Participant Guide

State Fiscal Year 2021*

*Effective 7.1.2020. Policies are subject to change and may be updated during the fiscal year. Please visit the Quality First Extranet's Resources page to ensure you have the most up to date policy information.

PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THIS GUIDE

Quality First is a voluntary program supporting child care and preschool programs across Arizona to improve the quality of early learning provided for children birth to age 5. The Quality First Participant Guide provides a central source of information about the policies and guidelines that support your participation in Quality First. The purpose of the Quality First Participant Guide is to assist you in understanding your responsibilities as a Quality First participant along with the roles and functions of the Quality First supports available to your program. Included with your Participant Guide are resource documents that will provide you with additional guidance as you participate in Quality First.

Each section of the guide provides information to support your understanding of the different components of Quality First participation. You will notice Quality First polices are included throughout the guide, within blue boxes with white text. Additional information about the processes associated with each policy, if needed, immediately follows the policy box. Strategies for success are included throughout the guide to provide you with concrete tips for making the most of your participation.

The information contained in the Participant Guide is updated annually. As a Quality First participant, it is your responsibility to review and agree to the policies and procedures described in the Participant Guide annually.

If you have any questions related to the policies or procedures please consult with your Quality First coach or contact the Quality First team at 602.771.5000

HIGHLIGHTS FOR SFY2021

The following information includes significant updates for this fiscal year. The information should not be used in isolation. Please refer to the remainder of the Participant Guide as more details regarding each item are provided.

Section One: Quality First Participant

- Participant Guide Acknowledgement – Participants must review and acknowledge the Participant Guide Acknowledgement and the Participant Roles and Responsibilities Agreement within the first 90 days of each fiscal year of participation. Both documents must be acknowledged and submitted in order to access incentive funds. (page 20)

Section Three: Quality First Assessment

- Summer Closures and Points Scale Assessment – If your Points Scale Preparation end date occurs during your program's summer closure, your assessment will automatically be deferred until 30 days after school your program resumes in the fall. You may request an extension of your Points Scale Preparation period to make up for the length of your summer closure. (page 33)

- Assessment Report Clarification Timeline – The Assessment Report Clarification Request must be submitted within 40 days of the assessment results being approved. A response will be provided within 14 days as possible. This new timeline provides faster resolution of assessment-related questions. (page 42)

Section Four: Quality First Financial Incentives

- Incentives Timelines – To allow year-end processing and record keeping, timelines for submittal of forms have been updated.
    - For participants ordering through the coach agency, Incentive Order Forms must be submitted by April 15. (pages 48-49)
    - For participants receiving incentives through a direct payment, all incentive funds must be fully expended by May 31. Participants are encouraged to submit the Incentives Payout Expenditure Report as soon as spending is completed, and the form must be submitted to the Quality First coach by June 30. (page 50)

Section Five: Quality First Specialized Assistance

- Assistance to help you prevent expulsions – As a Quality First participant, your program has access to resources to help you support all children's success and reduce or eliminate expulsion from your program. Find resources to help you and staff feel more equipped to respond to challenging behaviors in support of all children. (begins page 59)

3

Section Seven: Quality First Administrative Practices

- Appeals Policy – The Appeals Process only applies when a participant appeals a star rating or an enrollment termination. A participant must go through the Assessment Report Clarification Process before appealing a star rating. (page 66)

- Informal Dispute Resolution Policy – This policy only applies to concerns related to a participant's Quality First experience aside from concerns related to assessment, star rating, or termination. (page 67)

- Clarification, Concern Resolution and Appeal – The chart outlining the process for clarification, concern resolution, and appeal has been reformatted. The new chart identifies the distinct steps to be taken depending on the nature of the concern. (begins page 68)

- Star Rating Masking Policy – In order to provide accurate information about quality levels of participating programs, First Things First may temporarily mask a participating program's rating from the extranet and qualityfirstaz.com. Information about reasons for masking a star rating are included within the policy. (page 75)

Resources Section

- Resource Directory – Now included in the Resources Section, this guide offers descriptions and contact information for the many supports available to you as an early care and education provider in Arizona.

Forms

- The Participant Guide Acknowledgement form and Participant Role and Responsibilities Agreement form are included in the Participant Guide. All other forms are available on the Quality First Dashboard of the Extranet, in the Quality First Forms folder under Resources.

PARTICIPANT GUIDE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Participant Site Name and Address:	Participant ID #:

Quality First is a voluntary program supporting child care and preschool programs across Arizona to improve the quality of early learning provided for children birth to age 5. The Quality First Participant Guide provides a central source of information about the policies and guidelines that support your participation in Quality First. The purpose of the Quality First Participant Guide is to assist you in understanding your responsibilities as a Quality First participant along with the roles and functions of the Quality First supports available to your program. Included with your Participant Guide are resource documents that will provide you with additional guidance as you participate in Quality First. The information contained in the Participant Guide is updated annually. As a Quality First participant, it is your responsibility to review and agree to the policies and procedures described in the Participant Guide annually. If you have any questions related to the policies or procedures described in the Participant Guide, please consult with your Quality First coach or contact the Quality First team at 602.771.5000.

I, _____ , acknowledge that I have received a copy of the SFY21 Quality First Participant Guide. I understand that this Participant Guide and the policies described within it replace any prior editions I have received.

PLEASE READ AND INITIAL EACH ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BELOW:

___ I have read, understand, and agree to the policies contained in the SFY21 Quality First Participant Guide.

___ I understand participation in Quality First is voluntary and I may elect to decline participation at any time.

___ I have read, understand, and agree to the policies in the SFY21 Quality First Points Scale Guidance Document.

___ I have received an updated SFY21 Resource Directory.

___ I understand that before I gain access to incentive funds, I must review and agree to the terms contained in the SFY21 Incentive Management Agreement.

___ I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the Policies and Procedures contained in the SFY21 Participant Guide, Points Scale Guidance Document and Resource Directory.

Participant Name	Participant Signature	Date

QUALITY FIRST
FIRST THINGS FIRST

PARTICIPANT ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES AGREEMENT

Participant Site Name and Address:	Participant ID #:

I, _____, agree to uphold the roles and responsibilities of a Quality First participant.

PLEASE READ AND INITIAL EACH ACKNOWLEDGMENT BELOW

As a Quality First participant, I agree to:

___ Maintain my program's compliance with all regulatory requirements set forth by the regulatory body that provides licensure for my program (ADHS, DES, tribal or military authority). If my program experiences an event which causes my program to not be in good standing for a period of over 60 days or if my program experiences more than one event within 12 months, my participation in Quality First may be terminated.

___ Take leadership of my quality improvement process. I will work with my Quality First Coach, CCHC, and other technical assistance providers to identify how their supports can complement my quality improvement process.

___ If my program includes other personnel such as staff or volunteers, I will communicate my program's goals for quality improvement with them to make sustainable quality improvements to my program.

___ Maintain professionalism in my interactions with families, colleagues, staff, and technical assistance providers. I will meet with my coach and technical assistance providers as applicable and as agreed to when scheduling on-site visits. In the event that I cannot attend or will be late, I will notify the appropriate individuals in advance.

___ Maintain respectful communication and interaction with children, families, colleagues, staff, and technical assistance providers avoiding prejudice or lack of fairness towards individuals or groups of people. I will respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual, respect diversity in children, families, and colleagues, and recognize that children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust and respect.

___ Take a proactive approach to avoid the expulsion of children from my program. My program will strive to build individual relationships with each child and family; make individualized adaptations in teaching strategies, learning environments, and curriculum; and consult with the family so that each child will benefit from the best placement.

___ Maintain accurate and up-to-date information about my program (including program operations, staffing, and enrollment) on the First Things First extranet. I will review the information on the extranet regularly and make updates as changes take place, at least quarterly.

_____   _____   _____
Participant Name   Participant Signature   Date

Contact Page

CONTACT	NAME	AGENCY	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL
Quality First Coach				
Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC)				
Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant (Smart Support)				
Inclusion Coach				
AZ Early Childhood Workforce Registry Outreach Coordinator				
ADE Early Childhood Program Specialist				
ADHS Licensing Surveyor or DES Certification Specialist				
Other				
Extranet User Name		Extranet Password		

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RESOURCES

[National Accrediting Organizations](#)

[Extranet User Guide](#)

[Resource Directory](#)

[Staffing Guide](#)

[Points Scale Guidance Document](#)

FIRST THINGS FIRST

4000 N. CENTRAL AVE., PHOENIX, AZ 85012 STE.800
602.771-5100 • FIRSTTHINGSFIRST.ORG

FIRST THINGS FIRST

In November 2006, Arizona voters passed Proposition 203, a citizen's initiative that funds quality early childhood development and health programs. The Proposition created a new state level board, the Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health Board, also known as First Things First. First Things First was established to help provide greater opportunities for all children birth to age 5 in Arizona to grow up healthy and ready to succeed.

At First Things First, getting Arizona's children ready for kindergarten means a statewide financial commitment. Ninety cents of every tobacco tax dollar received by First Things First goes to programs like Quality First that benefit children birth to 5 years old. Volunteer councils decide the best ways to apply those funds for the children in their communities.

⊞ FIRST THINGS FIRST

OUR VISION

All Arizona's children are ready to succeed in school and in life.

OUR MISSION

First Things First is one of the critical partners in creating a family-centered, comprehensive, collaborative and high-quality early childhood system that supports the development, health and early education of all Arizona's children birth through age 5.

REGIONAL COUNCILS AND LOCAL FLEXIBILITY

First Things First's regional partnership councils represent the richly diverse communities across Arizona. Members of each council are appointed by the Board and have direct responsibility to: collect information on the strengths and desires of their community, prioritize the specific needs, plan how to address those needs, choose whom to partner and collaborate with to ensure success for the children in their communities, and identify the funding necessary to carry out their plan.

Regional Funding Policy: **Each regional council creates an annual regional funding plan. As part of developing their funding plans, regional councils determine the number of Quality First programs they will fund for the coming fiscal year. Some regions may choose to prioritize selecting programs into Quality First in high need areas to support the specific needs of the community. The selection schedule for enrolling new Quality First programs, although set annually, may change throughout the year based on the number of Quality First applicants and changes in regional funding. First Things First reserves the right to alter or eliminate these benefits at any time in whole or in part for any reason, including available funding, the availability of third-party service partners, the cost of services, the effectiveness of the benefits or the changes in funding priorities.**

For more information on regional councils and to find your local region, please visit: http://www.firstthingsfirst.org/regions/find-your-region. Early childhood education providers are encouraged to attend their local regional council meetings and become an active participant in the process.

In addition to funding available through First Things First's regional partnership councils, new opportunities for Quality First participation may be available through external partners. External partners may include, but are not limited to: the federal government, municipalities, school districts, corporate sponsors, non-profit organizations, and individual donors.

External Funding Policy: **External partners may provide funding to support Quality First participation in addition to the programs supported by regional funding plans. Externally funded participants have a finite period of funding determined at the time of enrollment. External funders pay for Quality First participation through a contract detailing the funding period, the terms of participation, and the participating early childhood program(s). At the end of the funding period identified in the contract, the external funder may choose to enter into a new contract or cease funding. Early childhood programs who have participated in Quality First through external funding are eligible to participate through regional funding after their external funding period is complete. Interested programs must reapply for Quality First. The application is available online at QualityFirstAZ.com.**

FIRST THINGS FIRST REGIONS
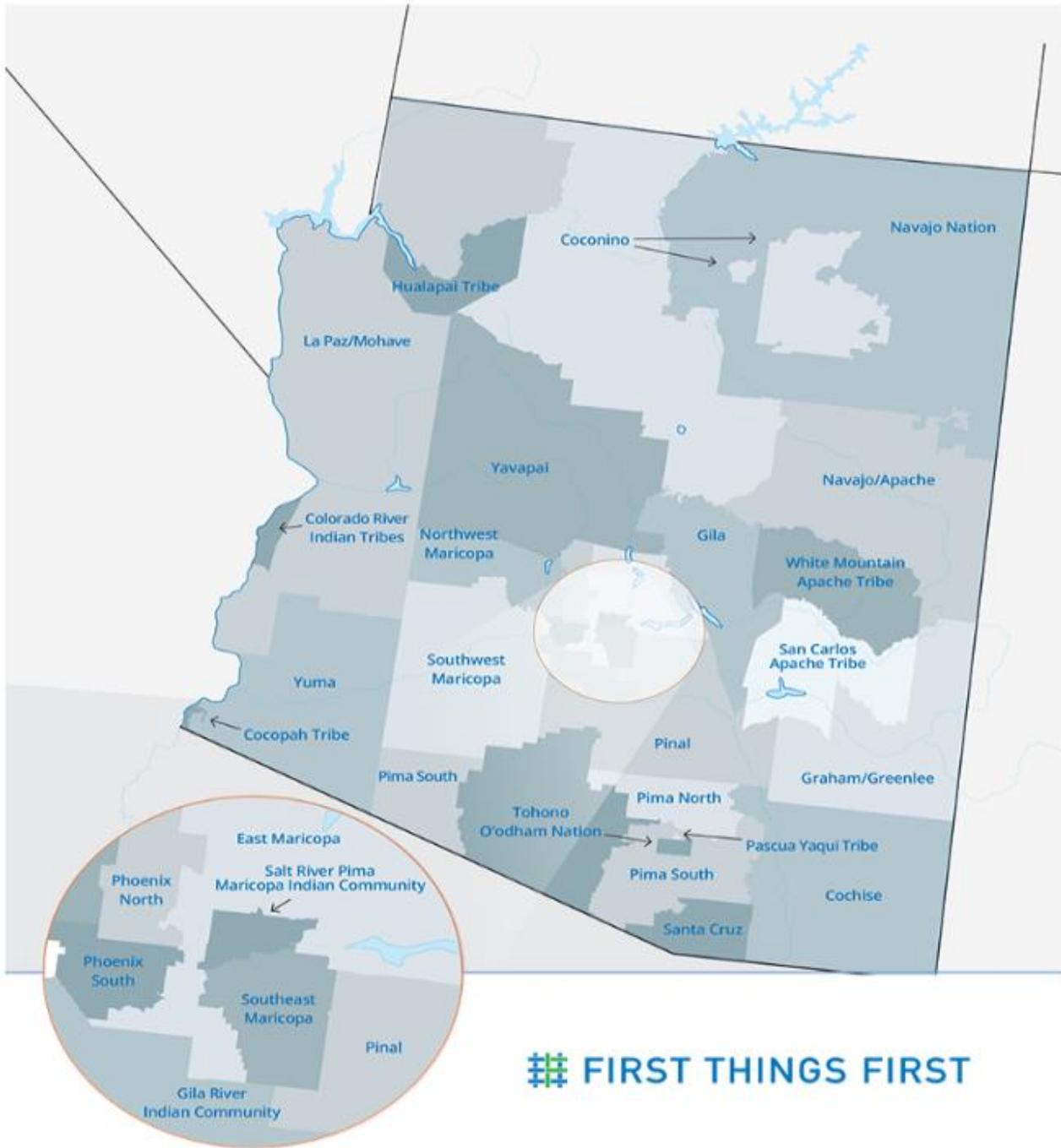
My region _____

WHAT IS QUALITY FIRST?

Quality First – a signature program of First Things First – partners with child care and preschool providers across Arizona to improve the quality of early learning for children birth to age 5. Quality First establishes a statewide standard of quality for early care and education programs and funds quality improvements that research proves help children thrive. This includes assessment to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement, professional development for teachers and caregivers to expand their skills in working with young children, technical assistance and coaching to help programs provide learning environments that nurture the emotional, social, language and cognitive development of every child.

There are forms of Quality First participation that do not include all services and benefits outlined in this guide. Please refer to your enrollment agreement and/or contract for details.

PHILOSOPHY

Research tells us that eighty-five percent of a child's brain is fully developed by age three, and both in-home and out-of-home experiences can positively or negatively impact that development. The relationship between children and their caregivers profoundly impacts children's learning and healthy development. That is why early childhood caregivers and teachers are so important to the future of young children. Participation in quality early care and education programs means children are engaged in activities with responsive, nurturing adults who stimulate development and learning and prepare children to successfully enter school.

QUALITY FIRST PARTICIPATION ELIGIBILITY

Early care and education providers who care for children ages five and under and are regulated by a monitoring agency are eligible for Quality First participation. Quality First participants are required to remain in good standing with their regulatory body while enrolled in Quality First. Regulatory bodies in Arizona include the Arizona Department of Health Services Bureau of Child Care Licensing (ADHS BCCL), the Arizona Department of Economic Security Child Care Administration (DES CCA), and tribal or military oversight entities.

Early care and education providers must offer care for children a minimum of 12 hours a week to be eligible for Quality First. Additional hours of operation may be required to be eligible for child care scholarships.

WHAT DOES A QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAM LOOK LIKE?

A high-quality child care or preschool setting has teachers and caregivers with expertise in working with children age 5 and younger, includes a learning environment that nurtures the emotional, social, and academic development of every child and prepares children for kindergarten.

Quality child care and preschool settings build on basic health and safety practices to include:

- Teachers and caregivers who know how to create positive, nurturing relationships with infants,

toddlers and preschoolers

- Learning environments that are engaging and encourage creativity and imaginative play

- Hands-on activities and adult-child interactions that stimulate brain development and positive connections in children

- Caregivers who communicate regularly with families about the development of their child

All of these elements combined create an early care and education environment that promotes healthy development and prepares children for kindergarten.

QUALITY FIRST STAR RATINGS

An important component of Quality First is the assignment of your star rating. Your Quality First star rating identifies the level of quality early care and education that your program is delivering to young children and their families based on your implementation of best practices as measured by the Quality First assessment process. The Quality First assessments use valid and reliable tools that focus on what research shows are the key components of quality early care, including adult-child interactions, learning environments and administrative practices. Based on these assessments, your program is noted on a continuum of quality, ranging from Rising Star (1 star) to Highest Quality (5 stars).

WHAT QUALITY FIRST STAR RATINGS MEAN

Your star rating represents where along the continuum of quality (1 to 5 stars) your program was rated and how you are implementing early childhood best practices. Your initial star rating is based on the on-site visit(s) from a Quality First assessor at the very beginning of your participation, using valid and reliable tools to observe the early learning environment, teacher-child interactions and administrative practices of your program. This initial star rating provides you with baseline information to build upon your strengths as well as to identify areas where improvements can be made. Your initial star rating will not be publicly posted unless you submit a completed Request for Public Rating form. A copy of this form is available on the First Things First data system (Quality First extranet) on the Quality First Dashboard, in the Forms section under Quality First Resources.

After at least one year of Quality First participation, your program will enter your second assessment cycle. All Quality First participants will have their star rating posted on the Quality First website following their second assessment cycle and each assessment cycle thereafter. Publicly posted star ratings are available for families and other members of the public to view on the Quality First website as well as on your program's extranet page. This information is also shared with Child Care Resource & Referral, regional councils and state agency partners.

QUALITY FIRST STAR RATING SCALE

The Quality First Star Rating Scale details the necessary scores required on each assessment to achieve a specific Quality First star rating. For each star rating level, a participant must meet the scores indicated for all required assessments. Rising Star (1) and Progressing Star (2) star ratings require the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Average Program Score. Quality (3), Quality Plus (4), and Highest Quality (5) star ratings require the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Average Program Score, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Average Program Score and the Quality First Points Scale Assessment Scores. A copy of the scale is provided on page 19.

QUALITY FIRST WEBSITE

QualityFirstAZ.com gives families information about why quality matters in child care and preschool and what quality looks like. It also gives families tools they can use to find a quality child care and preschool setting that meets their needs. The website also offers information for all providers about Quality First and supplemental resources that support quality care for young children.

At *QualityFirstAZ.com*, information about your program will be listed according to the information you have provided on the Quality First application and extranet. This information includes your program name, address, main contact, phone, website, email and ages of the children served. It is important that you keep your program's information current in the extranet because it is publicly available.

The website is available for families to search Quality First participating programs based on the specific name, address or zip code. A map displays programs in a particular area based on the search parameters. Home providers will be listed by city and zip code only, without a street address.

Your program's star rating will be posted on the website after the second assessment unless your program has chosen to post the initial rating. If your program has a website documented in the extranet, *QualityFirstAZ.com* will provide a link to your site for further information.

PROMOTING YOUR COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

Quality is an extremely important factor for families in choosing a child care setting for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Participation in Quality First is a clear sign to families that you are committed to improving the quality of your program to best serve the children in your care.

> **Promoting Your Commitment to Quality Policy:** **For the purpose of identifying active participation in Quality First and the current star rating, participants must display their current star rating certificate in a location easily visible to families. Participants will receive a new certificate each time the program's star rating is updated.**

Once your Quality First enrollment is complete, your program will be provided with a marketing

toolkit, including signs and website graphics, to promote your participation in Quality First. These items are sure to catch the eyes of visiting families and start conversations about quality early care and education and your participation in Quality First. The Quality First marketing toolkit includes talking points and key messages to make it easy for you and your staff to have these conversations and spread the word about the great things happening in your program. The digital marketing tools are available on the Quality First extranet and signage will be mailed directly to your program.

Once your program has been assigned a public rating after your second assessment, you will be mailed a star rating certificate. You will receive an updated star rating certificate after each assessment cycle. Quality First participants are required to display this certificate in a timely manner once received. Replacement certificates are available to participants upon request. Due to the costs of printing and mailing certificates, Quality First reserves the right to limit the number of replacement certificates issued.

QUALITY FIRST
FIRST THINGS FIRST

COMPONENT OVERVIEW*

SECTION ONE
COACHING

- Individualized guidance and support
- Targeted professional development and technical assistance
- Support of goal development and implementation
- On-site visits

SECTION TWO
ASSESSMENT

- Environment Rating Scales (ERS)
- Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
- Quality First Points Scale Assessment
- Quality Star Rating calculated from assessments

SECTION FIVE
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Development Network
- College Scholarships for Early Childhood Professionals
- Arizona Workforce Registry Professional Development Website

Participant

SECTION THREE
FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

- Financial Incentives
- ADHS Licensing Fees

SECTION FOUR
SPECIALIZED ASSISTANCE

- Birth to Five Helpline 1.877.705.5437
- Child Care Health Consultation on-site
- Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (regional funding)
- Inclusion Coaching (regional funding)

* Depending on the model of Quality First you participate in, all services and benefits may not be available to you. Please refer to your enrollment agreement and/or contract for details.

QUALITY FIRST
FIRST THINGS FIRST

STAR RATINGS

RISING STAR	PROGRESSING STAR	QUALITY	QUALITY PLUS	HIGHEST QUALITY
Committed to quality improvement	Approaching quality standards	Meets quality standards	Exceeds quality standards	Far exceeds quality standards
ERS Average Program Score	**ERS Average Program Score**	**ERS Average Program Score**	**ERS Average Program Score**	**ERS Average Program Score**
1.0 – 1.99	**2.0 – 2.99**	**3.0 – 3.99**	**4.0 – 4.99**	**5.0 and above**
		No classroom score below 2.5	*No classroom score below 3.0*	*No classroom score below 3.0*
CLASS™ Average Program Score	**CLASS™ Average Program Score**	**CLASS™ Average Program Score**	**CLASS™ Average Program Score**	**CLASS™ Average Program Score**
N/A	N/A	ES* 4.5 / CO 4.5 / IS* 2.0	ES* 5.0 / CO 5.0 / IS* 2.5	ES* 6.0 / CO 6.0 / IS* 3.0
Quality First Points Scale	**Quality First Points Scale**	**Quality First Points Scale**	**Quality First Points Scale**	**Quality First Points Scale**
		6-point minimum	*10-point minimum*	*12-point minimum*
N/A	N/A	SQ 2 / AP 2 / CA 2	SQ 2 / AP 2 / CA 2	SQ 4 / AP 4 / CA 4

ERS = Environment Rating Scales
ECERS: Early Childhood Environment
ITERS: Infant/Toddler Environment
FCCERS: Family Child Care Environment

CLASS™ = Classroom Assessment Scoring System™
ES*: Emotional Support Domain (Pre-K) and Emotional and Behavioral Support Domain (Toddler)
CO: Classroom Organizational Domain (Pre-K)
IS*: Instructional Support Domain (Pre-K) and Engaged Support for Learning Domain (Toddler)

Quality First Points Scale
SQ: Staff Qualifications
AP: Administrative Practices
CA: Curriculum and Assessment

SECTION ONE:
Quality First Participant

THE ROLE OF THE QUALITY FIRST PARTICIPANT

As a Quality First participant, you are the leader of your quality improvement process. Your vision for your program will drive the process of improvement within your site, as well as determine the guidance needed from your coach and technical assistance professionals. It is critical for all of your support team to understand the unique perspective that you bring to the quality improvement process and your desired outcomes for your specific quality improvement plan.

Leader of the Process: Your improvement process will be based on the values, culture, vision and goals that you determine to be central to your program's success. Your coach and technical assistance professionals can help you determine what these priorities are and how you can implement them using effective practices. Your vision for your program will lead your quality improvement process.

Program Expert: As the program's leader, you know your program best. You understand your program's history, successes and challenges. It will be important to share this information when planning with your coach and technical assistance professionals. All goals and strategies should align with what you as the participant are comfortable with implementing and confident in trying.

Director of Quality Improvement Efforts: With the guidance of your coach and technical assistance professionals, you will be the catalyst for change within your program. As the leader in your program, you will review the practices of your program, staff, and other resources on an ongoing basis to ensure that quality services are being implemented consistently and effectively. When questions arise, review your Quality First Participant Guide and resources. If you are unable to find the information you need, your Quality First coach or other technical assistance professionals can act as a secondary resource. Your leadership of this process is essential to success.

PARTICIPANT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Participant Acknowledgement Policy: **For the purpose of confirming agreement with all Quality First requirements and responsibilities, enrolled participants must review and acknowledge the Participant Guide Acknowledgement and the Participant Roles and Responsibilities Agreement within the first 90 days of each fiscal year of participation. Both documents must be acknowledged in order to access incentive funds. Failure to comply with the signed roles and responsibilities may result in a Targeted Support Plan and/or disenrollment.**

You will be given the opportunity to ask questions about the Participant Guide's policies and procedures to ensure your understanding before signing. This ensures your continued participation and allows for ongoing dialogue about the expectations of Quality First participation. Additional forms are required to access Quality First financial incentives. (See Quality First Incentives Policy in section four of this guide.)

PROGRAM DESIGNATION

Program Designation Policy: **For the purpose of supporting clear communication and engagement in the quality improvement process, all Quality First participants must identify the key personnel who will be responsible for leading and coordinating quality improvement. Select consistent personnel to be the Main Contact. This individual will meet with the Quality First support team on a regular basis and act as a bridge for information from the support team to staff members. It is also beneficial to identify a backup person (Primary Program Designee) to meet with the Quality First support team in the event that the Main Contact is not available.**

Upon enrollment, the coach will ask you to complete a Program Designation form. To make changes to your program's designated individual(s), you must submit a new Program Designation form to the coach and update your contact information in the extranet.

THE COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

Planning for change is an important part of the improvement process. Working to improve quality alongside your staff will take time, effort and adjustments. Some of this work will include identifying goals and action steps, motivating your staff, and creating an environment where practicing new strategies is encouraged and supported. Remember—mistakes are a part of the learning process! As you and your staff make changes to your practices and policies as a part of your continuous quality improvement plan, it is important for you to plan time to monitor and reflect on the changes you have made to ensure that they become a part of your regular practice. The goal of quality improvement is long-term, sustainable change. A commitment to quality is crucial to supporting improved outcomes for all children in your early care environment.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT SUPPORTS

Quality improvement supports are provided by First Things First once a program has been assessed, rated, and enrolled. These supports help participants remove barriers to increasing and maintaining quality within their program. Quality First participant supports include:

- Quality First coaching services to assist programs in developing quality improvement goals and identifying action steps to achieve those goals. Coaching services may include but are not limited to providing informational resources, facilitating professional development and trainings, modeling instructional practices, reviewing program policies and providing feedback to support programs in achieving their quality improvement goals.

- Financial incentives to purchase materials and supplies and offset costs of facility improvements that will enhance the environment and to support professional development opportunities for program staff.

- Formal assessment reports that provide programs with an impartial, reliable outside look at the environment, interactions, and administrative practices based on standardized program assessment tools.

- Child Care Health Consultation (CCHC), either on-site or over the phone, to ensure best practices in health and safety are incorporated in the program.

- College Scholarships to support the attainment of a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential and associate and bachelor's degrees in Early Childhood Education.

- Free membership in the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry, which has many benefits for professionals in the early childhood field in Arizona through the Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Development Network. The Registry provides a secure place for you and your staff to keep a record of professional development and credentials in one place. It allows employers and/or licensing agencies to verify staff's credentials. The Registry gives administrator access to a report listing all your staff's education and professional development. The Network hosts an active job bank to post job opportunities for early childhood professionals. To learn more about any of these benefits or to complete your registration, please visit http://www.azearlychildhood.org.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL PARTICIPATION

As the leader of your program and your quality improvement efforts, the following strategies will help you make the most of your Quality First participation:

- Select a consistent individual(s) onsite to lead your quality improvement efforts. Identify individuals who act in a leadership role and have the capacity to make decisions about program changes, lead improvement efforts and communicate with staff and families about the quality improvement process. The Program Designation Policy and Designation Form provide more information about the role of the Primary Program Designee and Main Contact. It is up to you to identify the individuals that will take responsibility in these roles and to keep this information updated.

- Identify and request program supports that will assist you in your quality improvement efforts. Coaches and other technical assistance professionals are knowledgeable experts in their fields; however, you are the expert on your program and staff. Let the Quality First support team know if there are specific practices, policies, or resources you would like them to assist you with.

- Schedule time in your calendar to work with your staff on your quality improvement efforts and to monitor and reflect on new policies and practices you have put into place. Sustained quality improvements take time and focused efforts.

- Plan to allow staff members time outside of the classroom if possible, away from the responsibilities of caring for children, so that they can work with coaches and other technical assistance professionals. This will allow them to focus on their work with the coach or technical assistance professional. Depending on the time of day, this may require you to schedule a different staff member who is able to cover for the staff member while they meet with the coach or technical assistance professional.

- Actively plan and monitor your goals on a regular basis. The goals you identify for your Quality Improvement Plan will serve as a map for your quality improvement process. By monitoring your goals from visit to visit, you will be able to determine whether you are reaching your desired outcomes, if strategies need to be varied or if you need to modify the program supports you are receiving.

- All participants are required to create an organizational system, such as a Quality First communication binder, that is easy to access by staff and Quality First technical assistance professionals. Your organizational system will include all of your Quality First contacts, forms, reports and resources you may want to share with your staff. This system provides organization of activities and resources for quality improvement activities in one place for easy access by you, your staff and technical assistance professionals working with your program.

- Schedule time in your calendar to review and update information about your program, staff, and contact information in the extranet and Registry on a quarterly basis.

- Work with your staff to align your administrative practices, staff handbook and parent handbook with any new practices you have identified as a part of your Quality Improvement Plan. Well-defined and implemented administrative practices will help to ensure that your quality improvements are sustainable over time. For more information about high quality administrative practices, refer to the Quality First Points Scale Guidance Document provided in the Resources section of this guide.

QUALITY FIRST
FIRST THINGS FIRST

Estimated Timeline

WEEK 1	**Selection notification** When your program is selected for Quality First participation, you will receive an email notification. Programs are selected throughout the year based on available funding.
WEEK 2-3	**Contact from a Quality First coach** Within 15 calendar days from your selection notification, a coach will contact you to explain the next steps in the enrollment process and to schedule an initial visit at your program. During the initial visit, you will work with the coach to create a schedule for on-site visits to begin the coaching partnership.
WEEK 4-6	**Assessment contact and scheduled visit** You will receive a phone call from an assessor to schedule your initial assessment visit.
WEEK 14-16	**Assessment results available** The timing of the availability of these results depends on the number of assessments to be completed and the size of your program.
WEEK 15-19	**Enrollment** A Quality First coach will meet with you to review your assessment results and discuss how they are related to your own quality improvement ideas. You will sign the Enrollment Agreement and your star rating will be available for your own review but not posted on the public website unless you choose to request a public posting. Once enrolled, Child Care Health Consultation services become available.
WEEK 20 **AND ONGOING**	**Quality improvement planning** A Quality Improvement Plan with action steps will be established in collaboration with a Quality First coach and any other technical assistance providers supporting your program. The plan will be uploaded to the extranet. Financial incentives are available to support quality improvement efforts each fiscal year until April 15.

SECTION TWO:
Quality First Coaching

Quality First coaching services are provided to your program to offer focused support in the form of regular and ongoing visits, communication and technical assistance. Participating in the coaching process supports you in providing high quality early learning experiences to the children in your care, so they are ready to succeed in school and in life.

THE ROLE OF THE QUALITY FIRST COACH

The role of a Quality First coach is to act as a quality improvement consultant for your program. As knowledgeable consultants, they can work alongside you and your staff in creating a vision for your program, supporting your identified quality improvement goals, pinpointing productive action steps and monitoring your progress. While your program's quality improvement process is driven by you, a Quality First coach can bring additional insights to your program's practices and support your vision and movement toward quality goals.

Quality First coaches are selected based on their knowledge and experience in the field of early childhood education with a focus on promoting adult learning and positive interactions. Coaches receive initial and ongoing training in the quality improvement process, all assessment tools, early learning standards and development guidelines to ensure that they have the skills to support you and your program in creating quality environments for young children. Every effort is made to create positive connections between participants and coaches, and the Quality First team will work diligently to make sure that a good fit is established. The Quality First coach makes it a priority to respect your program, its practices and its culture and create a trusting relationship with an emphasis on confidentiality. Coaching assignments may change periodically based on a variety of factors such as staffing changes, scheduling needs, and to establish the best fit between coach strengths and participant needs.

QUALITY FIRST COACH ACTIVITIES

Quality First coaches are knowledgeable and skilled consultants that you and your program access as a supportive resource as you work through your Quality Improvement Plan. A Quality First coach will regularly visit your program to support you in accessing all Quality First resources in an effort to answer any questions you might have regarding Quality First, your assessments, and information contained in this guide.

Quality First coaches act as your primary contact in Quality First. Once an initial contact has been made and the coach has had the opportunity to visit your program and meet your staff, the coach will begin to learn about your vision for what an optimal level of quality would look like in your program and identify your desired outcomes from the coaching process. Once your program's initial assessment

results are available, the coach will review the reports with you and support you in identifying your program's strengths and areas where you believe meaningful quality improvement opportunities exist. After reviewing your assessment results, you will create goals and action steps with the support of a Quality First coach and any other technical assistance providers with whom you are working. The goals will address areas identified for growth and include action steps with corresponding timelines, which determine how you choose to utilize coaching services to support the outcomes of your identified goals. Once you have established your Quality Improvement Plan, the Quality First coach will assist you in determining how your incentive funds can be utilized to support your efforts.

QUALITY FIRST COACH VISITS

The Quality First coach will schedule regular visits to your program based on your assigned star rating level. Participants at the Rising Star (1 Star) and Progressing Star (2 Star) levels will engage in six hours of on-site coaching each month to support their quality improvement process. Participants in the Quality (3 Star), Quality Plus (4 Star), and Highest Quality (5 Star) levels will have access to four hours of coaching support each month to support their quality improvement process. A Rating Only program has access to 24 hours of coaching services per year. This time can be scheduled as needed throughout the span of the cycle in order to best meet the needs of your program and staff. You will work with your coach to plan the agenda for these visits to ensure a common understanding of what will occur during your coaching hours.

Quality First Coaching Visit Policy: For the purpose of providing support to facilitate quality improvement efforts, regular visits with a Quality First Coach are a required component of participation. Your coach will work with you to identify a schedule for regular visits. In the event you or another designated staff member is unable to meet for a planned visit, it is your responsibility to notify the coach in advance. Cancellation of coaching visits results in reduced on-site coaching hours and may impact your program's progress toward your goals. A pattern of repeated cancellation of coaching visits may result in a Targeted Support Plan and/or disenrollment.

Coaching visits may include but are not limited to meeting with the program director/administrators for planning and reviewing progress, observing and modeling in classrooms, providing feedback, opportunities for reflection, and resource materials. Virtual on-site hours through video based conferencing, or other mutually agreed-upon platforms, may be utilized. Coaches may use videotaping equipment with permission from the participant to highlight staff successes and to provide staff with an opportunity to reflect on their practice and interactions with children. Coaches may work with identified staff to act as an on-site quality improvement mentor. Flexibility and adaptability are key to making the most of coaching visits; it is your responsibility to provide the coach with information and feedback on the primary needs of your program when it comes to implementing appropriate coaching strategies in your program.

After each visit, the Quality First coach will create a summary of activities accomplished and any plans for upcoming visits. A copy of the summary will be provided to you. This information is also entered in

the Quality First data system and shared with First Things First to track quality improvement activities.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Quality Improvement Planning Policy: **For the purpose of documenting goals and action steps to promote high quality early learning experiences for children, Quality Improvement Plans are a required part of program participation. Quality Improvement Plans are goals created by synthesizing information from assessment reports, technical assistance professional observations and additional information regarding the program's specific needs and vision. For each assessment cycle, goals must be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely (S.M.A.R.T.).**

A Quality First coach and other technical assistance professionals will assist you in documenting these goals and your progress towards achievement. With coach and other technical assistance support, you will use the Quality Improvement Plan form to document your goals (see the Quality Improvement Plan form in the Resources section of the Quality First extranet), and monitor progress on action steps regularly. This document will also be uploaded to your program profile in the Quality First extranet where progress will be noted monthly as action steps are completed.

As you accomplish your goals, consider how to sustain the quality improvements you have worked to achieve within your program. The Quality First coach working with your program can assist you in developing plans for sustainability so that new practices become a regular part of your program's operations. Consider who will be responsible for ongoing implementation and monitoring, how the new practices will be incorporated into staff training and development and what written policies and procedures should be updated. Share these goals and plans for sustainability with your staff to ensure a lasting impact.

STRATEGIES FOR A SUCCESSFUL COACHING RELATIONSHIP

Working with a Quality First coach and other assigned technical assistance professionals requires a commitment to a strong professional working partnership. Here are some tips to make the most of this consultative relationship:

- Talk with the coach about the type of communication that works best for you. If you prefer to meet at a certain time or would appreciate regular phone calls, emails or text messages, let the coach know so they are able to best work within your preferences.

