



# **Early Care and Education Quality Journey**

# Welcome to the Quality Preschool Initiative (QPI) Quality Journey!

***Early childhood education is one of the best, most long-lasting investments that we can make for our children.***

Research shows that high-quality early childhood programs can deliver a 13 percent per year return on investment. This is because children who attend a high-quality preschool program get a better start in life and have better outcomes in education, health, social behaviors, and employment.<sup>1</sup> Ninety percent of a child's brain develops by age five, and early experiences build the foundation for lifelong learning. Early care and education ensures that foundation is strong, but ***quality makes all the difference.***

***You are the key to quality early childhood education.***

Professionals who serve children ages 0-5 in early learning centers and family child care homes mean so much to the children and families they serve. Every day you support children to reach their fullest potential, strengthen families, and enable families to work and thrive. Research shows that the environment you create for children, the way you interact with them, the knowledge you bring to your work, and the tools and strategies you use every day make a difference in the outcomes for children and families you serve.

***We are here to help!***

YMCA Childcare Resource Service (YMCA CRS) and the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) have teamed up to help you integrate key quality practices into your work, in alignment with guidance from the California Department of Education and Quality Counts California. Together we implement the Quality Preschool Initiative (QPI) with support from First 5 San Diego, the California Department of Education, and First 5 California. QPI is a robust quality rating and improvement system based on the state's model. This Quality Journey is designed to help you continually improve the quality of your program and achieve high quality ratings within that system; and we are here to support you along the way. Contact YMCA CRS at [CRSqualitysupport@ymca.org](mailto:CRSqualitysupport@ymca.org) or (619) 521-3055, or SDCOE at [SDQPI@sdcoe.net](mailto:SDQPI@sdcoe.net) or (858) 292-3700 for more information.

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<sup>1</sup> Heckman, James. "Research Summary: The Lifecycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program." The Heckman Equation. (2016)

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# 1. Introduction

## a. About the San Diego Quality Preschool Initiative (QPI)

QPI is the county’s comprehensive early learning quality rating and improvement system (QRIS), based on a state model called Quality Counts California. Since 2006, QPI has focused on improving child development and achievement in San Diego by providing children in their critical first five years of life with the kinds of early education experiences they need to do well in school and beyond. QPI now reaches a variety of program types, including center-based preschools and infant/toddler programs as well as family child care homes.

QPI offers training, technical assistance, coaching, observation, assessments, and rating for all types of early learning programs. Areas of quality improvement focus reflect the San Diego QRIS Rating Matrix, based on the Quality Counts California template and key Continuous Quality Improvement Pathways. These areas include:

- Understanding Child Development
- Effective Adult-Child Interactions
- Child Observation and Individualized Instruction
- Developmental and Health Screenings and Referrals to Services
- Quality Learning Environments
- Continuing Education and Professional Development
- Licensing, Ratios, and Group Sizes
- Healthy Eating and Physical Activity
- Supporting Social-Emotional Development
- Family Engagement and Strengthening
- Director Leadership

QPI is implemented by the San Diego County Office of Education and the YMCA Childcare Resource Service, which is the county’s Childcare and Development Resource and Referral Agency. QPI exists thanks to significant support over many years from First 5 San Diego, First 5 California, and the California Department of Education. We are grateful for their ongoing commitment to building and supporting the quality of early learning experiences available to San Diego’s youngest children.

More information on QPI can be found at [www.sdqpi.org](http://www.sdqpi.org), and more information on Quality Counts California can be found at [www.qualitycountscalifornia.net](http://www.qualitycountscalifornia.net). You can also see the full San Diego QRIS Rating Matrix at the end of this document.

## b. Building Quality through QPI’s Quality Journey

This Quality Journey booklet will identify guideposts for improving quality in your family child care home or early learning center and direct you toward training, workshops, resources, and supports to help you achieve your quality goals. SDCOE and the YMCA CRS invite you to focus on different areas of quality based on your interests, needs, and availability at a pace that works for you.

If you would like assistance with implementation of new ideas and practices, you are not alone! Research shows that often training by itself is not enough to support change. That is why we offer on-site technical assistance as well as longer-term coaching to support achievement of quality improvement goals. In addition, expert observers and assessors are available to visit your program and provide feedback or provide official, valid assessments using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) tools or the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) tools. If and when you are ready, you can also receive a full site rating using the San Diego QRIS Rating Matrix.

A great way to set goals for yourself is to develop a comprehensive quality improvement plan (QIP). QIPs can be written in many ways, but often have the following in common:

- They identify one or more improvement goals related to key areas of quality
- They note action steps you plan to take toward each of the goals
- They set timelines for completing the action steps
- They track your progress over time

A sample QIP is available at [www.sdqpi.org](http://www.sdqpi.org). We encourage you to create goals that are meaningful to you, plan out the action steps that can get you there, and track your progress. We are here to help you as you develop and implement your QIP!

We also encourage you to sign up for the California Early Care and Education Workforce Registry at [www.caregistry.org](http://www.caregistry.org). The Registry tracks and promotes the education, training, and experience of the early care and education workforce in California. You will need your Registry information at workshops, so we recommend you write it down here and bring this booklet with you when you attend any workshop.

*Workforce Registry #:*

*Username:*

*Password:*

### **c. Getting Started with the Quality Preschool Initiative**

Wondering how to get started on your Quality Journey? Here's our recommended pathway...

