

Early Learning Program Quality Assessment and Accreditation Accreditation Application Resource Guide



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Section 1: Staffing and Licensing Items

Information about the qualifications of educators and administrators of early learning programs is self-assessed in the Accreditation Application in conjunction with information that is entered by program administrators into the Early Learning Hub. It is the responsibility of program administrators to ensure that all staff information, staff qualifications, and licensing documentation is up to date and accurate at the time the application is submitted.

Item	Rationale	Comments
A.8.01: At least 50% of assistant teachers fulfill the requirements for ECE I (CDA or state equivalent), ECE II (Early Childhood associate degree) or ECE III (Early Childhood bachelor's degree or higher) designation.	The delivery of high-quality early childhood education is reliant on a diverse population of well-prepared workforce of professional educators and administrators. The intent of this item is to evaluate the qualifications of assistant educators, as aligned to the Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession.	Recommendations: ❑ Ensure all assistant teachers (if used) are listed in the ELP Hub. ○ Each assistant teacher is assigned to at least one class. ○ The highest level of formal education, relevant to the ECE field, and/or ECE specific credentials have been accurately reported for each assistant teacher.
A.8.04: 100% of assistant teachers fulfill the requirements for ECE I (CDA or state equivalent), ECE II (Early Childhood associate degree) or ECE III (Early Childhood bachelor's degree or higher) designation.	The delivery of high-quality early childhood education is reliant on a diverse population of well-prepared workforce of professional educators and administrators. The intent of this item is to evaluate the qualifications of assistant educators, as aligned to the Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession.	Recommendations: ❑ Ensure all assistant teachers (if used) are listed in the ELP Hub. ○ Each assistant teacher is assigned to at least one class. ○ The highest level of formal education, relevant to the ECE field, and/or ECE specific credentials have been accurately reported for each assistant teacher.
A.8.02: At least 50% of teachers fulfill the requirements for ECE II (Early Childhood associate degree) or ECE III (Early Childhood bachelor's degree or higher) designation.	The delivery of high-quality early childhood education is reliant on a diverse population of well-prepared workforce of professional educators and administrators. The intent of this item is to evaluate qualifications of lead educators, as aligned to the Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession.	Recommendations: ❑ Ensure all teachers are listed in the ELP Hub. ○ Each teacher is assigned to one class. ○ Each class has been assigned at least one teacher.

Item	Rationale	Comments
		○ The highest level of formal education, relevant to the ECE field, and/or ECE specific credentials have been accurately reported for each teacher.
A.8.05: 100% of teachers fulfill the requirements for ECE II (Early Childhood associate degree) or ECE III (Early Childhood bachelor's degree or higher) designation.	The delivery of high-quality early childhood education is reliant on a diverse population of well-prepared workforce of professional educators and administrators. The intent of this item is to evaluate qualifications of lead educators, as aligned to the Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession.	Recommendations: ❑ Ensure all teachers are listed in the ELP Hub. ○ Each teacher is assigned to one class. ○ Each class has been assigned at least one teacher. ○ The highest level of formal education, relevant to the ECE field, and/or ECE specific credentials have been accurately reported for each teacher.
A.8.03: At least 50% of administrators fulfill the requirements for ECE III (Early Childhood bachelor's degree or higher) designation.	The delivery of high-quality early childhood education is reliant on a diverse population of well-prepared workforce of professional educators and administrators. The intent of this item is to evaluate qualifications of administrators, as aligned to the Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession.	Common Errors: • Programs do not include administrator information in the ELP Hub. • Administrators are listing the 'Administrator Credential recognized by NAEYC' as a form of administrator qualifications, however, this credential alone does not meet the requirements for ECE III. Recommendations: ❑ Ensure at least one administrator is listed in the ELP Hub. ○ The highest level of formal education, relevance to the ECE field, and/or ECE- or administrator-specific credentials have been

Item	Rationale	Comments
A.8.06: 100% of administrators fulfill the requirements for ECE III (Early Childhood bachelor's degree or higher) designation.	The delivery of high-quality early childhood education is reliant on a diverse population of well-prepared workforce of professional educators and administrators. The intent of this item is to evaluate qualifications of administrators, as aligned to the Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession.	accurately reported for each administrator. Common Errors: - Programs do not include administrator information in the ELP Hub. - Administrators are listing the 'Administrator Credential recognized by NAEYC' as a form of administrator qualifications, however, this credential alone does not meet the requirements for ECE III. Recommendations: ☐ Ensure at least one administrator is listed in the ELP Hub. - The highest level of formal education, relevance to the ECE field, and/or ECE- or administrator-specific credentials have been accurately reported for each administrator.
A.9.14: The program is in good standing with the applicable state licensing authority or applicable public or governmental regulatory system at the time of assessment.	Center-based programs and home-based providers that are licensed or regulated have demonstrated a capacity to meet minimum health and safety standards that protect children from harm. A requirement for all programs seeking NAEYC recognition or accreditation to be licensed or regulated provides basic assurance that these fundamental standards have been addressed. This is a required item and failure to meet this item will result in the application being denied.	Common Errors: - Programs are not in good standing with applicable state licensing authority or applicable public or governmental regulatory system at the time of application. Recommendations: If licensed/regulated: - Ensure that the licensing/regulatory status is in good standing and free of restrictions prior to applying for NAEYC recognition. - Ensure that a copy of the current license/regulatory documentation is ready to be uploaded in the application. If license-exempt and ineligible to be licensed:

Item	Rationale	Comments
		Ensure that a copy of the <i>License Exempt Acknowledgement Form</i> is completed, signed, and ready to be uploaded in the application.

Section 2: Family Handbook & Policy Items

Program administrators may submit up to ten documents for Family Handbook & Policy questions. Supplemental, single-page documents, flyers, external resources, and the like will not be accepted. In response to each question in this section of the application, program administrators must provide the exact page numbers or range of pages where the corresponding information can be found. If multiple documents are uploaded, the response must also indicate which specific document is to be referenced. Program administrators are strongly encouraged to note the specific section heading and/or to highlight the relevant information within the uploaded document(s).

Evidence of this assessment item must be in the uploaded family handbook or family policies and procedures manual(s).

Item	Rationale	Comments
A.2.03: The family handbook outlines at least two ways families can negotiate difficulties that arise which involve increasing levels of formality.	Negotiation requires genuine respect for a point of view different from one's own, an ability to listen to what others believe, and a willingness to examine one's own values and beliefs. High-quality early learning programs are adept at negotiating differences between the program and enrolled families in respectful ways that balance professional practices and family beliefs. The intent of this item is to ensure that families have more than one way to raise their concerns and know the appropriate way to escalate concerns as needed.	Common Errors: Recommendations: ❑ Ensure the family handbook includes a policy that provides 2 or more ways that families can negotiate difficulties with increased levels of formality if their first attempt does not lead to a resolution. ❑ Consider adding specific names, phone numbers, email addresses, etc. when applicable ❑ For more information, it may be helpful to review: Family Engagement Principles
A.5.08: The family handbook describes at least two ways family members can provide their own observations from home to contribute to the child assessment process.	Ethical assessment uses the participation and involvement of family members – both in gathering evidence and in discussing the implications of the evidence once it has been collected. The intent of this item is to ensure that families are aware of how they can contribute their own observations of their child to inform formal assessments conducted at the program. Programs should offer more than one way for families to contribute their observations to formal assessment processes	Common Errors: • Programs provide information on general communication with families, but it is not specifically tied to the assessment process • Programs state that they talk with families at parent-teacher conferences which is often after the assessment is completed rather than part of the data gathering process Recommendations:

Item	Rationale	Comments
	to accommodate differences in communication styles and availability.	☐ Ensure the communication is clearly aligned with the assessment process ☐ Ensure you provide at least 2 ways families can contribute ☐ Providing ongoing modes and opportunities is best practice rather than only collecting information once or twice a year
A.6.07 I: The family handbook includes an infant feeding policy that requires breast milk to be labeled with the infant's full name and the date that the milk was expressed to ensure that staff and providers can offer the oldest milk first.	High-quality programs work with families in support of their decision to breastfeed and follow AAP recommended practices for the storage and preparation of breastmilk within the program. The intent of this item is to ensure that program staff can ensure the correct breastmilk is served to the correct child (labeled with the infant's full name) and that the oldest expressed milk is offered before that which has been more recently expressed. This reduces the likelihood of wasting otherwise consumable breastmilk.	Common Errors: - Programs do not state the infant's full name (only "name" or "first name") - Programs do not clarify the date the milk was expressed (only "date" which could be the date it was expressed or the date the bottle was made) Recommendations: ☐ Ensure the feeding policy provides directions to label the breast milk with the infant's full name and the date the milk was expressed
A.6.14: The family handbook includes a policy discouraging idling vehicles in parking areas, except if vehicles need to idle in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures.	High-quality programs take active measures to support young children's health and developing bodies by implementing policies and procedures to reduce exposure to potentially harmful air quality. The intent of this item is to combat poor air quality in parking areas and driveways next to early learning program facilities and playgrounds.	Common Errors: Programs do not provide information for families to not idle vehicles in parking areas but rather provide information about their program buses/vehicles Recommendations: ☐ Ensure the policy is clear that idling any vehicle in the parking areas is strongly discouraged for anyone utilizing the parking lot
A.6.19: The family handbook includes relevant emergency response plans.	Clearly written emergency response plans for families are one component of how high-quality programs prepares, orients, and welcomes families. Information related to emergency response plans assures families	Common Errors: Programs refer to a supplemental document within the family handbook but do not provide that handbook within their evidence

Item	Rationale	Comments
	that their child's safety and well-being will be maintained in the event of emergencies and other threats (e.g., fire, tornados, earthquakes, hurricanes, wildfires, floods, plumbing/HVAC issues, acts of terrorism, police activity, etc.). These kinds of plans should generally be reflective of the recommended emergency preparedness measures relevant to the program area, provide families with communication methods during such emergencies, and how families can seek reunification with their children following emergencies. Exact/specific emergency response plans and procedures (e.g., evacuation routes, evacuation addresses, shelter in place instructions, public access to online communication systems) are NOT a requirement to meet this item and may in fact be counterproductive in protecting children during certain emergencies (e.g., acts of terrorism).	- Programs have a generic emergency plan rather than situational specific plans (at least 2 must be provided) Recommendations: ☐ Ensure your program provides relevant emergency response plans that are specific to your program (applicable weather events, natural disasters, etc) and the types of events that you may encounter ☐ Ensure your policies are clear and provide families with the necessary information needed ☐ At least 2 emergency plans are required to meet the item Resource for support: EPRR - Partnering with Families Resources (Digital).pdf

Section 3: Staff Handbook & Policy Items

Programs may submit up to 10 documents for Staff Handbook items, so long as they are a policy and procedures manual/handbook. Supplemental single-page documents, flyers, external resources, etc. will not be accepted.

Evidence of this assessment item must be in the uploaded staff handbook or staff policies and procedures manual(s).

Item	Rationale	Comments
A.4.13 Optional: The staff handbook includes a policy to address the use of technology in learning environments. The policy 1) restricts screen time and media use to children over the age of 2, 2) limits technology and media use to less than 30 minutes in half-day program or providers and 60 minutes in full-day program or providers for toddlers over the age of 2 years, and 3) instructs educators of preschoolers and kindergarteners to integrate technology use into children's play and offering children access to apps that support collaborative play.	Early learning programs serving young children make intentional choices about if and how technology and media are used in early childhood classrooms. These decisions are made in the context of family involvement and are informed by contemporary research, Developmentally Appropriate Practice, and the Code of Ethics. The intent of this item is to ensure that there are written policies to guide educators in making thoughtful and intentional decisions about the use of technology and media to support curricular activities.	Common Errors: - Programs state that they are completely screen/technology free. This does not meet the intent for part 3 Recommendations: ❑ Ensure you are addressing all the information for the age groups you serve ❑ Ensure the policies are clear and within the timeframes provided within the item language Additional resources: PS technology Examples.pdf Technology and Young Children: Online Resources and Position Statement NAEYC
A.5.02: The staff handbook outlines the steps taken to partner with families when there is reason to believe that a child has a developmental delay or other special need. These procedures include: 1) providing families with the documentation and explanation for the concern, 2) suggested next steps the family can take, and	In alignment with the Code of Ethics for Early Childhood Educators, programs have a responsibility to communicate sensitive information about children's development and assessment results in ways that respect the family's primary role in advocating for their child. This includes providing accurate, complete documentation of any developmental concerns and providing information to help families locate appropriate resources and supports.	Common Errors: Programs state they keep documentation but do not clearly indicate that the documentation is provided to the family and explanation for the concern (part 1 of item) Recommendations: Ensure you address all 3 parts of the item language

