COLORADO SHINES

START EARLY
START STRONG
QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

State of Colorado

Colorado Shines

Quality Rating & Improvement System

Point Structure Guide for Quality Levels 3-5
May 2015

COLORADO

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Introduction to Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System

Colorado's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), Colorado Shines, is the result of several years of collaborative design from early childhood stakeholders across the state and country. In 2012, Colorado engaged the support of Oldham Innovative Research to develop the design framework at the direction of the Early Childhood QRIS Design Committee. In 2013, Colorado was awarded a $45 million Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant to invest in early childhood strategies that improve both the quality of early childhood education and the number of children with high needs being served by quality early childhood education programs. As part of that grant, Colorado will implement Colorado Shines QRIS that has been under design for the past two and a half years.

In July 2013 the Office of Early Childhood published an initial draft of the QRIS, called The Next

Generation QRIS, and input was received from early childhood education providers and early childhood leaders across Colorado. In September, the Office of Early Childhood issued a Request for Information to gather additional formal feedback about the design and implementation.

Formal and informal responses to the initial draft consistently addressed two areas for the design committee to review and revise: 1) Adjusting Workforce Qualifications to recognize experience or other alternatives to a formal early childhood degree and 2) More emphasis on Learning Environment with specific focus on teacher – child interactions.

The design committee, in consultation with the Office of Early Childhood published the Next Generation QRIS draft version 3 in November 2013. This version addressed previously noted concerns as well as additional concerns/opportunities identified when reviewing the design. In March, 2014 the design was reviewed by research scientists, Donna Bryant and Noreen Yazejian, with the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute. After implementation of their feedback and a final evaluation by the design team, this final version was published in September, 2014.

In August, The Office of Early Childhood contracted with ratings administrator, Qualistar Colorado, who will provide further training materials and support to implement this version of Colorado Shines. Following implementation, a validation study will be conducted. A Colorado Shines Advisory Board will be engaged to actively review input and support the Ratings Administrator and Office of Early Childhood in making future results-based revisions as required.

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STANDARDS & POINTS

I. Standards & Criteria

Colorado Shines standards will be based on an accumulation of points within five standard categories:

1) Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development; 2) Family Partnerships; 3) Leadership, Management and Administration; 4) Learning Environment; and 5) Child Health. Points must be gained within each of the five areas with a specified minimum number of points. The breakdown of the points is documented within the Standards and Points Framework applicable to the program or provider. Additional points may be earned in optional categories: 1) Home Language; 2) Additional Professional Staff 3) Professional Leadership and 4) Infant and Toddler CLASS Observations The provider may choose to apply up to two (2) earned optional points to only one of the five standard areas in order to increase the total score of that standards area. If optional points are added to
a standards area, it will be noted in the rating details on the Colorado Shines website to ensure transparency in ratings and scoring.

Colorado Shines QRIS standards apply to all licensed childcare centers and family childcare homes including preschool/Pre-K programs and licensed Early Head Start and Head Start programs. There are separate Standards and Points Framework documents outlining the standards and indicators for family childcare homes. While the standard areas for both centers and homes are the same, the indicators and points vary in order to properly address the unique characteristics of each sector and the underlying associated program standards. Throughout this document the term "program" is used, this term is meant to be inclusive of all licensed programs.

The standards and indicators within Standards and Points Framework are based on research-based program standards (i.e., national accreditation, Head Start Performance, and other applicable national early childhood standards) and on Colorado's Child Care Licensing Rules and Regulations and Colorado's Quality Standards for Early Childhood Care and Education.

Table 1: Child Care Centers

Categories	Total Possible Points	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1. Workforce Qualifications and Professional	31	8	12	18
2. Family Partnerships	22	10	13	20
3. Leadership, Management & Administration	26	12	18	24
4. Learning Environment	29	8	13	22
5. Child Health	14	5	7	9
Optional available points:	12			
Minimum requirement for Rating		43	63	93
Environment Ratings Score		At least 3.75 with no classroom below a 3.0	At least 4.75 with no classroom below a 4.0	At least 5.75 with no classroom below a 5.0

Table 1A: Programs serving only Infants/Toddlers

Embedded in the point's structure for Learning Environment is the ability for center based programs to use the Pre-School CLASS assessment tool to earn points. As Infant/Toddler programs do not have the ability to earn these points, the Learning Environment point structure for Infant/Toddler programs changes. The following table shows how the Learning Environment points change for Infant/Toddler programs. All other standard areas remain the same.

Categories	Total Possible Points	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
4. Learning Environment	23	6	10	17
Minimum Requirement for Rating		41	60	88

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Table 2: Family Child Care

Categories	Total Possible Points	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1. Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development	11	3	5	7
2. Family Partnerships	20	8	10	14
3. Leadership, Management & Administration	6	3	4	5
4. Learning Environment	27	6	9	16
5. Child Health	14	5	7	8
Optional Available Points	12			
Minimum requirement for Rating		25	35	50
FCCERS-R Score		At least 3.75	At least 4.75	At least 5.75

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II. LICENSING AS THE FOUNDATION FOR QRIS

Licensing Specialists within the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS), Division of Early Care and Learning will verify Levels 1 and 2 of Colorado Shines Quality Rating Improvement System. Level 1 will be automatically designated to all programs and providers who hold a license in good standing. Level 2 designations will be awarded to those programs and providers that have a license in good standing, have staff registered into the Colorado Shines Professional Development and Information System (PDIS), meet the quality indicators[1] (centers), have engaged in the self-assessment process resulting in a quality improvement plan and have completed Colorado Shines QRIS-Level 2 Trainings[2].

[1] The quality indicators are available to programs through the Colorado Shines QRIS Level 2 Trainings in the Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System, the Office of Early Childhood Website, or though the program's assigned licensing specialist.

[2] 75% of a center's staff will be required to have completed the Colorado Shines Level 2 QRIS trainings. At least one staff member per classroom must have completed the trainings. New employees will need to have a plan to complete required trainings within 90 days of their hire date this will count toward 75%.

