

The Five Key Quality Components to Look For:

1. Curriculum, Assessment and Diversity

This includes the development and assessment of curriculum, the “serve and return” interactions between teacher and child, and attention to children with special needs and diverse language and cultures. Because all staff members that work with children are key partners in learning, we refer to all of them as “educators”.

Key questions:

- Have the educators received formal professional development in curriculum that is aligned with Massachusetts guidelines? Have they completed coursework on language and literacy skills?
- Are educators trained in using screening tools to detect developmental delays? Does your program monitor each child’s progress?
- Is there regularly scheduled time for staff to plan curriculum?
- Will they use screening tools to set goals for your child and provide regular progress reports?
- Are the materials used reflective of your child’s background and culture and the diversity of the community?

2. Safe, Healthy, Indoor and Outdoor Environments

Program environments should support the implementation of the curriculum through the use of space, materials and opportunities for children to experiment and practice skills. They also support health, safety and nutrition.

Key questions:

- Are there stimulating indoor and outdoor spaces, including outdoor space that allows for gross motor activities?
- Does the environment include 3-4 interest areas with a variety of accessible and appropriate materials and equipment?
- Is there an annual consultation by a Health Consultant to monitor records, update health care policies and assist the program in complying with health and safety requirements?
- Are educators trained to work with special diets, allergies and/or specialized feeding issues?

3. Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development

To ensure healthy development, the workforce must have formalized training, content knowledge and ongoing professional development.



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Key questions:

- Do all educators caring for children have a high school diploma or GED?
- Does at least one educator have a minimum of 2 years experience as a Family Child Care Provider?
- Does at least one educator have a Child Development Associate's credentials or higher (i.e. AA or BA) for the age of the children served OR is EEC Lead Teacher Qualified (Preschool or Infant/Toddler)?
- Do all educators have an Individual Development Plan that ensures they are trained in MA guidelines?
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4. Family and Community Engagement

High-quality programs recognize the interconnection between the child, the family, the community and the program itself. These programs involve parents as full partners while providing them with information, resources and support.

Key questions:

- Is there a system in place for daily two-way communication (i.e.: email, telephone hour, checklists)?
- Is there an opportunity to meet with educators at least every two months?
- Does the educator participate in community events and have relationships with and information about community resources such as vision and dental screenings?
- Are parents encouraged to volunteer to assist in the program and share their culture and interests?

5. Leadership, Management and Administration

High quality programs require effective leadership with management and administrative practices that ensure a stable environment, fiscal accountability, evaluation of the program's practices and policies and the development of relationships within the community.

Key Questions:

- Does the program have a written business plan and admissions policy?
- Is there a written plan that addresses alternative staffing or care if the caregiver is ill, must be away from home, or in case of emergency?
- Are communications updates sent to educators and families?
- Are educators and families surveyed on an annual basis in order to evaluate the program and develop a comprehensive written improvement plan?
- Do educator salary scales reflect education and performance levels?



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