- If you employ staff, introduce the coach to your entire staff at the beginning of your participation. This will help to establish a familiarity and a comfort level for coaching activities within your program. Be sure that the children are introduced to the coach as well to alleviate any stranger anxieties.

- Let your families know that your program is participating in Quality First and that you will have regular visits from a coach and potentially other technical assistance professionals to provide ongoing support for your program. Families will appreciate knowing who will be working in your program and how your improvement efforts can benefit their children.

- Plan ahead for coaching visits with questions, needs, clarifications or plans. This will save time during your on-site meetings so that you and the coach are ready to accomplish any activities you have planned for each visit.

- Communicate with the coach and other technical assistance professionals regarding your preferences for support, your plans for implementing change, your program's philosophy and how you want your staff involved in the process. Your commitment to the process creates ongoing sustainability.

SECTION THREE:
Quality First Assessment

Quality First assessment is a valuable support for your program in the improvement process. The purpose of receiving ongoing assessments is to offer objective and reliable measures of the everyday experiences of the children in your program and to provide a guide for achieving best practices.

Quality First Assessment Policy: **Quality First assessments are a required component of participation. Assessment is designed based on high quality standards using valid and reliable tools and conducted by highly trained objective observers. All Quality First participants will be assessed initially to establish a baseline, non-public rating and will receive subsequent regular assessments to establish a public star rating. Failure to participate in the assessment process may result in disenrollment.**

THE ROLE OF THE QUALITY FIRST ASSESSOR

Quality First assessors are experienced professionals in the field of early childhood and receive extensive training on the assessment tools to ensure they are measuring program practices accurately.

The assessment reports you receive provide important information for you to build upon your strengths as well as to identify areas where improvements can be made.

A Quality First assessor will visit your program to complete an assessment at the very beginning of your participation. This assessment provides a baseline of information that is the foundation for you to build on in establishing program improvements. During your assessment observation, the assessor will focus on maintaining a professional stance at all times. The assessor will remain objectively removed from social interactions with staff in order to gather as much information as possible according to the tools being used. While the assessor is in your program, they will not initiate or extend an interaction with a child but will never ignore a question, curiosity or a request for attention.

Quality First assessors are dedicated to the same measures of confidentiality as coaches and other technical assistance providers and will show respect in a professional manner.

Although the assessor will be collecting information during the visit, no feedback will be provided at that time. Your program's written assessment results will be available for your review in the extranet once reports have been completed and approved.

QUALITY FIRST ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

The Quality First process begins with your initial assessment, which will provide objective information to guide your quality improvement efforts. This is the beginning stage and will provide information to help you move forward – setting a starting point for quality improvement efforts. This baseline star rating will not be posted publicly on the Quality First website unless you choose to have it posted.

The following represents some general activities related to your Quality First assessment:

- **Accreditation** - As an accredited or Head Start program, if your program's CLASS assessment results are at the Quality Level (3, 4, or 5 star levels), your program will be assessed using the Quality First Points Scale Assessment. Your program will be given six months to prepare for the Points Scale Assessment during the first assessment cycle your program qualifies. Future Points Scale Assessments will be conducted within the same timeframe as your CLASS assessment. It is your responsibility to identify your program as Head Start or accredited to the assessor before beginning the assessment process. (For a list of accreditations recognized by Quality First, see National Accrediting Organizations in the Resources section of this guide.)

- **Assessor Objectivity** - Whenever possible, different assessors will conduct the ERS assessments, CLASS assessments, and Points Scale assessment. This is to ensure objectivity for each observation.

- **Blackout Dates** - You will have an opportunity to inform the assessor of dates that would preclude an assessment visit. For instance, days your program is closed, planned field trips, special events such as picture day, scheduled emergency drills, scheduled Quality First support team visits (including coaches and other technical assistance professionals) and days when you will typically have low attendance or staff absences may all interfere with a proper assessment.

- **Children with Special Needs** - Prior to assessing a classroom, the assessor will ask you if there are any enrolled children with an IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan), IEP (Individualized Education Plan), documented gifted needs, and/or medically diagnosed conditions (i.e., asthma, diabetes, severe allergies) to determine if accommodations that are observed need to be taken into account. As this information is confidential, assessors will not need to view the individual child plans.

- **Classrooms/Care Groups** - It is your responsibility to share information about your program's classroom and care group structure with Quality First before beginning the assessment process. For programs in their initial assessment, the Quality First coach will assist you with entering this in the extranet. For all subsequent assessments, you are responsible for ensuring individual classrooms/groups are noted in the extranet. For assessment purposes, Quality First considers a unique roster of children assigned to a specific lead teacher or classroom space as an individual classroom/group. For example, a program may have a single lead teacher with an a.m. class roster and a p.m. class roster. Each of these roster groups is considered an individual classroom/group. To assist the assessor in identifying the number of assessments as well as age-appropriate tools for

your program, it is important that you discuss with the assessor how many classroom/child groupings your program contains.

- **Eligibility for Assessment in 5 Year-Old Classrooms** - In center-based programs, if a majority of children in a classroom (51 percent) had their 5th birthday after September 1 of the current school year, the classroom is included in the random draw for assessment.

- **Extranet Data** - Before conducting the assessment, the assessor will review your information from the extranet to determine how many classrooms/groups of children to assess and which tools to use during the assessment based on the age groups you serve. The classrooms/groups identified on the first day of assessment will be utilized throughout the assessment process. Assessors will verify this information over the phone and also in person on the first day of assessment at your program.

- **Initial Phone Call** - An assessor will contact your program to schedule the date of your initial assessment. It is your responsibility to contact the assessor within 72 hours of a phone call or email message. Your initial assessment will be scheduled for a mutually agreed-upon date and timeframe. In subsequent years, you will be provided a three-week time frame in which the assessment will be conducted. The assessor can come at any time within these three weeks other than specified blackout dates.

- **Moving/Relocation During Assessment** - If your program moves to a new location in the middle of the assessment process, the assessment team will re-complete all of the assessments at the new location. Rescheduling of the assessments will be done on a case by case basis. If a program moves after the rating is final, the rating will apply until the next assessment cycle.

- **Multiple Assessors** - More than one assessor may attend during an observation visit for the purpose of training, reliability testing and/or to accommodate the size of your program. You will be notified in advance if this is a possibility for your program.

- **Random Draw** - If your program has more than one classroom or grouping of children, the assessor will ask you to conduct a random draw to determine which classrooms/groups to assess upon arrival. The assessor will ask that the random draw be witnessed by a member of your staff to ensure accuracy and also have a participant signature at the time.

- **Special Considerations to Share with the Assessor** - When you are contacted by an assessor to schedule your initial assessment or set up your three-week assessment window, you should discuss any special considerations or specific educational philosophies that your program practices that you would like taken into consideration as the assessment team prepares for your visit. Topics you may want to discuss with the assessor when they call include but are not limited to languages spoken in your program, children with special needs or potential triggers to children who have experienced trauma. In some cases, children who have had traumatic experiences may become triggered by an unexpected visitor in their classroom. Certain elements of the assessor's appearance can be adapted to reduce the potential for triggering a trauma response; for example

removing the name tag, removing the clipboard or wearing more casual/nondescript clothing. Programmatic philosophies or practices such as Montessori, Parent Cooperatives, Student Teaching or Primary Caregiving should be communicated. Programmatic philosophies or practices that you would like the assessment team to be aware of must be identified in your Parent/Family Handbook or in written policies and procedure information that you share with families. The assessor may request to view this documentation.

- **Staff Verification** - The assessor will ask you to verify the staff assigned to each classroom based on the current staff you have listed in the extranet. For programs in their initial assessment, the Quality First coach will assist you with entering this in the extranet. For all subsequent assessments, you are responsible for ensuring staff names are included in your program's extranet profile. Please identify the regular teaching staff and their roles in each classroom or child care group and share any staffing considerations such as new staff or substitute teachers. This information guides the assessor in determining whether or not a classroom is eligible for assessment. (For more information, see the Quality First Staffing Guide included in the Resources section at the end of this guide.)

- **Summer Closures** - If your program is closed for the summer and your next assessment cycle is scheduled to begin during your summer break, your assessment window will be opened no earlier than October 1. Nine-month programs with an assessment cycle scheduled to open after April 30 will have their assessment deferred until on or after October 1. The assessment team uses the information from your program's extranet profile summary to determine your dates of operation.

- **Summer Closures and Points Scale Assessment -** If your Points Scale Preparation end date occurs during your program's summer closure, your assessment will automatically be deferred until 30 days after your program resumes in the fall. You may request an extension of your Points Scale Preparation period to make up for the length of your summer closure by contacting the Assessment Program Manager at kromero@swhd.org or 602.633.8652.

QUALITY FIRST ASSESSMENT TOOLS

A variety of assessment tools are used to collect information about the average experience of the children in your program. Research indicates that gathering meaningful big picture information to establish the level of quality practices in an early childhood program requires an in-depth look at the program's environment, interactions and administrative practices. Quality First assessors will select the appropriate assessment tool(s) to be used in your program's assessment based on Quality First policies and procedures.

ENVIRONMENT RATING SCALES (ERS; Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford and Debby Cryer) - measuring elements of a quality environment.

> **Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Assessment Policy**: **ERS assessments will be conducted to assess early care and education environments. The ERS assessment will be conducted on-site for approximately three hours by a qualified assessor. Quality First participants that are Head Start or nationally accredited will not have an ERS conducted initially unless CLASS threshold scores are not achieved (a list of National Accrediting Organizations is included in the Resources section at the end of this guide).**

Establishing high quality learning environments has been shown to positively support the development of young children and their early education. The ERS are observational tools used to assess the quality of the environment in early care settings. Observations using the ERS provide a brief snapshot of the classroom environment, as well as the children's experiences in that classroom. There are three versions of the ERS utilized by Quality First, each designed to assess a specific age group and early care setting.

1. Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-revised (ECERS-R)
This scale is designed to assess the quality of preschool environments (children 2 ½ - 5 years of age) located in center-based child care settings.

2. Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-revised (ITERS-R)
This scale is designed to assess the quality of care environments serving children birth to 30 months of age and is used in infant and toddler center-based child care settings.

3. Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-revised (FCCERS-R)
This scale is designed to assess the quality of the environment in family child care settings with mixed-age groups. More information can be found at http://ersi.info/

For your initial assessment, the assessor will call to schedule your program's assessment. In subsequent years, you will receive a three-week window for assessment. For centers, the assessor will assess your classrooms/care groups based on the charts below. If you care for infant/toddlers and preschoolers, both an ITERS and ECERS will be completed.

If your program serves multiple age groups, infants/toddlers (0-30 months) AND preschool age children (30 months to 5 years):

- 1 classroom = 1 classroom assessment
- 2-6 classrooms = 2 classroom assessments
- 7-9 classrooms = 3 classroom assessments
- 10-12 classrooms = 4 classroom assessments
- 13 + classrooms = 1/3 of the number of classrooms

If your program serves only one age group, infants/toddlers (0-30 months) OR preschool age children (30 months to 5 years):

- 1-3 classrooms = 1 classroom assessment
- 4-6 classrooms = 2 classroom assessments
- 7-9 classrooms = 3 classroom assessments
- 10-12 classrooms = 4 classroom assessments
- 13+ classrooms = 1/3 of the number of classrooms

In center-based programs, if the majority of the children in a classroom/care group (51 percent) had their 5th birthday after September 1 of the current school year, the classroom/care group will be included in the random draw for assessment.

Family child care homes will have the areas assessed that are part of the child care program.

When the assessor arrives, they will need to gather some initial information regarding the total number of children enrolled, the number of children in attendance that day, children with special needs, the birthdates of the youngest and oldest child enrolled in the classroom selected, and the staff assigned to each classroom/child care group.

If more than one classroom/care group is being assessed, the assessor will ask you to randomly draw which classroom will be assessed that day. Each assessor will only assess one classroom per day. In order to maintain the integrity of the assessment, the participants cannot choose which classrooms will be assessed.

The assessor will remain at your program for at least three hours when conducting the ERS assessment. An assessor may stay longer if they need to gather information not collected during the first three hours. The assessor will not talk to the staff during the assessment. An assessor is unable to answer questions or provide information during the assessment. An assessor will move

around the classroom, collect data on materials, watch interactions and routines and write notes. After an assessor has finished collecting the data, they will request an interview with the lead teacher from the classroom. The interview may be arranged (time and location) before the assessment begins.

It is required that the lead teacher be allowed to participate in the interview process, as this is a part of the assessment. The assessor will ask questions relating to things they did or did not see during the assessment and a series of other questions relating to the program. In some cases, the assessor may ask for clarification from program administration. The lead teacher may also use the interview as an opportunity to share information about the classroom, routines and teaching practices with the assessor.

Once the interview is complete, the assessor will leave the site and begin scoring and report writing using the notes collected at your program. Once the report is complete, you and your Quality First coach will receive notice that the assessment is ready for review. You and your coach will review the results and move forward with the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

If you have questions or concerns about the assessment, please contact the Assessment Program Manager, Katie Romero, at 602.633.8652 or kromero@swhd.org. The assessor is not permitted to share any results or information about the assessment with the program, nor are they allowed to provide technical assistance.

It is important to prepare the classroom staff for the assessment. The coach can facilitate a meeting to discuss further the assessment process with the teaching staff. It is important to inform them that an assessment will occur as part of your participation in Quality First.

CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT SCORING SYSTEM (CLASS; Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2005) - measuring quality interactions

<u>**Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Policy**</u>**: CLASS assessments will be conducted to assess adult-child interactions. Quality First programs must achieve a level of 3.0 or higher on the ERS assessment with no individual classroom score below 2.5 to have a CLASS assessment conducted (Head Start and nationally accredited programs will begin with a CLASS assessment). A CLASS assessment will be conducted by a trained assessor who will observe the classroom in four back-to-back 20 minute observation cycles with a designated scoring time in between. Programs that operate four hours or less will have modified observation cycles. In these programs, the assessor will complete four back-to-back 15 minute observation cycles with designated scoring time in between.**

Research shows that positive adult-child interactions in early care and education settings are a vital part of supporting children's learning and development. The CLASS is a system for observing and assessing the quality of interactions between teachers and students in infant, toddler and preschool classrooms. The CLASS examines social-emotional and instructional interactions that contribute to children's social competence and academic achievement in center and home-based programs serving children from birth to 5 years of age.

Quality First uses three versions of the CLASS. Quality First currently uses the CLASS Pre-K and CLASS Toddler in the Rating Scale, each designed to assess a specific age group and early care setting. The CLASS Infant is being conducted for data collection and to provide feedback to your program.

1. CLASS Pre-K
This scale is designed to assess the quality of interactions within preschool environments (children 3 - 5 years of age) located in center-based and family child care settings.

2. CLASS Toddler
This scale is designed to assess the quality of interactions within toddler environments (children 15 - 36 months of age) located in center-based and family child care settings.

3. CLASS Infant
This scale is designed to assess the quality of interactions within infant environments (children 0 - 18 months of age) located in center-based and family child care settings. Participants providing care to infants may have a CLASS Infant assessment conducted in their program. CLASS Infant scores are not utilized when calculating a participant's star rating.

The most appropriate assessment tool for each age range will be determined using classroom rosters of enrolled children. The CLASS assessment will not be conducted during the same visit as the ERS assessment; you will be contacted to schedule the CLASS assessment if it is required. More information can be found at teachstone.com/class.

THE DAY OF A CLASS ASSESSMENT

For your initial assessment, the assessor will call to schedule your program's assessment. In subsequent years, you will receive a three-week window for assessment. For centers, the assessor will assess one-third of your preschool classrooms/care groups (ages 3-5) using the Pre-K CLASS and one-third of your infant/toddler classrooms/care groups using the Infant (birth to 18 months) or Toddler CLASS (15 to 36 months). The assessor will use the assessment tool designed to best capture the age range in a classroom, based on the ages of the children included on the classroom rosters.

In each age group (Infant/Toddler or Preschool) your program serves, the assessor will determine the number of classrooms/care groups in that age group (based on classroom rosters) to be assessed based on the chart below.

- 1-3 classrooms = 1 classroom assessment
- 4-6 classrooms = 2 classroom assessments
- 7-9 classrooms = 3 classroom assessments
- 10-12 classrooms = 4 classroom assessments
- 13+ classrooms = 1/3 of the number of classrooms

For family child care homes, the assessor will look at the ages of the children birth to five to determine which CLASS tool is appropriate in the setting using the following guidelines:

- If the majority of the expected attendance at the family child care home on the day of the assessment is made up of children between the ages of 3-5, the Pre-K CLASS will be conducted.
- If the majority of the expected attendance at the family child care home on the day of the assessment is made up of children between the ages of 15-36 months, the Toddler CLASS will be conducted.
- If the majority of the expected attendance at the family child care home on the day of the assessment is made up of children between the ages birth to 18 months, the Infant CLASS will be conducted.
- In cases when the expected attendance on the day of the assessment is split evenly between age groups, the Toddler CLASS will be conducted if there are children between the ages of 15-36 months present, otherwise the Pre-K CLASS will be conducted.

When the assessor arrives, they will need to gather some initial information regarding the total number of children enrolled, the number of children in attendance that day, the age composition of the classroom, and the teaching staff assigned to each classroom/child care group.

If more than one classroom is being assessed, the assessor will ask you to randomly draw which classroom will be assessed that day. Each assessor will only assess one classroom per day. In order to maintain the integrity of the assessment, participants cannot choose which classrooms will be assessed.

The assessor will remain at your program for approximately two to three hours for a CLASS assessment. The assessor will complete four CLASS cycles during the assessment. One cycle includes a 20 minute observation period immediately followed by a 10 minute coding period. The assessor will conduct another cycle if any of the four cycles are less than 20 minutes in length, making the observation incomplete. Programs that operate four hours or less will have modified observation cycles. In these programs, the assessor will complete four back-to-back 15 minute observation cycles with designated scoring time in between. At the end of the CLASS assessment, the assessor will ask the staff in the classroom if there are any children with an IEP/ISFP present in the classroom just assessed.

Infant CLASS data will be collected and reports will be available for programs to review in the extranet, but the data will not count toward a program's final star rating. If the Infant CLASS is conducted in your center-based program, the assessor will re-draw an additional toddler classroom. The randomly selected toddler room will be used in calculating your program's star rating. If an Infant CLASS is conducted in your home-based program, another CLASS assessment will not be completed.

If you have questions or concerns about the assessment, please contact the Assessment Program Manager Katie Romero at 602.633.8652 or kromero@swhd.org. The assessor is not permitted to share any results or information about the assessment with the program, nor are they allowed to provide technical assistance.

It is important to prepare the classroom staff for the assessment. Your coach can facilitate a meeting to discuss the assessment process with the teaching staff. It is important to inform them that an assessment will occur as part of your participation with Quality First.

QUALITY FIRST POINTS SCALE – measuring program administrative practices.

<div style="background:#29ABE2;color:white;padding:10px;">

Points Scale Assessment Policy: **A Points Scale Assessment will be conducted to assess administrative practices. A Quality First participating program must achieve the ERS and CLASS threshold scores at the Quality levels (3, 4, or 5 star) to receive a Points Scale Assessment. (See the Quality First Star Rating scale on page 19 of this guide.) This assessment will be scored using on-site data collection and documentation review, and offsite review of documentation available in the extranet and the Registry.**

</div>

Administrative practices are an important part of high quality early care and education programs. The Quality First Points Scale is a tool designed by First Things First that provides evidence of the quality levels of your program's administrative practices.

The Quality First Points Scale was developed by First Things First to measure three additional areas of quality:

1. **Staff Qualifications**, which includes staff education and experience working with young children. Education documentation must be submitted directly to the Registry to document staff education. (For more information, see the Points Scale Guidance Document.)

2. **Administrative Practices**, which includes ratios, group size counts and staff retention.

3. **Curriculum and Child Assessment**, which includes the use of the Arizona Early Learning Standards and Infant and Toddler Developmental Guidelines, Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education, curriculum plans, and ongoing progress monitoring of individual children.

<div style="background:#29ABE2;color:white;padding:10px;">

Transcript and Education Documentation Policy: **For the purpose of collecting educational documentation and official transcripts to document the post-secondary education level of staff, transcripts must be submitted by Quality First participants. All education documentation, including official transcripts, Child Development Associate (CDA) Credentials and teaching certificates, will be verified using the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry. Quality First participants are required to create a registry account to submit this documentation.**

</div>

THE DAY OF A POINTS SCALE ASSESSMENT

Your program's initial Points Scale Assessment will be scheduled with you ahead of time. For all subsequent Points Scale Assessments, you will be given a three week window to notify you of the upcoming Points Scale Assessment. On the day of the Points Scale Assessment, the assessor will review the documentation you have collected and provided to them as well as conduct a count of the children in each classroom/group to identify the ratios and group sizes your program has in place that day.

The assessor will review curriculum and child assessment documentation for one-third of your preschool classrooms/care groups (ages 3-5 years) and for one-third of your infant/toddler classrooms/care groups (birth to 36 months). In each age group (Infant/Toddler or Preschool) your program serves, the assessor will determine the number of classrooms/care groups in that age group (based on classroom rosters) to review documentation, based on the chart below.

- 1-3 classrooms = 1 classroom documentation review
- 4-6 classrooms = 2 classroom documentation reviews
- 7-9 classrooms = 3 classroom documentation reviews
- 10-12 classrooms = 4 classroom documentation reviews
- 13+ classrooms = 1/3 of the number of classrooms documentation reviews

The assessor will not verbally share if documentation is missing. It is the participant's responsibility to provide the assessor with all of the documentation you would like reviewed as part of the Points Scale Assessment. In the event the assessor does not find the required documentation, you will be given a Points Scale Documentation Review form and allowed 30 minutes to collect the documentation for assessor review. The Points Scale Documentation Review form will state if *entire pieces* of documentation are missing; for example, you will be notified if a lesson plan was not observed or if the assessor did not receive one of the child assessment portfolios. The Points Scale Documentation Review form does not capture if elements inside of a piece of documentation are missing; for example, if specific learning objectives for children are not included with a lesson plan or if a child assessment portfolio does not include family input.

It is the participant's responsibility to review the Points Scale Assessment Guidance Document and to ensure that all documentation provided to the assessor is complete and sufficient to meet the documentation requirements. Only documentation provided to the assessor on the day of the Points Scale Assessment or visible in the extranet and Registry will be considered for your program's star rating. It is important that you check your extranet page and your program's Registry page for accuracy and review the Points Scale Guidance Document well before your Points Scale Assessment to ensure that your program is as successful as possible. More information can be found in the Points Scale Guidance Document at the end of this guide or by viewing the Quality First Points Scale. (A copy of the Quality First Points Scale is available on the extranet Quality First Dashboard under Quality First Resources.)

If you have questions or concerns about the assessment, please contact the Assessment Program Manager Katie Romero at 602.633.8652 or kromero@swhd.org.

41

QUALITY FIRST ASSESSMENT REPORTS

You will not receive direct feedback from the assessor on the observations or any assessment data collected during the assessment visit. An assessment report will be available online through the Quality First extranet (Assessment Summary tab) and can be printed. Each tool that is used to conduct an assessment has a unique report with specific scores related to the indicators identified in each tool. You will find areas designated as strengths in your program as well as areas of opportunity for growth. Quality First coaches can help you review the information contained in these assessment reports and assist you in highlighting specific areas for goal setting.

Assessment Report Clarification Policy: For the purpose of clarifying content contained in an assessment report, assessment clarification is offered to Quality First participants. The Assessment Report Clarification Request must be submitted within 40 days of the assessment results being approved. A response will be provided within 14 days as possible. All Assessment Report Clarification Requests must be sent via Word document to allow for timely response. PDF or scanned documents may require extra time to process. If the clarification warrants a change in scores, this will be noted in the extranet and the assessment report will be updated. Video or audio recordings or photographs will not be considered in the Assessment Report Clarification Process. The assessment process is conducted using live, on-site observations to capture the entire context of the learning environment and interactions.

In the event that you have a question about your assessment report or if you find any information that seems inconsistent based on your program specifics, you have the opportunity to submit an Assessment Report Clarification Request form. Your request will be submitted to either the assessment team or to First Things First depending on the content of your question (see the Assessment Report Clarification Request form for guidance). A copy of this form is available in the extranet on the Quality First Dashboard, in the Forms section under Quality First Resources.

In the event you are having difficulty reviewing your assessment reports online, please contact the extranet Help Desk for assistance at extranet@firstthingsfirst.org.

QUALITY FIRST STAR RATING

- Once all of the assessment reports have been completed and approved, you will have the opportunity to review this information on the Quality First extranet. Your program's assessment reports will remain confidential and are only available for review by you and the Quality First team.

- Your new Quality First star rating will be available for viewing on your extranet page two business days after you receive the email notification that your assessment reports are available for viewing.

- You may find your current assessment cycle end date on your program's extranet profile page.

- Your program will receive ongoing assessments on a regular basis:

    o   Following your initial rating, your program will be contacted for assessment after 12 to 14 months.

    o   At the Rising Star (1) and Progressing Star (2) level, your program will be contacted for assessment every 12 to 14 months.

    o   At the Quality Levels (3, 4, and 5 star), your program will be contacted for assessment every 24 to 26 months.

Request for Public Rating Policy: **Participants who achieve a star rating of 3, 4 or 5 in their initial rating cycle have an option to publicly post the star rating at that time rather than waiting for the next assessment cycle. A public rating of 3, 4, or 5 stars will move your program into an assessment cycle of 24-26 months. A Request for Public Rating Form must be submitted to First Things First within three months of your assessment results.**

ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT POLICIES

Early Assessment Policy: **Participants may request to have an assessment conducted prior to the regular cycle. The request will be reviewed to determine if this option is available, and you will be notified by the assessment team whether or not your request is approved. A response will be provided within five business days as possible. An early assessment may not be conducted if the assessment cycle is less than 10 months, and participants at the Rising Star and Progressing Star levels may not be approved two assessment cycles in a row.**

Assessment Deferment Policy*: **Participants may request to have an assessment deferred due to unforeseen circumstances. A Request for Assessment Deferment must be submitted to the Assessment Program Manager. Deferment requests will be reviewed to determine eligibility, and notification will be sent by email to the participant whether or not the request is approved. Deferment requests are not guaranteed and will be reviewed on a case by case basis.**

*This policy applies to enrolled participants only. Newly selected programs in the initial assessment cycle may not request deferment. Initial assessments are designed to provide feedback and establish a baseline before beginning quality improvements.

Informal Assessment Policy: Informal assessments are offered to provide feedback in the form of a narrative report through the Quality First Assessment team outside of the standard assessment cycle. An informal assessment includes a classroom observation using a CLASS or ERS tool, based on request. Informal assessment is offered based on the schedule and availability of the assessment team and is not guaranteed. The formal Quality First assessment process cannot be delayed or deferred due to a delay in informal assessment. Following the observation, a written summary will be emailed to your program including feedback about strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Copies of the Request for Public Rating, Request for Early Assessment, Assessment Deferment Request and Informal Assessment Request forms are available in the extranet on the Quality First Dashboard, in the Forms section under Quality First Resources.

STRATEGIES TO HELP PREPARE FOR A SUCCESSFUL ASSESSMENT

In order to make the most of your Quality First participation and to help prepare your program for successful assessments, here are some considerations:

- Review the assessment tools, including the Points Scale Guidance Document. A Quality First coach is available to support you to ensure that you have a complete understanding of how your program's practices will be measured.

- Share information about the Quality First assessment tools with your staff, potentially through staff meetings prior to the assessment.

- If you employ staff, talk with them about what to expect during the assessment – how the assessor will be in the classroom, how long the assessor will be there, what the assessor will be observing, and how to maintain a natural environment for the children.

- Be sure that your program information is up to date in the extranet and Registry and that all class rosters are updated accurately in advance. Gathering all the birthdates of the children in each child care group is helpful in planning ahead.

- Although assessors will not need to look at the individual plans for children with special needs or special health care conditions, it is helpful to make the assessor aware so that they are able to focus on the environment in terms of the child's unique needs.

- Prepare your families for the assessment so they understand your program's involvement in Quality First and your commitment to improvement.

- Consider the unique needs of your program in planning for your assessment. You will be asked by the assessor about your program's specifics, such as language of instruction or a unique population served in order to support individual requirements.

- Plan your time so you are available in case the assessor needs additional information. Sometimes, a lead teacher may be asked for supporting information and needs to have substitute coverage.

- Have the teachers talk to the children about the role of the assessor to alleviate any fears and to help them to feel comfortable with the assessor's presence. You have the option of introducing the assessor to the children when he or she is ready to assess the classroom.

- If you are unsure about any part of the process before, during, or after the assessment is complete, be sure to ask questions of the assessor or the coach or seek clarification using the Assessment Report Clarification Request form (this form is available in the extranet on the Quality First Dashboard, in the Forms section under Quality First Resources).

- Understand that the assessment report is a valuable piece of information to help guide your quality improvement efforts. Share this information with staff to support their understanding of your program's strengths and opportunities for improvement.

- All assessment data finalized prior to April 1 will be used to determine a program's incentives allocation and child care scholarship eligibility for the next fiscal year.

SECTION FOUR:
Quality First Financial Incentives

Programs enrolled in Quality First have access to different forms of financial incentives to support the improvement process. Regional councils budget an allotted amount for each Quality First participant in their region per fiscal year (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021). The amount budgeted supports the different components of Quality First including coaching, assessment, financial incentives, specialized technical assistance and professional development. It is important to plan for the sustainability of quality improvement efforts by making investments that will stand the test of time.

There are forms of Quality First participation that do not include the financial incentives outlined in this section. Please refer to your enrollment agreement and/or contract for details.
There are two different types of financial incentives offered to Quality First participants:

- **Licensing fee assistance** – for participants licensed by the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS)

- **Quality First Incentives** – for eligible participants to overcome barriers in support of improvement efforts

LICENSING FEE ASSISTANCE

Quality First provides assistance with paying ADHS licensing renewal fees to support programs in covering the administrative costs associated with operating a regulated program in Arizona.

> **Licensing Fee Assistance Policy:** **Licensing fee assistance is provided to regionally funded Quality First participants with an ADHS license. Fifty percent of licensing fees will be covered by First Things First with the additional fifty percent paid by the participant when the license is renewed every three years. It is the responsibility of each Quality First participant to provide their updated licensing information within two weeks of the previous license expiring. The licensing fee assistance does not apply to family child care programs certified by the Department of Economic Security (DES), programs certified by the military or tribal programs not licensed by ADHS.**

Once you are fully enrolled in Quality First, you will receive assistance with payment of licensing fees if you are regulated by ADHS. Quality First licensing fee assistance is paid directly to ADHS by First Things First.

The chart below shows Quality First's definitions of program size, based on licensed capacity. Your licensing fees and incentives are based on your program size as defined in the chart. (For more information about licensed capacity, see the Licensed Capacity Verification policy in section 7 of this guide.)

SMALL CENTER
(0-5 licensed capacity = 50 or fewer)

MEDIUM CENTER
(0-5 licensed capacity = 51-150)

LARGE CENTER
(0-5 licensed capacity = 151+)

GROUP HOME
(licensed capacity = 10)

FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME
(certified for four children or fewer)

The chart below shows the 50 percent amount you will be responsible for paying to the Arizona Department of Health Services every three years, upon renewal of your license:

SMALL CENTER	MEDIUM CENTER	LARGE CENTER	GROUP HOME
$500	$2,000	$3,900	$500

QUALITY FIRST INCENTIVES

Making improvements in your program can be challenging due to the associated costs, which may become a barrier in the process toward providing high quality care. To assist you in overcoming these challenges, Quality First Incentives are available to enrolled, eligible Quality First participants, including Rating Only programs, to make program improvements.

Quality First Incentives Policy: Financial incentives are available to eligible Quality First participants to overcome barriers to establishing and sustaining high quality practices. Financial incentives will be accessible once enrollment in Quality First is finalized. Incentives may be used to purchase materials and supplies that will enhance the learning environment, to offset costs of facility improvements that will enhance the environment, and to support professional development opportunities for program staff. E-Verify documentation and/or Lawful Presence documentation must be completed and submitted (if applicable) as a requirement for Quality First participation and to be eligible for incentives.

Each year, you will need to complete and submit the Incentive Management Agreement, Participant Guide Acknowledgement and Participant Role and Responsibilities Agreement to gain access to the Quality First financial incentives. To allow year-end processing and record keeping, Incentive Order Forms must be submitted by <u>April 15</u>.

Once you have signed the required forms as outlined in the Enrollment Policy and Quality First Incentives Policy, financial incentives will be available to your program. The Quality First coach will assist you in accessing your incentives through the coaching agency ordering and/or incentives payout process, as applicable. The following represents the total incentive amount that will be available to you for the fiscal year (beginning July 1, 2020). Quality First incentive funds cannot be carried over from year to year if the full amount is unused. Your program's star rating as of April 1 will determine your financial incentives for the upcoming year.

The table below represents the incentive levels based on star rating and program size:

PROVIDER TYPE	1 & 2 STAR	3 STAR	4 STAR	5 STAR
LARGE CENTER (ADHS licensed, tribal or military) 151+ CHILDREN	$8,400	$9,400	$10,400	$11,400
MEDIUM CENTER (ADHS licensed, tribal or military) 51–150 CHILDREN	$5,250	$5,875	$6,500	$7,125
SMALL CENTER (ADHS licensed, tribal or military) 1–50 CHILDREN	$3,675	$4,125	$4,575	$5,025
GROUP HOME (ADHS LICENSED, tribal or military)	$2,100	$2,350	$2,600	$2,850
FAMILY HOME (DES CERTIFIED, tribal or military)	$1,050	$1,175	$1,300	$1,425

The implementation of financial incentives in Fiscal Year 2021 will be as follows:

- 1 - 2 star programs have access to financial incentives to purchase materials, equipment, facility improvements, transcript payment, professional development, consultation and specialized services tied

49

to a program's Quality Improvement Plan. Materials will be purchased through the coaching agency and delivered to your program.

- 3 - 5 star programs receive financial incentives through a direct payment to use at their discretion or through purchasing offered by the coaching agency. Participants must use these incentives to focus on continuation of efforts to maintain the quality of their program through materials, equipment, facility improvements, transcript payment, professional development, consultation and specialized services or staff salaries.

Incentives Payout Expenditure Report Policy: **For the purpose of documenting all purchases for Quality First participants receiving an incentive direct payment, the Incentives Payout Expenditure Report is required. Participants are required to provide details about expenditures and maintain records documenting those expenditures. All incentive funds must be fully expended by** May 31**. The Incentives Payout Expenditure Report must be submitted to the Quality First coach by** June 30**. A program will not receive an incentive payout until the Incentives Payout Expenditure Report for the previous fiscal year has been reviewed and approved.**

To ensure incentive funds are used to support quality improvement, Quality First may complete an onsite review of your program's records, receipts, and materials purchased with incentive funds. If it is determined that funds were not used in accordance with Quality First's policies, future incentives may not be accessible, you may be required to repay funds, and/or your participation in Quality First may be terminated.

Please submit the Incentives Expenditure Report to the coach as soon as spending has been completed. If you have a monthly meeting with an accountant or bookkeeper, this is a good time to review expenditures and complete this form. Timely submission of the Incentives Expenditure Report supports the review and approval process which must be completed before future incentives are accessible.

Incentive funds may not be used for religious purposes or activities, such as faith-based curriculum, religious children's books, faith-based program accreditation, attendance at faith-based conferences, staff salaries for program time spent on religious instruction or worship, or bonuses for staff whose predominant or sole purpose is religious. Incentive funds may be used for facility improvements to buildings or rooms used for religious purposes only if the improvements will not substantially benefit the religious uses of the building or room, as determined by Quality First. Participants will be required to repay any incentive funds determined to have been used for religious purposes or activities.

Quality First Incentive funds can be used for the following types of expenses:

Materials and Equipment: If your program has a specific need for additional learning materials and equipment or furnishings, incentive funds can be used to purchase these items. For participants ordering through the coaching agency, materials may be ordered through an approved vendor.

Consultation and Specialized Services: Incentive funds can be used for consultation and specialized services. For participants ordering through the coaching agency, payment for these services will be provided through the coaching agency based on a quote from the vendor. An example might be to hire a trainer for specialized needs unique to your program.

Facility Improvements: Examples of facility improvement projects might include shelving, cement slabs, fencing, painting or carpet installation. For participants ordering through the coaching agency, you will work with the coach to complete a Facility Projects Liability release for approval of these types of projects. (The Facility Projects Liability Release is available in the extranet on the Quality First Dashboard, in the Forms section under Quality First Resources.) Incentive checks will be made payable and mailed to the vendor delivering the service after it has been provided. Incentive funding requests for facility improvement projects cannot exceed 30% of a participant's total incentive funds. Supportive documentation for these projects is required for payment; the Quality First coach working with your program will provide the needed forms for your completion.

Transcript Payment: Incentive funds may be used to cover the cost of requesting transcripts, credentials, or certificates for staff in preparation for the Quality First Points Scale Assessment. For participants ordering through the coaching agency, please work with the Quality First coach to request reimbursement for the cost of education documentation using your program's incentive funds.

Professional Development: Incentive funds may be set aside to provide professional development opportunities for staff including regional and national conferences, online trainings, professional development materials to be kept in classrooms or onsite, or payment for professional membership in early childhood organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or the Family Child Care Association (FCCA).

Staff Salaries or Bonuses: For 3-5 star programs who receive an incentive payout in the form of a direct payment, incentive funds may be used to offset the cost of staff salaries or bonuses. For example, funds may be used to support hiring of additional teaching or support staff, to provide paid time outside the classroom for teachers to focus on curriculum planning or professional development, or to recognize staff implementation of high-quality practices.

QUALITY FIRST CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIPS

To better serve the needs of the communities, Quality First Scholarships are funded directly by regional councils. The regional councils identify priorities through a strategic planning process that includes reviewing the needs and assets of the community. If selected as a priority, the number of Quality First Scholarships funded will be determined by the regional council and allocated to programs based on the Quality First rating as of April 1, 2020.

A participant's tuition rates do not affect the Quality First Scholarships reimbursement rate.

If the Quality First Scholarships reimbursement rate is less than the amount your program charges for

tuition and fees, you may decide to charge a copayment to families. Families may be responsible for paying the amount by which your tuition rate plus fees exceeds all scholarships, subsidies, and discounts paid on the families' behalf, including the Quality First Scholarships reimbursement rate. The tuition and fees for Quality First Scholarships families may not exceed the tuition and fees that are charged to families not receiving a Quality First Scholarship. If you choose to charge a copayment to families, it is the recommendation of First Things First that families receiving scholarships pay no more than 10 percent of their gross monthly income on any co-payments that would be charged to the family.