Item	Rationale	Comments
3) information about resources for diagnostic evaluation		❑ Part 1- ensure you are clear that the documentation is provided to the families ❑ Part 2- ensure you are clear that you provide suggested next steps to the family ❑ Part 3- ensure you provide information about resources for diagnostic evaluation which might include connecting the child/family or providing contact information, websites, etc.
A.6.01: The staff handbook includes a written procedure for promptly notifying families and, if necessary, temporarily excluding any under immunized children from care if a vaccine-preventable disease to which the children are susceptible occurs in the program or provider.	Early learning program staff and families have a shared responsibility in creating a safe, healthy environment for young children – particularly in group care settings. The intent of this item is to protect young children who may not be immunized – either because they are not old enough to have received all recommended doses or their families have not obtained the recommended vaccines – from picking up a vaccine-preventable disease. When a vaccine-preventable illness is present within the program written procedures should direct staff to review child information to determine who may be at an increased risk due to lack of immunization. Procedures may include contacting local health authorities for guidance when determining whether unimmunized or under-immunized children should be excluded from care.	Common Errors: • Programs have a general policy regarding outbreaks of communicable diseases; however, the policy does not address temporarily excluding any under immunized children from care if a vaccine-preventable disease to which the children are susceptible occurs in the program or provider • Instead of providing a written procedure, the program states that all children must be vaccinated. This does not meet the intent of this item Recommendations: ❑ All programs must have a written procedure regarding under-immunized children, regardless of a required immunization policy Possible Resource for support: Healthy Young Children, Sixth Edition NAEYC

Item	Rationale	Comments
A.6.02: The staff handbook includes a policy addressing when sick staff should be excluded from work and when they may return.	Strong early learning programs depend on healthy educators and support staff. High-quality early learning programs have policies that support the health, safety, and well-being of educators. The intent of this item is to ensure that educators and other program staff have clear written policies that dictate the specific circumstances in which they should not report to work to limit the spread of illness and disease within the early learning program environment.	Common Errors: • Programs provide generic policies about not working while ill • Programs provide information on when sick staff should be excluded but not about when they can return to work Recommendations: ☐ Provide clear information/situations in which staff should be excluded from work ☐ Provide clear guidelines for when staff may return to work Possible resources: CFOC Standards Database National Resource Center Healthy Young Children, Sixth Edition NAEYC
A.6.03: The staff handbook includes a medication policy which states that medications are stored in locked containers except those that must be readily available for emergency use. Emergency use medications are not required to be locked but must be inaccessible to children.	Young children may accidentally ingest medications if they are accessible. Educators and program staff should ensure that medications are stored in such a manner that they are inaccessible to children – most medications should be locked but those that must be readily available for emergency use (e.g., epi-pen, asthma inhalers) can remain unlocked but out of reach of children to allow program staff easy and quick access to life-saving medications.	Common Errors: • Programs fail to include that emergency medication will be inaccessible to children but not required to be locked up so that they can easily be used in case of emergency Recommendations: ☐ Provide clear expectations that most medications are to be stored in locked containers ☐ Provide clear expectations that emergency medications are still

Item	Rationale	Comments
		inaccessible to children but easily accessible for educators to use in case of emergency
A.6.04 Optional: The staff handbook includes a medical needs policy in which the program or provider assures that an appropriately trained staff member is always present when children who require specialized medical care are present.	The intent of this item is to ensure that children who require specialized medical care and/or complex medical needs have equitable access to the learning environment and may also be relevant to the legal requirements of providing reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Educators are not typically taught the skills to implement these specialized procedures as part of formal schooling, professional development, or practical experience; therefore, program administrators must be intentional about how trained staff are scheduled and/or outside professional services are obtained and used. Examples of the types of medical care covered in this standard include tube feeding, airway suctioning, supplemental oxygen, postural drainage, urine catheterization, blood sugar checks, and injections.	Common Errors: Recommendations: ☐ Provide clear expectations that at least 1 trained staff member is always present when children who required specialized medical care are present ☐ Consider adding how you ensure this whether that be by having back-up trained staff, staggered scheduling, etc. Possible Resource: 3.5.0.1 Care Plan for Children with Special Health Care Needs CFOC Basics Child Care Technical Assistance Network
A.6.05: The staff handbook includes a diapering policy which includes instructions for staff to check for and change wet or soiled diapers when children wake up from naps.	The intent of this item is to prevent the likelihood of diaper dermatitis caused by extended contact of the skin with feces and/or urine.	Common Errors: • Programs do not clearly state that children’s diapers are checked and changed when they wake up from nap and simply state they are checked every 2 hours Recommendations: ☐ Provide a clear expectation for staff to check all children in diapers when they awake from nap ☐ Provide directions for staff to change wet or soiled diapers during these checks

Item	Rationale	Comments
A.6.06: The staff handbook includes a hand hygiene policy that instructs staff to wash or sanitize hands 1) before and after feeding a child, 2) before and after administering medication, 3) after handling garbage, and 4) after cleaning.	Proper and frequent hand hygiene is a primary line of defense against the spread of infectious disease, especially in early learning environments.	Common Errors: • Not all 4 times are mentioned within the handwashing policy • Supplemental posters are provided rather than a policy within the staff handbook Recommendations: ❑ Ensure your handwashing policy includes all 4 parts of the item language. Be clear with each part and include before AND after
A.6.08 I: The staff handbook instructs staff to discard unfinished breast milk that has been unrefrigerated for more than 2 hours.	Proper storage of human breast milk is essential for preserving the quality of the milk and ensuring the health and safety of the child consuming the milk.	Common Errors: Recommendations: ❑ Ensure policy clearly instructs staff to discard unfinished breast milk that has been out of the refrigerator for 2 or more hours
A.6.09: The staff handbook includes a food safety policy which instructs staff to never use plastic or polystyrene (Styrofoam) containers, plates, bags, or wraps when microwaving children's food or beverages.	The intent of this item is to protect young children from harmful chemicals that can leach from food and beverage containers, utensils, and storage materials. If microwaves are used to heat children's food or beverages these should be transferred to glass, porcelain, or microwave-safe pottery plates before heating. If microwaves are not used, the relevant policy in the staff handbook should instruct staff to never microwave children's food or beverages. When completing the accreditation application, programs that do not allow the use of microwaves for children's food or beverages may select 'Not Applicable' for this item.	Common Errors: Recommendations: ❑ If microwaves are used to heat food, ensure food service policies clearly state that staff should never use plastic or Styrofoam containers, plates, bags or wraps when microwaving children's food or beverages ❑ Applicable food service policies or regulations may be provided

Item	Rationale	Comments
A.6.15 Required: The staff handbook includes a child guidance policy that: 1) includes examples and definitions of physical abuse, psychological abuse, and coercion, 2) outlines the steps the program or provider will take to address disruptive and unsafe behavior to include: a) assessing why the behavior is happening, b) how the program or provider will work with families and other professionals to develop individualized plans, and c) how positive behavior support strategies will be used.	The protection of children from harm is paramount among ethical responsibilities for early childhood educators. The intent of this item is to ensure that all programs seeking accreditation have in place specific policies regarding the appropriate use of child guidance techniques that work to support healthy development, build trusting relationships with and among key caregivers and providers, and encourage positive behavior. Punitive and exclusionary discipline practices are counterproductive to helping educators and administrators build long-term, mutually respectful, and trusting relationships with young children and their families. Early childhood professionals have ethical responsibilities to children to do no harm to children (Responsibility 1.1), protect children from abuse and neglect (Responsibility 1.7), and strive to prevent suspensions and expulsions in early childhood settings (Responsibility 1.8). The intent of this item is to ensure that programs and providers have a detailed policy in place that employees can access when managing any disruptive, unsafe, or challenging behaviors in the learning environment.	Common Errors: - Programs do not fully address each part of the item - Programs include strategies within their child guidance policy that fall under the definitions of physical abuse, psychological abuse or coercion Recommendations: ☐ Ensure that each part of the item is fully addressed. ☐ Part 1- ensure your child guidance policy includes definitions and examples of physical abuse, psychological abuse and coercion ☐ Part 2- ensure your child guidance policy provides detailed steps the program will take to address disruptive and unsafe behavior including the 3 sub-areas Possible Resources: Exclusionary Discipline Practices in Early Childhood NAEYC Preventing Suspensions and Expulsions in Early Childhood Settings An Administrator's Guide to Supporting All Children's Success
A.6.16: The staff handbook includes a child guidance policy that addresses the use of suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary measures due to consistent and prolonged disruptive or unsafe behavior. The policy includes	Strong policies regarding the use of suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary measures serve to protect children's developmental trajectories, promote positive behavior, support young children's mental health, and foster equity and inclusion in the high-quality early learning setting.	Common Errors: - Programs do not address each part of the item language - Contradictory information is found within the policy which makes it unclear if suspension is used only as a last resort

Item	Rationale	Comments
1) the specific circumstances under which these types of separations may occur, 2) the specific steps to be taken before a decision to exclude is considered, 3) separations do not happen until all other possible interventions have been exhausted (refer to item A.6.15), and 4) how the program or provider will assist the family in accessing services and alternative placement.		Recommendations: Ensure you fully address each part of the item ❑ Part 1- must list specific circumstances ❑ Part 2- must provide the specific steps taken prior to a decision being made ❑ Part 3- must include information that every other possible intervention has been exhausted prior to reaching a decision to exclude ❑ Part 4- must include how the program will assist the family in accessing services and alternate placement Possible Resources: Exclusionary Discipline Practices in Early Childhood NAEYC Preventing Suspensions and Expulsions in Early Childhood Settings An Administrator's Guide to Supporting All Children's Success Standing Together Against Suspension & Expulsion in Early Childhood: Resources NAEYC
A.6.17 Required: The staff handbook includes a supervision policy which states: 1) infants and toddlers are always supervised by sight and sound, and 2) preschoolers and kindergarteners are primarily supervised by sight and sound with brief periods where they may be supervised by sound only, as is developmentally appropriate.	The close supervision of young children is paramount among the responsibilities for early childhood educators. Families have an expectation that their child will be kept safe and secure while in the care of educators. In addition to promoting safety (prevention of accidents, injuries, and unsafe behaviors), strong supervision policies promote positive behaviors in young children, encourage learning and engagement, and foster secure relationships between children and educators.	Common Errors: • Programs supervision policies are unclear regarding expectations for educators and sight and sound supervision by age group Recommendations: ❑ Ensure that each age group has specific expectations if they vary. Infants and toddlers must ALWAYS be in sight and sound supervision. Preschoolers and Kindergartners may be out of direct sight for short periods of time (independent bathroom use,

Item	Rationale	Comments
		etc) but must always be in sound supervision. Possible Resources: supervision_in_naeyc_accredited_programs.pdf Active Supervision HeadStart.gov
A.6.18 Required: The staff handbook includes a policy that outlines the expectation for all educators who work directly with children to be certified in pediatric CPR and first aid.	Ensuring that all educators who work with young children have regular training in pediatric CPR and first aid works in conjunction with strong supervision policies to protect their health and safety. Policies that require all staff members to have current pediatric CPR and first aid training ensure rapid and effective response in emergencies.	Common Errors: • Programs provide information about staff having 30 days to acquire first aid/CPR but do not provide guidance that those educators are not left alone with children until they are fully certified • Programs do not specify that educators must be certified in PEDIATRIC CPR and first aid Recommendations: ❑ If new educators have a designated timeframe to get certified in First Aid/CPR, ensure your policies are clear that they will work with someone who is certified at all times.
A.6.20 I Required: The staff handbook includes an infant sleep policy to include that: 1) all staff must place infants younger than 12 months on their backs to sleep without the use of infant sleep positioners, unless ordered by a physician, and 2) when infants younger than 12 months arrive at the program or provider asleep, or fall asleep in equipment not specifically designed for infant sleep, the infant is removed and placed in appropriate sleep equipment (including infants who fall asleep while being held by program staff and providers), and	Strong policies dictating the specific practices related to infant sleep serve the primary purpose of preventing Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other accidental deaths or injuries related to infant sleep in out-of-home settings. Consistent implementation of infant sleep policies is dependent upon program leaders effectively communicating the policy, training educators on the policy, and regular monitoring of all educators and staff who place infants to sleep.	Common Errors: • Programs have unclear infant sleep policies or policies that do not address all 3 parts of the item • For part 2- programs do not specify that infants must be placed in their appropriate sleep equipment when they fall asleep being held by a program staff Recommendations: ❑ Ensure all 3 parts are fully addressed within your infant sleep policy ❑ Ensure your policy is clear and provides expectations for how anyone

