



**Delaware Stars for *Early Success***

**Early Care & Education Center Standards  
Verification Manual**

**2014**

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## Introduction

### Delaware Stars for *Early Success* Early Care & Education Center Standards Verification Manual

The Early Care & Education Center Standards Verification Manual is a tool for determining how a program meets a particular Delaware Stars standard. The manual also provides information on the purpose of each standard. The Verification Manual is primarily a tool for Stars staff and programs participating in the Delaware Stars. The manual is a guide and has been developed with examples, but is flexible enough to encourage programs to continue to develop alternative ways to meet a standard. This manual will be updated annually and found on [www.delawarestars.udel.edu](http://www.delawarestars.udel.edu).

The format for the Verification Manual is:

**Standard** – The complete text of the standard, its code and point value appear first in a shaded box.

**Rationale of the Standard** – The rationale summarizes the purpose of the standard – ‘why’ the standard is important for the quality of the program and the children enrolled.

**Verification Method** – Three different methods of verification may be used: Observation, Interview and/or Documentation. The method of verification will vary based on the nature of the standard, and some standards may use more than one method. Numbered items are necessary for verification, bulleted items are examples/recommendations. Programs may provide or submit additional forms of evidence to meet standards.

There may be multiple ways for programs to provide evidence of meeting the standard. The verification methods are not exhaustive. Programs may have innovative ways of meeting the intent of the standard and these strategies should be discussed with their Technical Assistants. These discussions may help inform future revisions to the standards and/or protocols.

## File and Lesson Plan Review

### **Children's Files Review:**

When a review of children's files is required to determine standard evidence, the verifier will randomly choose:

Current Enrollment	Sample Size
30 or fewer Children	10
31 to 80 Children	20
More than 80 Children	25% of Enrollment

The verifier must ensure that files reviewed in the sampling reflect all children served by the program. The same group of files pulled for the sample will be used for all standards that include a review of children's files. To meet each standard, 95% of the selected files must demonstrate evidence of meeting the standard's requirement for programs with enrollment of 31 or more children. For programs with 30 or fewer children, 90% of the selected files must demonstrate evidence of meeting the standard.

### **Lesson Plan Review** (under Learning Environments and Curriculum):

Programs will provide lesson plans from the past three months. 50% of lesson plans will be selected for review.

## Definitions of Terms

Certain terms have specific meaning in these standards. To clarify, the following terms are defined.

**Career Lattice:** Delaware’s Early Childhood Career Lattice is a tool to assist early childhood professionals in career planning. <http://dieec.udel.edu/professionals/career-advisement>

**Child Assessment:** The process of observing, recording, and otherwise documenting the work children do and how they do it, as a basis for the variety of educational decisions that affect the child. Assessment uses ongoing, systematic, formal and informal approaches to collecting and providing information about children’s learning and development. It occurs within the context of reciprocal communications with families and with sensitivity to the cultural contexts in which children develop.

**Comprehensive Assessment System:** A Comprehensive Assessment System includes, at a minimum a) Screening Measures; (b) Formative Assessments; (c) Measures of Environmental Quality; and (d) Measures of the Quality of Adult Child Interactions.

**Comprehensive Curriculum:** A comprehensive curriculum is a written plan that guides the design of children’s goals for learning and development, the experiences children will have to achieve those goals and the way in which adults, both staff and families, will support children’s learning to achieve school success. It is evidence-based or relies on what research tells us about the way in which children grow and learn. Curriculum should align with the Delaware Early Learning Foundations.

Curriculum serves as a guide for instruction and day-to-day interactions with young children. It includes goals, content, pedagogy (teaching), and instructional practices and should be thoughtfully planned, challenging, engaging, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, comprehensive, and likely to promote positive outcomes for all young children. It should encompass critical areas of development, including children’s physical wellbeing and motor development; social and emotional development; approaches to learning; language development; cognition and general knowledge; and subject matter areas such as science, mathematics, language, literacy, social studies, and the arts.

**Core Part of the Day:** The primary or essential part of the day, when program content is delivered. This typically would not include the early or late times of the day when multiple age groups may be combined due to decreased staffing.

**DEEDS:** The Delaware (DE) Educator Data System. DEEDS is the teacher licensure system for educators in Delaware.

**Developmental Screening Tool:** An instrument that provides information on whether a child’s development is similar to or different from other children of the same age. Screenings capture a

quick snapshot of a child's developmental status and efficiently determine if a child should receive a more thorough comprehensive evaluation.

**DIEEC:** The **D**elaware **I**nstitute for **E**xcellence in **E**arly **C**hildhood. DIEEC is the operational home of the Delaware's Early Childhood Professional Development System and Delaware Stars for *Early Success*. DIEEC is located at the University of Delaware in the College of Education and Human Development in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies. .

**Diverse Families:** Includes the following cultural frameworks: Race, ethnicity and national origin, language, religion and/or spiritual practice, abilities and disabilities, social class, status, economic level, and sexual orientation.

**Diverse Learners:** Children with disabilities and/or special health or behavioral health challenges; children who are migrant, homeless, neglected, abused, dual language learners, low-income; or children of all races and national origins.

**DPEC Certificate:** A formal document issued by the Department of Education (DOE) indicating that an individual is qualified to fulfill a role in a program based on the evaluation of that individual's education and experience. Certificates are issued by DOE's **D**elaware **P**ractitioners in **E**arly **C**hildhood, a qualifications data system.

**Dual Language Learners:** Children who are learning English in addition to their home language.

**Formative Child Assessment:** A tool used to measure skills and abilities which helps determine progress over time. Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes.

**High Risk:** Populations of children who are low-income, have identified disabilities and/or special needs, homeless, dual language learners, and/or involved in the child welfare system.

**Intentional Teaching:** Teachers use curriculum resources to plan and develop goals for children based on ongoing assessment. They design instructional strategies to help children achieve the desired goals, then re-assess and revise their instructional strategies based on those assessments.

**Ongoing:** Continuing on a regular basis; verifiers will be looking for documentation that shows requirements occur at least monthly.

**Policy:** A written, well-organized plan that is designed to guide decisions, actions and other matters; and is reviewed and updated as needed. The policy must meet the intent of the Rationale when a policy is referenced in the Standard.

**Program Year:** The beginning and ending dates of services to children and their families. “Program year” is applicable to programs that provide services less than 12 months per year.

**Staff:** An employee qualified to be alone with children, with a designated role during the core part of the day.

**Supplemental Curriculum:** A supplemental curriculum accompanies the core comprehensive curriculum by providing guidance and practice in specific areas to meet the needs of the children. Supplemental Curriculum should align with the Delaware Early Learning Foundations.

**Transition:** Transition refers to change. There are many kinds of transitions that children may experience:

- Transitions between programs including a move from home into a school-age program or from one program to another, i.e. into and out of a program
- Transitions within programs, typically when children move from one classroom to another

## STANDARDS

**FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

<b>FC1</b>	<b>Maximum 2 points</b>	<b>Program welcomes all children and their families with procedures that embrace inclusion and diversity.</b>	<b>2 points</b>
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RATIONALE

This Standard is intended to ensure all programs welcome, with policies and practices, all children and their families. Programs demonstrate policies that reach out to and welcome families from diverse backgrounds and cultures as well as create a welcoming environment that reflects the early learning community. Marketing, recruitment, and the intake process are opportunities to ensure that outreach is made to families from diverse cultures and children with diverse needs.