If the Quality First Scholarships reimbursement rate is more than the amount your program charges for tuition and fees, then the family should not be charged a co-pay. Fees include all costs above and beyond the program's tuition rate. It is recommended that these additional scholarship funds above and beyond the tuition be used to support your ongoing quality improvement efforts.

Scholarship reimbursement is based on a child's scheduled hours of instruction. Programs must be open for children to attend at least 400 hours over the course of a year and at least 34 hours in a month to be eligible for part-time scholarship reimbursement. Programs must be open for children to attend at least 1,120 hours over the course of a year and at least 93 hours in a month to be eligible for full-time reimbursement. Full-time scholarships are most often used for full-time care, but a full-time scholarship can be split into two part-time scholarships, subject to the program minimum hours requirements. Part-time scholarships could be considered if a part-time model best meets the needs of the families.

The Quality First Scholarship annual, full-time reimbursement amount is indicated in the table below. If your program does not operate for twelve months out of the year or meet the minimum monthly full-time hours, the reimbursement amount will be less than what is indicated below:

TYPE	AGE	2 STAR	3-5 STAR
CENTER	0-2 years	$7,970	$11,300
	3-5 years	$6,000	$7,300
HOME	0-2 years	$5,625	$7,600
	3-5 years	$4,875	$6,200

Generally, only programs that achieve a star rating at the Quality level and above (3, 4, and 5) will be allocated child care scholarships. Programs at the Rising and Progressing star levels (1 & 2) will continue to receive Quality First Incentives for program improvements. Some regional councils may approve funding for additional scholarships at the Progressing Star (2) level if a specific community need has been identified.

Scholarships allocated to a program that includes religious instruction or worship as part of the program's

activities will be transferable scholarships, meaning the scholarship will follow a child receiving a scholarship under certain conditions. Scholarships allocated to a program that does not include religious instruction or worship as part of the program's activities will remain with the program for the entire state fiscal year (July 1 – June 30), subject to available funding and reallocation for non-use.

The number of scholarships your program is allocated can be found on the Quality First extranet under the Scholarships tab. Participants receiving scholarships are required to maintain compliance with the Quality First Scholarships Policies and Procedures identified through the contract with Valley of the Sun United Way. Failure to comply with the policies and procedures may result in termination from both the Quality First Scholarships program and Quality First.

For more information about Quality First Scholarships, please visit *qfscholarshipsreporting.org* or contact the Valley of the Sun United Way Scholarships Team using the contact information noted below:

Valley of the Sun United Way - Scholarships Team
3200 E. Camelback Road, Suite 375
Phoenix, AZ 85018
Participant helpline: 602.240.6325
Parent helpline: 602.240.6324 or 866.973.0012
regionalscholarships@vsuw.org

SECTION FIVE:
Quality First Specialized Assistance

During your ongoing participation in Quality First, you may have the opportunity to receive additional specialized assistance to support the individual needs of your program as you work toward quality improvement. Availability of specialized assistance depends on your geographic region and the model of Quality First you participate in.

Quality First Specialized Assistance provides an opportunity for collaboration with technical assistance professionals and coaches to meet the unique needs of your program. Collaboration is the act of working together to coordinate service efforts to meet a common goal. The process involves teams that partner with one another to obtain greater resources, share knowledge, learn together and build consensus. Collaboration does not imply any type of authority or hierarchy, but a group of people with similar interests and complementary areas of expertise participating equally.

You and the Quality First coach have the opportunity to collaborate with other early childhood education technical assistance professionals which may include, Child Care Health Consultants, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants, Inclusion Coaches, ADE Early Childhood Specialists, ADHS Licensing Surveyors, DES Certification Specialists and College Scholarship Specialists as they are available to help with goal setting and quality improvement planning. In addition to collaboration during on-site visits with you and your staff, your coach and other early childhood education technical assistance professionals may meet outside of these visits for planning and coordination of services to support your improvement efforts.

Joint collaboration activities may include:

- Joint visits with you, the Quality First coach and other consultants/technical assistance professionals

- Collaboration on goal setting, identifying action steps, and planning visits

- Feedback and input on your program's strengths and opportunities for growth

- Sharing of training resources and materials

- Joint trainings, Communities of Practice, Professional Learning Communities and other group events focused on quality improvement goals

Collaboration Meeting Policy: **Collaboration meetings are a part of participation in Quality First, to coordinate services efforts to meet a common goal. Collaboration meetings are required at least quarterly and will include the participant, the Quality First coach, CCHC and any additional technical support professionals serving the site (such as Inclusion, Smart Support, and ADE). Documentation of the collaboration meeting will be shared with all participating members and inputted into the extranet activity log and added to the collaboration binder.**

The coach will work with you to schedule a collaboration meeting with you and the Quality First collaboration team that works within your schedule each quarter. This meeting will focus specifically on your program's needs and identified goals for quality improvement. During the meeting, you will discuss your quality improvement plans with the collaboration team. One member of the team will keep notes of discussion and decisions made and provide you with a copy.

Quality First Communication Binder Policy: **An organizational system, such as a Quality First communication binder is required in order to establish a system of documentation related to Quality First participation. All Quality First participants are required to maintain an organizational system on-site to collect documentation including copies of the enrollment agreement, assessment reports, coaching logs and quality improvement plans. This system must be accessible to all Quality First technical assistance professionals providing services to the program.**

TYPES OF SPECIALIZED ASSISTANCE

Child Care Health Consultation (CCHC)
available in all First Things First regions to programs participating in the Quality First full participation model

A Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC) is a specially trained health professional who provides advice and support to early care and education providers through education and the identification of site-specific health and safety needs. The CCHC provides support by delivering comprehensive technical assistance through:

- Onsite and telephone guidance and consultation
- Staff training on health and safety licensing requirements and evidence based best practices
- Assistance in the development of health and safety related policies and procedures
- Referrals to community resources
- Information to share with parents and children

This may also include supporting your program in meeting the needs of individual children and their specific health needs such as asthma, allergy and diabetes plans.

Child Care Health Consultation Policy: To support high quality health and safety practices, each full participation model Quality First participant will be assigned a Child Care Health Consultant once enrolled. Participants have the option of requesting from three levels of service:

- Tier 1 - phone and email consultation as needed
- Tier 2 - responsive on-site consultation based on a critical health or safety need
- Tier 3 - regular on-site consultation to help you support the health, safety and well-being of the children in your care

Rising Star and Progressing Star programs must receive a Health and Safety Checklist assessment annually as part of their Quality First participation.

After enrollment in Quality First, participants will receive a visit from the CCHC to determine consultation needs. The CCHC will discuss CCHC services, needs of the child care program, and the value of the health and safety checklist. Together, you and the CCHC will decide on a tier level of service. You can seek more information on working with a CCHC by contacting the CCHC designated on your Quality First extranet home page.

The Empower program, provided by the Arizona Department of Health Services, provides guidance toward effective health practices in the early care and education setting.

Empower Policy: To help children and families lead healthier lives, participation in Empower is required of all Quality First participants. Participants are required to sign an Empower agreement and have a written policy and implementation for each standard. Empower standards support program health and wellness including nutrition, breastfeeding, physical activity, screen time, tobacco, oral health, sun safety and staff training.

Your child care health consultant may also provide training and technical assistance on Empower topics. For support, guidance and further information on the Empower program, please visit https://azdhs.gov/prevention/nutrition-physical-activity/empower/index.php.

Birth to Five Helpline
available statewide to all participants
The **Birth to Five Helpline** links Quality First participants to experts who will provide telephone consultation in the areas of child care health, early childhood mental health and inclusion of children with special needs.
Reach the Birth to Five Helpline at **877.705.KIDS (5437)**

An example of a how you could use the Helpline would be in the event a child is exhibiting concerning behaviors and a teacher is looking for guidance in how to respond appropriately or to offer valuable resources to the family.

56

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (Smart Support)
available in the following First Things First regions: Cochise, Coconino, East Maricopa, Graham/Greenlee, Hualapai Tribe, Navajo Nation, Navajo/Apache, Northwest Maricopa, Phoenix North, Phoenix South, Pinal, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, Southeast Maricopa, Yavapai and Yuma

Smart Support is an evidence-based strategy proven to support the social and emotional development of all children in care and help providers respond to children with behavioral challenges. In regions that offer this support, consultants are available to work directly with teachers to develop strategies to work most effectively with children in early learning settings.

Contact Smart Support at **1.866.330.5520**

An example of services that might be provided through Smart Support would be training for teachers on helping children to label emotions and create helpful activities that assist children in learning how to deal with strong feelings.

Inclusion of Children with Special Needs (Inclusion Program)
available in the following First Things First regions: Northwest Maricopa, Phoenix North, Phoenix South and Yuma

Inclusion Coaching addresses the need for quality early care and education for young children with special needs ages birth to age 5. Specific focus is on improving skills of child care staff and providing training and assistance to support quality inclusive settings. Contact Inclusion via the contact information below:

Maricopa County regions
602.633.8454 or email ecei@swhd.org

Yuma region
928.248.5112

An example of how this specialized assistance could be provided would be to support children who may have difficulty communicating or have challenging behaviors be successful in the classroom by using visual supports or other strategies. The Inclusion Program can also provide professional development on a variety of topics related to children who have identified or suspected developmental delays.

Arizona Department of Education (ADE)
available statewide to all participants

ADE offers free training to all early childhood professionals throughout the state in a number of areas including the Arizona Early Learning Standards, the Infant and Toddler Developmental Guidelines, and the Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education: Birth through Kindergarten. An ADE Early Childhood Specialist may also be available to participants in some regions to support the transition of children from early care and education settings into Kindergarten. Professional development opportunities can be found

on ADE's Events Management System at: https://www.azed.gov/ece/professional-development/

An example of the services offered through the Department of Education would be to invite a representative to your facility to offer hands-on training for you and your staff to discuss and learn more about the Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines. If your group is too small to have a representative at your site, you could partner with another participant in your area or have your staff attend a regularly scheduled training.

SUPPORTING ALL CHILDREN: ASSISTANCE TO HELP YOU PREVENT EXPULSIONS

Young children grow and thrive within stable relationships with caring adults. Maintaining stability in children's early learning experiences supports their development and their long-term success in kindergarten and beyond. Unfortunately, preschoolers are three times more likely to be expelled than students in kindergarten through 12th grade.[1] This is often due to challenging behaviors that educators feel unequipped to handle. Nationwide, early childhood programs are developing policies to reduce and eliminate expulsion.

As a Quality First participant, your program has access to resources to help you support all children's success and reduce or eliminate expulsion from your program. Consultation, training and technical assistance helps you and your staff feel more equipped to respond to challenging behaviors in support of all children's success. For support in preventing expulsions in your program, utilize the resources below:

Call a Specialist

- **Birth to Five Helpline**
  available statewide to families, caregivers and professionals

  In addition to being a resource for Arizona families, the Birth to Five Helpline is available to all early childhood educators who work with children ages birth to 5. By calling the Helpline, you can access support from Southwest Human Development's wide range of early childhood development staff including psychologists and master's level counselors. Services are available in English and Spanish. Contact the helpline:
  - By phone at **877.705.KIDS**
  - On the website at swhd.org/programs/health-and-development/birth-to-five-helpline
  - On the Birth to Five Helpline app available at the Apple App Store or on Google Play

- **Expulsion Prevention Support Line**
  available statewide to all DES certified child care centers and family child care homes

  If you have a child in your program that is at risk for expulsion, contact the resource specialists for support. These specialists will provide guidance on challenging behaviors, provide recommendations, and will work to connect you with training and community resources to assist you in working with the child at risk for expulsion. Contact a Resource Support Specialist:
  - By phone at **602.542.2526**
  - By email at DESExpulsionPrevention@azdes.gov

---

[1]Gilliam, W.S. 2005. Prekindergarteners left behind: Expulsion rates in state prekindergarten systems. New Haven, CT: Yale University Child Study Center. Available from http://www.ziglercenter.yale.edu/publications/National%20Prek%20Study_expulsion_tcm350-34774_tcm350-284-32.pdf.

Participate in Training and Technical Assistance

- **Expulsion Prevention Training and Technical Assistance**
  available statewide to all DES certified child care centers and family child care homes*

  Southwest Human Development provides caregivers with skills and strategies they need to respond effectively to these challenges through a series of training on expulsion prevention. This new series offers opportunities to learn how understanding child development, attachment, trauma reaction and support of children's developing self-regulation skills can help reduce and prevent expulsion of children from ages birth to 12 years.

  - o Register online for training through the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry at azregistry.org. After logging into your account, simply search "Expulsion Prevention."

  - o Technical assistance is available to provide practical tips and strategies to use in your caregiving environment. For more information regarding technical assistance, please contact Jennifer Atkari-Benavides at **602.633.8730** or jatkari@swhd.org.

  *Not a DES certified provider? Contact Southwest Human Development at the contact information above to find out about opportunities that may be available to you.

Access On-site Consultation

- **Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (Smart Support)**
  available in the following First Things First Regions: Cochise, Coconino, East Maricopa, Graham/Greenlee, Hualapai Tribe, Navajo Nation, Navajo/Apache, Northwest Maricopa, Phoenix North, Phoenix South, Pinal, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, Southeast Maricopa, Yavapai and Yuma

  Smart Support is an evidence-based strategy proven to support the social and emotional development of all children in care and help providers respond to children with behavioral challenges. Consultants can work directly with teachers to develop strategies to work most effectively with children in early learning settings.

  - o Contact Smart Support at **1.866.330.5520**

STRATEGIES TO BENEFIT FROM SPECIALIZED ASSISTANCE

In order to make the most of the specialized assistance available to you as a Quality First participant, here are some considerations:

- Do some research to find what types of specialized assistance services are available in your area. Visit firstthingsfirst.org, select Find your Region and insert the address. This will take you to your region page, which includes the regional council members and a selection of publications and resources available for that region.

- Talk with your Quality First coach to discuss your specific needs. Consider some of the goals you have established for program improvement and how specialized assistance can be used to help you meet your goals.

- Reach out to the staff you work with. What are their needs in providing the best care to the children and families they serve? What types of specialized assistance could they engage in to support their teaching?

- Review your assessment reports and find areas that may indicate more work is needed to provide quality care. If it is in the area of creating appropriate lesson plans with the Arizona Early Learning Standards, contact the Arizona Department of Education.

- Communicate with your families about the types of specialized assistance that you are using in your program. Introduce your families to the coaches and consultants who will be supporting your program as they may see them in your program on a regular basis.

SECTION SIX:
Quality First Professional Development

Professional development is an important part of your Quality First participation and in working toward providing quality care to the children in your program. The opportunity to engage in professional development offers continuous learning for anyone working in the field of early education. Growing in knowledge and developing new skills based on the most recent research and standards of best practice will benefit your program, the staff and the children. There are a variety of ways in which professional development can be offered to you and your staff based on your goals, staff qualifications, unique program needs and availability.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

Exchange Magazine – This professional journal is provided free of charge to all programs participating in the full participation model of Quality First. The magazine offers valuable information about the field of early care and education with resources to support your staff and the families you serve and ideas for program practice. This magazine will be mailed directly to your program six times per year and is available to you online. If you are not receiving this publication, please contact the Quality First Team at qualityfirst@firstthingsfirst.org or 602.771.5000.

Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Network – The purpose of this valuable resource is to provide information on Workforce Knowledge and Competencies, training and workshop offerings, career opportunities, and access to the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry for early childhood professionals to document and track their experience, education and knowledge over time. The Network is a comprehensive, consistent, and accessible web-based system designed to meet the professional development needs of Arizona's early childhood professionals from entry to advanced levels and promote high quality professional development. Visit the Network at azearlychildhood.org.

   The network includes the following components:

- A professional development website to promote and provide access to a variety of professional development, career and higher education resources to assist early childhood professionals in keeping their skills and knowledge up to date.

- The Arizona Career Lattice, a tool that early childhood professionals can use for individualized professional assessment, setting professional development goals, and documenting their progress in their career development.

- The Arizona Workforce Knowledge and Competencies, a uniform set of expectations that identify the basic knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for early childhood professionals across sectors of

62

early childhood including early care and education, early intervention, mental health, physical health and social services/child welfare professionals. They ensure implementation of quality services for young children and their families.

- A Job Bank that includes information about early childhood jobs submitted from employers seeking employees as well as information pulled from Indeed.com.

- First Things First College Scholarships for Early Childhood Professionals provide access to higher education for the early childhood workforce working directly with or on behalf of young children birth to age 5. These scholarships are available to assist early childhood professionals with credential and degree attainment.

- A web-based Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry to collect and store data about the early childhood workforce. Information such as college credits, work history, workshops competed and site training logs will be stored making it easier for early childhood professionals to keep track of their professional development.

Registry Policy: **To track early childhood workforce professional development, education and experience, Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry membership is required of all staff working with children in Quality First participating programs. Information regarding staff education will be obtained from the Registry for the Quality First Points Scale Assessment.**

To create a registry account, visit azearlychildhood.org and click on the registry link at the top right side of the page. A video on how to create a registry account may be viewed at azearlychildhood.org/resources/videos. Program directors will also need to request administrative access to view and manage their early education program and staffing information. Step-by-step instructions for requesting administrative access, submitting education documentation and more are outlined on the website at http://azearlychildhood.org/about/using-the-registry.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFULLY USING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In order to make the most of professional development, here are some considerations:

- Take advantage of professional development opportunities as often as possible to increase your knowledge and support your understanding of the needs of children and how best to support them. It is never too late to learn new things!

- When you or your staff members attend professional development events or complete coursework through a college or university, provide opportunities for the information to be shared among all members of your team. This will not only create common learning opportunities but also create an advanced skill for the individual sharing the information.

- Create a mentor or on-site coach role in your program for a staff member who has specialized or advanced knowledge or skills so that others can receive ongoing support and mentoring from within your own team.

- Consider the vision, philosophy and values of your program in establishing professional development plans for you and your staff. As you and your staff learn more ways to support the uniqueness of your program, there are greater opportunities for unity and common understanding. For instance, if "risk-taking" for young children is a part of your program philosophy, send your staff to training on how to create safe outdoor play environments that support these types of behaviors.

- Read your *Exchange Magazine* and share it with all of your staff. Share information with families at your program. Do an article review with a group or experiment with new ideas you find on the pages. The *Exchange Magazine* also often publishes opportunities for continuing education credits available online or through correspondence. You also have the opportunity to have your program featured on the magazine jacket cover to showcase quality practices.

- Seek out opportunities to learn about quality improvement efforts and how to be a leader in your program in supporting these changes. Make professional development a part of your goal planning process and have your coach or specialized assistance team help you to grow in this area.

- Create an environment that encourages and supports staff in putting new knowledge into practice.

- Ensure your program's entire classroom and administrative staff become members of the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry. Make enrollment in the Registry a part of your new hire onboarding process, and show new staff how to use the Registry to access professional development. As members, they will have access to professional development opportunities, access to possible college scholarship opportunities, and a place to track all of their education and professional development accomplishments.

- To ensure your program and staff information is up-to-date, make reviewing your program's information a regular practice. The reports available provide you with information about your staff's

professional development and education and are accepted by ADHS Child Care Licensing and DES Child Care Certification specialists to document ongoing professional development. These reports are a great tool for supporting you and your staff's professional development. Review these reports regularly to identify core knowledge areas (CKAs) that are underrepresented in each staff member's record. As training needs are identified, create a plan to participate in professional development that meets these needs.

SECTION SEVEN:
Quality First Administrative Practices

This section offers guidance on policies and state standards to support your participation in Quality First. These practices are listed in alphabetical order for easy review.

APPEALS

Appeals Policy: A participant may only submit a Request for Appeal within 60 days of being notified of a star rating or enrollment termination. The Request for Appeal must be submitted in writing to the Quality First Director at First Things First using the Request for Appeal form. Once received, the Quality First Director and the Senior Director for Early Learning, the Chief Program Officer (CPO), and/or the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will review the Request for Appeal and provide a written response, which includes a scheduled meeting date, to you within 14 days of the receipt of the request. A copy of the Request for Appeal form is available in the extranet on the Quality First Dashboard, in the Forms section under Quality First Resources.

The Appeals Process only applies when a participant appeals a star rating or an enrollment termination. A participant must go through the Assessment Report Clarification Process before appealing a star rating. If you would like to discuss any other specific challenge that you are having, the Clarification and Concern Resolution process is the appropriate route.

All Quality First services and benefits will end upon enrollment termination with the exception of already awarded college scholarships and FTF Professional REWARD$. If First Things First reenrolls the participant in Quality First as a result of the Appeals Process, the participant may be eligible to receive financial benefits withheld during the period of termination.

While an appeal about a star rating is being considered, the participant's star rating will be masked from public view on the Quality First website.

If you are unsatisfied with the result of your Request for Appeal, you may request a formal hearing conducted by an Administrative Law Judge with the Office of Administrative Hearings. First Things First will notify you in writing when the opportunity to request a formal hearing is available. After receipt of that notice, you will have 30 days to file a request for a hearing in writing. Refer to "Administrative Hearing" in the charts on pages 68-69 under "Clarification, Concern Resolution and Appeals Process" for more details.

CLARIFICATION AND CONCERN RESOLUTION

The process for clarification, concern resolution, and appeal is outlined on pages 68-69. If you have questions about your assessment results and/or star rating, review your assessment reports with your coach, using the ERS tools, All About books, CLASS manuals, and Points Scale Guidance Document to answer questions. If questions remain, you may initiate the clarification process by submitting an Assessment Report Clarification Request. The Request for Assessment Report Clarification form is available in the extranet on the Quality First Dashboard, in the Forms section under Quality First Resources.

If you have other concerns related to your Quality First experience, begin by speaking directly with the Coach or CCHC working with your program. If your concerns persist after speaking with the Coach or CCHC, contact a supervisor or program manager for support. Program contact information is available in the Quality First Resource Directory available in the Resources section of this guide.

Informal Dispute Resolution Policy: **Informal Dispute Resolution is available to resolve concerns related to a participant's Quality First experience. If informal methods of resolving the issue have not successfully addressed the participant's concerns, a Quality First Complaint Form may be submitted to the Quality First Director at First Things First.**

The Complaint form is available in the extranet on the Quality First Dashboard, in the Forms section under Quality First Resources. In the Complaint form, you will provide a description of your concern and any attempts made to resolve the issue as well as recommendations of possible solutions.

A representative of the First Things First Quality First team will contact you to determine next steps to address your concern either over the phone or by scheduling a meeting with all involved parties, ideally within 14 calendar days of receiving the Complaint. After the meeting, First Things First will make a decision and notify you within 14 days.

This informal dispute resolution process does not apply in the case of an enrollment termination.

CLARIFICATION, CONCERN RESOLUTION AND APPEALS PROCESS

If you have questions or concerns about your participation in Quality First, options are available to you to have these concerns addressed. The processes for clarification, concern resolution, and appeal are outlined in the charts that follow.

If you have questions or concerns about your assessment results and/or star rating:

Step 1: Clarification

If you have questions about your assessment results and/or star rating, review your assessment reports with your coach, using the ERS tools and All About books, CLASS manuals, and Points Scale Guidance Document to answer questions.

If questions remain, you may submit a Quality First Assessment Report Clarification Request**. The Request must be submitted within 40 days of the assessment results being approved.** A written response will be provided to you within 14 days of receipt of the Request, as possible. (See Assessment Report Clarification Policy on page 41.)

If concerns persist after completing the assessment clarification process, you may proceed to Step 2, Request for Appeal.

If you are unsatisfied with the result of Step 1, you may move to Step 2

Step 2: Request for Appeal

The Request for Appeal must be submitted within 60 days of being notified of the star rating.

Once your Request for Appeal is received**,** a representative of the Quality First team will contact you to offer the option of an Informal Dispute Resolution meeting or an Appeal meeting, within 14 days of the receipt of the request.

If you participate in an Informal Dispute Resolution meeting as a first step in response to your Appeal, and you are unsatisfied with the result, you may proceed with an Appeal meeting. You will be contacted by First Things First to proceed.

To proceed with an Appeal meeting**,** the Quality First Director, the Senior Director for Early Learning, the Chief Program Officer (CPO), and/or the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will review the Request for Appeal and provide a written response, which includes a scheduled meeting date. The Quality First Director, Senior Director for Early Learning, Chief Program Officer, and/or the CEO will meet with you and provide a decision on the Request for Appeal. (See Appeals Policy on page 65.)

If you are unsatisfied with the result of Step 2, you may move to Step 3

Step 3: Administrative Hearing

If you are unsatisfied with the result of your Request for Appeal, you may request a formal hearing conducted by an Administrative Law Judge with the Office of Administrative Hearings.

First Things First will notify you in writing when the opportunity to request a formal hearing is available. After receipt of that notice, you will have 30 days to file a request for a hearing in writing. The request must include the name and address of the program seeking the hearing, the decision being appealed and a concise statement of the reasons for the appeal. The request must be provided to First Things First's main office in care of the General Counsel.

Once a recommendation decision is made by the Office of Administrative Hearings, the First Things First Board will review the decision and take action to accept, reject or modify the recommendation. First Things First will notify you of the final Board decision in writing.

If you are appealing termination from Quality First:

Step 1: Request for Appeal

You may submit a Request for Appeal of your termination from Quality First.

The Request for Appeal must be submitted within 60 days of being notified of the termination.

Once received, the Quality First Director, the Senior Director for Early Learning, the Chief Program Officer (CPO), and/or the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will review the Request for Appeal and provide a written response, which includes a scheduled meeting date, to you within 14 days of the receipt of the request. The Quality First Director, Senior Director for Early Learning, Chief Program Officer, and/or the CEO will meet with you and provide a decision on the Request for Appeal.

If you are unsatisfied with the result of Step 1, you may move to Step 2

Step 2: Administrative Hearing

If you are unsatisfied with the result of your Request for Appeal, you may request a formal hearing conducted by an Administrative Law Judge with the Office of Administrative Hearings.

First Things First will notify you in writing when the opportunity to request a formal hearing is available. After receipt of that notice, you will have 30 days to file a request for a hearing in writing. The request must include the name and address of the program seeking the hearing, the decision being appealed and a concise statement of the reasons for the appeal. The request must be provided to First Things First's main office in care of the General Counsel.

Once a recommendation decision is made by the Office of Administrative Hearings, the First Things First Board will review the decision and take action to accept, reject or modify the recommendation. First Things First will notify you of the final Board decision in writing.

If you have other concerns about your Quality First experience:

Step 1 : Discussion

If you have concerns about your Quality First experience, begin by speaking directly with the Coach or CCHC working with your program.

If your concerns persist after speaking with the Coach or CCHC, contact a supervisor or program manager for support. Program contact information is available in the Quality First Resource Directory available in the Resources section of this guide.

If concerns persist after discussing the issue with a program contact, you may proceed to Step 2, Informal Dispute Resolution.

If you are unsatisfied with the result of Step 1, you may move to Step 2

Step 2: Informal Dispute Resolution

You may submit a Quality First Complaint form to the Quality First Director at First Things First. In the Complaint form, you will provide a description of your concern and any attempts made to resolve the issue as well as recommendations of possible solutions.

A representative of the First Things First Quality First team will contact you to determine next steps to address your concern either over the phone or by scheduling a meeting with all involved parties, ideally within 14 calendar days of receiving the Complaint. After the meeting, First Things First will make a decision and notify you within 14 days. (See Informal Dispute Resolution Policy on page 66.)

CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT (NAEYC)

The Code of Ethical Conduct is a document that provides a framework and guidance for the early childhood professional in working with families and young children. The Code outlines the Core Values of the early childhood profession and details the Ethical Responsibilities to children, to families, to colleagues, and to the community. This Code can help in making ethical decisions and in developing sound policy and practice guidelines for your program. As a Quality First participant, you agree to utilize the principles and ideals of the Code of Ethical Conduct in your work with children, families, colleagues, and the community. A copy of the Code is included in the Resources section of the extranet.

The Code of Ethical Conduct can also be found online at:

https://www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/ethical-conduct.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality Policy: **All Quality First partners (coaches, assessors, child care health consultants, supervisors and other technical assistance professionals) are expected to maintain confidentiality about their work with the assigned Quality First participant. Program records, staff information, assessment results and quality improvement efforts are not made public, nor are they shared with individuals outside of First Things First, its contracted parties, and state agency partners, except as required by law and state regulatory agencies.**

If you feel your confidentiality has not been maintained, please discuss this with the coach, technical assistance provider or their supervisor to address this issue.

CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORTING

Critical Incident Report Policy: **For the purpose of documenting critical incidents, the Critical Incident Report is required for all Quality First technical assistance professionals. This policy applies to incidents that cause concern, including when a technical assistance professional witnesses an emergency, serious health or safety violations, or reasonably believes that abuse, neglect or child endangerment has occurred.**

In the event of a critical incident, the Quality First coach or technical assistance professional will notify the on-site administrator or supervisor that a report will be made. If applicable, the appropriate authorities will be contacted (i.e. Department of Child Safety, ADHS, DES, or tribal authority) and a Critical Incident Report will be completed. A copy of the completed Critical Incident Report will be provided to you upon request.

DISENROLLMENT

Program Disenrollment Policy: To end Quality First participation and related services, a disenrollment process must be completed. Upon disenrollment you are no longer eligible to receive any financial incentives, including any unexpended financial incentives remaining for the fiscal year.

- Programs may voluntarily disenroll by submitting a disenrollment form to the coach.

- Involuntary disenrollment will be at the discretion of First Things First based on compliance with program requirements or in the event your program is funded by external sources and that funding ends.

- Programs disenrolling from Quality First due to a business closure are advised to redistribute all materials purchased with financial incentives to other providers serving children in the region.

- Programs disenrolling from Quality First but continuing to serve children may retain the materials purchased with financial incentives to support their continued work with children.

ENROLLMENT

Enrollment Policy: Enrollment begins after the initial assessment has been conducted, the participant has reviewed the assessment results, the Enrollment Agreement is signed by the participant, and all required documentation is submitted. Programs must be in good standing with their regulatory agency (ADHS, DES, military or tribal authority) in order to be enrolled. Quality First services including Child Care Health Consultation and financial incentives may not begin until after a program is officially enrolled.

E-VERIFY AND LAWFUL PRESENCE

E-Verify and Lawful Presence Policy: To determine eligibility for financial incentives, First Things First is required to collect documentation related to E-Verify Participation and Lawful Presence to ensure compliance with federal and state laws.

A participant that is an "employer" as specially defined in A.R.S. § 23-211 must provide proof to First Things First that the participant is registered with and participating in E-Verify. An E-Verify form will be provided to you by your coach. All participants must complete and return the form, but only "employers" must provide proof of registration with and participation in E-Verify.

When a participant's child care program is owned in the name of an individual or a sole proprietorship, the owner must complete the Statement of Lawful Presence & Eligibility to Receive Public Benefits form and submit certain documentation establishing lawful presence and eligibility. First Things First will email you a link to the form if you need to comply with this requirement.

EXTRANET (DATA SOURCE)

The extranet is where you can access all of your Quality First information in one place and track all of your improvement data over time to note your progress and program status. This data is extremely helpful in keeping up to date on staffing trends, enrollment changes and your movement in scores across time. The extranet is also used to determine financial incentives, potential child care scholarship allocations, and assessment scheduling, so the accuracy of this information is critical.

Extranet Update Policy: To ensure accurate and up-to-date information, the Quality First extranet must be updated at least quarterly by the participant. All Quality First participants are responsible for updating information in the areas of program information, classroom enrollment, identification of children with special needs, and staffing information. Contact information in the extranet will be used for all communication.

You will receive an invitation to the extranet with your own personal login and password. It may be helpful to note your login information on the front page of this Participant Guide for easy access. If you have challenges logging in or navigating this database for your program, assistance is available at extranet@firstthingsfirst.org. See the extranet User Guide for more detailed information. (A copy of the extranet User Guide is included at the end of this guide in the Resources section.)

LICENSED CAPACITY VERIFICATION (LCV)

Licensed Capacity Verification Policy: To determine financial incentives and other quality improvement benefits for Quality First participants, the participant's licensed capacity is verified. All Quality First participants are responsible for confirming or updating the total licensed capacity and capacity for children age birth to age 5 each year. The License Capacity Verification Form (LCV) is due no later than March 15 each year. Failure to provide this data may result in future incentives not being accessible. Information about license changes, such as a new license number and/or expiration date, must be submitted within two weeks of the previous license expiring.

The verification process typically takes place between February and March every year. This data is used to determine your financial incentives in the following fiscal year, so the accuracy of this information is critical. Failure to provide this data may result in future incentives not being accessible.

In the event an LCV form is not submitted or an incorrect LCV form is not corrected and resubmitted by

the **March 15** deadline, the following information will be used to determine both the total license capacity and the birth to age 5 capacity:

- **ADHS Licensed Participants**
  - o Total licensed capacity will be based on the capacity noted in the ADHS system on March 1.
  - o Birth to five capacity will be based on your reported current fiscal year's birth to five capacity.*
    *If the current year's reported birth to five capacity exceeds the March 1 capacity noted in the ADHS system, the ADHS March 1 license capacity will be used.

- **DES Licensed Participants** – DES capacity (four children) or the current fiscal year's reported capacity, whichever is lower.

- **Tribal Participants** – Current fiscal year's reported birth to age 5 capacity.

MANDATED REPORTING

As an early childhood provider, you are a designated mandated reporter by law (as outlined in A.R.S. § 13-3620). Mandated reporters are individuals who are obligated by law to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. In general, any person who has responsibility for the care or treatment of a child is a mandated reporter. Quality First technical assistance professionals, including coaches, assessors and child care health consultants, are required to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect as well. Mandated reporter laws are designed to catch child abuse in its early stages so that children are protected from physical or emotional trauma. If you reasonably believe a child in your program is a victim of abuse or neglect, you are required to report this information to the Department of Child Safety or your local law enforcement authority, though a tribal social services agency may be contacted instead for any child who is a tribal member and who lives on a reservation. If you have an incidence of child abuse in your program, it is your responsibility to contact local law enforcement and your regulatory agency to make a report.

OWNERSHIP CHANGE

Ownership Change Policy: **To ensure accurate information about Quality First participation location and ownership as related to funding and access to services, ownership changes must be communicated to the Quality First coach. Participants are required to notify Quality First of changes in licensing and/or ownership immediately and a new enrollment agreement must be signed by the new owner to ensure understanding of the Quality First program guidelines and responsibilities. E-Verify and Lawful Presence documentation will be re-gathered for the new owner.**

All programs must remain in good standing and work with their regulatory agency to ensure that the proper paperwork has been filed and approved. Any change in information, including the issuance of a new license or modifications to program size or licensed capacity, must be communicated to the Quality First coach and updated in the extranet.

REDISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS

If your program closes, it is recommended that all materials purchased with your financial incentives be redistributed to other providers serving children in your region. The Quality First coach will provide assistance to you. If you will be disenrolling from Quality First but continuing to serve children, you may retain the materials purchased with your financial incentives to support your work with children.

REGULATORY STATUS

Regulatory Status Policy: **To ensure all Quality First participants are in good standing with the program's regulatory agency, regulatory status is reviewed on a monthly basis. All Quality First participants are required to maintain regulatory status and remain in good standing to ensure compliance with state regulatory standards (ADHS, DES and/or tribal or military authority). If a program experiences an event that causes it to be placed in enforcement action with ADHS or on probation or suspension with DES, the program will not have access to Quality First Financial Incentives or receive reimbursement for Quality First Child Care Scholarships during that time. While the program is not in good standing, its star rating will not be publicly visible on the extranet or Quality First website. Once the program is removed from this status, access to incentives and reimbursement for all Quality First Scholarships will be reinstated. If a program is noted as not in good standing with its regulatory body for over 60 calendar days or if there is more than one incident in a 12-month period, participation in Quality First may be terminated or a Targeted Support Plan may be initiated.**

Your program's regulatory status will be monitored on a monthly basis. If your program has been noted in enforcement action or on probation/suspension, you will receive notification from your coach and the scholarships team (if applicable).

It is important for you to maintain open communication with the Quality First coach and other technical assistance professionals to help in supporting your compliance with state standards. Your licensing surveyor or certification specialists are also available to support you in the process of creating a plan of improvement for your success.

REGIONAL WAITLIST

Regional Waitlist Policy: **Quality First applications are available on the Quality First website and are considered on a first come, first served basis, unless regional priorities are identified. Applications are selected based on regional funding and will be placed on a waitlist until openings are available. Applicants are required to be in good standing with their regulatory body and serving children birth to age 5 for at least 12 hours per week in order to be eligible for selection.**

Early care and education providers interested in participating in Quality First must fill out an application online at qualityfirstaz.com. Once the application is submitted, the provider will receive a confirmation email. The application is automatically added to the regional council Quality First waitlist, which is managed by the Quality First team at First Things First. Programs are selected for participation every five weeks between July and March, based on regional funding availability. Prior to program selection, Quality First monitors the status of applicants to ensure they meet eligibility requirements as described in the Regional Waitlist Policy. They will be eligible for selection once they meet eligibility criteria. It is the applicant's responsibility to contact the Quality First team if their application information needs to be updated.

RELOCATION/MOVING

If your program may be moving to a new location, discuss this move with Quality First to determine whether your Quality First participation will be able to transfer. Communicate any programmatic or structure changes that may be occurring as part of the relocation. Depending on regional priorities, your program may be able to maintain participation, your program's eligibility for Quality First Child Care Scholarships and other specialized services may change, or you may need to reapply for participation at the new location.

STAR RATING MASKING

Star Rating Masking Policy: In order to provide accurate information about quality levels of participating programs, First Things First may temporarily mask a participating program's rating from the extranet and qualityfirstaz.com. Quality First star ratings may be temporarily masked due to the following reasons:

- **A participant is on the Regulatory Status report due to not being in good standing with their regulatory agency**
- **A critical incident has occurred at the program and is under investigation by law enforcement or a state agency**
- **A participant is in the midst of a Request for Appeal related to their rating**
- **After the rating was finalized and posted, a participant is granted a reassessment**

In these instances, the star rating will only be masked until the situation has been rectified.

