Quality Counts California Implementation Guide

Updated July 2025

Please note: Updates to this document were made to reflect changes to Quality Counts California (QCC) implementation including rating requirements for California State Preschool Programs (CSPP) effective July 2025.

For questions or clarifications regarding this document please email support@qualityca.net

For questions related to funding requirements, contact the administering state agency.

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1. Purpose and Audience for This Guide

The Quality Counts California (QCC) Implementation Guide (Guide) was originally developed for local, regional, and statewide QCC implementers, raters, and monitors working with rated sites within California's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). As the early education system has evolved, the QCC Guide has been updated to support implementation of the Quality Continuum Framework-Measurable Quality Elements (QCF) which includes continuous quality improvement elements for all early learning and care setting types across California, including rating requirements for California State Preschool Program (CSPP) QRIS Block Grantees. Consortium agreements ensure local and regional QCC models are implemented to fidelity in accordance with statewide agreements, statutory requirements, and state policy guidance. The Guide will continue to be updated as QCC implementation and funding requirements evolve.

Please refer to the glossary for definitions of terms used throughout this Guide.

Additional resources for QCC Consortium members, including historical information about the development of QCC as California's QRIS, can be found at www.qualitycountsca.net.

2. The Quality Continuum Framework: Core Areas and Elements

QCC supports quality in early learning and care settings to promote environments, relationships, interactions, and activities that aid all children's growth and development and to prepare them for success in school and life. The QCF (see Appendix 1) provides a *framework*, or *structure*, for quality improvement and this Guide provides information to support implementation at the local level. The QCF uses the terms "Core" and "Elements," which refer to the three overarching categories (Core) and the indicators or components within these categories (Elements). The Elements are numbered consecutively one through six, with Elements five and six for centers only, as shown below.

Core	Elements
Core I: Child Development and School Readiness	**Element 1.** Child Observation **Element 2.** Developmental and Health Screenings
Core II: Teachers and Teaching	**Element 3.** Minimum Qualifications for Lead Teacher or Family Child Care Home **Element 4a.** Effective Teacher-Child Interactions: Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS®)

Core	Elements
	Element 4b. Effective Teacher-Child Interactions: CLASS® **(CSPP rated element– requires use of the CLASS Second Edition and CLASS Environment)**
Core III: Program and Environment	**Element 5.** Ratios and Group Size (centers only beyond licensing regulations) **Element 6.** Director Qualifications (centers only)

The tables below outline total point ranges that may be used for quality improvement monitoring in conjunction with quality improvement plans, and the CSPP rating requirements. Calculation Guidance for Quality Improvement (QI) monitoring can be found in Appendix 2. For CSPP QRIS Block Grantees, detailed rating information can be found in Section 5 of this guide.

Total Point Ranges for Quality Improvement

Setting	Tier 1 (blocked, must receive 1 point per element)	Tier 2 (locally determined—point values, blocked, or combination)	Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5 (can include additional locally determined requirements)
Centers	6 points	7–16 points	17–22 points	23–26 points	27 points and above
Family Child Care Homes	4 points	5–9 points	10–13 points	14–17 points	18 points and above

CSPP Rating (Element 4b only)

Setting	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5
CSPPs (Centers and FCCHENs)	-	-	3 points	4 points	5 points

3. Continuous Quality Improvement

QCC is committed to providing resources and information about the importance of quality early learning and care settings, as well as the lifelong positive impact they can have on children and families. While state-level funding has differentiated requirements, the overarching quality improvement goals of QCC are to support the program quality of

early learning and care settings, to improve access to QCC by providing administrative support to programs, and to create a strong and sustainable QCC system.

Developing Site Quality Improvement Plans

Participating sites and individuals directly receiving support regardless of QCC funding source must have a site quality improvement plan (QIP) completed, either jointly with the site or on behalf of the educator/provider (e.g., Family, Friend, and Neighbor [FFN]). All QIPs must include consistent information describing, at a minimum: quality improvement goals, actions to achieve the goals, resources needed to achieve the goals, and a timeline. The standardized QCC Site and Individual QIP Template may be used or counties may choose to use their own, provided all elements are included with similar breadth and depth and can be reported to the state efficiently.

Offering Professional Development Opportunities

Professional development opportunities delivered through evidence-informed effective delivery methods, and where possible, aligned with and in adherence to the California Early Childhood Educator Competencies and elements within the QCF, include but are not limited to:

- Coaching — a dynamic and collaborative process grounded in a learning and supportive relationship for both coaches and coached individuals that supports adult learning, self-reflection, and self-directed culturally supportive action to benefit the children and families whom the coached serves
- Training — learning opportunities designed and implemented using principles of adult learning to improve the participants' knowledge, skills, and competencies to support young children and their families
- Professional growth — resources, information, and paths to equitable access of opportunities for adult learning for the purpose of gaining skills, dispositions, and knowledge that are incorporated into the work of supporting the development and well-being of children and their families
- Higher education— promoting multiple options to support access to higher education, including, but not limited to, support for navigating enrollment, course advisors, and linguistic, technological or adaptive access to coursework

Utilizing the Continuous Quality Improvement Core Tools and Resources

Organized with the same structure as the QCF, the Continuous Quality Improvement Core Tools and Resources (CQI Tools) document (formally known as the CQI pathways) highlights resources that support advancement of core quality elements of the QCF. While these links are not required activities for QCF implementation, they can support programs and the early learning workforce. The CQI Tools can be found on the QCC website.

4. QCC Funding Structure

As QCC defines quality elements and activities, there are multiple state agency funding streams that support these efforts. The funding requirements of each of these grants vary and are differentiated in the following section.

- **California Department of Social Services (CDSS), QCC Workforce Pathways Grant, QCC Quality Improvement Grant, and Professional Development Resources**

  Under a joint request for applications, the California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) QCC Workforce Pathways Grant and the QCC Quality Improvement Grant focus on supporting increased learning and healthy development of California's children (ages birth to 13).

  The QCC Workforce Pathways Grant aims to increase the number of qualified ELC professionals, and increase the educational credentials, knowledge, and skills of existing ELC professionals across the state. This grant supports providers participating, or interested in participating, in QCC and providers interested in continuous quality improvement (CQI) as well as the ongoing training and education of the workforce in California's mixed-delivery system which includes access to FFN, Family Child Care Home (FCCH), and center providers.

  The QCC Quality Improvement Grant supports site-level improvements, administrative supports, and building an equitable child care system. This grant assists local consortia to provide site-based training, technical assistance, coaching, and other resources to support CQI and promote better outcomes for children and families.

  The CDSS is researching ways to recognize, incentivize, and collaborate with families, the workforce, and other proximity experts to support a statewide system that is anti-bias, anti-hate, linguistically supportive and that is equitable. Given the recent concerns regarding the rating matrix, ratings are not an allowable expense. Programs must focus on utilizing developmentally appropriate resources that have been proven to directly impact CQI and that are linked to positive outcomes for children. Grantees will use the QCF and aligned resources, which we are overarchingly using to define quality.

  Additional guidance for the requirements of the QCC Workforce Pathways Grant and the QCC Quality Improvement Grant can be found on CDSS' Quality Funding Announcements web page.

In addition, to the QCC Workforce and Quality Improvement Grants, the CDSS funds other quality initiatives and projects that support QCC and the workforce including the Resource and Referral Programs (R&Rs), Child Care Initiative Project (CCIP), Local Planning Councils (LPCs), California Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC), California Early Childhood Mentor Program (CECMP), Program for Infant and Toddler Care (PITC), California Early Childhood Online (CECO), as well as many others. To see current quality initiatives please visit the CDSS Quality Initiatives Webpage.