VERIFICATION METHOD**DOCUMENTATION**

## 1. Program Policy:

Determine if recruitment/enrollment policy reflects the diversity of the children and families within its community.

**AND**

## 2. Evidence of at least two examples of the following;

- Enrollment reflects children with diverse backgrounds and abilities
- Documentation of outreach efforts targeting families of children that reflect the diversity of the community. Documentation may be in the form of pictures, announcements, newspaper advertisements, etc.
- MOUs or written agreements with referral agencies about sharing waiting lists and/or referral practices
- Written agreements or policies with community agencies for sharing of recruitment or Stars brochures
- Documentation of enrollment materials that show questions about family culture, children and family's special needs or interests
- Documentation of enrollment materials in the languages of the community in which the program is located
- Program environment has a variety of visual displays that represent varied cultures, family types and children

<b>FC2</b>	<b>Maximum 4 points</b>	<p><b>Each classroom provides regular written correspondence with families.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>For classrooms with children predominately 0-36 months, correspondence is individualized and provided daily</b></li> <li>• <b>For classrooms with children predominately 37 months and older, correspondence is group and provided at least weekly</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>2 points</b></p> <p><b>2 points</b></p>
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### RATIONALE

Programs and families share a partnership for nurturing the growth and development of the children. To that end, programs have a responsibility for developing a collaborative relationship with each child's family. Regular written communication with families provides an opportunity for families to receive pertinent information regarding their child's experiences within the program as well as about their development and learning. These communications also offer an additional opportunity to promote consistent at-home and program learning experiences and activities and include information about current and upcoming events, activities and projects.

Daily communication regarding children younger than 36 months provides families with information about their child's health and well-being. Learning experiences and activities demonstrate connections to the domains of the Early Learning Foundations. Health includes eating, sleeping and diapering routines; and well-being includes information about the child's social-emotional development.

Regular communication for children older than 3 years allows families to be aware of their children's weekly learning experiences and activities. Written correspondence for all the children in one classroom or group demonstrates the connections to the domains of the Early Learning Foundations.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

#### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Program Policy:

Review the program's policy to determine how written communication with families is delivered.

**AND**

2. Review written correspondence over the last 3 months. Sample should be representative of all classrooms and age groups served.

- For classrooms with children 0-36 months, documentation shows that correspondence is individualized, provided daily, and includes information on learning experiences and activities, health and well-being. Acceptable evidence includes samples from each classroom of completed daily communications including logs, journal notes, progress reports, daily emails, etc.
- For classrooms with children predominately 37 months and older, documentation shows that correspondence is at least a weekly written group communication that includes information on children's learning experiences and activities. Samples of completed communications include newsletters, emails, classroom webpage, postings on a bulletin board, dry erase board postings, etc.
- Alternate communication methods are acceptable when families' needs require information in ways other than writing.

Point Allocation:

- If a program serves both age groups, 2 points shall be awarded for each age group that meets the Standard. If both age groups meet the Standard, 4 points are awarded.
- If a program serves only one of the age groups and meets the Standard, 4 points are awarded.

<b>FC3</b>	<b>Maximum 1 point</b>	<b>Program conducts conferences with families at least twice annually.</b>	<b>1 point</b>
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### RATIONALE

Families and the program staff have informal opportunities to talk with each other occurring almost daily. A more formalized opportunity for a shared conversation between family and staff who have the most interaction with the child provides a positive and informative way to build relationships.

Planned conferences occur at least twice a year or approximately every six months. From the program's perspective, the conversation includes a thoughtful discussion about the child's growth and development, progress towards current learning goals and identification of new goals, and insight into the child's classroom experiences. The family perspective includes time to share information about life at home, participate in goal setting and ask questions to help them understand about the child's learning experiences and activities, health, well-being and classroom schedule.

A written conference form can be provided to families that summarizes the key topics of the discussion and the child's strengths and areas of development for the upcoming months. While some of the information can be completed ahead in anticipation of the conference, other parts of the form that ask for family feedback can be completed at the time of the conference.

The timing of the conferences can allow for some flexibility based on the structure of the program. For example, while full year programs may schedule every six months, part year programs may schedule initial conferences in late September or October and the second conference in May or June. A written policy can help ensure that conferences are held regularly for all children.

Quality programs encourage all families to participate in the conference cycle, and consider each family's availability when scheduling conferences. If families choose not to participate in conferences, staff documents the preference to opt out.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

#### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Program Policy:

Determine the program's policy and process for completing family conferences.

**AND**

## 2. Child Files:

Evidence of one of the following in the sample of children's files:

- Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s) signature on dated summary forms from conferences.  
Samples of conference summaries that include information about children's growth and development, progress towards current learning goals, identification of new goals, and examples of their classroom experiences. Summaries include opportunities for family input. Have a system in place to document families that chose not to participate in conferences
- Documentation of formative child assessment results and that they were shared with families

### Point Allocation:

- The point may still be awarded if families of children who have been enrolled between 6 months and 12 months have completed one of the two required conferences.

### Exception:

- Families of children enrolled in the program less than 6 months may be excluded from this requirement.

<b>FS1</b>	<b>Maximum 2 points</b>	<b>Programs partner with families with children with diverse needs.</b>	<b>2 points</b>
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### RATIONALE

Quality programs provide the opportunity for diverse learners and their families to fully participate in the learning experience. Families are encouraged to share information about their child such as an IFSP or IEP or a behavioral or health plan. For families who are dual language learners, program communication with families includes their preferred method to receive information about their children.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

#### **DOCUMENTATION**

##### 1. Program Policy:

Determine how program policy addresses partnering with families with children who are diverse learners.

#### **AND**

##### 2. Child Files and Program Files

Evidence of at least two examples of the following:

- Relevant teaching staff's review of copies of the child's current IFSP or IEP or notes from a therapist or specialist
- Relevant teaching staff's review of the child's current behavior management or health services plan
- Correspondence, notes from meetings with families, therapists, treatment specialists regarding accommodations
- Staff meetings to discuss ways in which to review the program's current environment, schedule, routines, etc. to consider the special need and ways adaptations may be made for child with diverse needs
- Periodic review notes of the child's performance to determine if additional adaptations are needed
- For children who are dual language learners, and their families, evidence may include but is not limited to the following:
  - Documentation of bi-lingual staff
  - Translated materials (enrollment forms, newsletters, etc.) represent the languages of the children enrolled.
  - Bulletin boards, classroom postings, classroom labeling, etc. represent the languages of the children enrolled
  - Access to translator as needed
  - Children's files have forms and/or notes to and from the family in their home language

<b>FS2</b>	<b>Maximum 2 points</b>	<b>Program systematically gathers information from families and uses data to inform program planning annually.</b>	<b>2 points</b>
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### RATIONALE

Quality programs create a system for gathering information from families, analyze the data gathered, and use the data in planning for the program.

Following the collection of information from families, the Administrator and/or other staff should compile the data to look for commonalities and trends, and use it to inform program planning. The results are shared with families in a cumulative, non-identifying format as a means for sharing family satisfaction with the program or explaining curriculum or operational changes.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Program Policy:

Determine how family input is obtained and used to inform annual program planning.