- 1) Participate in a QPI orientation presentation.  
In the orientation you will learn more about what each of the elements of quality mean and what they look like in practice. You will have an opportunity to learn more about the rating system and to ask questions of the experts.
- 2) Meet with a coach – *at no cost to participant!*  
Once you've completed a QPI orientation, you will be invited to schedule a meeting with a quality improvement coach, who will provide an initial consultation to help you plan your next steps to achieve your quality goals.
- 3) Try a workshop in an area of interest.  
We recommend attending a workshop in an area you're interested in learning about and improving in. As part of that workshop, we encourage you to identify what you might be doing well already, and what you could do to improve in that area of focus.
- 4) Work on implementing your new knowledge.

As you put new ideas into practice in your program, we are here to help with technical assistance or coaching. Contact us to find out if you may be eligible for scholarships, or for low-cost services.

Visit [www.sdqpi.org](http://www.sdqpi.org) or contact YMCA CRS at [CRSqualitysupport@ymca.org](mailto:CRSqualitysupport@ymca.org) or (619) 521-3055, or SDCOE at [SDQPI@sdcoe.net](mailto:SDQPI@sdcoe.net) or (858) 292-3700 to take the first step!

## 2. Key Elements of Quality Early Learning

### a. Understanding Child Development and Learning

Early learning quality is all about supporting the optimal development of young children in order to ensure every child reaches their fullest potential and enters kindergarten ready to learn and thrive. Knowledge of child development has increased exponentially in recent years, especially when it comes to understanding the young brain. Before you jump into details about building quality, you may want to consider brushing up on current knowledge of child development. Many community colleges and universities in the San Diego area offer excellent courses in Child Development and Early Childhood Education, and there are lots of resources out there to explore. A few great ones include:

- Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University
  - [www.developingchild.harvard.edu](http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu)
- ZERO TO THREE
  - [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)
- Healthychildren.org from the American Academy of Pediatrics
  - [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)
- All About Young Children
  - [www.allaboutyoungchildren.org](http://www.allaboutyoungchildren.org)

The State of California has compiled years of research-based information into comprehensive guides on child development for early childhood educators. Printed and electronic written guides are available in multiple languages and include the following:

- **The California Preschool Learning Foundations** outline key knowledge and skills that most children can achieve when provided with the kinds of interactions, instruction, and environments that research has shown to promote early learning and development, and can be found at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfoundations.asp>.
- **The California Preschool Curriculum Frameworks** present strategies for early childhood educators that enrich learning and development opportunities for all of California's preschool children, and can be found at [www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psframework.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psframework.asp).
- **The California Infant/Toddler Learning & Development Foundations** describe research and evidence-based expectations for the way most infants and toddlers make progress in the major domains of social-emotional, language, cognitive, and perceptual and motor development, and can be found at [www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/itfoundations.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/itfoundations.asp).

- **The California Infant/Toddler Curriculum Framework** presents principles, a planning process, and strategies to assist teachers in their efforts to support children’s learning from birth to three years of age, and can be found at [www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/itframework.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/itframework.asp).

State of California Online Resources:

- California Early Childhood Online (CECO) training modules – start with the Overview Module on the Foundations and Frameworks in order to unlock access to 16 hours of training, at no cost to participants, on topics like Infant/Toddler Social-Emotional Development, Infant/Toddler Cognitive Development, Preschool Language and Literacy Development, Preschool Physical Development, and more: [www.caearlychildhoodonline.org](http://www.caearlychildhoodonline.org).
- “Child Development and Learning,” California Early Childhood Educator Competency video: [www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/ececomps.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/ececomps.asp).

Local Resources:

- In-person workshops through SDCOE and YMCA CRS on topics like, “Brain Development in Infants and Toddlers,” “Baby’s First Years in Family Child Care,” “Language Development,” and more: [www.sdqpi.org](http://www.sdqpi.org).

## b. Effective Adult-Child Interactions

Creating effective learning experiences means that the adults in the classroom or family child care home are engaged in a variety of ways with the children. High-quality adult-child interactions not only help children establish healthy relationships, but they also lead to overall school readiness and increased academic success. Many programs use the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) to assess the quality of the interactions between children and their teachers and care providers. CLASS assessments cover domain areas like the emotional and instructional support provided to children, classroom organization, behavioral support provided to children, engaged support for learning, and responsive caregiving depending on the age group in the setting.

Research has shown that higher scores on the CLASS are associated with greater child outcomes. Programs with higher scores on independent CLASS assessments receive higher scores in this quality element on the San Diego QRIS Rating Matrix.

Rating scale for this element (Element 4):

1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
Licensed and In Good Standing	Familiarity with CLASS assessment for appropriate age group as available, by a minimum of 1 representative from the site	Independent CLASS assessment by reliable observer to inform the program’s professional development/improvement plan	Independent CLASS assessment by reliable observer with minimum CLASS scores of: <u>Pre-K</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional Support-5</li> <li>• Instructional Support-3</li> <li>• Classroom Organization-5</li> </ul> <u>Toddler</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional &amp; Behavioral Support-5</li> <li>• Engaged Support for</li> </ul>	Independent CLASS assessment by reliable observer with minimum CLASS scores of: <u>Pre-K</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional Support-5.5</li> <li>• Instructional Support-3.3</li> <li>• Classroom Organization-5.5</li> </ul> <u>Toddler</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional &amp; Behavioral Support-5.5</li> <li>• Engaged Support for</li> </ul>



			Learning-3.5 <u>Infant</u> • Responsive Caregiving-5	Learning-4 <u>Infant</u> • Responsive Caregiving-5.5
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Resources for the Tools:

- The company that developed and supports the CLASS tool is called Teachstone: [teachstone.com](http://teachstone.com).
- Five-minute video on “Effective Teacher-Child Interactions”  
<https://info.teachstone.com/resources/videos/watch-effective-teacher-child-interactions>.
- Research summary on “Effective Teacher-Child Interactions and Child Outcomes”  
<https://info.teachstone.com/research-paper-outcomes>.

