

A photograph of two young girls with dark hair, smiling warmly. The girl in the foreground has long dreadlocks and is wearing a light pink shirt. The girl in the background is slightly out of focus. They appear to be in a classroom or play area with colorful objects.

# Virginia Quality Frameworks

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 [VirginiaQuality.org](http://VirginiaQuality.org)



Committed to Quality  
Early Learning

# Virginia Quality Standards

***A child's brain develops most rapidly between birth and age 5.***

Virginia's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) awards quality levels to child care and preschool programs based on four nationally recognized quality standards and best practices: the education and qualifications of the staff, the curriculum or intentional teaching approach the program uses to guide children's learning, the learning environment, and teacher-child interactions.



## EDUCATION & QUALIFICATIONS

A teacher's formal education in child development or early childhood education has an impact on school readiness. When teachers have some formal education, such as a Child Development Associate (CDA), professional certificate, or child-related college credits, they are more prepared to intentionally support children's learning through high quality interactions. This standard measures the education and qualifications of program staff.



## CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

Intentional teaching has an impact on school readiness. This standard does not require programs to use a purchased curriculum. Instead, this standard measures how programs intentionally promote children's learning and development. Virginia has developed the *Milestones of Child Development* and the *Foundation Blocks for Early Learning* to guide early childhood educators in promoting school readiness, and this standard considers how the program aligns with Virginia's Early Learning Guidelines.



## ENVIRONMENT

The engagement of children in meaningful learning and play, guided by qualified caregivers in an enriched educational environment, has an impact on school readiness. This standard measures the types of materials available to the children and the types of activities they are involved in throughout the day.



## INTERACTIONS

Interactions between teachers and children form the foundation for all social and cognitive learning, significantly impacting school readiness. In addition to exposure to high quality materials and intentional teaching, children benefit most when they experience high quality interactions. At your program, do teachers:

- support children's social and emotional growth?
- have a positive attitude towards the children?
- use constructive behavior management techniques?
- encourage children to learn and be creative?

This standard measures the quality of interactions.

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# How to Use this Document

Participating programs can demonstrate their quality at 5 different levels across 4 nationally recognized standards of quality.

**1**

## LEVEL 3 Curriculum & Assessment

**2**

**3** **Criteria**

Meet all requirements for Levels 1 and 2

AND

Staff have at least eight (8) hours of training on implementing the identified curriculum or teaching framework

+

Completion of the Virginia QRIS curriculum & assessment checklist to demonstrate selection and use of curriculum or other teaching framework aligned with Virginia's Milestones of Child Development or Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning

+

Validation visit to confirm accuracy of curriculum & assessment checklist through on-site document review and observation

**4**

**5** **Required Improvement Activities**

Program completes an Environment Rating Scale (ERS) self-study using the appropriate tool for the ages served and setting

For more information on the ERS visit [ersi.info](http://ersi.info)

- 1** Indicates which level is being explained
- 2** Shows the cumulative nature of progressing through the levels system
- 3** Criteria section: specific quality indicators that must be met to achieve a particular level within Virginia's QRIS. Criteria define the quality levels for all programs
- 4** "PLUS (+)" represents additional criteria needed to achieve that level. "OR" represents one criteria or another needed to achieve that level. "AND" represents additional criteria that needs to be met
- 5** Required Improvement Activities section: specific quality improvement activities that must be completed to progress to the next Level within Virginia's QRIS. Activities build the foundation for success in the next levels, and can be completed in a variety of ways depending on your program's needs

# LEVEL 1

## Basic Health & Safety



### Criteria


A program must be in good standing with local and state regulations. Depending on the child care program type, one or more of the following may apply: Virginia Department of Social Services Licensing Standards, Virginia Board of Education Regulations, Head Start Performance Standards, Local Ordinances, or Licensed Family Day Care System.

### Required Improvement Activities

Program staff completes Virginia's QRIS Orientation Training by either:

 Completing the [Virginia Quality Online Module](#)

 Or, attending a regional in-person training\*

 Or, request an on-site orientation session for your staff\*\*

\* For more information on regional in-person trainings, contact the Regional Quality Coordinator for your area. (See page 9 of this document for a directory of Regional Coordinators)

\*\* For more information or to schedule an orientation for your program, contact the Regional Quality Coordinator for your area. (See page 9 of this document for a directory of Regional Coordinators)

## **Fast-Track** **Advance to Level 3**

A Virginia Quality "fast track" exists for early learning programs participating in the following quality improvement systems:

- Virginia Preschool Initiative
- Head Start
- NAEYC Accreditation

Through the "fast track", participating programs receive credit for their existing work towards quality. By participating in these systems, programs are provided the benefit of a solid foundation for seamless access to Virginia Quality and the resources it provides.

