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MISSISSIPPI CHILD CARE QUALITY STEP SYSTEM (MCCQSS)

Including Administrative Policy, Professional Development, Learning Environments, Parent Involvement, Evaluation Implementation July 1, 2006

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Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System

Section 100 - Introduction

The Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS) is a method to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in licensed early child care and education settings across the state. The MCCQSS is part of the State's broader quality improvement continuum which offers incentives and has five components: Administrative Policy, Professional Development, Learning Environments, Parent Involvement and Evaluation. Financing Incentives will be linked to compliance with quality standards and parent education. Mississippi has adopted the motto, "**Step Up To Star Quality**".

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The proposed goals of the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System

- To prepare all children to learn and be ready for school.
- To provide opportunities for children to learn to value and respect authority.
- To provide opportunities for children to learn and practice self discipline.
- To provide opportunities for children to learn how to be observant and to practice socialization skills.

Section 100.02

The proposed objectives of the MS Child Care Quality Step System:

- Increase the quality of early childhood care and education by creating healthier children in Mississippi; provide appropriate school readiness skills for all childcare; provide more childcare programs; and have consistent standards across all licensed child care settings and education.

- Increase training and compensation by increasing the rate of pay for subsidized children and rate of individual compensation for caregivers.

- Increase parental awareness through parental involvement, responsibility and providing information about the MCCQSS and quality child care.

- Increase and develop a support system and a resource and referral system that links professional development, training and technical assistance, parental education and assessment of the environment.

The pilot phase of the MCCQSS is scheduled for implementation in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2007, beginning July 1, 2006. Participation in the pilot project by licensed child care facilities serving children through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is voluntary. The pilot phase will determine the feasibility of the process and the attainment of criteria before being implemented on a statewide basis.

Section 100.03

The Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System Criteria

1. The system will consist of five steps and will be titled the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS).
2. The system will be expanded at a later date to encompass family child care home programs and possibly after school programs pending availability of funds.
3. The existing training for teachers and program support will be factored into the overall outreach component as much as possible for program administrators/directors to utilize.
4. The assessment instruments for some of the components and the process for monitoring program standards and accountability have yet to be determined. The writing team offering a draft of specifics such as the number of monitoring visits and the achievement of performance objectives needed to adequately assess programs will be approved/determined by the Office for Children and Youth.
5. The need for adding support programs such as the Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies and stipends for individuals seeking to receive a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) has been recognized as one way to achieve quality improvements.

	Administrative Policy	Professional Development	Learning Environments	Parent Involvement	Evaluation
Step 5	Developmental check list for each child Implement Transition Plan for Kindergarten Mentoring-Director	Director: BA/BS or higher Staff: 25% of fulltime teaching staff w/current CDA or higher 25 hours Staff Development w/10 hours in area teaching for fulltime teaching staff	MS ELG (fully implemented) On-going Child Assessment ERS 5.1-7.0	Parent/Teacher conference (twice a year) Monthly Newsletter	ERS 5.1-7.0
Step 4	Annual supervisor and staff evaluation w/implementation of a Professional Development Plan	Director: AA or higher Staff: 15% of fulltime teaching staff have current CDA or higher 20 hours Staff Development w/ 10 hours in area teaching for fulltime teaching staff	MS ELG (all staff trained) Trained in on-going Child Assessment ERS 4.1-5.0	Parent Involvement Program Parent Resource Center	ERS 4.1-5.0 Parent Staff Survey
Step 3	Director / Management in child care training MOU with Mental Health (LEA, PHS)	Director/Childcare staff member holds current OCY Director's Credential or a credential approved by MDHS/OCY Staff: 1 current CDA or higher on-site, GED or High School for all staff 18 hours Staff Development for fulltime teaching staff (no-in house) Monthly Staff Meeting	MS ELG (Director Trained) ERS 3.6-4.0	Weekly Notes to Parents Parent Education Training (offered annually) Parental Lending Library	ERS 3.6-4.0
Step 2	Staff Handbook Staff: 15 hours	Director: Additional Staff Development by 5 hours annually Staff: 15 hours Staff Development for fulltime teaching staff (no in-house)	Weekly Lesson Plans Learning Centers MS ELG (review) ERS 3.0-3.5	Bulletin Board (for parent communication) Quarterly Newsletter Calendar Annual Parent/Teacher Conference	Self-Assessment; Annual Staff Evaluation ERS 3.0-3.5
Step 1	Licensing				

The criteria for the MCCQSS are developed on a system of upward progression: For example, for a facility to move from a Step 1 to a Step 3 all criteria must be met in Steps 1, 2 and 3. This systematic approach to improving quality allows for gradual improvement that is acknowledged through public recognition of the stars found on the facility's licensing certificate.