### **AND**

2. Evidence of at least one example of the following:

- Completed surveys from families showing their input about the program
- Written notes to families requesting input with submission dates, method of submission, etc.
- Summary of group meeting notes, such as from a family night, family orientation, etc. where feedback was sought
- Summary of group meeting notes where feedback was sought on specific project. For example, a meeting to discuss changes to the playground or changes to the program day

3. Summary of survey results and staff review shared with families

4. Changes made as a result or timeline with changes to be made, or explanation of input changes that were considered but not made

<b>FS3</b>	<b>Maximum 1 point</b>	<b>Program implements a variety of family-centered events annually.</b>	<b>1 point</b>
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### RATIONALE

Programs that implement family-centered events enhance relationships with the families they serve. These events offer families and program staff opportunities to learn about each other and to share information about the children in a more informal setting. Families can also benefit from program-sponsored educational events such as parenting education classes or nights when a specialist presents information on a topic such as childhood illness or getting ready for kindergarten. The intent is to further engage the families they serve in the program.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Program Policy:

Determine if the program offers both educational and social family centered events.

### **AND**

2. Determine if the program has offered at least 3 family-centered events within the previous 12-month period. Family events may include, but are not limited to: holiday celebrations, parenting education classes, events with educational topics, family fun night, reading programs, shared meals, family picnic, harvest festival, etc.

Acceptable evidence may include:

- Dated announcements or flyers regarding the event
- Dated sign-in sheets from the event
- Dated pictures or posters from the event
- Dated agendas or materials from the event

<b>FS4</b>	<b>Maximum 6 points</b>	<b>Program supports transitions for families:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Into the program</b></li> <li>• <b>Within the program</b></li> <li>• <b>Out of the program</b></li> </ul>	<b>2 points</b> <b>2 points</b> <b>2 points</b>
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### RATIONALE

The success of a child's placement in a program, building trust with families, is that their child will be safe, nurtured, and educated facilitating the child's overall success. This trusting relationship is built with the program in general and specifically with each individual staff person. Transition planning and implementation is a concrete method for supporting the development of trusting relationships.

Three distinct points of transition are identified for specific planning and implementation:

- **Into the Program** – the purpose of this transition is to provide families the opportunity to determine if the program is the right fit for their children and to ensure that the Program has sufficient information to provide for the children's care and comfort.
- **Within the Program** – the purpose of this transition is to support the children and their families as children move into a new classroom with unfamiliar staff. Families and children develop relationships with the staff in the classroom they are leaving and need support to develop that same relationship with the new staff.
- **Out of the Program** – the purpose of this transition is support families and their children as they exit the program. Families leave programs for a variety of reasons: children age out of the program, families relocate, or the program no longer meets the needs of the family or the child. For children aging out or families relocating, the program will have information that will help the child and family in the next child care program or school the child attends.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

#### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Program Policy:

Determine how transitions are planned and implemented in the program for each age group served.

**AND**

2. Evidence of planning and implementation for all of the following transitions for each age group served:

Into the program:

Acceptable evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- Use of “Getting to Know You” form
- Use of written request of children’s records from previous program with family permission
- Teacher meeting with adults and/or classroom visit
- Classroom visit for the child
- A gradual entry into the program if requested (partial days, then full days, for example)

Within the program:

Acceptable evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- Mutually-agreed upon decision regarding transition to another classroom with families
- Meeting/visiting with new classroom staff and children
- Teachers’ meeting(s) to share information about the child
- Families meeting/visiting with new classroom staff
- Schedule for the child’s gradual transition into the classroom

Out of the program:

Acceptable evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- Meetings with families about transitioning to another type of care or school
- For families of children who are transitioning to kindergarten:
  - Literature about kindergarten readiness sent home to families
  - Information shared about kindergarten readiness or kindergarten registration activity
  - Evidence of visits or field trips to kindergarten classrooms or kindergarten personnel’s visits to the program
  - Evidence of participation in shared curriculum planning or information exchange with Kindergarten teachers
- For families of children who are transitioning into school-age classrooms
  - Literature about school policies and procedures to share with families such as drop off and pick-up times, homework policy, illness procedures, etc.
  - Information shared about school events and schedules such as school orientation or open house
  - Information shared about activities such as after school sports

Point Allocation:

- For programs that do not transition children to different classrooms due to serving only one age group or multi-age grouping, no *Within the Program* transitioning is required but points are allocated.

<b>FP1</b>	<b>Maximum 1 point</b>	<b>Program develops and maintains active relationships with schools.</b>	<b>1 point</b>
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### RATIONALE

Children's school readiness can be enhanced when programs partner with their local schools. Information-sharing and participation in shared events and professional development are ways in which schools and programs can work together as a team to support children and families' successful school experiences. Meetings between the program and school system staff that specify the others' operational structure, learning expectations and delivery methods assure a continuity of learning that offers families and children a greater understanding and level of comfort as they move back and forth between the two types of learning systems.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

#### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Program Policy:

Determine the program's policy on developing and maintaining an active relationship with local school(s).

#### **AND**

2. Evidence of at least one active relationship, which may include but is not limited to the following examples:

- Agreements with inclusive services for children with disabilities
- Participation in professional development activities with school personnel
- Attendance on school or program committees
- Shared transition activities such as pen pals or classroom visits
- Participation on a Delaware Readiness Team
- Use of locations for school/program events such as holding kindergarten registration day at the program or a special family activity at the school
- Invitation to or attendance at school-led events for children (school play, special programs, etc.)

<b>FP2</b>	<b>Maximum 1 point</b>	<b>Program develops and maintains active relationships with community-based agencies.</b>	<b>1 point</b>
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### RATIONALE

Programs' knowledge of the local community's services and resources are an important component of a relationship-based program. Families depend on the program staff's expertise to offer information that may address children's needs or help them access community supports. Programs often know when families might benefit from the services of a community-based agency. This includes program staff's knowledge about the referral process for children and/or families who may be at high risk.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **DOCUMENTATION**

#### 1. Program Policy:

Determine the program's policy on developing and maintaining active relationships with community-based agencies including information about resources and referral processes for children and families.

### **AND**

#### 2. Evidence of at least one active relationship, which may include but is not limited to following types of evidence:

- A binder or compilation of descriptions of the community agencies, their hours of operation, services provided, referral processes, etc.
- Brochures and materials about community services are available to families
- Information about local resources is shared, as appropriate, during family conferences
- Information about local resources is shared during family events
- Flyers or other information about community services is distributed to families
- Written agreements with service agencies
- Meetings with community agencies or agency presentations during staff meetings

## QUALIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

<b>QE1</b>	<b>Maximum 4 points</b>	<b>Staff functioning as Administrator completes the Delaware Administrator Credential and is qualified through Delaware First as an Administrator.</b>	<b>4 points</b>
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\* Effective July 1, 2015, the Delaware Administrator Credential will be an Essential Standard for Star 4 and Star 5 programs when they move up or re-verify.

### **RATIONALE**

Qualified staff are critical in developing a high quality program. The leader of the program, the Administrator, is responsible for the entire program of services provided to children and their families. The leader of the program has the expertise and knowledge base to manage the everyday operations of the business, including the overall development and implementation of the program with the use of a continuous quality improvement plan and deep early childhood understanding, development and maintenance of family partnerships, supervision of staff, fiscal and accounting procedures, and environmental upkeep. This requires a diverse skill set that is supported through ongoing and comprehensive professional development that spans the varied aspects of business operation.

Information about the Delaware Administrator Credential can be found on the DIEEC website. <https://dieecpd.org/early-childhood-credentials>

In determining the responsibilities associated with a particular position, Delaware Stars uses the position titles and role responsibilities defined by Office of Child Care Licensing's regulations.

