CT's Quality Recognition and Improvement System (QRIS)

Safety & Health

Workforce

Learning & Environment

Family Engagement (pilot)

Leadership (pilot)

Vision

All young children in Connecticut are safe, healthy, learning and thriving. Each child is surrounded by a strong network of nurturing adults who deeply value the importance of the first years of a child's life and have the skills, knowledge, support and passion to meet the unique needs of every child. Families have adequate access and the information necessary to choose high quality early care and education that fits their needs and values.

Mission

The Connecticut Quality Recognition and Improvement System (CT QRIS) will empower families with the information and access necessary to choose early care and education settings that both meet their needs and provide a high quality environment in which their children can thrive. Access to high quality early care and education will be increased by engaging all types of settings in a process of continuous quality improvement.

Revisions to 2017-2018 Draft Criteria

- Pilot Data
  - 66 programs (center-based, public schools, home-based, and school-age programs represented)
- QRIS Think Tank led by BUILD
  - Cross-sector CT team
- Additional feedback sessions with pilot programs
- Lessons learned by other states

Key OEC Improvement Strategies

- **Health and Safety:** NAPSAC self-assessment tools

- **Learning and Environments**
  - Learning: Pyramid Model, Curriculum/Standards/Assessment work
  - Environment: ERS

- **Workforce:** Competency Frameworks appropriate for role and goals (e.g., ECE CKCs, Common Core of Teaching, etc.) Individual Professional Development Plans (IPDP), reflective supervision

- **Family Engagement:** Efforts tied to family input portion of CT DOTS and/or *The Full, Equal and Equitable Partnerships with Families: Connecticut's Definition and Framework for Family Engagement*.

- **Leadership:** Director's credential, PAS/BAS, Reflective Supervision

Key Principles Guiding Revision
(Based on pilot data, Think Tank Advisory, feedback from key stakeholders)

- Keep it simple!
- Tie both criteria and improvement efforts to existing efforts in CT
  - Connect criteria to licensing, NAEYC, ERS, NAFCC, Head Start Perf. Standards, etc.
  - Build coherence for programs and use evidence from these systems to streamline process for programs and raters
- Tie improvement efforts to current CT efforts
  - Focus on key efforts that are research-based (content and process) and can result in significant program improvement
  - Keep criteria broad so priorities can be somewhat flexible
  - Leverage professional learning offered by partners and other OEC divisions to the extent possible
- Focus on a process of continuous quality improvement for ALL programs.

Development/Early Roll-Out Timeline

Fall 2018

- Finalize center- and school-based criteria
- Build ongoing Advisory Group

Early 2019

- Recruit and enroll voluntary center-and school-based programs to be early adopters (Enrollment for 3 pillars, pilot Family Engagement and Leadership)
- Finalize family-home provider and school-age/afterschool criteria
- Increase capacity and work to build systems components
- Begin Pre-Enrollment Sessions for next phase of roll out

Key Messages

-*Strive for Quality* offers a common vision of quality across early care and education settings

-*Strive for Quality* offers an opportunity to better coordinate and streamline supports for program improvement

-When a program enrolls in *Strive for Quality* they are demonstrating a commitment to quality by engaging in a continuous improvement process