This list may be amended to add other, existing quality improvement systems interested in the fast track. Technical assistance is available.

**Please contact [qris@vecf.org](mailto:qris@vecf.org) for more information.**

# LEVEL 2

## Education & Qualifications



### Criteria

A program must meet all requirements for Level 1

AND

#### For Classroom-based Programs

One Administrator or Director has earned an Associate degree in a relevant field<sup>1</sup> with a minimum of 15 child-related credits

OR

Has earned 24 child-related credits from an accredited college (or in progress)

+

At least 50% of Lead Teachers have national Child Development Associate credential (also known as a CDA)

OR

12 child-related credits from an accredited college OR another approved credential such as an American Montessori Society Credential (or in progress)<sup>1</sup>

#### For Family Child Care Homes

The Family Child Care Provider responsible for the direct supervision of children and delivery of the curriculum and instruction has a national Child Development Associate credential (also known as a CDA)

OR

12 child-related credits from an accredited college OR another approved credential such as an American Montessori Society Credential (or in progress)<sup>1</sup>

*Because a teacher's participation in formal education in child development or early childhood education has an impact on children's school readiness, programs should work to meet the Level 2 criteria in-full. However, in some cases, a program may be prepared to meet the criteria at the higher levels before meeting the Level 2 criteria. In these cases, there are alternative pathways available.<sup>2</sup>*

### Required Improvement Activities

- Program staff complete the Virginia Quality Professional Development Series to support your understanding and lay the foundation for success in future Levels. Programs can complete these modules in a variety of ways depending on your program's needs, including:



Completing the [Virginia Quality Online Modules](#)



Or attending a regional in-person training<sup>3</sup>



Or watch the Virginia Quality Modules during a group training with your staff

*Includes introductory level training on the following topics:*

- › Including Children with Disabilities
- › Supporting Kindergarten Transition
- › Resources for Working with Families
- › Building Cultural Competence
- › Intentional Teaching
- › Play-Based Learning Environments
- › High Quality Interactions
- › New Employee Orientation and Staff Professional Development *(for administrators only)*
- › Resources for School Readiness

<sup>1</sup> For information about the Career Pathways document and other Professional Development Resources, please visit the VDSS Child Care Provider Resources website: [www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cc/professionals\\_resources.cgi](http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cc/professionals_resources.cgi)

<sup>2</sup> Programs may complete a professional development plan or request a waiver to this requirement, provided that they meet all Level 3 requirements and are seeking a Level 4 or 5 observation

<sup>3</sup> For more information on regional in-person trainings, contact the Regional Quality Coordinator for your area. (See page 9 of this document for a directory of Regional Coordinators)

# LEVEL 3

## Curriculum & Assessment




### Criteria

A program must meet all requirements for Levels 1 and 2

AND

Completion of the Virginia QRIS curriculum & assessment checklist to demonstrate selection and use of curriculum or other teaching framework aligned with *Virginia's Milestones of Child Development* or *Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning*; and developmentally appropriate practices.

 Download [Virginia's Milestones of Child Development](#) here<sup>4</sup>

 Download [Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning](#) here<sup>4</sup>

+

Lead Teachers have at least eight (8) hours of training on implementing the identified curriculum or teaching framework.

+

Validation visit to confirm accuracy of curriculum & assessment checklist through on-site document review and observation. Information also used to guide quality improvement efforts.

#### *More about the Level 3 Curriculum Checklist*

Programs will use this tool to examine any curricula or other intentional teaching approaches used to support learning and development of the children in their care. The checklist should be completed by a director, family child care home owner, or other individual in an educational leadership position in the program. A team of these individuals may also complete the checklist. The checklist has three components that will assess:

- The extent to which the program's curriculum or intentional teaching approach addresses the domains of early learning and development identified as significant for young children in Virginia to promote school readiness.
- The extent to which the program's curriculum or intentional teaching approach is aligned with developmentally appropriate practices.
- The support and training teaching staff receive on implementing the curriculum or intentional teaching approach.