### **VERIFICATION METHOD**

### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Evidence in the Qualifications section of the Stars' database for documentation that the staff functioning as Administrator holds an Administrator certificate issued by Delaware First, Department of Education and a Delaware Administrator Credential issued by the Department of Education.

The functioning Administrator must hold both the certificate *and* the credential in order to be awarded these points.

<b>QE2</b>	<b>Maximum 3 points</b>	<b>Staff functioning as the Administrator utilizes the <i>Delaware Early Childhood Career Lattice</i> for professional development planning and achieves Step 8 or above.</b>	<b>3 points</b>
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### RATIONALE

The Delaware Early Childhood Career Lattice is a guide to the educational levels for various positions in the early childhood field. It defines levels of knowledge and skill mastery and identifies steps for advancement. The Career Lattice is a professional development tool that is used to encourage early childhood professionals to plan a career in the early childhood field and attain credentials and higher education degrees.

The Educational Steps in the Lattice recognize educational achievement. Educational Step 8 on the Career Lattice requires a professional to hold at least a Bachelor's Degree with 15 college credits in early childhood, or 12 credits in school age care, or a Montessori Credential.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Evidence in the Qualifications section of the Stars' database for documentation that the staff functioning as Administrator link has achieved at least Step 8 on the Career Lattice.

<b>QE3</b>	<b>Maximum 2 points</b>	<b>Teaching staff complete appropriate credentials.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>At least one staff member attains a Delaware Credential (excluding Administrator)</b></li> <li>• <b>25% of staff completes one Delaware Credential</b></li> </ul>	<b>1 point</b>  <b>2 points</b>
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### RATIONALE

Qualified staff are critical in developing a high quality program. Credentials offer evidence of an individual reaching a level of achievement and expertise that reflects current research and best practice. Credentials are awarded by the Delaware Department of Education. The Delaware Department of Education determines the list of credentials that meet this standard and the criteria by which they are awarded. The following are currently accepted for meeting this standard:

- Early Childhood Inclusion
- Early Childhood Infant/Toddler
- Early Childhood Preschool
- Early Childhood School Age
- Family Child Care

The Delaware Department of Education may change the credentials that meet this standard or add to the list of those that meet the standard.

DPEC also recognizes credentials issued by national or international early childhood organizations. Credentials issued by other entities must be submitted to DPEC for review.

DPEC has aligned these national credentials to Delaware's credentials and will issue the appropriate Delaware Credential to the individual.

In determining the responsibilities associated with a particular position, Delaware Stars uses the position titles, roles, and responsibilities defined by Office of Child Care Licensing's regulations.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

#### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Evidence in the Qualification section of the Stars' database.

Point Allocation:

- At least one staff member, excluding the Administrator, holds a qualifying credential in order to meet the first bullet.
- At least 25% of staff hold qualifying credential in order to meeting the second bullet.
- If a staff person other than the Administrator holds the Administration Credential, this credential may be used to meet the requirements for this Standard.

- If the Administrator holds a credential other than the Administration Credential, this credential may be used to meet the second bullet of the standard.

<b>QE4</b>	<b>Maximum 9 points</b>	<b>Program staff utilizes the <i>Delaware Early Childhood Career Lattice</i> for career planning.</b>	
		• <b>50% of staff achieves Step 4 or above on the <i>Delaware Early Childhood Career Lattice</i></b>	<b>2 points</b>
		• <b>30% of staff achieves Step 7 or above on the <i>Delaware Early Childhood Career Lattice</i></b>	<b>3 points</b>
		• <b>20% of staff achieves Step 8 or above on the <i>Delaware Early Childhood Career Lattice</i></b>	<b>4 points</b>

### RATIONALE

The Delaware Early Childhood Career Lattice is a tool to assist early childhood professionals in career planning. The Educational Steps in the Lattice recognize educational achievement.

- Step 4 requires that a professional has completed TECE I and II, 9 college credits in ECE, 9 college credits in school age, or hold a valid CDA.
- Step 7 requires that a professional hold as least an Associate Degree with 15 college credits in ECE, 12 credits in school age care, or a Montessori Credential.
- Step 8 requires that a professional hold as least a Bachelor Degree with 15 college credits in early childhood, 12 credits in school age care, or a Montessori Credential.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Evidence in the Qualification section of the Stars' database.  
All staff at the program are considered for determining this Standard including the Administrator and Curriculum Coordinator.

<b>QE5</b>	<b>Maximum 3 points</b>	<b>Person functioning as Curriculum Coordinator utilizes the <i>Delaware Early Childhood Career Lattice</i> for professional development planning.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Achieves Step 7 or above on the <i>Delaware Early Childhood Career Lattice</i></b></li> <li>• <b>Achieves Step 8 or above on the <i>Delaware Early Childhood Career Lattice</i></b></li> </ul>	<b>2 points</b>  <b>3 points</b>
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**\*Effective July 1, 2016, the Curriculum and Assessment Credential will be an Essential Standard for the Curriculum Coordinator for Star 4 and Star 5 programs when they move up or re-verify.**

### RATIONALE

The Delaware Early Childhood Career Lattice is a guide to the educational levels for various positions in the early childhood field. It defines levels of knowledge and skill mastery and identifies steps for advancement. The Career Lattice is a professional development tool that is used to encourage early childhood professionals to plan a career in the early childhood field and attain credentials and higher education degrees. For the individual functioning as the Curriculum Coordinator, educational steps 7 and 8 of the Career Lattice are needed to acquire points for this Standard.

- Step 7 requires that a professional hold at least an Associate Degree with 15 college credits in ECE, 12 credits in school age care, or a Montessori Credential.
- Step 8 requires that a professional hold as least a Bachelor Degree with 15 college credits in early childhood, or 12 credits in school age care, or a Montessori Credential.

One individual may serve as both Administrator and Curriculum Coordinator in a program licensed for 60 or fewer children or if approved by the Office of Child Care licensing.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Evidence in the Qualifications section of the Stars' database to determine if Step 7 and/or 8 are met for the Curriculum Coordinator.

<b>QT1</b>	<b>Maximum 3 points</b>	<b>Annual training hours are quality assured.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>For each staff, 50% or more of all training hours completed are quality assured</b></li> <li>• <b>For each staff, 75% or more of all training hours completed are quality assured</b></li> </ul>	<b>2 points</b>  <b>3 points</b>
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### RATIONALE

Assuring the quality of training enhances the professional knowledge and skills of the early childhood and school age work force. Delaware's quality assurance process assures both instructors and training content as a means of ensuring that appropriate and meaningful professional development activities occur. Quality assured training is aligned with best practices in the field and instructors are highly competent within their approved content area.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Official DIEEC or college transcripts reflecting appropriate percentage of quality assured training from the current or previous licensing year, or from the 12 months prior to the validation date. The same method will be used for all staff.

#### Exception:

- A staff member may be excluded from this Standard if she or he has been employed at the program for less than 3 months.

QT2	Maximum 5 points	<p><b>Program implements a system of staff evaluation that integrates professional development needs.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Annual evaluation for each staff person that includes observations, written feedback, and a self-assessment completed by staff using the <i>Delaware Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals</i></b></li> <li>• <b>Program requires staff to use annual competency-based evaluation and self-assessment to create annual <i>Individual Professional Development Plans</i> that integrates professional development needs</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>2 points</b></p> <p><b>3 points</b></p>
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### RATIONALE

High quality programs strive to improve the quality of services to children by building the skills and knowledge of the staff working with the children. Delaware has defined the skills and knowledge needed by staff as competencies. These competencies are articulated in the Delaware Competencies for Early Childhood and the Delaware Competencies for School Age Professionals. These competencies are progressive and emergent and are linked to the specific roles various staff fulfill, Administrator, Curriculum Coordinator, etc.