- **First 5 California, IMPACT Legacy**

  In alignment with Proposition 10, the 2019 F5CA Strategic Plan, and F5CA's North Star and Audacious Goal, the purpose of IMPACT Legacy is to expand access to the Quality Counts California (QCC) system and resources for center and home-based ELC educators serving high-need communities and populations not already receiving quality support. Objectives towards fulfilling the purpose of IMPACT Legacy include understanding and eliminating barriers to participation and prioritizing children's well-being, workforce engagement and well-being, family engagement, and multilingual learners (MLL).

  IMPACT Legacy focuses on addressing the needs of the whole child, including health, child development, and family strengthening. The IMPACT Legacy investment provides funding to support and retain a valued workforce through a commitment to comprehensive training, coaching, technical assistance, and professional development systems. These investments honor the diverse needs of educators and prepare them to implement learning strategies that meet the unique needs of the families in the communities they serve. Using research-based approaches, IMPACT Legacy prioritizes processes and procedures that are inclusive of all priority populations and address barriers to participation and provide specific professional development (PD) opportunities to ELC providers. Due to concerns regarding the rating matrix, formal ratings are not currently supported with IMPACT Legacy funds.

  Additional guidance for the requirements of IMPACT Legacy can be found on First 5 California's QRIS web page.

- **California Department of Education (CDE), CSPP QRIS Block Grant**

  The CDE CSPP QRIS Block Grant funds are allocated to local consortia for support of CSPP quality rating and improvement processes to increase the

number of low-income children in high-quality preschool programs preparing children for success in school and life.

All sites participating in the CSPP QRIS Block Grant are required by *Education Code* 8203.1 to be rated. For the fiscal years (FYs) 2025–26 and 2026–27, CSPP QRIS Block Grantees are to use the QCF unless otherwise notified by the California Department of Education (CDE), to support quality improvement activities and ratings. The full requirements for rating are detailed in section 5 of this Guide. Programs are required to be rated on a three- to five-year cycle, based on their last tier rating (further details provided on page 9).

Participating CSPP sites engage in an ongoing continuous quality improvement process and maintain an updated quality improvement plan between ratings. CSPP QRIS Block Grantees are required to monitor participating sites between ratings.

Additional guidance for the requirements of the CSPP QRIS Block Grant can be found on the CDE's CSPP QRIS Block Grant web page.

5. Rating Guidelines for CSPP QRIS Block Grant

Grantees are to base CSPP ratings only on Element 4b (Effective Teacher-Child Interactions) of the QCF and are required to conduct observations using both the CLASS 2nd Edition and the CLASS Environment tools for rating purposes (unless observing in a Head Start funded agency). The rating requirements for the CSPP QRIS Block Grant require all CLASS observations to be done by an independent certified CLASS observer (defined below). Grantees may still use CSPP QRIS Block Grant funds to support quality improvements across the QCF (as outlined above) but cannot use funds for rating purposes on elements other than CLASS and CLASS Environment, within the two-year transitional grant period of FYs 2025–26 and 2026–27.

All CSPP QRIS Block Grantees agree to implement all tools, measures, and documents in accordance with the Guide. Preserving the components that made the original practice effective can directly impact the success of desired outcomes. To ensure high-quality implementation, consortia need to identify and clearly stipulate distinct QCC functions:

- **Independent certified CLASS® observers** are those who have completed the training to become a CLASS observer, passed the CLASS certification test, have an active CLASS certification from Teachstone, and do not work at or provide coaching or other types of consultation directly to the observation site. Additionally, independent certified CLASS observers must also have completed the CLASS Observer Support Series, including:

    - Settings with Dual Language Learners,
    - Settings with Children with Disabilities, and
    - Reducing Bias.

- **CLASS Environment Observers** are those who are independent certified CLASS observers as defined above and who have completed both the Prek-K-K CLASS Environment Foundations and CLASS Environment within a CLASS Observation.

- **Monitors** ensure sites maintain their rated quality and compliance with QRIS requirements between ratings.

Frequency of CSPP Rating

A CSPP's rating is valid for three (for Tier 3) or five years (for Tiers 4 and 5), from the time the overall site rating is assigned (see below for examples). During the two-year transitional period of FYs 2025–26 and 2026–27, CSPP QRIS Block grantees have flexibility to adjust rating cycles +/- one year to allow the redistribution of CSPPs being rated in a FY.

If The Site was Rated in:	**The Result was Tier 3 (or below on previous QCF), The Site's Rating is Valid Through*:**	**The Result was Tier 4 or 5, The Site's Rating is Valid Through*:**
February 2025	February 2028	February 2030
May 2024	May 2027	May 2029
March 2023	March 2026	March 2028
November 2022	November 2025	November 2027

*Note: CSPP QRIS Block Grantees have flexibility to adjust the annual rating cycle by one year in any direction during this two-year grant cycle.

Re-rating is required when a site license changes due to a change of physical location. The decision to re-rate a site for other reasons during the rating period is a local decision. Some local circumstances that may prompt a reconsideration of the rating before the rating period has passed include:

1. Significant turnover in staff
2. New director
3. Changes that warrant re-assessment of an individual classroom, including a change in the lead teacher of a formerly assessed classroom
4. Significant licensing violation
5. Other evidence of changes related to the criteria upon which the site was rated
6. Other reasons determined by local consortia

Communicating the CSPP Rating

Consortia have discretion on how ratings are publicized. Consortia may share CSPP ratings by:

- Posting at a participating CSPP to indicate QRIS participation and tiered rating
- Posting on a website (e.g., Mychildcareplan.org, R&R, and/or local QRIS website). Public communication should include the effective dates of the rating.

Reporting Site Data to the State

Consortia receiving CSPP QRIS Block Grant are required to report all CLASS data to the State in addition to submitting annually to the Common Data File (CDF) and annual performance report (APR) unless other direction is provided by the CDE. Details about how and when to report annual data are available at https://qualitycountsca.net/quality-partners/consortium-members/.

Observing Classrooms

Defining Classrooms for Observation

Classrooms are defined by the teaching team and the group of children. The table below demonstrates several scenarios to help determine the number of CSPP classrooms.

Scenario	Number of Classrooms	Rationale

Full-day preschool in center or family child care setting; one group of children and one teaching team	1	This is one CSPP classroom, the children and the teaching team are the same for the whole day
Full-day preschool in center or family child care setting; one group of children with the same lead teacher, but different teaching team	1	This is one CSPP classroom, the children and the lead teacher are the same, though the teaching team changes
AM preschool + PM preschool in center or family child care setting; different children and same teaching team	2	This is two CSPP classrooms; even though the teaching team is the same, the children are different
AM preschool + PM preschool in center or family child care setting; different children and same lead teacher but different supporting staff	2	This is two CSPP classrooms; even though the lead teacher is the same, the children and support staff are different
AM preschool + PM preschool in center or family child care setting; using the same physical classroom at different times, different children and different teaching teams in AM and PM	2	This is two CSPP classrooms; different children and different teaching teams

Selecting Classrooms for Observation

CSPP QRIS Block Grantees are responsible for coordinating or conducting CLASS observations at participating CSPP QRIS Block Grant sites for at least one-third of the total number of CSPP classrooms at a site, but are highly encouraged to observe 100 percent of CSPP classrooms, or observe a higher proportion in alignment with Management Bulletin (MB) 23-10 (30 percent FY 2025–26 and 60 percent FY 2026–27). Classrooms with more than one funding source (e.g., a classroom with

blended CSPP and Head Start funding) shall be included in the count for CSPP classrooms.

To determine the required one-third of classrooms please use the following table:

Number of CSPP Classrooms at Site	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Total number of CSPP Classrooms to Observe	**1**	**1**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**4**

Parameters for Selecting Classrooms

If observing only one-third of CSPP classrooms, those classrooms should be chosen randomly by the grantees from among all CSPP classrooms at the site. In this case, all observed classrooms should be included to calculate the CSPP's rating. If more than one-third of classrooms are observed, the grantee may either calculate the CSPP's rating based on a random one-third sampling of observed classrooms, or all classrooms that have been observed, whichever is preferred.