In limited situations, a star rating may be masked for other reasons as First Things First deems appropriate. A note will be created in the Extranet to identify the purpose of the star rating being masked. During the masking, the rating will show as "Rating Unavailable" on the public website.

STATE STANDARDS

The State of Arizona through its various agencies has a wealth of resources available to you as an early childhood professional in your work with young children. Quality First, through First Things First, partners with these state agencies in providing documentation to guide your practice.

The following tools are available to you free of charge and are excellent sources of information for you and your program to establish best practices in your work with the children you serve. Trainings for all three of these resources are now available online and free of charge. Please visit the Arizona Department of Education website, http://www.azed.gov/ece/ for more information.

- **Arizona's Infant and Toddler Developmental Guidelines**
  Arizona's Infant and Toddler Developmental Guidelines are part of a continuum of early learning guidelines that provide a framework for understanding and communicating a common set of developmentally appropriate expectations for young children, presented within a context of shared responsibility and accountability for helping young children meet these expectations. Specifically, these guidelines describe expectations about what infants and toddlers should know and do across multiple domains of development during specific age ranges, as well as what adults can do to support children's optimal learning and development. (Click on the link below to access these Guidelines.)

  https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=54efdb1e1130c00eb465d5bc

- **Arizona Early Learning Standards**
  The Arizona Early Learning Standards have been developed to provide a framework for the planning of quality learning experiences for all children three to five years of age. The standards cover a broad range of skill development and provide a useful instructional foundation for children from diverse backgrounds and with diverse abilities. The standards are intended for use by all those who work with young children in any early care and education setting in urban, rural and tribal communities. (Click on the link below to access these Standards.)

  https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=5ba5462a1dcb2507f8788ea1

- **Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education: Birth Through Kindergarten**
  The Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education: Birth through Kindergarten does not contain a list of requirements, but rather a set of recommended practices for programs to use as they strive for excellence in the care and education of young children throughout Arizona. This document is intended to provide guidance by delineating quality and providing a set of indicators that concretely describe what a program will look like when providing high quality early care and education for children birth through age six. (Click on the link below to access these Guidelines.)

  https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=5879561caadebe0c98a80509

TARGETED SUPPORT PROCESS

Targeted Support Process Policy: A Targeted Support Plan may be initiated to provide short term intensive support to overcome barriers to participation and quality improvement. A Targeted Support Plan identifies barriers toward quality improvement and designates specific steps to be taken to overcome barriers and sustain quality practices. At the end of the 90-day Targeted Support Plan timeframe, the plan will be reviewed with the technical assistance professionals to identify next steps and review participation. Inability to comply with the Targeted Support Plan may lead to disenrollment from Quality First.

As a Quality First participant, you are the leader in the improvement process, working together with your coach and other consultants to implement the necessary policies and procedures noted in this Participant Guide. If you experience barriers to compliance with these standards, your coach will partner with you to develop a Targeted Support Plan. A Targeted Support Plan may be initiated if your program has challenges as noted below:

Participation Agreement - As a quality first participant, you agree to play an active role in the quality improvement process as outlined in the Participant Role and Responsibilities Agreement. A Targeted Support Plan may be initiated if you have challenges meeting the expectations outlined in the agreement.

Regulatory Status - If your program is noted as not in good standing with its regulatory body for over 60 days or if there is more than one incident in a 12-month period, participation may be terminated or a Targeted Support Plan may be initiated.

Expectation of Progress - As a Quality First participant, it is anticipated your program will achieve a quality level rating as a result of your program's efforts and the supports provided to you. If you do not achieve the benchmarks noted below, a Targeted Support Plan may be initiated.

- Programs rated at 1 star must increase their rating to a 2 star or higher within three assessment cycles. This means that a program rated at 1 star will have two years of improvement supports before a 2 star or higher is expected.

- Programs rated at 2 stars must increase their rating to a 3 star or higher within 3 assessment cycles. This means that a program rated at 2 stars will have two years of improvement supports before a 3 star or higher is expected.

For the duration of the Targeted Support Plan, financial incentives spending is limited to only purchases needed to support the focus of the plan. This applies to all programs ordering through the coaching agency.

77

TEMPORARY CLOSURE

> **Temporary Closure Policy*:** In the event of a short-term program closure or not serving children 0-5, temporary closure status may be requested to place a hold on Quality First services without disenrolling. A participant may request to have temporary closure status for up to 45 days; if the participant does not resume services after 45 days, disenrollment may result.
>
> *This policy applies to enrolled participants only. Newly selected participants must be open and ready to receive services at the time of selection.

Some examples of a temporary program closure include:

- Facility/property damage due to natural disasters, such as fire or flooding

- Health epidemic/personal medical conditions

- Lack of enrollment of children birth to age 5

In the event your program has an unexpected closure, you must complete a Request for Temporary Closure Form and submit it to your Quality First coach. Requests for temporary closure will be reviewed by Quality First. The coach will notify you whether or not the request is approved. Quality First Child Care Scholarships and financial incentives are not available while a program is in temporary closure status. If your program does not resume services after 45 calendar days, your ongoing enrollment in Quality First will be reconsidered, taking into account any extenuating circumstances on a case by case basis.

Participant Guide Resources

State Fiscal Year 2021

QUALITY FIRST
FIRST THINGS FIRST

National Accrediting Organizations

Transcripts must be received from an accredited institution. "Accredited" means approved by the:

New England Association of Schools and Colleges,

Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools,

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools,

Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges,

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, or

Western Association of Colleges and Schools

National Early Childhood Education Accrediting Organizations

Association Montessori International (AMI)

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

The National Early Childhood Program Accreditation Commission (NECPA)

Association for Christian Schools International

American Montessori Society (AMS)

National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education (NAC)

National Family Child Care Accreditation (NAFCC)

*Head Start programs are also recognized at the same level as accredited programs

User Guide: Extranet Log in- Quality First

Welcome to the First Things First extranet!

To access the FTF extranet, please go to the following website or click here:
https://extranet.azftf.gov/extranet/Pages/default.aspx

1. Click Log In

Log In

Reset Password and Retrieve Forgotten Username
Please use the links below to Reset Password or to Retrieve Username.

To Reset your password, click on the link below and enter your USERNAME (AZFTF\jsmith)
Reset forgotten password

2. Log in window will pop up to enter Username and Password.

   a) Username must include backslash (****); not a forward slash.

   - This is typically the first initial of first name and last name.

   b) Password is case sensitive;

   - You will be sent a temporary password, which you can change once logged in. Passwords must be minimum eight characters and include at least one capital letter and one number.

Username: AZFTF\jsmith

Password: Cartoons8

Windows Security   ×

iexplore

Connecting to secure.azftf.gov.

AZFTF\jsmith

••••••••

Domain: AZFTF

☐ Remember my credentials

OK   Cancel
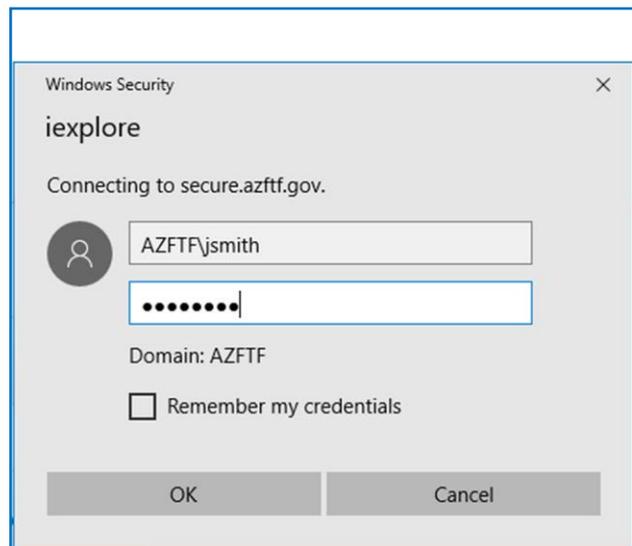
3. Click Ok. You will be on the main Dashboard. Click on Quality First Graphic.

4. Click on "Quality First Participants" link.

5. Click "Select" to access your Profile.

6. The first page is the Profile Summary.

7. To update your profile, click on the Left Navigation Link to access each area of your profile.

TROUBLESHOOTING USERNAME AND PASSWORD ISSUES FOR THE FTF EXTRANET:

1. Username and Password Error:

Check that your username is being entered correctly.

The back slash is a " ****" and must be entered as AZFTF****username.

A common error is for users to put in their username with the forward slash AZFTF/username; this will cause an error.

Your Password is case sensitive.
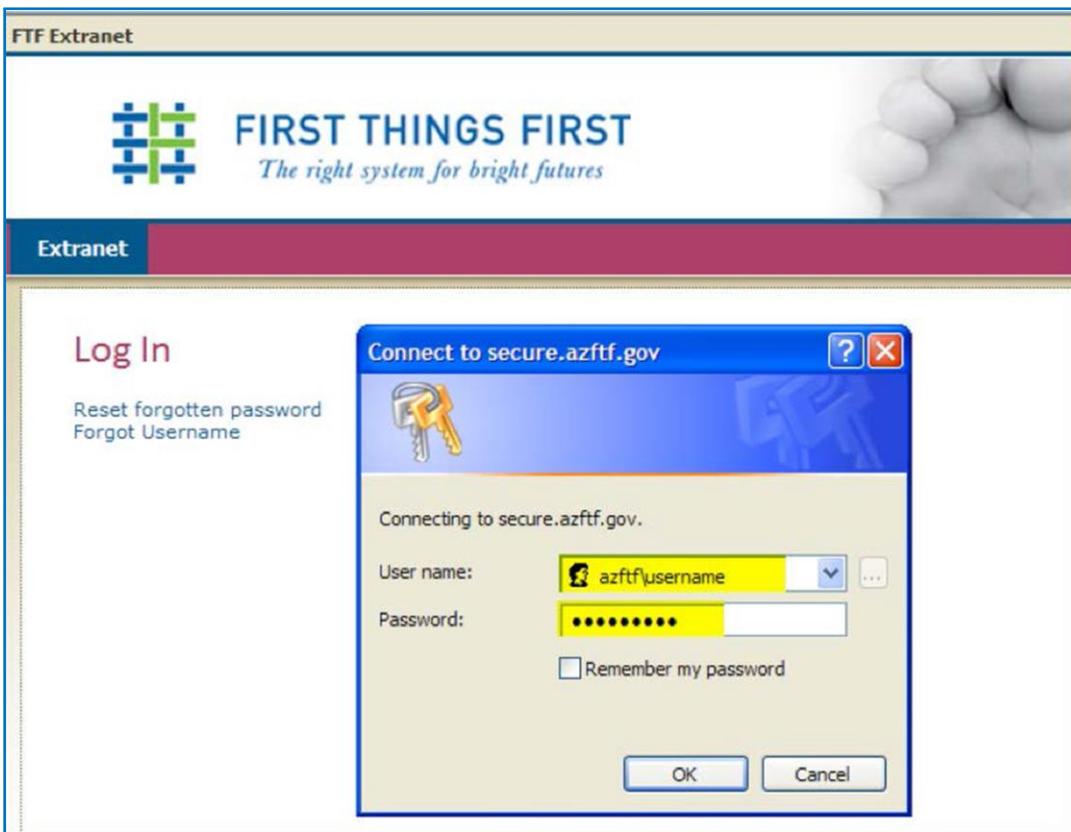
2. Forgotten Your Username:

You can request to have your username sent to you via email by accessing the main FTF extranet Dashboard and selecting the FORGOT USERNAME link.
(https://extranet.azftf.gov/extranet/Pages/Default.aspx)

You will be requested to enter in the email address that was used to provide your original username and password. Your username will be emailed to you.
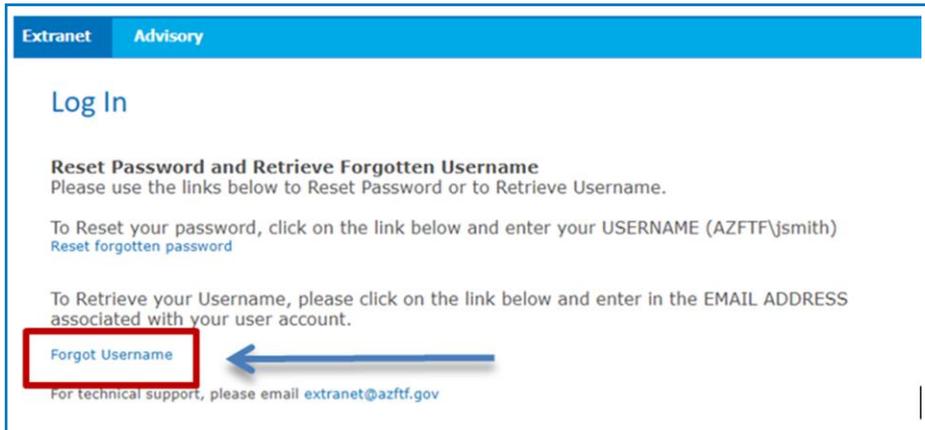
3. Reset Forgotten Password:

If your username is correct and you need to Reset Forgotten Password you can request a reset password be sent to you by accessing the FTF extranet Dashboard and selecting the RESET FORGOTTEN PASSWORD link. *(https://extranet.azftf.gov/extranet/Pages/Default.aspx)* You will be requested to enter in your username (AZFTF\username) that was provided to you. A temporary new password will be emailed to you. If you do not have your username, you must complete the steps in #2 to obtain your username.
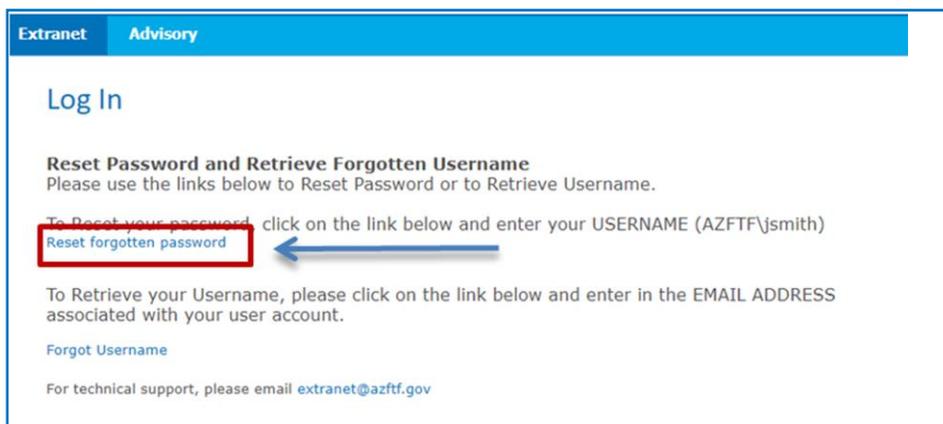
4. To Change a Password (not FORGOT Password),

      a) You can change your password by logging into the extranet with your AZFTF\username and password.

      b) Once logged in, you will be at the main Welcome Page of the extranet.

      c) Select the CHANGE PASSWORD link.
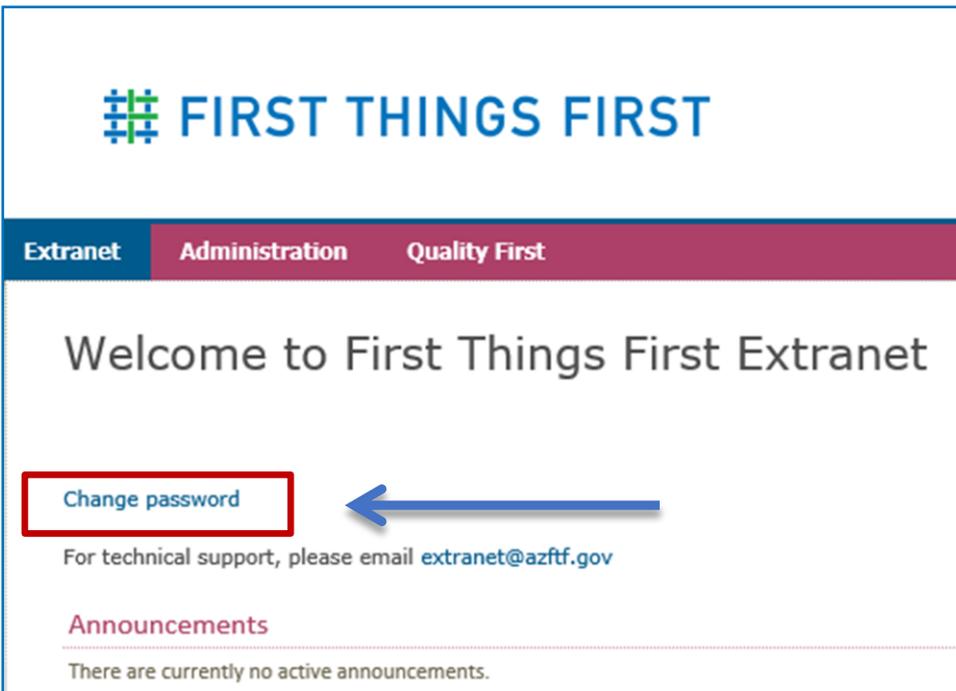
      a) You will be prompted to enter your current password along with your New Password and Confirm.

      b) Next, select Change Password.

      c) IMPORTANT: a pop-up window will appear after you click Change Password; you will need to enter your Username AND your NEWLY CHANGED password.

d)

Instructions for changing your password:

1. **Please enter your Current Password.** If you do not know your current password, please use the reset password link on the main extranet page to have a temporary password sent to you.
2. **Enter a New Password.** Please see the following requirements for password generation.

   Your new password must be a minimum of 8 characters and contain 3 of the 4 groups of following characters:

   ○ Alpha uppercase
   ○ Alpha lowercase
   ○ Numeric
   ○ Non-alphabetic characters (for example, !, $, #, %)

   Your password must not contain more than 2 consecutive characters of your user ID.

3. **Confirm your New Password.**
4. **Click Change Password.** A pop up window will appear requesting you to enter in your username and newly created password. You must complete this set to complete the process.

Current Password: *

New Password: *

Confirm Password: *

Change Password

IMPORTANT: a pop up window will appear after you click Change Password; you will need to enter your Username AND your NEWLY CHANGED password.

FTF Extranet

FIRST THINGS FIRST
The right system for bright futures

Extranet

Log In

Reset forgotten password
Forgot Username

Connect to secure.azftf.gov

Connecting to secure.azftf.gov.

User name: azftf\username

Password: •••••••••

☐ Remember my password

OK   Cancel

8

Resource Directory

State Fiscal Year 2021

QUALITY FIRST
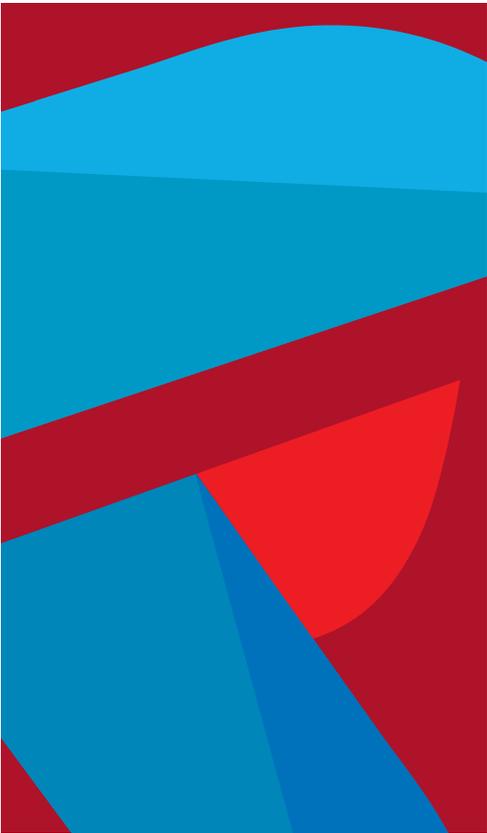
FIRST THINGS FIRST

RESOURCE DIRECTORY

ADMINISTRATION OF QUALITY FIRST –

How is Quality First structured?

Arizona's Early Childhood Development and Health Board, also known as First Things First, funds a variety of strategies to ensure children have the skills to succeed in school and in life. Strategies focused on Health, Literacy, and Early Learning are funded through statewide grant partners. This organizational chart identifies only the grantees and sub-grantees responsible for implementation of Quality First and related programs for state fiscal year 2021. For more information on First Things First governance and structure, visit the website at https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/about-first-things-first/how-we-work
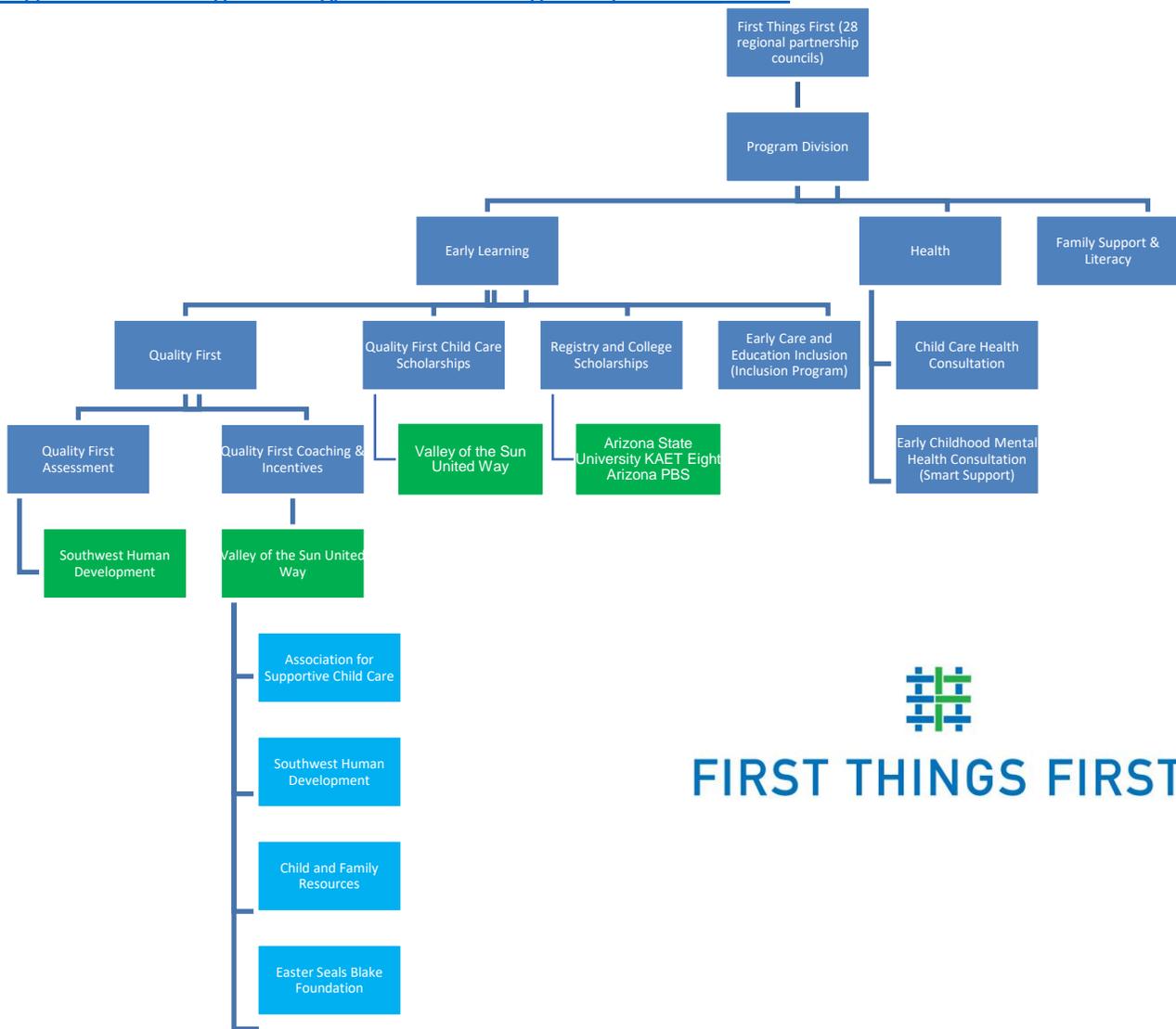
ACHIEVING QUALITY LEVELS –

How do I find out more about achieving high quality?

Quality First website - Understanding the key elements of quality is an important first step in making an informed choice, but recognizing a quality environment isn't always easy. Find programs in your area that have achieved quality levels; schedule a visit or an observation. You can also review the standards of quality in the assessment tools and view the Quality Checklist-- a tool highlighting quality practices which parents can use when seeking quality child care. Visit the website at http://www.qualityfirstaz.com

ADVOCACY –

How can I advocate for my program in the community?

Arizona Association for the Education of Young Children - Early childhood professionals understand the importance of quality early childhood education programs and the lasting impact that a good start in life provides for all young children. Learn more about the issues that affect young children, their families, and the early childhood workforce. Visit the website at https://www.azaeyc.org

Arizona Department of Education ECQUIP (Early Childhood Quality Improvement Practices) - Work with other ECE programs within your community to create systems that benefit children who will be entering public education. The ECQUIP process is led by district staff, Head Start, community child care, families, business partners, local Read On partners, and kindergarten teachers. Each team sets goals and develops an ECQUIP Quality Enhancement Plan annually. To learn more about the ECQUIP team in your community, contact your local school district. To learn more about ECQUIP, call (602) 364-1530 visit the website at http://www.azed.gov/ece/early-childhood-assessment

Arizona Early Childhood Education Association – AECEA represents private, licensed child care centers statewide and to promote affordable, quality early care and education that meets the needs of Arizona's families and children. Visit the website at http://azece.org

Arizona State Legislature - track pending legislation, plus locate and contact individual legislators, and stay up-to-date on current issues. Visit the website at http://azleg.gov

Act 4 KIDS– Receive information and steps you can take to advocate for children birth to five in Arizona. Sign up for mobile updates sent directly to your phone: Text "Act4Kids" to 52866

First Things First Regional Partnership Councils - Regional partnership council members work with their communities to determine what children 5 years old and younger in their area need to arrive at school healthy and ready to succeed. Visit the website at
https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/governance/ftf-regions/find-your-region

Children's Action Alliance- CAA is an independent voice for Arizona children at the state capitol and in the community. CAA works to improve children's health, education, and security through information and action. Learn more about the issues and how you can advocate on behalf of young children in Arizona.
Visit the website at https:/azchildren.org

ARIZONA EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS (AZELS) –

How do I find out more about the Arizona standards?

Arizona Department of Education - to provide leadership and support to schools, organizations, educators, families and communities in implementing programs that assist all children from birth through age 8 to become successful lifelong learners. Contact the department at (602)364-1530 or visit the website at
http://www.azed.gov/ece/preschool

BIRTH TO FIVE HELPLINE –

How do I access assistance through the helpline?

A Birth to Five Helpline – This free service is open to all families with young children looking for the latest child development information from experts in the field. Professionals may also take advantage of this service. Topics addressed include but are not limited to: sleep, health and nutrition, safety, challenging behaviors, feeding and eating, general child development, potty training, fussiness/colic and parenting. Contact 1 (877) 705-KIDS, visit the website at
https://www.swhd.org/programs/health-and-development/birth-to-five-helpline
or download the Birth to Five Helpline app available for iOS devices on the App Store, or for Android devices on Google Play.

DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY–

How do I learn more about caring for children involved with DCS?

Department of Child Safety—Specialists are available to answer your questions and provide support to child care providers who serve children involved with DCS. If you have a question about your rights as a provider serving children and families involved with DCS, or if you would like support or coordination in helping to meet a child's needs, contact the team at childcareexpulsionprevention@azdcs.gov

CHILD ASSESSMENT-

How do I learn more about systems for child assessment?

Teaching Strategies Gold- This system for ongoing child assessment provides tools to early childhood professionals for documenting and organizing information about children's development and learning. The system helps professionals gather and organize data, create developmental profiles, and create reports to share with families. Visit the website at teachingstrategies.com/solutions/assess/gold.

Arizona Department of Education- ADE's Assessment Continuum Guide for Pre-K through Third Grade in Arizona provides best practices for child assessment in an early childhood setting. The recommendations rely on researched and or evidence-based practices that have been shown to positively affect outcomes for children and families within our communities. The document is intended as a resource for all administrators and teachers who use screening measures, environmental assessments, teacher-child interaction assessments, formative assessments, and Kindergarten entry assessments. View the guide at https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=58efcb706f53b721f8089716

CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL-

How do I find information about child care in Arizona?

Child Care Resource and Referral – CCR&R provides the bridge between parents, providers, community leaders, and policymakers about anything related to child care in Arizona. The website includes a comprehensive search feature for families seeking child care, and information about paying for child care, regulations, and links to submit a provider complaint or to report suspected abuse or neglect. Contact the resource line at (800) 308-9000 or visit the website at https://www.azccrr.com

CHILD CARE TUITION ASSISTANCE –

How can I find out about child care tuition support?

If you have questions about Quality First Child Care Scholarships, call the Valley of the Sun United Way Provider Line at (602) 240-6325, email regionalscholarships@vsuw.org or visit the website at http://www.azftfscholarships.org
Families who have questions about scholarships may call the Parent Helpline at (602) 240-6324.

The Department of Economic Security offers For information about DES child care assistance to help eligible families access child care.
To find information on becoming a DES Child Care Provider, visit the website at https://des.az.gov/services/child-and-family/child-care/become-des-child-care-provider

Families who are interested in applying for child care assistance may access the online application at https://des.az.gov/services/child-and-family/child-care/how-apply-for-child-care-assistance

COACHING –

How do I access information or find out more about coaching?

Quality First Coaching – Your program will receive coaching services to offer continuing guidance and support through regular and ongoing visits, communication and assistance. This partnership will establish a strong foundation for all quality improvement efforts and can provide added value to your program, staff and administration. Contact Kristina Almus, Senior Director for Quality First Coaching and Incentives at Valley of the Sun United Way at (602) 631-4912 or kalmus@vsuw.org.

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS –

How do I access assistance for continuing education?

The First Things First College Scholarship for Early Childhood Professionals provides the early childhood workforce working directly with or on behalf of young children birth through age 5 with access to education and training to achieve degrees, credentials and specialized skills to promote children's development. The scholarship may only be accessed by members of the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry via the Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Development Network at http://www.azearlychildhood.org. You may also contact the Arizona Registry at 1 (855) 818-6613 or info@thearizonaregistry.org to apply for a scholarship.

COMPLAINTS, CONCERNS, APPEALS –

How do I address a concern or file a complaint/appeal regarding Quality First?

If you have a concern or are seeking resolution regarding a Quality First program decision that cannot be resolved through informal methods of discussion with coaching, assessment, or CCHC, you have the opportunity to submit a Quality First Complaint form. If your needs are not met through the complaint meeting, you have the option to file an appeal. There are two scenarios in which to file an appeal within Quality First: Star Rating or the termination of your participation (If you are appealing your Star Rating, you must first go through the Assessment Clarification process). Procedures and forms can be found on the Quality First Extranet at http://ftf/extranet or email Quality First at qualityfirst@firstthingsfirst.org

How do I submit a complaint about a child care provider?

Child Care Resource and Referral –The website includes links to submit a provider complaint or to report suspected abuse or neglect. Visit the website at https://www.azccrr.com

DEVELOPMENTAL MONITORING & SCREENING-

How can I learn more about developmental monitoring and screening?

Ages and Stages Questionnaires – The ASQ system includes developmental and social-emotional screening tools to assess and address children's developmental progress between one month and 5 ½ years of age. View products, services, and free resources on their website at http://agesandstages.com. For more information about using the ASQ system, contact your Child Care Health Consultant or the coach working with your program.

CDC's Learn the Signs Act Early – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers free resources to help families and caregivers track developmental milestones as well as tips for supporting healthy development. Print developmental milestones checklists in English or Spanish, or download the free Milestone Tracker App, available on the App Store or Google Play. For more information and free materials, visit the website at https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html

EXCHANGE MAGAZINE-

How do I find news and information for early childhood professionals?

As a Quality First participant, you receive a free subscription to Exchange Magazine, which offers valuable information about the field of early care and education. For additional professional development tools, resources, and products, or to subscribe to Exchange Every Day, the free daily E-Newsletter with inspiration and advice for early childhood professionals, visit the website at ChildCareExchange.com

EXPULSION PREVENTION –

How do I find more information about effective alternatives to expulsion?

It can be difficult to deal with challenging behavior. However, suspensions and expulsions of young children deprive children of valuable learning experiences and have a negative impact on children's development that extends into grade school and beyond.

Birth to Five Helpline- Contact early childhood experts for information, tips, and community resources to help you keep children enrolled in your program. Contact 1(877) 705-KIDS or visit the website at http://www.swhd.org/programs/health-and-development/birth-to-five-helpline

Child Care Resource & Referral- CCR&R provides a summary of the expulsion and suspension policies and procedures for DES contracted programs, as well as steps to prevent expulsion and additional resources available to you. For more information call 1 (800) 308-9000 or visit the website at https://www.azccrr.com/expulsion-prevention.html

DES Resource Specialist – Resource Support Specialists are available Monday through Friday to support providers, child care staff and/or families. If you are experiencing a difficult situation inside your program or the families you work with, contact a Resource Support Specialist via phone or email at: (602) 542-2526 or DESExpulsionPrevention@azdes.gov

PreventExpulsion.org– SRI International has created a guide to provide program leaders with resources and tools to support the success of all children. For more information or to view the guide, visit the website at http://preventexpulsion.org

Southwest Human Development– SWHD offers training, resource assistance, and on-site technical assistance for early childhood programs across Arizona. Mental health professionals and early childhood specialists provide a series of trainings to support programs in minimizing the rate of expulsion through preventative strategies and partnering with families. The training series is available for participants who work in programs serving children birth to twelve that have a current registration agreement with the Department of Economic Security Child Care Administration. To register for the training series, visit the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry website at https://www.azregistry.org

EXTRANET –

How do I access information or assistance with the extranet?

The Extranet is where you can access all of your Quality First information in one place and track all of your improvement data over time to note your progress and program status. To learn more about the extranet, view the Quality First Extranet User Webinar available on the Quality First extranet dashboard under the Quality First resource links. If you have challenges logging in or navigating this database for your program, refer to the User Guide for Quality First Extranet Login and Profile Access or email Extranet@firstthingsfirst.org

EMPOWER PROGRAM –

How do I learn about Arizona's Empower Standards?

The Empower Program, offered through the Arizona Department of Health Services, focuses on supporting the development of healthy habits in child care settings. Facilities participating in the Empower Program pledge to adopt ten standards that support healthy eating, encourage active play, prevent exposure to second-and third-hand smoke, practice sun safety and promote good oral health habits in exchange for reduced licensing fees.* Note- Enrollment in Empower is required for DES contracts and for all Quality First participating programs. To learn more, visit the website at http://www.azdhs.gov/prevention/nutrition-physical-activity/empower/index.php

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT –

How can I find resources and information to share with families?

American Academy of Pediatrics- Find information on child development, health and safety to share with families and staff. To access webinars and e-newsletters on a variety of topics related to children's health and development, visit the website at https://www.aap.org/en-us/Pages/Default.aspx

9

Family Resource Centers - embedded in local communities, family resource centers provide families with access to information and education on a variety of child development and health topics, as well as referrals to community resources. Child care is often provided while parents take classes. To find a Family Resource Center in your area, visit the website at http://familyresourceaz.org

First Things First- Find a wealth of information for families including blogs with information on brain development, literacy, early learning, a podcast dedicated to providing information and inspiration for parents and caregivers of young children, resources for families, and more. Visit the website at http://www.firstthingsfirst.org/for-parents-and-families

Zero to Three- Find information and engaging content to share with families and staff. Zero to Three works to ensure that babies and toddlers benefit from the family and community connections critical to their well-being and development. Visit the website at https://www.zerotothree.org/

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES –

How do I find out more information about financial incentives?

Financial incentives are available to eligible Quality First participants* to assist in program improvement and overcoming barriers to achieve high quality learning environments. The amount and availability of Incentives are based on the participation agreement, licensed capacity of the program (0-5) and the star rating. For more information, review the Quality First Participant Guide or consult with the Quality First coach working with your program.

Depending on the model of Quality First you participate in, all services and benefits may not be available to you. Please refer to your enrollment agreement and/or contract for details on whether financial incentives are included.

FIRST THINGS FIRST –

How do I find out about resources to support children and families in my community?

First Things First partners with families and communities to help kids have the positive, nurturing experiences they need to arrive at school ready to succeed. We do this through quality early care and education programs, preventive health efforts, and supporting parents in their role as their child's first teachers. To find more information about resources available in your area, visit the website at https://www.firstthingsfirst.org and enter your zip code in the "Find FTF Programs" search tool.

HEALTH AND SAFETY –

How do I find out more about health & safety practices?

Child Care Health Consultants - experts in child health are available to support child care providers to assure that children in their care are safe, healthy and ready to succeed. They also provide advice on the well-being of a single child, with the view toward training child care staff to prevent and intervene appropriately in future occurrences. Contact Sarah Harrison, Children's Health Program Specialist at 602-771-5059, sharrison@firstthingsfirst.org

Healthy Kids AZ App – This free app provides access to electronic versions of the infectious disease and injury prevention flipcharts, AZ specific vaccine information, infection control guidance, and more. Download the Healthy Kids AZ app available for iOS on the App Store, or for Android on Google Play.

HIGH QUALITY PROGRAM GUIDELINES –

How do I find out about Arizona State Program Guidelines?

The Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education: Birth through Kindergarten are a set of recommended practices for programs to use as they strive for excellence in the care and education of young children throughout Arizona. This document is intended to provide guidance by delineating quality and providing a set of indicators that concretely describe what a program will look like when providing high quality early care and education for children birth through age six. To view the document, visit the website at https://www.azed.gov/ece/publications-manuals

INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS –

How can I find support for children with special needs?

The Arizona Department of Education Early Childhood Education Unit has information and resources available. Visit the website at http://www.azed.gov/ece/early-childhood-special-education

AZEIP- More information is also available through the Arizona Early Intervention Program at https://www.azdes.gov/AzEIP.