Beginning with childcare licensing as the foundation for building quality, Levels 3-5 on Colorado Shines QRIS will be verified by the Quality Ratings Administrator. The higher-level designations will be determined through points achieved by demonstrating quality indicators during program observations. The point system is designed to be flexible and allow programs/providers to develop and demonstrate quality in a variety of ways.

III. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF QRIS RATINGS

The standard categories included within Colorado Shines QRIS will be: 1) Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development; 2) Family Partnerships; 3) Leadership, Management, and Administration; 4) Learning Environment; and 5) Child Health. The indicators within the standards are noted in the Standards and Points Framework (see Appendix I) applicable to the program or provider.

Table 3: Standards and Criteria of Colorado Shines QRIS

Standard Categories	Criteria
Workforce Qualifications & Professional Development	a. Director Qualifications b. Early Childhood Teacher Qualifications c. Early Childhood Assistant Teacher & Aides Qualifications d. Ongoing Professional Development
Family Partnerships	a. Home Language b. Cultural Sensitivity c. Transitions d. Engagement of Families e. Engagement of Communities
Leadership, Management & Administration	a. Program Evaluation b. Personnel c. Benefits d. Business Administration
Learning Environment	a. Curriculum b. Ratio, Group Size & Continuity of Care c. Observational Assessment of Program d. Child Assessment
Child Health	a. Child Health Promotion
Optional Points	a. Home Language b. Additional Professional Staff c. Professional Leadership d. CLASS Infant/Toddler

Colorado Shines QRIS will consist of classroom/home observations using research-based assessment tools by a trained, independent and reliable assessor for programs seeking Level 3-5 designations. These tools will be used and the scores determined will impact the quality level a program/provider receives. For centers, 50% of classrooms will be assessed with at least one classroom per age group represented in the assessment. Classroom assessment tools will be appropriate for the age group within the classroom being assessed.

IV. ACCOUNTABILITY AND MONITORING

The following describes documenting compliance, determination of ratings, alternative pathways, and monitoring the ratings of Colorado Shines QRIS. To better understand the nature of accountability and monitoring of a QRIS, Anne Mitchell in her 2005 publication, *Stair Steps to Quality: A Guide for States and Communities Developing Quality Rating Systems for Early Care and Education* defines these terms as follows:

- **Accountability** is the process of using valid and reliable methods of assessment to monitor compliance with a set of standards.

- **Assessment** is a systematic approach for gathering information to make a judgment about the component of quality that a standard(s) addresses to then assign a quality rating.

- **Monitoring** is keeping track of compliance with each of the standards.

V. DETERMINATION OF RATINGS AND DOCUMENTING COMPLIANCE

A Level 1 rating will be determined by current licensing criteria. If a program/provider meets all requirements of The Departments Division of Early Care and Learning licensing, the program/provider will receive a Level 1 rating.

Programs/providers that wish to move through Colorado Shines QRIS Levels can voluntarily apply for a higher rating (2 - 5) by providing evidence to meet the level requirements. If a program/provider chooses not to move ahead in the QRIS then they will remain at a Level 1 unless licensing compliance changes.

Licensing Specialists with the Division of Early Care and Learning will verify a Level 2 rating at the next routine licensing inspection. To reach a Level 2 rating, programs/providers must complete:

- Colorado Shines QRIS Level 2 Training requirements;

- Ensure enrollment of staff in the Colorado Shines PDIS;

- Conduct a self-assessment; meeting all the core quality indicators; and

- Develop a quality improvement plan. Assistance in conducting self-assessments and the development of quality improvement plans will be supported through Level 2 Trainings.

Programs/providers seeking a Level 3-5 Colorado Shines rating will use the *State of Colorado's QRIS Provider Guidance Document*[1] to determine the evidence they can provide to earn points at a Level 3, 4, or 5 rating. Those interested in a Level 3-5 rating will submit an application to the Colorado Shines Quality Ratings Administrator who will designate all Level 3-5 ratings. Level 3-5 ratings require that programs/providers provide evidence to verify that a certain number of points have been achieved; meet threshold scores from the ERS based on an observation by an independent, reliable observer; and develop a quality improvement plan based on results from the assessor observation.

1 In development by the QRIS Ratings vendor with input from the QRIS Advisory Team

VI. ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

Alternative pathways to meet the standards for Levels 3 and 4 are part of Colorado Shines QRIS. An alternative pathway means that the program meets or exceeds the QRIS standards by being in compliance with an approved accreditation. Accrediting entities have the option to apply for approval and will be included in Levels 3 and 4 based on their submitted application. Approved accrediting entities will be published by The Department.

Programs/providers that are accredited by an approved accrediting entity must **complete the QRIS and ensure registration of staff in PDIS.**

4. Additionally, programs must submit a copy of their accreditation certificate and annual report of continued accreditation compliance.

Early Head Start and Head Start programs, either grantee or delegate agencies, will also be recognized as an alternative pathway to attaining Levels 3 and 4.

Programs/providers that have a current review report from the Office of Head Start (OHS) and have had no outstanding non-compliance issues will automatically be rated at a Level 4 provided they submit all documents of their most recent review, including documentation from OHS that shows no outstanding non-compliance issues, and their annual Program Information Report.

For programs that have a current Qualistar Rating prior to the implementation of Colorado Shines QRIS, a **direct crosswalk will occur (example: a program with a star 2, 3 or 4 rating in Qualistar will be recoginized as a quality level 2, 3 or 4 in Colorado Shines). Once the program's** quality rating expires, the program/provider must comply with the Colorado Shines QRIS **standards**.

Alternative Pathway programs who wish to pursue a Level 5 quality rating must participate in an on-site assessment by a Colorado Shines assessor, provide evidence to verify that the minimum number of points has been achieved; and meet threshold scores from the ERS based on an observation.

