 50 points = 5 star rating * 37 - 42 points = 4 star rating * 25 - 36 points = 3 star rating * 13 - 24 points = 2 star rating * 4 - 12 points = 1 star rating <p>Star Rating+:</p> <p>Programs holding a Gold Seal designation will earn a star rating "plus".</p>			<p align="right">Subtotal <input type="text" value="29"/></p> <p align="right">Bonus Points <input type="text" value="3"/></p> <p align="right">Total Points Earned <input type="text" value="32"/></p> <p align="right">Gold Seal Designation <input type="text" value="YES"/></p> <p align="right">Final Star Rating <input type="text" value="3 +"/></p>			<p>Bonus Point Designation:</p> <p>2 bonus points for 50% or more and one bonus point for designated curriculum specialist</p>

Appendix 10

Quality Counts Quality Rating Improvement System Final Star Rating Form

Assessment Date: _____
 Assessor Name: _____
 Site Name: _____

Pathway		Star Rating	x Weight	Equals Total Points	Bonus Points	
	Score					
Learning Environment - Environment Rating Scales (40%)	ITERS		2	0	<p style="text-align: center;">Bonus Points:</p> <p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At least 25% = 1 Bonus Point ● 50% or more = 2 Bonus Points <p>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.</p>	
	ECERS		2	0		
	*ITERS OR ECERS Only		4	0		
Staff Qualifications and Professional Development (20%)	Star Rating		0	2		0
	Director					
	Lead Teacher					
	Asst. Teacher					
	Total	0				
	Average Total/3)	0				
Ratios - Group Size (10%)		0	1	0		
Curriculum (15%)		0	1.5	0		
Program Operations (15%)	Family Engagement	0	0.75	0		
	Administration	0	0.75	0		
<p>Final Star Rating Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 43 - 50 points = 5 star rating * 37 - 42 points = 4 star rating * 25 - 36 points = 3 star rating * 13 - 24 points = 2 star rating * 4 - 12 points = 1 star rating <p>Star Rating+:</p> <p>Programs holding a Gold Seal designation will earn a star rating "plus".</p>		<p>Subtotal <input style="width: 50px; text-align: center;" type="text" value="0"/></p> <p>Bonus Points <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/></p> <p>Total Points Earned <input style="width: 50px; text-align: center;" type="text" value="0"/></p> <p>Gold Seal Designation <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/></p> <p>Final Star Rating <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/></p>			<p>Bonus Point Designation:</p>	

DM # 88955

**Children's Services
Council PBC**

Quality Counts Contact List

<u>Contact</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Phone # /e-mail</u>
Assessment:		
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