State Resources:

- “Relationships, Interactions, and Guidance” California Early Childhood Educator Competency video: [www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/ececomps.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/ececomps.asp).

Local Resources:

- In-person workshops through SDCOE and YMCA CRS on topics like, “Introduction to Quality Interactions,” “Maximizing Instruction through the CLASS Lens,” “Supporting Cognitive and Language Development,” and more: [www.sdqpi.org](http://www.sdqpi.org).

*What are some examples of effective, positive interactions that support quality early learning??*

- Infants: Get physically close with infants, smile and laugh. Learn about their preferences and cues and respond in a timely manner. Help infants learn how to do things themselves. Talk with them throughout the day.
- Toddlers: Demonstrate respectful language and actions. Help children learn words to express their feelings. Be available to children when they need support. Provide opportunities for children to make choices. Provide simple and clear expectations.
- Pre-K: Support cooperation and positive peer interactions. Spend one-on-one time with children who have challenging behaviors. Listen and respond to children. Be flexible to respond to children’s ideas. Provide real responsibilities to children. Provide specific positive feedback.

### c. Child Observation and Individualized Instruction

Highly skilled early learning providers use child observation to identify child strengths and opportunities for growth, and tailor their lesson planning to the unique needs of every child. The Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP 2015) is a tool used across the state for conducting observations in a range of developmental domains. The five essential developmental domains for school readiness assessed with the DRDP 2015 are:

- Approaches to Learning–Self-Regulation: includes attention maintenance, engagement, persistence, curiosity, initiative, self-comforting, self-control of feelings and behavior, imitation, and shared use of space and materials.



- **Social and Emotional Development:** includes identity of self in relation to others, social and emotional understanding, relationships and social interactions with familiar adults, relationships and interactions with peers, and symbolic and sociodramatic play.
- **Language and Literacy Development:** includes foundational language and literacy skills in any language and in all modes of communication.
- **Cognition, Including Math and Science:** includes spatial relationships, cause and effect, classification, number sense of quantity, number sense of math operations, measurement, patterning, shapes, inquiry through observation and investigation, documentation and communication of inquiry, and knowledge of the natural world.
- **Physical Development – Health:** includes perceptual-motor skills and movement concepts, gross locomotor movement skills, gross motor manipulative skills, fine motor manipulative skills, active physical play, nutrition, safety, and personal care routines (hygiene, feeding, dressing).

High-quality programs use the DRDP 2015 to observe and assess children at least twice a year and intentionally use the information to inform instruction, with curriculum aligned to the California Learning Foundations and Curriculum Frameworks. Programs that use the DRDP 2015 to observe children at least twice a year and intentionally use the information in planning instruction receive higher scores in this quality element. Programs that also use DRDP Online to record and analyze classroom data receive the highest score.

Rating scale for this element (Element 1):

1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
Licensed and In Good Standing	Program uses evidence-based child assessment/ observation tool annually that covers all five domains of development	Program uses valid and reliable child assessment/ observation tool aligned with CA Foundations & Frameworks (minimum twice a year)	Program uses DRDP 2015 (minimum twice a year) AND Results used to inform curriculum planning	Program uses DRDP 2015 (minimum twice a year) AND Uploads results into DRDP Tech AND Results used to inform curriculum planning

Resources for the Tools:

- All DRDP 2015 forms are available online at no cost to participants at [www.desiredresults.us](http://www.desiredresults.us). These include the Infant/Toddler© View and the Preschool© Views.

State Resources:

- California Early Childhood Online (CECO) training modules – six online training modules, at no cost to participants, on the DRDP in English and Spanish: [www.caeearlychildhoodonline.org](http://www.caeearlychildhoodonline.org).
- “Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation” California Early Childhood Educator Competency video: [www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/ececomps.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/ececomps.asp).

Local Resources:

- In-person workshops from SDCOE and YMCA CRS on topics like “Introduction to Child Observation,” “DRDP 2015,” “DRDP Meaningful Observation,” and more: [www.sdqpi.org](http://www.sdqpi.org).

- On-site technical assistance with understanding the DRDP may also be available from SDCOE upon request (at no cost to participants): email [sdqpi@sdcoe.net](mailto:sdqpi@sdcoe.net).

#### d. Developmental and Health Screenings and Referrals to Services

Screenings for health, developmental, and social-emotional needs help support appropriate growth and development for children. Early detection and support for children with delays have been shown to increase kindergarten readiness and reduce more costly interventions in elementary school. Ensuring that every child has a health screening completed by their physician is an important marker of quality for early care and education settings. In addition, many programs use the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) to screen for developmental and behavioral concerns. Programs receive higher scores in this quality element if they use these tools, make referrals to appropriate services when children show concerns, and work to address concerns in the classroom. A sample tool for tracking completion of all items for every child can be found at [www.sdqpi.org](http://www.sdqpi.org).

Rating scale for this element (Element 2):

1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
Licensed and In Good Standing, Meets Title 22 Regulations	Health Screening Form (Community Care Licensing form LIC 701 "Physician's Report - Child Care Centers" or equivalent) used at entry for every child, and then <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• annually for every child</li> </ul> OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures vision and hearing screening are conducted annually</li> </ul>	Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using a valid and reliable developmental screening tool at entry and as indicated by results thereafter AND Meets all Criteria from point level 2	Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using the ASQ-3 at entry and as indicated by results thereafter AND Meets all Criteria from point level 2	Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using the ASQ-3 & ASQ:SE, if indicated, at entry, then as indicated by results thereafter AND Program staff uses children's screening results to make referrals and implement intervention strategies and adaptations as appropriate AND Meets all Criteria from point level 2

Resources for the Tools:

- Visit [www.agesandstages.com](http://www.agesandstages.com). Check out the "About ASQ" section for information on how the ASQ works, who uses the ASQ, what comes after completion of the ASQ, and more.