VII. MONITORING RATINGS

Programs attaining Levels 3-5 in Colorado Shines will be monitored every three years, barring no major changes within the program. Programs at Levels 1 and 2 will be monitored as per the Division of Early Care and Learning's monitoring protocol. Situations that would indicate a major change and potentially an additional monitoring visit or call for further evidence would include:

- serious licensing violation;

- change in ownership;

- change in director;

- change in/or additional location;

- a request for a higher rating

For programs/providers rated at a Level 3, 4, or 5, an annual QRIS report[2] will be submitted to the Colorado Shines Quality Ratings Administrator verifying that there has been no major changes and that the rating is still verifiable through an annual self-assessment and a careful review of the quality (or continuous) improvement process, including the actions highlighted within the quality improvement plan. For those programs/providers that have a Level 1 or 2 rating, monitoring will be conducted by the Division's Licensing Specialists during their scheduled visit. Level 2 programs/providers will report on their progress of meeting objectives highlighted within the quality improvement plan and will establish new goals for the next year based on their self-assessment. Any new staff will also need to complete the Colorado Shines QRIS Level 2 Trainings.

For those that have received a rating through an alternative pathway, annual reports submitted to accrediting bodies or the Office of Head Start, **along with updating any required information in Colorado Shines** are sufficient as long as there is inclusion of the continuous quality improvement component.

Colorado Shines QRIS ratings are not stagnant. All QRIS ratings will need to be verified annually through QRIS reporting and, for Levels 3-5, every third year through on-site assessments. If after monitoring, a program/provider drops to a lower rating, the program/provider will have the opportunity to restore their former, higher rating if they choose. This can be done by developing a written plan for restoring compliance with measureable, timed, evidence-based action steps that can be monitored for compliance. This plan must be implemented within three months (more time can be given if negotiated with the ratings administrator) for the higher rating to be honored and publicized. If the program/provider does not follow through with developing and implementing the restoration plan then the lower rating designation will be the new, public rating.

If a program/provider rated at Level 1 or 2 wishes to appeal their rating designation, they can follow the dispute process established by The Department. For those programs with a Level 3-5 rating, the provider/program can follow the dispute procedure established by the Colorado Shines Quality Ratings Administrator. Making the ratings public will be suspended for those programs/providers appealing their rating until a resolution is reached. All programs/providers will be informed of the dispute process both verbally and in writing at the time of their rating.

An advisory board will be developed to guide the policies, procedures, and practices of Colorado Shines QRIS. This advisory structure will consist of a variety of state and other agency stakeholders.

2 Currently in development

Program/Provider Supports & Incentives

I. QRIS FOR EARLY EDUCATION IN COLORADO

The organizations, agencies, and other stakeholders that support Colorado Shines QRIS in our state are vast, consisting of both the private and public sector. Incentivizing Colorado Shines QRIS is critical to participation rates and sending the message that quality experiences for children and families are important to Colorado. The Department is working to ensure incentives and supports will be provided to participants of Colorado Shines QRIS to promote higher quality and to help offset the costs of providing high quality education and care.

II. PROGRAM / PROVIDER SUPPORTS

Program/provider supports will be available to those volunteering to advance through QRIS. The supports will include professional development, technical assistance, and outreach/information.

a. Professional Development

Professional development opportunities will be a support to participants of Colorado Shines. Level 2 will feature online accessible professional development training modules specific to the QRIS standard areas, which will be aligned with the newly developed Colorado's Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and Administrators. Professional development specific to ERS, program self-assessment, and developing a quality improvement plan will be included to those wanting to improve quality through advancement within the QRIS levels. All professional development related to QRIS will be directly linked to the Competencies and the Professional Development Information System as well.

To ensure high quality and consistent delivery, specialized professional development as well as a credential will be required of anyone wishing to provide coaching/mentoring services to Colorado Shines participants.

b. Technical Assistance (includes "Relationship-Based Professional Development")

Technical assistance will be an integral part of Colorado Shines. Technical assistance will be available at all rating levels and will include support through a website with a link specific to programs/providers that will include QRIS information, forms, contact information and resources; a toll-free support line to access staff who can answer questions related to the QRIS; an email address to access a staff person to assist with questions electronically; and QRIS orientations. Another component of available technical assistance is known as relationship-based professional development, which will include coaching from a Colorado Shines Coach. Coaches will be trained and credentialed in order to properly support those who wish to improve quality through advancement within the QRIS levels[1]

1   Costs, if any, of relationship based coaching will be determined based on cost model analysis.

c. Outreach & Information

The Quality Ratings Administrator, **The Department and partners** will develop resources, examples, and templates that are accessible to programs/providers as they navigate through the QRIS. The **program** guide[2] will be reviewed and revised annually by the QualityRatings Administrator and will be accessible in a variety of formats and will consider appropriate languages and literacy rates.

The Colorado Shines website**, launched November 2014,** includes a link specific for programs/ providers, resources that can be downloaded for programs/providers, accurate QRIS ratings, information on available professional development opportunities, how to access technical assistance and how to access and qualify for financial incentives, and other relevant information for parents. Colorado Shines website will be updated in a timely manner to ensure the most accurate information is reflected.

Benchmarks for participation rates and levels of quality have been established to determine QRIS progress over time. Colorado Shines Advisory

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2 To be developed by the contracted vendor with input from the QRIS Advisory Group.

Board will receive annual reports of progress toward meeting benchmarks and will support the strategic plan to meet established benchmarks.

d. FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Financial incentives will be available to Colorado Shines QRIS participant**s at the completion of Level 2 and for** Levels 3-5 to assist in the costs to provide higher standards of quality education and care. **These incentives will be aligned to program quality improvement plans and can be applied for through the Colorado Shines website.**

Consumer Engagement & Public Awareness

I. EDUCATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVOCATES

Colorado has an array of service providers that engage with early childhood programs and providers on a regular basis. A concerted effort will be placed on educating and informing these early childhood advocates ensuring consistent messages are articulated about Colorado Shines.