Item	Rationale	Comments
3) soft items are not allowed in cribs or infant sleep equipment for infants younger than 12 months.		working with infants should place infants to sleep Possible Resource: Safe Sleep Environment Safe to Sleep®
A.8.07: The staff handbook describes that new educators must complete an orientation plan for onboarding before working alone with children.	New employee orientation prior to working alone with children serves to prevent untrained educators from unintentionally making potentially unsafe or inappropriate decisions regarding child guidance, classroom management, adherence to state regulations or other quality standards, and curriculum implementation. Intentional onboarding promotes consistency in the care and educational experiences that children receive in addition to fostering a culture of professionalism and accountability.	Common Errors: - Programs state that new educators will complete orientation but do not include that they must complete this prior to working alone with children Recommendations: ❑ Ensure it is clear that new educators will complete orientation prior to working alone with children
A.9.01 Required: The staff handbook includes a policy which describes 1) how the rights of staff members and the children in their care are protected when a staff member is accused of abusing or neglecting children in their care and 2) how staff members who report legitimate suspicions of child abuse and/or neglect are protected from retaliation for doing so.	Paramount among the ethical responsibilities for educators to young children is to do no harm (1.1) and to follow state laws and community procedures that protect children against abuse (1.7.b). High-quality early learning programs have written policies that supplement baseline child abuse and neglect reporting requirements which serve to remove obstacles that may influence staff members to delay reporting suspicions of child abuse or neglect or to not report suspicions at all. Policies that protect staff members' right to a fair and unbiased investigation when they have been accused of child abuse or neglect promote trust, transparency, and a professional environment. Likewise, policies that protect staff members who make reports of suspected child abuse or neglect from retaliation foster staff morale and trust and encourage timely reporting. A	Common Errors: - Programs restate the item language within their staff handbook but do not outline HOW their program will ensure both parts of the item Recommendations: ❑ Ensure your staff handbook has a policy that clearly outlines how the rights of the staff members and children in their care are protected when one of your staff members is accused of abusing or neglecting a child in their care. ❑ Ensure your policy describes how staff members who report legitimate suspicions are protected from retaliation

Item	Rationale	Comments
A.9.03: The staff handbook includes procedures that address how to maintain developmentally appropriate staff-to-child ratios and class sizes: 1) during all hours of operation, 2) in learning environments and other indoor settings, 3) in outdoor learning environments, and 4) during field trips.	comprehensive policy balances the need to promptly and appropriately address concerns about child abuse and neglect with the prevention of defamation, retaliation, and wrongful termination. Procedures that address how staff-to-child ratios and group size maximums are always maintained ensures child safety and supervision, supports educator capacity to provide individualized attention, promotes relationship building, reduces the likelihood of challenging behaviors, and creates an environment in which deeper learning can take place. The intent of this item is twofold, and the evidence presented must address both: 1) programs are using the NAEYC recommended staff to child ratios and class size maximums, and 2) there are specific procedures in place to always monitor and maintain those ratios. ELP Ratios/Class Size Maximums Infant – 1:4, 8 Toddler/Two – 1:6, 12 Preschool – 1:10, 20 Kindergarten – 1:12, 24	Common Errors: • Programs do not provide clear procedures for each of the 4 scenarios listed in the item language • Programs state they always follow ratios/group sizes but fail to provide the specific procedures that staff should follow Recommendations: ☐ Ensure you provide clear procedures for each of the 4 parts of the item ☐ If your program does not take field trips, please indicate that within your response Examples of procedures that monitor and maintain staff to child ratios include things like: • The use of sign-in/out sheets or digital apps to monitor children throughout the day and staff informing administrators when ratio or class size maximums are exceeded. • Careful planning of shifts, breaks, and lunches; the use of floaters to maintain ratio. • Name-to-face tracking of children during transitions and field trips at regular intervals. • Regular ratio and class size audits by administrators throughout the day, during transitions, in various learning environments, during transportation, and during field trips.

Item	Rationale	Comments
A.9.05: The staff handbook includes information about the employee benefits package which includes: 1) health insurance, 2) education benefits, 3) retirement plan, and 4) sick leave and vacation/personal leave.	High-quality early learning programs offer comprehensive benefits to attract and retain professional staff. These benefits serve to promote a healthier, more resilient, and better trained staff while improving job satisfaction and reducing turnover.	Common Errors: • Programs do not provide information for all 4 benefits listed within the item • Programs provide free tuition for the staff members' children for education benefits while this item is looking for education benefits for the employee themselves Recommendations: ☐ Ensure your employee handbook includes information about your employees benefit package ☐ Ensure each of the 4 benefits are provided within the policy to fully meet this item
A.9.06: The staff handbook includes information about staff planning time which specifies that educators are scheduled for at least 60 minutes of collaborative planning time weekly, during which they do not supervise awake children.	Providing early childhood educators with regular collaborative planning time leads to more intentional teaching and learning, promotes professional growth through reflection and the sharing of strategies, and supports consistency of curriculum implementation across classrooms and age groups.	Common Errors: • Programs do not provide information that addresses both 60 minutes of planning time where they do not supervise children who are awake AND it is collaborative Recommendations: ☐ Ensure your staff planning time policy provides information on at least 60 minutes of planning time each week where they do not supervise awake children AND is collaborative ☐ If staff are to use child rest periods for planning time, please specify that it is still a collaborative planning time AND have an alternative option for those working in classrooms where not all of the children consistently nap
A.9.08: The staff handbook includes information about how staff can locate resources that support them in stress management,	Wellness programs for early childhood staff serve to reduce burnout and absenteeism, foster resilience, and promote emotional regulation. This in turn enhances job satisfaction and retention while also	Common Errors: • Programs state they have a wellness program; however, they do not include information on where employees can locate resources.

Item	Rationale	Comments
prevention and treatment of depression, and/or general wellness.	improving the quality of care and learning experiences that staff can offer to young children.	Recommendations: ❑ Ensure that the handbook contains detailed information regarding where staff may access these resources independently and confidentially.
A.9.09: The staff handbook includes the program or provider's policies around staff breaks to include: 1) a minimum of 15-minute break after 4 hours of working directly with children and 2) that immediate breaks for brief periods of a few minutes may be requested when staff are unable to perform their duties safely and appropriately.	Working directly with children requires constant emotional presence, physical energy, and attentiveness. Educators who work with young children for prolonged periods of time without breaks may experience increased stress, mental or physical exhaustion, and/or lack of emotional regulation and patience. Under these conditions, educators are more likely to make inappropriate or unsafe decisions that put children's safety or well-being at risk.	Common Errors: • Programs provide basic break information that does not highlight that an educator does not work directly with children for 4 hours without receiving at least a 15-minute break. Recommendations: ❑ Ensuring your staff break policy includes specific and clear information that ensures an educator does not go 4 hours of providing direct care to children without receiving at least a 15-minute break. ❑ If 1-hour lunches are provided, we would need to see that these are scheduled in a way that it still meets the intent of the item (ex. educators who work 8-5 will receive lunch from 12-1 ensuring a break once they hit the 4-hour mark). ❑ Ensure that part 2 is addressed and educators are aware that they may request immediate breaks for brief periods when they are unable to perform their duties safely and/or appropriately
A.9.10: The staff handbook includes resignation, termination, and grievance procedures.	A comprehensive staff handbook with strong personnel policies promotes quality in early learning programs by promoting transparency, supporting legal and ethical compliance, encouraging professionalism and accountability, and providing clear	Common Errors: • Programs do not provide information on all 3 areas (resignation, termination and grievance)

Item	Rationale	Comments
	guidance during times of transition and/or conflict.	- Programs do not provide the procedures that will be followed for each Recommendations: ☐ Ensure your staff handbook includes clear procedures on resignation, termination and grievance. This may include both the employer's and the employee's roles and responsibilities
A.9.15: The staff handbook includes a confidentiality policy that addresses program or provider and educator use of social media regarding the protection of privacy and consent of children, families, and colleagues (Refer to Code of Ethics for Early Childhood Educators).	Confidentiality policies ensure that all staff understand the importance of protecting sensitive information about children, their development, behavior, and family circumstances. With the prevalence and ease of access to a wide array of social media and digital devices, the line between personal and professional online presence can become blurred. Confidentiality policies with specific attention paid to the use of social media can prevent the intentional and unintentional sharing of information which may violate privacy laws, damage trust between families and the program, and put children and their families at risk of unwanted exposure or judgement.	Common Errors: - Programs provide a general confidentiality policy rather than the specific information around social media - Programs provide information on the confidentiality of families/children but do not address colleagues Recommendations: ☐ Ensure your staff handbook has a clear confidentiality policy around staff members use of social media ☐ Ensure the policy addresses the protection of privacy AND consent of children, families and colleagues if there are scenarios in which they might post any of these parties on social media ☐ If your program does not allow staff members to post children, families or colleagues on social media at all, providing that information would be sufficient and the consent part of the item would not need to be addressed
A.9.17: The staff handbook includes procedures to address unusual circumstances at arrival and departure.	Arrival and departure times are critical transition moments in any early learning program. Clear policies that address unusual circumstances at these critical times ensure child safety and security, protect the program and staff, enhance communication	Common Errors: Programs provide information about unusual circumstances at departure but fail to provide information about unusual circumstances at arrival

Item	Rationale	Comments
	and transparency between the program and families. Common examples of unusual circumstances that such policies may address include unauthorized pickup attempts, custody disputes, late pickups, child distress or illness, unusual behavior or safety concerns with individuals attempting to pick up, or transportation issues. Some examples of "unusual circumstances" at drop off in the AM -- child is acting unusual, super difficult separations, child is dropped off by someone unknown to staff (grandparent, other family members, etc.), child being dropped off in a different classroom for some reason, etc.	Recommendations: ❑ Ensure you provide clear procedures staff should follow when there are unusual circumstances at arrival time ❑ Ensure you provide clear procedures staff should follow when there are unusual circumstances at departure time

Section 4: Show & Describe Items

Two separate pieces of evidence are needed for this section. A show item is an attached example to demonstrate how the program or provider meets the item. The description typically ranges from 3 to 8 sentences depending on item requirements. Be sure to read individual item instructions. The description provided needs to show how the program meets the item, rather than stating to 'see attachment'.

Item	Rationale	Comments
A.1.02 TPK: Educators have anticipated and taken steps to prevent unsafe or disruptive behavior of all age categories served.	Educators who can recognize and anticipate common factors that lead to unsafe or disruptive behaviors in young children are able to proactively minimize distractions and maintain a calm and focused learning environment. This in turn allows educators to meet children's needs and reduces stress for both the children and the educators.	Common Errors: • Programs provide information that is reactive rather than proactive in preventing unsafe or disruptive behavior • Programs provide strategies that are not developmentally appropriate for the age category Recommendations: ❑ Provide one specific example of what proactive strategy was put into place including a full description and

Item	Rationale	Comments
		uploaded evidence that clearly shows this practice being implemented ❑ A brief written description that explains each provided example Strategies may include: ❑ Use of songs, timers, or visual schedules to support smooth transitions. ❑ Preparing children for transitions ahead of time. ❑ Arranging classroom materials and equipment to minimize crowding, overstimulation, running, and/or eloping. ❑ Providing children with meaningful choices. ❑ Modeling/practicing skills ahead of time with books, puppets, or role-play. ❑ Preparing extra support at critical times (arrival, cleanup, group time, bathroom time, meals)
A.2.01 IT: Educators have communicated daily with the families of infants and/or toddlers about each child's developmental, individual activities, and/or shared caregiving issues	Daily communication with infant and toddler families about their child's activity, milestones, and caregiving encourages trust and partnership, supports continuity of care, and promotes developmental awareness to help families understand their child's growth and progress. Daily communication is recommended at this age as this is the fastest period of growth and development. Infants and toddlers experience rapid gains in motor skills, language, social-emotional awareness, and cognitive abilities.	Common Errors: • Programs provide one communication via an app without information confirming that families receive this daily • Programs share a family newsletter rather than individual information specific to one child's developmental milestones, individual activities, etc Recommendations: ❑ Provide 2 specific examples that show individual developmental milestones, activities or shared caregiving issues were communicated on a daily basis ❑ A brief written description that explains each provided example Strategies may include:

Item	Rationale	Comments
		○ Daily reports (paper or digital) ○ Verbal check-ins at arrival and departure ○ Communication apps/portals
A.2.02 PK: Educators have communicated with the families of preschoolers and/or kindergartners about each child's developmental milestones, individual activities, and/or shared caregiving issues.	Regular communication with preschool and kindergarten families about their child's activities, milestones, and caregiving encourages trust and partnership, supports continuity of care, and promotes developmental awareness to help families understand their child's growth and progress. Weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly communication is recommended at this age as developmental growth is more refined and steadier but begins to slow as compared to the infant and toddler years.	Common Errors: • Programs share a family newsletter rather than individual information specific to one child's developmental milestones, individual activities, etc Recommendations: ☐ Provide 2 specific examples that show individual developmental milestones, activities or shared caregiving issues were communicated ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example Strategies may include: ○ Daily/weekly reports (paper or digital) ○ Verbal check-ins at arrival and departure ○ Communication apps/portals
A.2.05 ITPK: Educators have invited family members of all age categories served to participate in learning experiences.	When family members are invited to participate in learning experiences the school-home connection is strengthened. Family participation reinforces concepts that are learned in the classroom and supports continuity of learning at home. When young children see their family members engaging in their school setting they have a greater sense of belonging, motivation, and confidence.	Common Errors: • Programs provide information on how families can contribute to providing materials to the classroom rather than participating in the learning experiences with their children Recommendations: ☐ Provide 2 specific examples of when families were invited to participate in learning experiences with their children ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example Strategies may include:

