

**PEIC Program Quality Workgroup  
DRAFT Program Quality Matrix - 4.15.24**

Program Quality Indicator	NIEER Benchmark	NAEYC Standard	Private regulated center-based programs	Private regulated home-based programs	School-based programs	H.217 Opportunities
<i>What are the various indicators of prek program quality?</i>	<i>How does NIEER define benchmarks for high quality prek programs?</i>	<i>How does NAEYC define standards for high quality prek programs?</i>	<i>What are VT's current UPK quality standards for private regulated center-based programs?</i>	<i>What are VT's current UPK quality standards for private regulated home-based programs?</i>	<i>What are VT's current UPK quality standards for school-based programs?</i>	<i>What opportunities do we have to make recommendations for program quality?</i>
<b>Early Learning &amp; Development Standards</b>	<p>Comprehensive</p> <p>Supported</p> <p>Culturally sensitive</p> <p>Aligned with state infant &amp; toddler and K-3 or college &amp; career ready standards</p> <p>Aligned w/ child assessments</p>	<p>Implements a curriculum that is consistent with its goals for children</p> <p>Promotes learning and development in each of the following areas: social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive.</p>	<p>Vermont Early Learning Standards (<a href="#">VELS</a>) are a framework for curriculum &amp; instruction that cover development and growth for birth-3rd grade</p> <p>VELS align with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practice</li> <li>● Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework</li> <li>● K-3 Common Core State Standards for English LA and Math,</li> <li>● Next Generation Science Standards</li> <li>● VT's Grade Level Expectations</li> <li>● AOE Curriculum</li> <li>● TSG Assessment required for UPK funding</li> <li>● Approved by VT State Board of Education, 2015</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">STARS Quality Standards</a> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Adult-child interaction</li> </ul>	<p>Vermont Early Learning Standards (<a href="#">VELS</a>) are a framework for curriculum &amp; instruction that cover development and growth for birth-3rd grade</p> <p>VELS align with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practice</li> <li>● Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework</li> <li>● K-3 Common Core State Standards for English LA and Math,</li> <li>● Next Generation Science Standards</li> <li>● VT's Grade Level Expectations</li> <li>● AOE Curriculum</li> <li>● TSG Assessment required for UPK funding</li> <li>● Approved by VT State Board of Education, 2015</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">STARS Quality Standards</a> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Adult-child interaction</li> </ul>	<p>Vermont Early Learning Standards (<a href="#">VELS</a>) are a framework for curriculum &amp; instruction that cover development and growth for birth-3rd grade</p> <p>VELS align with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practice</li> <li>● Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework</li> <li>● K-3 Common Core State Standards for English LA and Math,</li> <li>● Next Generation Science Standards</li> <li>● VT's Grade Level Expectations</li> <li>● AOE Curriculum</li> <li>● TSG Assessment required for UPK funding</li> <li>● Approved by VT State Board of Education, 2015</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">STARS Quality Standards</a> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Adult-child interaction</li> </ul>	<p>Additional training at director/leadership level in culturally responsive practices.</p> <p>Field requests for professional development around reading, using, and designing curriculum usage on the VELs.</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Family &amp; youth engagement</li> <li>● Responsive practices</li> </ul> <p>Inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● AOE prequalification requires attestation of inclusion of children with disabilities</li> <li>● CDD licensing requires nondiscrimination agreement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Family &amp; youth engagement</li> <li>● Responsive practices</li> </ul> <p>Inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● AOE prequalification requires attestation of inclusion of children with disabilities</li> <li>● CDD licensing requires nondiscrimination agreement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Family &amp; youth engagement</li> <li>● Responsive practices</li> </ul> <p>Inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● AOE prequalification requires attestation of inclusion of children with disabilities</li> <li>● CDD licensing requires nondiscrimination agreement</li> </ul>	
<b>Curriculum Supports</b>	<p>Approval process for selecting curricula</p> <p>Supports in place for curriculum implementation</p>	<p>Uses developmentally, culturally &amp; linguistically appropriate and effective teaching approaches that enhance each child’s learning and development in the context of the curriculum goals.</p>	<p>VT agencies do not mandate or recommend curriculum for prek. AOE does require UPK programs to align with VELs &amp; state how on prequalification application and renewal.</p> <p>VELs aligns with NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practices, Head Start Standards, and (K-3) Common Core, Next Gen Science, and VT Grade Level Expectations.</p>	<p>VT agencies do not mandate or recommend curriculum for prek. AOE does require UPK programs to align with VELs &amp; state how on prequalification application and renewal.</p> <p>VELs aligns with NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practices, Head Start Standards, and (K-3) Common Core, Next Gen Science, and VT Grade Level Expectations.</p>	<p>VT agencies do not mandate or recommend curriculum for prek. AOE does require UPK programs to align with VELs &amp; state how on prequalification application and renewal.</p> <p>VELs aligns with NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practices, Head Start Standards, and (K-3) Common Core, Next Gen Science, and VT Grade Level Expectations.</p>	<p>Do we want a standardized curriculum? How would we pay for it?</p>
<b>Teacher Preparation</b>	<p>Lead teacher must have a BA at minimum</p> <p>Assistant teacher must have a CDA or equivalent at minimum</p>	<p>The program employs and supports a teaching and administrative staff that have the qualifications, knowledge, and professional commitment necessary to promote children’s learning and development and to support families’ diverse needs and interests.</p>	<p>AOE licensed teacher on site (not necessarily teaching) during UPK hours for each student’s UPK hours enrolled. Ie: if students attend differing days or hours the UPK funded hours must align with the teacher hours.</p> <p>Additional program staff must meet CDD requirements for their positions.</p>	<p>AOE licensed teacher as mentor &gt;3 hours/week, or owner as licensed teacher, or contract with licensed teacher for the UPK hours/week.</p> <p>If licensed FCCH, additional staff must meet CDD licensing requirements.</p>	<p>Lead teacher in each UPK classroom is licensed by AOE</p> <p>Assistant teacher-must meet SU/SD determined requirements (usually are paraeducator standards) and CDD licensing requirements.</p>	

