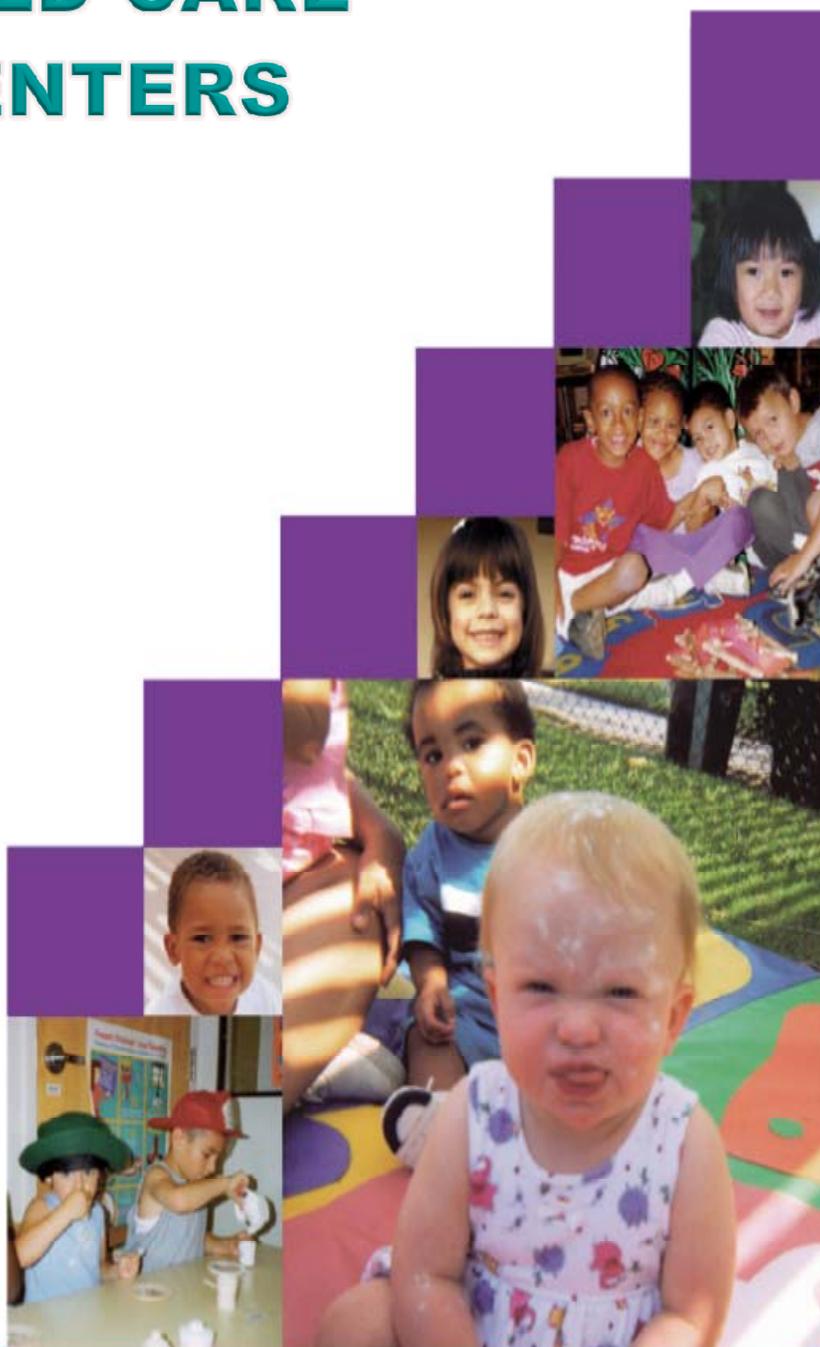




Steps To Excellence Program
Promoting Quality Child Care

**QUALITY RATING
STANDARDS FOR
CHILD CARE
CENTERS**



HOW DOES STEP MEASURE CHILD CARE QUALITY?

The STEP Quality Rating and Improvement System evaluates six areas of a child care program's operation. These areas include:



1) Regulatory Compliance



2) Teacher-Child Relationships



3) Learning Environment



4) Inclusion of Children with Special Needs



5) Staff Qualifications & Working Conditions



6) Family & Community Connections

Each area has a distinct group of standards, divided into five quality rating levels. Take time to thoroughly review this booklet to understand STEP's quality standards for each area. You can then use this information to determine your child care program's quality level and plan improvements.