Item	Rationale	Comments
		• Opportunities to share family culture and traditions. • Guest/mystery readers in the classroom • Classroom helpers, learning stations/centers • Fieldtrip chaperone/volunteer • Curriculum nights/workshops • Family talent shows/game nights
A.2.07: The program or provider has worked with other community organizations or groups to co-sponsor or participate in an event to enrich the experience of enrolled children and families.	Early learning program collaboration with other community organizations serves to strengthen holistic support networks for families regarding health, nutrition, housing, mental wellness or other needs. Additionally, this kind of partnership can help families feel more connected, promote a sense of belonging, and increase family engagement and participation within the program. This can also enhance program visibility within the community and strengthen the program's reputation as a community partner.	Common Errors: • Programs provide information about co-sponsoring an event, but it is not clearly something that will enrich the experience of enrolled children and families • Programs provide general ways they do this rather than providing a specific example Recommendations: ☐ Provide one specific example of how your program has worked with other community organizations or groups to co-sponsor or participate in an event to enrich the experiences of enrolled children and families ☐ A brief written description that explains the provided example Strategies may include: • Family/Community Engagement Nights (literacy night at local library or bookstore, multicultural fair with cultural centers, STEM fair at science museums) • Seasonal/Holiday Events (back to school nights, fall festivals, winter coat/toy/book/food drives, spring/fall grounds clean up)

Item	Rationale	Comments
		Special Interest Events (art/gallery exhibits, Week of the Young Child, public safety events, early childhood/family advocacy)
A.2.10: The program or provider has shared information about child-centered community events with families in the past year.	By sharing information about child-centered community events with families, early learning programs strengthen family engagement with their child's development and learning beyond the classroom. This promotes stronger community connections for families and can help bridge opportunity gaps for families by highlighting low-cost and no-cost events that support and/or complement early learning.	Common Errors: - Programs provide posters or flyers that do not include the date or only include the month and day and not the year to verify it was within the past year - Programs provide information about an event within the program rather than a child-centered community event Recommendations: ☐ Provide 2 specific child-centered community events that were shared with families in the past 12 months (dated including the year) ☐ Include the description of the event and how it was shared with families (describe) and the uploaded evidence to show how it was communicated with families (flyers, emails, communication via family app, posted on a bulletin board, etc) ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example Examples of events might include: - Events for young children at local cultural centers (libraries, parks, zoos, museums). - Family events (holiday craft/art fairs, street fairs, holiday celebrations/parades)

Item	Rationale	Comments
A.2.13 Optional: The program or provider has developed a formalized process for community asset mapping to identify community strengths, local leaders, and resources.	Community asset mapping is a process to identify the strengths, resources, and opportunities available within a community. The intent is to create an inventory of community assets that can be leveraged to support program goals, family needs, and child development – specifically in relation to program activities that support related assessment items [A.2.07, A.2.10, OTHERS].	Common Errors: Recommendations: ☐ Provide a detailed description outlining the process for community asset mapping and upload the evidence that shows the outcome ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example Examples of community assets: • Organizations (e.g., libraries, health clinics, cultural centers) • People (e.g., local leaders, volunteers, service providers) • Physical Spaces (e.g., parks, schools, community centers, commercial districts) • Programs and Services (e.g., food pantries, parenting classes, youth activities) Strategies may include: • Digital maps with relevant community resources pinned. • Digital survey tools to collect input from families about known community assets. • Organized lists of local leaders/groups (city council members, chamber of commerce directories, membership groups)
A.3.04 IT: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators of infants and/or toddlers in supporting their social and emotional development through social stories or books daily.	The intent is that the curriculum supports educators in the teaching and development of social and emotional skills in infants and toddlers with a specific interdisciplinary approach of doing so in an accessible, print-rich environment.	Common Errors: • Provides general reading of books • Provides information about social and emotional stories but does not show that they are provided daily Recommendations: ☐ Two examples of planned lessons/activities that involved social

Item	Rationale	Comments
		stories or books with social/emotional themes. Must show proof that it happens daily ❑ A brief written description that explains each provided example Examples might include: • Class-made social stories like "I can play with friends/use gentle hands, etc." made with the children's photos of them acting it out and read at the appropriate time/activity/transition • Lesson plans with daily read aloud section or documentation board with daily read aloud documentation • Daily read-alouds including social/emotional language stories-providing with a weekly list of books and/or a lesson plan/daily reflection
A.3.05 P: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators of preschoolers in supporting their social and emotional development by helping them recognize, label, and manage their emotions.	The intent is that the curriculum supports educators in the teaching and development of social and emotional skills in preschoolers to build capacity in managing social issues in the moment.	Common Errors: • Programs provide examples that show recognizing, labeling, <i>or</i> managing emotions instead of all three. Recommendations: ❑ Two specific examples of planned lessons/activities that involved teaching preschoolers how to recognize, label, and/or manage their emotions. ❑ A brief written description that explains each provided example
A.3.06 K: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators of kindergarteners in supporting their social and emotional development through planned activities or discussions to learn strategies for calming and learning about the feelings and needs of self and others.	The intent is that the curriculum supports educators in the teaching and development of social and emotional skills in kindergarteners by building their capacity to independently and proactively manage social issues and self-regulate.	Common Errors: Recommendations: ❑ Two specific examples of planned lessons/activities that involved teaching kindergarteners strategies for calming themselves, learning about their feelings and needs, and/or

Item	Rationale	Comments
		learning about the feelings and needs of others. ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example
A.3.08 TPK: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators in providing toddlers, preschoolers and/or kindergarteners with materials or planned conversations to support healthy hygiene habits.	The intent is that the curriculum supports educators in teaching young children personal hygiene habits in developmentally appropriate ways. Establishing healthy hygiene habits early supports the growth of these habits throughout life.	Common Errors: Programs provide evidence of a 1-time special event (dentist visited the program) rather than ongoing, embedded materials or planned conversations Recommendations: ☐ Two examples of planned lessons/activities that involved teaching toddlers, preschoolers and kindergarteners hygiene habits (e.g., washing hands, bathing, toileting, brushing teeth, hair care, skin care, washing clothing, etc.) ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example
A.3.10 ITPK: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators in the adaptive reading of books with and to children of all age categories served.	The intent is that the curriculum supports educators in adjusting their reading instruction, materials, and delivery to meet the diverse needs of all children.	Common Errors: - Programs do not provide information on what adaptive reading strategies they utilize - Programs provide pictures without a clear description of what they are showing Recommendations: ☐ One example of a planned lesson/activity that involved adaptive reading of books (e.g., providing individual copies of books being read to children, providing copies with enlarged print/pictures, allowing children to fidget or move during the reading of books, incorporating home languages into the reading of books, etc.) to young children.

Item	Rationale	Comments
A.3.11 PK: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators of preschoolers and/or kindergarteners in 1) modeling the use of a range of materials to create messages, lists, and other writings in support of children's play and 2) providing children daily opportunities to write or dictate their ideas.	The intent of this item is that the curriculum guides educators to support preschool and kindergarten age children in the development of early literacy and writing skills. Modeling the use of writing materials in a variety of contexts demonstrates to young children the purposeful use of written communication, supports emergent literacy, and promotes print awareness. Daily opportunities to practice these skills supports language development and expression, fosters the development of fine motor skills, and encourages emergent phonemic awareness, and can provide valuable insights for educators in understanding children's thinking, interests, and developmental progress.	☐ A brief written description that explains the provided example. Common Errors: • Programs do not provide an example for each part of the item • Programs do not address the “daily” opportunities in part 2 of the item Recommendations: ☐ One example of planned lessons/activities that involved educators modeling handwriting to preschoolers and kindergarteners (e.g., making lists, writing messages or letters, making notes, etc.) ☐ One example which shows children have daily opportunities to write or dictate their ideas to educators (e.g., a daily schedule, classroom routines, family handbook information, etc.). ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example.
A.3.13 PK: Preschool and/or Kindergarten learning environments have provided children with printed letters and illustrated word/labels. If posted, these materials must have been at children's eye level.	The intent of this item is to provide preschool and kindergarten age children with environments that are rich with print to support early literacy and communication skills.	Common Errors: • Programs do not fully describe how they provide a language rich environment • Programs provide pictures of words that are out of children's eye line Recommendations: ☐ A description of how preschool and/or Kindergarten learning environments have provided children with printed letters and illustrated words/labels ☐ A photograph of an area of the classroom that provides print words and/or labels with illustrations. • This may be provided as a set, for example in a designated writing area, or

Item	Rationale	Comments
		this may be words or labels with illustrations posted around the classroom or learning environment at child eye level ☐ A brief written description that explains the provided example.
A.3.14 PK: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators of preschoolers and/or kindergarteners in planning experiences that enhance phonological and phonemic awareness.	The intent of this item is for the curriculum to support educators in providing preschool and kindergarten age children with opportunities to develop critical early literacy skills. Early exposure to activities that promote phonological and phonemic awareness is foundational to early reading and writing skills. This in turn helps prepare young children for decoding and spelling skill development in the lower elementary years. Examples of phonological activities may include: - Rhyming games - Syllable clapping - Alliteration games (e.g., find/identify objects that start with the same sound) Examples of phonemic activities may include: - Sound isolation (e.g., what is the first sound in the word <i>bus</i>?) - Sound blending (e.g., what word do the sounds /h/ /o/ /p/ make?) - Sound segmenting (e.g., what letter sounds are there in the word <i>run</i>?) - Sound manipulation games (e.g., What happens if you change the beginning sound of the word <i>run</i> with a /b/ sound?) Other examples may include: - Reading books and emphasizing rhyming, alliteration, syllables, or letter sounds.	Common Errors: Recommendations: ☐ Two examples of planned lessons/activities that involved teaching preschoolers and kindergarteners the smallest units of sound in the language of instruction (e.g., /b/, /d/, /f/ are three of 44 phonemes in English). ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example

Item	Rationale	Comments
	• Singing songs, chants, or call and response that reinforce repeated sound patterns. • For kindergarteners, incorporating inventive spelling or sound stretching in writing activities.	
A.3.15 I: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators of infants in their gradual discovery of math concepts and language over time.	The intent of this item is for the curriculum to support educators in providing infants and young toddlers with exposure to early math concepts in their day-to-day experiences. The daily incorporation of early math concepts and language when speaking around and with infants and young toddlers provides a gradual introduction of the vocabulary that will be necessary to understand more complex mathematical concepts over time.	Common Errors: • Programs provide examples of activities that are not developmentally appropriate for infants. Recommendations: ❑ Two examples of planned lessons/activities or intentionally incorporated opportunities in daily routines to introduce math concepts and language to infants (e.g., counting body parts during diaper changes, introducing words for spatial relationships (above, below, behind, under, etc.), drawing attention to attributes (weight, size, colors, patterns, etc.) of materials and objects in the environment. ❑ A brief written description that explains each provided example Possible Resources: Making Math Meaningful for Young Children NAEYC
A.3.16 TPK: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators of toddlers, preschoolers and/or kindergarteners in planning or responding to activities which support sorting or organizing shapes, sizes, colors, and other attributes.	The intent of this item is for the curriculum to support educators in young children's development of early mathematical skills. Classification encourages critical thinking and problem-solving skill development which builds the foundation for more complex mathematical concepts such as number sense, geometry, and data analysis in lower elementary grades. Young children also develop mathematical language skills by engaging in activities that foster	Common Errors: Recommendations: ❑ Two examples of planned lessons/activities that support educators in providing toddlers, preschoolers, and kindergarteners with opportunities to sort and/or organize items by shapes, sizes, colors, and/or other attributes (e.g., weight, design, texture, etc.).