Local Resources:

- In-person workshops from SDCOE and YMCA CRS on topics like "Developmental Screenings," "Ages and Stages Questionnaires, Third Edition (ASQ-3)," "Ages and Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ:SE-2)," and more: [www.sdqpi.org](http://www.sdqpi.org).
- ASQ-3 developmental and ASQ:SE-2 behavioral screening kits may be available along with coaching and technical assistance for Family Child Care providers (at no cost to participants): email [CRSqualitysupport@ymca.org](mailto:CRSqualitysupport@ymca.org).

## e. Quality Learning Environments

State laws address the minimum indications of safety to prevent injury and the spread of disease in early care and education settings. In addition, environments that have adequate learning supplies and toys also encourage young children to use their creativity and experience to learn new concepts and develop their minds, bodies, and friendships to become better prepared for kindergarten and life. Many programs use the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) to assess the safety and quality of the learning environment for children. Programs that earn higher scores on ERS assessments receive higher scores in this quality element. In addition, early care and education centers that are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) also earn higher scores in this quality element.

Rating scale for this element (Element 6):

1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
Licensed and In Good Standing	Independent ERS assessment using scale for the appropriate setting. All subscales completed and averaged to meet overall score level of 3.0	Independent ERS assessment using scale for the appropriate setting. All subscales completed and averaged to meet overall score level of 4.0	Independent ERS assessment using scale for the appropriate setting. All subscales completed and averaged to meet overall score level of 5.0	Independent ERS assessment using scale for the appropriate setting. All subscales completed and averaged to meet overall score level of 5.5 OR Current National Accreditation approved by the California Department of Education

Resources for the Tools:

- Learn more about the ERS at the Environment Rating Scales Institute website: <http://www.ersi.info/index.html>.

State Resources:

- “Learning Environments and Curriculum” California Early Childhood Educator Competency video: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/ececomps.asp>.

Local Resources:

- In-person workshops from SDCOE and YMCA CRS on topics like “Introduction to the Environment Rating Scales,” “Learning Environments for Infants and Toddlers (ITERS),” “Developing an Intentional Environment Using the ECERS Tool,” and more: [www.sdqpi.org](http://www.sdqpi.org).

*What are some examples of elements of a quality early learning environment???*

- Family Child Care: Soft, child-sized furnishings are provided especially for children. A friendly atmosphere welcomes families to spend time visiting when they drop-off and pick-up their child. Provider explains the reasons for safety rules and ensures that children follow them.
- Infant/Toddler Classroom: Suitable space is provided for different kinds of experiences. Staff take part in verbal play with children. A variety of art and music are introduced as children are ready. Sand or water play is provided daily.

- Pre-Kindergarten Classroom: Children use child-sized serving utensils and help during meals and snacks. Stationary and portable equipment for gross motor skill activities are used. Concepts are introduced in response to children’s interest or when children work to solve problems.

## f. Continuing Education and Professional Development for Teachers

Well-qualified teachers are critical to the learning and development of the young children in their care. At a minimum, lead teachers at licensed early care and education centers must complete 12 higher education units of Early Childhood Education (ECE) or Child Development (CD) course work. Family Child Care Home (FCCH) operators must complete 15 hours of training on preventative health practices. However, higher levels of education and ongoing professional development contribute significantly to high-quality instruction. Programs with teachers who have higher levels of education in ECE/CD and who also complete at least 21 hours of professional development (PD) annually receive higher scores in this quality element.

Rating scale for this element (Element 3):

1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
Meets Title 22 Regulations • Center: 12 units of ECE/CD • FCCH: 15 hours of training on preventive health practices	• Center: 24 units of ECE/CD OR Associate Teacher Permit + 12 units of ECE/CD • FCCH: 12 units of ECE/CD OR Associate Teacher Permit	24 units of ECE/CD + 16 units of General Education OR Teacher Permit AND 21 hours PD annually	Associate degree (AA/AS) in ECE/CD (or closely related field) OR AA/AS in any field + 24 units of ECE/CD OR Site Supervisor Permit AND 21 hours PD annually	Bachelor’s degree OR Master’s degree in ECE/CD (or closely related field) OR BA/BS in any field plus/with 24 units of ECE/CD OR Program Director Permit OR BA/BS OR Master’s degree plus • Teacher Permit OR • Site Supervisor Permit AND 21 hours PD annually

State Resources:

- “Professionalism” California Early Childhood Educators Competency video: [www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/ececomps.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/ececomps.asp).

Local Resources:

- YMCA CRS provides in-person training on Continuing Education and Professional Development: [www.sdqpi.org](http://www.sdqpi.org).
- YMCA CRS can provide technical assistance to help you navigate your opportunities to earn higher education credits and continued professional development: email [CRSqualitysupport@ymca.org](mailto:CRSqualitysupport@ymca.org). SDCOE can also help you navigate professional development opportunities: email [SDQPI@sdcoe.net](mailto:SDQPI@sdcoe.net).

## g. Licensing, Ratios, and Group Sizes

Child care providers in California must be licensed by the California Department of Social Services, unless they are expressly exempt from licensing regulations. California’s Child Care Licensing program is designed to ensure the health and safety of the children in care. To earn a quality rating, a program must be licensed and in good standing unless they are exempt from licensing requirements. Licensing regulations set maximum group sizes and minimum adult-to-child ratios. However, fewer children assigned per adult in the classroom is an indicator of higher quality. This allows for the appropriate opportunities for adult-child interaction and adequate supervision of children. In addition, the number of children enrolled in a particular learning environment should be limited so that students can create friendships, receive attention from the adults in the room, and have adequate materials to learn with. Center-based programs with higher adult-to-child ratios and smaller class sizes earn higher scores in this quality element. Family Child Care Homes are not scored in this element on the rating matrix but must adhere to Title 22 regulations in order to be eligible for rating.