Overall Progression
(Specific Criteria For Each Pillar Based on This Model)
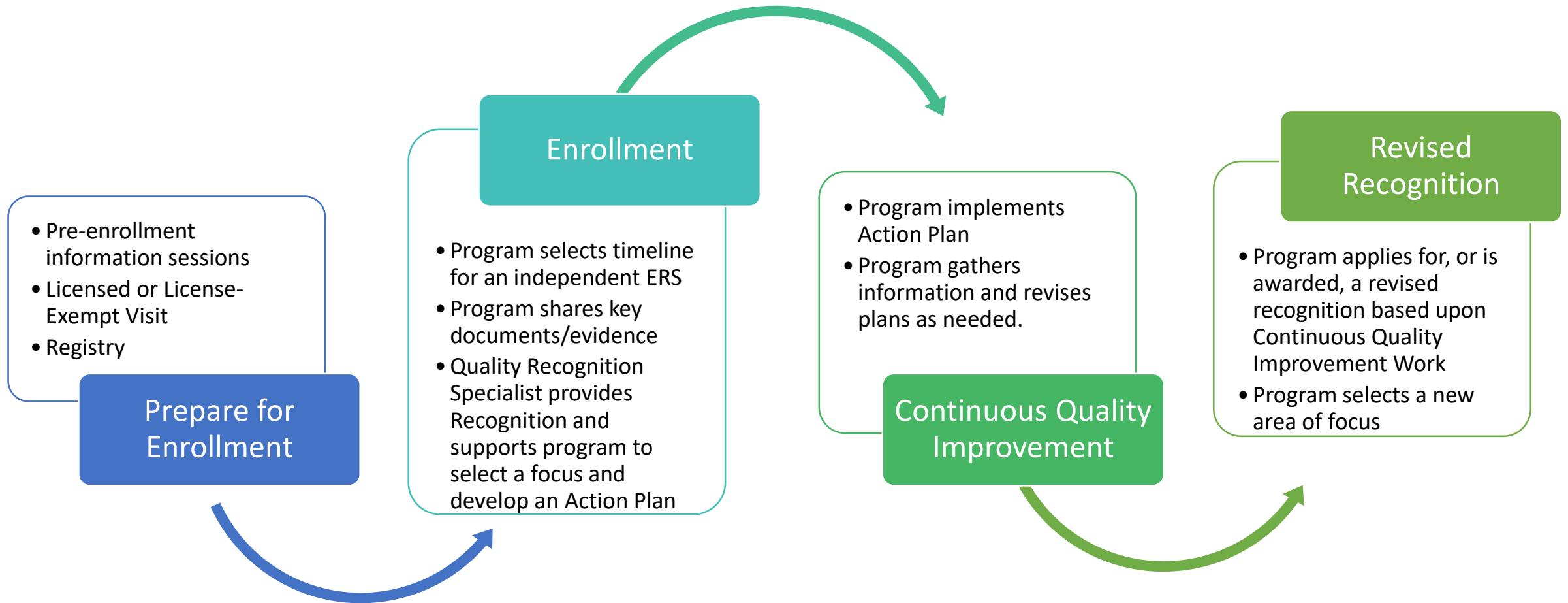
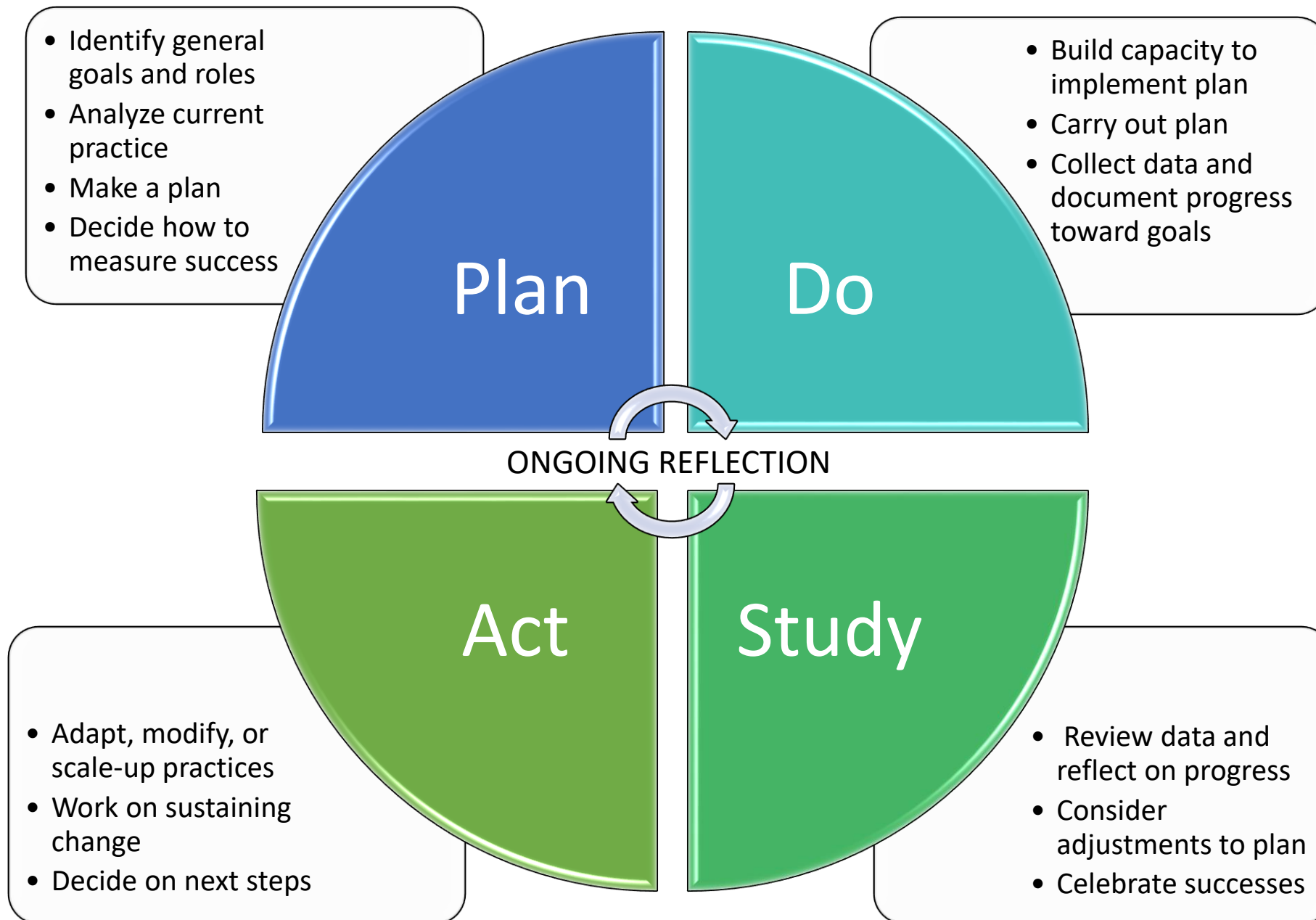**1** — Licensing or Equivalent