Birth to Five Helpline- Contact the Birth to Five Helpline for more information at 1-877-705-KIDS or visit the website at https://www.swhd.org/programs/health-and-development/birth-to-five-helpline

1

Inclusion Program- This program helps providers address the need of quality early care and education for young children with special needs ages birth to five. Specific focus is on improving the skill of child care staff and providing training and assistance to support quality inclusive settings for children. For more information or to see if the program is available in your area, call (602) 633-8454 or visit the website at https://www.swhd.org/training/inclusion-program

The Office for Children with Special Health Care Needs (OCSHCN) –Offered through the Arizona Department of Health Services, OCSHCS works to improve systems of care, provide information and referral to families who would like assistance in finding the services available to their child; provide training to families and professionals on best practices related to medical home, cultural competence, and family and youth involvement; and support telemedicine to provide services in remote areas of the state. Visit the website at https://www.azdhs.gov/prevention/womens-childrens-health/ocshcn/index.php

Raising Special Kids- This organization provides support and information for parents of children with a full range of disabilities and special health care needs in Arizona. Programs are offered at no cost to families, and are available in English and Spanish. Visit the website at http://www.raisingspecialkids.org

INFANT AND TODDLER DEVELOPMENTAL GUIDELINES (ITDG) –

How do I access more information?

Arizona's Infant and Toddler Developmental Guidelines- As part of a continuum of early learning guidelines, these guidelines help parents, families and other caregivers understand the appropriate development of infants and toddlers and promote healthy growth and development for infants and toddlers, both in their own homes and in early learning settings. To access the Guidelines visit the website at https://www.azed.gov/ece/publications-manuals

INFORMAL ASSESSMENT –

How do I plan for an informal assessment?

An informal assessment maybe scheduled at your program to provide mid-year feedback from either the Environment Rating Scale or CLASS Assessment tools. The feedback offered will not be considered in your star rating but may be used as an opportunity to offer professional development for your program staff prior to a formal assessment being conducted. These assessments will be scheduled based upon assessment staff availability. Access the request form on the Quality First extranet dashboard under Quality First Resources or contact Katie Romero at (602) 633-8652 or kromero@swhd.org

MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTATION –

How do I support children with challenging behaviors?

The National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI) - This online resource center focuses on promoting the social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes of young children birth to five, reducing the use of inappropriate discipline practices, promoting family engagement, using data for decision-making, integrating early childhood and infant mental health consultation and fostering inclusion. For information and teaching tools, visit the website at http://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu

Smart Support - This evidence-based strategy has been proven to support the social and emotional development of all children in care and help providers respond to children with behavioral challenges. In regions that offer this support, consultants are available to work directly with teachers to develop strategies to work most effectively with children in early learning settings. To access services call 1-866-330-5520 or email smartsupport@swhd.org or visit the website at https://www.swhd.org/training/smart-support

PARTICIPANT GUIDE & RESPONSIBILITIES –

How can I find out more about the requirements of Quality First?

Quality First Participant Guide - provides information about the Quality First program, the various components and supports offered, as well as participant responsibilities. The Guide may be found on the Extranet at http://ftf/extranet. Download a copy for quick and easy reference.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE REGISTRY–

How do I access information about professional development opportunities?

Professional Development is an important part of your Quality First participation and in working towards providing quality care to the children in your program. Multiple professional development opportunities are available through the Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Development Network. The Network is the home of the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry, which will help you create a plan to grow your skills and advance your career. The more experience, education, and professional development you have in early childhood education, the further you can go. Registration is free and can support you in finding and registering for training and professional development opportunities, managing your credentials and training records, and accessing college scholarships. Visit the website at http://AZEarlyChildhood.org

13

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT PROCESS –

How can I access information or ask questions regarding assessment of my program?

Quality First Assessment - The quality of each program is assessed using valid and reliable tools that focus on what research shows are the key components of quality early care, including adult-child interactions, learning environments and staff qualifications. Contact Katie Romero, Assessment Program Manager at (602) 633-8652 or kromero@swhd.org

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT TOOLS –

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
How can I find out information about the assessment tool and strategies?

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System or CLASS is an assessment tool designed to measure the quality of teacher-child interactions in your program. The tools focus on observable behaviors and responses between teachers and children in center and home settings. Because children learn differently at each age level, three separate tools are used based on the age of the children in the classroom: infants, toddlers, or preschoolers. To learn more, visit the website at http://teachstone.com/class

Environment Rating Scale (ECERS, ITERS, FCCERS)
How do I find out more?

The Environment Rating Scales (ERS; Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford and Debby Cryer) are observational tools used to assess the quality of the environment in early care settings. Observations using the Environment Rating Scales provide a brief snapshot of the classroom environment, as well as the children's experiences in that classroom. The three tools measure preschool classrooms, infant toddler classrooms, and family child care settings. Quality First uses the ECERS-R, ITERS-R, and FCCERS-R versions of the assessment tools. For more information, visit the website at http://ersi.info

Points Scale Assessment

The Quality First Points Scale is a tool that provides evidence of the quality levels of your program's administrative practices. This assessment is scored using both on-site observation and reviewing documentation that you collect and present to the assessor during the scheduled visit. You may review the Points Scale on the extranet at http://ftf/extranet

A guidance document has been created for use in preparing for the Points Scale Assessment and can also be found on the extranet or in your Participant Guide. From the Quality First dashboard, scroll down to Quality First Resources and select Points Scale Guidance Document SFY21.

PROGRAM SELECTION –

How are programs selected and how long will my program be waitlisted?

Programs are selected into Quality First based on each regional council's funding for the fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). Regions may determine areas of need based on zip code location and how many openings are available. Programs can remain on the waitlist until a Quality First opening in their region is available; selections are based on the earliest application date and regional priorities for selection. Contact the Quality First office for more information at (602) 771-5000 or email qualityfirst@firstthingsfirst.org

QUALITY FIRST UPDATE –

How do I find information in the QF Update?

The Quality First Update is a monthly communication emailed to all participants which provides important information about upcoming events, participant responsibilities and support for program improvement. This communication links to the blog on the Quality First website and various resources to support your program's ongoing quality improvement. Updates are posted on the extranet announcements page at http://ftf/extranet and will be sent directly to your program's email address. Visit the blog at https://qualityfirstaz.com/blog. If you are not receiving these Updates, please contact qualityfirst@firstthingsfirst.org

QUALITY FIRST WEBSITE –

How do I access the website and find information?

The Quality First website is an online resource with provides a full range of information regarding Quality First participation, details about the program components and resources to assist you in your improvement efforts. Information is also available for families to search for Quality First programs in their area. Visit the website at http://www.qualityfirstaz.com

REGULATORY STANDARDS –

How do I find out more about regulatory standards in Arizona?

Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS), Child Care Facilities Licensing - For information regarding ADHS applications and regulatory requirements call (602) 364-2539 or visit the website at http://www.azdhs.gov/licensing/childcare-facilities/index.php

Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES), Child Care Provider Certification- For information regarding DES applications and regulatory requirements call (602) 542-4248 or visit the website at https://des.az.gov/services/basic-needs/child-care-home

How can I learn more about regulation for early childhood programs in Tribal communities in Arizona?

Tribal Child Care Regulation- Contact your tribal health or education department for more information. For more information about tribal affairs at First Things First, call (602) 771-5034, email Candida Hunter, Senior Director for Tribal Affairs at cahunter@firstthingsfirst.org or visit the website at https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/governance/tribal-affairs

RESEARCH-

How do I find information and updates on recent Early Childhood Research?

Research gives early childhood professionals and programs essential knowledge to use when making decisions regarding the care and education of young children. Child care & Early Education Research Connections provides access to a continually updated, free and searchable collection of research on child care and early education. Visit the website at http://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/welcome

TRANSCRIPTS-

How can I learn more about submitting transcripts and education documentation?

For step-by-step instructions on how to submit education documentation, including transcripts, credentials and certificates, visit the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry. Select "submit documentation" to learn how to submit documentation to determine your Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Career Lattice Level. Visit the website at https://www.azregistry.org

To find information about how staff education is considered in your program's Points Scale Assessment and star rating, review the Quality First Points Scale Guidance Document available on the extranet. From the Quality First Dashboard, scroll down to Quality First Resources and select SFY21 Points Scale Guidance Document.

16

Have Questions about the information in this Directory?

Please contact the Quality First Team

Michelle Golus, Quality First Director
(602) 771- 5019, mgolus@firstthingsfirst.org

Courtney King, Quality First Program Coordinator (Assessment)
(602) 771-5027, coking@firstthingsfirst.org

Heidi Walton, Quality First Program Coordinator (Coaching & Incentives)
(602) 771-2345, heidiwalton@firstthingsfirst.org

Diana Robles, Quality First Administrative Assistant
(602) 771-5000, drobles@firstthingsfirst.org

Quality First Staffing Guide

Providing a high-quality early care and education environment is a team effort, and each team member plays an important role. Teaching staff, management, families, and volunteers all contribute to a child's daily experiences in the early care setting. The purpose of this guide is to support Quality First Participants in understanding how different staff members and volunteers are considered through the lenses of the Quality First assessment tools, the Arizona Department of Health Services Child Care Licensing (ADHS Licensing), and the Department of Economic Security Child Care Administration (DES Certification).

How to use this document:
- Review the staff and volunteers working at your program to ensure you have the required information in each staff member's file, as required by your program's regulating body. This guide includes information pertaining to ADHS Child Care Licensing and DES Child Care Certification. If your program is regulated by a tribal or military authority, please contact your regulating body for specific guidance.

- Review your program's staff to ensure you have accurate and updated information about each staff member on the Quality First Extranet staffing tab and the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry.

- Identify which staff members' education documentation will be reviewed during the Quality First Points Scale using the Early Childhood Workforce Registry.

- Consider the job expectations and employment qualifications your program requires for each role in your program, and how these are communicated to staff, parents, and volunteers.

- Review the document to learn how Quality First assessment and ADHS licensing will evaluate your staff members during site visits and assessments.

Things to keep in mind:
- Each program's staffing patterns are unique, and the staff descriptions listed here may not accurately reflect your program's practices. Some job titles, such as Education Coordinator, Curriculum Specialist, or Creative Director are not included in this list due to the variety of functions within these roles. Regardless of the job title, consider the *role* your staff fill and where they fit best within the descriptions listed here. If you have questions, or you are unsure how your staff should be identified, please consult with your Quality First Coach, ADHS Licensing Surveyor, or your DES Certification Specialist.

- This guide is not meant to be used in isolation; please see the Quality First Points Scale Guidance Document, the Child Care Licensing Rules for Centers and/or the Child Care Licensing Rules for Group Homes, as applicable, for further information.

Program staff role	Environment Rating Scales- *ECERS, ITERS, FCCERS*	Classroom Assessment Scoring System- *CLASS-Pre-K, CLASS-Toddler, CLASS-Infant*	Quality First Points Scale Assessment	ADHS Licensing Requirements for DHS Small Group Homes	DES Requirements for Certified Family Child Care Providers
Family Child Care Provider- This is the person responsible for the operations of a family child care program. Often, this is also the person providing care and supervision of children. *May also be called caregiver, provider, or home care provider.*	Interactions between family child care providers and children **will be observed** during ERS assessment. The majority of the children must be enrolled in the family child care home at least 10 business days for ERS to be completed.	Interactions between family child care providers and children **will be observed** during the CLASS assessment. The observer focuses on the caregiver who is interacting with the majority of the children. The children must be enrolled in the family child care home at least 20 business days for CLASS to be completed.	The owner/operator of a family child care program should be identified as "director" on the extranet's staffing tab. First Things First reviews the following to score Staff Qualifications for directors: • Level of education.* • Coursework in Early Childhood Education and related fields.* • Experience working in an ECE setting. ** First Things First reviews the following to score Curriculum and Child Assessment: • Child care providers have completed the Introduction to the Arizona Early Learning Standards (AZELS) and the Introduction to Arizona's Infant and Toddler Developmental Guidelines (ITDG). ** • Child care providers have completed at least 2 additional modules of the AZELS/ITDG. ** For more information on these trainings, see the Quality First Points Scale Guidance Document. Family child care providers are counted in staff to child ratios if they are providing supervision to children. *This data is collected from the program's Staff Education and Professional Development report in the Registry.* **This data is collected from the program's extranet staffing tab.*	Family Child Care Providers are counted in staff to child ratios if staff qualifications are met in accordance with R9-3-301-A.1. **See [Arizona Administrative Rules and Revised Statutes for Child Care Group Homes](#) R9-3-301-A.4.b for guidance on staff files and records.**	Family child care providers are counted in adult to child ratios if all eligibility criteria are met in accordance with DES Child Care Administration rules and statutes. **See [Arizona Department of Economic Security website](#) for eligibility criteria and required documents.**

Program staff role	Environment Rating Scales- *ECERS, ITERS, FCCERS*	Classroom Assessment Scoring System- *CLASS-Pre-K, CLASS-Toddler, CLASS-Infant*	Quality First Points Scale Assessment	ADHS Licensing Requirements for ADHS Small Group Homes	DES Requirements for Certified Family Child Care Providers
Family Child Care- Other Family Members In family child care settings, other family members may be present in the home. How these family members are considered depends on their role within the program. *This may include spouses or other relatives who may live in the home.*	Unless the family member is typically a part of the child care program and works with the children for a substantial portion of the day or for much of the day, their interactions **will not be considered** during an ERS assessment, unless they are observed to interact negatively with children. The majority of the children must be enrolled in the family child care home at least 10 business days for ERS to be completed.	The observer focuses on the caregiver who is interacting with the majority of the children. The children must be enrolled in the family child care home at least 20 business days for CLASS to be completed.	Family members who are child care staff must be identified as "assistant director," "lead teacher," or "assistant teacher," on the extranet's staffing tab, depending on the role they serve within the program. **Family members who are child care staff:** First Things First will assess child care staff based on their role as identified in the extranet. (For example, if a staff member is identified as a lead teacher, they will be assessed as a lead teacher within the Staff Qualifications and Curriculum and Child Assessment sections of the Points Scale Assessment.) Family members who are child care staff are counted in staff to child ratios if they are providing supervision to children. **Family members who are not child care staff:** First Things First does not consider other family members who are not child care staff when scoring the Quality First Points Scale Assessment. They do not need to be included on the extranet's staffing tab. Family members who are not child care staff are not counted in staff to child ratios.	**See Arizona Administrative Rules and Revised Statutes for Child Care Group Homes** **R9-3-301-A.4.b for guidance on recordkeeping for staff and residents.**	Other family members who are age 13 or younger will be counted in the adult to child ratios. Adult family members living in the home must meet all requirements for a home provider, and all required documentation must be provided in accordance with DES Child Care Administrative Rules and Statutes. **See Arizona Department of Economic Security website for eligibility criteria and required documents.**

Program staff role	Environment Rating Scales- *ECERS, ITERS, FCCERS*	Classroom Assessment Scoring System- *CLASS-Pre-K, CLASS-Toddler, CLASS-Infant*	Quality First Points Scale Assessment	ADHS Licensing Requirement
Owner/Area Manager- This person provides oversight and business administration of the program. This person may have an office off-site and typically spends less than half of their hours on-site at the program. *May also be the program's business owner. May also be called regional manager, district manager, principal, or supervisor.*	Unless this staff member is typically a part of the classroom staff and works with the children for a substantial portion of the day or for much of the day, their interactions **will not be considered** during an ERS assessment, unless they are observed to interact negatively with children.	Interactions between all caregivers and children **will be observed** during the CLASS assessment. The observer focuses on the caregiver who is interacting with the majority of the children.	First Things First does not consider owners/ area managers in the scoring of the Points Scale Assessment. Owners/ area managers do not need to be included on the extranet's staffing tab.	Will be counted in staff to child ratios if staff qualifications are met in accordance with R9-5-401.1 and R9-4-101.45 **See [Arizona Administrative Rules and Revised Statutes for Child Care Facilities](#) R9-5-402 for guidance on staff files and records.**

Program staff role	Environment Rating Scales- *ECERS, ITERS, FCCERS*	Classroom Assessment Scoring System- *CLASS-Pre-K, CLASS-Toddler, CLASS-Infant*	Quality First Points Scale Assessment	ADHS Licensing Requirement
Director- This is the primary person onsite that is responsible for the planning and daily operations of the program. *May also be called facility director, center director, site administrator, program administrator, coordinator, or principal.*	Unless this staff member is typically a part of the classroom staff and works with the children for a substantial portion of the day or for much of the day, their interactions **will not be considered** during an ERS assessment, unless they are observed to interact negatively with children.	Interactions between all caregivers and children **will be observed** during the CLASS assessment. The observer focuses on the caregiver who is interacting with the majority of the children.	First Things First reviews the following to score Staff Qualifications for directors: • Level of education. * • Coursework in Early Childhood Education and related fields. * • Experience working in an ECE setting. ** First Things First reviews the following to score Curriculum and Child Assessment: • Directors have completed the introduction to the AZELS and ITDG. ** • Directors have completed 2 additional modules of the AZELS/ITDG. ** For more information on these trainings, see the Quality First Points Scale Guidance Document. Directors who have been employed by the program 30 classroom days must have submitted education documentation to the Registry and be included on the extranet's staffing tab. Directors may be counted in staff: child ratios if they are providing supervision for a group of children, for example, in a teacher's absence. *This data is collected from the program's Staff Education and Professional Development report in the Registry.* **This data is collected from the program's extranet staffing tab.*	May be counted in staff to child ratios if staff qualifications are met in accordance with R9-5-401.1 and R9-4-101.45 **See Arizona Administrative Rules and Revised Statutes for Child Care Facilities R9-5-402 for guidance on staff files and records.**

Program staff role	Environment Rating Scales- *ECERS, ITERS, FCCERS*	Classroom Assessment Scoring System- *CLASS-Pre-K, CLASS-Toddler, CLASS-Infant*	Quality First Points Scale Assessment	ADHS Licensing Requirement
Assistant Director- This person provides administration of the program and acts as the director's designee in the director's absence. *May also be called facility director designee, office manager, or center assistant.*	Unless this staff member is typically a part of the classroom staff and works with the children for a substantial portion of the day or for much of the day, their interactions **will not be considered** during an ERS assessment, unless they are observed to interact negatively with children.	Interactions between caregivers and children **will be observed** during the CLASS assessment. The observer focuses on the caregiver who is interacting with the majority of the children.	First Things First reviews the following to score Staff Qualifications for assistant directors: • Level of education. * • Coursework in Early Childhood Education and related fields. * • Experience working in an ECE setting. ** First Things First reviews the following to score Curriculum and Child Assessment: • Assistant directors have completed the introduction to the AZELS and ITDG. ** • Assistant directors have completed 2 additional modules of the AZELS/ITDG. ** For more information on these trainings, see the Quality First Points Scale Guidance Document. Assistant directors who have been employed by the program 30 classroom days must have submitted education documentation to the Registry and be included on the extranet's staffing tab. Assistant directors may be counted in staff to child ratios if they are providing supervision for a group of children, for example, in a teacher's absence. *This data is collected from the program's Staff Education and Professional Development report in the Registry. **This data is collected from the program's extranet staffing tab.*	May be counted in staff to child ratios if staff qualifications are met in accordance with R9-5-401.2 See **[Arizona Administrative Rules and Revised Statutes for Child Care Facilities](#) R9-5-402 for guidance on staff files and records.**

Program staff role	Environment Rating Scales- *ECERS,ITERS,FCCERS*	Classroom Assessment Scoring System- *CLASS-Pre-K, CLASS-Toddler, CLASS-Infant*	Quality First Points Scale Assessment	ADHS Licensing Requirement
Lead Teacher/ Caregiver- This is the person primarily responsible for developing and implementing lesson plans, facilitating activities, documenting children's developmental progress, and conducting parent-teacher conferences. *May also be called teacher, primary teacher, co-teacher, co-lead, or guide.*	Interactions between lead teachers and children **will be observed** during ERS assessment. The lead teacher must have worked in the classroom with the current group of children for 10 classroom days for ERS to be completed.	Interactions between a lead Teacher and children **will be observed** during the CLASS assessment. The observer focuses on the caregiver who is interacting with the majority of the children. The lead teacher must have worked in the classroom with the current group of children for 20 classroom days for CLASS to be completed.	First Things First reviews the following to score Staff Qualifications for lead teachers: • Level of education. * • Coursework in Early Childhood Education and related fields. * • Experience working in an ECE setting. ** First Things First reviews the following to score Curriculum and Child Assessment: • Lead teachers have completed the introduction to the AZELS and ITDG. ** • Lead teachers have completed 2 additional modules of the AZELS/ITDG. ** For more information on these trainings, see the Quality First Points Scale Guidance Document. All lead teachers who have been employed by the program 30 classroom days must have submitted education documentation to the Registry and be included on the extranet's staffing tab. Lead teachers will be counted in staff to child ratios if they are providing supervision to children. *This data is collected from the program's Staff Education and Professional Development report in the Registry.* *This data is collected from the program's extranet staffing tab.*	May be counted in staff to child ratios if staff qualifications are met in accordance with R9-5-401.3 and R9-5-101.118 **See [Arizona Administrative Rules and Revised Statutes for Child Care Facilities](#) R9-5-402 for guidance on staff files and records.**

Program staff role	Environment Rating Scales- *ECERS, ITERS, FCCERS*	Classroom Assessment Scoring System- *CLASS-Pre-K, CLASS-Toddler, CLASS-Infant*	Quality First Points Scale Assessment	ADHS Licensing Requirement
Assistant Teacher/ Caregiver- This person assists the lead teacher to provide care and supervision of children. *May also be called instructional assistant, instructional aide, or floater. This may be a college student enrolled in ECE coursework earning practicum hours in an early learning classroom.*	Interactions between assistant teachers and children **will be observed** during ERS assessment.	Interactions between assistant teachers and children **will be observed** during the CLASS assessment. The observer focuses on the caregiver who is interacting with the majority of the children. The assistant teacher must have worked in the classroom with the current group of children for 10 classroom days for CLASS to be completed.	First Things First reviews the following to score staff qualifications for Assistant Teachers: • Experience working in an ECE setting. ** Assistant teachers will be counted in staff to child ratios if they are providing supervision of children. Assistant teachers who have been employed by the program 30 classroom days must be included on the extranet's staffing tab. ***This data is collected from the program's extranet staffing tab.*	May be counted in staff to child ratios if staff qualifications are met in accordance with R9-5-401.4 and R9-5-101.114 **See [Arizona Administrative Rules and Revised Statutes for Child Care Facilities](#) R9-5-402 for guidance on staff files and records.**
Teacher/Caregiver Aide- This is a person 16 years of age or older who works under the supervision of a lead teacher-caregiver. *May also be called a student volunteer.*	If the teacher/caregiver aide is typically a part of the classroom and works with the children for a substantial portion of the day or for much of the day, their interactions **will be considered** during an ERS assessment. If the teacher/caregiver aide is not typically a part of the classroom staff and does not work with the children for a substantial portion of the day, their interactions **will not be considered**, unless they are observed to interact negatively with children.	Interactions between teacher/caregiver aides and children **will be observed** during the CLASS assessment. The observer focuses on the caregiver who is interacting with the majority of the children. In order to complete a CLASS assessment, the regular classroom teacher must be present.	First Things First does not consider teacher/caregiver aides in the scoring of the Points Scale Assessment. Teacher/Caregiver Aides do not need to be included on the extranet's staffing tab.	May not be counted in staff to child ratios. **See [Arizona Administrative Rules and Revised Statutes for Child Care Facilities](#) R9-5-401.5-6 for guidance.**

Quality First Staffing Guide SFY21

Program staff role	Environment Rating Scales- *ECERS, ITERS, FCCERS*	Classroom Assessment Scoring System- *CLASS-Pre-K, CLASS-Toddler, CLASS-Infant*	Quality First Points Scale Assessment	ADHS Licensing Requirement
Volunteer Visitor- A community member or parent who, under the supervision of staff, assists with classroom or program activities. *May also be called a parent visitor or community volunteer.*	Unless this person is typically a part of the classroom staff and works with the children for a substantial portion of the day or for much of the day, their interactions **will not be considered** during an ERS assessment, unless they are observed to interact negatively with children.	Interactions between caregivers and children **will be observed** during the CLASS assessment. The observer focuses on the caregiver who is interacting with the majority of the children.	First Things First does not consider volunteer visitors in the scoring of the Points Scale Assessment. Volunteer visitors do not need to be included in the extranet's staffing tab.	May not be counted in staff to child ratios.
Volunteer Staff- This person provides child care services without compensation. *May also be called a cooperative preschool parent volunteer or student teacher.*	If the volunteer staff member is typically a part of the classroom and works with the children for a substantial portion of the day or for much of the day, their interactions **will be considered** during an ERS assessment. If they are not typically a part of the classroom staff and works with the children for a substantial portion of the day or much of the day, their interactions **will not be considered** unless they are observed to interact negatively with children.	Interactions between caregivers and children **will be observed** during the CLASS assessment. The observer focuses on the caregiver who is interacting with the majority of the children.	If a volunteer staff member regularly participates in classroom activities, they may be considered in the Points Scale Assessment. To be considered in the Points Scale Assessment, volunteer staff must be identified on the extranet's staffing tab. Volunteer staff qualifications are measured within Staff Qualifications based on their role as identified in the extranet. (For example, if a volunteer staff is identified as an assistant teacher, their qualifications will be assessed as an assistant teacher.)	May only be counted in staff to child ratios if they meet the criteria for director, teacher-caregiver, or assistant teacher-caregiver as outlined in R9-5-401. **See Arizona Administrative Rules and Revised Statutes for Child Care Facilities R9-5-402 for guidance on staff files and records.**

Program staff role	Environment Rating Scales- *ECERS, ITERS, FCCERS*	Classroom Assessment Scoring System- *CLASS-Pre-K, CLASS-Toddler, CLASS-Infant*	Quality First Points Scale Assessment	ADHS Licensing Requirement
Contractor- This is a person who facilitates activities, but is not employed by the program. *May also be called gymnastics coach, literacy program teacher, music teacher.*	Unless this staff member is typically a part of the classroom staff and works with the children for a substantial portion of the day or for much of the day, their interactions **will not be considered** during an ERS assessment, unless they are observed to interact negatively with children.	Interactions between caregivers and children **will be observed** during the CLASS assessment. The observer focuses on the caregiver who is interacting with the majority of the children.	First Things First does not consider contractors in the scoring of the Points Scale Assessment. Contractors do not need to be included on the extranet's staffing tab.	May only be counted in staff to child ratios if they meet the criteria for director, teacher-caregiver, or assistant teacher-caregiver as outlined in R9-5-401. **See Arizona Administrative Rules and Revised Statutes for Child Care Facilities R9-5-402 for guidance on staff files and records.**

Program staff role	Environment Rating Scales- *ECERS,ITERS,FCCERS*	Classroom Assessment Scoring System- *CLASS-Pre-K, CLASS-Toddler, CLASS-Infant*	Quality First Points Scale Assessment	ADHS Licensing Requirement
Student Aide- This is a student under 16 years of age who is participating in an educational, curriculum-based course of study, vocational education, or occupational development program and who, without pay, is present at a facility to receive instruction from and supervision by staff in the provision of child care services. *This may include: high school student in a technical education program at a lab school.*	If the student aide is typically a part of the classroom and works with the children for a substantial portion of the day, their interactions **will be considered** during an ERS assessment. If the student aide is not typically a part of the classroom staff and works with the children for a substantial portion of the day or for much of the day, their interactions **will not be considered** during an ERS assessment, unless they are observed to interact negatively with children.	Interactions between caregivers and children **will be observed** during the CLASS assessment. The observer focuses on the caregiver who is interacting with the majority of the children.	First Things First does not consider student aides in the scoring of the Points Scale Assessment. Student aides do not need to be included on the extranet's staffing tab.	May not be counted in staff to child ratios. See **Arizona Administrative Rules and Revised Statutes for Child Care Facilities** R9-5-101.114 for guidance on staff files and records.

Program staff role	Environment Rating Scales- *ECERS, ITERS, FCCERS*	Classroom Assessment Scoring System- *CLASS-Pre-K, CLASS-Toddler, CLASS-Infant*	Quality First Points Scale Assessment	ADHS Licensing Requirement
Therapist- This is a professional who provides individualized services to children at the program. Services are typically provided one-on-one or in very small groups based on a child's identified special need. *This may include roles such as speech therapist, occupational therapist, literacy specialist.*	Unless this staff member is typically a part of the classroom staff and works with the children for a substantial portion of the day, their interactions **will not be considered** during an ERS assessment, unless they are observed to interact negatively with children.	Interactions between caregivers and children will be observed during the CLASS assessment. The observer focuses on the caregiver who is interacting with the majority of the children. Therapists typically are not observed during CLASS assessments since they usually interact with one child or a small group of children.	First Things First does not consider therapists in the scoring of the Points Scale Assessment. Therapists do not need to be included in the extranet's staffing tab.	May be counted in staff to child ratios if they meet the criteria for director, teacher-caregiver, or assistant teacher- caregiver as outlined in R9-5-401. **See Arizona Administrative Rules and Revised Statutes for Child Care Facilities R9-5-402 for guidance on staff files and records**.

Program staff role	Environment Rating Scales- *ECERS, ITERS, FCCERS*	Classroom Assessment Scoring System- *CLASS-Pre-K, CLASS-Toddler, CLASS-Infant*	Quality First Points Scale Assessment	ADHS Licensing Requirement
Substitute teacher- An individual who provides child care services in the absence of a teacher/caregiver.

May also be called sub, temp staff, or teacher on-call. | Interactions between substitute teachers and children **will be observed** during ERS assessment if the substitute teacher has been in the classroom 10 classroom days.

The substitute teacher must be in the classroom 10 classroom days for ERS to be completed. | Interactions between a substitute teacher and children **will be observed** during the CLASS assessment. The observer focuses on the caregiver who is interacting with the majority of the children.

The substitute teacher must have worked in the classroom with the current group of children 20 business days for CLASS to be completed. | **Short-term Substitutes**-Substitute teachers who have worked at the program fewer than 30 consecutive classroom days will not be considered for the Staff Qualifications or Curriculum and Child Assessment sections of the Points Scale Assessment.

Long-term Substitutes-Substitute teachers who have worked at the program at least 30 consecutive classroom days will be considered for the Staff Qualifications and Curriculum and Child Assessment sections of the Points Scale Assessment.

All substitute teachers who have worked at the program at least 30 consecutive classroom days must have submitted education documentation to the Registry and be included on the extranet staffing tab. Identify which role the substitute teacher is filling by selecting "Lead Teacher" or "Assistant Teacher" from the drop-down menu. Substitute teachers who have worked at the program 30 consecutive classroom days or more will be assessed based on the role selected. (Please see "Lead Teacher/Caregiver" and "Assistant Teacher/Caregiver" sections of this chart.)

Substitute teachers working at the program (regardless of the length of time) will be counted in staff to child ratios if they are providing supervision to children. | May be counted in staff to child ratios if staff qualifications are met in accordance with R9-5-401.

See [Arizona Administrative Rules and Revised Statutes for Child Care Facilities](#) R9-5-402 for guidance on staff files and records. |

Program staff role	Environment Rating Scales- *ECERS, ITERS, FCCERS*	Classroom Assessment Scoring System- *CLASS-Pre-K, CLASS-Toddler, CLASS-Infant*	Quality First Points Scale Assessment	ADHS Licensing Requirement
Technical Assistance Provider- An individual who provides on-site consultation, coaching, training, or technical assistance to early childhood programs and staff. This person is neither employed by the program nor volunteering to provide child care services at the program. Typically, this person is employed by a social service or state agency to provide professional support to the early childhood staff. *This may include roles such as Quality First Coach, Mental Health Consultant, Inclusion Coach, Child Care Health Consultant, Department of Education Early Childhood Specialist.*	Because they are not program staff, technical assistance providers **are not observed** using the Environment Rating Scales Tools.	Because they are not program staff, technical assistance providers **are not observed** using the CLASS assessments.	First Things First does not consider technical assistance providers in the scoring of the Points Scale Assessment. Technical assistance providers do not need to be included in the extranet's staffing tab.	Because technical assistance providers are not providing direct child care services, they are not counted in staff to child ratios.

Additional Resources on Staffing in Early Care and Education Programs

Arizona's Program Guidelines for High-Quality Early Childhood Education: Birth through Kindergarten
https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=5879561caadebe0c98a80509

Barhyte, D. (2018, September/October). Volunteer Management: Leadership Strategies for Success. Child Care Exchange.
https://ccie-catalog.s3.amazonaws.com/library/5024342.pdf

Harris, L. (2005, September/ October). Staffing at the Child Care Center. Child Care Exchange.
https://www.childcareexchange.com/library/5016570.pdf

Yastishock, A. (2016, August/September). Miss Nelson is Missing! Preparing for a Substitute Teacher. Teaching Young Children, 9 (5)
https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/aug2016/miss-nelson-missing-preparing-substitute

If you have questions about the information in this guide, please contact:

For questions about the Arizona Department of Health Services licensing requirements, contact ADHS at 602-364-2539 or 1-800-615-8555.

For questions regarding Quality First Assessment, contact Katie Romero, Quality First Assessment Program Manager at 602-633-8652 or kromero@swhd.org.

For questions about the Quality First program, contact the Quality First Team at First Things First at 602-771-5000 or qualityfirst@firstthingsfirst.org.

QUALITY FIRST
FIRST THINGS FIRST

POINTS SCALE GUIDE 2021

Contents

INTRODUCTION

This Points Scale Guidance Document is designed to help you and your staff prepare for the Quality First Points Scale Assessment. The document is not intended to be used in isolation; rather, it should be used alongside the Quality First Points Scale rubric. The Points Scale rubric is the scoring rubric used to assess your program. This guidance document will help your program gather the evidence needed to demonstrate each concept assessed.

The document is divided into three main sections: Staff Qualifications, Administrative Practices, and Curriculum and Child Assessment. These sections mirror the three domains of the Points Scale Assessment. Within each section, there are best practices statements to inform you of why Quality First is assessing the domain. Next, the section will outline the information that is reviewed for each domain during the Points Scale Assessment and indicate whether the data is reviewed by an assessor during the onsite visit or reviewed offsite by First Things First's Quality First staff using the extranet or Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry. Following this, there is additional information regarding the scoring requirements for each indicator in the Points Scale Assessment. The information includes descriptions of the indicators and the details of each piece of required evidence. At the end of each section are frequently asked questions, definitions, additional resources, and a checklist to help you track that you've gathered all of the required evidence for each domain and indicator.

There are two additional sections within the State Fiscal Year 2021 Points Scale Assessment Guidance Document. First, there is a Highlights for SFY 2021 section. It calls attention to some of the critical practices for this fiscal year. There is also a Primary Caregiving section at the end of the document to provide further details on how to organize and submit information if your program practices the philosophy of primary caregiving.

You are encouraged to utilize this document alongside the Quality First Points Scale rubric. Take time to match the evidence your program has gathered and the indicator(s) to which it aligns. You can self-assess where your program should score in each domain and what is required to achieve full points.

While the Points Scale Guidance Document is comprehensive, you may find you need additional assistance when gathering your evidence. Please feel free to reach out to the Quality First team, whether by asking further questions of your Quality First coach and consultants, the Assessment Team or the First Things First Quality First Team at 602-771-5000 or qualityfirst@firstthingsfirst.org.   We are all here to act as a resource during your preparation.

The following information includes updates for State Fiscal Year 2021. The information should not be used in isolation. Please refer to the remainder of the Points Scale Guidance Document as more details regarding each item are provided.

GENERAL INFORMATION
- The yellow highlighting found throughout the document spotlights information that is commonly requested by participants. The highlights shift year to year based on the trends of questions from the field.
- Please remember that participants going through the Points Scale Assessment for the second time, or any cycle thereafter, do not have a six month preparation period. The Points Scale Assessment is conducted in the same timeframe as the program's ERS and CLASS assessments.
- All documentation a participant wants to be credited in the scoring of its Points Scale Assessment must be prepared by the participant's cycle end date and presented at the time of assessment. This includes all documentation reviewed in-person by the assessment team, as well as documentation reviewed offsite by First Things First's Quality First Team via the Quality First extranet or Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry. Documentation that is not presented at the time of assessment may not be submitted for review during the assessment clarification process.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS
- First Things First retired the Transcript and Education Documentation Policy at the end of SFY20 (June 30, 2020). The processes for submitting education documentation are included in the Staff Qualifications section of this guide.
- All education documentation, including official transcripts, CDA credentials, and teaching certificates, you want credited must be verified by the registry and visible on your Professional Development and Education Report at the time of your Points Scale assessment. It is the participant's responsibility to ensure that education documentation is submitted to the registry with enough time for it to be processed before the date of your Points Scale assessment.
- To assist in the scoring of the Staff Qualifications domain, please enter each of your staff member's Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry ID number in the extranet's staffing tab. Refer to the picture directions on p. 19-22 for assistance with completing this task.

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES
- Please refer to the Quality First Staffing Guide, located in the resource section of the SFY21 Participant Guide, for assistance in understanding how different staff roles and volunteers are considered in the Points Scale Assessment.
- If your written staff retention plan is included within a larger document, such as a staff handbook or policy manual, you must label all pages/sections you want reviewed by the assessment team (e.g. with sticky notes, flags, or highlighting).

CURRICULUM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT

- The Arizona Department of Education has updated their process for issuing certificates of attendance at their trainings. It is the participant's responsibility to schedule staff attendance at required trainings far enough in advance of their Points Scale Assessment to ensure that there is time to receive, submit to coaching, and have attendance reflected in the extranet's staffing tab. Information about ADE's process and timelines are noted in the Curriculum and Child Assessment section.

- If your written policy statements are included within a larger document, such as a family handbook or policy manual, you must label all pages/sections of the document you want reviewed by the assessment team (e.g. with sticky notes, flags or highlighting).

- Family input must be documentation that the participant will allow the assessor to review after completion by a family to ensure all required elements are present. If the participant uses family input documentation protected by IDEA or HIPAA and does not have parental consent to share the information with Quality First, another form of family input must be provided for review by the assessor. Credit cannot be given for reviewing blank documentation or documentation that is redacted to the point that the assessor cannot verify it meets Quality First's requirements.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

1. WHY IS QUALITY FIRST ASSESSING STAFF QUALIFICATIONS? WHAT RESEARCH AND BEST PRACTICES TELL US THIS IS GOOD FOR CHILDREN?

Arizona's Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education: Birth through Kindergarten, Standard 1.0: Program Administration and Qualification

Effective program administration is one key ingredient in the successful implementation of an early education program. Through the development of a written philosophy, the identification of efficient operational policies, the hiring of competent and committed staff, and the provision of consistent supervision, program administrators lay the foundation for early education program staff to focus on implementing developmentally appropriate programs. Since professional background and knowledge are critical components to early education program quality, it is necessary to address the experience, competence, and continuous development of staff to improve the early education system in Arizona. Achieving and maintaining the highest levels of quality personnel universally across the varying types of early childhood programs will be an ever evolving and ongoing process (Arizona Department of Education, 2013).

