



Delaware Stars for *Early Success*

**Family Child Care Standards
Verification Manual**

2014

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
File and Lesson Plan Review	2
Definitions of Terms	3
Standards	6
Family and Community Partnerships	6
Communication (FC)	6
Support (FS)	11
Community Partnerships (FP)	17
Qualifications and Professional Development	19
Education (QE)	19
Training (QT)	21
Management and Administration	23
Operations and Administration (MO)	23
Fiscal Management (MF)	26
Learning Environment and Curriculum	27
Observation and Assessment (LO)	28
Curriculum Planning and Implementation (LC)	32

Introduction

Delaware Stars for *Early Success* Family Child Care Standards Verification Manual

The Family Child Care Standards Verification Manual is a tool for determining verification 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.

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:

In Family Child Care all children's files will be reviewed to determine if a standard is being met. To meet each standard 95% of the selected files must demonstrate evidence of meeting the standard's requirement.

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.

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, x 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.

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, including a move from home into a school-age program or from one program to another, i.e. into and out of a program.

STANDARDS
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

FC1	Maximum 2 points	Program welcomes all children/youth and their families with procedures that embrace inclusion and diversity.	2 points
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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

FC2	Maximum 4 points	Program provides regular written correspondence with families. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For children 0-36 months, correspondence is individualized and provided daily • For children/youth 37 months and older, correspondence is group and provided at least weekly 	2 points 2 points
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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 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 age groups served.
 - For 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 of

completed daily communications include logs, journal notes, progress reports, daily emails, etc.

- For children 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, webpage, postings on a bulletin board, dry erase board postings.
- Alternate communication methods are acceptable when families' needs require information in ways other than writing. The Program must provide written documentation of implementation.

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.

FC3	Maximum 4 points	Program conducts conferences with families at least twice annually.	4 points
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RATIONALE

Families and the Provider have informal opportunities to talk with each other almost daily. A more formalized opportunity to have a planned, specific conversation between family and the Provider offers a positive and informative way to build the relationship between both and to talk about the child's experiences.

Planned conferences occur at least twice a year or approximately every six months. From the Program perspective, the conversation includes a thoughtful discussion about the child's growth and development, progress made towards current learning goals and identification of new goals, and insight into the child's experiences. The family perspective includes time to share newsworthy events from home, participate in goal setting and ask questions to help them understand the child's day.

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 focus 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 experiences. Summaries include opportunities for family input. Have a system in place to document families that chose not to participate in conferences.
- Documentation of child formative assessment results and that they were shared with families.

Point Allocation:

- The points 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 Program less than 6 months may be excluded from this requirement.

FS1	Maximum 2 points	Programs partner with families with children with diverse needs.	2 points
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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:
 - Copies of the child's current IFSP or IEP or notes from a therapist or specialist
 - Child's current behavior management or health services plan
 - Correspondence, notes from meetings with families, therapists, treatment specialists regarding accommodations
 - 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
 - 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:
 - Bi-lingual Provider
 - Translated materials (enrollment forms, newsletters, etc.) represent the languages of the children enrolled.
 - Bulletin boards, postings, 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

FS2	Maximum 2 points	Program systematically gathers information from families and uses data to inform program planning annually.	2 points
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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 Provider 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 examples 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 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

FS3	Maximum 3 points	Program implements a variety of family-centered events annually.	3 points
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RATIONALE

Programs that implement family-centered events enhance relationships with the families they serve. These events offer families and the Provider 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 the Provider serves 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 2 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

FS4	Maximum 1 point	Program makes available information about child/youth and family related resources.	1 point
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RATIONALE

Providers and families tend to establish strong relationships in the family child care environment due to the nature of the child care. Providers come to know the children and their families well and as a result Providers often become a source of information and guidance for families. It is important the Provider be knowledgeable of resources available to children and families in the community.

Providers should be a support to families by having information available or connecting with sources such as 2-1-1/ Help Me Grow on behalf of families. Providers should be aware of local and state resources to share with families.

VERIFICATION METHOD

INTERVIEW

1. Interview Provider to determine if she or he has family resource materials available.

OBSERVATION

2. Observe the materials. It is acceptable for the Provider to use 2-1-1/ Help Me Grow and other websites as their information sources.

FS5	Maximum 4 points	Program supports transitions for families: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Into the program • Out of the program 	2 points 2 points
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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. Transition planning and implementation is a concrete method for supporting the development of those trust relationships.

Two 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.
- 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.

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 and evidence of use
- Provider meeting with family

- Visit for the child
- A gradual entry into the program if requested (partial days, then full days, for example)

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

FP1	Maximum 1 point	Program develops and maintains active relationships with schools.	1 point
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RATIONALE

Children’s school readiness can be enhanced when Programs partner with their local school districts. 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.)