The Curriculum Checklist will be available to programs working on Level 3 through the [Virginia Quality Website](#).

### Required Improvement Activities

- Program completes an Environment Rating Scale (ERS) self-study using the appropriate tool for the ages served and setting.

 For more information on the ERS, visit [ersi.info](#)

- Program completes a Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) self-study using the appropriate tool for ages served.

 For more information on the CLASS, visit [teachstone.com](#)

<sup>4</sup> Document can be downloaded at [www.virginiaquality.com](http://www.virginiaquality.com)

# LEVEL 4

## Environment & Interactions



### Criteria

A program must meet all requirements for Levels 1, 2, and 3

AND

A trained, reliable Virginia Quality rater will complete an on-site observation of the program's learning environment and teacher-child interactions. The two tools used in Virginia Quality for this purpose are the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and the Environment Rating Scale (ERS).

Achieve an average ERS score of **4.00 or higher** across four subscales:<sup>5</sup>

- Language-Reasoning/Listening and Talking
- Activities
- Interaction
- Program Structure

+

Achieve an average CLASS score of **5.00 or higher** in:<sup>5</sup>


- Emotional Support & Classroom Organization (Pre-K CLASS)
- Emotional and Behavioral Support (Toddler CLASS)
- Relational Climate & Teacher Sensitivity (Infant CLASS)

+

Achieve an average CLASS score of **3.25 or higher** in:<sup>5</sup>

- Instructional Support (Pre-K CLASS)
- Engaged Support for Learning Score (Toddler CLASS)
- Facilitated Exploration & Early Language Support (Infant CLASS)

 For more information on the ERS, visit [ersi.info](http://ersi.info)

 For more information on the CLASS, visit [teachstone.com](http://teachstone.com)

### Required Improvement Activities

- Develop a quality improvement plan based on feedback from ERS and CLASS on-site observation.

<sup>5</sup> For programs with multiple classrooms and age groups, scores from different ERS and CLASS tools are combined for a total average for the program (not per classroom).

# LEVEL 5

## Environment & Interactions



### Criteria

A program must meet all requirements for Levels 1, 2, and 3

AND

A trained, reliable Virginia Quality rater will complete an on-site observation of the program's learning environment and teacher-child interactions. The two tools used in Virginia Quality for this purpose are the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and the Environment Rating Scale (ERS).

Achieve an average ERS score of **5.00 or higher** across four subscales:<sup>5</sup>

- Language-Reasoning/Listening and Talking
- Activities
- Interaction
- Program Structure

+

Achieve an average CLASS score of **6.00 or higher** in:<sup>5</sup>

- Emotional Support & Classroom Organization (Pre-K CLASS)
- Emotional and Behavioral Support (Toddler CLASS)
- Relational Climate & Teacher Sensitivity (Infant CLASS)

+

Achieve an average CLASS score of **4.25 or higher** in:<sup>5</sup>

- Instructional Support (Pre-K CLASS)
- Engaged Support for Learning Score (Toddler CLASS)
- Facilitated Exploration & Early Language Support (Infant CLASS)



For more information on the ERS, visit [ersi.info](http://ersi.info)



For more information on the CLASS, visit [teachstone.com](http://teachstone.com)