SECTION 101

STEP 1-☆

The first step in the MCCQSS is:

- The child care facility must be licensed as outlined in the MS Department of Health's Regulations Governing Licensure of Child Care Facilities.

SECTION 102

STEP 2-☆ ☆

The child care facility must be licensed and have successfully completed the following:

***Section 102.01**-Step 2: Administrative Policy Criteria*

- The child care facility must have a staff handbook. (See Appendix A)

***Section 102.02**-Step 2: Professional Development Criteria*

- The Director will receive additional training by approved training entities per MS Department of Health child care licensing regulations to exceed the required number for licensing by a minimum of five hours annually.
- Fifteen (15) hours annually of staff development for full time teaching staff by approved training entities per child care licensing regulations will be documented for each staff with no allowable in-house hours being allowed to be counted in the fifteen (15) hours total.

***Section 102.03**-Step 2: Learning Environments Criteria*

- Weekly written lesson plans are present. (See example in Appendix B)
- Learning Centers are being utilized in the classrooms for all children (except infant rooms) as defined in the MCCQSS glossary of this manual.
- A total score of 3.0-3.5 on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS) and/or the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS) as defined in glossary.

***Section 102.04**-Step 2: Parent Involvement Criteria*

- A designated bulletin board for parent communication.
- Quarterly communication to parents through a newsletter.
- Monthly calendar disseminated to parents highlighting classroom activities and home learning activities.
- Annual documented parent/teacher conference.

***Section 102.05**-Step 2: Evaluation Criteria*

- Director's self-assessment completed on file with a plan of self-improvement that indicates actions, which have been taken to address deficient areas that need improvement. **Self-assessment instruments must be approved by OCY, as listed in Appendix C as an example.**
- Annual staff evaluations on file that indicates each staff member has attended an evaluation conference with the director/supervisor, signed and dated by both parties.
- A total score of 3.0-3.5 on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS) and/or the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS).

SECTION 103

STEP 3 -☆☆☆

The child care facility must have successfully completed all the criteria for Steps 1 and 2 and the following:

Section 103.01*-Section Step 3: Administrative Policy Criteria*

The Director will have successfully completed a course in the management of a child care facility as a business offered by the Mississippi Extension Service.

- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) completed, on file and signed by the child care director and the designated service agency. Documentation that at least one appropriate referral and/or assessment is on file. The MOU will indicate an arrangement with the child care facility and at least one other agency that can provide additional services to children and/or staff. Examples of partners include but are not limited to: Local Education Agency (LEA) for teacher training or special education services to children in the facility, mental health agencies to provide teacher training and/or services to children and families in the facility, MS Department of Health (MDH) or Public Health System (PHS) to provide screenings to children per parental approval (See Appendix D).

Section 103.02*-Step 3: Professional Development Criteria*

- Director holds current OCY Director's Credential or a credential approved by MDHS/OCY.
- Conduct and document monthly staff development meetings (i.e. sign-in sheets, minutes, etc.).

- At least one staff member holds a current CDA credential or a higher credential such as an Associate Degree in Child Development Technology, Early Childhood Education or a Bachelor's Degree in Child Development, Early Childhood Special Education, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education or related field.
- All staff members must be, eighteen (18) years of age or older, hold either a GED or high school diploma.
- Eighteen (18) hours of annual staff development training by approved training entities per child care licensing regulations for staff with ten (10) hours of training specific to the age of child(ren) they are teaching or caring for.

***Section 103.03**-Step 3: Learning Environments*

- Director trained in Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines.
- A total score of 3.6–4.0 on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS) and/or Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS).