Rating scale for this element (Element 5):

1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
Center: Title 22 Regulations, Infant Ratio of 1:4, Toddler Option Ratio of 1:6, Preschool Ratio of 1:12, FCCH: Title 22 Regulations, excluded from point values in ratio and group size	Infant/Toddler Ratio of 4:16, Toddler Ratio of 3:18, Preschool Ratio of 3:36	Infant/Toddler Ratio of 3:12, Toddler Ratio of 2:12, Preschool Ratio of 2:24	Infant/Toddler Ratio of 3:12 or 2:8, Toddler Ratio of 2:10, Preschool Ratio of 3:24 or 2:20	Infant/Toddler Ratio of 3:9 or better, Toddler Ratio of 3:12 or Better, Preschool Ratio of 1:8 or better and group size of no more than 20

State Resources:

- California Department of Social Services: [www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Child-Care-Licensing](http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Child-Care-Licensing).
- Videos on licensing issues for center-based and home-based care: <https://cld.childcarevideos.org/>.

Local Resources:

- In-person workshops through YMCA CRS on Community Care Licensing compliance: [www.sdqpi.org](http://www.sdqpi.org).

## h. Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

In early childhood, children are developing the nutritional habits and preferences that can stay with them for the rest of their lives. Healthy feeding practices and nutritious meals and snacks are an important part of developing healthy eaters into adulthood and are a marker of a high-quality early learning program. High-quality programs serving infants also implement policies and practices that enable moms of infants to continue breastfeeding their children by having systems to store and provide breast milk for the babies in their care. Many programs can access reimbursement for healthy foods through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which publishes healthy meal standards for child care facilities.

The Institute of Medicine identifies that higher levels of physical activity and lower levels of sedentary behavior at home and in care and education settings are vital to child health and preventing childhood obesity. In San Diego County many early care and education providers also participate in YMCA CRS's Wellness Champions program, which provides technical assistance to achieve quality markers in many areas of health, especially including nutrition and physical activity.

Resources on the Tools:

- Healthy eating and physical activity are not rated elements of quality in San Diego County, but programs can assess their own quality and identify opportunities to improve their practices in healthy eating and physical activity using Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) tools available at no cost to participants at <https://gonapsacc.org/resources/nap-sacc-materials>.

State Resources:

- "Health, Safety, and Nutrition" California Early Childhood Educator Competency video: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/ececomps.asp>.
- California Early Childhood Online (CECO) training modules – online training is available at no cost to participants on the topics of Nutritional Fundamentals, Mealtime Environment, Preschool Nutrition and Active Physical Play, and Food Safety for Preschoolers: [www.caearlychildhoodonline.org](http://www.caearlychildhoodonline.org).

Local Resources:

- In-person workshops through YMCA CRS on topics like "Mealtime Best Practices," "Physical Activity," "Preventive Health," and more: [www.sdqpi.org](http://www.sdqpi.org).
- YMCA CRS Wellness Champion program supports providers who commit to implementing healthy practices: [www.ymca.org](http://www.ymca.org).

## i. Supporting Social-Emotional Development

Social-emotional development encompasses the way children experience and express their feelings, regulate their own behavior, understand the feelings of others, and build empathetic relationships with others. High-quality programs invest in developing strong social-emotional competence in children and implement strategies that help children strengthen these skills. Many early care and education programs use a Pyramid Model developed by the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) to support social-emotional development and positive behavior. The Pyramid Model focuses on building an effective teaching staff who are engaged in nurturing and responsive relationships, and who can teach young children friendship-making and problem-solving skills as well as how to use emotion words to support the prevention of challenging behavior and increase their ability to control their impulses (self-regulation). Teachers using the Pyramid Model also provide individualized interventions or referrals to appropriate services when necessary. Supporting social-emotional development is a vital element of quality, but is not rated on the San Diego QRIS Rating Matrix.

Resources on the Tools:

- The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning has a lot of resources for teachers and caregivers including practical strategies, scripted stories for social situations, tools

for building relationships, a children’s book list, and ideas for building social and emotional learning around popular children’s books: [www.csefel.vanderbilt.edu](http://www.csefel.vanderbilt.edu).

#### State Resources:

- California Early Childhood Online (CECO) training modules – online training at no cost to participants on the topics of Infant/Toddler Social-Emotional Development, Preschool Social-Emotional Development, Guidelines for Early Learning in Child Care Home Settings (Family Child Care Homes): [www.caeearlychildhoodonline.org](http://www.caeearlychildhoodonline.org).

#### Local Resources:

- In-person workshops through SDCOE and YMCA CRS on topics like “Aggression, Tantrums, and Meltdowns...Sound Familiar?,” “Creating Effective Schedules, Routines, and Transitions,” “Supporting Positive Behaviors,” “Breathe, Relax, and Inspire Mindfulness in Children,” and more: [www.sdqpi.org](http://www.sdqpi.org).
- Opportunities for training, technical assistance, and coaching on this topic may also be available at no cost to participants, along with 1:1 support for families of children with particular concerns: email [crsbehaviorsupport@ymca.org](mailto:crsbehaviorsupport@ymca.org).

## j. Family Engagement and Strengthening

High-quality programs recognize that families are their children’s first and most important teachers. Quality programs promote culturally appropriate family engagement and education so that families can effectively provide learning and development experiences at home. Providing many opportunities and levels of engagement allows all families to not only feel welcomed by their child’s educational setting, but also to create true partnerships with their child’s teachers, director, and other support staff.