Announcing Observations

CSPP QRIS Block Grantees are required to inform contractors by the end of the first quarter if their CSPP(s) will be rated in that FY or three months prior to their scheduled observation, whichever comes first.

Use of Existing Observations

CSPP QRIS Block Grantees may accept CLASS observations previously conducted in lieu of the county consortium sending an observer only if the observation was:

- Completed within the same fiscal year of the rating
- Performed by an independent certified CLASS observer (If observations are funded by a Head Start funded agency, the CLASS Observer Support Series detailed on pages 9-10 is optional)
- Conducted using the Pre-K-3rd CLASS 2nd Edition observation tool and CLASS Environment (If observations are funded by a Head Start funded agency, CLASS 2008 may be used and CLASS Environment is optional)
- Conducted with the same lead teacher, classroom, and physical location as the randomly selected classroom

Recommendations for Observations Using the CLASS Tool

When coding with CLASS, the observer evaluates the effectiveness of interactions. In any classroom setting, multiple adults may be present during the observation, requiring the observer to consider how each adult interacts with children and how those adults jointly influence the overall classroom experience.

Local consortium policy should guide other observation protocols, such as:

- When a classroom receives a CLASS observation (e.g., if at a lower point level than required in the QCF)
- The number of children in the classroom (or target age level) that need to be present in order to observe and if/when to reschedule an observation to maximize attendance

Guidelines for Use of CLASS in Commingling Classrooms

Each classroom that includes one or more children enrolled in CSPP must conduct CLASS observations with respect to all children in the classroom, regardless of funding source. In other words, CLASS must be applied to all classrooms or settings where children are commingled (by age or funding source), if at least one of which is enrolled in CSPP. For example:

- When conducting a CLASS observation in a mixed-age setting or classroom, including in FCCHs operating as part of a family childcare home education network (FCCHEN), contractors must observe using CLASS Second Edition Pre-K-3rd.
- When contractors commingle CSPP children (certified children) with children being served through different funding sources (non-certified children), contractors must observe using the CLASS Second Edition Pre-K-3rd unless commingled classrooms are within a Head Start funded agency. A Head Start funded agency may use CLASS 2008.

In all commingling situations, the observers must observe teacher-child interactions with all children in the classroom, not just children enrolled in CSPP.

Regional CLASS Trainers and Observers

Regional CLASS Affiliate Trainers

A CLASS Trainer is certified by Teachstone to conduct training on a specific tool and is called an affiliate trainer. QCC recommends, but does not require, each region to identify a regional CLASS affiliate trainer to support the region’s CLASS needs.

Regional CLASS affiliate trainers who work within QCC are authorized to provide training to other partners within their local QRIS.

Geography or other needs may call for each consortium within a regional hub to have its own consortium-dedicated affiliate trainers, or several consortia may elect to share a regional CLASS affiliate trainer.

The regional CLASS affiliate trainers should maintain annual certification through Teachstone. If authorized by the regional hub, the regional CLASS affiliate trainer may:

- Coordinate regional training and observer certification
- Review reports written by CLASS observers

Certified CLASS Observers

Whether regional or consortia specific, Certified CLASS observers carry out observations on applicable tools (CLASS Pre-K-3[1] and CLASS Environment) and complete reports, as applicable within a consortium or for several consortia within a regional hub.

Certified CLASS observers must be recertified annually through Teachstone to maintain a current CLASS observer certification. Certifications expire exactly one year from the date observers were last certified or recertified. Certified CLASS observers must have proof of current certification from Teachstone demonstrating reliability on the applicable tool and must also have completed the CLASS Observer Support Series (one time only), which includes:

- Settings with Dual Language Learners,
- Settings with Children with Disabilities, and
- Reducing Bias.

The purpose of this additional training requirement is to ensure California is centering diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in CLASS implementation.

[1] CLASS 2008 may be used in a Head Start funded agency.

Appendix 1: Quality Continuum Framework – July 2025

Quality Counts California

Quality Continuum Framework
July 2025

NOTE: The Quality Continuum Framework (formerly called the Rating Matrix) includes elements that are research-based indicators of quality. It provides a recommended *framework*, or *structure*, for quality improvement. **Only Element 4b is required for California State Preschool Program Ratings**.

Element	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
Core I: Child Development and School Readiness **1. Child Observation**	-	Program uses evidence-based child assessment or observation tool annually that covers all five domains of development	Program uses valid and reliable child assessment or observation tool aligned with the most recent iteration of the *California Learning Foundations* twice a year	Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) is administered twice a year, at minimum, and results are used to inform curriculum planning	Program uses DRDP twice a year and uploads into DRDP Online or DR Access, and results are used to inform curriculum

Core I: Child Development and School Readiness **2. Developmental and Health Screenings**	Meets Title 22 Regulations	Health Screening Form (Community Care Licensing form LIC701 "Physician's Report – Child Care Centers" or equivalent) used at entry, then: Annually **OR** Ensures vision and hearing screenings are conducted annually	Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using a valid and reliable developmental screening tool at entry and as indicated by results thereafter **AND** Meets criteria from point level 2	Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) at entry and as indicated by results thereafter **AND** Meets criteria from point level 2	Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using the ASQ and ASQ-Social Emotional, if indicated, at entry, then as indicated by results thereafter **AND** Program staff uses children's screening results to make referrals and implement intervention strategies and adaptations as appropriate **AND** Meets criteria from point level 2

Element	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
Core II: Teachers and Teaching **3. Minimum Qualifications for Lead Teacher or Family Child Care Home (FCCH)**	Meets Title 22 Regulations **Center:** 12 units of Early Childhood Education (ECE) or Child Development (CD)[2] **FCCH:** 16 hours of training on preventative health practices	**Center:** 24 units of ECE or CD **OR** Associate Teacher Permit **FCCH:** 12 units of ECE or CD **OR** Associate Teacher Permit	24 units of ECE or CD, plus 16 units of General Education **OR** Teacher Permit **AND** 21 hours of professional development (PD) annually	Associate's degree (AA/AS) in ECE or CD (or a closely related field) OR AA/AS in any field plus 24 units of ECE or CD **OR** Site Supervisor Permit **AND** 21 hours of PD annually	Bachelor's degree (BA/BS) in ECE or CD (or a closely related field) **OR** BA/BS in any field plus/with 24 units of ECE or CD (or a master's degree in ECE or CD) **OR** Program Director Permit **AND** 21 hours of PD annually

[2] For all ECE or CD units, the core eight are desired, but not required.

Note: Point values are not indicative of Tiers 1 through 5, but reflect a range of points that can be earned toward assigning a tier rating (see Total Point Range).

Element	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
Element 4a: For Use By Non-California State Preschool Programs					
Core II: Teachers and Teaching **4a. Effective Teacher-Child Interactions: Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)[3]**	-	Familiarity with CLASS for appropriate age group as available by one representative from the site	Independent CLASS assessment by a reliable observer to inform the program's PD or improvement plan **OR** Informal assessment and results used to inform Quality Improvement Plan and staff PD plan	Independent CLASS assessment by a reliable observer with minimum CLASS scores: **Pre-K:** ● Emotional Support – 5 ● Instructional Support – 3 ● Classroom Organization – 5 **Toddler:** ● Emotional & Behavioral Support – 5 ● Engaged Support for Learning – 3.5 **Infant:** ● Responsive Caregiving – 5	Independent CLASS assessment by a reliable observer with minimum CLASS scores: **Pre-K:** ● Emotional Support – 5.5 ● Instructional Support – 3.5 ● Classroom Organization – 5.5 **Toddler:** ● Emotional & Behavioral Support – 5.5 ● Engaged Support for Learning – 4 **Infant:** ● Responsive Caregiving – 5.5

[3] CLASS or CLASS 2nd Edition can be used for Non-California State Preschool Programs. Non-California State Preschool Programs can also choose to follow 4b in its entirety, but are not required.