***Section 103.04**-Step 3: Parent Involvement Criteria*

- Weekly notes to parents describing the activities of the week with copies maintained on file.
- Parent education trainings offered and documented annually.
- Facility provides a parent/family lending library for parents as defined in glossary.

***Section 103.05**-Step 3: Evaluation Criteria*

- A total score of 3.6–4.0 on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS) and/or Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS).

SECTION 104

STEP 4 - ☆☆☆☆

The child care facility must have successfully completed all criteria in Steps 1, 2, and 3 and the following:

Section 104.01*-Step 4: Administrative Policy Criteria*

- Annual staff evaluations completed and documentation on file.
- Documentation with implementation of a Professional Development Plan.

Section 104.02*-Step: 4 Professional Development Criteria*

- The Director holds an Associate Degree in Child Development Technology or Early Childhood Education or higher degree, Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Special Education with 18 credit hours in Early Childhood, Child Development, Elementary Education with 18 credit hours in Early Childhood courses.
- Fifteen percent (15%) of staff has a CDA or higher degree/credential (Associate and/or Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Special Education, Child Development, Elementary Education or related field).
- Twenty (20) hours of staff development training by approved training entities per child care licensing regulations for staff with ten (10) hours of training specific to the age of the child(ren) in their care.

Section 104.03*-Step 4: Learning Environments Criteria*

- All teaching staff of three and four year old children is trained to use the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines.

- All teaching staffs of three and four year old children are trained to use on-going child assessment as described in the MS Early Learning Guidelines.
- A total score of 4.1–5.0 on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS) and/or Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS).

***Section 104.04**-Step 4: Parent Involvement Criteria*

- Parent/family volunteer program is implemented and proof of participation is documented.
- Parent/family resource center is part of the facility's services.

***Section 104.05**-Step 4: Evaluation Criteria*

- Parent/family survey to rate performance of staff completed and on file.

SECTION 105

STEP 5 – ☆☆☆☆☆

The child care facility must have successfully completed all criteria in Steps 1, 2, 3 and 4 and the following:

***Section 105.01**-Step 5: Administrative Policy Criteria*

- Developmental checklist for each child is implemented and documented as defined in Glossary. (For Example see Appendix E)
- A transition plan with LEA's for children entering kindergarten is implemented and documented, as defined in Glossary.
- Director to peer mentor at a minimum of 2 hours per month established and documented for the purpose of helping a facility obtain a higher rating in the MCCQSS.

***Section 105.02**-Step 5: Professional Development Criteria*

- Director holds a Bachelor's Degree or higher degree in, Child Development, Early Childhood Special Education, Elementary Education or a related field.
- Twenty-five (25%) of staff holds a current CDA or higher credential/degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, Early Childhood Special Education, Elementary Education or a related field. (See Appendix F-Provider Support Professional Development)
- Twenty-five (25) hours of staff development training by approved entities per child care licensing regulations for staff with ten (10) hours of training specific to the age of the child(ren) in their care.

***Section 105.03**-Step 5: Learning Environments Criteria*

- Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines fully implemented in all three and four year old classrooms.
- On-going child assessments documented and implemented in all three and four year old classrooms.
- A total score of 5.1-7.0 on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS) and/or Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS).

***Section 105.04**-Step 5: Parent Involvement Criteria*

- Documentation showing that parent/teacher meetings are held at least twice a year.
- Monthly newsletter disseminated to parents.

***Section 105.05**-Step 5: Evaluation Criteria*

- A total score of 5.1-7.0 on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS) and/or Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS).

Glossary

Accountability – An appropriate means of assessment and monitoring, measured for compliance with the specific criteria of certain standards.

Assessment – On-going observations and recordings of progress that occur within the context of the child's everyday experiences and interactions with adults and peers in the learning environment.

Developmental Check List – A standardized development guidance tool recognized or one recognized by the state (As found in Appendix E), used to record the stages/areas of gains of a child according to age appropriate skills that should be mastered.

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS) – A scale designed to measure the quality of a child care facility through its program monitoring, evaluation improvement, and research, while maintaining evaluation and technical assistance services to licensed child care facilities. This rating scale is geared for children ages 2 ½ to 5 years.