In addition, high-quality programs invest in family strengthening by supporting parent resilience, knowledge of parenting and child development, social and emotional competence of children, social connections among families, and concrete support in times of need. Evidence supports that these five protective factors create healthy family environments for the optimal development of young children. Family engagement and strengthening are not rated elements of the San Diego QRIS Rating Matrix.

#### Resources on the Tools:

- Center for the Study of Social Policy’s Strengthening Families webpage: [www.cssp.org/young-children-their-families/strengtheningfamilies](http://www.cssp.org/young-children-their-families/strengtheningfamilies).

#### State Resources:

- California Early Childhood Online (CECO) training modules – seven training modules on Implementing the Strengthening Protective Factors Framework: [www.caeearlychildhoodonline.org](http://www.caeearlychildhoodonline.org).
- “Family and Community Engagement” and “Culture, Diversity, and Equity” California Early Childhood Educator Competencies videos: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/ececomps.asp>.
- All About Young Children -- information for families on children’s early development: [www.allaboutyoungchildren.org](http://www.allaboutyoungchildren.org).



Local Resources:

- In-person workshops through SDCOE and YMCA CRS on topics like “Strengthening Families Overview,” “Building Collaborative Relationships with Families,” “Strengthening Families and the Five Protective Factors Framework,” and more: [www.sdqpi.org](http://www.sdqpi.org).

## k. Director Leadership

Quality programs thrive with quality leadership. Early care and education programs — with their focus on development, education, and family partnerships — require targeted education and professional development for their leaders. At minimum, center directors must complete 12 higher education units of ECE or CD coursework, plus three units of management/administration coursework. Programs led by directors who have earned higher levels of education and who complete at least 21 hours of professional development each year earn higher scores in this quality element. Director qualifications apply to center-based programs only.

Rating scale for this element (Element 7):

1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
12 units core ECE/CD and 3 units of Management/Administration	24 units ECE/CD + 16 units General Education +/with 3 units Management/Administration OR Master Teacher Permit	Associate degree with 24 units ECE/CD +/with 6 units Management/Administration and 2 units of supervision OR Site Supervisor Permit AND 21 hours PD annually	Bachelor’s degree with 24 units ECE/CD +/with 8 units of Management/Administration OR Program Director Permit AND 21 hours PD annually	Master’s degree with 30 units ECE/CD including specialized courses +/with 8 units of Management/Administration, OR Administrative Credential AND 21 hours PD annually

State Resources:

- “Leadership in Early Childhood Education” and “Administration and Supervision” California Early Childhood Educator Competency videos: [www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/ececomps.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/ececomps.asp).

Local Resources:

- In-person workshops through SDCOE specifically designed for early learning directors and other leaders on topics like, “Instructional Leadership Through a Reflective Process,” “Using DRDP and ASQ Data to Plan for Professional Growth,” and more: [www.sdqpi.org](http://www.sdqpi.org).

## 3. Quality Services:

### a. Technical Assistance and Coaching

While training can provide the foundation of knowledge related to the topics described in this Quality Journey, research shows that interactive technical assistance and coaching are the key ingredients to successful implementation of new concepts. Technical assistance and coaching can both be provided on-site at your center or FCC by individuals with relevant expertise in early learning and adult learning techniques. Contact us to get connected! Scholarships may be available.

### *What's the difference between technical assistance and coaching?*

Technical assistance is focused on a specific issue, like developing or strengthening a process, applying particular knowledge, or implementing a new practice. Because of its specific focus, technical assistance is typically short-term. Coaching is a longer-term, relationship-based process focused on setting and achieving professional goals. Coaching is meant to help you build and integrate new skills over time and continuously improve, like you would with a sports coach or a physical trainer.

### *What kinds of things can a technical assistant or coach help with?*

- Implementing systems to support social-emotional development and positive behaviors across an agency, site, classroom, or FCC
- Implementing developmentally appropriate practices
- Implementing the DRDP 2015 child observation tool and DRDP Online data application, interpreting and utilizing DRDP data, and adjusting classroom practice to meet individual child needs
- Completing Ages and Stages Questionnaire screenings, mapping service providers in your area, having conversations with families and referring them to services, tracking results and follow-up, making adjustments to meet individual needs, and supporting inclusion of children with special needs
- Developing a professional development plan and applying for financial aid
- Improving adult-child interactions and using CLASS results to target changes
- Assessing sites for possible licensing violations, assistance writing licensing reports, and addressing licensing, ratio, and group size challenges
- Improving your indoor and outdoor learning environments, and adjusting your environment to be inclusive for all children
- Assessing your nutrition and physical activity using the NAP SACC tools, becoming a Wellness Champion, utilizing the Child and Adult Care Food Program, starting a garden, implementing breastfeeding-friendly practices, and identifying physical activity opportunities in your space
- Creating and implementing family engagement and family strengthening plans
- Program administration, leadership, and management
- Incorporating the California Preschool Learning Foundations and Frameworks

Technical assistants may provide short-term guidance and support in these areas. Coaches support the development of quality improvement plans (QIPs) and assist FCC providers, teachers, and directors with the implementation of those QIPs over time. We offer intermediate and advanced coaching to meet your specific needs.

## **b. Program Observations and Assessments**

Assessments using the Environment Ratings Scales (ERS) and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) are key components of the San Diego QRIS Rating Matrix. Both are validated assessments, which means that researchers have demonstrated that they accurately measure specific elements of the quality of early learning programs. ERS assessments are focused on the overall quality of the learning environment, including the space and furnishings provided, the personal care routines implemented among the children, support for language and reasoning (called listening and talking in infant/toddler classrooms), the activities children participate in, the interactions among children and adults, program structure, and the provisions for families and staff. CLASS assessments are focused primarily on the quality of the interactions between children and their teachers or caregivers including responsive caregiving for infants, emotional and behavioral support along with engaged support for learning for toddlers, and emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support for pre-kindergarteners.