Element	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
Element 4b: Required Rating Element For Use By California State Preschool Programs[4]					
Core II: Teachers and Teaching **4b. Effective Teacher-Child Interactions: Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)[5]**	-	-	CLASS 2nd Edition Pre-K-3rd assessment completed by an independent certified CLASS observer to inform continuous quality improvement **AND** CLASS Environment observation completed by an independent certified CLASS observer	CLASS 2nd Edition Pre-K-3rd assessment completed by an independent certified CLASS observer to inform continuous quality improvement **AND** CLASS Environment observation completed by an independent certified CLASS observer **AND** Meets domain score requirements of: **Pre-K:** ● Emotional Support – 5 ● Instructional Support – 3 ● Classroom Organization – 5	CLASS 2nd Edition Pre-K-3rd assessment completed by an independent certified CLASS observer to inform continuous quality improvement **AND** CLASS Environment observation completed by an independent certified CLASS observer **AND** Meets domain score requirements of: **Pre-K:** ● Emotional Support – 5.5 ● Instructional Support – 3.5 ● Classroom Organization – 5.5

[4] Non-California State Preschool Programs can also choose to follow 4b in its entirety, but are not required.
[5] For programs in a Head Start funded agency, CLASS or CLASS 2nd Edition may be used and CLASS Environment is optional.

Element	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
Core III: Program and Environment[6] **5. Ratios and Group Size** (Centers only beyond licensing regulations)	**Center:** Title 22 Regulations Infant ratio of 1:4 Toddler Option ratio of 1:6 Preschool ratio of 1:12 **FCCH:** Title 22 Regulations (excluded from point values in ratio and group size)	**Center:** Ratio: Group Size Infant/Toddler – 4:16 Toddler – 3:18 Preschool – 3:36	**Center:** Ratio: Group Size Infant/Toddler – 3:12 Toddler – 2:12 Preschool – 2:24	**Center:** Ratio: Group Size Infant/Toddler – 3:12 or 2:8 Toddler – 2:10 Preschool – 3:24 or 2:20	**Center:** Ratio: Group Size Infant/Toddler – 3:9 or better Toddler – 3:12 or better Preschool – 1:8 ratio and group size of no more than 20

[6]Effective August 2023, ERS was removed as a QCC rating requirement, however, Title 5 programs using CDSS contract funds are required, per statute (5 CCR 18281), to use the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) as part of the self-assessment requirement.

Element	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
Core III: Program and Environment **6. Director Qualifications** (Centers only)	12 units ECE or CD, plus/with 3 units management or administration	24 units ECE or CD, plus 16 units general education, plus/with 3 units management or administration **OR** Master Teacher Permit	AA/AS with 24 units ECE or CD, plus/with 6 units management or administration and 2 units in supervision **OR** Site Supervisor Permit **AND** 21 hours of PD annually	BA/BS with 24 units ECE or CD, plus/with 8 units management or administration **OR** Program Director Permit **AND** 21 hours of PD annually	Master's degree with 30 units ECE or CD, including specialized courses, plus/with 8 units management or administration **OR** Administrative Credential **AND** 21 hours of PD annually

Total Point Ranges for Quality Improvement

Program Type	Common Tier 1	Local Tier 2[7]	Common Tier 3	Common Tier 4	Local Tier 5[8]
Centers 6 elements for 30 points	**Blocked** (6 points) – must meet all elements	7 to 16 points	17 to 22 points	23 to 26 points	27 points and above
FCCHs 4 elements for 20 points	**Blocked** (4 points) – must meet all elements	5 to 9 points	10 to 13 points	14 to 17 points	18 points and above

[7] Local Tier 2: Local decision if blocked or points and if there are additional elements.
[8] Local Tier 5: Local decision if there are additional elements included.

California State Preschool Program Rating (Element 4b only)

Program Type			Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5
CSPP (Centers and FCCHENs)	-	-	3 points	4 points	5 points

Appendix 2: Guidance for Quality Improvement Elements by Points

This appendix provides guidance on determining the point values of the quality elements for sites using the QCF for QI planning and monitoring. For CSPP QRIS block grant rating requirements, please refer to Section 5 in this document.

Core I: Child Development and School Readiness

Element 1. Child Observation

1 POINT

Indicator: Not required

Detail: The child observation and assessment is not required at Common Tier 1/BLOCK. Sites licensed and in good standing with Community Care Licensing or are legally license exempt and eligible for participation will automatically receive one point for this element.

2 POINTS

Indicator: The program uses evidence-based child assessment or observation tool annually that covers all five domains of development.

Detail: Local consortia may use the list of evidence-based child assessment or observation tools from the list below, create local guidelines, or both. Local criteria must include evidence that the tool is observational, annual, and, at minimum, assesses the following developmental domains: physical (gross and fine motor), social-emotional, cognitive, and communication.

Optional, a partial list of evidence-based tools:

- HighScope Child Observation Record (COR) for Infants and Toddlers
- HighScope Preschool Child Observation Record (COR), Second Edition
- Work Sampling, Developmental Guidelines, Preschool 3
- Work Sampling, Developmental Guidelines, Preschool 4
- Learning Accomplishment Profile-3rd Edition (preschool)
- The Ounce Scale (infant/toddler)

- National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER) Early Learning Scale

Uses refers to any assessment, instrument, or tool that yields individual and group information. This term requires that the program accesses and analyzes results and those results (whether individual information or aggregated group data) are used to inform practice.

3 POINTS

Indicator: The program uses valid and reliable child assessment or observation tools aligned with the most recent iteration of the California Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations (PTKLF) twice a year.

Detail: Valid and reliable child observation tools must be approved by the QCC State Support Team.

Currently approved tools are:

- Teaching Strategies GOLD® (Creative Curriculum) assessment
- Early Learning Scale by NIEER available from Lakeshore Learning School Supply
- Brigance Inventory of Early Development III

Assessment tool developers must contact support@qualityca.net to submit documentation of alignment with the PTKLF.

4 POINTS

Indicator: The Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) is administered twice a year, at minimum, and results are used to inform curriculum planning.

Detail: All users of the DRDP must use the most current version of the DRDP version. Sites may choose, at their discretion, to use the comprehensive, fundamental, or essential view. Additionally, individual child assessments are considered when planning for learning experiences through which the curriculum goals will be achieved.

This could include:

1. The use of DRDP and program has current National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation **OR**
2. The use of DRDP and provide current Head Start School Readiness Goals **OR**
3. Completing a CD 4001B (Desired Results Developmental Profile Summary of Finding for the Classroom and Family Child Care Home Form) **OR**

4. Providing two of the following:

    - Written curriculum statements
    - Lesson plans
    - Planning webs
    - Notes from planning sessions with information on how a purchased curriculum (if used) considers assessment of child progress

5 POINTS

Indicator: Program uses DRDP twice a year and uploads into DRDP Online or DR Access, and results are used to inform curriculum planning.

Detail: DRDP Online is free to Head Start, state-funded programs, and all QCC participating sites.

This should include the use of domain scale reports when planning for individual and group learning experiences within the curriculum. DR Access domain-level reports can be used for children with Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

Element 2. Developmental and Health Screenings

1 POINT

Indicator: Meets Title 22 Regulations.

Detail: Title 22 Regulations require current immunization records for every child enrolled in the family child care home (FCCH) or center. Family child care homes use form PM 286, available at https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH Document Library/Immunization/CDPH-286.pdf and centers use form LIC 701, available at https://www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/entres/forms/English/LIC701.pdf. Forms must be printed on blue paper. Sites licensed and in good standing with Community Care Licensing or legally license exempt and eligible for participation will automatically receive one point for this element.