FP2	Maximum 2 points	Program develops and maintains active relationships with community-based agencies.	2 points
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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 Provider's expertise to offer information that may address children's needs or help them access community supports. Providers often know when families might benefit from the services of a community-based agency. This includes Provider'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 process, 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

QUALIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

QE1	Maximum 10 points	Provider completes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Child Care Credential • One Delaware Credential • Two or more Delaware Credentials 	5 points 2 points 5 points
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RATIONALE

A qualified Provider is critical in developing high quality services for children and their families. The Provider is responsible for the entire program of services provided to children and their families. The educational components of the Family Child Care Credential require exposure to content in the areas of infant/toddler, preschool and school-age children, child assessment, developmentally appropriate practice, multi-age learning environments, business practices and creating a quality family child care program. In addition the Provider may choose among the other credentials in administration, inclusion, infant/toddler, preschool, or school-age areas.

Information about the Family Child Care Credential and other credentials 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.

DOCUMENTATION

1. Evidence in the Qualifications section of the Stars' database for documentation that the Provider holds a Family Child Care Credential or other credentials issued by the Delaware Department of Education

Point Allocation:

- If the Provider holds only a Family Child Care Credential, 5 points shall be awarded
- If the Provider holds the Family Child Care Credential and at least one other credential, then 10 points may be awarded (meets the Two or more Delaware Credentials)
- If a Provider does not hold a Family Child Care Credential, but holds one credential 2 points shall be awarded
- If a Provider does not hold a Family Child Care Credential, but holds two credentials 5 points shall be awarded

QE2	Maximum 5 points	Provider utilizes the <i>Delaware Early Childhood Career Lattice</i> for career planning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider achieves Step 4 or above on the <i>Delaware Early Childhood Career Lattice</i> • Provider achieves Step 7 or above on the <i>Delaware Early Childhood Career Lattice</i> • Provider achieves Step 8 or above on the <i>Delaware Early Childhood Career Lattice</i> 	3 points 4 points 5 points
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RATIONALE

The Delaware Early Childhood Career Lattice is a tool to assist early childhood professionals in career planning. 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.

- Step 4 requires that a professional has completed TECE I and II, 9 college credits in ECE, 9 college credits in school-age, or holds a valid CDA.
- Step 7 requires that a professional holds 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 holds 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 Qualifications section of the Stars' database to determine the Provider's Step on the Career Lattice

Point Allocation:

- Points are awarded according to the highest Step achieved; points are not cumulative

QT1	Maximum 7 points	Annual training hours are quality assured. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For provider, 50% or more of all training hours completed are quality assured • For provider, 75% or more of all training hours completed are quality assured 	3 points 7 points
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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.

QT2	Maximum 3 points	Provider conducts a self-assessment using the <i>Delaware Competencies for Early Childhood</i> or <i>School-Age Professionals</i> and creates a professional development plan annually.	3 points
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RATIONALE

High quality Providers strive to improve the quality of services to children by improving their skills and knowledge. 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.

The purpose of this self-assessment is for the Provider to assess where she or he falls on the skills and knowledge continuum in the Competencies. The Provider will use this information to develop a professional development plan that will address areas of weakness. The assessment and plan must be completed annually to ensure the assessment and plan reflect the Provider's current level of knowledge and skills.

VERIFICATION METHOD

DOCUMENTATION

1. Evidence of the Provider's documentation of self-assessment and professional development plan. The program may use the Delaware Stars Individual Development Plan or a written document that provides the same information. Determine if the assessment and plan were completed within the past 12 months.
 - A Provider may use a different competency-based assessment if it is aligned with the Delaware Competencies

Point Allocation:

- Both the self-assessment and development plan must be current for the points to be awarded

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

MO1	Maximum 4 points	Provider has access to technology: Computer with internet service, may be off-site On-site computer with internet service	2 point 4 points
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RATIONALE

The internet allows the Delaware Stars program to communicate via email with participating programs. In addition, Delaware Stars' materials and resources are only available online. Beyond Delaware Stars information, there is a wealth of information for Providers available online.

VERIFICATION METHOD

INTERVIEW

1. Interview the Provider to determine how she or he accesses the internet.

AND

2. If there is an off-site computer, confirm that Delaware Stars can connect with the Provider electronically, OR if it is an on-site computer, observe to determine if there is internet access.

AND

3. Confirm the Provider has a valid email address.

MO2	Maximum 5 points	Program implements a risk management plan.	5 points
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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, substitutes, and the families that depend on the program. The risk management plan includes at least 4 of these 9 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
- 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 parent(s)/legal guardian(s) 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.

- 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 Provider and procedures for accident reporting and analysis. Health and Safety policies includes safe sleep policies if infants are served.
- 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 Provider and families, including obtaining family and Provider permission prior to posting
- Confidentiality
 - Review the confidentiality policy for Provider and families, ensuring respecting privacy and safety
- Crime Prevention
 - Review the Provider 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 children and families over the past year.

MF1	Maximum 6 points	Program implements a system for fiscal management. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual operating budget with income and expense figures • Program reviews annual operating budget quarterly, adjusts as needed, and files copies for later review 	3 points 3 points
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RATIONALE

Early childhood programs that provide quality service to children and families must be a stable and dependable business. 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

1. Annual operating budget with income and expense figures including categories of services and functions with the program.