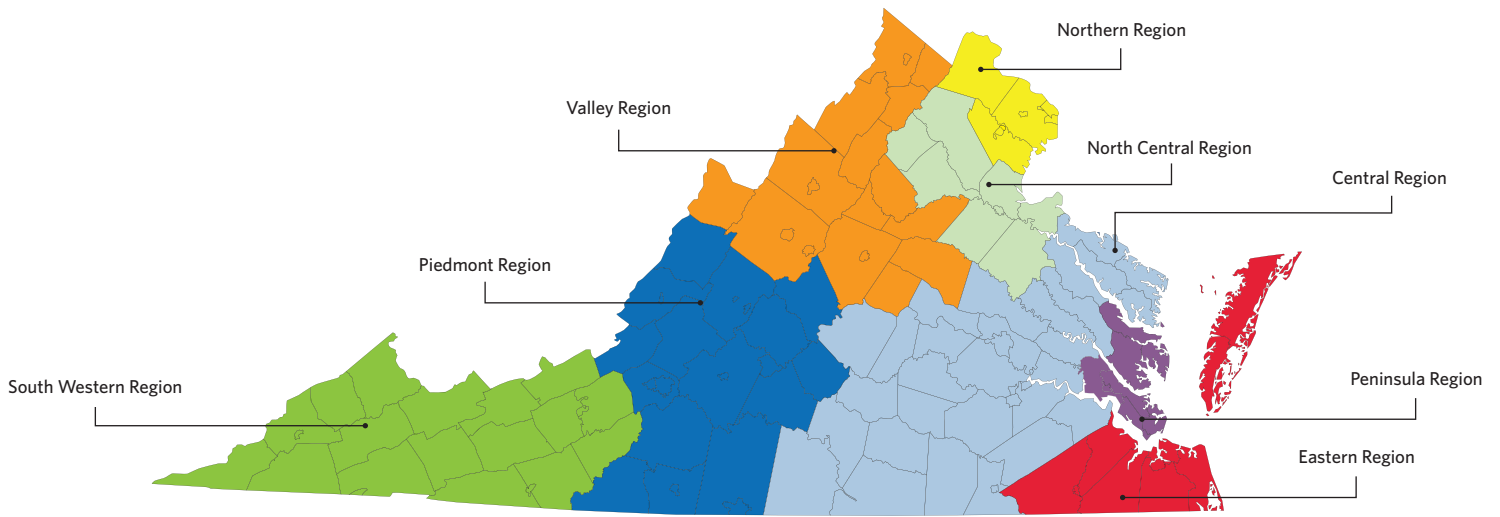
### Required Improvement Activities

- Develop a quality improvement plan based on feedback from ERS and CLASS on-site observation.

<sup>5</sup> For programs with multiple classrooms and age groups, scores from different ERS and CLASS tools are combined for a total average for the program (not per classroom).



# Regional Quality Coordinator Directory



## South Western Region

[www.VirginiaQuality.com](http://www.VirginiaQuality.com)

**Cities:** Bristol, Galax, Norton, Radford

**Counties:** Bland, Buchanan, Dickenson, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Lee, Montgomery, Pulaski, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, Wythe, Carroll

## Peninsula Region

[www.VirginiaQuality.com](http://www.VirginiaQuality.com)

**Cities:** Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, Williamsburg

**Counties:** Gloucester, James City, Mathews, Middlesex, York

## North Central Region

[www.VirginiaQuality.com](http://www.VirginiaQuality.com)

**Cities:** Fredericksburg

**Counties:** Caroline, Culpeper, Fauquier, King George, Rappahannock, Spotsylvania, Stafford

## Piedmont Region

[www.VirginiaQuality.com](http://www.VirginiaQuality.com)

**Cities:** Bedford, Buena Vista, Covington, Danville, Lexington, Lynchburg, Martinsville, Roanoke, Salem

**Counties:** Alleghany, Amherst, Appomattox, Bath, Bedford, Botetourt, Campbell, Craig, Franklin, Henry, Nelson, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Roanoke, Rockbridge

## Northern Region

[www.VirginiaQuality.com](http://www.VirginiaQuality.com)

**Cities:** Alexandria, Fairfax, Manassas, Manassas Park

**Counties:** Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William

## Eastern Region

[www.VirginiaQuality.com](http://www.VirginiaQuality.com)

**Cities:** Chesapeake, Franklin, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach

**Counties:** Accomack, Isle of Wight, Northampton, Southampton

## Valley Region

[www.VirginiaQuality.com](http://www.VirginiaQuality.com)

**Cities:** Charlottesville, Harrisonburg, Staunton, Waynesboro, Winchester

**Counties:** Albemarle, Augusta, Clarke, Frederick, Greene, Highland, Madison, Orange, Page, Rockingham, Shenandoah, Warren, Fluvanna, Louisa

## Central Region

[www.VirginiaQuality.com](http://www.VirginiaQuality.com)

**Cities:** Colonial Heights, Emporia, Hopewell, Petersburg, Richmond

**Counties:** Amelia, Brunswick, Buckingham, Charles City, Charlotte, Chesterfield/Chester, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Essex, Goochland, Greensville, Halifax, Hanover, Henrico, King and Queen, King William, Lancaster, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, New Kent, Northumberland, Nottoway, Powhatan, Prince Edward, Prince George, Richmond, Sussex, Westmoreland, Surry