NAEYC Program Standard 6: Staff Competencies, Preparation, and Support

The program employs and supports teaching and administrative staff that have the qualifications, knowledge and professional commitment necessary to promote children's learning and development and to support families' diverse needs and interests.

RATIONALE:

Children in early learning programs benefit most when teaching and administrative staff have high levels of formal education and specialized professional preparation. Staff who have specific preparation, knowledge, and skills in child development and early childhood education are more likely to engage in warm, positive interactions with children, offer richer language experiences, and create higher quality learning environments. Opportunities for teaching and administrative staff to receive supportive supervision and to participate in ongoing professional development ensure that their knowledge and skills reflect the profession's ever-changing knowledge base (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2018).

2. HOW WILL THE INFORMATION FOR STAFF QUALIFICATIONS BE ACCESSED?

The information used to score the Staff Qualifications domain of the Quality First Points Scale Assessment is accessed by the First Things First Quality First team offsite using (a) the Quality First extranet (http://extranet.azftf.gov) and (b) the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry (www.azregistry.org). The assessment team is not responsible for reviewing any documentation for this domain during the onsite visit.

1. ==The site's extranet staffing tab is used to review all staff members' months of employment at the current program and years of previous experience in early childhood education, working with children birth-8.==
   Picture directions for how to update this information are included at the end of this section.

Staff members who work directly with children should be included on the site's extranet staffing tab. Please refer to the Quality First Staffing Guide, located in the resource section of the SFY21 Participant Guide, for assistance in determining which adult roles at your program should be included on the extranet staffing tab.

2. **The site's Registry Professional Development and Education Report from the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry is used to review all lead teacher and administrator education documentation.** Information will be gathered from the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry for all active lead teachers and administrators listed on the extranet's staffing tab.

Quality First accesses the program's registry report by the ADHS, DES, tribal or military license/certification number documented in the Quality First extranet. All site staff must be included in the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry account with the matching license/certification number. Site staff not included in the registry report for the site's license/certification number will not be credited in the Points Scale Assessment. Documentation that is not presented at the time of assessment may not be submitted for review during the assessment clarification process.

You may also refer to the Arizona Early Childhood Registry's How-to Guides for assistance in topics such as creating and managing registry accounts, requesting administrator access, or submitting education documentation (http://azearlychildhood.org/about/using-the-registry/).

CENTERS
For each lead teacher and administrator, the information reviewed includes:
1. Months employed at the current program
2. Total years of experience working with children birth-8 prior to employment at the current program
3. Education documentation, including highest degree earned and/or the number of college credits in ECE or a related field. *Please note that only coursework passed with a grade C or better is credited. Quality First does not recognize hashtags.*

For each assistant teacher, the information reviewed includes:
1. Months employed at the current program
2. Total years of experience working with children birth-8 prior to employment at the current program

FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES
The Staff Qualifications domain is assessed for the person who holds the family child care license/certification. The information reviewed includes:
1. Months employed at current program
2. Total years of experience working with children birth-8 prior to employment at the current program
3. Education documentation, including highest degree earned and/or the number of college credits in ECE or a related field. *Please note that only coursework passed with a grade C or better is credited. Quality First does not recognize hashtags.*

PARTICIPANTS RECEIVING THEIR FIRST POINTS SCALE ASSESSMENT

All official transcripts, teaching certificates, or other education documentation must be verified by the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry and visible on your Registry Professional Development and Education Report before your Points Scale Preparation End Date.

Education documentation must be submitted directly to the registry. The documentation can be submitted four ways:

1. By U.S. Postal Mail to
   Arizona PBS- Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry
   555 N. Central Ave., Suite 500
   Phoenix, AZ 85004

2. By email to info@thearizonaregistry.org

3. By fax to 602-297-6590, ATTN: Registry Staff

4. By upload in the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry (for CDAs and teaching certificates only).
   - Click on **"My Profile"** under **My Tools & Settings**
   - Look for the Participant Files Section
   - Click on **Choose File**. You will upload one file at a time.
   - **Upload Document**

It is the participant's responsibility to ensure all education documentation to be considered in the scoring of their Points Scale Assessment is verified and viewable on the Registry Professional Development and Education Report for the ADHS, DES, tribal or military license/certification number that is documented in the Quality First extranet's program tab.

Please see the Arizona Early Childhood Registry's How-to Guides for assistance in submitting your education documentation (http://azearlychildhood.org/about/using-the-registry/).

PARTICIPANTS RECEIVING THEIR SECOND POINTS SCALE ASSESSMENT (OR ANY CYCLE THEREAFTER)

All official transcripts, teaching certificates, or other education documentation must be verified by the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry and viewable on your Registry Professional Development and Education Report prior to the date of your first onsite assessment, either ERS or CLASS.

Education documentation must be submitted directly to the registry. The documentation can be submitted three ways:

1. By U.S. Postal Mail to
   Arizona PBS- Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry
   555 N. Central Ave., Suite 500
   Phoenix, AZ 85004

2. By email to info@thearizonaregistry.org

3. By upload in the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry (for CDAs and teaching certificates only).
   - Click on **"My Profile"** under **My Tools & Settings**
   - Look for the Participant Files Section
   - Click on **Choose File**. You will upload one file at a time.
   - **Upload Document**

It is the participant's responsibility to ensure all education documentation to be considered in the scoring of their Points Scale Assessment is verified and viewable on the Registry Professional Development and Education Report for the ADHS, DES, tribal or military license/certification number that is documented in the Quality First extranet's program tab.

Please see the Arizona Early Childhood Registry's How-to Guides for assistance in submitting your education documentation, creating or managing registry accounts (http://azearlychildhood.org/about/using-the-registry/).

PARTICIPANTS WHO HAVE HIRED NEW STAFF MEMBERS OR SUBSTITUTE STAFF NEAR THE TIME OF ASSESSMENT
New staff and substitute staff may be considered in the scoring of the Staff Qualifications domain of the Points Scale Assessment, depending on their length of employment with the program.

For programs receiving their first Points Scale Assessment, any new or substitute staff that meets the criteria below on the Points Scale Preparation end date must be included on the extranet's staffing tab and the site's Registry Professional Development and Education Report.

For programs receiving their second Points Scale Assessment or any assessment thereafter, a new staff or substitute staff member who meets the criteria below on the date of your first assessment (either ERS or CLASS) must be included on the site's extranet staffing tab and the site's Registry Professional Development and Education Report.

Criteria for inclusion in scoring:
1. If the administrator has worked onsite for 30 business days, their information will be considered in the scoring of the Staff Qualifications section of the Points Scale Assessment.
2. If a lead teacher has worked in the classroom for 30 classroom days, their information will be considered in the scoring of the Staff Qualifications section of the Points Scale Assessment.
3. If an assistant teacher has worked in the classroom for 30 classroom days, their information will be considered in the Staff Qualifications section of the Points Scale Assessment.

Documentation that is not received, verified, and visable on the site's Registry Professional Development and Education Report will not be credited in the scoring of the site's Points Scale Assessment.

3. WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR SUBMITTING EDUCATION DOCUMENTATION FOR THE QUALITY FIRST POINTS SCALE ASSESSMENT?

All education documentation, including official transcripts, Child Development Associate (CDA) credentials, and teaching certificates must be verified by the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry and viewable on your Registry Professional Development and Education Report at the time of your Points Scale Assessment. Documentation not presented at the time of assessment may not be submitted for review during the assessment clarification process.

The timeline for the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry to process education documentation is fluid and based on the volume of documentation being received. Please review the pop-up box on the Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Development Network's homepage (http://azearlychildhood.org/) for the current processing time. The information is updated monthly to reflect the anticipated wait time.

It is the participant's responsibility to ensure all staff education documentation they want to be credited in the Points Scale Assessment is received, verified, and reflected on the site's Registry Professional Development and Education Report before the Points Scale Assessment. *Please note that Quality First's assessment timelines will not be extended for participants waiting for their documentation to be received or verified by the registry.*

4. WHAT COURSES, SUBJECTS, OR MAJORS ARE CREDITED IN THE QUALITY FIRST POINTS SCALE ASSESSMENT?

Quality First credits the degrees, courses, and subjects recognized in the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Career Lattice.
 (http://azearlychildhood.org/advance-your-career/career-lattice/)

The degrees, subjects, and courses credited as early childhood education (ECE) are listed on p. 8 of the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Career Lattice.

The degrees, subjects, and courses considered related fields are listed on p.9. For coursework in a related field to be credited, it must:
1. Be closely related to ECE;
2. Have a focus on children birth-8; and
3. The majority of the course objectives must reflect at least one of the eight Workforce Knowledge and Competencies: (http://azearlychildhood.org/resources/standards-and-guidelines/workforce-knowledge-and-competencies/)
    - Child Growth and Development
    - Curriculum and Learning Environment
    - Child Observation and Assessment
    - Effective Interactions

- Health, Safety and Nutrition
- Family and Community Partnerships
- Professionalism
- Program Management

Additional coursework may be considered on a case-by-case basis. The staff member must contact the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry for assistance.

5. WHAT CERTIFICATES AND CREDENTIALS ARE CREDITED IN THE POINTS SCALE ASSESSMENT?

Quality First credits the certificates and credentials recognized in the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Career Lattice. (http://azearlychildhood.org/advance-your-career/career-lattice/)

1. A valid Child Development Associate (CDA) credential awarded by the Council for Professional Recognition
2. Certificate of Completion in Early Childhood Education or a related field from a community college
   - A list of accepted certificates is located on p.9 of the Career Lattice.
3. A valid AZ Teaching Certificate in:
   - Early Childhood Education (Birth-Age 8 or Grade 3)
   - Early Childhood Special Education
   - Elementary Education with an Early Childhood (Birth-Age 8 or Grade 3) Endorsement

Please note that Quality First does not recognize certificates or credentials that have expired. It is your staff's responsibility to submit updated certificates and credentials as needed to document their continued good standing with the National CDA Council or Arizona Department of Education.

Certificates and credentials must be submitted directly to the registry. The documentation can be submitted four ways:

1. By U.S. Postal Mail to
   Arizona PBS- Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry
   555 N. Central Ave., Suite 500
   Phoenix, AZ 85004

2. By email to info@thearizonaregistry.org

3. By upload in the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry (CDAs and teaching certificates only).

   - Click on **"My Profile"** under **My Tools & Settings**
   - Look for the Participant Files Section
   - Click on **Choose File**. You will upload one file at a time.
   - **Upload Document**

It is the participant's responsibility to ensure all education documentation to be considered in the scoring of their Points Scale Assessment is verified and viewable on the Registry Professional Development and Education Report for the ADHS, DES, tribal or military license/certification number that is documented in the Quality First extranet's program tab.

Please see the [Arizona Early Childhood Registry's How-to Guides](http://azearlychildhood.org/about/using-the-registry/) for assistance in submitting your education documentation or creating and managing registry accounts (http://azearlychildhood.org/about/using-the-registry/).

6. WHAT IS THE SCORING CRITERIA FOR THE STAFF QUALIFICATIONS DOMAIN?

The Quality First Points Scale rubric is the First Things First Board approved document used for scoring.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS (MUST MEET STANDARDS IN ALL COLUMNS OF EACH ROW TO RECEIVE POINTS)			Points earned
Center Based - Administrators (Director and Assistant Director) and Teachers* have the following education and experience:	Center Based - Assistant Teachers have the following education and experience:	Family Child Care - Providers have the following education and experience:	
2a. July 1, 2011 **25% have Education:** 12 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section **OR** Certificate of completion in ECE or child development from a community college **OR** CDA credential **AND Experience:** 1 year of teaching in or administration of an early care and education program	**2b. 50% have experience:** 6 months of experience working in an early care and education program	**2c. Education:** 6 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section **OR** Certificate of completion in ECE or child development from a community college **OR** CDA **AND EXPERIENCE:** 1 year of experience in an early care and education program	2 points

* Teacher refers to one who is primarily responsible for the classroom operations, including writing the lesson plans, conducting the parent-teacher conferences, and documenting the children's developmental progress.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS (MUST MEET STANDARDS IN ALL COLUMNS OF EACH ROW TO RECEIVE POINTS)			Points earned
Center Based - Administrators (Director and Assistant Director) and Teachers* have the following education and experience:	Center Based - Assistant Teachers have the following education and experience:	Family Child Care - Providers have the following education and experience:	
4a. A total of 75% have the following education. **EDUCATION: 25% HAVE** 12 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section **OR** Certificate of completion in ECE or child development from a community college or CDA credential **AND 50% HAVE** AA or AAS in ECE **OR** AA or AAS that includes at least 15 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section **AND EXPERIENCE:** 1 year of teaching in or administration of an early care and education program	**4b. 50% HAVE EXPERIENCE:** 6 months of experience working in an early care and education program	**4c. Education:** 12 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section **OR** Certificate of completion in ECE or child development from a community college **OR** CDA credential **AND EXPERIENCE:** 1 year of experience in an early care and education program	4 points

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS (MUST MEET STANDARDS IN ALL COLUMNS OF EACH ROW TO RECEIVE POINTS)			Points earned
Center Based - Administrators (Director and Assistant Director) and Teachers* have the following education and experience:	Center Based - Assistant Teachers have the following education and experience:	Family Child Care - Providers have the following education and experience:	
6a. 25% ** HAVE EDUCATION** BA or BS in ECE or related field **OR** State of AZ Provisional/Standard Teaching Certificate in Early Childhood Education **OR** State of AZ Provisional/Standard Teaching Certificate in Early Childhood Special Education with ECE endorsement **OR** State of AZ Provisional/ Standard Teaching Certificate in Elementary Education with ECE endorsement **AND EXPERIENCE:** 6 months of teaching in an early care and education program **AND** The remaining percentage of teachers meets the requirements at the 2 point level	**6b. 50% HAVE EXPERIENCE:** 6 months of experience working in an early care and education program	**6c. Education:** AA or AAS in ECE **OR** AA or AAS that includes at least 15 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section **OR** BA or BS in any field with at least 15 college credit hours in early childhood or related fields listed in the documentation requirements section **AND EXPERIENCE:** 1 year of experience in an early care and education program	6 points

7. USEFUL DEFINITIONS

Administrator: The one who is engaged in administrative duties or program practices and onsite at the program more than 50% of the time.

Family Home Child Care Provider: The person who holds the family home child care license/ certification.

Lead Teacher: The one who is primarily responsible for classroom operations, including writing lesson plans, conducting parent-teacher conferences, and documenting children's developmental progress.

Short-Term Substitute: A substitute staff member that has worked in the classroom less than 30 days as of the Points Scale Preparation end date for sites in their first Points Scale Assessment. For sites receiving their second Points Scale Assessment or any assessment thereafter, it is a substitute staff member that has worked in the classroom less than 30 days on the day of your first assessment (either ERS or CLASS).

Staff: For Quality First purposes, staff includes paid or unpaid adults working directly with children.

8. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Where should I submit my staff's transcripts, certificates or credentials?
- Please refer sections 2, 3 and 5 above for directions on where to submit education documentation.

My staff's education documentation is visible in the registry and included in my Registry Professional Development and Education Report. How do I get the information updated on my extranet staffing tab?
- Quality First transitioned the process of transcript and education review to the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry in 2017 and is not updating education documentation on a site's extranet staffing

tab. We use the site's Registry Professional Development and Education Report to assess administrator and lead teacher education documentation during the Points Scale Assessment.

My staff sent education documentation to the registry, but I do not see it on my Registry Professional Development and Education Report. What should I do?
- Please review the pop-up box on the Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Development Network's homepage (http://azearlychildhood.org/) for the current processing time. Has the processing time exceeded what was anticipated?
- Please contact the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry staff for assistance at info@thearizonaregistry.org. In your request, please provide the following information:
    1. The staff member's first and last name as it appears in the registry;
    2. The staff member's Registry ID number;
    3. Your email address; and
    4. Your daytime phone number.
- Have your staff contact the college or institution where they requested the documentation. Verify that the documentation was sent to the registry and the address it was sent to was correct.

Please consider if the staff member's education documentation had a different name (such as a maiden or former last name) that does not match the name listed in the registry profile. If this is the case, please contact the Registry's staff to share this discrepancy.

I have a staff member with a teaching certificate. Can it be counted?
- Please refer to section 5 above or the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Career Lattice for a list of accepted Arizona teaching certificates. (http://azearlychildhood.org/advance-your-career/career-lattice/

There is substitute staff working in my program right now. How will they be viewed during the Points Scale Assessment?
- Please refer to section 2 above for the requirements to consider a new staff member in the scoring.

I'm in the process of hiring new staff at my site. Will they be considered in the scoring of Staff Qualifications?
- Please refer to section 2 above for the requirements to consider a new staff member in the Points Scale Assessment.

My staff members' education documentation is verified in the registry, but I think there is a mistake. What should I do?
- Please contact the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry staff for assistance at info@thearizonaregistry.org. In your request, please provide the following information:
    1. The staff member's first and last name as it appears in the registry;
    2. The staff member's Registry ID number;
    3. Your email address; and
    4. Your daytime phone number.
- Please note that Quality First's assessment timeline and assessment clarifications timeline are not extended for participants going through the registry's appeal process. It is the participant's

responsibility to submit their education documentation far enough in advance of their Points Scale Assessment for it to be verified by the registry and discuss needed changes before the Quality First assessment process begins.

I didn't find an answer to my question. What should I do?
- The FAQs included here are a sampling of information. Review the remainder of the Points Scale Guidance Document to see if your question is answered.
- Talk with one of your site's Quality First technical assistance providers, such as your coach.
- Contact the Quality First Assessment Program Manager, Katie Romero, at 602-633-8652 or kromero@swhd.org.
- Contact the First Things First Quality First Team at 602-771-5000 or qualityfirst@firstthingsfirst.org.

9. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
Arizona Early Childhood Network www.azearlychildhood.org
- Arizona Early Chiildhood Network's Registry How-to Guides http://azearlychildhood.org/about/using-the-registry/2/

- Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Career Lattice (http://azearlychildhood.org/advance-your-career/career-lattice/)

- Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry www.azregistry.org

- Arizona's Workforce Knowledge and Competencies (http://azearlychildhood.org/resources/standards-and-guidelines/workforce-knowledge-and-competencies/)

Arizona's Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Childhood Education: Birth through Kindergarten https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=5879561caadebe0c98a80509

National Association for the Education of Young Children www.naeyc.org
- NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/higher-ed/standards
- NAEYC Program Standards https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/10-naeyc-program-standards

Quality First Extranet http://extranet.azftf.gov
- Extranet question inbox extranet@azftf.gov

10. AM I READY?
☐ All current administrators, lead teachers, and assistant teachers are included on my Quality First extranet staffing tab. This includes new staff and substitute staff who have worked in my program for at least 30 classroom days as of my Points Scale end date (first Points Scale)/ on the first date of assessment, ERS or CLASS (all other Points Scales).

☐ The position title, hire date, years of previous ECE experience, and Registry ID number fields for each administrator, lead teacher, and assistant teacher on the extranet's staffing tab are current.

☐ All staff members have created an Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry account and selected our site as their current employer. This includes new staff and substitute staff who have worked in my program for at least 30 classroom days as of my Points Scale end date (first Points Scale) or on the first day of assessment, ERS or CLASS (all other Points Scales).

☐ Another site administrator or I have administrator access for the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry account for the the ADHS, DES, tribal or military license/certification number that matches the one in the Quality First extranet to review my staff's information.

☐ All current staff members are viewable on the Registry Professional Development and Education Report under the ADHS, DES, tribal or military license/certification number that matches the one in the Quality First extranet.

☐ Administrators and lead teachers have submitted education documentation to the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry.

☐ I have reviewed my site's Registry Professional Development and Education Report to ensure all education documentation I want to be credited in my Points Scale Assessment is viewable on the report.

☐ I reviewed the FTF Board approved Quality First Points Scale rubric to see where I believe my site should score in the Staff Qualifications domain of the Points Scale.

How to Update the Extranet's Staffing Tab

1. On the extranet, go to the staffing tab.

2. To add a new staff member, click on "Add new row."

3. Fill out the pop up box with all of the information. Make sure the "Active?" box is checked. Then **click on the green save button**.

4. You should now see the staff member and their position title in the staffing tab.

5. Click on "Edit Details" for the staff member just added.

6. Fill in the "Staff Details" information (with the exception of the end date for employment). Be sure to fill in the staff member's Registry ID number. Then **click on the green save button** in the box.

7. When the screen returns to the full page, **click on the green save button** at the top of the page.

8. Repeat steps 2-7 for each new staff member.

9. To remove a staff member who is no longer employed, start on the staffing tab and click on "Edit details."

10. Uncheck the active button and add the staff member's end date. Then **click on the green save button**.

11. When the screen returns to the full page, **click on the green save button** at the top of the page.
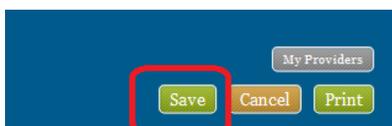
12. The staff member's name should move to the bottom of your staffing list, underneath all of the active staff members. Also, the totals for current staff members should reflect the change in active staff.

13. Repeat steps 9-11 for each staff member no longer employed in the program.

14. To change a staff member's position title, Registry ID number or other employment information, repeat steps 5-7.

**Please remember that only staff members who work directly with children should be included in the staffing tab. Information will be gathered from the extranet for all active staff members during the Points Scale assessment. Please consult the Quality First Staffing Guide if you have questions about which staff members/volunteers should be included on your site's extranet staffing tab.

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

1. WHY IS QUALITY FIRST ASSESSING ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES? WHAT RESEARCH AND BEST PRACTICES TELL US THIS IS GOOD FOR CHILDREN?

"Group size works to raise program quality, not simply because there is magic in having a particular number of children gathered together, but because when the number of children is small, each child gets more individual attention and interaction is more likely. Small groups do not automatically produce quality; quality lies in what can be achieved because the size of the group is small. Group size is, therefore, a key indicator of program quality (Wilson, 2007).

NAEYC Program Standard 10: Leadership and Management
The program effectively implements policies, procedures, and systems that support stable staff and strong personnel, fiscal, and program management so all children, families, and staff have high-quality experiences.

RATIONALE:
Excellent programming requires effective leadership and governance structures and comprehensive, well-functioning administrative policies, procedures, and systems. Effective leadership and management create the environment for high-quality care and education by (a) ensuring compliance with relevant regulations and guidelines; (b) promoting fiscal soundness, program accountability, effective communication, helpful consultative services, and positive community relations; (c) maintaining stable staff; and (d) instituting ongoing program planning as well as continuous quality improvement (NAEYC, 2018).

2. HOW WILL THE INFORMATION FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES BE ACCESSED?

The information used to score the Administrative Practices domain of the Points Scale Assessment is gathered (a) by the assessment team during the onsite visit and (b) offsite by the First Things First Quality First Team through review of the extranet's staffing tab at http://extranet.azftf.gov.

RATIOS AND GROUP SIZES
The assessment team will collect the information used to score indicators related to ratios and group size during the onsite Points Scale Assessment visit.

The procedures for conducting ratio and group size counts include:
1. Ratios and group size data will be collected for all open classrooms/child care groups serving children birth to five. This includes the assessor coming back on a different day if required by classroom configurations, such as a program with M/W/F and T/TH classrooms. AM/PM classrooms will be assessed separately.
   a. To maintain consistency and integrity in the assessment cycle date, the Points Scale Assessment will use the same classroom/child care group information you provided to the assessment team on your first day of assessment, ERS or CLASS, to verify the site's open classrooms. This information is documented using the On-site Assessment Summary Form, signed by the onsite administrator, and a copy is left with the site.
   b. If your program has experienced a change in enrollment and a classroom has been opened or

closed since that time, please let the assessor know.

d. If your program utilizes Primary Caregiving and has throughout your assessment cycle, including during the ERS and CLASS assessments, please refer to the Primary Caregiving section of this document for further details on how ratios and group sizes will be assessed.

2. The onsite administrator will provide the following information for each classroom/child care group before the assessor conducts the first set of ratio and group size counts:
   a. The classroom/group name
      i. If the current classroom/group name is different than what is listed in the extranet, please inform the assessor of the old and new name.
   b. The licensed capacity of the classroom/group
   c. The highest number of children the site allows in the classroom/ child care group at one time (self-limit).
   d. The birthdate of the youngest child enrolled on the classroom/ child care group roster. Please note that ratio and group size counts are assessed based on the birthdate of the youngest child enrolled in the group, whether or no the child is present on the day of assessment.
   Please note that ratio and group size counts are assessed based on the birthdate of the youngest child enrolled in the group, whether or not the child is present on the day of assessment.
      i. Children who are transitioning into a new classroom (i.e. moving from the Toddler room to the Preschool room) should be included on their primary classroom's roster. The child does not need to be included in the birthdates provided to the assessor for the room the child is transitioning into unless the child is present in the transitioning classroom, under that teachers' supervision at the time of assessment.
   e. The name(s) of the staff member(s) assigned to the classroom and their position title.
      i. Please consult the Quality First Staffing Guide to determine which staff roles and volunteers may be included in your site's ratio and group size counts.

3. The assessor, accompanied by an onsite administrator, will visit each classroom to document the ratio and group size count. This will be done at two different points in time for each classroom.
   a. The ratio and group size counts will be collected at least two hours apart in full-day programs.
   b. The ratio and group size counts will be collected at least one hour apart in programs operating four hours or less.

4. The onsite administrator will confirm the name(s) of the staff member(s) present in the classroom for the assessor.

5. If there are unusual circumstances in the classroom at the time of a ratio and group size count, such as

short-term substitutes, unpaid adults, visiting children, children transitioning into the classroom, or missing staff members, it is the onsite administrator's responsibility to share this information verbally with the assessor. The assessor documents the information on the Ratio and Group Size Form.

    a. All children the staff member(s) have supervisory responsibility for are included in the ratio and group size count. If a child from another classroom or program is visiting and the teacher(s) in the classroom are responsible for the child's safety and well-being, the child will be counted in the ratio.

    b. If a child is visiting the classroom with a family member and not enrolled in the classroom, they will not be included in the ratio and group size count because the child's family member is responsible for their health and well-being.

    c. In a family child care home, all children participating in the group that the participant has supervisory responsibility for are considered, whether or not the participant is receiving compensation for the child.

6. The assessor will state the number of staff and the number of children aloud, and then record the information on the Ratio and Group Size Form.

7. The onsite administrator initials each ratio/group size count verifying that the ratio and group size count information recorded on the Ratio and Group Size Form matches what both the onsite administrator and assessor observe, including (a) the classroom name, (b) birthdate of the youngest child enrolled, (c) staff member(s) present, (d) the number of children present, and (e) any classroom anomalies.

    a. ==Your onsite administrator's initials next to each count on the Ratio and Group Size Form identify their agreement that all of the information recorded for the classroom/ child care group's ratio and group size count is accurate.==

STAFF RETENTION

The data used to score indicators related to staff retention is accessed (a) offsite by First Things First's Quality First Team using the extranet (http://extranet.azftf.gov) and (b) by the assessment team during the onsite visit.

1. All staff members' months of employment at the program will be reviewed in the extranet's staffing tab.
2. The assessment team will review the site's written retention plan during the onsite visit.

A **written staff retention plan** includes information about the policies and benefits offered to staff that encourage them to stay employed at their current job.

- A staff retention plan is suggested for any program that employs more than one staff member.
- This information may be included as part of an existing document, for example, an employee handbook, company operations manual, or a policy and procedures manual.
  - If the written retention plan is located within a larger document, either as a single or statement or in multiple statements, the participant must label each section (e.g. with a sticky note flag, highlight, etc.) for the assessor.

- You can also write a new retention plan. The plan may be in any format, but there is a Quality First Retention plan form included on the extranet (http://extranet.azftf.gov) in the SFY21 Forms file in the Quality First Resources section for your use.
- A sample retention plan form is included at the end of this section for your use.

3. WHAT INFORMATION DO I NEED TO UPDATE IN THE EXTRANET?

1. Update the classroom tab to include all open classrooms serving children birth-5. *Picture directions are included at the end of this section for assistance.*
2. Update the staffing tab to include all active administrators, lead teachers, and assistant teachers' hire date. *Picture directions are included at the end of the Staff Qualifications section for assistance.*

4. WHAT IS THE SCORING CRITERIA FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES DOMAIN?

The Quality First Points Scale rubric is the First Things First Board approved document used for scoring.

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES (MUST MEET STANDARDS IN ALL COLUMNS OF EACH ROW TO RECEIVE POINTS)			Points earned
Center Based - Ratios and Group Sizes*** Age of youngest child determines ratio of group. All classrooms will be assessed.	Family Child Care - Ratios and Group Sizes***	All Programs - Retention	
2a. Group sizes are a maximum of no more than two times the ratio of children per a single adult • Infants 1:5, max of 10 children • 12-24 months 1:6, max of 12 children • 2 year olds 1:8, max of 16 children • 3 year olds 1:13, max of 26 children • 4-5 year olds 1:15, max of 30 children	**2b.** Ratios and group sizes are the following: • Up to 5 children enrolled 1:5, max of 5 children • 6-10 children enrolled 1:5, max of 10 children	**2c.** In the past 2 years, the retention rate for Director, Assistant Director and Lead Teachers or Family Child Care Provider does not fall below 60%. If a program falls below 60%, 2 points will be earned with a written retention plan to address barriers and propose recommendation	2 points

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES (MUST MEET STANDARDS IN ALL COLUMNS OF EACH ROW TO RECEIVE POINTS)			Points earned
Center Based - Ratios and Group Sizes*** Age of youngest child determines ratio of group. All classrooms will be assessed.	Family Child Care - Ratios and Group Sizes***	All Programs - Retention	
4a. Group sizes are the following: • Infants 1:5, max of 10 children • 12-24 months 1:6, max of 12 children • 2 year olds 1:8, max of 16 children • 3 year olds 1:12, max of 24 children • 4-5 year olds 1:13, max of 26 children	**4b.** Ratios and group sizes are the same as the previous level.	**4c.** In the past 2 years, the retention rate for Director, Assistant Director and Lead Teachers or Family Child Care Provider does not fall below 65%. If a program falls below 65%, 4 points will be earned with a written retention plan to address barriers and propose recommendation	4 points

25

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES (MUST MEET STANDARDS IN ALL COLUMNS OF EACH ROW TO RECEIVE POINTS)			Points earned
Center Based - Ratios and Group Sizes*** Age of youngest child determines ratio of group. All classrooms will be assessed.	Family Child Care - Ratios and Group Sizes***	All Programs - Retention	
6a. Ratios and Group sizes meet the following: • Infants 1:4, max of 8 children • 12-24 months 1:4, max of 8 children • 2 year olds 1:6, max of 12 children • 3 year olds 1:9, max of 18 children • 4-5 year olds 1:10, max of 20 children	**6b.** Ratios and group sizes are the following: • Up to 5 children enrolled 1:4, max of 5 children • 6-10 children enrolled 1:4, max of 10 children	**6c.** In the past 3 years, the retention rate for all classroom staff or Family Child Care staff does not fall below 65%. If a program falls below 65%, 6 points will be earned with a written retention plan to address barriers and propose recommendation to be	

5. USEFUL DEFINITIONS

Enrolled: A child is enrolled at a center or home, not in a classroom or child care group. A child is listed on a classroom roster when they are physically in the classroom and under the supervision of that group's teaching staff. Quality First requires that children are assigned to their primary classroom. For programs that use enrollment management software, the generated rosters of children should include only children assigned in that room as their primary group. If a child is transitioning or visiting for any other reason, the child's name can be handwritten on the physical roster in the classroom and the child signed in and out.

Lead Teacher: The one who is primarily responsible for classroom operations, including writing lesson plans, conducting parent-teacher conferences, and documenting children's developmental progress.

Open Classroom: A classroom or child care group in which there are children currently assigned (on a roster).

Staff Retention Plan: A retention plan that includes policies and benefits offered to staff that encourage them to remain employed at their current job.

6. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I need to submit a written staff retention plan if I'm a family child care home?

• Quality First recommends a written staff retention plan be developed for sites who employ more than one staff member. The Points Scale Assessment measures the staff retention percentage for all staff employed, provider and assistants, at the six point level. If less than 65% of all staff have been employed with the program for more than three years, credit for this indicator may still be given if you have a written retention plan in place.

• Please see section 4 for more details.

How does Quality First look at a child who is not enrolled in the classroom when conducting ratio and group size counts?

- Please see step 5 of the ratio and group size procedure listed in section 2 above for information about which children are considered in the ratio and group size counts.
- Please see the Useful Definitions section for Quality First's definition of enrolled.

Why must an onsite administrator accompany the assessor during both ratio and group size counts?

- This policy provides your site with a level of protection. The onsite administrator will observe the same ratios and group sizes as the assessor and verify the accuracy of the written documentation by initialing the Ratio and Group Size Form. Please see section 2 above for the complete Quality First ratio and group size procedure.
- The onsite administrator also has the opportunity to provide additional context or clarification for each ratio and group size count if there are anomalies in the classroom, such as unpaid adults, missing staff members, or visiting children.
- The onsite administrator's initials next to each count on the Ratio and Group Size Form identify their agreement that all of the information recorded for the classroom/ child care group's ratio and group size count is accurate.

Why does Quality First assess ratios and group sizes using the birthdate of the youngest child enrolled in the classroom? Shouldn't it be the youngest child present at the time of assessment?

- The ratios and group sizes established in the Quality First Points Scale Assessment measure best practice. Best practice states that classrooms should have consistent staffing to support the number and ages of the children enrolled in the group, anticipating that the youngest child may be present at any time.
- Please refer to section 7 below for additional resources on supporting best practices in regards to ratios and group sizes and continuity of care.

I didn't find an answer to my question. What should I do?

- The FAQs included here are a sampling of information. Review the remainder of the Points Scale Guidance Document to see if your question is answered.
- Talk with one of your site's Quality First technical assistance providers, such as your coach.
- Contact the Quality First Assessment Program Manager, Katie Romero, at 602-633-8652 or kromero@swhd.org.
- Contact the First Things First Quality First Team at 602-771-5000 or qualityfirst@firstthingsfirst.org.

7. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Arizona's Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Childhood Education: Birth through Kindergarten
https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=5879561caadebe0c98a80509

National Association for the Education of Young Children   www.naeyc.org

- NAEYC Program Standards   https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/10-naeyc-program-standards

Quality First Extranet   http://extranet.azftf.gov
- Extranet question inbox extranet@azftf.gov

Wilson, R. A. (2007). Group size- A key indicator of quality.
http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleId=576+

Zero to Three. (2010). How to care for infants and toddlers in groups.
https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/77-how-to-care-for-infants-and-toddlers-in-groups

8. AM I READY?

☐ I consulted the Quality First Staffing Guide (located in the extranet's resource section) to determine which staff roles should be included in the extranet's staffing tab, and all current staff members are inputted.

☐ The position title, hire date and Registry ID field for each administrator, lead teacher, and assistant teacher are up-to-date on the extranet's staffing tab.

☐ All open classrooms/ child care groups serving children birth-5 are included on my extranet's classroom/family group tab.

☐ I am ready to provide an assessor the name, licensed capacity, self-limit capacity, birthdate of the youngest child enrolled, and full names of staff assigned and present in each open classroom serving children birth to five.

☐ I have a written staff retention plan in place for my program. It is included in the documents for the assessor to review. If the information is included in a larger document, such as a handbook, all sections/pages are labeled for the assessor.

☐ I reviewed the FTF Board approved Quality First Points Scale rubric to see where I believe my program should score in the Administrative Practices domain.

How to Update the Extranet's Classroom/ Family Group Tab

1. On the extranet, go to the Classroom/Family Group tab.

2. To add an open classroom, click "add classroom."

3. Fill out the information in the pop-up box and **click the green save button**.

4. You should now see the newly entered classroom in the list.

5. Repeat steps 2-4 for each newly opened classroom.

6. To inactivate a classroom that is now closed, find the classroom's name in the list and click on "Edit

Details."

7. Uncheck the "Classroom/Family Group Active" box. Then **click the green save button**.

8. You should now see the checkmark gone and the classroom has moved to the bottom of the list, underneath all of the active classrooms.

9. Repeat steps 6-8 for each classroom that no longer has children enrolled (on an attendance roster).

10. To update the number of children in a classroom, click on "Edit Details."

11. Update the information and **click the green save button**.

12. You should now see the changes in the classroom list.

13. Repeat steps 10-12 for each classroom required.

14. If you want to make a previously closed classroom active, click on "Edit Details."

15. Check the "Classroom/Family Group Active" box. Then **click the green save button**.

16. You should now see the "Active" box checked when looking at the classroom list.

17. Repeat steps 14-16 for each classroom required.

All active classrooms in the extranet will be assessed for ratios/group sizes during the Quality First Points Scale assessment.

An open (active) classroom is one in which children are assigned (i.e., on an attendance roster).
If your program uses primary care groups, each group should be listed separately in the Classroom/Family Groups tab.

Staff Retention Plan Form

QUALITY FIRST — FIRST THINGS FIRST

PARTICIPANT SITE NAME:	ADDRESS:
PARTICIPANT ID#	
CONTACT PHONE:	**DATE PLAN CREATED:**
NAME OF COACH:	**PARTICIPANT TYPE:** ☐ Center-Based ☐ Family Child Care

BARRIER *List barriers that impact teacher retention. List one barrier per line, with at least one barrier.*	PLAN OF ACTION *For each barrier, write a plan to address the challenge.*	PERSON RESPONSIBLE

Follow up: Upon 6 months from the date the staff retention plan was created, please evaluate the plan(s) of action listed above. If new barriers exist or different plan(s) of action need to be created, please use a new retention plan form to create a new plan. If the retention calculation rate for (1) all lead teachers/ administrators and (2) all staff meets the 65% level, complete the current plan of action and no further plan is necessary.