<b>Teacher specialized training</b>	Lead teacher must have specialized training in a pre-K area	Teaching staff have educational qualifications and specialized knowledge about young children and early childhood development	ECE, CD, ECE SpEd  All staff must meet CDD requirements as defined in CC licensing regulations.	ECE, CD, ECE SpEd  All staff must meet CDD requirements as defined in CC licensing regulations.	ECE, CD, ECE SpEd  All staff must meet CDD requirements as defined in CC licensing regulations.	
<b>Staff professional development</b>	Teacher and assistant teacher must receive at least 15 hours/year of in-service professional development and training  Individualized annual professional development plans & coaching	Program makes provisions for ongoing staff development, including orientations for new staff and opportunities for continuing education  Teaching staff have training in the program’s curriculum and work as a teaching team	AOE licensed teachers must complete 45 hours of professional development in 3 years if Level 1 or 90 hours of professional development if Level 2 (in 5 years)  Assistants: 15 hours/ year  Licensed teacher is not required to do Individual Professional Development plan- all other staff required. Must have copy of license and transcript on file with CDD.	AOE licensed teachers must complete 45 hours of professional development in 3 years if Level 1 or 90 hours of professional development if Level 2 (in 5 years)  Assistants: 15 hours/ year  Licensed teacher is not required to do Individual Professional Development plan- all other staff required. Must have copy of license and transcript on file with CDD.	AOE licensed teachers must complete 45 hours of professional development in 3 years if Level 1 or 90 hours of professional development if Level 2 (in 5 years)  Assistants: 15 hours/ year  Coaching if required by individual SU/SD not a state requirement.  Licensed teacher is not required under AOE or CDD to do Individual Professional Development plan- all other staff required. Must have copy of license and transcript on file with CDD.  All nonlicensed staff are required to complete Individual Professional Development Plans (under CDD regulations).  Licensed teachers may be required to write if part of teacher evaluation or district structure.	
<b>Maximum class size</b>	20 students or fewer	NAEYC maximum class size for preschool is 20.	20 students or fewer	Various depending on ages present. Charts on <a href="#">pages 74-79 Childcare Regulations</a>	20 students or fewer	