Written materials, presentations, and QRIS resources will be disseminated to organizations, agencies, and other stakeholders participating in Colorado Shines QRIS orientation sessions throughout Colorado in order to assist programs/providers to better understand the benefits of providing high-quality experiences and environments for children by participating in Colorado Shines. The Colorado Shines website will be an important tool to orient organizations, agencies, and other stakeholders on up-to-date QRIS resources and information.

II. REACHING FAMILIES & CONSUMERS

One of the main reasons for developing a QRIS is to assist families in choosing and evaluating care for their children. To campaign for the success of a QRIS, messages **are** be**ing** designed for a variety of audiences (families, providers, stakeholders) to promote the value of the system. As noted by Anne Mitchell in her 2005 publication, *Stair Steps to Quality: A Guide for States and Communities Developing Quality Rating Systems for Early Care and Education:*

"Not everyone will see the inherent benefits of QRS. Some may oppose QRS due to ideological concerns, which frequently include the belief that child care minimizes the role of families. A strategy employed by supporters of QRS is listening to concerns, seeking common ground based on what is good for children, and responding with facts that explain why the QRS is being developed. Research on program quality is often part of the explanation, along with affirmation that families are children's first teachers and that many children are in out-of-home programs because their families work."

Engaging and educating families is a critical component of public outreach to help families understand, choose and evaluate high-quality care and education settings that meet their family's needs. Colorado Shines QRIS will design, implement and evaluate marketing strategies that are family-friendly and consider literacy rates, English-language proficiency, and adult caregivers with disabilities in order to do so effectively.

The following modalities will be part of reaching families and consumers through Colorado Shines:

Easily recognized symbols will be used to show the different levels within the QRIS so that families/consumers can easily see what level child care programs/providers are rated;

Easy, widespread access to ratings and what they mean along with a variety of ways to obtain rating information will be available;

Use of local and social media will promote Colorado Shines efforts (i.e., public service announcements and paid advertisements through radio and television, templates for newspaper articles or press releases for those programs/providers wanting to place an announcement about their recent rating in the local paper, and social networking sites);

Brochures, posters, and/or flyers will be available at local institutions, organizations, and agencies (e.g., social service agencies, doctor's offices, employment agencies, home visiting programs, and hospitals);

Colorado Shines website with a link specific to families will be developed for families to retrieve information about ratings as well as tips on choosing and evaluating quality care for their children.

To ensure that Colorado Shines QRIS information is available, updated and current, all public awareness and outreach information will be reviewed and revised in a timely and planned manner.

III. REACHING PROGRAMS / PROVIDERS

To encourage participation of programs in Colorado Shines QRIS beyond offering provider incentives and supports, participation will also be promoted using a range of marketing techniques. The following marketing techniques will be used to encourage provider participation in Colorado Shines:

Public awareness packets will be distributed to programs/ providers once they are rated (e.g., a decal to hang in the window, a QRIS certificate that depicts what level the program has reached, a template of a press release, etc.) QRIS web site with a link specific to providers/programs that will include basic QRIS information about getting involved, frequently asked questions, and resource materials;

Webinars, orientations, and QRIS-specific training will be provided at no cost to programs interested in participating in the QRIS;

Education of licensing staff, QRIS vendor staff, and other organizations, agencies, and stakeholders will help promote the QRIS when conducting visits with programs/providers and assure that there is continuity of messages given to programs/providers. QRIS flyers/ brochures will also be handed out during licensing visits to encourage continued progression through the QRIS;

Dissemination of QRIS data illustrating participation and progression rates through the QRIS levels will offer insights as to what populations may need to be targeted to encourage future QRIS participation and support.

Strategies that will be part of building consumer support for Colorado Shines will include:

Educating QRIS champions to promote the QRIS throughout Colorado;

Developing a series of presentations specific to the QRIS geared toward legislators, schools, other early childhood advocates, community agencies, local institutions and public funders;

Creating talking points to assist champions in their efforts to talk to others about the QRIS;

Including community groups (i.e., Colorado's Early Childhood Councils) to raise awareness and build support for the QRIS through hosting events to engage a wide-range of audiences at the local level.

> Engaging the private sector in the education and promotion of Colorado Shines QRIS will be a priority to raise awareness at the community level and to engage other partners within the private sector in QRIS efforts.

CHILD CARE CENTERS STANDARDS AND POINTS FRAMEWORK

Levels 1 and 2 of the Colorado Shines QRIS will be determined by Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS), Division of Early Care and Learning (DECL) Licensing Specialists. Levels 3, 4 and 5 of Colorado Shines QRIS will be verified by the Quality Ratings Administrator and through points achieved by demonstrating quality indicators. The point system is designed to be flexible and allow providers to develop and demonstrate quality in multiple ways.

1. Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development (31 points)

a.	Director Qualifications	(8 points)
b.	Early Childhood Teacher Qualifications	(10 points)
c.	Early Childhood Assistant Teacher & Aides Qualifications	(6 points)
d.	Ongoing Professional Development	(7 points)

2. Family Partnerships (22 points)

a.	Home Language	(2 points)
b.	Sensitivity to Diversity	(2 points)
c.	Transitions	(3 points)
d.	Engagement of Families	(12 points)
e.	Engagement of Communities	(3 points)

3. Leadership, Management & Administration (26 points)

a.	Program Evaluation	(3 points)
b.	Personnel	(13 points)
c.	Benefits	(7 points)
d.	Business Administration	(3 points)

4. Learning Environment (29 points + ERS scores)

a.	Curriculum	(5 points)
b.	Ratio, Group Size and Continuity of Care	(8 points)
c.	Observational Assessment of Program	(8 points)
d.	Child Assessment	(8 points)

Child Health Promotion (14 points)

a.	Child Health Promotion	(14 points)

Optional Point Areas (12 points)

a.	Home Language	(2 points)
b.	Additional Professional Staff	(4 points)
c.	Professional Leadership	(2 points)
d.	CLASS Assessments Infant/Toddler	(4 points)

Points must be gained within each of the five areas of quality. The minimum points that a program must achieve are listed below. For example, to be at a Level 3, a program must have 43 total points. Those points need to come from all five categories with the following minimum points in each category:

- 8 points from Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development

- 10 points from Family Partnerships

- 12 points from Leadership, Management & Administration

- 8 points from Learning Environment (**6 Points if the program only serves infants/toddlers**)

- 5 points from Child Health

In addition, a program can also use up to two (2) optional points to add to any category for which they do not have enough points.   In addition to points, programs must meet minimum levels of quality as measured by the appropriate ERS. To be at a Level 3, programs must have average ERS scores of 3.75 across all observed classrooms with no individual classroom with an ERS score lower than 3.0.