CURRICULUM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT

1. **WHY IS QUALITY FIRST ASSESSING CURRICULUM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT? WHAT RESEARCH AND BEST PRACTICES TELL US THIS IS GOOD FOR CHILDREN?**

Arizona's Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education: Birth through Kindergarten, Standard 3.0: Program Practices: Curriculum, Environment, and Child Assessment

NAEYC defines curriculum as "…the goals for the knowledge and skills to be acquired by children and the plans for learning experiences through which such knowledge and skills will be achieved" (NAEYC, 2003). A high quality early education program recognizes and understands how children's goals for learning are framed with the context of learning standards and aligns planning of activities and design of environment to stimulate children's learning across content areas (social-emotional, language and literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, physical development and health, and fine arts). In high quality programs, instructors place as much emphasis on the process of learning as they do on the content and capitalize on children's natural curiosity to promote language, thinking and problem-solving. Effective early education programs provide a wide variety of planned experiences within an intentionally designed environment that enable children to learn through interaction, exploration, manipulation, and self-discovery. Research clearly demonstrates that children learn more in programs where there is a well-planned and implemented curriculum (Landry, 2007). Therefore, it is essential for every early childhood setting—school, center, family child-care home, tribal, military, and faith-based programs—to have a high quality curriculum which incorporates thoughtful planning and design.

Child assessment in an early education program is the process of observing, recording, and otherwise documenting the work children do and how they do it. To ensure that assessment is both reliable and valid, a variety of approaches to data collection that match children's ages, development and background are used. The information is then used as a basis for a variety of educational decisions that affect the child, including designing the environment, planning activities to meet individual and group of children's needs, monitoring children's development and learning, and communicating with families. Appropriate and on-going assessment methods are essential if programs are to provide curriculum and experiences that are age and developmentally appropriate, as well as culturally sensitive. Assessment will address all areas of learning, meet the needs of individual students, and include a variety of methods and processes (Arizona Department of Education, 2013).

2. **HOW WILL THE INFORMATION FOR CURRICULUM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT BE ACCESSED?**

The information used to score the Curriculum and Child Assessment domain of the Quality First Points Scale Assessment is accessed (a) offsite by the First Things First Quality First Team using the Quality First extranet (http://extranet.azftf.gov) and (b) by the assessment team during the onsite visit.

All documentation a site wants credited in the scoring of its Points Scale Assessment must be presented at the time of assessment, either in person to the assessor or via the extranet's staffing tab. Documentation that is not presented at the time of assessment may not be submitted for review during the assessment clarification process.

1. <mark>The information used to verify staff training requirements is reviewed offsite using the site's extranet staffing tab.</mark> The assessment team is not responsible for reviewing training documentation during the onsite visit.

   For each lead teacher, administrator, or family child care home provider, the information reviewed includes:
   a. Completion of the introduction to the Arizona Early Learning Standards training
   b. Completion of the introduction to the Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines training
   c. The number of completed module trainings for the Arizona Early Learning Standards and Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines
   d. The months employed at the current program

2. **The assessor collects data during the onsite visit related to curriculum/lesson plans, child assessment portfolios, and written policies and procedures.**

3. **WHAT TRAININGS ARE REQUIRED IN THE QUALITY FIRST POINTS SCALE ASSESSMENT?**
   1. To receive credit at the 2 point level, the extranet's staffing tab must document that all lead teachers, administrators, or a family child care provider completed:
      a. Introduction to the Arizona Early Learning Standards training, and
      b. Introduction to the Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines training

   2. To receive credit at the 6 point level, the extranet's staffing tab must document that all lead teachers and administrators or a family child care provider attended two of the 4-hour module trainings listed below:
      - AZELS Approaches to Learning module
      - AZELS Fine Arts module
      - AZELS Language and Literacy module
      - AZELS Mathematics module
      - AZELS Physical Development, Health, and Safety module
      - AZELS Science module
      - AZELS Social Emotional module
      - AZELS Social Studies module
      - ITDG Approaches to Learning module
      - ITDG Cognitive Development module
      - ITDG Language Development and Communication module
      - ITDG Physical and Motor Development module
      - ITDG Social Emotional module

INTRODUCTORY TRAINING WAIVERS
   1. All lead teachers, administrators, and family home child care providers are required to complete the introduction to the Arizona Early Learning Standards training, unless:

a. The staff member has been employed with the program, in any staff role, for less than six months at the time of assessment OR
b. The staff member has a valid AZ Teaching Certificate with an ECE endorsement verified on the site's Registry Professional Development and Education Report.

2. All lead teachers, administrators, and family home child care providers are required to attend the introduction to the Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines training, unless
a. The staff member has been employed with the program less than six months, in any staff role,at the time of assessment.

Please note there is no waiver available for staff with an AZ Teaching Certificate with an ECE endorsement.

Please note that staff who were promoted to a lead teacher/ administrator role are required to complete both introductory trainings if they have been employed with the program, in any role (e.g. assistant teacher, lead teacher, administrator or other), for more than six months at the time of assessment.

MODULE TRAINING WAIVERS
There are no waivers for the 4-hour module trainings required at the six point level. This is in part because credit at the six point level is not required to achieve any star rating, including the highest rating.

WAYS TO ATTEND THE TRAININGS
The Introduction to the Arizona Early Learning Standards and Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines trainings (credited at indicator 2a) can be facilitated:
1. In person by ADE staff
2. Online through ADE's event management system

- Please see the Quality First Points Scale Trainings section of the ADE Early Childhood Unit's Professional Development and Training webpage for scheduled and online training opportunities.
- For help with registering for a course in ADE's event management system, please see the ADE EMS Quick Reference Guide.
- If you have questions about attending a course, please contact your ADE Program Specialist or the ADE Early Childhood Unit at 602-364-1530 or ECEinbox@azed.gov.

*In special circumstances, such as when there is a language or technology barrier to using ADE's resources, the Quality First Coaching Team may facilitate the introductory trainings. Please contact your coach with questions about utilizing this option.

The Arizona Early Learning Standards and Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines 4-hour module trainings (credited at indicator 6a) are facilitated by ADE staff, either in person or virtually.
- Please see the Quality First Points Scale Trainings section of the ADE Early Childhood Unit's Professional Development and Training webpage for scheduled in-person and virtual trainings.
- For help with registering for a course in ADE's event management system, please see the ADE EMS

- If you have questions about attending a module training, please contact your ADE Program Specialist or the ADE Early Childhood Unit at 602-364-1530 or ECEinbox@azed.gov.

Please note that ADE recently developed 30-minute online "Intro to" courses for specific standards of the Arizona Early Learning Standards and Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines. These 30-minute online courses are not counted in the scoring of the Points Scale Assessment.

DOCUMENTATION OF ATTENDANCE

When a staff member has attended a training session, please provide a copy of your certificate of attendance to your Quality First coach. Your coach will update the extranet to document for each staff member:

1. Attendance at the introduction to the Arizona Early Learning Standards training
2. Attendance at the introduction to the Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines training
3. The number of module trainings completed

Please note that ADE has updated their process of issuing certificates of completion.
- For online trainings, certificates of attendance are generated on the last day of the month for all trainings attended during the month (e.g. a certificate for a training attended on May 2 will be generated on May 31. Staff members must log into their ADE Connect account at the end of the month to download or print a certificate.
- For in-person and virtual trainings, certificates are generated within 10 days of attending a training. Staff members must log into their ADE Connect account to download or print a certificate.

It is the participant's responsibility to ensure all staff education documentation they want to be credited in the Points Scale Assessment is submitted to a coach and visible in the extranet's staffing tab before the date of their Points Scale Assessment. Documentation not presented at the time of assessment (via documentation in the extranet's staffing tab) may not be submitted for review during the assessment clarification process. *Quality First's assessment timelines will not be extended for participants waiting for their documentation to be received from ADE or updated in the extranet's staffing tab by coaching*.

4. **WHAT DO I NEED TO PREPARE FOR CURRICULUM/LESSON PLANS?**

A random draw will be conducted to determine which classrooms' or child care groups' curriculum/ lesson plans will be assessed. The random draw process will mirror the process used when conducting a CLASS assessment.

CENTERS:
1. Curriculum/lesson plans from one-third of your preschool classrooms/care groups (3-5 years) and one-third of your infant/toddler classrooms/care groups (birth-36 months) will be reviewed.
2. In each age group (infant/toddler or preschool) your program serves, the assessor will determine the number of classrooms/care groups in that age group to assess curriculum/ lesson plans based on the chart below.

- 1-3 classrooms = 1 classroom
- 4-6 classrooms = 2 classrooms
- 7-9 classrooms = 3 classrooms
- 10-12 classrooms = 4 classrooms
- 13 + classrooms = 1/3 of the number of classrooms

FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES:
1. If your program operates as one classroom or child care group, then a random draw is not required.
2. If your program operates as more than on classroom or child care group, a random draw will be conducted using the guidelines listed above for centers.

ALL PARTICIPANTS:
The most recently completed four weeks of curriculum/lesson plans for each classroom/child care group selected during the random draw process will be reviewed.

There is no required format for lesson plans/curriculum; your program is encouraged to utilize the format that works best for your program.

Each written lesson plan/curriculum must include the following technical requirements.
1. The name of the classroom/child care group
2. The full dates (month, day, and year) that the curriculum was used, for example "May 1-May 5,2020."

All documentation a program wants to be credited in the scoring of its Points Scale Assessment must be presented at the time of assessment. Documentation not presented to the assessor at the time of the onsite visit may not be submitted during the assessment clarification process.

A. **USE OF THE ARIZONA EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS (AZELS) / INFANT TODDLER DEVELOPMENTAL GUIDELINES (ITDG)**
To receive credit at the 2 point level, all written lesson plans must include at least 1 AZELS standard or 1 ITDG domain per week.
1. Use of AZELS standards is assessed for classrooms/child care groups serving children 3-5 years.
2. Use of ITDG domains is assessed for classrooms/child care group serving children birth-2 years.
3. Each written lesson plan must include (a) the AZELS domain or ITDG standard and (b) a corresponding activity on the curriculum/lesson plan.
   a. If the activity takes place during a transition or routine care time (i.e. handwashing, diapering, etc.) that is not included on the curriculum/lesson plan form, a written description of the time, along with the domain/standard and activity, must be provided.

Examples of reflecting standards on lesson plans:
A preschool teacher identified the AZELS Language and Literacy Standard as an area of focus for a week. On the lesson plan, there is an activity labeled "reciting rhymes" during group time on Monday.

A family home child care provider identified the ITDG Standard for Physical Health and Well Being as an area of focus for the week. The staff plan to talk about healthy foods during snack time each day. The home's lesson plan template does not include a pre-made area for snack time. So, the staff writes on the bottom of the lesson plan, "ITDG Physical Health and Well Being: Each day during AM Snack, provide nutritious foods for children to try and talk about what makes each one healthy."

B. SPECIFIC LEARNING OBJECTIVES

A **specific learning objective** documents how the teacher individualizes instruction during a specific activity to meet different children's needs and interests.

To receive credit at the 4 point level, all written lesson plans must include at least 1 specific learning objective for an individual child or small group of children. *Please note that whole group learning objectives do not meet this requirement.*

To receive credit, the skill/concept identified, the activity during which it will take place, and the child or group of children whom the specific learning objective targets must be written on the lesson plan or an attached document.

1. To protect the identity of the children in your care, coding systems such as initials or symbols may be used rather than writing children's full names.
2. If using a coding system other than initials, a code key must be provided to the assessor so the assessor can interpret your system.
3. If the activity will take place during a transition or routine care time (i.e. handwashing, diapering, etc.) that is not included on the lesson plan form, a written description of the time of day, along with the activity and specific learning objective, must be included.

If using an attached document for specific learning objectives:
4. The lesson plan/curriculum must include a written statement outlining this practice so the assessor can interpret your system.
5. Items 1-3 from the list above must be met.
6. The attached document must be labeled with the classroom/child care group name.
7. The attached document must include the dates of implementation, including month, day, and year.
8. The attached document must be presented to the assessor alongside the written lesson plan/curriculum to which it corresponds.

If the site stores specific learning objectives within individual child assessment portfolios:
9. The lesson plan/curriculum must include a written statement outlining this practice so the assessor can interpret your system.
10. Items 1-3 from the list above must be met.
11. The attached document must be labeled with the child's first and last name.
12. The attached document must include the dates of implementation, including month, day, and year.

13. <mark>There must be at least 1 activity on each written lesson plan/curriculum that matches the specific learning objectives noted on the document.</mark> *Please note that if there is no alignment between the lesson plans activities and the specific learning objective, credit will not be given. When viewing the combination of the curriculum/lesson plan and specific learning objective sheet in the child portfolio, all required elements must be easily distinguishable: (1) the skill/concept identified, (2) the activity during which it will take place, and (3) the child whom the specific learning objective targets.*

Examples of specific learning objectives for children:

A teacher plans to use the classroom's math time to work in small groups. Although all children will participate in a beading activity, small groups of children will work on different skills. Group A will work AB patterns, Group B will work on AABB patterns, and Group C will work on AABC patterns. The teacher documents the activity (small group patterning by AB, AABB, or AABC), the activity time (math time), and the children the skill is targeted for (each subgroup must be identified with the children it includes using initials or other coding systems).

A teacher may plan a small group activity for a set of children that have shared an interest in the same skill. For instance, during free play, the teacher plans to initiate a small group that works on one-to-one correspondence. The teacher documents the activity (small group for one-to-one correspondence), the activity time (during free play), and the children the skill is targeted for (either by initials or another coding system).

A teacher may facilitate an activity designed to help one child build a skill, but do so in a small group or whole group setting. For example, a teacher identifies a child that needs practice balancing on one foot. She plans to have the whole group practice this skill while waiting to wash hands before lunch. The teacher documents the activity (balancing on one foot), the activity time (during the handwashing routine before lunch), and the child the skill is targeted for (either by initials or a coding system).

C. STRATEGIES, MODIFICATIONS, AND ACCOMMODATIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

A **strategy, adaptation or modification** identifies the resources a teacher will introduce into the environment to allow a child with special needs to fully participate in a specific activity.

To receive credit at the 6 point level, all written lesson plans must include at least 1 strategy, modification and/or accommodation for children with an IEP, IFSP, or specialized health concern.
   a. The assessor will ask you to identiy the nature of the delay, such as language, cognitive or physical.
   b. You are not required to provide the child's name, diagnosis, or paperwork (including an IEP or IFSP) to the assessor.

<mark>The strategy, accommodation and/or modification, the activity during which it will take place, and the child or group of children whom it targets must be written on the lesson plan or an attached document.</mark>
   1. The assessor will ask before reviewing any lesson plans/curriculum if there are children with special

needs or special health concerns enrolled in the classroom. If the onsite administrator answers yes, the indicator is scored. If the onsite administrator answers no, the indicator is marked N/A.

2. To protect the identity of the children in your care, coding systems such as initials or symbols may be used rather than writing children's full names.

3. If using a coding system other than initials, a code key must be provided to the assessor so they can interpret your system.

4. If the modification, accommodation or strategy will be used during a transition or routine care time (i.e. handwashing, diapering, etc.) that is not included on the lesson plan form, a written description of the activity/time of day it will be implementedmust be included.

If using an attached document for documenting strategies, accommodations and/or modifications for children with special needs:

5. The lesson plan/curriculum must include a written statement outlining this practice so the assessor can interpret your system.

6. Items 2-4 from the list above must be met.

7. The attached document must be labeled with the classroom/child care group name.

8. The attached document must include the dates of implementation, including month, day, and year.

9. The attached document must be presented to the assessor alongside the written lesson plan/curriculum to which it corresponds.

If the program stores documentation of strategies, accommodations and/or modifications for children with special needs within individual child assessment portfolios:

10. The lesson plan/curriculum must include a written statement outlining this practice so the assessor can interpret your system.

11. Items 2-4 from the list above must be met.

12. The attached document must be labeled with the child's first and last name.

13. The attached document must include the dates of implementation, including month, day, and year.

14. There must be at least 1 activity on each written lesson plan/curriculum that aligns with the modification, accommodation or strategy included in the document. *Please note that if there is no alignment between the lesson plan activities and strategy, accommodation and/or modification, credit will not be given. When viewing the combination of the curriculum/lesson plan and a separate document in the child portfolio, all required elements must be easily distinguishable: (1) the modification, accommodation or strategy (2) the activity during which it will take place, and (3) the child whom it targets.*

Examples of strategies, accommodations, and/or modifications:

There is a child in your class with special needs in the area of fine motor. You know that during art activities, the child must be provided a glue stick rather than a glue bottle to work independently. The teacher documents the accommodation (providing a glue stick), the activity (in the art center during free play), and the child the accommodation targets (either by initials or another coding system).

There is a child with a language delay in your classroom. You know he should be provided clear, one step directions. The teacher documents the strategy (stating clear, one step directions), the activity (during clean-up times), and the child the strategy targets (either by initials or another coding system).

There is an infant in your care with delayed motor skills. You know that to play with an infant gym successfully, the hanging objects must be large-sized and made of a non-slippery material. The teacher documents their strategy (providing large, non-slippery hanging objects to encourage reaching and grasping), the activity (while using the infant gym), and the child the strategy targets (either by initials or another coding system).

5. WHAT DO I NEED TO PREPARE FOR CHILD ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIOS?

A random draw will be conducted to determine which classrooms' or child care groups' child assessment portfolios will be assessed. The random draw process will mirror the process used when conducting a CLASS assessment.

CENTERS:
1. Child assessment portfolios from one-third of your preschool classrooms/care groups (3-5 years) and one-third of your infant/toddler classrooms/care groups (birth-36 months) will be reviewed.
2. In each age group (infant/toddler or preschool) your program serves, the assessor will determine the number of classrooms/care groups in that age group to assess curriculum/ lesson plans based on the chart below.
    - 1-3 classrooms = 1 classroom
    - 4-6 classrooms = 2 classrooms
    - 7-9 classrooms = 3 classrooms
    - 10-12 classrooms = 4 classrooms
    - 13 + classrooms = 1/3 of the number of classrooms

FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES:
1. If your program operates as one classroom or child care group, then a random draw is not required.
2. If your program operates as more than one classroom or child care group, a random draw will be conducted using the guidelines listed above for centers.

ALL PARTICIPANTS:
For each classroom/child care group that was randomly selected, four child assessment portfolios will be randomly selected on the day of the onsite visit for review by the assessor.
1. Please have current classroom/child care group rosters available for the assessor during the random draw process.
2. Children must have been in attendance for 30 classroom days in the past six months to be eligible for review.
3. If a child has not been in attendance for 30 classroom days in the past six months, a re-draw will be conducted to choose an eligible portfolio.

a. It is the participant's responsibility to inform the assessor if they believe any child is ineligible for review during the random draw process and before proceeding to gather the requested child portfolios. The assessor will confirm the child's eligibility or lack of eligibility with the site administrator during the random draw process.

There is no required format for child assessment portfolios; your program is encouraged to utilize the format that best meets your program's needs.

1. If your site uses an electronic child assessment system, the information must be presented to the assessor in a "frozen" or "suspended" state, such as by PDF.

    a. *Instructions for downloading child assessment portfolio information in Teaching Strategies Gold are included at the end of this section. Please also review* [Teaching Strategies' Report How-to-Guide](#) *for instructions on how to download different reporting options (*https://teachingstrategies.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/MyTeachingStrategies-How-To-Guide-for-Administrators_Report.pdf*).*

2. If your program uses an electronic system that cannot be placed into a "frozen" state, the documentation must be printed out for the assessor to review.

    a. It is the participant's responsibility to ensure that all technical requirements outlined on p. 44 are visible on the printouts.

3. If you use a mix of formats, some hardcopy and some electronic, all information should be provided to the assessor for review.

4. All documentation a participant wants to be credited in the scoring of their Points Scale Assessment must be presented at the time of assessment and all required components must be visible to the assessor. Documentation not presented to the assessor at the time of the onsite visit in a format that allows for its complete review may not be submitted during the assessment clarification process.

5. If the program's electronic curriculum or child assessment system encounters errors, it is the participant's responsibility to share written documentation, such as a screenshot or email from the system administrator, with the assessor. For example, if the system is down for maintenance at the time of assessment or if one of the system's features is unavailable to staff. If possible, the participant should notify the assessor before the start of the Points Scale Assessment if there are any known issues.

ACCEPTED DOCUMENTATION METHODS

Methods of documentation should match children's ages, abilities, and background (ADE, 2013). Quality First recognizes three forms of documentation collected by program staff.

1. *Anecdotal Note:* Short written descriptions of what a teacher sees and hears a child doing throughout the day. A photo or video may accompany the note as an additional way of tracking developmental information about the child. *Please note that a photo or video must have a written description, so there is context about what area of development is being highlighted.*

2. *Developmental Checklist:* A checklist that shows the developmental milestone a child reaches at a certain age. Use of the checklist can show whether a child is reaching developmental milestones at the

anticipated age range (the rate of a typical peer) or if there is a need for further assessment in a developmental area because the child is not meeting the anticipated milestone.

3. ***Work Sample:*** A tangible piece of evidence created by the child. ==*Please note that a work sample must include a completed child-created product,*== *such as a photograph of a finished block tower or an original piece of artwork. A photo of a child participating in an activity, such as riding a bike or sharing with peers, is not a work sample as the child does not create a tangible piece of evidence.*

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

All child assessment portfolio documentation must meet the following technical requirements to be credited:

1. Each piece of documentation must include the child's first and last name.
2. Each piece of documentation must include a date of collection, including the month, day, and year.
3. Each piece of documentation must include labeling of the developmental domain(s) it represents.
4. Documentation must be collected within the past 12 months of the date of the onsite assessment to be credited.
5. Documentation must be specific to the child whose portfolio is being reviewed. ==If a piece of documentation references a group of children, it must also include at least one statement that references the individual child and their developmental information.==
6. Child assessment portfolio documentation is reviewed per child, not per classroom. If a child is enrolled in more than one classroom, documentation from all classrooms/child care groups may be presented to provide a full picture of the child's development.
7. Each piece of documentation must be legible/viewable. *Please note that electronic documentation that is too small/blurry for the assessor to view cannot be credited. Please review scanned/uploaded documentation to ensure that it meets requirements.*

ALIGNMENT

1. The developmental domains assessed in the Points Scale Assessment align with the learning domains in Arizona's State Standards.
   a. Arizona Early Learning Standards (AZELS)
      https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=5ba5462a1dcb2507f8788ea1
   b. Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines (ITDG)
      https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=54efdb1e1130c00eb465d5bc
2. The developmental domains assessed align with Teaching Strategies Gold's (TSG) Objectives for Development & Learning: Birth through Third Grade.
   https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=586d752daadebe1114465447
3. Please refer to the Quality First Points Scale Child Assessment Review form on the extranet for more descriptions on how the Arizona Early Learning Standards and Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines strands and concepts are aligned with the four domains in the Points Scale Assessment.
4. The terms/labels used by AZELS, ITDG or TSG are recognized as labels of developmental domains in the areas to which they are aligned.

A. EACH CHILD ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIO MUST INCLUDE DOCUMENTATION IN THE FOUR DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAINS

To receive credit at the 2 point level, the child assessment portfolios randomly selected for review must include all of the following:

1. The documentation must be collected by program staff. *Please note that documentation provided by families is credited as family input at the 4 point level. For example, if an ASQ was completed by a family member, it will be credited as family input at the 4 point level and not as a developmental checklist in the 2 point level.*

2. Documentation that meets Quality First's definition of an anecdotal note, developmental checklist, or work sample;

3. Documentation that meets the technical requirements listed in the section above;

4. One piece of evidence documenting the child's social development;
   a. Social development involves growing awareness of social values and expectations and developing skills that allow a child to relate to others, form relationships, and positively contribute to society.

5. One piece of evidence documenting the child's emotional development;
   a. **Emotional** development involves a child increasing his capacity to experience and express personal feelings as well as recognize and interpret those of others.

6. One piece of evidence documenting the child's cognitive development;
   a. Cognitive development includes progressively building thinking and learning skills that allow a child to process sensory information and then later evaluate, analyze, remember, and make comparisons.

7. One piece of evidence documenting the child's physical development; and
   a. Physical development involves a child developing control over their body, including muscle coordination, and increasing their knowledge and skills to develop healthy life-long habits.

B. A VARIETY OF METHODS ARE USED TO DOCUMENT CHILDREN'S ONGOING DEVELOPMENT

To receive credit at the 4 point level, in each classroom/child care group, at least 2 of 3 documentation methods must be used to gather evidence of children's ongoing development and progress.

When looking across the four child assessment portfolios in a classroom/child care group, there must be examples credited as:

- Anecdotal notes and developmental checklists;
- Anecdotal notes and work samples;
- Developmental checklists and work samples; or
- Anecdotal notes, developmental checklists, and work samples

Please note that each developmental domain does not need more than one method. For example, all social development samples may be developmental checklists, but there are anecdotal notes or work samples as evidence for physical development.

C. FAMILY INPUT

To receive credit at the 4 point level, all child assessment portfolios randomly selected for review must include family input.

==Family input== consists of information about a child's development that comes from the family to the program to support the program's understanding of the child. Families offer insight into how their child develops outside of the classroom/child care group environment. The information is important for consideration in developing learning plans and objectives.

There is not a required format for family input; you are encouraged to use the documentation that best works for your program, for example, a Best of Care Form or another intake form, home visiting or parent-teacher conference notes that includes the family's perspective, or parent questionnaires.

Please note, the family input provided for Quality First's Points Scale Assessment must be documentation that the participant will allow the assessor to review after completion by a family to ensure all required elements are present. If the program uses family input documentation protected by IDEA or HIPAA and does not have parental consent to share the information with Quality First, another form of family input must be provided for review by the assessor. Credit cannot be given for blank documentation forms or documentation that is redacted to the point that the assessor cannot verify it meets the requirements listed below.

To be credited, family input must meet the following requirements:

1. It must include information from the family to the program about a child's development.
2. It must include the child's first and last name.
3. It must include a parent/guardian signature. *Please note that electronic signatures are accepted as long as the site also provides a copy of a statement to families explaining this practice for the assessor to review.*
4. It must include the date of collection, including month, day, and year.
5. ==The documentation's date of collection must be within the past 12 months as of the date of the onsite assessment.== *Please note that family input must be gathered at least annually as children's growth and development changes rapidly in the early years.*

Quality First recognizes that some families may be hesitant to share information with participants. Every effort should be made to collect documentation through multiple means, including the use of different types of forms, documented conversations, or meeting notes. However, credit may be given on a case-by-case basis when family input is not present in a portfolio if:

1. The teacher documents the dates they attempted to gather family input
2. Provides a copy of the family input form(s) they attempted to collect, and
3. There is evidence of family input documentation regularly being gathered from families throughout the child assessment portfolios that were randomly selected for review.

6. WHAT DO I NEED TO PREPARE FOR MY SITE'S WRITTEN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR ASSESSMENT?

There is no required format for the policies and procedures. The site is encouraged to use ones already in place as part of an employee handbook, family handbook or other operations manual if available.

If your written policy statements are included within a larger document, such as a family handbook, you must label all pages/sections of the document you want reviewed by the assessment team (e.g. with sticky notes, flags or highlighting).

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

A **parent-teacher conference policy** is written documentation that includes how often parent-teacher conferences occur in a calendar year.

Quality First requires the participant to offer regularly scheduled conferences for all families. Providing conferences upon family request does not fulfill this requirement. Best practice in early childhood programs is to reach out to families to keep them informed of their child's progress.

To receive credit at the 2 point level, parent-teacher conferences must be offered once per year. At the 6 point level, parent-teacher conferences must be offered twice per year.

SHARING CURRICULUM WITH FAMILIES

To receive credit at the 2 point level, the site must have a **policy for sharing curriculum with families.** This is a written statement showing the methods your program uses to inform families of what their children are learning and/or the curriculum used.

CHILD TRANSITION PLAN

A **written child transition plan** outlines the timelines and activities a program, child and/or family engages in when transitioning from home to the program (enrolling), within the program (permanently changing classroom/child care group rosters), and exiting the program (withdrawing).

To receive credit at the 4 point level, the site's written child transition plan must include all three of the requirements below:

1. At least one timeline and one activity for transitioning into the program. This can be child, family or program based.
2. At least one timeline and activity for transitioning within the program. This can be child, family or program based. *If children do not transition between classrooms/child care groups during their enrollment in the program, this criterion is not required.*
3. At least one timeline and activity for transitions exiting the program. This can be child, family or program based.

Please note that ADHS licensing regulations in center-based care prohibit classroom visits that combine infants

and older children in a group setting due to the safety risk it may present.

Examples of written child transition plan statements:

Before enrollment (timeline), the child's family tours the facility and completes an entrance interview with the site's director (activity).

Six weeks before a child transitions to the next age group (timeline), there is a family conference to discuss the child's transition. As long as all parties are in agreement, the child begins spending time in the new classroom with a familiar adult during morning free play (activity).

When a family notifies our program that a child is withdrawing (timeline), the child's lead teacher prepares a current assessment of the child's developmental progress for the family to share with their new program (activity).

CHILDREN'S SCREENING AND REFERRAL

A **screening** is a quickly administered assessment used to initially identify children who may benefit from a more in-depth assessment. To be credited, the screening must cover multiple areas of child development, not just vision and hearing, as best practice in screening includes a review of all developmental domains.

If children require further assessment, a program should offer a **referral** or connect the child's family with a professional or program that can administer the needed evaluation.

To receive credit at the 6 point level, the site must have a **policy for children's screening and referral**. This is a written statement that informs families of the activities and timelines regarding screening at the program and how referrals are offered as a result of those screenings.

7. WHAT INFORMATION DO I NEED TO UPDATE IN THE EXTRANET?

Update the staffing tab to include all active administrators, lead teachers, and assistant teachers' hire date. *Picture directions are included at the end of the Staff Qualifications section for assistance.*

8. WHAT IS THE SCORING CRITERIA FOR THE CURRICULUM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT DOMAIN?

The Quality First Points Scale rubric is the First Things First Board approved document used for scoring.

CURRICULUM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT (MUST MEET ALL COLUMNS OF EACH ROW TO RECEIVE POINTS)			Points earned
All Programs - State Standards and Program Guidelines	All Programs - Curriculum	All Programs - Child Assessment****	
2a. Teachers*, Directors and Assistant Directors have completed the approved 2 hour training on the Introduction to the Arizona Early Learning Standards (AZELS)* and Infant - Toddler Developmental Guidelines (ITDG). The Infant - Toddler Developmental Guidelines will be required when written and available. * A valid Arizona Early Childhood Teaching Certificate or Endorsement is accepted in lieu of training.	**2b.** The Arizona Early Learning Standards and Infant-Toddler Development Guidelines (when complete) are clearly reflected in the written activity plans. There is a written process for sharing curriculum with families.	**2c.** Assessment of children's growth and development is an ongoing process and is conducted during children's daily activities and routines to assess progress in the 4 domain areas of social, emotional, cognitive and physical development. AND Parent Teacher conferences are offered once per year.	2 points

CURRICULUM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT (MUST MEET ALL COLUMNS OF EACH ROW TO RECEIVE POINTS)			Points earned
All Programs - State Standards and Program Guidelines	All Programs - Curriculum	All Programs - Child Assessment****	
4a. Programs follow the Arizona Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Education Birth through Kindergarten's recommendation for transitions between environments.	**4b.** Written curriculum plans include specific learning objectives for children based on each child's documented or observed assessment information.	**4c.** Assessment of children's growth and development includes gathering and documenting information received from families either from child information surveys, daily communications with families, or formal conferences held with the families AND Programs use a variety of methods including at least two of these methods: observation/anecdotal notes, children's work samples, developmental checklists.	4 points

CURRICULUM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT (MUST MEET ALL COLUMNS OF EACH ROW TO RECEIVE POINTS)			Points earned
All Programs - State Standards and Program Guidelines	All Programs - Curriculum	All Programs - Child Assessment****	
6a. Teachers*, Directors and Assistant Directors have completed the approved training on at least two of the modules of the Arizona Early Learning Standards or Infant - Toddler Development Guidelines (when written and available)	**6b.** Written activity plans include strategies, modifications, and/or adaptations to fully involve all children with special health and/or developmental needs, including gifted and talented (e.g. adaptive materials are listed to be gathered, wide range of materials allow for individual use based on development, etc.) **This item may be N/A**	**6c.** Additional child assessment strategies include developmental and sensory screening activities (either provided directly or arranged for by the provider) and, when necessary, families are referred to appropriate health or intervention agencies. **AND** Parent teacher conferences are offered twice per year.	

9. USEFUL DEFINITIONS

Anecdotal Note: A way to document children's development through short descriptions of what a teacher sees and hears a child doing throughout the day. A labeled photo or video may accompany the note as an additional way of tracking developmental information.

Developmental Checklist: A checklist showing what developmental milestones a child has reached at a certain point in time. Use of the checklist can show whether a child is reaching developmental milestones at the anticipated age range, that of a typical peer, or if there is a need for further assessment because a child is not meeting the anticipated milestones.

Lesson Plan: A lesson plan is developed to guide instruction throughout the day or week and as a method of preparation. It usually includes the name or theme of the lesson, the date(s) of application, the focus or objective of the lesson, the materials used, and the activities to be done, including any modifications for children with special needs.

Referral: Connecting a child's family to outside resources, including professionals and programs, for more in-depth assessment in an identified area of need.

Screening: A quickly administered assessment used to initially identify children who may benefit from more in-depth assessment.

Specific Learning Objectives for Children: A concept or skills taught to an individual child or small group of children (not the whole classroom/child care group) based on an identified developmental need or child interest.

Strategies, Modifications or Adaptions for Children with Special Needs: A change in what or how a concept, skill or activity is presented to a child to allow the child to participate with their peers successfully. This can include altering the content, presentation or materials used in the lesson or activity.

Work Sample: A way to gather information on where a child is developmentally through a tangible piece of evidence that has been created by the child.

10. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I am interested in having my staff attend ADE module trainings but I don't see any scheduled in my area or virtually. What should I do?

- If there is a specific module training you would like to attend, but do not see it on ADE's upcoming schedule, please contact your ECE Program Specialist or the ADE Early Childhood Unit at 602-364-1530 or ECEinbox@azed.gov to submit a training request.

I have children that attend my program on a drop-in basis. Will the assessor review their child assessment portfolios?

- Please see section 5 for the eligibility requirements for children's assessment portfolios to be reviewed.

I just enrolled a new child in a classroom. Will the assessor review their portfolio?

- Please see section 5 for the eligibility requirements for children's assessment portfolios to be reviewed. *==Please note that a child does not need to be enrolled in the same classroom for 30 days to be eligible for review.== For example, if a child transitions from the Toddler Room to the Preschool Room but has been continuously enrolled at the site and has attended 30 days in the past six months, the child's portfolio is eligible for review.*

My program's policies prevent me from including children's names on lesson plans. How can I document specific learning objectives for children or modifications for children with special needs?

- Please see section 4B and 4C for more information on using coding systems.

My program collects a lot of different documentation for child assessment portfolios. Should I give it all to the assessor or should I select pieces to hand in?

- You are encouraged to present all of your documentation at the time of assessment as it provides a complete picture of each child's development.

How does Quality First look at child assessment portfolios? If one portfolio is missing a piece is that okay?

- Each child assessment portfolio reviewed (100%) must meet the requirements outlined in section 5 to receive credit at each point level.

Will the assessor let me know if I'm missing documentation at the time of assessment?

- The assessor will not verbally share if documentation is missing. It is the participant's responsibility to provide the assessor with all of the documentation they would like reviewed as part of their Points Scale Assessment.

- Quality First policy states that at the end of the assessment, the onsite administrator is provided a Documentation Review Form. The Documentation Review Form will state if entire pieces of documentation are missing. For example, you will be notified if a lesson plan was not observed or if the assessor did not receive one of the child assessment portfolios.

- The Documentation Review Form does not capture if elements inside of a piece of documentation are missing. For example, you will not be notified if specific learning objectives for children are not included with a lesson plan or if a child assessment portfolio does not include family input.

- A template of the Documentation Review Form is available in the Quality First Resources section of the extranet (http://extranet.azftf.gov).

What if I forget to provide something to the assessor during the onsite visit? Can I turn it in later?

- Quality First policy requires all documentation to be submitted at the time of assessment, either in person to the assessor, via the extranet, or on the Registry Professional Development and Education Report. Documentation that is not presented at the time of assessment cannot be submitted during the assessment clarification process.

I didn't find an answer to my question. What should I do?

- The FAQs included here are a sampling of information. Review the remainder of the Points Scale Guidance Document to see if your question is answered.
- Talk with one of your site's Quality First technical assistance providers, such as your coach.
- Contact the Quality First Assessment Program Manager, Katie Romero, at 602-633-8652 or kromero@swhd.org.
- Contact the First Things First Quality First Team at 602-771-5000 or qualityfirst@firstthingsfirst.org.

11. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) http://agesandstages.com/

- ASQ-3 http://agesandstages.com/products-services/asq3/
- ASQ-SE-2 http://agesandstages.com/products-services/asqse-2/

Arizona Department of Education Early Childhood Education unit http://www.azed.gov/ece/

- ADE Event Management System https://ems.azed.gov/Home/Calendar?sd=4956
- ADE Event Management System Quick Reference Guide https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=55c533111130c00930f79660
- ECE Professional Development and Training page https://www.azed.gov/ece/professional-development/
- ECE Program Specialist, Directors, and Administravie Staff's contact information https://www.azed.gov/ece/contactus/

Arizona State Standards

- Arizona Early Learning Standards https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=5ba5462a1dcb2507f8788ea1

- Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=54efdb1e1130c00eb465d5bc

- Program Guidelines for High Quality Early Childhood Education: Birth through Kindergarten https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=5879561caadebe0c98a80509

Center for Disease Control and Prevention Developmental Milestones https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html

- CDC Developmental Milestone Tracker https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones-app.html

National Association for the Education of Young Children   www.naeyc.org
- NAEYC Program Standards   https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/10-naeyc-program-standards

Teaching Strategies https://teachingstrategies.com/
- Administrator's How-to-Guide for generating GOLD reports https://teachingstrategies.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/MyTeachingStrategies-How-To-Guide-for-Administrators_Report.pdf

- Teaching Strategies Gold's Objectives for Development & Learning: Birth through Third Grade https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=586d752daadebe1114465447

12. AM I READY?

☐ All current staff members are included on the extranet's staffing tab.

☐ The position title, hire date, and Registry ID fields for each administrator and lead teacher are up-to-date on the extranet's staffing tab.

☐ I have provided my coach a copy of each lead teacher's and administrator's training certificates for the introduction to the Arizona Early Learning Standards training, introduction to the Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines training, and any module trainings completed.