Item	Rationale	Comments
	mathematical vocabulary (bigger, smaller, same, different, rounded, corners, etc.).	☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example
A.3.17 PK: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators of preschoolers and/or kindergarteners in planning or responding to activities which support pattern building and recognition.	The intent of this item is for the curriculum to support educators in young children's development of early mathematical skills by providing opportunities to build and recognize sequencing patterns. Once children have developed some mastery in classification, identifying and building patterns is a next natural progression in mathematical thinking. Introducing young children to experiences in identifying and building patterns supports their developing ability to predict, reason, and understand relationships between objects which are foundational to later mathematical concepts such as geometry, number operations, and early algebra.	Common Errors: Recommendations: ☐ Two examples of planned lessons/activities that support educators in providing preschoolers and kindergarteners with opportunities to recognize and/or build patterns (e.g., sequencing patterns such as color patterns, size patterns, letter patterns, sound patterns, movement patterns, etc.) ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example
A.3.18 P: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators of preschoolers in planning activities or materials to support understanding of whole numbers (counting, one-to-one correspondence, number relationships) and beginning operations (joining and separating sets).	The intent of this item is for the curriculum to support educators in young children's development of early mathematical skills. In planning activities that support understanding of whole numbers and beginning operations educators are setting the stage for young children to develop strong number sense (flexible thinking and comfort with numbers). These activities build upon classification and patterning by encouraging more refined critical thinking and problem-solving skills which in turn set the stage for more complex representational and pre-algebraic thinking.	Common Errors: Recommendations: ☐ Two examples of planned lessons/activities that support educators in providing preschoolers with opportunities to count whole numbers and/or adding and subtracting whole numbers. ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example
A.3.19 K: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators of kindergarteners in planning or responding to learning experiences that encourage children to do addition, subtraction, and other numerical functions using numerical symbols and operators.	The intent of this item is for the curriculum to support educators in young children's development of early mathematical skills. Kindergarteners that have some mastery in classification, patterning, and understanding of whole numbers and their relationships are prepared for more complex early mathematical skills. Introducing numerical symbols and operators at this stage helps young children begin to connect	Common Errors: Recommendations: ☐ Two examples of planned lessons/activities that support educators in providing kindergarteners with opportunities to count and do beginning numerical functions with symbols and operators (+, -, =).

Item	Rationale	Comments
	mathematical language (e.g., join together, add, take away, subtract) to their written representations.	☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example
A.3.20 PK: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators of preschoolers and/or kindergarteners in planning or responding to activities to support math reasoning by solving practical problems during daily activities.	The intent of this item is for the curriculum to support educators in young children's development of early mathematical skills. Educators capitalize on the organic opportunities to support math reasoning throughout the day (e.g., counting napkins as they are distributed during snack time, counting objects in the illustrations/photographs in a book that is being read, counting with children as they wash their hands, commenting on the number of children in the class vs. who is present, counting/tallying the number of trucks vs. cars children see drive by the playground, etc.). This is in addition to lessons/activities that educators have planned with the explicit intention of teaching or reinforcing specific math skills.	Common Errors: Recommendations: ☐ Two examples of intentionally incorporated opportunities in daily routines that support educators in providing preschoolers and kindergarteners with opportunities to develop math reasoning skills and/or solving practical problems (e.g., counting napkins as they are distributed at snack, adding groups of children seated at tables, counting the steps between areas in the classroom, adding groups of materials as children play with them, etc.) ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example
A.3.21 IT: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators of infants and/or toddlers in supporting curiosity, observation, and engagement with daily natural events and patterns.	The intent of this item is for the curriculum to support educators in helping infants and toddlers' development observation skills and cognitive thinking.	Common Errors: Recommendations: ☐ Two examples of intentionally incorporated opportunities in daily routines that support educators in providing infants and toddlers with opportunities to observe and engage with natural events and patterns (e.g., mentioning the weather during transitions to the outdoors, noticing rainbows in the classroom from a prism hung by the window, anticipating what happens after nap time, commenting on a familiar staff member or classmates new hair style, etc.)

Item	Rationale	Comments
		☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example
A.3.22 PK: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators of preschoolers and/or kindergarteners in planning or responding to experiences that build understanding of the structure and properties of matter.	The intent of this item is for the curriculum to support educators in further the development of observation skills and cognitive thinking in preschoolers and kindergarteners.	Common Errors: Recommendations: ☐ Two examples of planned lessons/activities that support educators in providing preschoolers and kindergarteners with opportunities to build understanding of physical matter (e.g., textures, weights, transformation of ice to water or water to ice, sinking vs. floating, etc.). ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example
A.3.23 PK: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators of preschoolers and/or kindergarteners in planning or responding to experiences that allow children to engage in scientific practices (observation, prediction, collecting data, discussing and representing information).	The intent of this item is for the curriculum to support educators in providing preschoolers and kindergarteners exposure to and experience with critical thinking, cognition, and other skills related to scientific methods.	Common Errors: Recommendations: ☐ Two examples of planned lessons/activities that support educators in providing preschoolers and kindergarteners with opportunities to engage in scientific practices (making observations, making predictions, collecting data or information, discussing observations, representing data or information). ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example
A.3.24 ITPK: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators in planning or responding to children's interest in artistic expression in open-ended, process-oriented ways.	The intent of this item is for the curriculum to support educators in providing children with opportunities to foster creative thinking, self-expression, and artistic skill development in young children.	Common Errors: • Programs provide examples of product-based art. Recommendations: ☐ Two examples of planned lessons/activities that support educators in providing children with opportunities to express themselves artistically in open-ended ways. ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example

Item	Rationale	Comments
		Related Resource: Process Art Experiences
A.4.02 ITPK: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators in planning or responding to opportunities for children of all age categories served to learn from each other.	Curriculum serves as an important role in the intentional planning and framing of learning experiences for young children. This ensures learning activities are aligned with curriculum goals and is implemented in a way that is consistent.	Common Errors: Recommendations: ☐ Provide 2 specific examples of opportunities children have been provided to learn from each other (peer-to-peer) ☐ Provide a brief description of these experiences
A.4.03 TPK: The curriculum or learning approach has guided teachers in planning or responding to activities that allow toddlers, preschoolers and/or kindergarteners to engage in group projects.	Educators that incorporate group projects into the curriculum provide prime opportunities for collaborative learning, social development, and deeper engagement with the intended learning content. This type of learning activity integrates multiple domains of development. Group projects are child-centered, collaborative, and process oriented.	Common Errors: Recommendations: ☐ Provide 2 specific examples of opportunities children have been provided to engage in group projects ☐ Provide a brief description of these experiences
A.4.06 TPK: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators in planning or responding to opportunities to teach toddlers, preschoolers and/or kindergarteners self-help skills in meaningful and achievable parts.	Self-help skills such as dressing, feeding, toileting, hygiene, and cleaning up are the base upon which young children can build independence and confidence. These opportunities support the development of practical life skills in addition to broader developmental outcomes related to fine- and gross-motor skills, responsibility, school-readiness, and social-emotional skills.	Common Errors: • Programs provide examples of children engaging in self-help skills or activities; however, they do not break the self-help skills down into meaningful and achievable parts. Recommendations: ☐ Provide one developmentally appropriate example of how educators provide opportunities to teach children self-help skills in meaningful and achievable parts. Be sure to include the information on how these skills are broken down to fully meet the intent of the item.

Item	Rationale	Comments
		☐ A brief written description that explains the provided example
A.4.07 IT: Educators have intentionally revisited learning experiences for infants and toddlers over several days to reinforce and expand on learning.	Infants and toddlers benefit from repetition and familiarity. When educators intentionally plan to revisit experiences over several days young children have the opportunity to strengthen their memory and understanding, build confidence and mastery, and engage deeper with the learning experience.	Common Errors: - Programs do not provide evidence that shows revisiting learning experiences over several days Recommendations: ☐ Provide one developmentally appropriate example of when educators have intentionally revisited learning experiences across several days ☐ A brief written description that explains the provided example
A.4.08 PK: Educators have intentionally revisited learning experiences for preschoolers and/or kindergarteners over several weeks to reinforce and expand on learning.	Preschool and kindergarten age children have greater cognitive, emotional, and emotional capacities than infants and toddlers. Revisiting learning experiences over a period of several weeks honors this developmental difference and provides more opportunities for sustained inquiry, reflection, and skill development.	Common Errors: - Programs do not provide evidence that shows revisiting learning experiences over several weeks Recommendations: ☐ Provide one developmentally appropriate example of when educators have intentionally revisited learning experiences across several weeks ☐ A brief written description that explains the provided example
A.4.12 ITPK: Educators have changed materials or equipment in the learning environment as children's skill levels change over time.	Rotating classroom materials and equipment ensures that the learning environment remains responsive, engaging, and developmentally appropriate.	Common Errors: - Programs state the move infants to cribs one they turn one which is not meeting the intent of the item around children's skill levels Recommendations: ☐ Provide 2 developmentally appropriate examples of when an

Item	Rationale	Comments
		educator has changed materials or equipment in the learning environment as children's skills advance over time ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example
A.4.15 ITPK: The curriculum or learning approach has been used by educators to incorporate words and language that reflects the local community and/or cultures in planned activities and in learning environment for children of all age categories served.	Young children learn best when content is relevant to their lives. When educators incorporate words and language that are reflective of the local community and cultures children build more meaningful connections, expand their vocabulary in natural ways, and learn to value the local community and their place within it.	Common Errors: Recommendations: ☐ Provide 2 developmentally appropriate examples of how educators have incorporated words or languages that reflect the local community and/or cultures ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example Examples may include: • Using local names for foods, places, or customs. • Incorporate local stories and folklore into curricular activities. • Use local language in greetings, expressions, in lesson plans, or to label materials. • Celebrate local traditions, holidays, and festivals. • Collaborate with families to incorporate important words/language.
A.5.01: Developmental screenings have been completed annually for all children to evaluate children's language, cognition, gross motor, fine motor and social-emotional development.	Comprehensive developmental screenings help educators and families understand each child's unique developmental profile and ensure that all children receive the support they need to thrive. Early screening allows educators to recognize areas of strength and potential concern. Timely interventions are key to improving long-term outcomes for young children. These can also serve to support individualized learning, promote	Common Errors: • Programs provide a show item that does not have a date to show that the screenings are done annually. • Programs provide assessments rather than a developmental screening Recommendations: ☐ Provide 1 example of how the program completes developmental

Item	Rationale	Comments
	family engagement and communication, and fosters equity in access to services when there is an identified need.	screenings for all children at least annually ☐ A brief written description that explains the provided example
A.5.03 Optional: Vision and hearing screenings have been conducted on all children annually.	Early childhood programs can play a critical roles in identifying potential hearing or vision challenges that might otherwise go unnoticed. Routine screenings ensures all children have equitable access to learning and developmental opportunities. Timely interventions can prevent long-term delays.	Common Errors: Programs provide a show item that does not have a date to show that the screenings are done annually. Recommendations: ☐ Provide one example of how the program provides opportunities for annual vision and hearing screenings at the program (dated or a policy showing this is provided on a yearly basis) ☐ A brief written description that explains the provided example <i>Some state licensing or regulatory authorities may require annual vision and hearing screenings as part of a general health form completed by a medical professional as a condition of annual enrollment. In these cases, this can be documented to meet this item. If this is not required, then programs must document they provide an opportunity for annual vision and hearing screenings at the program.</i>
A.5.05 ITPK: Educators have used information from an observational assessment to create an individualized activity for children of all age categories served through intentional selection of materials and/or instruction.	Educators that leverage the results of observational assessments to plan individualized activities are better able to provide young children with learning experiences that are meaningful, responsive, and developmentally appropriate.	Common Errors: Programs provide an uploaded example of an individualized activity without showing how it is connected to results of an observation-based assessment. Recommendations: ☐ Provide 2 specific examples of when educators used information from an observational assessment to create an individualized activity through

Item	Rationale	Comments
		intentional selection of materials and/or instruction ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example Evidence should clearly connect examples of child-assessment results and the specific elements of a planned lesson that were individualized for that child.
A.6.10: Child nutrition guidelines have been referenced when planning menus for the types and amounts of food provided to children by the program or provider.	Adequate nutrition plays a critical role in the growth, development, and learning of young children. Early learning programs that reference child nutrition guidelines from organizations such as the USDA, CDC, AAP, and other health authorities ensure that snacks and meals are safe, balanced, and developmentally appropriate for young children.	Common Errors: Recommendations: ☐ Provide one specific example of how your program meets this item ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example
A.6.12: The cleaning products that have been used by the program or provider are non-toxic and fragrance-free.	Young children are especially vulnerable to environmental exposures due to their developing bodies, frequent hand-to-mouth behaviors, and time spent close to surfaces. Adults and children alike are susceptible to adverse reactions to the use of strong chemical cleaners and fragrances. Toxic chemicals and fragrances can cause respiratory irritation, skin reactions, headaches, and other health issues. Strong synthetic and natural fragrances may also trigger asthma or other breathing problems, sneezing, or watery eyes. Using non-toxic and fragrance-free cleaning products reflects a commitment to the environmental health and well-being of young children, families, and staff.	Common Errors: - Program shows pictures cleaning products without information verifying they are non-toxic and fragrance-free Recommendations: ☐ Provide one specific example of how your program meets this item ☐ A brief written description that explains the provided example
A.6.13: The program or providers have developed health and safety policies and/or procedures to reduce staff and child exposure to environmental hazards.	The implementation of clear health and safety policies meant to minimize exposure to environmental hazards is essential for protecting both children and staff.	Common Errors: - Programs provide something other than safety policies and/or procedures - Programs do not address both staff and child exposure