	Categories	Total Possible Points	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1.	Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development	31	8	12	18
2.	Family Partnerships	22	10	13	20
3.	Leadership, Management & Administration	26	12	18	24
4.	Learning Environment	29	8	13	22
5.	Child Health	14	5	7	9
	Optional available points:	12			
	Minimum requirement for Rating		43	63	93
	Average Environment Ratings Score (ITERS-R/ECERS-R)		At least 3.75 with no classroom below a 3.0	At least 4.75 with no classroom below a 4.0	At least 5.75 with no classroom below a 5.0

Table 1A: Programs serving only Infants/Toddlers

Categories	Total Possible Points	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
4. Learning Environment	23	6	10	17
Minimum Requirement for Rating		41	60	88

I. Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development

	Director Qualifications (Select 1 Category)	Points
1.1	Meets requirements for Early Childhood Professional III Credential	2
1.2	Meets requirements for Early Childhood Professional IV Credential	4
1.3	Meets requirements for Early Childhood Professional V Credential	6
1.4	Meet requirements for Early Childhood Professional VI Credential	8

Early Childhood Teacher Qualifications (Select 1 Category)	Points
1.5 75% of early childhood teachers meet requirements for Early Childhood Professional II Credential	2
1.6 At least 50% of early childhood teachers meet requirements for Early Childhood Professional III Credential	4
1.7 75% of early childhood teachers meet requirements for Early Childhood Professional III Credential	6
1.8 At least 50% of early childhood teachers meet requirements for Early Childhood Professional IV Credential or higher	8
1.9 75% of early childhood teachers meet requirements for Early Childhood Professional IV Credential or higher	10

Early Childhood Assistant Teacher & Aides Qualifications (Select 1 Category)	Points
1.10 75% of early childhood assistant teachers and aides meet **requirements** for Early Childhood Professional I Credential or higher	2
1.11 At least 50% of early childhood assistant teachers and aides meet requirements for Early Childhood Professional II Credential or higher	4
1.12 75% of early childhood assistant teachers and aides meet requirements for Early Childhood Professional II Credential or higher	6

On-Going Professional Development	Points
1.13 The program has a program-wide professional development plan informed by the individual professional development plans of all staff that provide direct services to children and families	2
1.14 Early Care Professionals who provide direct services to children will complete an annual self-assessment based on Colorado's competencies for Early Childhood Educators and Administrators and use this to inform and update the Individual Professional Development Plan	2
Coaching/Consulting (Select 1 Category)	
1.15a All classrooms in the Program have received (or are currently receiving) credentialed coaching/consulting activities of at least three (3) hours each within the past 12 months	1
1.15b All classrooms in the Program have received (or are receiving) credentialed coaching/consulting activities of at least five (5) hours each within the past 12 months.	2
1.15c All classrooms in the Program have received (or are currently receiving) credentialed coaching/consulting activities of at least eight (8) hours each in the past 12 months	3

II. Family Partnerships

	Home Language	Points
2.1	The program provides documentation or written policy of the use of interpreters, or other resources for help with other languages of enrolled families	2

	Sensitivity to Diversity	Points
2.2	The program provides materials and resources (information about community-based programs, community mental health, child nutrition, physical fitness, food banks, Child Find, medical/dental resources) in a way that is accessible to all families, including families with high needs[1]	1
2.3	The program offers opportunities for all families, including those from different backgrounds and communities, to get to know one another and work together for the benefit of the children in the program	1

	Transitions	Points
2.4	The program has written policies and procedures that describe how transitions are supported among all early childhood and home settings and how transition information is shared with families	1
2.5	The program offers information sessions and/or individual family meetings specific to child transitions (e.g., what to expect in terms of transitions from one classroom to another, from home to a classroom, to another setting, connecting families with schools for children transitioning into school) in order to help prepare the child and family for transition and to help the child adjust to new settings	2

	Engagement of Families	Points
2.6	Program conducts an annual family survey to ask families for suggestions on how to improve the program and how the program can support families and: The results from the survey are shared with families The information is used to inform the quality improvement plan The program has documentation of one or more changes made as a result of the annual family survey	3
2.7	The program conducts two annual parent/teacher conferences	3
2.8	The program offers annual educational information sessions on child development and learning aligned with the Early Learning and Development Guidelines	2
2.9	Family members act in leadership positions on program and/or advisory boards and are provided with a training and/or orientation on their role	2
2.10	The program provides a series of parenting classes annually, which includes family goal setting and action plans	2

	Engagement with Community	Points
2.11	A plan is written and implemented describing procedures to refer and connect families to appropriate community service agencies (e.g., mental health, health, developmental, educational)	1
2.12	The program coordinates and/or collaborates with community service providers, families, school district personnel, etc. in order to design learning activities that aid in meeting outcomes/goals of Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP), Individual Education Programs (IEP), School Readiness Plans, Individual Learning Plans, and/or other individual plans	2

III.   Leadership, Management and Administration

	Program Evaluation	Points
3.1	The program has developed a continuous quality improvement plan that is updated annually, shared with staff, families, and stakeholders, with documented goals, timelines, and outcomes	3

