Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards
Required Criteria Observation Tool

Program:	Date:
Observer:	

	Required Criteria	Met	Not Met	Comments
1.2R	Teaching staff foster a respectful and positive learning environment by: a. considering and treating all children with respect b. implementing activities, discussions and teaching practices that build confidence and a positive sense of self as well as teach respect and encourage the valuing of differences c. intervening when children tease or exclude others d. providing materials, models and visual representations that reflect all adult roles, abilities and backgrounds using appropriate and respectful language in interactions			
1.3R	Teaching staff follow written positive child guidance policies which: a. prohibit the use of physical punishment, psychological abuse or coercion b. address how disruptive and unsafe behaviors in children are handled c. limit or eliminate the use of suspension or expulsion			
2.1R	Program staff use a variety of formal and informal strategies and routines (including conversations) to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family structure; their child-rearing practices; and information families wish to share about their backgrounds.			
3.9R	Children have varied opportunities to develop a sense of competence and positive attitudes toward learning, such as persistence, engagement, curiosity, and mastery.			

3.10R	**Children have varied opportunities to develop competence in verbal and nonverbal communication by:** **a. responding to questions** **b. communicating needs, thoughts and experiences** **c. describing things and events**			
3.14R	**Children have varied opportunities to develop phonological awareness by:** **a. playing with the sounds of language** **b. learning letters and the sounds they represent** **c. recognizing and producing words which have the same beginning or ending sounds** **d. self-initiated efforts to write letters that represent the sounds of words are supported**			
3.15R	**Children have varied opportunities to:** **a. access various types of books including adaptive books, storybooks, factual books, books with rhymes, alphabet books and wordless books** **b. explore books on their own and have places that are conducive to the quiet enjoyment of books** **c. have books read to them in an engaging manner at least twice a day in full-day programs and at least once daily in half-day programs** **d. be read the same book on repeated occasions** **e. be read to regularly in individualized ways including one-on-one or in small groups of two to six children** **f. engage in conversations that help them understand the content of the book** **Teaching staff provide children with opportunities to:** **g. identify the parts of books and differentiate print from pictures** **h. ask and answer literal and inferential questions about books** **i. retell and reenact events in storybooks** **j. link books to other aspects of the curriculum**			
3.18R	**Children are provided learning opportunities and materials to build an understanding of foundational math skills and practices related to:**			

	a. number sense, counting and subitizing b. recognizing, creating and extending patterns c. beginning operations (joining and separating sets) d. measurement e. geometry and attributes			
4.1R	**Daily schedules reflect intentional time for child-initiated play, exploration and creative self-expression.**			
4.6R	**Teaching staff help children:** **a. identify and use prior knowledge** **b. express their ideas** **c. build on the meaning of their experiences** **d. reinforce learning** **e. extend current understandings**			
5.7R	**The program uses an ongoing assessment process to evaluate all areas of children's development and learning. The assessment results are used at least weekly by teaching staff to:** **a. identify children's interests, strengths and needs** **b. adjust instructional practices, the curriculum and the environment** **c. adjust teaching practices to inform classroom instruction for large groups, small groups and individual children**			
6.1R	**There is a minimum of 35 square feet of usable space per child in each of the primary indoor activity areas and at least 75 square feet of outdoor gross motor environment play space for each child playing at any time.**			
6.2R	**Facilities meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements. Accessibility includes but is not limited to access to buildings, toilets, sinks, drinking fountains, outdoor play space, and all classroom and therapy areas.**			

6.3R	**Fully equipped first-aid kits are readily available and maintained for each group of children. Teaching staff take at least one kit to the outdoor play areas as well as on field trips and outings away from the site.**			
6.5R	**A variety of age and developmentally appropriate materials are rotated as preschoolers' skill level changes over time and are available indoors and outdoors for children throughout the day. This equipment includes:** **a. dramatic play equipment** **b. sensory materials** **c. materials which support curriculum goals and objectives in all developmental domains and content areas** **d. gross motor equipment for activities**			
6.7R	**The indoor learning environment is designed to protect children and adults from hazards, including but not limited to sufficient lighting, electrical shock, burns or scalding, slipping, tripping, or falling. Floor coverings are secured to keep program staff and children from tripping or slipping.**			
6.9R	**Program staff provide for an outdoor play area that is protected by a fence that:** **a. is fully enclosed** **b. has childproof gates** **c. is at least four feet in height** **d. prevents entry to bodies of water, traffic, or other such dangers**			
6.10R	**The outdoor play area protects children from:** **a. injury from falls** **b. catch points, sharp points, and protruding hardware** **c. entrapment** **d. tripping hazards** **e. excessive wind and direct sunlight**			