2 POINTS

Indicator: Health Screening Form (Community Care Licensing form LIC 701 “Physician's Report - Child Care Centers" or equivalent*)* used at entry, then:

1. Annually **OR**

2. Ensures vision and hearing screenings annually

Detail:

Used at entry then annually: Requires the program to collect form LIC 701 (or equivalent) at the child's entry into the program and annually or at the beginning of each program year.

Conducts (or collects) screening: If vision and hearing screening are used as the method of meeting this standard, programs may:

- Use information from a doctor's or specialist's screening
- Conduct vision and health screenings at the site
- Use information from a doctor or specialist and conduct vision and health screening at the site

In instances where the site has difficulty meeting the annual requirements for one or more returning children (after collection of Health Screening Form LIC 701 upon entry), consider one or both of the following::

- Parent "opt-out" form or equivalent evidence that parent denied resubmittal of Health Screening Form and/or denied screening
- Detailed documentation of repeated attempts to obtain Health Screening Form and/or parent consent when conducting file review

3 POINTS

Indicator: Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using a valid and reliable child screening tool at entry and as indicated by results thereafter **AND**

Meets criteria from point value 2

Detail: Below is a partial list of valid and reliable child screening tools. Other tools are acceptable at the discretion of the consortium. **Partial List:**

- Mullen Scales of Early Learning
- DIAL 3
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)
- ESP (Early Screening Profiles)
- ESI-R (Early Screening Inventory)
- Denver II
- Parents Evaluation of Developmental Status

- Parents Evaluation of Developmental Status – Developmental Milestones
- Battelle Developmental Inventory Screening Test
- Learning Accomplishment Profile-Diagnostic Screens

“As indicated by results thereafter” refers to the actions taken by the program to refer families to additional resources based on the results of the screening tool.

Beginning at this point value, both centers and family child care homes must use a developmental screening tool or produce one of the items below:

- IFSP/IEP
- Evidence of screening in another venue (must have actual screen or documented results)
- Parent “opt-out” form or equivalent evidence that parent denied screening
- Detailed documentation of repeated attempts to obtain parental consent when conducting file review

In addition to 100 percent of children being screened, the site must have a referral process in place.

4 POINTS

Indicator: Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using the ASQ at entry and as indicated by results thereafter **AND**

Meets criteria from point value two

Detail: “Program works with families” means:

- Families are engaged in the screening process
- Results are shared with the family in a confidential and supportive manner
- Program staff use screening results to refer families to the appropriate agencies for further assessment, such as the local Regional Center, school district, and/or other resources

For a definition of the ASQ, see the glossary.

5 POINTS

Indicator: Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using the ASQ and ASQ:SE (Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social and Emotional), if indicated, at entry, then as indicated by results thereafter **AND**

Program staff uses children's screening results to make referrals and implement intervention strategies and adaptations as appropriate **AND**

Meets criteria from point value two

Detail: For a definition of the ASQ:SE, see the glossary.

"If indicated" is a local decision acting in the best interest of the child.

Core II: Teachers and Teaching

Element 3. Early Childhood Educator Qualifications: Minimum Qualifications for Lead Teacher or Family Child Care Home (FCCH)

1 POINT

Indicator: Meets Title 22 Regulations

Center: 12 units of ECE or CD

FCCH: 16 hours of training on preventative health practices

Detail: Sites licensed and in good standing with Community Care Licensing or legally license exempt and eligible for participation will automatically receive one point for this element.

2 POINTS

Indicator:

Center: 24 units of ECE or CD **OR** Associate Teacher Permit

FCCH: 12 units of ECE or CD **OR** Associate Teacher Permit

Detail: In point values 2 through 5, qualifications are entered into the Workforce Registry for all lead teachers employed at the site **and** no less than 75 percent of them must meet requirements in point values 2 through 5. All higher education units are calculated by semester units (quarter units are converted to semester units).

Total Number of Lead Teachers	Number Needed to Meet Requirement
2	2
3	3
4	3
5	4
6	5
7	6
8	6
9	7
10	8

For point values 3 through 5, staff in FCCHs and centers are held to the same educational standard.

Point value two is equivalent to the Associate Teacher Permit for FCCHs and centers. Teachers who applied for the permit may substitute verification of application, in lieu of the transcript, for review.

An expired permit can meet the requirements for point values 2 through 5 as long as the qualifications are consistent with current permit requirements.

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) Child Development Permit Matrix can be found at the following link:
https://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/child-development-permits-(cl-797)

For questions regarding Montessori certifications and their equivalent, see Title 22 licensing section 101216.1.

For obtaining translations and determining the status of foreign educational institutions, contact the International Education Research Foundation, Credentials Evaluation Service, www.ietf.org. Additional organizations approved by CTC for transcript evaluation can be found at
https://www.ctc.ca.gov/docs/default- source/leaflets/cl635.pdf?sfvrsn=bb4f6e6a_8

Core 8 courses are desired but not required.

Each group of children must have at least one designated lead teacher. The lead teacher must spend the vast majority of time with one group of children who attend at the same time rather than divide time between classrooms or float among groups. The

group size is determined by the point value of the rating. The above is based on the NAEYC accreditation definition of a teacher.

For the purposes of rating a licensed FCCH, the lead teacher is defined as the adult who is the owner and full-time operator of the FCCH. If the owner is not teaching the children, the FCCH lead teacher is defined as the adult with the highest degree who spends the vast majority of time with the children. A group of children in an FCCH is defined as those children who are enrolled in the FCCH. The group size is determined by licensing requirements based on the ages of the children enrolled.

3 POINTS

Indicator: 24 units of ECE or CD, plus 16 units of general education **OR**

Teacher Permit

AND 21 hours of professional development (PD) annually

Detail: Point value 3 is equivalent to the Teacher Permit.

Professional development activities may include classes, documented workshops, coaching sessions, equivalency of coursework, or other activities as determined locally by the consortium. PD activities should stem from the needs of the teacher and program, based on the individual professional growth plan and/or the site's QIP. PD includes, but is not limited to, the QCC QCF.

Annually in regard to PD is a 12-month period and can be calculated from the point of enrollment in QCC or as otherwise defined by the local consortium.

4 POINTS

Indicator: Associate's degree (AA/AS) in ECE or CD (or a closely related field) **OR**

AA/AS in any field plus 24 units of ECE or CD **OR**

Site Supervisor Permit

AND 21 hours of PD annually

Detail: Point value four is equivalent to the Site Supervisor Permit.

The consortium may accept at its discretion option two of the Teacher Permit if the ECE/CD unit requirement is met.

For point values four and five, a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in a closely related field, such as Education or Human Development, may be counted as a related field **if** a substantial amount of the coursework was focused on young children ages birth to five.

"Substantial" is calculated by the Workforce Registry and is aligned with CTC's approach.

5 POINTS

Indicator: Bachelor's degree (BA/BS) in ECE or CD (or a closely related field) **OR**

BA/BS in any field plus/with 24 units of ECE or CD **OR**

Master's degree in ECE or CD **OR**

Program Director Permit

AND 21 hours of PD annually

Detail: Point value five is equivalent to the Program Director Permit.

Consortia may accept at their discretion option 2 of the Master Teacher permit if the ECE/CD unit requirement is met.

Element 4a. Effective Teacher-Child Interactions: Classroom Assessment Scoring System (For Use by Non-California State Preschool Programs)

1 POINT

Indicator: Not required

Detail: Sites licensed and in good standing with Community Care Licensing or legally license exempt and eligible for participation will automatically receive one point for this element.

2 POINTS

Indicator: Familiarity with CLASS for appropriate age group as available by one representative from the site

Detail: The decision about what constitutes *familiarity with CLASS* is a local one.

It is recommended that CLASS presentations be conducted by a certified CLASS trainer.