☐ I have verified that each lead teacher and administrator's ADE training information is up-to-date in the extranet's staffing tab.

☐ If I have staff with an AZ Teaching Certificate with an ECE endorsement, I have verified that their teaching certificate (including a valid expiration date) is reflected on my site's Registry Professional Development and Education Report.

☐ I have collected the most recently completed 4 weeks of written lesson plans/curriculum (not including weeks the program was not in session) for each of my classrooms/child care groups.

☐ Each written lesson plan includes the classroom/child care group's name and dates of use, including month, day, and year.

☐ Each written lesson plan reflects the use of at least 1 Arizona Early Learning Standard or 1 Infant Toddler Developmental Guideline and an accompanying activity. This information is clearly marked for the assessor's review.

☐ Each written lesson plan includes specific learning objectives for children. This includes the concept/ skill being taught, activity/time of day it will occur, and children targeted. The information is clearly marked for the assessor's review.

☐ If I use a coding system other than initials to identify the children targeted for specific learning objectives, I have included a code key for review by the assessor to interpret my system.

☐ If I use a separate document (other than the written lesson plan) to document specific learning objectives for children, the document (a) includes the classroom name, (b) includes the dates of use with the month, day, and year, and (c) is placed with the written lesson plan it applies to. Additionally, the written lesson plan includes a written statement sharing where to find specific learning objectives for children so that the assessor can interpret my system.

☐ Each written lesson plan includes strategies, adaptations and/or modifications for children with special needs in any classroom where a child with a special need or specialized health concern is enrolled. This includes the modification, the activities the modification is used during, and the child(ren) targeted.

☐ If I use a coding system other than initials to identify the children targeted for strategies, adaptations and/or modifications for children with special needs, I have included a code key for review by the assessor to interpret my system.

☐ If I use a separate document (other than the written lesson plan) to document strategies, accommodations, and/or modifications for children with special needs, the document (a) includes the classroom name, (b) includes the dates of use with the month, day, and year, and (c) is placed with the written lesson plan it applies to. Additionally, the written lesson plan includes a written statement sharing where to find strategies, accommodations and/or modifications for children with special needs so that the assessor can interpret my system.

☐ I have child assessment portfolios for all enrolled children and am prepared to provide the assessor with the randomly drawn portfolios for children in any open classroom/child care group.

☐ I have classroom rosters available for the assessor so that the assessor can conduct the random draw process for choosing 4 child assessment portfolios from each classroom selected on the day of the onsite visit.

☐ Each child assessment portfolio includes at least 1 piece of evidence for social development, 1 piece of evidence for emotional development, 1 piece of evidence for cognitive development, and 1 piece of evidence for physical development.

☐ All child assessment portfolio documentation meets the technical requirements listed on p. 44.

☐ Each classroom/child care group uses at least 2 of 3 documentation methods outlined on p. 43-44 as types of evidence in child assessment portfolios.

☐ Each child assessment portfolio includes family input. The family input documentation meets the five requirements outlined on p. 48.

☐ I have a written policy for parent-teacher conferences. It is included in the documents for the assessor to review. If the information is included in a larger document, such as a handbook, all sections/pages are labeled for the assessor.

☐ I have a written statement for sharing curriculum with families. It is included in the documents for the assessor to review. If the information is included in a larger document, such as a handbook, all sections/pages are labeled for the assessor.

☐ I have a written transition plan. It is included in the documents for the assessor to review. If the information is included in a larger document, such as a handbook, all sections/pages are labeled for the assessor.

☐ I have a written policy for children's screening and referral. It is included in the documents for the assessor to review. If the information is included in a larger document, such as a handbook, all sections/pages are labeled for the assessor.

☐ I reviewed the FTF Board approved Quality First Points Scale rubric to see where I believe my program should score in the Curriculum and Child Assessment domain.
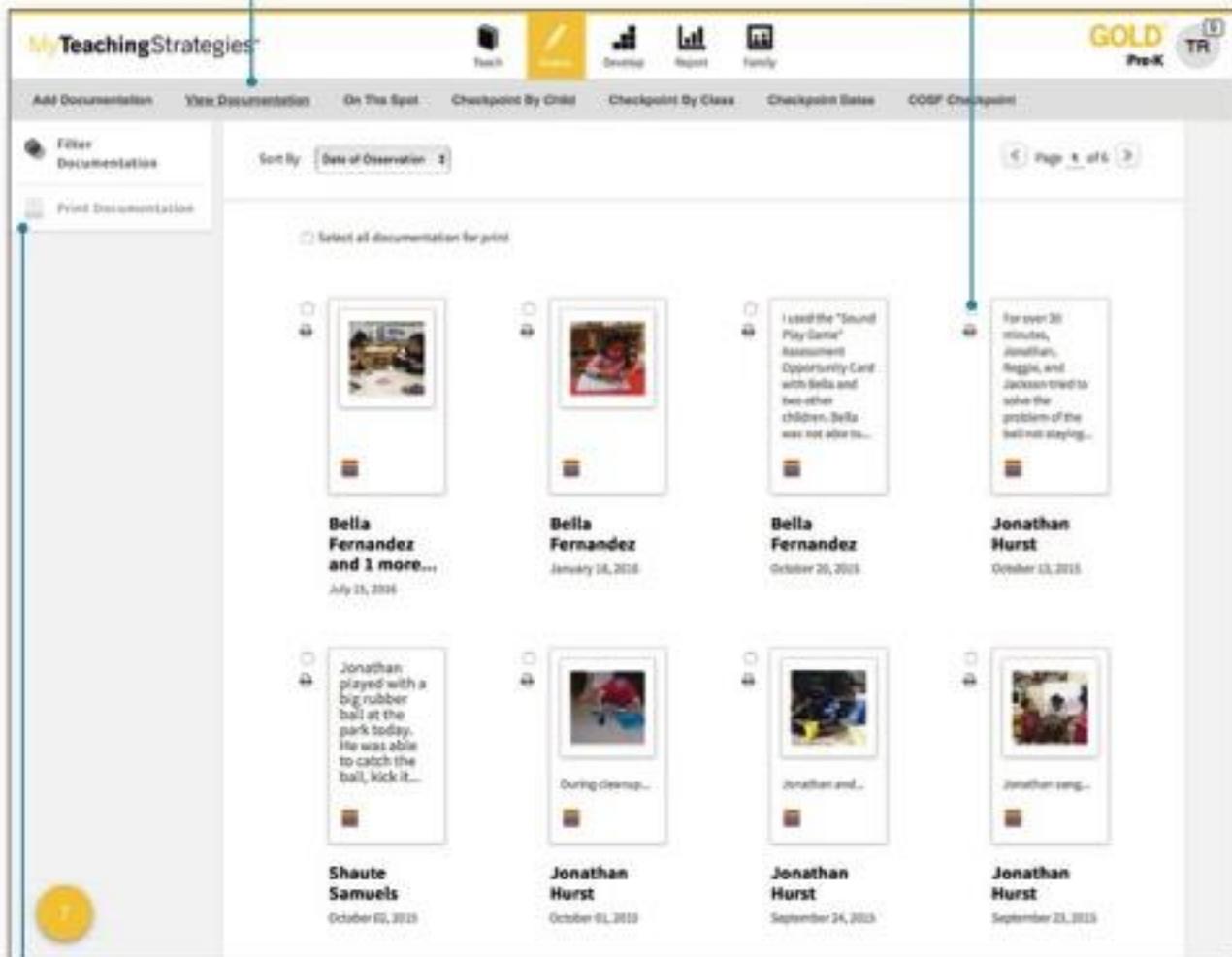
Printing Documentation

From the View Documentation screen in the Assess area, teachers can print individual, multiple, or all documentation.

Printing Individual Documentation

To print one piece of documentation:

**1** Select VIEW DOCUMENTATION from the sub-navigation.

2 Select a specific documentation tile.

3 Then select PRINT DOCUMENTATION in the left-hand navigation.

4 A pop-up box will appear with the ability to de-select options for displaying the notes, attachments, associated objectives & dimensions, preliminary levels, date/time entered, and/or author. Make sure the options you want to display in the PDF are checked, and then select PRINT.

A PDF is then generated on your device that is ready for printing.
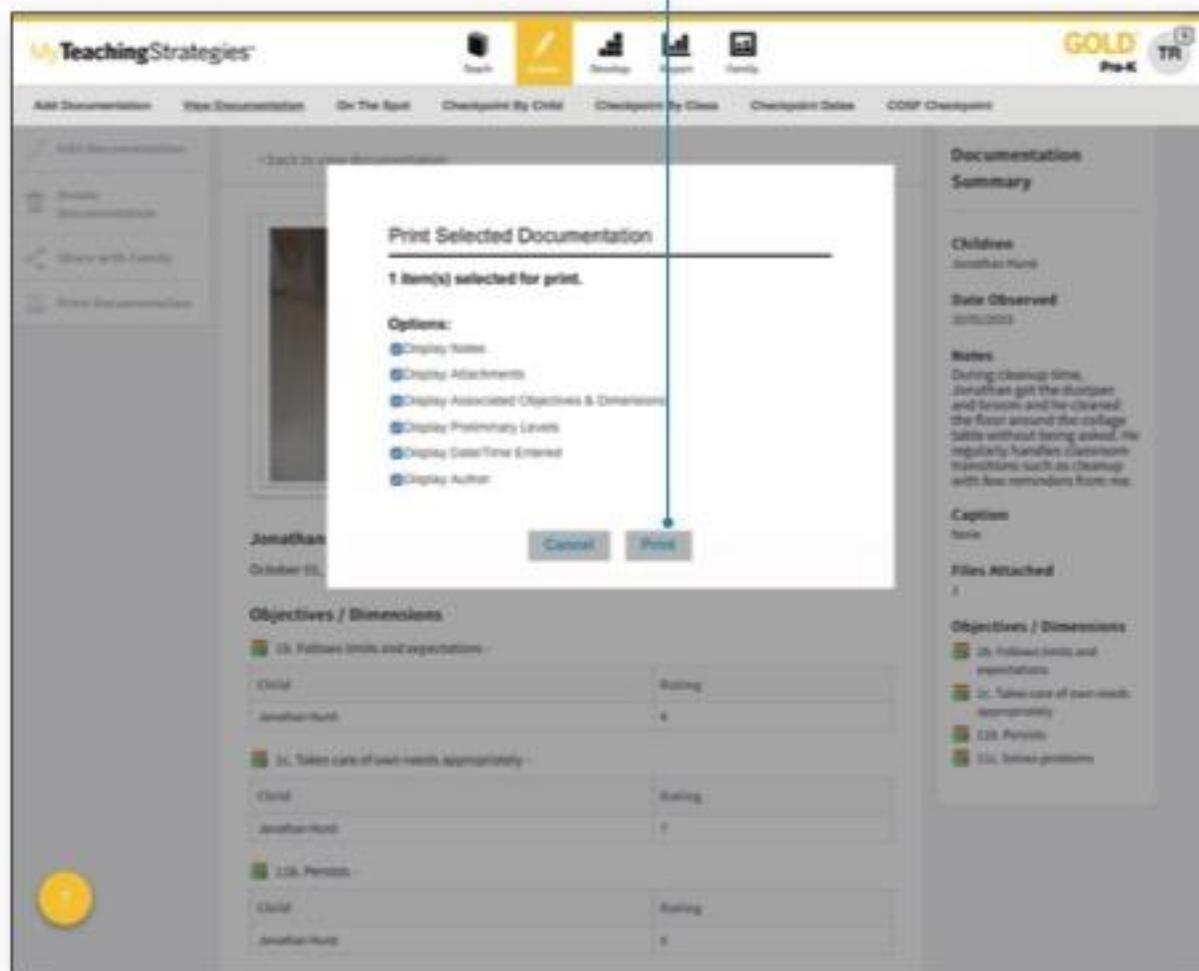
5 Select **MY FILES** and you will see the most recent files created. **Please Note:** The file will only remain here for 48 hours.
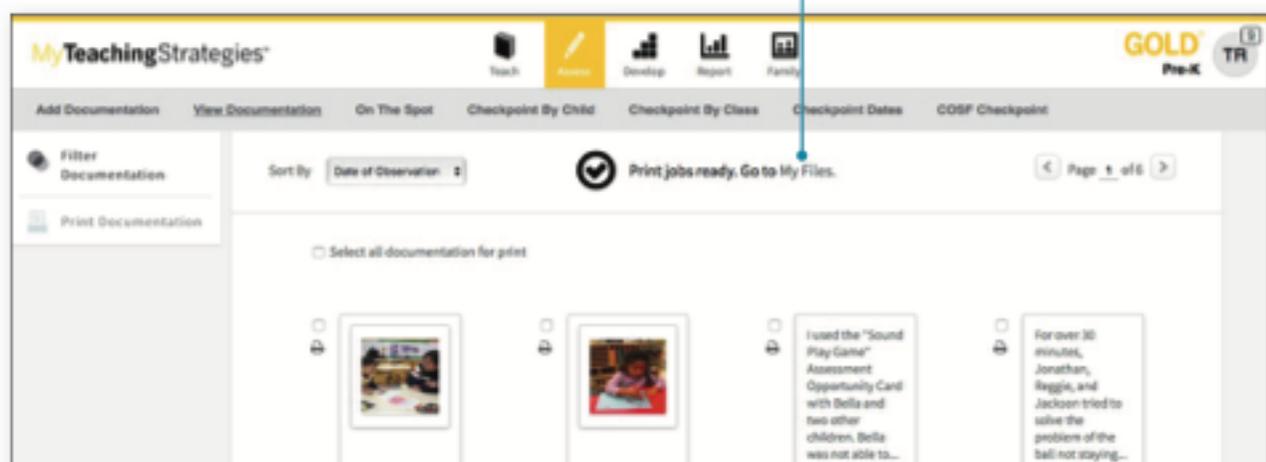
6 On the My Files page, you can change the name of each PDF you have generated by clicking on the pencil icon next to the title of each PDF.

7 You can also remove a specific PDF from your list by clicking the garbage can icon on the right-hand side.
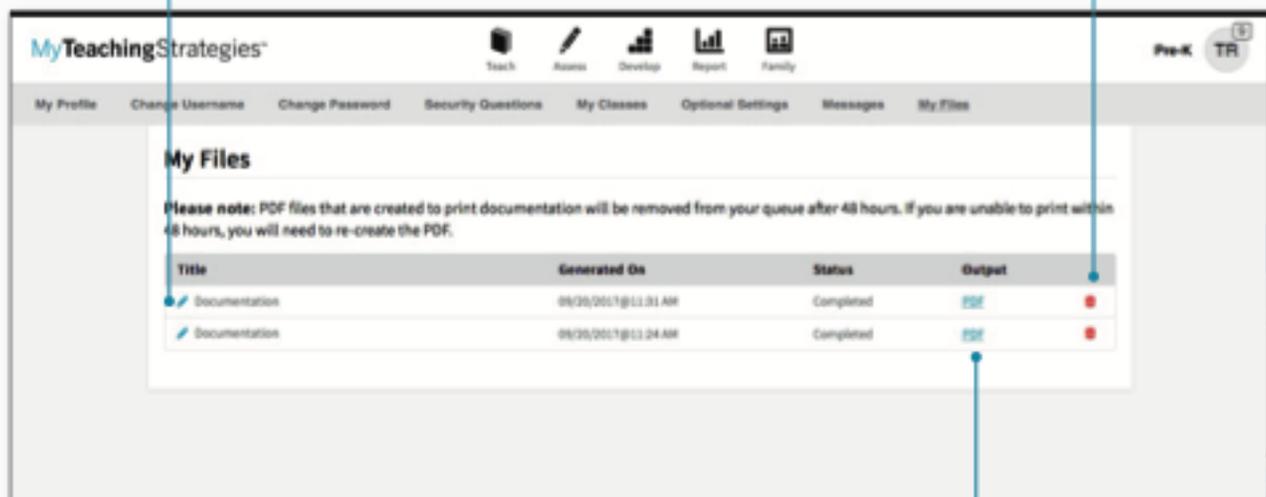

8 To view the PDF, select the **PDF** link under the Output column. **Please Note:** The file will only remain here for 48 hours.

Printing Multiple Documentation

To print multiple or all documentation:

1 Select VIEW DOCUMENTATION from the sub-navigation.

2 Use the FILTER DOCUMENTATION option in the left-hand navigation to view specific documentation if desired.

3 Select the checkbox to the left of one or more documentation tiles.
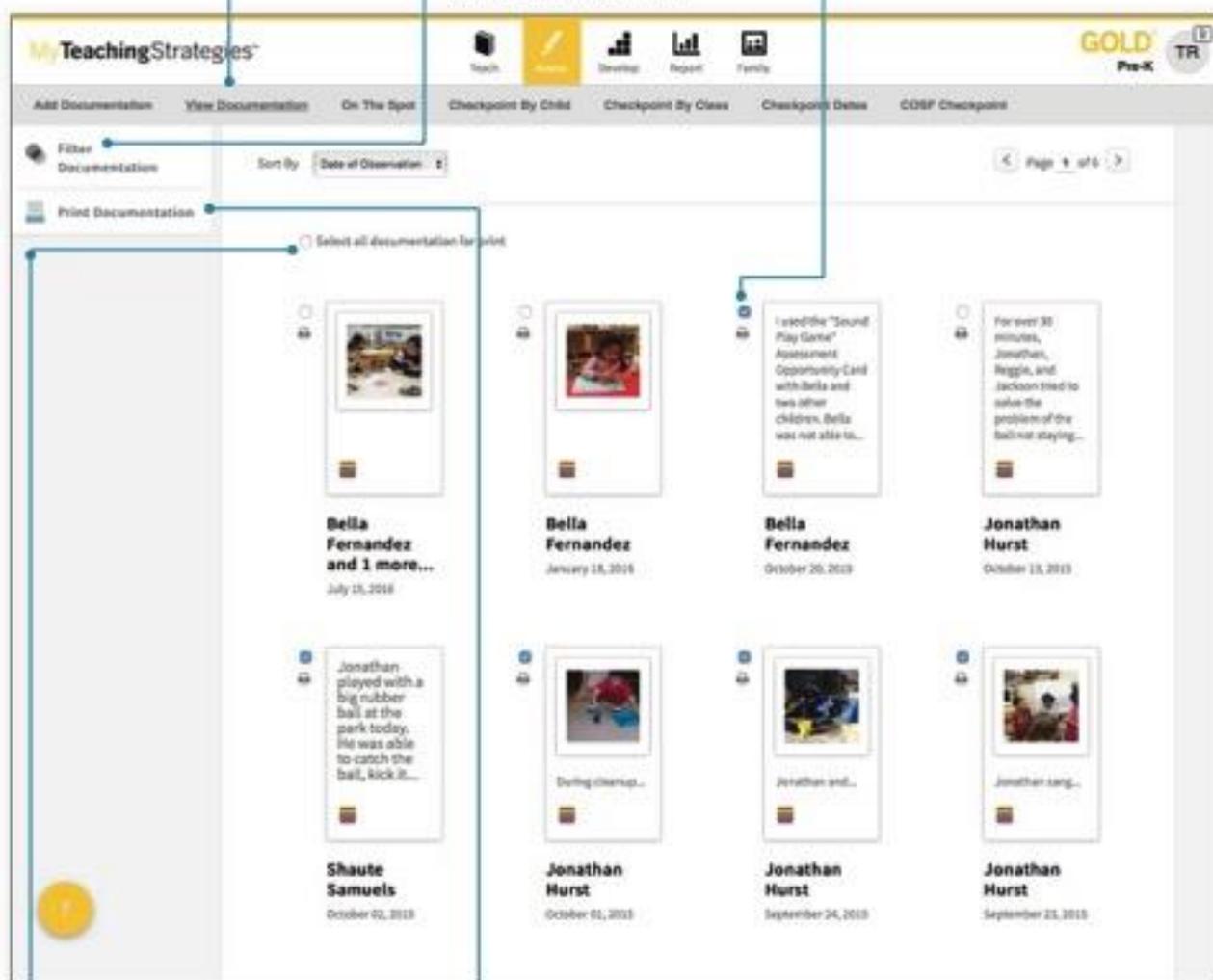
4 If you want to select all documentation, select the checkbox next to SELECT ALL DOCUMENTATION FOR PRINT.

5 Then, select PRINT DOCUMENTATION in the left-hand navigation.

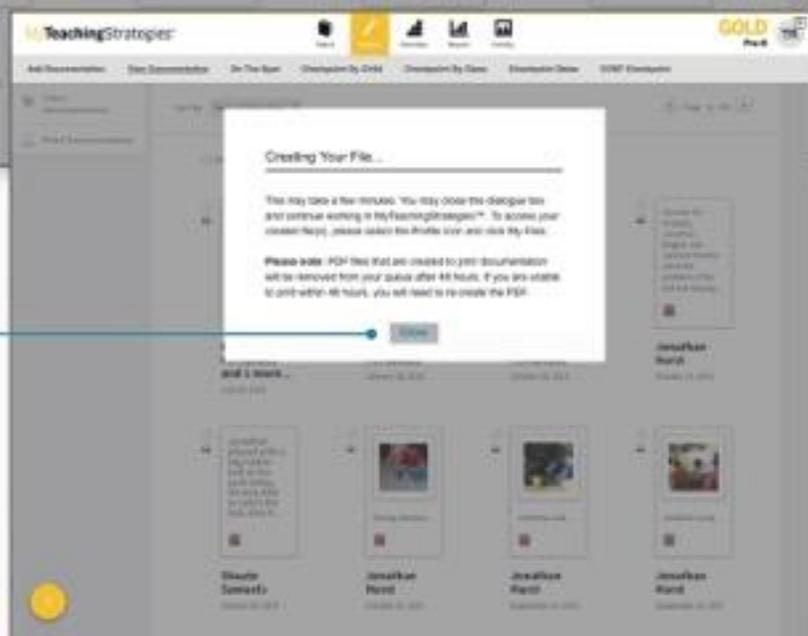**6** A pop-up box will appear with the ability to de-select options for displaying the notes, attachments, associated objectives & dimensions, preliminary levels, date/time entered, and/or author. Make sure the options you want to display in the PDF are checked, and then select PRINT.

Print Selected Documentation

137 item(s) selected for print.

Options:
☑ Display Notes
☑ Display Attachments
☑ Display Associated Objectives & Dimensions
☑ Display Preliminary Levels
☑ Display Date/Time Entered
☑ Display Author

Cancel   Print

Jonathan Hurst

Shaute Samuels
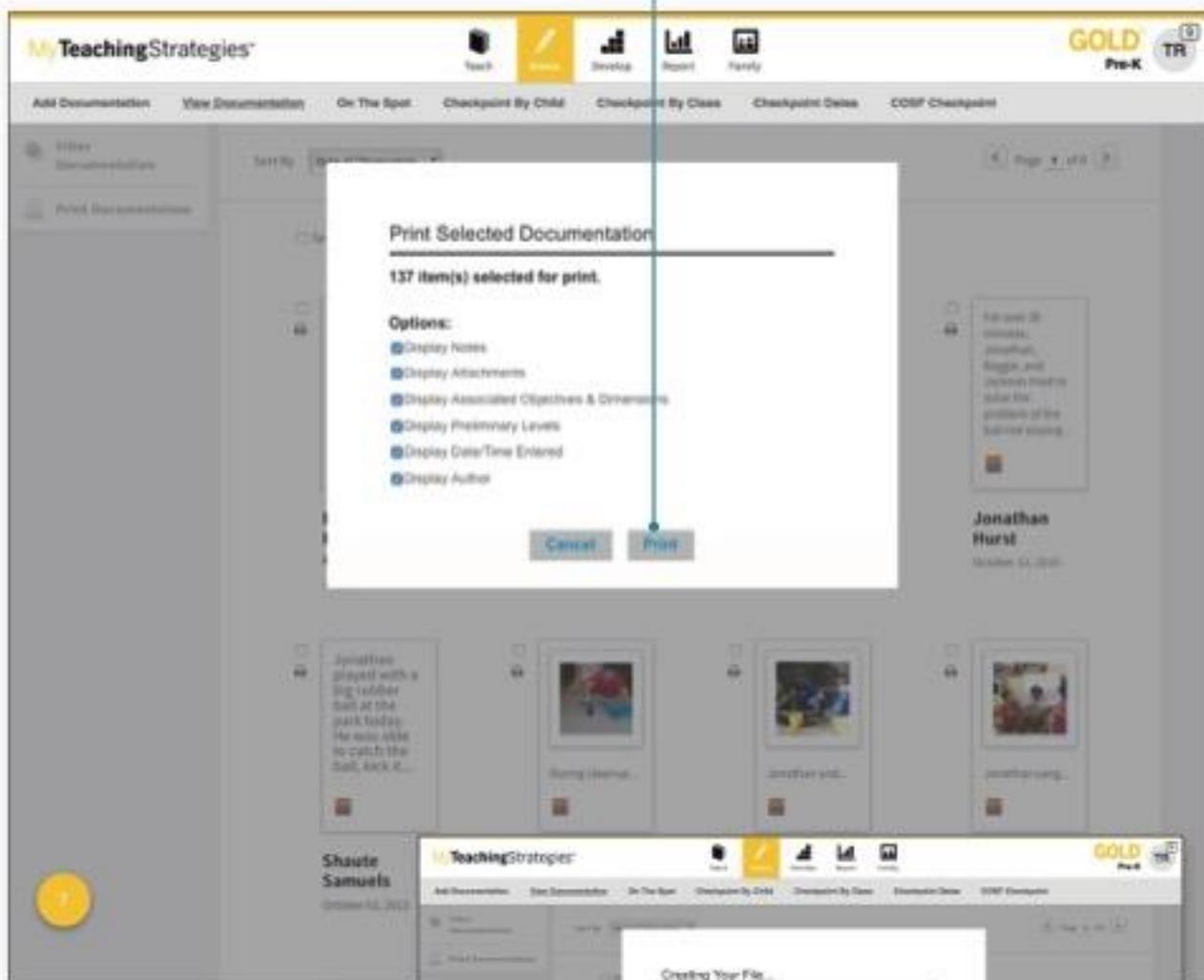
7 If the PDF generation will take a few minutes to complete, you will see a message explaining this process. Select CLOSE.

Creating Your File...

This may take a few minutes. You may close this dialogue box and continue working in MyTeachingStrategies™. To access your created file(s), please select the Profile icon and click My Class.

Please note: PDF files that are created to print documentation will be removed from your queue after 48 hours. If you are unable to print within 48 hours, you will need to re-create the PDF.
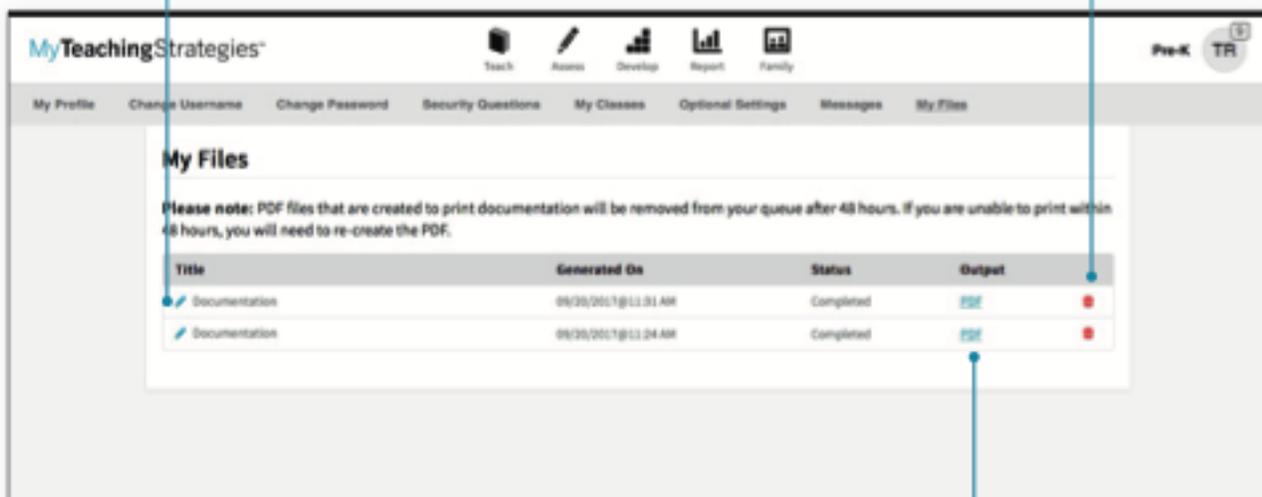
Close

8 When the PDF is ready, you will see an alert at the top of your screen. Select MY FILES to retrieve your PDF.
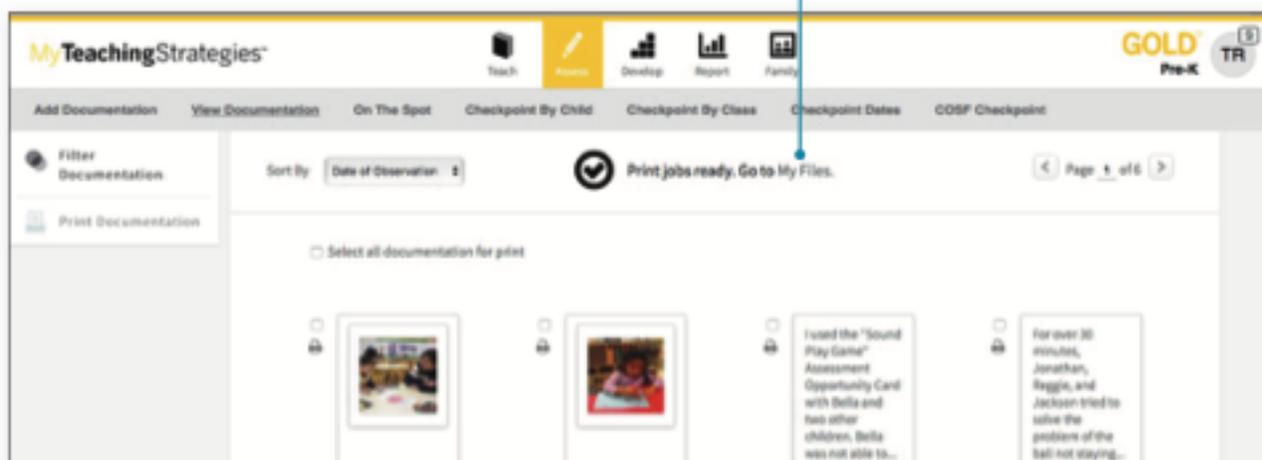
9 On the My Files page, you can change the name of each PDF you have generated by clicking on the pencil icon next to the title of each PDF.

10 You can also remove a specific PDF from your list by clicking the garbage can icon on the right-hand side.

11 To view the PDF, select the PDF link under the Output column. Please Note: The file will only remain here for 48 hours.

PRIMARY CAREGIVING

The following guidelines are intended for participants that embrace primary caregiving as part of their program philosophy, which is not a requirement of Quality First. Please use them in conjunction with the information included throughout the rest of the Points Scale Guidance Document when preparing for your assessment.

GENERAL GUIDELINES
- Your program must have identified at the beginning of your assessment cycle (your first day of assessment, either ERS or CLASS) that primary caregiving is part of your philosophy. It is the participant's responsibility to inform the assessor that primary caregiving is in practice; the assessor will not ask if primary caregiving is used.
- The same classroom configuration identified on the initial day of assessment, either ERS or CLASS, will be used to assess all parts of the Points Scale Assessment.
- For Quality First's purpose, each primary caregiving group is considered its own classroom.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS
- Each primary care group must be assigned a lead teacher, and the lead teacher must be identified as such in the extranet's staffing tab. This staff member's education documentation and years of experience will be scored in the Staff Qualifications domain.

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES
- Each primary care group must be listed separately in the extranet's classroom tab.
- Ratio and group size counts will be assessed individually for each primary care group.
- If your program has added a primary care group after your assessment cycle began due to increased enrollment, it is your responsibility to share this with the assessor. Ratio and group size counts are assessed in all open classrooms/groups.

CURRICULUM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT
- Each primary care group requires its own lesson plans.
- Lesson plans and child assessment portfolios will be reviewed for all primary care groups that are randomly selected on the day of the onsite visit.

AM I READY CHECKLIST

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

☐ All current administrators, lead teachers, and assistant teachers are included on my Quality First extranet staffing tab. This includes new staff and substitute staff who have worked in my program for at least 30 classroom days as of my Points Scale end date (first Points Scale)/ on the first date of assessment, ERS or CLASS (all other Points Scales).

☐ The position title, hire date, years of previous ECE experience, and Registry ID number fields for each administrator, lead teacher, and assistant teacher on the extranet's staffing tab are current.

☐ All staff members have created an Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry account and selected our site as their current employer. This includes new staff and substitute staff who have worked in my program for at least 30 classroom days as of my Points Scale end date (first Points Scale) or on the first day of assessment, ERS or CLASS (all other Points Scales).

☐ Another site administrator or I have administrator access for the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry account for the the ADHS, DES, tribal or military license/certification number that matches the one in the Quality First extranet to review my staff's information.

☐ All current staff members are viewable on the Registry Professional Development and Education Report under the ADHS, DES, tribal or military license/certification number that matches the one in the Quality First extranet.

☐ Administrators and lead teachers have submitted education documentation to the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry.

☐ I have reviewed my site's Registry Professional Development and Education Report to ensure all education documentation I want to be credited in my Points Scale Assessment is viewable on the report.

☐ I reviewed the FTF Board approved Quality First Points Scale rubric to see where I believe my site should score in the Staff Qualifications domain of the Points Scale.

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

☐ I consulted the Quality First Staffing Guide (located in the extranet's resource section) to determine which staff roles should be included in the extranet's staffing tab, and all current staff members are inputted.

☐ The position title, hire date and Registry ID field for each administrator, lead teacher, and assistant teacher are up-to-date on the extranet's staffing tab.

☐ All open classrooms/ child care groups serving children birth-5 are included on my extranet's classroom/family

group tab.

☐ I am ready to provide an assessor the name, licensed capacity, self-limit capacity, birthdate of the youngest child enrolled, and full names of staff assigned and present in each open classroom serving children birth to five.

☐ I have a written staff retention plan in place for my program. It is included in the documents for the assessor to review. If the information is included in a larger document, such as a handbook, all sections/pages are labeled for the assessor.

☐ I reviewed the FTF Board approved Quality First Points Scale rubric to see where I believe my program should score in the Administrative Practices domain.

CURRICULUM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT

☐ All current staff members are included on the extranet's staffing tab.

☐ The position title, hire date, and Registry ID fields for each administrator and lead teacher are up-to-date on the extranet's staffing tab.

☐ I have provided my coach a copy of each lead teacher's and administrator's training certificates for the introduction to the Arizona Early Learning Standards training, introduction to the Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines training, and any module trainings completed.

☐ I have verified that each lead teacher and administrator's ADE training information is up-to-date in the extranet's staffing tab.

☐ If I have staff with an AZ Teaching Certificate with an ECE endorsement, I have verified that their teaching certificate (including a valid expiration date) is reflected on my site's Registry Professional Development and Education Report.

☐ I have collected the most recently completed 4 weeks of written lesson plans/curriculum (not including weeks the program was not in session) for each of my classrooms/child care groups.

☐ Each written lesson plan includes the classroom/child care group's name and dates of use, including month, day, and year.

☐ Each written lesson plan reflects the use of at least 1 Arizona Early Learning Standard or 1 Infant Toddler Developmental Guideline and an accompanying activity. This information is clearly marked for the assessor's review.

☐ Each written lesson plan includes specific learning objectives for children. This includes the concept/ skill

being taught, activity/time of day it will occur, and children targeted. The information is clearly marked for the assessor's review.

☐ If I use a coding system other than initials to identify the children targeted for specific learning objectives, I have included a code key for review by the assessor to interpret my system.

☐ If I use a separate document (other than the written lesson plan) to document specific learning objectives for children, the document (a) includes the classroom name, (b) includes the dates of use with the month, day, and year, and (c) is placed with the written lesson plan it applies to. Additionally, the written lesson plan includes a written statement sharing where to find specific learning objectives for children so that the assessor can interpret my system.

☐ Each written lesson plan includes strategies, adaptations and/or modifications for children with special needs in any classroom where a child with a special need or specialized health concern is enrolled. This includes the modification, the activities the modification is used during, and the child(ren) targeted.

☐ If I use a coding system other than initials to identify the children targeted for strategies, adaptations and/or modifications for children with special needs, I have included a code key for review by the assessor to interpret my system.

☐ If I use a separate document (other than the written lesson plan) to document strategies, accommodations, and/or modifications for children with special needs, the document (a) includes the classroom name, (b) includes the dates of use with the month, day, and year, and (c) is placed with the written lesson plan it applies to. Additionally, the written lesson plan includes a written statement sharing where to find strategies, accommodations and/or modifications for children with special needs so that the assessor can interpret my system.

☐ I have child assessment portfolios for all enrolled children and am prepared to provide the assessor with the randomly drawn portfolios for children in any open classroom/child care group.

☐ I have classroom rosters available for the assessor so that the assessor can conduct the random draw process for choosing 4 child assessment portfolios from each classroom selected on the day of the onsite visit.

☐ Each child assessment portfolio includes at least 1 piece of evidence for social development, 1 piece of evidence for emotional development, 1 piece of evidence for cognitive development, and 1 piece of evidence for physical development.

☐ All child assessment portfolio documentation meets the technical requirements listed on p. 44.

☐ Each classroom/child care group uses at least 2 of 3 documentation methods outlined on p. 43-44 as types of evidence in child assessment portfolios.

- Each child assessment portfolio includes family input. The family input documentation meets the five requirements outlined on p. 48.

- I have a written policy for parent-teacher conferences. It is included in the documents for the assessor to review. If the information is included in a larger document, such as a handbook, all sections/pages are labeled for the assessor.

- I have a written statement for sharing curriculum with families. It is included in the documents for the assessor to review. If the information is included in a larger document, such as a handbook, all sections/pages are labeled for the assessor.

- I have a written transition plan. It is included in the documents for the assessor to review. If the information is included in a larger document, such as a handbook, all sections/pages are labeled for the assessor.

- I have a written policy for children's screening and referral. It is included in the documents for the assessor to review. If the information is included in a larger document, such as a handbook, all sections/pages are labeled for the assessor.

- I reviewed the FTF Board approved Quality First Points Scale rubric to see where I believe my program should score in the Curriculum and Child Assessment domain.