<p><b>Staff-child ratio</b>  <b>**These are class sizes for children who are all 3. If the classroom has not yet 3s in the mix the ratio drops.</b></p>	<p>Lowest acceptable ratio of staff to children in classroom (e.g., maximum number of students per teacher) must be 1:10 or better</p>	<p>1:10</p>	<p>1:10</p>	<p>Various depending on ages present. Charts on <a href="#">pages 74-79 Childcare Regulations</a></p>	<p>1:10</p>	
<p><b>Health</b></p>	<p>Required screenings &amp; referrals for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Vision,</li> <li>● hearing,</li> <li>● health</li> </ul>	<p>Promotes the nutrition and health of children and protects children and staff from illness</p>	<p>CDD Regulations require record of annual physical &amp; health history, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Name &amp; telephone of the child's primary health care and dental care providers</li> <li>● Description of any special medical, developmental, emotional or educational needs of the child</li> <li>● Written authorization from the parent for the program to be able to obtain emergency medical care</li> <li>● Child's immunization record or Vermont Department of Health approved exemption document</li> </ul>	<p>CDD Regulations require record of annual physical &amp; health history, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Name &amp; telephone of the child's primary health care and dental care providers</li> <li>● Description of any special medical, developmental, emotional or educational needs of the child</li> <li>● Written authorization from the parent for the program to be able to obtain emergency medical care</li> <li>● Child's immunization record or Vermont Department of Health approved exemption document</li> </ul>	<p>CDD Regulations require record of annual physical &amp; health history, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Name &amp; telephone of the child's primary health care and dental care providers</li> <li>● Description of any special medical, developmental, emotional or educational needs of the child</li> <li>● Written authorization from the parent for the program to be able to obtain emergency medical care</li> <li>● Child's immunization record or Vermont Department of Health approved exemption document</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Continuous Quality Improvement System</b></p>	<p>Systematic structured observations of classroom quality</p> <p>Information collected is used for classroom/ program improvement at the state and local levels</p>	<p>Informed by ongoing systematic, formal &amp; informal assessment approaches to provide information on children’s learning and development</p> <p>Assessments occur within the context of reciprocal communications with families and with sensitivity to the cultural contexts in which children develop</p>	<p>STARS quality definition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 3 (with approved plan)</li> <li>● 4 or 5 STARS to qualify for UPK</li> </ul> <p>Structured classroom observations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annual site visits from CDD</li> <li>● Biennial TSG developmental assessment through AOE</li> <li>● Adult-child interaction assessment through CLASS as part of STARS initial and 3 year renewal</li> </ul> <p>Data used for program improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● newly built into STARS system 7/2023 not otherwise required.</li> <li>● Exclusionary Data collected by AOE.</li> </ul>	<p>STARS quality definition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 3 (with approved plan)</li> <li>● 4 or 5 STARS to qualify for UPK</li> </ul> <p>Structured classroom observations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annual site visits from CDD</li> <li>● Biennial TSG developmental assessment through AOE</li> <li>● Adult-child interaction assessment through CLASS as part of STARS initial and 3 year renewal</li> </ul> <p>Data used for program improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● newly built into STARS system 7/2023 not otherwise required</li> <li>● Exclusionary Data collected by AOE</li> </ul>	<p>STARS quality definition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 3 (with approved plan)</li> <li>● 4 or 5 STARS to qualify for UPK</li> </ul> <p>Structured classroom observations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annual site visits from CDD</li> <li>● Biennial TSG developmental assessment through AOE</li> <li>● Adult-child interaction assessment through CLASS as part of STARS initial and 3 year renewal</li> </ul> <p>Data used for program improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● newly built into STARS system 7/2023 not otherwise required by state. May be required by individual SU/SD</li> <li>● Exclusionary Data collected by AOE</li> </ul>	<p>Assessment tools are accessible to programs and teachers have ongoing training to support it</p> <p>State-hosted, formal TSG training to improve data quality and collection</p>
<p><b>Safety</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Facility is designed so that staff can supervise all children by sight &amp; sound.</p> <p>Program has necessary furnishings, such as hand-washing sinks, child-size chairs and tables, and cots, cribs, beds, or sleeping pads</p> <p>A variety of materials and equipment appropriate for children’s ages, skills and abilities is available and kept clean, safe, and in good repair</p>	<p>CDD <u>licensing requirements</u> include all the NAEYC noted.</p> <p>In addition to NAEYC listed-all programs are inspected by Dept of Fire Safety, complete lead testing (water and paint), and are inspected by CDD staff.</p>	<p>CDD <u>licensing requirements</u> include all the NAEYC noted.</p> <p>In addition to NAEYC listed-all programs are inspected by Dept of Fire Safety, complete lead testing (water and paint), and are inspected by CDD staff.</p>	<p>CDD <u>licensing requirements</u> include all the NAEYC noted.</p> <p>* Public schools are exempt from a few CDD licensing requirements focused on admin documentation. None of the exemptions are about health and safety.</p> <p>In addition to NAEYC listed-all programs are inspected by Dept of Fire Safety, complete lead testing (water and</p>	