3 POINTS

Indicator: Independent CLASS observation (CLASS 2008 or CLASS 2nd Edition) by a reliable observer to inform the program's professional development/improvement plan

OR

Informal assessment and results used to inform the QIP and staff professional development plan

Detail: While results of the independent CLASS observation will be used to inform the site's QIP, evidence of having a QIP in place is not a requirement for a point value of three.

If choosing to use an informal assessment, the information from those assessment results must be evident in the program QIP and staff PD plan.

An informal assessment may include an external assessment, self-assessment, or other methods determined locally to enable teachers or sites to review adult-child interactions and set goals for improvement.

For an independent assessment, CLASS reliability must be renewed annually and is available for the infant, toddler, and pre-K CLASS tools. A *reliable CLASS* observer should be able to provide a certificate indicating current reliability (issued within the previous 12 months).

In classrooms with multiple age groups, it is a local decision as to whether to use the age-level tool appropriate for the highest number of children or to alternate two tools. If children are equally distributed, consult Teachstone (www.teachstone.org) for advice.

4 POINTS

Indicator: Independent CLASS observation (CLASS 2008 or CLASS 2nd Edition) by a reliable observer with minimum CLASS domain scores:

Pre-K:

- Emotional Support (ES) – 5
- Instructional Support (IS) – 3
- Classroom Organization (CO) – 5

Toddler:

- Emotional and Behavioral Support (EBS) – 5
- Engaged Support for Learning (ESL) – 3.5

Infant:

- Responsive Caregiving (RC) – 5

5 POINTS

Indicator: Independent CLASS observation (CLASS 2008 or CLASS 2nd Edition) by a reliable observer with minimum CLASS domain scores:

Pre-K:

- Emotional Support (ES) – 5.5
- Instructional Support (IS) – 3.5
- Classroom Organization (CO) – 5.5

Toddler:

- Emotional and Behavioral Support (EBS) – 5.5
- Engaged Support for Learning (ESL) – 4

Infant:

- Responsive Caregiving (RC) – 5.5

Detail (Points 4 and 5): Minimum scores are recommended by Teachstone, LLC, and based on research on the CLASS and on the design of QCC.

Each classroom observed will receive an individual point value based on the tool used and the domain cut-off scores. Average all classroom points and drop the decimal to obtain the final site points on this element.

Example*:*

Classroom	Domain Score	Domain Score	Domain Score	Points for Element
Pre-K Alligators	ES 5.42	IS 3.13	CO 5.89	4
Pre-K Bears	ES 5.10	IS 2.95	CO 5.68	3
Toddler Dragonfly	EBS 5.15	ESL 3.32		3
Infant Ladybugs	RC 5.11			4

1. Total the points earned by classroom: 4+ 3 + 3 + 4 = 14
2. Divide by the number of classrooms observed: 4
3. Obtain the average points for observed classrooms: 14 ÷ 4 = 3.5
4. Drop the decimal to determine the final point value for the site for this element. Site points for Element 4 (Teacher-Child Interactions) = 3

Element 4b. Effective Teacher-Child Interactions: Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) (Required for California State Preschool Programs)

Note: A Head Start funded agency may use CLASS 2008 and CLASS Environment is optional.

3 POINTS

Indicator: CLASS 2nd Edition Pre-K-3rd Assessment completed by an independent certified CLASS observer to inform continuous quality improvement **AND**

CLASS Environment Observation completed by an independent certified CLASS observer

4 POINTS

Indicator: CLASS 2nd Edition Pre-K-3rd Assessment completed by an independent certified CLASS observer to inform continuous quality improvement **AND**

CLASS Environment Observation completed by an independent certified CLASS observer **AND**

Meets domain score requirements of:

Pre-K:

- Emotional Support (ES) – 5
- Instructional Support (IS) – 3
- Classroom Organization (CO) – 5

5 POINTS

Indicator: CLASS 2nd Edition Pre-K-3rd Assessment completed by an independent certified CLASS observer to inform continuous quality improvement **AND**

CLASS Environment Observation completed by an independent certified CLASS observer **AND**

Meets domain score requirements of:

Pre-K:

- Emotional Support (ES) – 5.5
- Instructional Support (IS) – 3.5

- Classroom Organization (CO) – 5.5

Detail (Points 4 and 5): Minimum scores are recommended by Teachstone, LLC, and based on research on the CLASS and on the design of QCC.

Each classroom rated will receive an individual point value based on the tool used and the domain cut-off scores. Average all classroom points and drop the decimal to obtain the final site points on this element.

Example*:*

Classroom	Domain Score	Domain Score	Domain Score	Points for Element
Pre-K Alligators	ES 5.42	IS 3.13	CO 5.89	4
Pre-K Bears	ES 5.10	IS 2.95	CO 5.68	3
Toddler Dragonfly	EBS 5.15	ESL 3.32		3
Infant Ladybugs	RC 5.11			4

5. Total the points earned by classroom: 4+ 3 + 3 + 4 = 14
6. Divide by the number of classrooms observed: 4
7. Obtain the average points for observed classrooms: 14 ÷ 4 = 3.5
8. Drop the decimal to determine the final point value for the site for this element. Site points for Element 4 (Teacher-Child Interactions) = 3

Core III: Program and Environment

Element 5. Ratios and Group Size (Centers only beyond licensing regulations)

1 POINT

Indicator:

Center: Title 22 Regulations

Infant ratio of 1:4

Toddler option ratio of 1:6

Preschool ratio of 1:12

FCCH: Title 22 Regulations

(excluded from point values in ratio and group size)

2 POINTS

Indicator:

Center: Ratio: Group Size

Infant/Toddler – 4:16

Toddler – 3:18

Preschool – 3:36

3 POINTS

Indicator:

Center: Ratio: Group Size

Infant/Toddler – 3:12

Toddler – 2:12

Preschool – 2:24

4 POINTS

Indicator:

Center: Ratio: Group Size

Infant/Toddler – 3:12 or 2:8

Toddler – 2:10

Preschool – 3:24 or 2:20

5 POINTS

Indicator:

Center: Ratio: Group Size

Infant/Toddler Ratio – 3:9 or better

Toddler – 3:12 or better

Preschool – 1:8 ratio and group size of no more than 20

Detail (Points 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5): Sites licensed and in good standing with Community Care Licensing or legally license exempt and eligible for participation will automatically receive one point for this element.

Volunteers may not be used in ratio and group size calculations. Title 22 Regulations require that adult-child ratios include only employed adults.

Ages: Group Size

- Infant – A child aged birth to 18 months
- Toddler – A child who is 18 to 36 months of age

Based on Education Code Section 8265.5

- Preschooler – A child who is three years of age to kindergarten entry; the child's third birthday must be on or before September 1

Based on Management Bulletin 14-02

Ratios

Centers must meet the Community Care Licensing standards at a minimum.

Staff must meet the needs of the children in attendance and provide visual observation and supervision at all times. Centers may need additional staff depending on the age of children and their needs. Additional staff are needed for backup. An aide cannot be left alone with children except during naptime and to escort them to the restroom.

- One teacher can supervise no more than 12 children.
- One teacher and one aide can supervise up to 15 children.
- A fully qualified teacher and an assistant with six ECE units can supervise up to 18 children.
- A ratio of one teacher or aide for 24 napping children is permitted, provided the additional staff to meet the "awake" ratios are immediately available at the center.

Ratio and group size scores will be calculated as follows:

As with the CLASS observation, individual point values for each classroom will be determined for the ratio/group size element based on the QCF. Each classroom's point value is averaged for the overall site point value. The decimal is dropped, and the whole number will be reported as the points for this element.