STEP QUALITY RATING STANDARDS FOR CHILD CARE CENTERS

QUALITY AREAS	Step 1 Beginning Quality	Step 2 Intermediate Quality	Step 3 Good Quality	Step 4 Advanced Quality	Step 5 Excellent Quality
1). REGULATORY COMPLIANCE 	All child care programs rated by STEP hold a child care license from California's Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) for at least 12 months. STEP has confirmed the child care licensee is: 1) <u>not</u> probationary; 2) <u>not</u> involved in a compliance plan; and 3) has <u>not</u> been fined for failing to correct a deficiency in timely manner or for repeated offenses.				
2). TEACHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS 	2A). TEACHER-CHILD RATIOS QUALITY STANDARDS				
	Infants (0-2yrs): 1 teacher to 4 infants -or- 1 teacher to 12 infants (and at least 2 aides, each supervising no more than 4 infants for a 1:4 staff-to-child ratio)	Infants (0-2yrs): 1 teacher to 10 infants with at least 2 aides (each aide supervising no more than 3 infants for a 1:3 staff-to-child ratio).	Infants (0-18mo): 1 teacher to 18 infants with 5 aides for a 1:3 staff-to-child ratio.	Infants (0-18mo): 1 teacher to 18 infants with 5 aides for a 1:3 staff-to-ratio.	Infant (0-15mo): 1 teacher to 8 infants with 1 staff to 3 or 4 infants.
	Toddlers (18-30 mo): 1 teacher to 6 children -or- 1 teacher and 1 aide to 12 children.	Toddlers (18-30 mo): 1 teacher to 5 children -or- 1 teacher and 1 aide to 10 children.	Toddlers (18-35mo): 1 teacher to 16 children with 3 aides for a 1:4 staff-to-child ratio.	Toddlers (18-35mo): 1 teacher to 16 children with 3 aides for a 1:4 staff-to-child ratio.	Toddlers (12-28mo): 1 teacher to 12 children with additional aides for a 1:3 or 1:4 staff-to-child ratio.
	Preschool (2-5yrs): 1 teacher to 12 children -or- 1 teacher and 1 aide to 15 children -or- 1 teacher (and 1 aide with 6 early childhood education college units) to 18 children.	Preschool (2-5 yrs): 1 teacher to 10 children -or- 1 teacher and 1 aide to 14 children -or- 1 teacher and 1 aide (with 6 early childhood education units) to 17 children.	Preschool (3-5yrs): 1 teacher and 2 aides for a 1:8 staff-to-child ratio.	Preschool (3-5yrs): 1 teacher and 2 aides for a 1:8 staff-to-child ratio.	Younger Preschool (30-48mo): 1 teacher to 18 children, with additional aides for a 1:6 to 1:9 staff-to-child ratio. Older Preschool (4-5yrs): 1 teacher to 24 children, with additional aides for a 1:8 to 1:10 staff-to-child ratio.
	2B). GROUP SIZE QUALITY STANDARDS:				
	Infants (0-2yrs) : No group size requirement.	Infants (0-2yrs): No group size requirement.	Infants (0-18mo): No group size requirement.	Infant (0-18mo): Group sizes of 6-8 children.	Infants (0-15mo): Maximum group size of 8 infants.
	Toddlers (18-30 mo): Maximum group size of 12 toddlers.	Toddlers (18-30 mo): Maximum group size of 10 toddlers.	Toddlers (18-36mo): No group size requirement.	Toddlers (18-35mo): Group sizes of 12-14 toddlers.	Toddlers (12-28mo): Maximum group size of 12 toddlers.
	Preschool (2-5yrs): No group size requirement.	Preschool (2-5 yrs): No group size requirement.	Preschool (3-5yrs): No group size requirement.	Preschool (3-5yrs): Group sizes of 24 children.	Younger Preschool (30-48mo) : Maximum group size of 18 children. Older Preschool (4-5ys): Maximum group size of 24 children; 3 staff with one of whom is a fully qualified teacher.
	2C). CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT SCORING SYSTEM (CLASS™) QUALITY STANDARDS:				
	Score on the CLASS Emotional Support Domain is less than 3.0	Score on the CLASS Emotional Support Domain is between 3.0 and 3.99	Score on the CLASS Emotional Support Domain is between 4.0 and 4.99	Score on the CLASS Emotional Support Domain is between 5.0 and 5.99	Score on the CLASS Emotional Support Domain is equal to or over 6.0
3). LEARNING ENVIRONMENT 	3A). ENVIRONMENT RATING SCALE (ERS) QUALITY STANDARDS				
	Average overall ERS score is less than 3.0.	Average overall ERS score is between 3.0 and 3.99	Average overall ERS score is between 4.0 and 4.99	Average overall ERS score is between 5.0 and 5.99	Average overall ERS score is 6.0 or higher.
	3B). CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT SCORING SYSTEM (CLASS™) QUALITY STANDARDS:				
	Score on the CLASS Classroom Organization Domain is less than 3.0	Score on the CLASS Classroom Organization Domain is between 3.0 and 3.99	Score on the CLASS Classroom Organization Domain is between 4.0 and 4.99	Score on the CLASS Classroom Organization Domain is between 5.0 and 5.99	Score on the CLASS Classroom Organization Domain is equal to or over 6.0
	Score on the CLASS Instructional Support Domain is less than 3.0	Score on the CLASS Instructional Support Domain is between 3.0 and 3.99	Score on the CLASS Instructional Support Domain is between 4.0 and 4.99	Score on the CLASS Instructional Support Domain is between 5.0 and 5.99	Score on the CLASS Instructional Support Domain is equal to or over 6.0