Assessments are particularly helpful in building quality because they are conducted by an objective, impartial observer who is trained to use the tools accurately. They can help you gain perspective on your strengths and specific opportunities for growth that is difficult to have by yourself. In addition, they can be great tools for communicating with families about the things you do well. We can provide official, valid assessments of your program that may be used for ratings in the San Diego Quality Rating and Improvement System, or we can provide informal observations of your program using the tools to help you understand how you might score and what you could do to improve before an official assessment. All assessments and observations are offered by YMCA CRS.

Assessments and observations are conducted on individual classrooms or FCCs. Center-based programs with multiple classrooms have their assessment scores averaged for official ratings.

More information on the ERS tools can be found at [www.ersi.info](http://www.ersi.info) and more information on the CLASS tools can be found at [www.teachstone.com](http://www.teachstone.com). Contact [CRSqualitysupport@ymca.org](mailto:CRSqualitysupport@ymca.org) to inquire about an assessment of your program.

## **c. Earning a Quality Rating**

We encourage all sites to commit to the process of building quality over time. Earning quality ratings is an important part of that process that can help programs understand their strengths and opportunities for growth. Any site that receives a QRIS rating demonstrates their commitment to building the overall quality of their program, regardless of their score. An overall score of 3 indicates the site has reached quality, a score of 4 indicates high quality, and 5 indicates highest quality.

Ratings apply to early learning sites. A site is operated by an administration or entity at one physical location with at least one child care license from Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing Division, unless the site is exempt from licensing. Five of the seven elements apply to Family Child Care Homes, and all seven apply to early learning centers, which may include one or multiple classrooms.

The San Diego QRIS Implementation Guide, found at [www.sdqpi.org](http://www.sdqpi.org), describes the evidence required to demonstrate that a site has earned each of the element scores toward their rating on the San Diego QRIS Rating Matrix. Sites must contact SDCOE's Early Education and Program Services Unit regarding submitting all requisite documentation. Sites must submit complete documentation on all rated elements for all classrooms in a rated site using the Pinwheel database, and will receive one or more site visits by a representative from SDCOE to verify submitted data. SDCOE is the only entity in San Diego County that can provide a San Diego QRIS rating.

Element scores and ratings, once earned, will be posted to [www.sdqpi.org](http://www.sdqpi.org) and the early learning site may share information with the community regarding their scores. Scores are valid for a maximum of two years. If a site becomes no longer in good standing with licensing, their score is no longer valid and may be removed from [www.sdqpi.org](http://www.sdqpi.org). Contact [SDQPI@sdcoe.net](mailto:SDQPI@sdcoe.net) to inquire about a site rating for your program.

Early learning programs that receive scores and ratings demonstrate to our community that they take child development seriously and are committed to serving families in a quality way. When sites are ready for scores and ratings, we are ready to help!

## **4. Communicating about Quality**

We encourage you to talk to families and your community about your efforts to ensure that children experience high-quality early learning in your care! Not only will this help families understand the importance of the early learning that is occurring in their children, but it will also demonstrate your professional dedication to providing high-quality care and education. We have created some marketing materials you might consider distributing to families, posting in your facility or home, or highlighting on your website if you have one. These include:

- Commitment to Quality Early Learning
- Quality Overview Parent Handout
- Rating Certificates (if your site is rated)
- [www.sdqpi.org](http://www.sdqpi.org)

Please contact us for any of these materials and for more information to share with families and your community.

### **Thank you!**

Thank you for making the commitment to serve children and families with the highest quality program you can. The time they spend with you will make an important, lifelong impact. As you progress through your own quality journey, please let us know how we can help.

## **5. Contact Us**

For more information or to access supports, please contact the following:

San Diego County Office of Education: [sdqpi@sdcoe.net](mailto:sdqpi@sdcoe.net), (858) 292-3700

YMCA Childcare Resource Service: [CRSqualitysupport@ymca.org](mailto:CRSqualitysupport@ymca.org), (619) 521-3055

San Diego QPI website: [www.sdqpi.org](http://www.sdqpi.org)