Item	Rationale	Comments
		Recommendations: ❑ Provide 2 specific health and safety policies and/or procedures that have been developed to reduce staff AND child exposure to environmental hazards ❑ A brief written description that explains each provided example Examples may include: • Air quality monitoring/HVAC checks • Water quality monitoring • Assessments for lead, asbestos, radon exposures • Evaluation of materials and equipment that may contain harmful substances such as BPA, phthalates, and formaldehyde • Allergen awareness and management • Evaluations of noise-levels in indoor and outdoor learning spaces
A.6.21: The program or provider has developed health and safety procedures to reduce staff and child injuries.	Clear, proactive health and safety policies and procedures not only protects children and staff from injuries, but also promotes a culture of care, responsibility, and professionalism.	Common Errors: • Programs provide evidence other than a health and safety procedure • Programs do not address both staff AND child injuries Recommendations: ❑ Provide 2 specific health and safety procedures that have been developed to reduce staff AND child injuries ❑ A brief written description that explains each provided example Examples may include: • Slip, trip, and fall prevention • Safe storage practices (cleaning supplies, sharp objects, toxic materials, medications)

Item	Rationale	Comments
		• Equipment and facility maintenance checks • Safe lifting procedures • Procedures for checking safe water temperatures (scalding hazard)
A.7.01: The program or provider uses an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) system to eliminate or reduce harmful chemical exposures along with non-toxic pest management techniques inside and outside the facility whenever possible.	Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a proactive approach to pest control that is more environmentally responsible and emphasizes prevention, monitoring, and the use of least-toxic methods to limit unnecessary chemical exposure to staff and young children.	Common Errors: • Programs provide a picture of a pest management device only • Programs do not provide information on an IPM system rather a general pest management plan Recommendations: ☐ Provide one specific example of how the program uses an IPM system. This might include a policy, a contract with a company that provides information on the IPM system they utilize, etc. ☐ A brief written description that explains the provided example
A.7.02: Each outdoor learning environment has been designed to protect children from harmful weather conditions.	Young children are sensitive to harmful weather conditions due to their developing bodies, poorer temperature regulation, and inability to recognize common dangers. Ample opportunities for safe outdoor play encourages physical health and development. The intent of this item is to address common weather-related hazards without limiting or eliminating outdoor play and learning entirely.	Common Errors: • Programs do not provide evidence for each outdoor learning environment or don't provide information on how many outdoor learning environments the program has Recommendations: ☐ Provide one example for each outdoor learning environment showing they have been designed to protect children from harmful weather conditions ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example and the number of outdoor learning environments the program has Examples may include:

Item	Rationale	Comments
		• Access to shade, water, cooling breaks, sun-protective clothing, the application of sunscreen, and in the most extreme circumstances only, restricting outdoor play during high temperatures. • Appropriate clothing, warming stations, installation of snow guards, snow removal, ice melt application, and in the most extreme circumstances only, restricting outdoor play during cold weather. • Air quality monitoring – restricting outdoor play due to pollution or wildfire smoke. • Securing outdoor equipment, installation of natural or artificial windbreaks, and in the most extreme circumstances only, restricting outdoor play during high winds. • Use of permeable surfaces, installation of French drains, installation of vegetation to slow runoff, installation of hardscaping to prevent erosion, appropriate clothing, and in the most extreme circumstances only, restricting outdoor play during periods of heavy rainfall.
A.7.04 TPK: Handwashing sinks in toddler, preschool, and/or kindergarten learning environments have been aligned with principles for universal design and have allowed all children to reach and use hand-washing sinks without assistance.	Ensuring that all young children, including those with developmental delays and physical disabilities, have independent access to handwashing sinks reinforces the importance of hygiene as self-directed behavior (rather than an adult-enforced behavior), fosters confidence, and alleviates bottlenecks in classroom transitions and routines.	Common Errors: • Programs provide a picture of one hand sink without any other information (age group, handwashing sinks used by age group, height of sink ,etc) Recommendations: ☐ Provide one example for each age group served with enough information to show that the children in that age group reach and use handwashing sinks without assistance

Item	Rationale	Comments
A.7.05: Each indoor and outdoor gross motor environment provided by the program has been designed to provide at least 75 square feet of play space for each child playing at any time.	Young children require ample space to run, jump, climb, and explore in outdoor learning environments. Adequate space reduces the risk of accidental collisions and injuries while children engage in these kinds of big-body play. Additionally, issues of overcrowding, overstimulation, and conflict are also reduced when there is sufficient space for each child in outdoor environments. Educators also benefit from increased visibility when there is adequate space per child allowing for better supervision and improved ability to support positive interactions.	☐ A brief written description that explains the provided example Common Errors: • Programs do not provide information on how many indoor and outdoor gross motor environments the program has • Programs do not provide information on square footage and/or number of children who may utilize the area at any time Recommendations: ☐ Provide one example for each indoor and outdoor gross motor environment the program has/utilizes ☐ Provide square footage along with total number of children who might use the space at any given time ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example <i>Evidence must provide sufficient information to document the available square footage and the maximum number of children allowed in gross motor spaces at the same time. Evidence may include documentation from state licensing or regulatory standards which meet this standard.</i> <i>Programs that do not offer children opportunities to engage in gross motor play at least weekly (indoors or outdoors) must self-report this item as unmet.</i> <i>Programs that do provide, but do not own or maintain outdoor gross motor areas (e.g., use of local park or other space) may self-report this item as not applicable.</i>
A.7.06:	Young children require ample space to move freely, explore materials, and engage in	Common Errors:

Item	Rationale	Comments
Each indoor learning environment has been designed to provide at least 42 square feet of play space for each child playing at any time.	learning centers without overcrowding. Adequate space prevents accidents and supports safe navigation throughout the learning environment. Sufficient space allows for intentional classroom design to promote engagement and focused learning in a variety of group configurations. Additionally, issues of overcrowding, overstimulation, and conflict are also reduced when there is sufficient space for each child in indoor learning environments. Educators also benefit from increased visibility when there is adequate space per child allowing for better supervision and improved ability to support positive interactions.	• Programs do not provide information on how many indoor learning environments the program has • Programs do not provide information on square footage and/or number of children who may utilize the area at any time Recommendations: ☐ Provide one example for each indoor learning environment the program has/utilizes ☐ Provide square footage along with total number of children who might use the space at any given time ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example
A.7.07 Optional: Each indoor learning environment has been designed to provide at least 54 square feet of play space for each child playing at any time.	Young children require ample space to move freely, explore materials, and engage in learning centers without overcrowding. Adequate space prevents accidents and supports safe navigation throughout the learning environment. Sufficient space allows for intentional classroom design to promote engagement and focused learning in a variety of group configurations. Additionally, issues of overcrowding, overstimulation, and conflict are also reduced when there is sufficient space for each child in indoor learning environments. Educators also benefit from increased visibility when there is adequate space per child allowing for better supervision and improved ability to support positive interactions.	<i>This is an optional assessment item that recognizes early learning programs that can provide more square footage per child in indoor learning spaces than the minimum of 42 square feet per child in item A.7.06.</i>
A.8.08: The program or provider has developed an orientation plan for onboarding new staff which includes a review of: 1) policies and procedures, 2) curriculum and learning approaches, 3) assessment methods,	Comprehensive onboarding plans for new staff members ensure that staff understand and implement key program philosophies, routines, and procedures in a consistent manner. This in turn ensures that children and families have a continuity of experience during periods of staff transitions.	Common Errors: • Programs do not provide an orientation plan • Programs do not provide an orientation plan which includes all 6 topic areas

Item	Rationale	Comments
4) child and family information, 5) child guidance and classroom management techniques, 6) the daily activities and routines of the assigned class.	Additionally, new staff benefit by building their confidence and professional capacity in implementing high-quality practices regardless of any individual differences in experience, background, previous training, or formal education.	Recommendations: ❑ Provide one orientation plan that shows all 6 topic areas are reviewed during orientation for new staff ❑ For part 4, child and family information, this refers to new staff being provided with necessary information about the children and families in the classroom they will be working in (examples of this might include children with any food allergies, special care plans, etc) ❑ A brief written description that explains the provided orientation plan
A.8.10 Optional: Educators have participated in advocacy or professional learning activities in the past year that connected with other early learning professionals in the community.	Collaborative professional development and advocacy encourages continuing growth, reflection, and adaptation. When educators come together, they bring diverse experiences, strategies, and perspectives that foster innovative approaches and creative problem solving. Educators benefit from building their leadership capacity, broadening their career pathway, and reduced feelings of isolation. In turn, early learning programs and young children benefit from higher quality instructional practices.	Common Errors: • Programs provide administrator's experiences only rather than educators • Programs do not provide a dated example to show this has taken place in the past year Recommendations: ❑ Provide one specific example, dated within the past year, where educators participated in advocacy or professional learning activities with other early learning professionals in the community ❑ A brief written description that explains the provided example
A.8.11: The professional development plan for educators has been reviewed and updated annually.	This is intended to address program-wide professional development plans – not individual professional development plans for specific educators.	Common Errors: ❑ Programs do not provide evidence that the program wide professional development plans are reviewed and updated annually Recommendations:

Item	Rationale	Comments
		❑ Provide an example of a program-wide professional development plan that is dated or clearly shows it is reviewed and updated annually ❑ A brief written description that explains the provided example
A.8.12: The professional development plan for educators has been developed to include access to trainings on: 1) ethical issues relevant to early learning, 2) serving children and families from a variety of contexts, 3) communication and collaboration skills to support a positive work environment, 4) trauma and adverse childhood experiences, and 5) disabilities and complex medical needs in young children.	Comprehensive professional development ensures that educators are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and strategies that they need to support children's learning and development. This is intended to address program-wide professional development plans – not individual professional development plans for specific educators.	Common Errors: • Programs do not provide evidence showing that all educators have access to training on all 5 topic areas Recommendations: ❑ Provide a brief description explaining how your program meets this item ❑ Provide one program-wide professional development plan that includes access to trainings on the following topics (all topics must be included): ○ Training in ethical issues supports professional decision making, promotes trust and accountability, and protects the rights and well-being of children, families, and colleagues. ○ Training that addresses family-specific contexts strengthens educator partnerships with families by promoting culturally responsive practices and enhancing individualized teaching strategies. ○ Training that supports a positive work environment leads to stronger communication, shared decision-making, and mutual respect, which is essential for a cohesive, high-functioning team. ○ Training in trauma informed care and adverse childhood experiences equips educators to recognize the sign of

Item	Rationale	Comments
		trauma and adapt their practices to support healing and resilience in the early learning setting. ○ Training in disabilities and complex medical needs in young children promotes inclusive, equitable learning environments, ensures children receive appropriate care and instruction, builds educator confidence, and fosters better partnership with families and other ancillary professionals.
A.8.13 Optional: Educators are offered continuous job-embedded instructional coaching either within the program or provider by pairing newer staff with those that are more seasoned, or through outside support.	Job-embedded coaching offers depth to ongoing professional development efforts for educators working with young children. The intention is to provide the tools and supports in the specific context of the program to help both less experienced and more experienced staff grow professionally.	Common Errors: • Programs provide general information about coaching rather than addressing the information about pairing newer staff with those that are more seasoned, or through outside support Recommendations: ☐ Provide one specific example showing how your program ensures educators are offered continuous job-embedded instructional coaching either by pairing newer staff with more seasoned staff within the program, or through utilizing outside support ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example
A.8.14 Optional: The program or provider has provided professional development and/or mentoring and coaching experiences for other early learning programs, providers, and professionals related to Developmentally Appropriate Practice and high-quality early learning practices.	The intent of this item is to share high-quality practices as a NAEYC accredited program with other early learning programs and providers who may or may not have familiarity or experience with Developmentally Appropriate Practice, NAEYC accreditation, and/or other relevant high-quality early learning standards.	Common Errors: • Programs provide information of providing these services within their own organization rather than for programs outside of their own organization Recommendations: ☐ Provide one specific example of how your program provided professional

Item	Rationale	Comments
		development and/or mentoring and coaching experiences with other early learning programs, providers and professionals related to DAP and high-quality early learning practices ☐ A brief written description that explains the provided example
A.8.15: The professional development plan for administrators and leaders has been developed to include annual training on: 1) leadership development (adult learning, conducting performance evaluations, adhering to personnel policies) and 2) fiscal management (budgeting, software training, payroll).	Administrators in early learning programs are responsible for creating strong teams, setting clear goals, and creating a culture of continuous improvement while also attending to the financial stability and resource management of the program overall. Training in these areas strengthens program quality, sustainability, and compliance.	Common Errors: • Programs do not provide professional development plans for their administrators/leaders • Programs do not provide evidence showing both topic areas (leadership development and fiscal management) • Programs do not provide proof that the trainings are completed annually Recommendations: ☐ Provide evidence (dated/current professional development plan for the administrators/leaders, policy, job description, etc) that shows administrators/leaders have annual training on both leadership development and fiscal management ☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example
A.9.02: Educators are regularly assigned to work with the same children day-to-day and stably over time. For infants and toddlers, show that the goal is for these children to remain with the same educators for a minimum of 9 months.	When educators remain consistent, children and families are more likely to develop deeper connections built on trust and mutual understanding. This supports more responsive and individualized teaching strategies, reduces stress and behavior challenges, and promotes team cohesion among staff. This is particularly important for infants and toddlers where secure attachments to caregivers is foundational for healthy emotional and social development.	Common Errors: • Programs do not show evidence that shows a minimum of 9 months (show one month's schedule or a general roster without any information on how long children are kept with the same educators) Recommendations: ☐ Provide evidence that clearly shows the goal is for children to remain with the same educators for a minimum of 9 months