Example:

Infant Room point value of 4

Toddler Room point value of 3

Preschool Room A point value of 2

Preschool Room B point value of 3

Preschool Room C point value of 2

4 + 3 + 2 + 3 +2 = 14

14 ÷ 5 = 2.8

Overall points for ratio/group size = 2

Element 6. Director Qualifications (Centers only)

1 POINT

Indicator: 12 units ECE or CD, plus/with 3 units management or administration

2 POINTS

Indicator: 24 units ECE or CD, plus 16 units General Education, plus/with 3 units management or administration **OR**

Master Teacher Permit

3 POINTS

Indicator: AA/AS with 24 units ECE or CD, plus/with 6 units management or administration and 2 units in supervision **OR**

Site Supervisor Permit

AND 21 hours of PD annually

4 POINTS

Indicator: BA/BS with 24 units ECE or CD, plus/with 8 units management or administration **OR**

Program Director Permit

AND 21 hours of PD annually

5 POINTS

Indicator: Master's degree with 30 units ECE or CD, including specialized courses, plus/with 8 units management or administration **OR**

Administrative Credential

AND 21 hours of PD annually

Details (Points 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5): Sites licensed and in good standing with Community Care Licensing or legally license exempt and eligible for participation will automatically receive one point for this element.

Center director is responsible for:

- Scheduling staff in accordance with licensing requirements and site needs
- Managing of all aspects of employee relations including performance review and training
- Meeting all licensing regulations, agency policies and procedures, and the Education Code as applicable
- Accurate update of records on site including but not limited to enrollment, attendance, meal counts, daily logs, curriculum, child observations, and parent participation
- The designee for ensuring implementation of requirements of funding, including assessment, screening, curriculum, etc.
- The legal designee to send and/or receive legal documents (restraining orders, suspected child abuse reports, unusual incident reports, etc.)

A director who is responsible for two or more sites may serve as the "program director" of all of the site locations provided that a person meeting qualifications at point value 1 is employed for each individual site/location. In this instance, both the "program director" and a designated lead teacher will meet the educational qualifications of center director.

Based on the California Code of Regulations, Title 22 sections 101215 and 101215.1

For example, state preschools located on the grounds of an elementary school may have a "program director" of all the state preschool locations; however, at least one teaching staff person of a state preschool on each site must meet the educational qualifications of "center director."

Note for clarification: Due to changes in course offerings of administration/management and supervision in colleges in California, if a course includes content in both

administration/management **and** supervision in ECE/CD, the two semester units will be met for three points.

For point values 2 through 5, qualifications are entered into the Workforce Registry for all administrators employed at the site. All higher education units are calculated by semester units (quarter units are converted to semester units)

Glossary

Age groups are defined by QCC as:

- Infants – birth through 17 months, or as defined by the assessment tool
- Toddlers – 18 through 35 months, or as defined by the assessment tool
- Preschool – 36 months through kindergarten entry, or as defined by the assessment tool

Ages and Stages Questionnaire® (ASQ) is a series of 19 parent-completed questionnaires designed to screen the developmental performance of children in the areas of communication, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, problem solving, personal social skills, and overall development across time. The age-appropriate scale is completed by the parent or caregiver. The items on the scale represent behaviors the child should be able to perform at that age.

Ages and Stages Questionnaire®: Social Emotional (ASQ:SE) Modeled after the ASQ, the ASQ:SE is a series of questionnaires about young children's social and emotional development. Identifying behavior through ASQ:SE-2 paves the way for next steps to helping children reach their fullest potential, such as further assessment or specialized intervention or ongoing monitoring.

California State Preschool Programs serve eligible two- three- and four-year-old children in part-day and full-day services that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate. The program also provides meals and snacks to children, parent education, referrals to health and social services for families, and staff development opportunities to employees.

The **center director** provides direct on-site supervision and administrative support to teaching staff and children, provides ongoing communication with public and private agencies, and supports families in an early learning setting with at least one classroom. For additional clarification, see the Detail section under Element 6 in this guide.

A **certified CLASS observer** is a person who has attended a CLASS observation training and who has passed a CLASS Reliability Test within the past year. A certified CLASS observer has demonstrated a solid understanding of the CLASS tool and is qualified to code classrooms using the CLASS observation tool.

The **Classroom Assessment Scoring System®** (CLASS®) are observation tools designed by the University of Virginia to measure the quality of classroom processes and teacher- child interactions. Currently, QCC uses both the CLASS Second Edition Pre-K-3rd tool and CLASS 2008 edition tools which include Preschool, Infant, and Toddler.

A **CLASS Affiliate Trainer** receives certification through Teachstone, LLC. Certification is given to trainers who pass reliability on the CLASS tool and participate in Teachstone's Train-the-Trainer program. These trainers should be able to produce a certificate indicating that they successfully completed the Train-the-Trainer program along with a certificate demonstrating their current reliability on the CLASS tool (must be renewed annually). Certification is specific to each CLASS tool and its associated age group.

The **CLASS Environment** is the observation tool developed by Teachstone and used alongside CLASS to describe and measure specific features of learning settings that can support effective interactions and enhance children's development and learning.

A **CLASS observation**, also known as a CLASS assessment, is conducted by a certified CLASS observer.

A **classroom** is defined for the purpose of the QCC as:

- One teaching team using the same physical classroom space and working with the same age group.
- A group of children under a single teaching team. A classroom may be full-day or half-day. The definition of "group=classroom" in half-day morning and afternoon preschool is based on the consistency of the teaching team and consistency of the ages of children served.

Core 8 courses:

1. Child Growth and Development
2. Child, Family, and Community
3. Introduction to Curriculum
4. Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children
5. Observation and Assessment
6. Health, Safety, and Nutrition
7. Teaching in a Diverse Society
8. Practicum

The **Desired Results Developmental Profile** (DRDP) is a child observational assessment (not inclusive of the Desired Results for Children and Families – Parent Survey [optional]).

Desired Results (DR) Access supports special educators, administrators, and families in implementing the California Department of Education's DRDP (2015) for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who have an IFSP or IEP.

DRDP Online creates psychometrically valid reports for teachers and also meets the QCC requirements of state-level data.

An **early learning site**, commonly referred to as an **early care and education site or early education site**, is operated by an administration or entity at one physical location. If two administrations or entities are operating on the same site and are operating separately from one another (e.g., co-located), each is counted as a separate site.

An **evidence-based child assessment or observation tool** provides the level of evidence to support the generality of a practice as indicated by research. Evidence may come from empirical evidence, through evaluation reports by an outside source or the developer, or by consensus documents published by a professional organization.

Familiarity with CLASS refers to the participating program's management, center director, family child care operator, and lead teacher, as appropriate, having a basic understanding of the CLASS assessment tool. This can include having attended overview orientations, webinars, training, college courses in which the tool was presented, or other forms of knowing the intent, purpose, and use of the tool, but not to the depth of completing observations.

Group of children means children who are assigned for most of the day to a specific teacher or a team of teaching staff members and who occupy an individual classroom or well-defined space in a center. For FCCHs, it's the number of children who are enrolled in the FCCH.

Head Start funded agency refers to any Head Start grantee or delegate agency or has a signed collaboration agreement with a Head Start grantee or delegate agency.

In good standing refers to a licensed child care center or FCCH that currently does not have any of the following: (1) a non-compliance conference; (2) an administrative action taken or in the process of being taken (includes denied application, denied exemption, temporary suspension order, expedited revocation action, revocation action, or exclusion action that is being initiated, in process, or already taken); and (3) a probationary license. (See Health and Safety Code Sections 1596.773 and 1596.886.)

Informal assessment may include an external assessment, self-assessment, or other methods determined locally to enable teachers or sites to review adult-child interactions and set goals for improvement.

A **lead teacher** is the adult with primary responsibility for a group of children. For the purposes of rating an early childhood classroom, the lead teacher is the adult who meets the minimum licensing requirements as a teacher and any additional requirements for the point-level of the rating. When there is more than one teacher

working in a group, the lead teacher shall be considered the person with the highest degree.

Participating sites are licensed centers, FCCHs, and license-exempt settings. Priority is given to participating programs that are serving children with high needs.