This Standard allows for a two-stage process for developing and implementing a staff evaluation process. In the initial stage, the program will use the Delaware Competencies to evaluate staff in a process that includes observations of the staff, having the staff members complete a self-assessment based on the Competencies, and providing written feedback to the staff. Written feedback on performance includes strengths, areas in need of improvement, plan for improvement, and follow-up.

The second stage utilizes the evaluation and self-assessment to develop an Individual Professional Development Plan. The program may use the Delaware Stars Individual Development Plan or a written document that provides the same information.

The annual evaluation and Individual Professional Development Plans shall be completed at least every 12 months. New staff shall have their initial evaluation within six months of their hire date.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Evidence of staff observations with written feedback provided to the staff person completed within the last 12 months

2. Evidence of a self-assessment using the Delaware Competencies for each staff person within the previous 12 months
3. Evidence of an annual performance evaluation with written feedback shared with each staff person within the previous 12 months
4. Evidence of an Individual Professional Development Plan for each staff person completed within the previous 12 months
  - A program may use a different competency-based assessment if it is aligned with the Delaware Competencies and the program has received written approval from the Director of Delaware Stars prior to implementing the assessment

Exception:

- A staff member may be excluded from review for this Standard if he or she has been employed for less than 6 months

QT3	Maximum 1 point	Program completes an annual <i>Facility Professional Development Plan</i> to compile information on staff professional development needs.	1 point
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### RATIONALE

The Facility Professional Development Plan is a tool used to quantify the professional development needs of the entire staff of the program. The Facility Professional Development Plan allows the leadership of the program to strategically plan to ensure the needs of all staff are addressed. The Plan can also be used as a planning tool for the program's professional development budget.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Evidence of a written annual Facility Professional Development Plan based on information gathered from staff individual professional development plans, observations, and annual performance evaluations.
  - The program may use the Delaware Stars *Facility Professional Development Plan* or a written document that provides the same information.

## MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

<b>MP1</b>	<b>Maximum 3 points</b>	<p><b>Program arranges regular, paid planning time (minimum one hour) and access to resources for at least one staff member per classroom when they are not responsible for children.</b></p> <p><b>Every 2 weeks</b></p> <p><b>Weekly</b></p>	<p><b>2 points</b></p> <p><b>3 points</b></p>
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### RATIONALE

Effective early childhood staff plan for the activities in their classrooms and individualize those activities to meet the needs of the children in their classrooms. Planning requires focus and uninterrupted time to allow staff time to reflect on the children's progress in each developmental domain and plan the next experiences to continue that progress. Planning time occurs during times when staff are not responsible for the care of the children. The intent is that there is a pattern of regular implementation of paid planning time. Instances where planning time did not occur due to unforeseen circumstances (i.e., weather related delays/closings) are taken into account. This standard includes planning, as well as access to the curriculum materials and supplemental materials to enrich the curriculum.

- Planning period must be at least 30 minutes in duration.
- There is a pattern of regular implementation of paid planning time. Instances where planning time did not occur due to unforeseen circumstances (i.e., weather related delays/closings) are taken into account.
- The 3 hours of paid release time required by the T.E.A.C.H. program may not be counted as planning time.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

#### **INTERVIEW**

1. Ask which staff in each classroom is responsible for planning and how staff planning time is scheduled and documented.
2. Ask classroom staff which planning resources are readily available to staff during planning time, and to get feedback on implementation of planning time.

**AND**

#### **DOCUMENTATION**

3. Evidence of planning time for the past 3 months for each classroom which includes the following:

- Planning time schedule
- Staff sign-in/out sheets or its equivalent

*AND*

**OBSERVATION**

4. Evidence of staff access to curriculum and supplemental materials or access to other resources, such as a computer, books, journals, etc., to use for the planning purposes

<b>MO1</b>	<b>Maximum 2 points</b>	<b>Program implements a risk management plan.</b>	<b>2 points</b>
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### RATIONALE

Early childhood programs that provide quality service to children and families have met the state's legal obligations, developed and implement policies intended to protect children, and establish a stable and dependable business. Concrete planning and implementation will reduce risk to children, staff, and the families that depend on the program. The risk management plan includes at least 4 of these 10 components:

- Contract with each family
- Abuse and Neglect policy and procedures including protecting children from abuse and neglect within the program
- Financial Risk Management policy
- Health and Safety policies
- Staff Handbook
- Parent Handbook
- Social Media
- Confidentiality
- Crime Prevention
- Annual Risk Reduction Plan

It is acceptable for a program to use various formats for the required components as long as the required information is included and implemented. For example, a program may use multiple documents for the contract and Parent Handbook, this is acceptable as long as everything required is covered.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. *Evidence of at least 4 examples of the following:*

- Contract with each family
  - A written contract with a family identifies all parties involved including the child, parent(s)/legal guardian(s), and the program; program hours of operation and terms of payment; describe the termination agreement; include contract start date; and require signatures of all parties including parents/legal guardians and program.
  - Review children's files in the sample to determine if there is a contract with the family.
- Abuse and Neglect Policy
  - Review the written abuse and neglect policy that includes identification and reporting procedures, with evidence of training for all staff.

Acceptable evidence includes documentation of in-house training, new staff orientation, or training certificates.

- Financial Risk Management Policy
  - Review the written financial risk management policy describing how funds, expenses, and records are handled and who is responsible, and the security and confidentiality procedures in the financial management area of the program.
- Health and Safety Policies
  - Review the health and safety policies to determine if it includes the use of safety checklists that include potential and applicable hazards to look for both indoors and outdoors where children may have access, with evidence of daily completion by staff and procedures for accident reporting and analysis. Health and Safety policies includes safe sleep policies if infants are served.
- Staff Handbook
  - Review the Staff Handbook to determine if it includes the program's mission and philosophy, as well as policies and procedures around inclusion, family support, communication, and safe sleep policies (if applicable). The inclusion policy uses people first (not disability first) language and include, at minimum, the following components:
    - Program position statement on inclusion
    - Procedure for determining accommodations and supports
    - IEP/IFSP request and involvement
- Parent Handbook
  - Review the Parent Handbook to determine if it includes policies and procedures around program goals, family support and communication, curriculum and assessment, and appropriate accommodations for all children.
- Social Media Policy
  - Review the policy for use of social media by staff and families, including obtaining family and staff permission(s) prior to posting
- Confidentiality Policy
  - Review the confidentiality policy for staff and families, ensuring respecting privacy and safety
- Crime Prevention
  - Review the staff and family policy for crime prevention, including security procedures
- Annual Risk Reduction Plan
  - Review the program's annual Risk Reduction Plan that may include review of above policies, areas to improve noted due to accidents or incidents that occurred at the program, involving staff and/or families over the past year.

<b>MO2</b>	<b>Maximum 3 points</b>	<b>Program provides access to the following benefits for employees: Paid vacation, paid sick time, paid holidays, retirement, insurance (health or other).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Two selected</b></li> <li>• <b>Three or more</b></li> </ul>	<b>2 points</b> <b>3 points</b>
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### RATIONALE

The quality of the staff working in a program is not only defined by the staff knowledge and skills, job satisfaction is also a factor. Generally, individuals working in programs are not well compensated due to the low profit margins in child care programs. Delaware Stars strives to address the compensation of staff in multiple ways. One of the ways is requiring programs to offer some meaningful benefits to employees.