In-House – Training and/or staff development activities that occur within the child care setting by an approved entity.

Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS) – A scale designed to measure and assess the environment of a child care facility through organization of space, interaction, activities, schedule, and provisions for parents and staff, while maintaining evaluation and technical assistance services to licensed child care facilities. This rating scale is geared for children ages birth to 30 months.

Learning Center(s) – Designated area(s) in the facility class setting where the child(ren) can actively engage in exploration, thinking, conversation, inquiry, acquisition of literacy skills,

construction, and/or role playing while working (playing) with age appropriate learning materials.

Lending Library – A resource and referral area within the child care facility, designed to provide resources such as reading materials and videos to enhance and develop parenting skills.

Lesson Plan – A teacher's detailed description of the course of instruction for an individual lesson to be taught to a group of children.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – An agreement between the provider/participant and the State entity providing the service(s).

OCY Director's Credential Program – A training program designed to evaluate the knowledge and a wide range of skills needed by practicing directors of licensed child care facilities.

Parent Education – A resource tool to assist the parent(s) in understanding the MCCQSS, how it benefits children, families, and the early care and education system as a whole.

Program – State entities involved in promoting and providing technical assistance, training, mentoring and other supports towards professional enhancement and/or development.

Practitioner - Management and/or staff of a licensed child care facilities that utilizes the services of state sponsored programs for the purpose of technical assistance, training, and other supports.

Self-Assessment – A tool designed to ascertain the competence level of a child care provider as it relates to early childhood development practices and age appropriate activities.

Special Needs - Care for children under age eighteen (18) who meet the SSI definition of disability by having medically proven physical or mental condition(s) that caused marked

and severe functional limitations expected to last at least 12 months in duration and render the child incapable of self-care.

Staff Development- Training activities and/or enhancements to improve as well as develop early childhood practices as it relates to age appropriate development. This training may be attained through various resources such as technical assistance, workshops or conferences.

Standards – A set criteria used to measure compliance as stipulated by the State's child care licensing entity.

Transition Plan – A scheduled outline/guideline of age appropriate activities and visits to area schools to assist with children leaving child care and entering Pre-Kindergarten and/or kindergarten.

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SECTION 102

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The child care facility must be licensed and have successfully completed the following:

***Section 102.01**-Step 2: Administrative Policy Criteria*

- The child care facility must have a staff handbook. (See Appendix A)

***Section 102.02**-Step 2: Professional Development Criteria*

- The Director will receive additional training by approved training entities per MS Department of Health child care licensing regulations to exceed the required number for licensing by a minimum of five hours annually.
- Fifteen (15) hours annually of staff development for full time teaching staff by approved training entities per child care licensing regulations will be documented for each staff with no allowable in-house hours being allowed to be counted in the fifteen (15) hours total.

***Section 102.03**-Step 2: Learning Environments Criteria*

- Weekly written lesson plans are present. (See example in Appendix B)
- Learning Centers are being utilized in the classrooms for all children (except infant rooms) as defined in the MCCQSS glossary of this manual.
- A total score of 3.0-3.5 on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS) and/or the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS) as defined in glossary.

***Section 102.04**-Step 2: Parent Involvement Criteria*

- A designated bulletin board for parent communication.
- Quarterly communication to parents through a newsletter.
- Monthly calendar disseminated to parents highlighting classroom activities and home learning activities.
- Annual documented parent/teacher conference.

***Section 102.05**-Step 2: Evaluation Criteria*

- Director's self-assessment completed on file with a plan of self-improvement that indicates actions, which have been taken to address deficient areas that need improvement. **Self-assessment instruments must be approved by OCY, as listed in Appendix C as an example.**
- Annual staff evaluations on file that indicates each staff member has attended an evaluation conference with the director/supervisor, signed and dated by both parties.
- A total score of 3.0-3.5 on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS) and/or the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS).

SECTION 103

STEP 3 -☆☆☆

The child care facility must have successfully completed all the criteria for Steps 1 and 2 and the following:

***Section 103.01**-Section Step 3: Administrative Policy Criteria*

The Director will have successfully completed a course in the management of a child care facility as a business offered by the Mississippi Extension Service.

- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) completed, on file and signed by the child care director and the designated service agency. Documentation that at least one appropriate referral and/or assessment is on file. The MOU will indicate an arrangement with the child care facility and at least one other agency that can provide additional services to children and/or staff. Examples of partners include but are not limited to: Local Education Agency (LEA) for teacher training or special education services to children in the facility, mental health agencies to provide teacher training and/or services to children and families in the facility, MS Department of Health (MDH) or Public Health System (PHS) to provide screenings to children per parental approval (See Appendix D).

***Section 103.02**-Step 3: Professional Development Criteria*

- Director holds current OCY Director's Credential or a credential approved by MDHS/OCY.
- Conduct and document monthly staff development meetings (i.e. sign-in sheets, minutes, etc.).

- At least one staff member holds a current CDA credential or a higher credential such as an Associate Degree in Child Development Technology, Early Childhood Education or a Bachelor's Degree in Child Development, Early Childhood Special Education, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education or related field.
- All staff members must be, eighteen (18) years of age or older, hold either a GED or high school diploma.
- Eighteen (18) hours of annual staff development training by approved training entities per child care licensing regulations for staff with ten (10) hours of training specific to the age of child(ren) they are teaching or caring for.

Section 103.03*-Step 3: Learning Environments*

- Director trained in Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines.
- A total score of 3.6–4.0 on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS) and/or Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS).

Section 103.04*-Step 3: Parent Involvement Criteria*

- Weekly notes to parents describing the activities of the week with copies maintained on file.
- Parent education trainings offered and documented annually.
- Facility provides a parent/family lending library for parents as defined in glossary.

Section 103.05*-Step 3: Evaluation Criteria*

- ~~A total score of 2.5-3.0 on the Caregiver Interaction Scale (Arnett Scale).~~
- A total score of 3.6–4.0 on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS) and/or Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS).

SECTION 104

STEP 4 - ☆☆☆☆

The child care facility must have successfully completed all criteria in Steps 1, 2, and 3 and the following:

***Section 104.01**-Step 4: Administrative Policy Criteria*

- Annual staff evaluations completed and documentation on file.
- Documentation with implementation of a Professional Development Plan.

***Section 104.02**-Step: 4 Professional Development Criteria*

- The Director holds an Associate Degree in Child Development Technology or Early Childhood Education or higher degree, Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Special Education with 18 credit hours in Early Childhood, Child Development, Elementary Education with 18 credit hours in Early Childhood courses.
- Fifteen percent (15%) of staff has a CDA or higher degree/credential (Associate and/or Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Special Education, Child Development, Elementary Education or related field).
- Twenty (20) hours of staff development training by approved training entities per child care licensing regulations for staff with ten (10) hours of training specific to the age of the child(ren) in their care.

***Section 104.03**-Step 4: Learning Environments Criteria*

- All teaching staff of three and four year old children is trained to use the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines.

- All teaching staffs of three and four year old children are trained to use on-going child assessment as described in the MS Early Learning Guidelines.
- A total score of 4.1–5.0 on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS) and/or Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS).

***Section 104.04**-Step 4: Parent Involvement Criteria*

- Parent/family volunteer program is implemented and proof of participation is documented.
- Parent/family resource center is part of the facility's services.

***Section 104.05**-Step 4: Evaluation Criteria*

- Parent/family survey to rate performance of staff completed and on file.
- ~~A total score of a 3.0-3.3 on the Caregiver Interaction Scale (Arnett Scale).~~
- A total score of 4.1-5.0 on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS) and/or Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS).

SECTION 105

STEP 5 – ☆☆☆☆☆

The child care facility must have successfully completed all criteria in Steps 1, 2, 3 and 4 and the following:

***Section 105.01**-Step 5: Administrative Policy Criteria*

- Developmental checklist for each child is implemented and documented as defined in Glossary. (For Example see Appendix E)
- A transition plan with LEA's for children entering kindergarten is implemented and documented, as defined in Glossary.

- Director to peer mentor at a minimum of 2 hours per month established and documented for the purpose of helping a facility obtain a higher rating in the MCCQSS.

