

# Background on QRIS Quality Categories and Indicators

The quality indicators in QRIS can be grouped into 13 quality categories. Certain quality categories for child care centers are included in the majority of QRIS (20 or more). These include: licensing compliance (26), environment (24), staff qualifications (26), family partnership (24), administration and management (23) and accreditation (21). Three categories – curriculum (14) ratio and group size (13) and child assessment (12) – are included in half or just under half of the QRIS. The remaining categories are included in fewer than ten of the QRIS examined: health and safety (4), cultural and linguistic diversity (8), provisions for children with special needs (9) and community involvement (7).

A similar picture of standards emerges for family child care: certain quality categories for family child care are included in the majority of QRIS (19 or more). These include: licensing compliance (22), environment (21), staff qualifications (22), family partnership (21), and accreditation (19). Administration and management is included in 16 QRIS. The remaining categories are included in nine or fewer QRIS: curriculum (9), ratio and group size (5) and child assessment (8), health and safety (4), cultural and linguistic diversity (2), provisions for children with special needs (6) and community involvement (6).

1. Licensing Compliance – indicators refer to a program’s licensing status
2. Ratio and Group Size – indicators provide guidelines for the number of children per caregiver and the total number of children in a classroom or home
3. Health and Safety – indicators provide guidelines for provisions to protect children’s health and safety
  - Health and safety checklist
  - Staff certified in pediatric first aid
  - Professional development on health and safety topics
4. Curriculum – indicators refer to requirements or specifications about the curriculum used
  - Use an approved/written/developmentally appropriate/research-based curriculum
  - Teacher training on the curriculum
  - Individualize curriculum based on children’s interests and needs
  - Incorporate state’s Early Learning Guidelines
  - Lesson planning
  - Have written goals for children’s development and learning
  - Use observation results to inform curriculum planning
5. Environment – indicators refer to activities, practices, materials and provisions in the environment to promote children’s optimal learning and development
  - Ranges of scores/cut-offs/minimums
  - Self-assessments

- Improvement plans
6. Child Assessment – indicators refer to practices that promote ongoing assessment of children’s needs for the purposes of improving individual and group instruction and sharing information with parents
    - Ongoing use of an approved child assessment tool
    - Screening processes
    - Sharing results with families
    - Using results to individualize
    - Referral processes
    - Transition planning/processes
  7. Staff Qualifications – indicators specify the educational qualifications and training of the teaching staff, program director, or family child care provider
    - Director education/training/experience
    - Teacher education/training/experience
    - FCC Provider education/training/experience
    - Membership in a professional association
    - Level on a career lattice
    - Credentials or certificates
    - Professional development plans
  8. Family Partnerships – indicators refer to activities and strategies to involve and engage families
    - Bulletin board
    - Written communication
    - Parent teacher conferences
    - Activities with families
    - Community resource list
    - Parent participation in program
    - Parent advisory board
    - Parent Survey
  9. Administration and Management – indicators refer to administrative procedures and structures, human resource policies, employee benefits and other provisions in place to manage staff and program operations
    - Business practices/policies (documentation and financial record keeping)
    - Compensation
    - Staff benefits (insurance, paid membership fees to professional organizations, educational opportunities)
    - Staff communication (meetings, performance evaluations)
    - Program/Business Administration Scale
    - Staff orientation
  10. Cultural and Linguistic Diversity – indicators refer to provisions that reflect a value on cultural competence and intentional practices that promote respectful interactions with diverse children and families

- Communicate in children and families' home language
- Make resources available to communicate with families in the family's primary language
- Environment represents diversity
- Cultural sensitivity training

11. Accreditation – indicators refer to a program's status with regard to program accreditation by a national accrediting body

12. Provisions for Special Needs – indicators refer to practices and strategies to promote full inclusion of children with special needs

- Specialized training for staff
- Screening procedures
- Planning for children with special needs
- Documentation of plans and activities
- Integration of children with their peers
- Environmental accommodations for children with special needs

13. Community Involvement – indicators refer to practices and strategies to promote connections between the program and the community and/or to help families and children connect with resources in the community

- Relationships with community services
- Linking families to community resources
- Participation in community events
- Helping families plan for and navigate the transition of their children to local school districts

**Quality Standards Included in Majority of QRIS**

Quality Categories	Number of QRIS
Licensing Compliance	26
Staff Qualifications	26
Environment	24
Family Partnerships	24
Administration and Management	23
Accreditation	21

**Quality Standards Included in Half of QRIS**

Quality Categories	Number of QRIS
Curriculum	14
Ratio and Group Size	13
Child Assessment	12

**Quality Standards Included Less Frequently**

Quality Categories	Number of QRIS
Provisions for Special Needs	9
Cultural and Linguistic Diversity	8
Community Involvement	7
Health and Safety	4