Item	Rationale	Comments
		☐ A brief written description that explains each provided example
A.9.07: The program or provider has developed salary scales that include increments based on professional qualification, staff role, length of employment, and performance evaluation.	Early childhood educators are specialized professionals with unique qualifications, experience, knowledge, and training. Competitive, merit-based pay structures help attract and retain talented early childhood professionals and are a signifier of a respected and viable career pathway.	Common Errors: - Programs provide a salary scale, but it does not include all of the parts listed within the item (professional qualification, staff role, length of employment AND professional evaluation) Recommendations: ☐ Provide a brief description that provides information on the salary scales ☐ Provide evidence that the program has developed salary scales that include increments based on: - Professional Qualifications - Staff role - Length of employment - Program Evaluation - A brief written description that explains each provided example
A.9.11 Optional: The program or provider has developed relevant work materials (e.g., the staff manual, other relevant policies and procedures, professional development) in multiple languages when multi-lingual staff are employed.	Providing multi-lingual staff critical written policies and procedures in their native language whenever possible demonstrates a program's commitment to providing a welcoming and inclusive work environment. This practice can also reduce the risk of misinterpretation of key documents and ensures full understanding of expectations and responsibilities in the workplace.	Common Errors: - Programs do not provide at least 2 examples of relevant work materials that are available in multiple languages Recommendations: ☐ Provide 2 specific examples of relevant work materials in multiple languages that represent the

Item	Rationale	Comments
		languages spoken by your program staff ❑ A brief written description that explains each provided example
A.9.12: The program or provider has created quarterly or monthly accounting reports that include a reconciliation of expenses to budget.	Regular budget reconciliation helps programs maintain fiscal integrity and is recommended to ensure that programs can continue to function and serve their vision and mission for young children and their families.	Common Errors: • Programs provide an accounting report but it is not clear the frequency of the report to verify that it is done quarterly or monthly Recommendations: ❑ Provide one example of a quarterly or monthly accounting report that includes a reconciliation of expenses to budget ❑ A brief written description that explains each provided example
A.9.13: A financial review or financial audit was conducted in the most recent fiscal year.	Regular independent financial reviews and audits provide a clear and accurate picture of a program's financial health. This is essential for strategic planning, resource allocation, and accountability to stakeholders and funders.	Common Errors: ❑ Programs provide a review/audit that is older than the last fiscal year ❑ Programs provide a statement from someone stating this is complete but it is unclear their role Recommendations: ❑ Provide one example of a financial review/audit for the most recent fiscal year OR a statement by a CFO or 3rd party authority on company letterhead ❑ A brief written description that explains each provided example. If providing a statement on letterhead, please include the role of the person who signed off

Item	Rationale	Comments
A.9.16 Optional: Before working with children, volunteers and other service providers (special education, therapy, extracurriculars) have been given a packet to review which includes: 1) relevant health, safety, and emergency procedures, 2) acceptable guidance and learning environment management techniques, and 3) mandated reporting procedures.	There are many reasons for a program to invite volunteers and other service providers to work with young children. These individuals can offer specialized skills, experiences, and perspectives that enhance children's learning and/or provide targeted support for children with developmental delays, disabilities, or medical needs. Providing these individuals with relevant health and safety procedures, behavior management strategies, and child abuse/neglect reporting requirements ensures children's safety, promotes consistency, and enhances volunteer/service provider effectiveness.	Common Errors: • Programs do not include evidence showing that volunteers or other service providers have received a packet of information including all 3 parts of the item Recommendations: ☐ Provide one specific example that shows that volunteers and other service providers receive a packet to review that includes the 3 topic areas within the item ☐ Provide a brief explanation of the packet, topics included and confirmation that volunteers and other service providers review this information before working with children
A.9.18 Optional: The program or provider has developed a detailed, written strategic plan that includes what the program or provider will do to: 1) implement the program or provider's vision and mission, 2) achieve desired child outcomes, 3) maintain high-quality services to children and families (NAEYC accreditation, use of other quality rating scales and instruments, participation in state quality rating/improvement systems, fidelity to an evidence-based curriculum), and 4) ensure adequate funding for future needs.	A written strategic plan provides early learning programs with clear direction, measurable goals, and strong financial stability. This allows programs to remain mission-driven, responsive to change, and focused on long term impacts.	Common Errors: • Programs do not provide a detailed written plan that includes all part of the item Recommendations: ☐ Provide a detailed, written strategic plan that includes all 4 parts of the item ☐ A brief written description that explains the strategic plan

Section 5: Narrative Description Items

The description typically ranges from 3 to 8 sentences depending on item requirements. Descriptions will not be reviewed past sentence 8. Each description requires one to two examples in the description. Be sure to read individual item instructions for specific sentence and example requirements.

Item	Rationale	Comments
A.1.01 TPK: Toddlers, preschoolers and/or kindergarteners have had opportunities to decide what the class will do together (e.g., unit of study, interest areas, which book to read or song to sing as a group).	When early childhood educators provide children with opportunities to make plans with their classmates, they are supporting the development of crucial social and emotional skills as children must negotiate differences and cooperate. Additionally, this provides children with a sense of shared responsibility and ownership of the learning environment which also drives deeper engagement and motivation.	Common Errors: - Programs state that children get to choose where to play during free choice time. This does not meet the intent of the item which is looking for children have opportunities to decide what the class will do together. Recommendations: ❑ Ensure you provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for each age group served. Toddlers may need to be provided with options while preschoolers and kindergartners are able to come up with ideas on their own. ❑ Ensure you provide 2 specific examples for each age group served ❑ Possible resources: Principles of Child Development and Learning and Implications That Inform Practice NAEYC
A.2.04: The program or provider has addressed concerns a family has raised about their child's education or care.	Early childhood educators are professionals who can demonstrate positive conflict resolution skills when working with families. Collaborating with families to address concerns about their child's care or education is essential for creating supportive and effective learning environments. Open communication and shared problem-solving builds trust and promotes consistency.	Common Errors: Programs provide examples from when a family raised a concern about their child's development. This item is looking for how the program addresses family concerns about the care or education the family is receiving from the program

Item	Rationale	Comments
		Recommendations: ❑ Ensure you provide a specific example of concerns a family brought to you about the care or education they are receiving from the program and how you addressed it
A.2.06: Information about families has been used to adapt the program or provider's environment.	Strong early learning programs create inclusive, welcoming, and culturally responsive spaces. By adapting the space to reflect families, programs are fostering belonging, strengthening the home-school connection, and promotes equity and inclusion.	Common Errors: • Programs provide strategies but fail to provide a specific example or when they have implemented that strategy/process Recommendations: ❑ Ensure you provide a specific example of when your program has used information about a family/families to adapt the program's environment Strategies may include: • Signage/notices that reflect home languages. • Creating storage areas for car seats/strollers. • Materials in shared spaces and classrooms reflect images and/or experiences of enrolled families. • Planting a community garden with family input and/or heirloom seeds. • Planning family events that are inclusive to a variety of family structures, work schedules, and cultural norms.
A.2.08: The program or provider has worked with neighboring businesses, residents, or city/town representatives to address shared interests or needs.	Early learning programs are vital hubs within communities. Partnering with local stakeholders creates meaningful benefits to young children, their families, and the broader community.	Common Errors: Recommendations: ❑ Ensure you provide one specific example rather than generalized information

Item	Rationale	Comments
		Strategies may include: • Library collaborations • Engagement with community officials in efforts to improve local parks, create safer crosswalks nearby, alleviate parking/traffic concerns, neighborhood clean ups. • Cultural celebrations in the community • Health and wellness initiatives • Donation drives to meet community needs for food, books, toys, tools, and other material needs.
A.2.09 Optional: The program or provider has engaged in policy and/or advocacy work at the state or federal level in the past 12 months.	Engaging in policy work at the state and federal level ensures that the voices of educators are heard in shaping the systems that impact the early education field such as funding, access, workforce development, and curriculum standards.	Common Errors: • Programs provide generalized information • Programs do not provide a date for when they were engaged in policy and/or advocacy work to ensure it was in the past 12 months Recommendations: ☐ Ensure you provide one specific example from the last 12 months Strategies may include: • Hosting policy makers to tour classrooms and meet families and educators. • Participating in advocacy rallies, meetings, or events to promote early childhood issues with state and federal leaders. • Joining coalitions and collaborating with other organizations to amplify shared priorities to support young children, families, and the early learning workforce. • Testifying at legislative hearings.
A.2.11 ITPK:	When early learning educators adapt the curriculum to incorporate local community	Common Errors:

Item	Rationale	Comments
Educators have used their knowledge of the community and/or local cultural resources to adapt the curriculum and create learning experiences for children of all age categories served.	and cultural resources, children have more meaningful, relevant, and inclusive learning experiences. This serves to affirm children's identities, build cultural awareness and respect, and strengthen community connections.	• Programs provide general strategies rather than a specific example • Programs provide the same evidence for each category which may not be developmentally appropriate for all ages served Recommendations: ☐ Ensure you provide one specific example for each age group served ☐ Ensure your example is developmentally appropriate for the age group you are submitting it for Strategies may include: • Planning field trips to local parks, museums, zoos, and historical markers. • Inviting local artists, elders, officials, and historians to share cultural music, crafts, and oral histories. • Celebrating community traditions such as festivals, parades, or seasonal events. • Using curriculum materials provided by local cultural institutions in planned activities.
A.2.12 Optional: The program or provider knows the general demographics of enrolled families and has evaluated whether the list of child and family support services provided to families is culturally and linguistically appropriate.	Early learning programs often serve diverse families with a variety of cultural backgrounds and lived experiences. Ensuring that support service information provided to families is culturally and linguistically appropriate provides equitable access to resources, builds trust and belonging, promotes effective communication which ultimately serves to support overall family well-being.	Common Errors: Recommendations: ☐ Ensure the description includes the general demographics and characteristics of enrolled families and describe at least two child and family support services that have been promoted to families are culturally or linguistically appropriate.

Item	Rationale	Comments
A.3.01: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators in facilitating learning activities and experiences that are driven by the children's interests.	The intent of this item is for the curriculum to support teachers in fostering a positive attitude toward learning in young children through activities that align with children's current interests.	Common Errors: Recommendations: A brief description which includes: One specific example of an activity or learning experience that was driven by the children's interests.
A.3.02: The curriculum or learning approach has guided educators in planning and implementing learning activities and experiences that guide children's 1) physical development, 2) social development, 3) emotional development, 4) cognitive development, and 5) identity development.	The intent of this item is for the curriculum to support teachers in offering a robust and comprehensive curriculum that addresses all areas of development and learning for young children.	Common Errors: - Programs do not include all 5 of the learning domains Recommendations: A brief description which includes: - An explanation of how the curriculum or learning approach includes physical (gross motor, fine motor), social (friendships, relationships with others), emotional (feelings), cognitive (critical thinking), and identity (self-awareness, self-confidence) development.
A.3.03 Optional: Educators have received feedback about how they are implementing the curriculum or learning approach used.	The intent of this item is that educators are well-trained and maintain fidelity to the chosen curriculum and/or learning approaches adopted by the program. The intent of this item is that educators receive regular feedback from their administrators and/or other early childhood specialists.	Common Errors: - Programs provide information on how they receive feedback from families. This item is looking for educators to receive feedback from the administrators and/or other early childhood specialists Recommendations: A brief description which includes: - An explanation of how educators are observed implementing the chosen curriculum or learning approach and how they have received feedback about their observed teaching practices in relation to the chosen curriculum or learning approach. - Provide one specific example of a time feedback was provided to an educator
A.3.07 ITPK: Educators have used developmentally appropriate curricular plans/guidance to	The intent of this item is that educators can demonstrate specific curricular activities to	Common Errors: Programs do not provide information on both fine motor and gross motor