AND

2. 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

3. A letter form the program's accountant that outlines the policies and procedures for fiscal management delineated in the standard.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND CURRICULUM

REQUIRED	<p>Program has an Environment Rating Scale (ERS) assessment and achieves the following program score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 3.40 (Star Level 3) • Minimum 4.40 (Star Level 4) • Minimum 5.40 (Star Level 5)
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RATIONALE

This Standard uses the Environmental Rating Scale, 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.

LO1	Maximum 5 points	Program observes and documents individual children's/youth's progress on an ongoing basis and documents progress at least twice annually.	5 points
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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 provides the evidence. Collection of children's work provides examples that show children's progress and skill development over time. Observations and their documentation offer the Provider 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 both observation and documentation as part of the instructional cycle:
 - Forms or templates to use for observation and documentation, such as progress notes
 - Participation in professional development on observation and documentation

AND

2. Child Files
Evidence of the following in children's files:
 - Ongoing (at least monthly) observations including progress notes, anecdotal notes, checklists, running records, etc.
 - Documentation of observation collection strategies, such as portfolios, 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 for the sample. Children who have been enrolled between 30 days and six months must have at least one documentation report in addition to ongoing observation.

L02	Maximum 5 points	Program implements a child developmental screening for all infants, toddlers, and preschoolers enrolled annually.	5 points
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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 development 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
- Provider qualified 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 the following in 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 the 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

LO3	Maximum 5 points	Program implements a formative child assessment for all infants, toddlers, and preschoolers a minimum of two times each year and a developmental youth assessment for school-age children/youth annually.	5 points
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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 Provider and children during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning. It supports children's development and mastery of skills. Formative assessment helps 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 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 assessment
2. Star 3, 4, and 5 Providers have completed introductory assessment professional development (6 hours). Review training transcript.
3. Programs has completed professional development on the specific assessment tool being used if required for use of the tool

AND

4. Child Files:
 - Evidence of the following in children's files:
 - Formative assessment that was completed at least two times within the year
 - The Provider uses 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. 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 the provider has attended professional development and assessments have been documented at least once.

LC1	Maximum 5 points	Program implements a written comprehensive curriculum that is aligned with the Delaware Early Learning Foundations for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers enrolled and a framework for curriculum planning for school-agers enrolled.	5 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 providers 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 involvement, 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
- Review or evaluation processes for use of curriculum with group and individualized learning activities for children
- Ongoing training and/or coaching on the curriculum's integration into program activities (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 children's 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

LC2	Maximum 2 points	Program implements a supplemental curriculum to support children’s literacy, math, social-emotional or healthy lifestyles. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 supplemental curriculum • 2 or more supplemental curriculum 	1 point 2 points
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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 program’s 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 in these areas are not covered in depth within the comprehensive curriculum.

If two or more supplemental curriculum are chosen, they cannot be of the same type.

LC3	Maximum 5 points	Program implements lesson plans and activities for each age group served.	5 points
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RATIONALE

Developing and implementing lesson plans and activities allows a Provider to be prepared for the children each day. It is more likely that the children will be positively engaged when activities are planned and implemented, increasing active participation and decreasing behavioral challenges.

Family Child Care generally serves children of different ages and given the differences in development the Provider has to plan differently for each age group. If the program includes infants through school-age, plans must be implemented for infants/toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children. To meet this standard it is acceptable for the lesson plans to be a monthly calendar for each age group. The Provider may wish to use the Delaware Early Learning Foundations for infants, toddlers and preschoolers as a guide for the lesson plans. Using the Early Learning Foundations is not required for this Standard.

VERIFICATION METHOD

DOCUMENTATION

1. Review documentation of the past 3 month's lesson plans and daily activities for each age group served.

AND

OBSERVATION

2. Observe to determine if the current day's lesson plans are being implemented.

LC4	Maximum 5 points	Program uses information from children’s observations, the comprehensive curriculum and formative child assessment, the <i>Delaware Early Learning Foundations</i>, and families to design daily activities, lesson plans, and individualized goal plans.	5 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. Provider 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 manipulatives or materials that support the development of fine motor skills.*

LC5	Maximum 3 points	<p>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 specialized health needs populations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those with identified disabilities • Those with behavioral and/or health needs, dual language learners, migrant, homeless, neglected, delinquent, low-income, and children of all races and national origins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One Selected ○ Two Selected 	<p>1 points</p> <p>1 point</p> <p>2 points</p>
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RATIONALE

Quality child care programs are enriched by the inclusion of children with diverse learning 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. Providers 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 Provider 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 children's files who are currently enrolled or were enrolled within the last 12 months:

- Provider's review of copies of the child's current IFSP or IEP or notes from a therapist or specialist
- 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
- Periodic review of correspondence, journals, assessments, conference notes regarding the child's performance to determine if additional adaptations are needed

AND

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

OR

5. Observation of environmental modifications if applicable

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