	Personnel	Points
3.2	The program has a written code of professional conduct. Staff is trained annually on the code of conduct	1
3.3	The program conducts monthly staff meetings	2
3.4	The program implements a salary scale based on education, experience and job performance	2
3.5	Staff has an annual performance evaluation, which includes at least one classroom observation by their supervisor and a staff self-evaluation. The staff evaluation also informs the individual professional development plan	2
3.6	Lead teachers in each classroom are provided with a least an hour of paid planning time per week	1
3.7	All teaching staff are provided with paid planning time per week	2
3.8	Non-administrative personnel participate in decision-making for hiring, curriculum development, program goal-setting and/or annual planning	2
3.9	The program has a recruitment and retention plan that is reviewed and revised by the administration on an annual basis	1

Benefits	Points
3.10 The program offers full-time staff a compensation package with benefit options (1 point for each option up to 7 points): • Paid holidays • Paid time off (sick, vacation, personal) • Health and Dental insurance • Life Insurance • Disability Insurance • Retirement Plan • Employee Child Discount	7

Business Administration	Points
3.11 The program has a current business plan and/or strategic plan, created or revised in the past 36 months	1
3.12 The program has a current-year operating budget and quarterly income and expense statements that show revenues, expenses, and budget compared to actual	1
3.13 The program provides documentation of a certified financial review	1

IV. Learning Environment

Curriculum	Points
4.1 The program **uses** a curriculum that has been aligned with the domains of Colorado's Early Learning and Development Guidelines, and is age specific to the children the program serves to include: **All Ages: 1) physical development and health; 2) social & emotional development; 3) language and literacy development; 4) cognitive development; 5) approaches to learning** **Preschool Ages (3-5): 6) literacy knowledge & skills; 7) logic & reasoning; 8) mathematics knowledge & skills; 9) science knowledge & skills; 10) social studies knowledge & skills; 11) creative arts expression**	2
4.2 The program provides documentation that 75% of educational staff participates in annual training on use of the selected curriculum	3

	Ratio and Group Size (Select 1 Category)	Points
4.3a	The program has designed a plan and timeline to move toward lower group size and improve adult:child ratios beyond what is required by licensing	2
4.3b	Partial implementation of a plan to lower group size and improve adult:child ratios beyond what is required by licensing is evident	4
4.3c	Group size and adult:child ratios are aligned with NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children)	6
	Continuity of Care	Points
4.4	Primary caregiving practices are part of program policies and procedures	1
4.5	Continuity of care practices are part of program policies and procedures	1

	Observational Assessment of the Classroom or Program	Points
4.6	The program has conducted a self-assessment using an assessment tool in addition to the ERS and uses results to inform the quality improvement plan	2
	PRE-K CLASS ASSESSMENT (Select 1 Category)	Points
4.7	The program has had a reliable, independent, trained observer complete a CLASS Assessment in the previous 12 months in at least 50% of classrooms with average minimum scores: Emotional Support: 4.5 Classroom Organization: 4.5 Instructional Support: 2.0	2
4.8	The program has had a reliable, independent, trained observer complete a CLASS Assessment in the previous 12 months in at least 50% of classrooms with average minimum scores: Emotional Support: 5.5 Classroom Organization: 5.0 Instructional Support: 2.5	4
4.9	The program has had a reliable, independent, trained observer complete a CLASS Assessment in the previous 12 months in at least 50% of classrooms with average minimum scores: Emotional Support: 6.0 Classroom Organization: 6.0 Instructional Support: 3.0	6

	Child Assessment	Points
4.10	Developmentally appropriate child assessments (e.g., observation data, portfolios, work samples) are conducted within 90 calendar days after enrollment, and at least one other time within a year. Results of assessments are shared during parent/teacher conferences in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner	2
4.11	The program has a child assessment system that has been aligned with Colorado's Early Learning and Development Guidelines	2
4.12	The program provides documentation that 75% of educational staff participates in annual training or maintains reliability on use of the selected child assessment tool(s)	2
4.13	Assessment results are used to individualize curriculum and lesson planning	2

Child Health

	Child Health Promotion	Points
5.1	The program documents that each child has received a hearing, vision, and dental screening and provides resources for families on where to obtain them	3
5.2	The program documents that each child has medical insurance and a medical home and provides resources for families on where to obtain them	2
5.3	The program **documents that each child has received a developmental screening and** makes a referral or provides referral information to the family as appropriate for any child for whom a developmental concern has been identified	2
5.4	The program has a one-time certified playground inspection conducted. A playground quality improvement plan is created based on the results and progress is monitored annually	2
5.5	Classroom teachers lead children in structured physical activities daily. (Once in a **four** (4) hour or less time period; twice in a five (5) hour or more time period)	1
5.6	Program offers nutrition information and education programs, annually, led by nutritionist or registered dietitian	2
5.7	Program has a garden and serves fruits/vegetables from the garden for children to taste	2

Optional

	Home Language	Points
6.1	The program honors the child's home language and encourages home language development by having at least one caregiver/teacher in each classroom who is bilingual if there is a dominant second language[2] in the classroom.	2

Additional Professional Staff	Points
6.2 The program employs or maintains a daily service contract with one or more of the following program professional personnel: Child Care Health Consultant, Mental Health Consultant, Family Services Support Staff, Professional Development Coordinator, Early Childhood Coordinator, Program Manager and/or Coach, Special Education Staff or Nutritionist	2
6.3 The program employs or maintains a daily service contract with one or more of the following administrative professional personnel: Business Manager, Accountant, Human Resources Director	2

Professional Leadership	Points
6.4 An administrative member of the program regularly participates in a community leadership role with their local Early Childhood Council or another early childhood organization; which may include participation on a formal committee, serving as a board member or acting in a leadership role for an early childhood association	2

CLASS Assessments Infant/Toddler	Points
6.5 The program has had a reliable, independent, trained observer complete an infant CLASS Assessment in the previous 12 months in at least 50% of classrooms.	2
6.6 The program has had a reliable, independent, trained observer complete a Toddler CLASS Assessment in the previous 12 months in at least 50% of classrooms.	2

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[1] Children with high needs are children who: live in low-income families; have disabilities or developmental delays; are English-language learners; reside on "Indian lands"; live in migrant families; are homeless; live in foster care; or are recent immigrants.