STEP QUALITY RATING STANDARDS FOR CHILD CARE CENTERS

4). INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



4A). IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS QUALITY STANDARDS:

<p>No criteria.</p>	<p>The child care program is aware of support available through basic early intervention services provided by the local Regional Center and the local school district(s).</p>	<p>Meets Step2+: The child care program makes a high quality, culturally and developmentally appropriate screening tool available to all families enrolling their children in the center. Program works with families to screen their children within <u>90 days</u> of enrollment.</p> <p>Families are engaged in the screening process. Results are shared with the family in a confidential and supportive manner.</p> <p>Program staff use screening results to refer families to the appropriate agencies for further assessment, such as: the local Regional Center, the local school district and/or other resources.</p>	<p>Meets Step2+: The child care program makes a high quality, culturally and developmentally appropriate screening tool available to all families enrolling their children in the center. Program works with families to screen their children within <u>90 days</u> of enrollment <u>and</u> at least <u>once</u> a year thereafter.</p> <p>Families are engaged in the screening process. Results are shared with the family in a confidential and supportive manner.</p> <p>Program staff use screening results to refer families to the appropriate agencies for further assessment.</p> <p>Program staff use screening results to implement interventions strategies and adaptations as appropriate.</p>	<p>Meets Step 2+: The child care program makes a high quality, culturally and developmentally appropriate screening tool available to all families enrolling their children in the center. Program works with families to screen their children within <u>45 days</u> of enrollment <u>and</u> at least <u>twice</u> a year thereafter.</p> <p>Families are engaged in the screening process. Results are shared with the family in a confidential and supportive manner.</p> <p>Program staff use screening results to refer families to the appropriate agencies for further assessment.</p> <p>Program staff use screening results to implement interventions strategies and adaptations as appropriate.</p>
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4B). INCLUSION QUALITY STANDARDS:

<p>No criteria.</p>	<p>Families of children with special needs are welcomed to the program.</p> <p>A variety of adaptable materials are available in the learning environment to support at-risk children and to facilitate the inclusion of children with identified special needs.</p>	<p>Families of children with special needs are welcomed to the program.</p> <p>A variety of adaptable materials are available in the learning environment <u>and</u> activities are implemented to support at-risk children and to facilitate the inclusion of children with identified special needs.</p>	<p>Meets Step 3+: Clear and explicit intervention strategies and adaptations are based on assessment results and are implemented to support at-risk children and to facilitate the inclusion of children with identified special needs.</p>	<p>Meets Step 4+: A monitoring system is implemented to observe and record children's progress and to determine if further assessment is needed.</p>
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4C). SPECIAL NEEDS TRAINING QUALITY STANDARDS:

<p>No criteria.</p>	<p>At least 1 staff member has completed in the past 3 years professional development training that prepares them to work with children with special needs.</p>	<p>At least 1 staff member has completed specialized college coursework <u>or</u>, in the past 3 years, has completed professional development training that prepares her/him to work with children who have special needs. Training includes administration and interpretation of developmental screening tools. This individual is available to assist colleagues.</p>	<p>At least 1 staff member in each classroom has completed specialized college coursework <u>and</u>, in the past 3 years, has completed professional development trainings that prepare them to work with children who have special needs. Training includes administration and interpretation of developmental screening tools.</p>	<p>A majority of teaching staff have completed specialized college coursework <u>and</u>, in the past 18 months, have completed professional development training that prepares them to work children with special needs. Training includes administration and interpretation of developmental screening tools.</p>
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STEP QUALITY RATING STANDARDS FOR CHILD CARE CENTERS

5). STAFF QUALIFICATIONS & WORKING CONDITIONS



5Ai). PROGRAM DIRECTOR QUALITY STANDARDS:

Program Director has completed a minimum of 15 units in Early Childhood Education (ECE) <u>and</u> has at least 4 years teaching experience in ECE.	Program Director has at least an Associate of Arts (AA) degree in ECE or- Holds an AA in another field with at least 12 ECE units and has at least 1 year administrative experience.	Program Director holds or has applied for a Child Development Site Supervisor Permit.	Program Director holds or has applied for a Child Development Program Director Permit.	Program Director has a Master of Arts (MA) in ECE or related field, <u>and</u> holds or has applied for a Program Director Permit.
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5Aii). LEAD TEACHER QUALITY STANDARDS:

Each classroom (or group of children) is staffed by at least 1 teacher who has completed 12 units in Early Childhood Education (ECE) and has 6 months teaching experience.	Fifty percent (50%) of the classrooms (or groups of children) are staffed by at least 1 person who holds or has applied for a Child Development Teacher Permit. The remaining classrooms (or groups of children) are staffed by at least 1 person who holds or has applied for a Child Development Associate Teacher Permit.	Each classroom (or group of children) is staffed by at least 1 person who holds or has applied for a Child Development Teacher Permit.	Each classroom (or group of children) is staffed by at least 1 person who holds or has applied for a Child Development Master Teacher Permit.	Each classroom (or group of children) is staffed by at least 1 teacher who either: has a Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in ECE -or- has a BA/BS in another field and has completed at least 12 units in ECE.
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5Aiii). ASSISTANT TEACHER QUALITY STANDARDS:

If there are 18 or more children in a group or class, at least 1 assistant has completed 6 units in ECE.	All other assistant teaching staff, at a minimum, have completed 6 units in ECE.	All other assistant teaching staff, at a minimum, hold or have applied for a Child Development Assistant Permit.	All other assistant teaching staff, at a minimum, hold or have applied for a Child Development Associate Teacher Permit.	All other teaching staff hold or have applied for a Child Development Teacher Permit.
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5B). STAFF STABILITY QUALITY STANDARDS:

No criteria.	At least 60% of currently employed teachers have been employed for 3 years or more.	At least 80% of currently employed teachers have been employed for 3 years or more.	At least 85% of currently employed teachers have been employed for 3 years or more.	At least 90% of currently employed teachers have been employed for 3 years or more.
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5C). EMPLOYEE BENEFITS QUALITY STANDARDS:

No criteria.	Program offers access to health insurance.	Program offers access to partially-paid health insurance (or menu of appropriate options).	Program offers access to partially-paid health and dental insurance (or appropriate menu).	Program offers access to partially-paid health, dental insurance and pension plan (or appropriate menu).
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5D). WORKING CONDITIONS QUALITY STANDARDS:

The child care program has a written staffing plan (which specifies the qualifications and duties of staff) and a plan for in-service education of staff.	Meets Step 1+: Child care program implements 4 staff meetings per year, has formal grievance procedures, implements a salary scale and provides employees with the following: ▪ Written confirmation of job title, salary and hours; and ▪ Written job descriptions.	Meets Step 2+: Child care program implements 6 staff meetings per year and provides employees with the following: ▪ Paid time-off (e.g. sick time, vacation time); ▪ Annual employee evaluations; and ▪ Professional development plans.	Meets STEP 3+: Child care program implements monthly staff meetings and provides employees with the following: ▪ A salary scale which rewards education and experience (and staff are aware of the salary scale); and ▪ Paid preparation and planning time.	Meets STEP 4+: Child care program gives employees paid release time to provide professional development training and to participate in professional development activities and implements a salary scale that is aligned with the Los Angeles County Model Compensation Scale.
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STEP QUALITY RATING STANDARDS FOR CHILD CARE CENTERS