2
3 — Program enrolls in TA process, engages in reflection and continuous improvement guided by existing tools or initiatives, and demonstrates progress and/or meets a specified middle level of quality.
4

5 — Specified Level of Quality and/or Sustainability

QRIS Process

Prepare for Enrollment
- Pre-enrollment information sessions
- Licensed or License-Exempt Visit
- Registry

Enrollment
- Program selects timeline for an independent ERS
- Program shares key documents/evidence
- Quality Recognition Specialist provides Recognition and supports program to select a focus and develop an Action Plan

Continuous Quality Improvement
- Program implements Action Plan
- Program gathers information and revises plans as needed.

Revised Recognition
- Program applies for, or is awarded, a revised recognition based upon Continuous Quality Improvement Work
- Program selects a new area of focus

Plan
- Identify general goals and roles
- Analyze current practice
- Make a plan
- Decide how to measure success

Do
- Build capacity to implement plan
- Carry out plan
- Collect data and document progress toward goals

ONGOING REFLECTION

Act
- Adapt, modify, or scale-up practices
- Work on sustaining change
- Decide on next steps

Study
- Review data and reflect on progress
- Consider adjustments to plan
- Celebrate successes

Adapted from work of Tom Layman, Muriel Wong and members of the BUILD CQI CoP, 2017 in:
BUILD. (2017). *Continuous Quality Improvement in Early Childhood and School Age Programs: An Update from the Field*. Retrieved from: https://qrisnetwork.org/sites/all/files/conference-session/resources/Continuous%20Quality%20Improvement%20in%20Early%20Childhood%20and%20School%20Age%20Programs.pdf

Health and Safety

★ 1 — Program complies with basic health and safety standards

★ 2 — Program engages in an improvement process to review and improve health and safety practices.

★ 3 — Program actively promotes healthy and safe practices.

★ 4 — Program connects to local and state resources to promote health and safety of children, family, and staff.

★ 5 — Program routinely gathers and reviews data and uses this information to inform policies and practice.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Star Level	General Description	Health Pillar Description	Safety Pillar Description
1 ★	Program complies with basic health and safety standards.	Program complies with basic health standards.	Program complies with basic safety standards.
2 ★★	Program engages in an improvement process to review and improve health and safety practices.	Program engages in a process of reviewing and revising health practices.	Program engages in a process of reviewing and revising safety practices.
3 ★★★	Program actively promotes healthy and safe practices.	Program promotes healthy eating and physical activity.	Program has an ongoing plan and process for ensuring safety of children, family, and staff.
4 ★★★★	Program connects to local and state resources to promote health and safety of children, family, and staff.	Program collaborates with local or state health promotion programs to improve health and mental health of children, family, and staff.	Program collaborates with local or state emergency officials in ensuring the safety of children, family, and staff.
5 ★★★★★	Program routinely gathers and reviews data and uses this information to inform policies and practice.	Program collects and reviews health data to guide ongoing improvement efforts.	Program collects and reviews safety data to guide ongoing improvement efforts.