Professional development refers to 21 hours of professional development or continuing education per year, consistent with the professional growth activities described in the CTC Child Development Permit Professional Growth Manual, pages 8 and 9, at https://www.ctc.ca.gov/docs/default-source/credentials/manuals-handbooks/pg_manual_childdev.pdf

Points in QCC are based on a site's level of implementation of each quality element.

Program works with families means families are engaged in the screening process. The results are shared with the family in a confidential and supportive manner. Program staff use screening results to refer families to the appropriate agencies for further assessment, such as the local Regional Center, school district, and/or other resources.

A **Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)** is a method to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early learning settings.

Regional Coordination and Training and Technical Assistance Hubs (Hubs) are developed for consortia participating in First 5 IMPACT and QCC. The primary focus of the Hubs is to provide coordination and specialized support to consortia within a region or with similar TA needs to create economies of scale while building a local early learning system. As a regional body, the Hubs are required to:

- Help consortia identify local and regional strengths and assets, and determine local and regional gaps and needs
- Coordinate regional data collection and activities to implement the QCC elements and systems functions
- Reduce regional duplication of efforts
- Build local and regional expertise, and incorporate state and federal evidence-based practices models
- Maintain a strong connection to QCC

Related field refers to Education, Human Development, or a similar unit-based course that may be counted as a "child development related field" when a "substantial" amount of the coursework is focused on young children ages birth to five. QCC defers to the CTC and the Workforce Registry to determine whether coursework qualifies as a related field.

A **reliable CLASS observer** is an individual who has demonstrated their ability to observe and rate classrooms based on the CLASS quality indicators.

A **teaching team** consists of the same group of teachers over time.

Valid and reliable child assessment or observation tool refers to any assessment or tool whereby implementation from one time to the next and from one observer or implementer to the next is likely to yield the same results (reliability), and the instrument or tool measures what it says it measures in the defined audience or group (validity). Often, instrument validity is limited to a specific language, culture, or age group.

SDQPI LOCAL DECISIONS CHART 2025-26
FOR QCC SITE TIER RATING

NOTICE: Only items associated with local consortium decisions are included in this chart. Please refer to the most recent QCC Implementation Guide (Updated for July 2025 Implementation) for all other state-level requirements associated with QCC Site Tier Rating.

Page	Item	QCC Consortium Implementation Guide General – Introductory Pages	Local Consortium Decisions
10	V. Rating and Monitoring	**Frequency of Site Rating** The decision to re-rate a site for other reasons during the rating period is a local decision. Some local decisions that may trigger reconsideration of the rating before the rating period has passed include: Significant turnover in staff; New director; Changes that warrant re-assessment of an individual classroom, including a change in the lead teacher of a formerly assessed classroom; Significant licensing violation; Other evidence of changes related to the criteria upon which they were rated; Other reasons determined by local consortium.	A re-rating is triggered only when there is a change of the site license, which includes: change in age group/s being served, change of physical location, and change in capacity. No other changes will be monitored to trigger a re-rating between rating periods.
10	V. Rating and Monitoring	**Communicating the Site Rating** Consortia have discretion on how ratings are publicized. Consortia may share CSPP ratings by: • Posting at participating early learning setting to indicate QRIS participation and tiered rating • Posting on a website (e.g., R&R, and/or local QRIS website)	Ratings will be publicized by SDQPI seals indicating site rating. Ratings are also shared with the local R&R agency.
14	VI. Assessing Classrooms	**Recommendations for Observations Using the CLASS Tool** Local consortium policy should guide other observation protocol, such as: • When a classroom receives a CLASS observation (e.g., if at a lower point-level than required in the QCF) • The number of children in the classroom (or target age level) that need to be present in order to observe and if/when to reschedule an assessment to maximize attendance	All CSPP sites going through rating will receive CLASS reviews. At least 50% of students must be present for a CLASS review for center-based programs.

Page	Item	QCC Implementation Guide Appendix II: Guidance for Rating Elements by Points	Local Consortium Decisions
25	Element 1. Child Observation	***2 POINTS Detail*** Local consortium may use the list of evidence-based child assessment/ observation tools from the list below, create local guidelines, or both. Local criteria must include evidence that the tool is observational, annual, and, at a minimum, assesses the following developmental domains: physical (gross and fine motor), social-emotional, cognitive, and communication.	At 2 points, the local consortium has decided to add ASQ-3 to the list of evidence-based assessments since it is an annual, observation-based tool that assesses the four required domains. Since credit will only be given to assessment/observations tools that are identified on the list at the 2-point level, local guidelines will not be created to identify evidenced-based child assessments/observation tools.
30	Element 2. Developmental and Health Screenings	***5 POINTS Indicator*** Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using the ASQ & ASQ-SE, if indicated, at entry, then as indicated by results thereafter… "If indicated" is a local decision acting in the best interest of the child.	"If indicated" refers to the whether the ASQ-3 indicates a need to complete the ASQ:SE. It will be left to the program, acting in the best interest of the child, to determine if the ASQ-3 indicates a need to complete the ASQ:SE. The site leader will be asked to describe the process for determining if ASQ:SE is needed prior to reviewing the child files for ASQ-3/ASQ:SE completion.
32	Element 3. Early Childhood Educator Qualifications	***3 POINTS Detail*** Professional development activities may include classes, documented workshops, coaching sessions, equivalency of coursework, or other activities as determined locally by consortium. PD activities should stem from the needs of the teacher and program, based on the individual professional growth plan and/or the site's Quality Improvement Plan. Professional development includes, but is not limited to, the QCC Continuous Quality Improvement Framework.	"Other Activities" may include any other professional learning aligned to the SDQPI quality improvement plan, individual professional growth plan, and/or approved by the site leader.
32	Element 3. Early Childhood Educator Qualifications	***3-5 POINTS Detail*** *Annually* in regard to PD is a 12-month period and can be calculated from the point of enrollment in QCC or as otherwise defined by the local consortium. Method to verify 21 hours of professional development is a local consortium decision.	The 12-month period being reviewed for professional development will include the previous 12-month program year and/or the 12-month period from the date of the Rating Visit. Professional development hours will be verified using the CA ECE Workforce Registry.
33-34	Element 3. Early Childhood Educator Qualifications:	***4 POINTS Detail*** Consortium may accept at its discretion option two of the Teacher Permit if the ECE/CD unit requirement is met. ***5 POINTS Detail*** Consortia may accept at their discretion Option two of the Master Teacher permit if the ECE/CD unit requirement is met.	For 4 points, the consortium will accept option 2 of Teacher Permit if ECE/CD unit requirement is met. See CTC CD Permit Matrix. For 5 points, the consortium will accept option 2 of Master Teacher Permit if ECE/CD unit requirement is met. See CTC CD Permit Matrix.

Page	Item	QCC Implementation Guide Appendix II: Guidance for Rating Elements by Points	Local Consortium Decisions
34	Element 4a. Effective Teacher-Child Interactions (For Use by Non-California State Preschool Programs)	***2 POINTS Detail*** The decision about what constitutes *familiarity with CLASS* is a local one.	"Familiarity" of the CLASS tool requires certificate of completion of a CLASS overview orientation, webinars, trainings, or college course in which the tool was presented.
34	Element 4a. Effective Teacher-Child Interactions (For Use by Non-California State Preschool Programs)	***3 POINTS Detail*** An informal assessment may include an external assessment, self-assessment, or other methods determined locally to enable teachers/sites to review adult-child interactions and set goals for improvement. In classrooms with multiple age groups, it is a local decision as to whether to use the age level tool appropriate for the highest number of children or to alternate two tools. If children are equally distributed, consult Teachstone (www.teachstone.org) for advice.	No other 'informal assessment methods' were identified for use by the local consortium for this indicator/element. Will not use more than one age-level tool in a multi-age classroom. In multi-age classrooms, age of tool used will be determined by the majority age of the children present.