[2] The home language of 50% or more of the children is a specific language other than English.

APPENDIX II:

FAMILY CHILD CARE POINTS FRAMEWORK

Levels 1 and 2 of the Colorado Shines QRIS will be determined by Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS), Division of Early Care and Learning Licensing Specialists. Levels 3, 4 and 5 of Colorado Shines QRIS will be verified by the Quality Ratings Administrator and through points achieved by demonstrating quality indicators. The point system is designed to be flexible and allow providers to develop and demonstrate quality in multiple ways.

1. Qualifications and Professional Development (11 points)

a.	Family Child Care Qualifications	(6 points)
b.	Ongoing Professional Development	(5 points)

2. Family Partnerships (20 points)

a.	Home Language	(2 points)
b.	Sensitivity to Diversity	(2 points)
c.	Transitions	(3 points)
d.	Engagement of Families	(10 points)
e.	Engagement with Community	(3 points)

3. Leadership, Management & Administration (6 points)

a.	Program Evaluation	(3 points)
b.	Professional Conduct	(1 points)
c.	Business Administration	(2 points)

4. Learning Environment (27 points + ERS scores)

a.	Curriculum	(5 points)
b.	Ratio and Group Size	(6 points)
c.	Observational Assessment of Program	(8 points)
d.	Child Assessment	(8 points)

5. Child Health (14 points)

a.	Child Health	(14 points)

6. Optional Point Areas (12 points)

b.	Home Language	(2 points)
c.	Additional Professional Staff	(4 points)
d.	Professional Leadership	(2 points)
e.	CLASS Assessments Infant/Toddler	(4 points)

	Categories	Total Possible Points	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
1	Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development	11	3	5	7
2	Family Partnerships	20	8	10	14
3	Leadership, Management & Administration	6	3	4	5
4	Learning Environment	27	6	9	16
5	Child Health	14	5	7	8
6	Optional available points:	**12**			
	Minimum requirement for Rating		25	35	50
	FCCERS Score*		At least 3.75	At least 4.75	At least 5.75

Points must be earned within each of the five (5) areas of quality. The minimum points that a program must achieve are listed below. For example, to be at a Level 3, a program must have 25 total points. Those points need to come from all five categories with the following minimum points in each category:

- 3 points from Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development

- 8 points from Family Partnerships

- 3 points from Leadership, Management & Administration

- 6 points from Learning Environment

- 5 points from Child Health Promotion

In addition, a provider can use up to two (2) optional points to add to any category for which they do not have enough points. In addition to points, programs must meet minimum levels of quality as measured by the appropriate Environment Rating Scale. To be at a Level 3, programs must have a FCCERS score of at least 3.75.

I. Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development

	Family Child Care Qualifications (Select 1 Category)	Points
1.1	Meets requirements for Early Childhood Professional II Credential	2
1.2	Meets requirements for Early Childhood Professional III Credential	4
1.3	Meets requirements for Early Childhood Professional IV Credential	6

	On-Going Professional Development	Points
1.4	The Early Care Professional and any other professionals who provide direct services to children will complete an annual self-assessment based on Colorado's competencies for Early Childhood Educators and use this to inform and update the Individual Professional Development plan	2
	Coaching and Consulting (Select 1)	
1.5a	Early Care Professional has received (or is currently receiving) credentialed coaching/consulting activities of at least three (3) hours within the past 12 months	1
1.5b	Early Care Professional has received (or is currently receiving) credentialed coaching/consulting activities of at least five (5) hours within the past 12 months	2
1.5c	Early Care Professional has received (or is currently receiving) credentialed coaching/consulting activities of at least eight (8) hours in the past 12 months	3

II.   Family Partnerships

	Home Language	Points
2.1	The program provides documentation or written procedure of the use of interpreters, or other resources for help with other languages of enrolled families	2

	Sensitivity to Diversity	Points
2.2	The program provides materials and resources (information about community-based programs, community mental health, child nutrition, physical fitness, food banks, Child Find, medical/dental resources) in a way that is accessible to all families, including families with high needs	1
2.3	The program offers opportunities for all families, including those from different backgrounds and communities, to get to know one another and work together for the benefit of the children in the program	1

	Transitions	Points
2.4	The program has written procedures that describe how transitions are supported and information shared with families in order to help prepare the child and family for transition to new settings	1
2.5	The program offers information sessions and/or individual family meetings specific to child transitions (e.g., what to expect in terms of transitions to another setting, connecting families with schools for children transitioning into school) in order to help prepare the child and family for transition and to help the child adjust to new settings	2

	Engagement of Families	Points
2.6	Program conducts an annual family survey to ask families for suggestions on how to improve the program and how the program can support families. The results from the survey are shared with families	2
2.7	The program conducts two annual parent/provider conferences	3
2.8	The program offers annual educational information sessions on child development and learning aligned with the Early Learning and Development Guidelines	2
2.9	The program provides a series of parenting classes annually, which includes family goal setting and action plans	3

	Engagement with Community	Points
2.10	A plan is written and implemented describing procedures to refer and connect families to appropriate community service agencies (e.g., mental health, health, developmental, educational)	1
2.11	The program coordinates and/or collaborates with community service providers, families, school district personnel, etc. in order to design learning activities that aid in meeting outcomes/goals of Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP), Individual Education Programs (IEP), School Readiness Plans, Individual Learning Plans, and/or other individual plans	2

III.   Leadership, Management and Administration

	Program Evaluation	Points
3.1	The program has developed a continuous quality improvement plan that is updated annually, shared with staff, families, and stakeholders, with documented goals, timelines, and outcomes	3