7.2R	**Teaching staff supervise all children by sight and sound at all times. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible, as long as teachers check frequently on children who are out of sight (e.g., those who can use the toilet independently, who are in the library area, or who are napping).**			
7.3R	**At least one staff member with current pediatric CPR and pediatric first-aid training is always present with each class of children.**			
7.6R	**The program follows these practices regarding environmental safety:** **a. current fire certificate on file** **b. fire extinguishers are serviced and tagged** **c. fire alarms are installed in each classroom and are tagged and serviced annually** **d. measurement of radon concentrations as applicable** **e. fully working carbon monoxide detectors are installed on each floor and tagged and serviced annually** **f. smoke detectors, fire alarms and carbon monoxide detectors are tested monthly and a written log of battery changes and testing dates is maintained and available**			
7.7R	**The facility, outdoor play areas, and vehicles used to transport children are entirely tobacco- and nicotine-free. Smoking or vaping is not permitted in the presence of children.**			
8.1R	**Teachers hold an Iowa teaching license issued by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners (BOEE) and must hold an early childhood endorsement that reflects their current teaching assignment.**			
8.2R	**Assistant teachers/teacher aides (staff who implement program activities under direct supervision) have a high school diploma or GED and:** **a. 25% of assistant teachers/teacher aides have at least a paraeducator certificate with an early childhood concentration, Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) or equivalent** **b. 100% of assistant teachers/teacher aides who do not meet the above qualifications:**			

	i. are enrolled in a program leading to a paraeducator certificate with an early childhood concentration or CDA AND ii. are actively participating and demonstrating progress toward the paraeducator certificate with an early childhood concentration or CDA College-level course work is from regionally accredited institutions of higher education and may include distance learning or online coursework. If there is only one assistant teacher/teacher aide, then either of the requirements can be met.			
9.1R	The program administrator has the educational qualifications and personal commitment required to serve as the program's operational and pedagogical leader. This criterion can be met in one of four ways: a. The administrator holds a current Iowa administrative license issued by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners (BOEE). b. The administrator: i. has at least a baccalaureate degree AND ii. has at least 9 credit-bearing hours of specialized college-level course work in administration, leadership and management (which can be in school administration, business management, communication, technology, early childhood management or administration, or some combination of these areas) AND iii. has at least 24 credit-bearing hours of specialized college-level course work in early childhood education, child development, elementary education or early childhood special education that encompasses child development and children's learning from birth through kindergarten; family and community relationships; the practices of observing, documenting and assessing young children; teaching and learning processes; and professional practices and development.			

	c. The administrator documents that a plan is in place to meet the above qualifications within five years. d. The administrator can provide documentation of having achieved a combination of relevant formal education and experience as specified in the table titled Alternative Pathways to Achieve Educational Qualifications as a Program Administrator.			
9.9R	The program has written procedures addressing the maintenance of developmentally appropriate staff-child ratios within group size to facilitate adult-child interaction and constructive activities among children. Staff-child ratios within group size are maintained during all hours of operation, including: a. indoor time b. outdoor time c. field trips which require at least one adult above the standard classroom ratio			
9.10R	The program has a written policy and procedures in place for child abuse and neglect which comply with applicable federal, state and local laws. Required policies include: a. Staff report all suspected incidents of child abuse and/or neglect by families, staff, volunteers or others to the appropriate local agencies. b. Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect where they work are immune from discharge, retaliation or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious. c. Procedures to be followed if a staff member is accused of abuse or neglect of a child in the program protect the rights of the accused staff member as well as protect the children in the program.			