Example from Center- and School-based Workbook: Health, Level 2

General Description: Program engages in an improvement process to review and improve health and safety practices.

Health Description: Program engages in a process of reviewing and revising health practices.

Criteria: Option 1: Program has used an approved self-assessment(s) that addresses health and nutrition practices and documents 1-2 steps toward addressing items identified on self-assessment(s)

OR

Option 2: Program has consulted with their health consultant to create an improvement plan and documents 1-2 steps toward addressing items identified through consultation

OEC supported improvement efforts/tools: Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care Program (accessed through Thrive! or DPH)

Learning & Environment

★ 1 — Program provides an environment and daily activities that support child development.

★ 2 — Program provides an environment focused on supporting children's development and learning: there are goals for learning and development and a process for checking children's development in place.

★ 3 — Program intentionally supports children's learning and development by providing supportive interactions, a quality environment and planned play-based experiences to support learning.

★ 4 — Program demonstrates continued improvement in supporting all children's learning and development and providing a quality learning environment.

★ 5 — Program consistently uses practices that are known to support children's learning and development.

LEARNING AND ENVIRONMENT

Star Level	General Description	Learning	Environments
1	Program provides an environment and daily activities that support child development.	Program uses a written schedule/plan to provide developmentally appropriate and engaging experiences to support learning and development.	Program provides an accessible environment with consistent, nurturing care.
2	Program provides an environment focused on supporting children's development and learning: there are goals for learning and development and a process for checking children's development in place.	Program has developmentally appropriate goals to guide plans for supporting children's learning and has a process for checking in or monitoring children for concerns and progress in program.	Program is engaged in continually improving the quality of the environment.
3	Program intentionally supports children's learning and development by providing supportive interactions, a quality environment and planned experiences to support learning.	Program has an improvement plan based upon an approved focus area and staff has had basic training related to area of focus.	Program provides an enviroment that meets basic quality standards and is actively working toward a high level of quality.
4	Program demonstrates continued improvement in supporting all children's learning and development and providing a quality learning environment.	Program has documented progress in providing an enriching experience for children.	Program demonstrates progress toward achieving a high level of quality.
5	Program consistently uses practices that are known to support children's learning and development.	Program demonstrates a high level of fidelity in implementing best practices in the focus area selected.	Program demonstrates a high level of environmental quality.

Example from Center- and School-based Workbook: Learning, Level 3

General Description: Program intentionally supports children's learning and development by providing supportive interactions, a quality environment and planned experiences to support learning.

Learning Description: Program has an improvement plan based upon an approved focus area and staff has had basic training related to area of focus.

Criteria: Program has developed an improvement plan with an approved focus area tied to children's learning and development, has completed a program self-assessment in this area, and has had initial training for relevant staff.

Workforce

1 Program has staff that meets basic requirements for roles (in alignment with licensing standards and are enrolled in the OEC EC Professional registry).

2 Program has professional development plans for all staff that are aligned to appropriate competencies for individual career track.

3 Program staff hold recognized degree appropriate for role.

4 Program has a process for monitoring, supporting and documenting staff progress on professional development plans and resulting changes in practice.

5 Program is managed in a manner that supports consistency and continued educational levels for staff (hiring and retainment of highly qualified staff, connection to family home child care networks for support).

Example from Center- and School-based Workbook: Workforce, Level 5

General Description: Program policies and practices support hiring and retaining of highly qualified staff.

Criteria: Staff Orientation policy has been reviewed within the past 3 year and includes feedback from supervisor

AND

Program requires teaching and administrative staff to attend 20 or more hours of PD and provides support to participate in PD (provides paid time, compensation, and/or tuition/registration costs for PD, connects staff to scholarship opportunities, etc.)

AND

Program has a written salary scale by role and years of experience that includes a plan for annual increases in compensation

Evidence: Program Policy Review of PAS scores

Family Engagement

Supporting Strong Families

Supporting Learning and Development

1 Program creates a welcoming environment for all families

2 Program engages families in planning regular, personalized two way communication

3 Program offers family engagement opportunities that allow families to participate in a variety of roles

4 Program offers opportunities for families to build their capacity to take on new or expanded roles (trainings, connecting to advocacy opportunities, volunteering in classroom, etc.)