6). FAMILY & COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS QUALITY STANDARDS:

The child care program informs parents of their right to visit and/or observe their children in the program and welcome such visits.	Meets Step 1+: Applies at least 3 parent involvement strategies from Section A and 3 strategies from Section B.	Meets Step 1+: Applies at least 5 parent involvement strategies from Section A and 5 strategies from Section B. Applies at least 4 parent involvement strategies from Section C and 4 strategies from Section D.	Meets Step 1+: Applies at least 6 parent involvement strategies from each section (Section A, B, C & D).	Meets Step 1+: Applies at least 8 parent involvement strategies from each section (Section A, B, C & D).
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SECTION A: LIST OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES

- A1). Child care program offers a comprehensive orientation to all families.
- A2). Program has a parent handbook that describes the its mission statement, educational philosophy, policies and procedures.
- A3). Program provides written materials in home language(s) of families.
- A4). Program communicates in home languages of families, including securing adults to translate as needed.
- A5). A variety of opportunities exist for parents to contribute to the child care program (e.g. in-class helpers, field trips, donated items).
- A6). Program implements activities/materials that incorporate the cultures of enrolled families and the community at large.
- A7). Program hosts two annual group activities for children and their families (e.g. family picnic, potluck).
- A8). Program uses family schedules to determine meeting and event times.
- A9). Program offers families opportunities to participate in leadership/decision-making positions (e.g. Advisory Committees).
- A10). Program staff use creative strategies to adapt the program to meet family needs.

SECTION B: LIST OF PARENT COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

- B1). Program uses a communication system that uses families' preferred communication means.
- B2). Staff schedules allow for meaningful communications with families.
- B3). Program offers one (1) scheduled parent/teacher conference per year to discuss child's progress.
- B4). Program offers two (2) scheduled parent/teacher conferences per year to discuss child's progress; additional parent conferences are available by request.
- B5). Program completes an annual, written developmental report for each child.
- B6). Calendars of daily schedule and activities are readily available to families.
- B7). Program uses a group information dissemination system, such as a newsletter.
- B8). Program implements annual home visits.
- B9). Program offers families opportunities to help shape curriculum and program practices.
- B10). Program intentionally partners with families, recognizing parents as their child's first and most important teacher.

SECTION C: LIST OF PARENT SUPPORT STRATEGIES

- C1). Program offers opportunities for mutual support among families.
- C2). Program offers library services for families to check out books, toys, videos and/or resource materials.
- C3). Program offers information and coaching about healthy child growth and development.
- C4). Program works with families to implement strategies to create consistency between home practices and the child care program's developmentally appropriate practices.
- C5). Program offers families child-specific, home-based activity ideas based on child's talents and opportunities for growth.
- C6). Program has a physical space where parents can gather and meet.
- C7). Program has a support person for families to address areas of need (e.g. social workers, legal advocate, early intervention specialist).
- C8). Program creates family support plans and conducts an annual review of such plans (or more often as needed).
- C9). Program offers training and support for parents to develop their advocacy skills.
- C10). Program offers support and encouragement for parents to become better informed primary decision makers for their child.

SECTION D: LIST OF PARENT/COMMUNITY CONNECTION STRATEGIES

- D1). Program cultivates working relationships with public and community-based services (e.g. health, education, and social services).
- D2). Program develops and maintains a current list of community resources.
- D3). Program links families to identified liaisons in public and community-based services.
- D4). Qualified program staff participate in assessment/evaluation meetings with families (e.g. Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings).
- D5). Program staff initiate discussions about kindergarten at least one year prior to kindergarten entry.
- D6). Program engages in transition-to-school activities, in partnership with established school/center liaisons (e.g. hosting information sessions for parents, offering field trips/school visits and on-site enrollment support).
- D7). Program helps families navigate community resources and provides direct advocacy as needed.
- D8). Program invites community programs to share their areas of expertise with staff, parents and children (e.g. library, local artists, police, story tellers, etc).
- D9). Program informs families of relevant, local community events.
- D10). Program relays policy changes at local, state or national levels that effect early care and education services to families.



If you have any questions, please contact our office.

Thank you!



Los Angeles County Office of Child Care

*STEP is a program of the Los Angeles County
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