***Section 105.02**-Step 5: Professional Development Criteria*

- Director holds a Bachelor's Degree or higher degree in, Child Development, Early Childhood Special Education, Elementary Education or a related field.
- Twenty-five (25%) of staff holds a current CDA or higher credential/degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, Early Childhood Special Education, Elementary Education or a related field. (See Appendix F-Provider Support Professional Development)
- Twenty-five (25) hours of staff development training by approved entities per child care licensing regulations for staff with ten (10) hours of training specific to the age of the child(ren) in their care.

***Section 105.03**-Step 5: Learning Environments Criteria*

- Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines fully implemented in all three and four year old classrooms.
- On-going child assessments documented and implemented in all three and four year old classrooms.
- A total score of 5.1-7.0 on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS) and/or Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS).

***Section 105.04**-Step 5: Parent Involvement Criteria*

- Documentation showing that parent/teacher meetings are held at least twice a year.
- Monthly newsletter disseminated to parents.

***Section 105.05**-Step 5: Evaluation Criteria*

- ~~A total score of a 3.3 - 4.0 on the Caregiver Interaction Scale (Arnett Scale).~~
- A total score of 5.1-7.0 on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS) and/or Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS).

Glossary

Accountability – An appropriate means of assessment and monitoring, measured for compliance with the specific criteria of certain standards.

Assessment – On-going observations and recordings of progress that occur within the context of the child's everyday experiences and interactions with adults and peers in the learning environment.

~~**Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS-Arnett 1989)** – A scale in which a caregiver's behavior is rated during their interaction with children in the facilities class setting.~~

Developmental Check List – A standardized development guidance tool recognized or one recognized by the state (As found in Appendix E), used to record the stages/areas of gains of a child according to age appropriate skills that should be mastered.

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS) – A scale designed to measure the quality of a child care facility through its program monitoring, evaluation improvement, and research, while maintaining evaluation and technical assistance services to licensed child care facilities. This rating scale is geared for children ages 2 ½ to 5 years.

In-House – Training and/or staff development activities that occur within the child care setting by an approved entity.

Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS) – A scale designed to measure and assess the environment of a child care facility through organization of space, interaction, activities, schedule, and provisions for parents and staff, while maintaining evaluation and technical assistance services to licensed child care facilities. This rating scale is geared for children ages birth to 30 months.

Learning Center(s) – Designated area(s) in the facility class setting where the child(ren) can actively engage in exploration, thinking, conversation, inquiry, acquisition of literacy skills, construction, and/or role playing while working (playing) with age appropriate learning materials.

Lending Library – A resource and referral area within the child care facility, designed to provide resources such as reading materials and videos to enhance and develop parenting skills.

Lesson Plan – A teacher's detailed description of the course of instruction for an individual lesson to be taught to a group of children.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – An agreement between the provider/participant and the State entity providing the service(s).

OCY Director's Credential Program – A training program designed to evaluate the knowledge and a wide range of skills needed by practicing directors of licensed child care facilities.

Parent Education – A resource tool to assist the parent(s) in understanding the MCCQSS, how it benefits children, families, and the early care and education system as a whole.

Program – State entities involved in promoting and providing technical assistance, training, mentoring and other supports towards professional enhancement and/or development.

Practitioner - Management and/or staff of a licensed child care facilities that utilizes the services of state sponsored programs for the purpose of technical assistance, training, and other supports.

Self-Assessment – A tool designed to ascertain the competence level of a child care provider as it relates to early childhood development practices and age appropriate activities.

Special Needs - Care for children under age eighteen (18) who meet the SSI definition of disability by having medically proven physical or mental condition(s) that caused marked and severe functional limitations expected to last at least 12 months in duration and render the child incapable of self-care.

Staff Development- Training activities and/or enhancements to improve as well as develop early childhood practices as it relates to age appropriate development. This training may be attained through various resources such as technical assistance, workshops or conferences.

Standards – A set criteria used to measure compliance as stipulated by the State's child care licensing entity.

Transition Plan – A scheduled outline/guideline of age appropriate activities and visits to area schools to assist with children leaving child care and entering Pre-Kindergarten and/or kindergarten.