Programs may determine which of their employees are eligible for benefits. A program must offer 2 of the 5 benefits listed in the Standard to be awarded points. If a program chooses to offer a third benefit, it may be one not listed in the Standard. Examples of additional benefits may include programs such as the Stand by Me program or T.E.A.C.H. release time.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

#### **DOCUMENTATION**

##### 1. Program Policies

Determine which employees are offered benefits and which benefits are offered. If benefits are offered only to full-time employees determine how full-time is defined.

#### **AND**

##### 2. Evidence of benefits that may include but is not limited to at least one of the following:

- Contract or letter of agreement listing benefits received signed by employee
- Employee sign-off/acknowledgement of receipt of handbook, if specific benefits are listed in detail in the handbook
- List of the benefits an employee is accessing signed by employee
- Employee pay stubs detailing accrued benefits

<b>MO3</b>	<b>Maximum 2 points</b>	<b>Program conducts required staff meetings that are open to all staff.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Quarterly</b></li> <li>• <b>Monthly</b></li> </ul>	<b>1 point 2 points</b>
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RATIONALE

Regular face-to-face communication between program leadership and its staff is necessary and beneficial. The better the communication between leadership and staff the more likely it is that morale will be positive and challenges within the program identified and addressed. Staff meetings are a communication vehicle to provide information in a face-to-face forum. They can be supplemented with a variety of other communication tools to insure that staff receive programmatic information consistently.

In large programs with many staff, it may be more effective to have staff meetings with sub-sets of the staff, such as meetings of all infant and toddler staff or all school age staff. For these programs there must be at least one meeting per year that includes all staff at the same place and time.

VERIFICATION METHOD**DOCUMENTATION**

1. Attendance list or sign-in sheets from the last 3 all-staff meetings

**AND**

2. Written agendas from the last 3 all-staff meetings held within the last 12 months.

<b>MO4</b>	<b>Maximum 4 points</b>	<b>Program retains 75% of classroom staff on a program year basis.</b>	<b>4 points</b>
		<b>Partial points allowed for efforts to improve or maintain retention rates:</b>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Program retains 70% of classroom staff.</b></li> <li>• <b>Program retains 65% of classroom staff.</b></li> </ul>	<b>3 points</b> <b>2 points</b>

### RATIONALE

Recruiting and retaining highly qualified staff is critical to providing quality care to children in early care and education programs. Maintaining low staff turnover positively impacts child/caregiver relationships, provides opportunities for children to develop and practice social skills, and reduces costs related to interviewing hiring, and training new staff.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **INTERVIEW**

1. Interview Administrator to determine if staff change may be a result of increasing or decreasing total number of staff due to increase or decrease in enrollment or adjustment to child/staff ratios.
  - Partial credit may be given at 70% or 65% retention.

### **DOCUMENTATION**

2. Acceptable evidence includes but is not limited to:
  - Current staff list with hire dates in database

#### Exceptions:

- Contracts documenting that staff is returning when there is a gap in services for the typical program year (i.e. seasonal services during the summer, regular program year staff return for new school year)
- Program year is different from a licensing year. For programs that provide the same service year round, there is no difference. Conversely, for programs that change dramatically in order to add or decrease summer services, understanding the program year is important. This is addressed in the exception for seasonal/holiday staff.
- Seasonal staff (i.e. summer, holiday vacations) will be excluded from the calculation for retention of classroom staff

- Staff who have been in the program for less than a year due to classroom additions resulting from enrollment increases will not be factored into retention calculations

<b>MO5</b>	<b>Maximum 4 points</b>	<b>Program provides staff access to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Comfortable adult facilities and storage</b></li> <li>• <b>Administrative computer with internet</b></li> <li>• <b>Staff computer in staff space with internet</b></li> </ul>	<b>1 point 1 point 2 points</b>
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### RATIONALE

The quality of the staff working in a program is not only defined by the staff knowledge and skills, job satisfaction is also a factor. Quality programs provide adequate and comfortable adult space and resources for staff to work and plan for children's activities. Comfortable adult space apart from children also provides an area for staff to relax and/or conduct other break-time activities.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **OBSERVATION**

1. Determine if comfortable adult facilities and storage are available to staff:
  - Secure storage space such as locked cabinets or closet available for staff use
  - Adults-only bathroom and private area with comfortable adult furniture in space used primarily for staff

### ***AND/OR***

2. Administrative computer with Internet as evidenced by these 2 items:
  - Working technology onsite with internet access for administrative use
  - Valid e-mail address for Administrator

### ***AND/OR***

3. Staff computer in staff space as evidenced by having:
  - Working computer with Internet for staff use in space used primarily by staff

<b>MF1</b>	<b>Maximum 2 points</b>	<b>Program implements a system for fiscal management.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Annual operating budget with income and expense figures</b></li> <li>• <b>Program reviews annual operating budget quarterly, adjusts as needed, and files copies for later review</b></li> </ul>	<b>1 point</b>  <b>1 point</b>
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### RATIONALE

Early childhood programs that provide quality service to children and families must be stable and dependable businesses. Concrete budget planning and implementation increase the viability of the business. Effective businesses not only develop and implement an annual budget, they also compare actual income and expenses to the annual budget to avert challenges to the financial stability to the program.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

#### **DOCUMENTATION**

- Annual operating budget with income and expense figures including categories of services and functions with the Program.

#### ***AND***

- Evidence of budget adjustments which reflect the history of how the budget was modified, such as changes in income, expenditures or movement of funds to different line items.

#### ***OR***

- A letter from the program's accountant, business manager, or board treasurer that outlines the policies and procedures for fiscal management delineated in the standard.

## LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND CURRICULUM

<b>REQUIRED</b>	<p><b>Program has an Environment Rating Scale (ERS) assessment and achieves the following classroom scores for classrooms selected:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Minimum 3.40 (Star Level 3)</b></li> <li>• <b>Minimum 4.40 (Star Level 4)</b></li> <li>• <b>Minimum 5.40 (Star Level 5)</b></li> </ul>
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### RATIONALE

This Standard uses the Environment Rating Scales (ERS), an evidence-based, valid assessment tool, to rate the overall quality of the care and learning environment provided for the children. The rating determination is made by Delaware Stars staff that have no ongoing relationship with the programs they are assessing. The Delaware Stars assessors receive ongoing training and supervision to maintain inter-rater reliability on the ERS.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Appropriate scores from most recent Delaware Stars ERS assessment have been recorded in the Stars database. ERS scores are only valid for 60 calendar days from when the assessment results are shared with the program.