		<p>Outdoor play areas have fences or natural barriers that prevent access to streets &amp; other hazards.</p> <p>First-aid kits, fire extinguishers, fire alarms, and other safety equipment are installed and available</p>			<p>paint), and are inspected by CDD staff.</p> <p>Additionally abide by AOE Pk-12 facilities requirements.</p>	
<b>Relationships</b>	N/A	<p>Promotes positive relationships among all children and adults to encourage each child's sense of individual worth and belonging as part of a community and to foster each child's ability to contribute as a responsible community member</p> <p>Establishes relationships with and uses the resources of the children's communities to support the achievement of program goals.</p> <p>The program establishes and maintains collaborative relationships with each child's family to foster children's development in all settings. These relationships are sensitive to family composition, language, and culture.</p>	<p>VELS speak to providing opportunities that make a positive difference in their learning and development. "Intentional teaching includes having instructional goals for children that guide our interactions, learning environments, and curriculum planning."</p> <p>Throughout VELs the importance of adult relationships is embedded.</p> <p>The assessment tool CLASS (currently being used for STARS) has Adult-Child Interactions as one of the 3 areas it assesses. STARS also includes Family Engagement as an area.</p> <p>Child Care licensing regulations have the adult, child, and family relationships across many of the regulations.</p>	<p>VELS speak to providing opportunities that make a positive difference in their learning and development. "Intentional teaching includes having instructional goals for children that guide our interactions, learning environments, and curriculum planning."</p> <p>Throughout VELs the importance of adult relationships is embedded.</p> <p>The assessment tool CLASS (currently being used for STARS) has Adult-Child Interactions as one of the 3 areas it assesses. STARS also includes Family Engagement as an area.</p> <p>Child Care licensing regulations have the adult, child, and family relationships across many of the regulations.</p>	<p>VELS speak to providing opportunities that make a positive difference in their learning and development. "Intentional teaching includes having instructional goals for children that guide our interactions, learning environments, and curriculum planning."</p> <p>Throughout VELs the importance of adult relationships is embedded.</p> <p>The assessment tool CLASS (currently being used for STARS) has Adult-Child Interactions as one of the 3 areas it assesses. STARS also includes Family Engagement as an area.</p> <p>Child Care licensing regulations have the adult, child, and family relationships across many of the regulations.</p>	
<b>Leadership &amp; Management</b>	N/A	<p>Effectively implements policies, procedures &amp; systems that support stable staff and strong personnel, fiscal, and program</p>	<p>Child care licensing regulations have requirements for directors, requirements for policies, procedures and system.</p>	<p>Child care licensing regulations have requirements for directors, requirements for policies, procedures and system.</p>	<p>Child care licensing regulations have requirements for directors, requirements for policies, procedures and system.</p>	<p>Field requests for additional (optional) training on these requirements - First Children's Finance may offer some of these supports.</p>

		management so all children, families, and staff have high-quality experiences	<p>Depending on size of program, director is required to have certain coursework in these areas.</p> <p>Availability of Director Credential certificate through Northern Lights/CDD in addition to the requirements. OPTIONAL to do that step.</p> <p>*AOE School administrator license endorsement can be used in place of documenting coursework specifically listed in regulations.</p>	<p>Depending on size of program, director is required to have certain coursework in these areas.</p> <p>Availability of Director Credential certificate through Northern Lights/CDD in addition to the requirements. OPTIONAL to do that step</p> <p>*AOE School administrator license endorsement can be used in place of documenting coursework specifically listed in regulations..</p>	<p>Depending on size of program, director is required to have certain coursework in these areas.</p> <p>Availability of Director Credential certificate through Northern Lights/CDD in addition to the requirements. OPTIONAL to do that step.</p> <p>*AOE School administrator license endorsement can be used in place of documenting coursework specifically listed in regulations.</p>	
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**Resource Links:**

- [NIEER's Quality Benchmarks](#)
- [NIEER Vermont Preschool Profile 2022](#)
- [Classroom Assessment Scoring System \(CLASS®\) in Head Start](#) (new assessment of classroom quality/environment/interaction - STARS)
- [CDD Licensing Regulations](#)
- [STARS process for the QRIS / STARS Guidance Manual / STARS Quality Levels](#)
- [AOE UPK Program Requirements](#)
- [AOE UPK Program Requirements readiness chart](#)
- [AOE State Board Rules 2600 Series](#)
- [Vermont Early Learning Standards](#)
- Teaching Strategies Gold [Developmental Assessment](#) (online assessment of child skills over a time - plays nicely with VELS)
- [Head Start Program Performance Standards](#)
- [10 NAEYC Program Standards Overview / Program Accreditation Standards & Assessment Items 2022](#)
- IDEA Special Education Standards
- [AOE Early Childhood Special Education](#)
- [AOE Licensing Endorsements](#)
- [Ages & Stages ASQ](#) (alignment w/ stars & where this could fit)