# 6. San Diego QRIS Rating Matrix

	1 POINT	2 POINTS	3 POINTS	4 POINTS	5 POINTS
<b>Element 1: Child Observation</b>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Not required</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Program uses evidence-based child assessment/observation tool annually that covers all five domains of development.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Program uses valid and reliable child assessment/observation tool aligned with CA <i>Foundations &amp; Frameworks</i> (minimum twice a year)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Program uses DRDP 2015 (minimum twice a year)</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Uploads results into DRDP Tech results used to inform curriculum planning</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Program uses DRDP 2015 (minimum twice a year)</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Uploads results into DRDP Tech results used to inform curriculum planning</p>
<b>Element 2: Developmental &amp; Health Screenings</b>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Meets Title 22 Regulations</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Health Screening Form (Community Care <i>Licensing form LIC 701 "Physician's Report - Child Care Centers"</i> or equivalent) used at entry for every child, and then annually for every child</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensures vision and hearing screening are conducted annually</li> </ul>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using the ASQ-3 at entry and as indicated by results thereafter</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Meets all Criteria from point level 2</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using the ASQ-3 at entry and as indicated by results thereafter</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Meets all Criteria from point level 2</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using the ASQ-3 &amp; ASQ:SE, if indicated, at entry, then as indicated by results thereafter</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Program staff uses children's screening results to make referrals and implement intervention strategies and adaptations as appropriate</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Meets all Criteria from point level 2</p>
<b>Element 3: Qualifications for Lead Teacher/ Family Child Care Home (FCCH)</b>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Meets Title 22 Regulations</p> <p>Center: 12 units of Early Childhood Education (ECE)/Child Development (CD)</p> <p>FCCH: 15 hours of training on preventive health practices</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not Required</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Center: 24 units of ECE/CD<sup>1</sup></p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Associate Teacher Permit + 12 units of ECE/CD</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> FCCH: 12 units of ECE/CD</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Associate Teacher Permit</p>	<b>CORE II: TEACHING AND TEACHING</b>		
<b>Element 4: Effective Teacher-Child Interactions using CLASS Assessments</b> (*Use tool for appropriate age group, as available)		<p><input type="checkbox"/> Familiarity with CLASS assessment for appropriate age group as available, by a minimum of one representative from the site</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> 24 units of ECE/CD + 16 units of General Education</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Teacher Permit</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 21 hours professional development (PD) annually</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Associate's degree (AA/AS) in ECE/CD (or closely related field)</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>AA/AS in any field + 24 units of ECE/CD</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Site Supervisor Permit</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 21 hours PD annually</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree OR Master's Degree in ECE/CD (or closely related field)</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>BA/BS in any field plus/with 24 units of ECE/CD</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Program Director Permit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher Permit <b>OR</b></li> <li>Site Supervisor Permit</li> </ul> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 21 hours PD annually</p>
			<p><input type="checkbox"/> Independent CLASS assessment by reliable observer to inform the program's professional development/ improvement plan</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Independent CLASS assessment by reliable observer with minimum CLASS scores of:</p> <p>Pre-K</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional Support - 5.5</li> <li>Instructional Support - 3.5</li> <li>Classroom Organization - 5.5</li> </ul> <p>Toddler</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional &amp; Behavioral Support - 5.5</li> </ul> <p>Infant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged Support for Learning - 4</li> <li>Responsive Caregiving - 5.5</li> </ul>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Independent CLASS assessment by a reliable observer with minimum CLASS scores of:</p> <p>Pre-K</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional Support - 5.5</li> <li>Instructional Support - 3.5</li> <li>Classroom Organization - 5.5</li> </ul> <p>Toddler</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional &amp; Behavioral Support - 5.5</li> </ul> <p>Infant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged Support for Learning - 4</li> <li>Responsive Caregiving - 5.5</li> </ul>

CORE III: PROGRAM AND ENVIRONMENT – Administration and Leadership				
<b>Element 5: Ratios and Group Size</b> (Centers only, beyond licensing regulations)	<input type="checkbox"/> Center: Title 22 Regulations Infant Ratio of 1:4 Toddler Option Ratio of 1:6 Preschool Ratio of 1:12 <input type="checkbox"/> FCCH: Title 22 Regulations ( <i>excluded from point values in ratio and group size</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/> Not Required	<input type="checkbox"/> Center Infant/Toddler Ratio of 4:16 Toddler Ratio of 3:18 Preschool Ratio of 3:36	<input type="checkbox"/> Center Infant/Toddler Ratio of 3:12 Toddler Ratio of 2:12 Preschool Ratio of 2:24	<input type="checkbox"/> Center Infant/Toddler Ratio of 3:12 or 2:8 Toddler Ratio of 2:10 Preschool Ratio of 3:24 or 2:20
<b>Element 6: Program Environment Rating Scale(s)</b> (Use appropriate tool for setting: ECERS-R, ITERS-R, FCCERS-R)	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent ERS assessment using scale for the appropriate setting. All subscales completed and averaged to meet overall score level of 3.0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Required	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent ERS assessment using scale for the appropriate setting. All subscales completed and averaged to meet overall score level of 4.0	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent ERS assessment using scale for the appropriate setting. All subscales completed and averaged to meet overall score level of 5.0	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent ERS assessment using scale for the appropriate setting. All subscales completed and averaged to meet overall score level of 5.5 <b>OR</b> Current National Accreditation approved by the CDE

<b>Element 7: Director Qualifications</b> (Centers only)	<input type="checkbox"/> 12 units core ECE/CD and 3 units of Management/ Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> 24 units ECE/CD + 16 units General Education +with 3 units Management/ Administration <b>OR</b> Master Teacher Permit	<input type="checkbox"/> Associate's degree with 24 units ECE/CD +with 6 units Management/ Administration and 2 units of supervision <b>OR</b> Site Supervisor Permit <b>AND</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 21 hours PD annually	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree with 24 units ECE/CD +with 8 units of Management/ Administration <b>OR</b> Program Director Permit <b>AND</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 21 hours PD annually	<input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree with 30 units ECE/CD including specialized courses +with 8 units of Management/ Administration, <b>OR</b> Administrative Credential <b>AND</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 21 hours PD annually
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TOTAL POINT RANGES					
<b>Program Type</b>	<b>QPI Tier 1</b>	<b>QPI Tier 2</b>	<b>QPI Tier 3</b>	<b>QPI Tier 4</b>	<b>QPI Tier 5</b>
<b>CENTERS</b> 7 elements for 35 points	<b>Blocked</b> – Must Meet All Elements	<b>Point Range</b> 8 to 19	<b>Point Range</b> 20 to 25	<b>Point Range</b> 26 to 31	<b>Point Range</b> 32 and above
<b>FCCHs</b> 5 elements for 25 points	<b>Blocked</b> – Must Meet All Elements	<b>Point Range</b> 6 to 13	<b>Point Range</b> 14 to 17	<b>Point Range</b> 18 to 21	<b>Point Range</b> 22 and above