<b>LE1</b>	<b>Maximum 3 points</b>	<b>Program utilizes a system of continuity of care that includes primary care throughout the day.</b>	<b>3 points</b>
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### RATIONALE

A system of primary caregiving establishes an environment in which program staff work to minimize the number of staff a child interacts with during a day and over time. Primary caregiving ensures consistency of relationships, environment and communication between the staff and the families in order to strengthen relationships and the child's early learning experiences. It optimizes teachers' knowledge of children's routines, strengths and needs thus helping to create individualized and responsive learning experiences.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **DOCUMENTATION**

#### 1. Program Policy:

Includes evidence of all of the following for primary caregiving:

- Long-term staffing assignments (at least three months) that list specific teachers and their grouping of children that are assigned to them
- Assignments for staff to cover these groupings for the extended periods of the day when the primary teacher is not present
- Strategy for tracking and counting children throughout the day that relies on primary staff
- Communication with family from classroom staff

<b>LE2</b>	<b>Maximum 3 points</b>	<b>Program minimizes transitions for children throughout the program year.</b>	<b>3 points</b>
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### RATIONALE

When children are moved to a new room as they reach the next developmental stage or age, the process of forming new relationships, developing trust, understanding the child's unique temperament, etc. may affect children's sense of security in the program environment. When children's transitions are minimized throughout the year, they reduce the number of changes to which a child must adjust. Minimizing transitions ultimately supports the development of relationships between staff, children, their families and peers.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **DOCUMENTATION**

#### 1. Program Policy

Evidence of at least one strategy to decrease the number of transitions for children which may include:

- "Long-term groups" where the staff and the children in the group stay together over an extended period of time for at least one full program or calendar year.
- "Mixed-age groups" where children are placed in a group with children that are not all the same age. For example a group might be birth to 24 months and/or 3 years to Kindergarten entry. The children remain with the same group of children until they age-out of the group.
- "Looping system" where the lead staff stays with same group of children, moving with the children as they move from one classroom to another from entry into program through exit from program, usually infant through preschool. When the children exit the program then the lead staff member begins with another new group of children.

### **AND**

#### 2. Evidence of one of the following:

- Consistent correspondence (conferences, notes from teachers, daily logs, etc.) from the same classroom adults for a minimum of one program or calendar year in the sample of children's files
- Staffing files that demonstrate room or child group assignments that of long-term, mixed age grouping or looping

<b>LE3</b>	<b>Maximum 4 points</b>	<b>Program implements lower ratios:</b>	
		<b>Infants (under 12 months)</b>	<b>1:3</b>
		<b>Young Toddlers (12-24 months)</b>	<b>1:5</b>
		<b>Older Toddlers (24-36 months)</b>	<b>1:7</b>
		<b>Young Preschoolers (36-48 months)</b>	<b>1:9</b>
		<b>Older Preschoolers (48-60 months)</b>	<b>1:11</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Implements for Infants</b></li> <li>• <b>Implements for Toddlers</b></li> <li>• <b>Implements for Preschoolers</b></li> </ul>	<b>2 points</b> <b>1 points</b> <b>1 points</b>

### RATIONALE

Lower staff to children ratio is an indicator of high quality that has been clearly established in research. Lower ratios support children's optimal development by supporting the nurturing relationships between staff and children, improving interaction between staff and children, reducing children's behavioral challenges, and supporting all children's growth and development.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Staffing schedules and daily classroom attendance/tracking forms, and/or the electronic version of attendance, for previous 3 months.

**AND**

### **OBSERVATION**

2. Count children and staff to determine if the documentation and observed ratios are consistent.

Point Allocation:

- To be awarded the points for Toddler ratios, if both young toddlers and older toddlers are served; both ratios must be met for the Program to receive the points.
- To be awarded the points for Preschoolers ratios, if both young preschooler and older preschooler are served; both ratios must be met for the Program to receive the points.
- A total of 4 points is given if only one or two age groups are served and the standards are met for those age groups.

<b>LO1</b>	<b>Maximum 3 points</b>	<b>Program implements a child developmental screening for all infants, toddlers, and preschoolers enrolled annually.</b>	<b>3 points</b>
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\*Effective January 1, 2015, this will be an Essential Standard for Star 4 and Star 5 programs when they move up or re-verify.

### RATIONALE

A child developmental screening is completed to identify children who may be at risk for developmental problems. It is one component of a comprehensive assessment system and the first step in determining if a child needs to be referred for further diagnostic assessment or evaluation.

Delaware Stars must approve the child developmental screening tool prior to implementation. Delaware Stars has a list of approved screening tools. If the program chooses to use another tool or assessment not on the list, the tool and/or assessment must be submitted to Delaware Stars for review and approval. The list and the approval process can be found on the Delaware Stars website.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **DOCUMENTATION**

#### 1. Program Policy:

Evidence of all of the following:

- Use of an approved child developmental screening tool
- Qualified staff to administer the screening tool. Look for training certificates, transcripts or a dated contract or written agreement with state agency or school district
- Process for referrals when appropriate

### **AND**

#### 2. Child Files:

Evidence of all of the following in the sample of children's files:

- Child developmental screening that was conducted within the past year
- Results shared with families
- Determination, for each child, whether follow-up or additional evaluations/referral may be needed

Exceptions:

- Children enrolled in program less than 6 months may be excluded from this requirement
- Children with an IFSP or IEP will be determined to have met this requirement of having a developmental screening

<b>LO2</b>	<b>Maximum 3 points</b>	<b>Program observes individual children’s progress on an ongoing basis and documents progress at least twice annually.</b>	<b>3 points</b>
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### RATIONALE

Every child is unique in a variety of ways, developmental trajectory, temperament, learning style, family situation and culture, all impact development and learning. Children grow and develop at different rates across the developmental domains. Ongoing, objective observation and a collection of children’s work provides examples that show children’s progress and skill development over time. Observations and their documentation offer teachers the needed information to assess children, develop individualized goal plans and create responsive lesson plans and experiences for children.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Evidence of observation and documentation as part of the instructional cycle:
  - Forms or templates for teachers to use observation and documentation, such as progress notes
  - Professional development for staff on observation and documentation
    - o At least one teacher in each age served need to attend

### **AND**

2. Child Files

Evidence of all of the following in the sample of children's files:

- Ongoing (at least monthly) observations including progress notes, anecdotal notes, checklists, running records, etc.
- Use of observation collection strategies that show children’s growth and development, including photos, video clips, samples of children’s work (drawings, writings), etc. that have been compiled and updated at least twice annually

Exception:

- The files of children enrolled in the program for less than 30 days may be excluded from the sample. Children who have been enrolled more than six months but less than twelve months, must have at least one documentation report in addition to ongoing observation.

<b>LO3</b>	<b>Maximum 3 points</b>	<b>Program implements a formative child assessment for all infants, toddlers, and preschoolers a minimum of two times each year.</b>	<b>3 points</b>
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*\*Effective January 1, 2016, this will be an Essential Standard for Star 4 and Star 5 programs when they move up or re-verify.*

### RATIONALE

A formative assessment is a process used by teachers and children during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning. It supports children's development and mastery of skills. Formative child assessments help in planning and adapting curriculum to meet each child's developmental and learning needs.

Delaware Stars must approve the child assessment tool prior to implementation. Delaware Stars has a list of approved child assessment tools. If the program chooses to use another tool or assessment not on the list, an assessment rubric is available to determine if the tool meets the criteria for approval. The tool and/or assessment must be submitted to Delaware Stars for final review and approval. The list and the approval process can be found on the Delaware Stars website.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Use of an approved formative child assessment
2. Star 3, 4, or 5 Program Administrators have completed introductory assessment professional development (6 hours). Review training transcript. Prior training in assessment may meet this requirement.
3. Program staff has completed professional development on the specific child assessment tool chosen for use. At a minimum, one teacher for each of the age group in which the assessment will be used should receive training.

### **AND**

4. Evidence of the following in the sample of children's files:
  - Formative child assessment that was completed at least two times within the year.
  - Program staff use the assessment to inform them of children's development and skill mastery.
  - Examples of documentation may include a hard-copy finalized assessment or print-out of a finalized online assessment. Programs may also show the finalized assessments through the online portal.