5 Program engages families as full partners in supporting children's learning and development and making program level decisions

Family Engagement (DRAFT)			
Star Level	**General Description**	**Strengthening Families**	**Supporting Children**
★ (1)	Program creates a welcoming environment for all families	Program shares information with families about program operations and provides opportunities to participate in program held activities.	Program shares information with families and provides opportunities to participate in activities connected to learning and development
★★ (2)	Program engages families in planning regular, personalized bi-directional communication	Program seeks information from families about strengths and needs and connects them with community resources	Program works with families to create a process for ongoing communication about children's learning and development that is responsive to families' needs.
★★★ (3)	Program offers family engagement opportunities that allow families to participate in a variety of roles	Program supports families to participate and build their own capacity across a variety of roles.	Program offers multiple ways for families to engage in their child's learning and development
★★★★ (4)	Program offers opportunities for families to build their capacity to take on new or expanded roles (trainings, connecting to advocacy opportunities, volunteering in classroom, etc.)	Program offers opportunities for families to build their capacity to take on new or expanded roles related to the early care and education program or their own education and career.	Program offers opportunities for families to build their capacity to take on new or expanded roles related to their child's learning and development
★★★★★ (5)	Program engages families as full partners in supporting children's learning and development and making program level decisions	Program engages families as full partners in making program level decisions	Program engages families as full partners in supporting children's learning and development

Example from Center- and School-based Workbook: Draft Strengthening Families, Level 3

General Description: Program engages families in planning regular, personalized two-way communication

Strengthening Families Description: Program seeks information from families about strengths and needs and connects them with community resources

Criteria: Program has an intake process that gathers information from families that assists the program in building on family strengths and connecting families to community resources.

Leadership

Administrative Leadership

Pedagogical Leadership

1 Program meets requirements regarding admin and teaching and learning.

2 Program uses state, local, and/or national professional resources to guide practices

3 Program gathers information, reflects, and generates improvement plans based on data

4 Program makes progress toward improvement efforts and actively collaborates with state and/or community partners to achieve goals

5 Program demonstrates a strong organizational and learning environment

Star Levy	General Description	Administrative Leadership	Pedagogical (Early Childhood Practices) Leadership
1 star	Program meets requirements regarding program administration and teaching and learning	Program maintains and reviews written policies, plans, and procedures to ensure operation of a safe setting designed to meet the	Advocates for enrolled children and families by promoting devevelopmentally appropriate practices. (Head Teacher/Education Consultant)
2 stars	Program uses state, local, and/or national professional resources to guide practices	Program administration engages in reflection and self-assessment using state, local, and/or national professional resources as a basis for an improvement plan	Tools to guide curriculum and assessment practices-(curriculum self-assessment guide, other)
3 stars	Program gathers information, reflects, and generates improvement plans based on data	Gains feedback from others on practice and incorporates into learning goals/continuous improvement efforts	Program supports sound assessment practices, including the use of data to build support for individual children and to inform curriculum broader curriuclum decisions
4 stars	Program makes progress toward improvement efforts and actively collaborates with state and/or community partners to achieve goals	Specific training related to professional growth (e.g., reflective practice, adult learning principles, distributive leadership, coaching)	Promotes best practices in the field through role and communication and support for others (feedback to teachers on goals/observation/coaching)
5 stars	Program demonstrates a strong organizational and learning environment	Program regularly engages in reflection and continuous improvement process and demonstrates overall positive feedback from staff and families	Builds leadership of teachers and advocates for policies, funding and/or practices for the benefit of children, families and/or the field in the broader community, state or nation.

Example from Center- and School-based Workbook: Pedagogical Leadership, Level 3

Pedagogical Leadership Description: Advocates for enrolled children and families by promoting developmentally appropriate practices.

Criteria: Program policies and procedures involve the use of daily schedules with developmentally appropriate activities and program receives regular input on learning environment/curriculum from individual with expertise in ECE

Evidence: Most recent Full licensing inspection report (items 26-27 and 95-96) OR
For license-exempt programs: Review of plans and materials to meet criteria as above. Identified consultant or pedagogical leader who is a credentialed early childhood specialist with an Associate, Bachelors, Masters, or Doctorate degree in early childhood education, child development or human development or a four year degree in a related field with at least 12 credits in ECE and 2 years experience as an administrator

Questions