	Professional Conduct	Points
3.2	The program has a written code of ethics. If applicable, staff is trained annually on the code of ethics	1

	Business Administration	Points
3.3	The program has a current business plan and/or strategic plan created or revised in the past 36 months	1
3.4	The program has a current-year operating budget and quarterly income and expense statements that show revenues, expenses, and budget compared to actual	1

IV.   Learning Environment

	Curriculum	Points
4.1	The program has a curriculum that has been aligned with the domains of Colorado's Early Learning and Development Guidelines, and is age specific to the children the program serves to include: 1) physical development and health; 2) social & emotional development; 3) language and literacy development; 4) cognitive development; 5) literacy knowledge & skills; 6) logic & reasoning; 7) mathematics knowledge & skills; 8) science knowledge & skills; 9) social studies knowledge & skills; 10) creative arts expression	2
4.2	The provider provides documentation that training on selected curriculum has been completed within the past 24 months	3

	Ratio and Group Size (Select 1)	Points
4.3a	The Program has designed a plan and timeline to move toward lower group size and improve adult:child ratios beyond what is required by licensing	2
4.3b	Partial implementation of a plan to lower group size and improve adult:child ratios as follows: Partial implementation-Total capacity seven (7) children[1] Up to One (1) child under 12 months Up to One (1) child 12 months - 2 years Up to One (1) 2 years to 3 years Up to two (2) children 3-5 years - enrolled and attending kindergarten Up to two (2) school age children **Partial implementation for Large Family Child Care Homes:** Total capacity of eleven (11) children and two (2) caregivers, 2nd caregiver required when seven (7) or more children in care	4
4.3c	Full Implementation meeting lower Group size and adult:child ratios as follows: Full implementation-Total capacity six (6) children[2] Up to One (1) child under 12 months Up to One (1) child 12 months - 2 years Up to One (1) 2 years to 3 years Up to two (2) children 3-5 years - enrolled and attending kindergarten Up to two (2) school age children **Full implementation for Large Family Child Care Homes:** Ten (10) children and two (2) caregivers, 2nd caregiver required when six (6) or more children are in care.	6

	Observational Assessment of the Program	Points
4.4	The program has conducted a self-assessment using an assessment tool in addition to the FCCRS and uses results to inform the quality improvement plan	2
	Pre-K CLASS ASSESSMENT (Select 1 Category)	Points
4.5a	The program has had a reliable, independent, trained observer complete a CLASS Assessment in the previous 12 months in at least 50% of classrooms with average minimum scores: Emotional Support: 4.5 Classroom Observation: 4.5 Instructional Support: 2.0	2
4.5b	The program has had a reliable, independent, trained observer complete a CLASS Assessment in the previous 12 months in at least 50% of classrooms with average minimum scores: Emotional Support: 5.5 Classroom Observation: 5.0 Instructional Support: 2.5	4
4.5c	The program has had a reliable, independent, trained observer complete a CLASS Assessment in the previous 12 months in at least 50% of classrooms with average minimum scores: Emotional Support: 6.0 Classroom Observation: 6.0 Instructional Support: 3.0	6

	Child Assessment	Points
4.6	The program has a child assessment system that has been aligned with Colorado's Early Learning and Development Guidelines	2
4.7	Developmentally appropriate child assessments (e.g., observation data, portfolios, work samples) are conducted within 90 calendar days after enrollment, and two others within a year. Results of assessments are shared during parent/teacher conferences in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner	2
4.8	Provider has been trained on the use of an approved assessment system (including all screening and assessment tools used)	2
4.9	Assessment results are used to individualize curriculum and lesson planning	2

V. Child Health

	Child Health Promotion	Points
5.1	The program collects (or provides resources) for hearing, vision, and dental screenings for enrolled children	3
5.2	The program ensures the child has medical insurance and a medical home or provides resources for families to obtain	2
5.3	The program makes a referral or provides referral information to the family as appropriate for any child for whom a developmental concern has been identified	2
5.4	The program has a one-time certified playground inspection conducted. A playground quality improvement plan is created based on the results and progress is monitored annually	2
5.5	Classroom teachers lead children in structured physical activities daily. (Once in a 3 hour or less time period; twice in a 5 hour or more time period)	1
5.6	Program offers nutrition information and education programs, annually, led by nutritionist or registered dietician	2
5.7	Program has a garden and serves fruits/vegetables from the garden for children to taste	2

VI.   Optional

Home Language		Points
6.1	The program honors the child's home language and encourages home language development by having at least one caregiver/teacher who is bilingual if there is a dominant second language[3] in the program	2

Additional Professional Staff		Points
6.2	The program employs or maintains a service contract with one or more of the following program professional personnel: Child Care Health Consultant, Mental Health Consultant, Family Services Support staff, Professional Development Coordinator, Early Childhood Coordinator, program manager and/or Coach, Special Education Staff or Nutritionist	2
6.3	The program employs or maintains a service contract with one or more of the following administrative professional personnel: Business Manager, Accountant, Human Resources Director, shared service provider or alliance	2

Professional Leadership		Points
6.4	The Program actively participates in a community leadership role with their local early childhood council or another early childhood organization; which may include participation on a formal committee, serving as a board member, presenting at an early childhood conference, or acting in a leadership role for an early childhood association	2

CLASS Assessments Infant/Toddler		Points
6.5	The has had a reliable, independant, trained observer complete an infant CLASS Assessment in the previous 12 months in at least 50% of classrooms.	2
6.6	The program has had a reliable, independant, trained observer complete a Toddler CLASS Assessment in the previous 12 months in at least 50% od classrooms.	2

. . . .

1 Families with multiple birth children (twins, triplets) will be honored given capacity remains at a total of seven (7) children

2 Families with multiple birth children (twins, triplets) will be honored given capacity remains at a total of six (6) children

3 The home language of 50% or more of the children is a specific language other than English.

COLORADO
SHINES

START EARLY
START STRONG
QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

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Office of Early Childhood
Department of Human Services