Item	Rationale	Comments
support children’s fine motor and gross motor development on a weekly basis.	support young children’s physical development skills on a regular basis.	- Programs do not indicate how they ensure there are weekly opportunities for both fine and gross motor development Recommendations: A brief description which includes: - An explanation of how educators ensure that children have weekly opportunities to develop both fine motor and gross motor skills.
A.3.09 ITPK: Educators select books that reflect many diversities and help children identify with characters and themes.	The intent of this item is that educators can demonstrate specific examples of books they have read to or made available to children that reflect the children’s identities and/or lived experiences. This fosters a sense of belonging and encourages engagement.	Common Errors: Recommendations: A brief description which includes: An explanation of how educators have selected books that reflect the characteristics and lived experiences of the children in the class.
A.3.12 PK: Educators have helped preschoolers write the words and messages they are trying to communicate.	The intent of this item is that educators can demonstrate specific examples of how the curriculum or learning approach has been used to support early writing and communication skills in preschool-age children.	Common Errors: Recommendations: A brief description which includes: An explanation of how educators have helped preschool children write (e.g., modeling for children, providing instructional support, scaffolding, taking dictation).
A.4.01 TPK: Educators have engaged in collaborative inquiry with toddlers, preschoolers and/or kindergarteners individually and with small groups of children.	Collaborative inquiry is a powerful teaching strategy where educators and children explore questions, generate ideas, and solve problems together. This approach recognizes that children are not merely passive recipients of knowledge and values their contributions to the learning process.	Common Errors: - Programs discuss opportunities in a large group and/or do not specify if something was done individually or with a small group (defined as 2-6 children) - Programs do not provide information on collaborative inquiry - Programs do not provide 2 specific examples that are developmentally appropriate Recommendations:

Item	Rationale	Comments
		❑ Provide 2 specific examples of collaborative inquiry that are developmentally appropriate for the age group ❑ Ensure you include information on whether the activity was done with an individual child or a small group (2-6 children)
A.4.04 TPK: Educators have helped toddlers, preschoolers and/or kindergarteners express their ideas about curriculum content and build upon the meaning of their experiences.	When educators help children reflect and expand on their learning, children are building problem solving skills, boosting their confidence in self-directed learning, and strengthening their communication skills.	Common Errors: • Programs provide general techniques within the description rather than specific examples Recommendations: ❑ Provide 2 specific examples that describe how educators help children reflect and expand their learning. Strategies may include: • Group discussions • Documentation panels • Drawing and journaling • Role-play
A.4.05 ITPK: Educators have departed from an activity or lesson when children showed disinterest.	Early childhood educators that are flexible and have the ability to modify when children are not showing interest in planned activities are better equipped to maximize learning opportunities, support individual and group needs, and promote engagement.	Common Errors: • Programs provide information about teaching based of their knowledge of children's interest rather than starting an activity and departing from it when children show disinterest. Recommendations: ❑ Provide 2 specific examples for the age group that describes what the planned activity was, how they noted children were not interested, and what changes or adaptations were made as a result Strategies may include: • Changing materials

Item	Rationale	Comments
		• Shifting the focus • Adding movement or other sensory elements • Following children's interests • Inviting children to lead
A.4.09 ITPK: Educators have modified the procedures or time for an activity or learning unit to individualize learning for children of all age categories served.	Young children do not develop uniformly and have unique learning styles, interests, and needs. Educators who can adapt procedures and timing of activities to respond to these individual differences in the moment demonstrate a capacity to facilitate deeper learning and engagement.	Common Errors: Recommendations: ☐ Provide one specific example of a time this happened ☐ Provide information on how the activity or learning unit was modified ☐ Provide information on how the modification supported individualized learning for children Strategies may include: • Extending time for exploration of materials • Breaking activities into smaller steps • Offering flexible participation • Adjusting group size • Revisiting activities over several days
A.4.10 ITPK: Educators have made an activity less difficult to enable children to develop toward skill mastery (scaffolding).	Strong early childhood educators demonstrate aptitude in meeting each child's unique developmental needs. Recognizing when children can benefit from simplification of a learning activity promotes optimal challenge. This allows children to develop mastery, encourages persistence, and builds problem solving skills.	Common Errors: • Programs provide general statements rather than specific examples Recommendations: ☐ Provide 2 specific examples for the age group that is developmentally appropriate and identifies: • What the child was struggling with • What you did/what modification was made to make the activity a little less different

Item	Rationale	Comments
A.4.11 ITPK: Educators have made an activity more difficult as children refine skills or gain new skills and knowledge (scaffolding).	Strong early childhood educators demonstrate aptitude in meeting each child's unique developmental needs. Recognizing when children can benefit from extension of a learning activity promotes optimal challenge. This allows children to take on new challenges, encourages critical thinking, and builds confidence.	Common Errors: - Programs provide general statements rather than specific examples Recommendations: ☐ Provide 2 specific examples for the age group that is developmentally appropriate and identifies: - What the initial activity was - What you did/what modification was made to make the activity more difficult
A.4.14 ITPK: Educators have modified the curriculum or learning approach to reflect - the values and/or beliefs of enrolled families of children, - the experiences of the children, and - the languages and/or dialects spoken by the children (and/or their families).	Curriculum and planned learning experiences should reflect the backgrounds, lived experiences, and languages of the children to foster an inclusive, respectful, and engaging learning environment. Educators should be familiar with the unique qualities of the children and families they serve and adapt learning experiences to reflect those qualities.	Common Errors: - Programs do not provide information related to each of the 3 parts of the item - Programs do not provide 3 specific examples (one for each part of the item) Recommendations: ☐ Provide 1 specific example of how your program modified the curriculum or learning approach to reflect the values and/or beliefs of enrolled families ☐ Provide 1 specific example of how your program modified the curriculum or learning approach to reflect the experiences of the children ☐ Provide 1 specific example of how your program modified the curriculum or learning approach to reflect the languages and/or dialects spoken by the children (and/or their families)
A.5.04 SWPP Eligible: The curriculum or learning approach has been aligned with the assessment methods used by the program or provider.	Aligning assessment methods with curriculum ensures that these systems work together to support children's development. This allows for clear learning goals to be defined and	Common Errors: Programs provide the assessment they use but fail to link it to their curriculum

Item	Rationale	Comments
	measured, which then supports individualized instruction.	- Programs share a developmental screener rather than providing information on their assessment method Recommendations: ☐ Provide information on how your curriculum or learning approach is aligned with the assessment methods
A.5.06 Optional: Educators, families, other program or provider staff, or specialized consultants have worked as a team to develop and implement individualized care or learning plans for a child.	The creation of individualized care and learning plans through a collaborative approach ensures that children receive consistent, personalized support across settings. These may be formal IEP, IFSP, or 504 plans, but may also be applicable in any context in which children would benefit from individualized care or learning (e.g., behavior plans, toilet training plans, feeding plans, intervention plans, etc.).	Common Errors: - Programs provide their general process/procedures rather than providing 2 specific examples of a time when educators, families, other program/provider staff or specialists worked together as a team to develop and implement individualized care or learning plans for a child Recommendations: ☐ Provide 2 specific examples that include those who worked together as part of the team to both develop and implement an individualized care or learning plan for a child
A.5.07: Child assessment results have been used to inform overall program or provider improvements in the past 12 months.	When administrators review assessment data across classrooms this can provide valuable insights that improve teaching practices, curriculum design, and overall program effectiveness. When looking at aggregated assessment results administrators can identify trends and make data-informed decisions. This information can be used to make changes to curriculum, plan professional development opportunities, inform budget decisions related to material and human resources, and evaluate program the effectiveness of program goals.	Common Errors: - Programs do not provide a specific example of what child assessment results was used in the last 12 months (date is needed) to inform overall program improvements - Programs provide an example of how they used an individual child's assessment to create an individualized activity. This item is looking for overall program trends to impact the program as a whole

Item	Rationale	Comments
		Recommendations: ❑ Include one specific example of a trend that was identified through reviewing assessment data across classrooms and what program improvements were made as a result ❑ Include the date and ensure it is within the last 12 months
A.6.11 Optional: The program or provider has worked with families in developing care plans for children with special dietary, medical, or cultural feeding needs. This at minimum includes 1) how staff are informed of and trained on special feeding needs, 2) how staff are held accountable to following established feeding plans, and 3) how families are provided necessary information to know that their child's special feeding needs are being met.	When children have special dietary, medical, or cultural feeding needs it is essential that the adults surrounding them have a shared understanding of the individualized needs. This ensures that children's health and safety is protected and that religious or cultural practices are respected.	Common Errors: • Programs do not provide information on all 3 parts of the item • Programs provide a general policy or practice rather than providing a specific example of when this was implemented Recommendations: ❑ Provide one specific example that includes: • What the special dietary, medical or cultural feeding plan entails • How staff are informed and trained on the special feeding plan • How staff are held accountable for following established feeding plans and • How families are provided with the necessary information to know that their child's special feeding needs are being met
A.6.22 SWPP Eligible: Staff-related policies, practices, or projects have promoted a collaborative, inclusive organizational climate.	Early learning programs are most effective when educators, administrators, and other support staff work together as a cohesive and supportive team. When staff feel included and valued they are more likely to contribute ideas, support each other, and work toward shared goals.	Common Errors: • Programs do not provide 2 specific examples of policies, practices or projects Recommendations: ❑ Provide 2 specific examples of staff-related policies, practices of projects

Item	Rationale	Comments
		that have promoted a collaborative, inclusive organizational climate Strategies may include: • Shared planning/agenda setting • Peer-to-peer mentorship • Cultural and personal celebrations • Professional development/team building
A.7.03: The program or provider has informed families of relevant Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recall notices.	When programs share relevant recall notices to families the health and safety of children is centered between the program and home environments. Many recalled products may be found in both the program and the home. Ensuring that all adults in both settings are aware of relevant recalls prevents accidents and injuries and promotes a culture of safety.	Common Errors: • Programs provide information on how THEY receive information rather than how they have informed families of recall notices Recommendations: ☐ Provide one example of a CPSC recall notice and how you notified families
A.8.09 Optional: At least three policies have been connected to the Code of Ethics for Early Childhood Educators.	When program policies are aligned with the Code of Ethics for Early Childhood Educators there is an embedded framework to ensure the profession's highest standards are consistently in practice.	Common Errors: • Programs provide 3 policies but do not connect them to the Code of Ethics for Early Childhood Educators Recommendations: ☐ Provide three specific policies along with which ideal or principle each aligns with in the Code of Ethics. ☐ Provide description that states how it is aligned
A.8.16: Program administrators, leaders, and/or providers have maintained awareness of updates and changes in local, state, tribal, and/or federal policies related to early care and learning and family related services.	When program administrators make an intentional practice of reviewing changing policies at all levels of government ensures that they are able to consistently comply with regulatory changes and adapt programming in response to funding and policy changes.	Common Errors: • Provide general strategies for remaining aware rather than providing 2 specific examples Recommendations: ☐ Provide 2 specific examples of HOW program administrators/leaders have maintained awareness of updates and

Item	Rationale	Comments
		changes in local, state, tribal and/or federal policies related to early care and learning and family related services. ❑ This might include being on a list serve, subscribing for newsletters joining a committee or community workgroup, a membership to a local, state, etc agency
A.9.04 SWPP Eligible: Annual performance reviews for educators and administrators have included opportunities for self-evaluation and professional reflection.	Incorporating self-evaluation into performance reviews encourages staff to take a proactive role in their own professional development. Taking the time to reflect on strengths, areas for growth and impact is a key practice to guide continuous improvement.	Common Errors: • Programs do not provide information regarding <i>administrator</i> annual performance reviews. Information is only provided for educators. • Programs provide a general description of performance evaluations rather than a specific example. Recommendations: ❑ Ensure that the description includes a specific example of annual performance reviews for both educators and administrators that include opportunities for self-evaluation and professional reflection. Strategies may include: • Reflection prompts • Goal setting • Portfolio reviews • Responding to peer or family feedback

Additional Resources

Topic	Resource
Assessment and Observation	DAP: Observing, Documenting, and Assessing Children's Development and Learning NAEYC Rocking and Rolling: Bringing Observation and Documentation to Life in Infant and Toddler Settings NAEYC
Playful Learning	<i>Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs</i> Chapter 5: The Power of Playful Learning in the Early Childhood Setting NAEYC: The Power of Playful Learning in the Early Childhood Setting
Curriculum	DAP: Planning and Implementing an Engaging Curriculum to Achieve Meaningful Goals NAEYC
Family Partnership	DAP: Engaging in Reciprocal Partnerships with Families and Fostering Community Connections NAEYC
Building Relationships	DAP: Creating a Caring, Equitable Community of Learners NAEYC
Suspension and Expulsion, and Implicit Bias	Preventing Suspensions and Expulsions in Early Childhood Settings NAEYC statement regarding research on implicit bias and early childhood educators
Business Practices • Policy Development and Handbooks • Teacher Planning Time • Professional Development • Budgeting	The Power of a Policy: How Good Policies Make Great Programs NAEYC

Topic	Resource
Health and Safety Practices	Caring for Our Children National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs CPSC Recalls & Product Safety Warnings
Equitable Learning Opportunities	Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education Position Statement NAEYC
Code of Ethics for Early Childhood Educators	Code of Ethics for Early Childhood Educators NAEYC
Learning Environments	Universal Design for Learning: A Checklist for Early Childhood Environments