Exception:

- The files of children enrolled in the program for less than 6 months may be excluded for the sample. Children who have been enrolled between six months and one year must have at least one completed assessment report.

Point Allocation:

- During the program's first year of assessment, it may be awarded partial credit of 2 points if the program can demonstrate that both an administrator and teaching staff have attended professional development and assessments have been documented at least once.

LC1	Maximum 3 points	Program implements a written comprehensive curriculum that is aligned with the Delaware Early Learning Foundations for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers enrolled.	3 points
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\*Effective July 1, 2016, this will be an Essential Standard for Star 4 and Star 5 programs when they move up or re-verify.

### RATIONALE

A comprehensive curriculum can help teachers and directors make thoughtful decisions about how and what to teach. It provides a blueprint for planning and implementing a program that addresses all aspects of child development and building partnerships with families and promotes learning and development in each of the following areas: social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive.

Components of high quality, comprehensive curriculum that support the development of the whole child include: specific learning goals, culturally and linguistically responsive, individualized instruction, intentional teaching, family engagement, and appropriate for program staff, children and families.

Programs must select a comprehensive curriculum from a list of approved curricula. Those programs that use a locally-designed curriculum must demonstrate alignment with Delaware's rubric for curricula. The approved list and procedures for submitting alignments are located on the Delaware Stars website.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **DOCUMENTATION**

#### 1. Program Policy:

Evidence of a comprehensive curriculum including **all** of the following:

- Comprehensive curriculum that is linguistically and culturally responsive to the program's clientele from the Delaware Stars approved list
- Teacher review or evaluation processes that review teachers' use of curriculum for group and individualized learning activities for children
- Staff meetings or ongoing training and/or coaching on curriculum and the instructional cycle and the curriculum's integration into program activity (field trips, family events, special curriculum days, etc.)

**AND**

***All of the following:***

2. Lesson plans that include activities in all areas of learning including social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive domains
3. Use of approved curriculum for a minimum period of three months to inform classroom experiences
4. Inclusion of curriculum references in newsletters or information sent home

***AND***

**OBSERVATION**

5. Materials within the classroom environment that link to the curriculum themes

<b>LC2</b>	<b>Maximum 2 points</b>	<b>Program implements a supplemental curriculum to support children’s literacy, math, social-emotional or healthy lifestyles.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>1 supplemental curriculum</b></li> <li>• <b>2 or more supplemental curriculum</b></li> </ul>	<b>1 point 2 points</b>
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### RATIONALE

Children’s growth, development and learning may be enhanced by the addition of a supplemental curricula that focus on specific aspects of learning such as literacy, math, social-emotional development or healthy lifestyles. These may be used in addition to a comprehensive curriculum.

### VERIFICATION

### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Daily activities and lesson plans that include additional activities or instruction specifically focused on literacy, math, social-emotional or healthy lifestyles for the last 3 months.
2. Materials within the classroom environment that link to the supplemental curriculum
3. Inclusion of curriculum references in newsletters or information sent home

### Additional Notes:

- Science and STEM areas may be considered if these areas are not covered in depth within the comprehensive curriculum.
- If 2 or more supplemental curriculum are chosen, they cannot be of the same type.

LC3	Maximum 3 points	Program uses information from children’s observations, the comprehensive curriculum and formative assessment, the <i>Delaware Early Learning Foundations</i> , and families to design daily activities, lesson plans, and individualized goal plans.	3 points
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\*Effective July 1, 2016, this will be an Essential Standard for Star 5 programs when they move up or re-verify.

### RATIONALE

Quality programs promote intentional teaching and individualized goal planning for all children. Staff uses information gathered through observation, screening and assessment, in addition to comprehensive curriculum materials linked to the *Delaware Early Learning Foundations*, to plan for both group and individualized learning experiences.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

### **DOCUMENTATION**

1. Observation documentation is used to inform assessment decisions
2. Use of children’s assessment results to determine areas of strength and areas of focus; those focus areas are identified as goals for learning
3. The comprehensive curriculum and formative child assessment must be from the Delaware Stars approved lists
4. Children’s goals for learning are supported through activities or experiences on lesson plans. *For example, a child or children with fine motor deficiencies would have multiple opportunities throughout the day to use manipulative or materials that support the development of fine motor skills.*

LC4	Maximum 3 points	<p><b>Program implements instructional and/or environmental adaptations that support the learning for children with diverse needs, including those with identified disabilities, dual language learners, identified behavioral health needs, and/or specialized health needs.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Those with identified disabilities</b></li> <li>• <b>Those with behavioral and/or health needs, dual language learners, migrant, homeless, neglected, delinquent, low-income, and children of all races and national origins</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>One Selected</b></li> <li>○ <b>Two Selected</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>1 point</b></p> <p><b>1 point</b> <b>2 points</b></p>
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### RATIONALE

Quality child care programs are enriched by the inclusion of children with diverse learning needs. Including children with diverse needs supports children in the following ways:

- Increased social skills and self-esteem
- Increased family social support
- Increased understanding and acceptance of others
- Increased skills related to individualizing care for all children

Including diverse learners and their families in a child care setting may help broaden all children's understanding of other cultures, lifestyles, languages, and customs, and may help promote nurturing relationships between children and families with different life experiences.

The key to diverse learners' success in any program is the way in which the program is able to make adaptations or accommodations to meet the child's needs. Program staff must work with both families and other agency staff to assure each child's individualized needs, along with strategies for adaptations, are identified. These adaptations may require changes to the environment, daily schedule, curriculum or teacher-adult interaction.

### VERIFICATION METHOD

#### **INTERVIEW**

1. Interview Administrator to determine that the children's files sampled include diverse learners.

#### **DOCUMENTATION**

2. Program Policy:

Determine how accommodations for children with diverse needs, including those with identified disabilities, behavioral and/or health needs, dual language learners, migrant, homeless, neglected, delinquent, low-income, and children of all races and national origins are planned and accomplished.

***AND***

3. Child Files

Evidence of the following in the sample of files of children who are currently enrolled or were enrolled within the last 12 months:

- Teaching staff's review of copies of the child's current IFSP or IEP or notes from a therapist or specialist, correspond with families regarding the child's needs, other information pertaining directly to needed accommodations
- Staff meetings to discuss ways in which to review the program's current environment, schedule, routines, etc. to consider diverse needs and possible adaptations
- Periodic review of correspondence, journals, assessments, conference notes regarding the child's performance to determine if additional adaptations are needed

***AND***

4. Review lesson plans for notations of appropriate instructional or environmental modifications that may be necessary for specific activities and/or experiences.

***OR***

5. Observation of environmental modifications if applicable.

Early Care & Education Centers with a School-Age component must complete one of the following additional standards in order to verify at Star 3; two additional standards in order to verify at Star 4; and three of the additional standards in order to verify at Star 5.

- SA1 25% of school-age staff completes School-Age Credential
- SA2 Program implements developmental youth assessment for school-age youth annually
- SA3 Program uses youth assessment to inform goals and lesson planning
- SA4 Program has plan for daily and weekly activities appropriate to all ages

*Assessment Method requirements can be found in the School-Age Standards Indicator Manual under QE3, LO2, LO3, and LC2, respectively.*

Star Rating	Required Points
Star 3	40-59
Star 4	60-79
Star 5	80-100