



# Quality Counts California

## Quality Continuum Framework-Measurable Quality Elements July 2025

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

Element	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
Core I: Child Development and School Readiness  <b>1. Child Observation</b>	-	Program uses evidence-based child assessment or observation tool annually that covers all five domains of development	Program uses valid and reliable child assessment or observation tool aligned with the most recent iteration of the <i>California Learning Foundations</i> twice a year	Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) is administered twice a year, at minimum, and results are used to inform curriculum planning	Program uses DRDP twice a year and uploads into DRDP Online or DR Access, and results are used to inform curriculum
Core I: Child Development and School Readiness  <b>2. Developmental and Health Screenings</b>	Meets Title 22 Regulations	Health Screening Form (Community Care Licensing form LIC701 “Physician’s Report – Child Care Centers” or equivalent) used at entry, then: Annually <b>OR</b> Ensures vision and hearing screenings are conducted annually	Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using a valid and reliable developmental screening tool at entry and as indicated by results thereafter <b>AND</b> Meets criteria from point level 2	Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) at entry and as indicated by results thereafter <b>AND</b> Meets criteria from point level 2	Program works with families to ensure screening of all children using the ASQ and ASQ-Social Emotional, if indicated, at entry, then as indicated by results thereafter <b>AND</b> Program staff uses children’s screening results to make referrals and implement intervention strategies and adaptations as appropriate <b>AND</b> Meets criteria from point level 2

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

<sup>1</sup> For all ECE or CD units, the core eight are desired, but not required.

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

Element	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
<b>Element 4a: For Use By Non-California State Preschool Programs</b>					
<p>Core II: Teachers and Teaching</p> <p><b>4a. Effective Teacher-Child Interactions: Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)<sup>2</sup></b></p>	-	<p>Familiarity with CLASS for appropriate age group as available by one representative from the site</p>	<p>Independent CLASS assessment by a reliable observer to inform the program's PD or improvement plan</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Informal assessment and results used to inform Quality Improvement Plan and staff PD plan</p>	<p>Independent CLASS assessment by a reliable observer with minimum CLASS scores:</p> <p><b>Pre-K:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional Support – 5</li> <li>Classroom Organization – 5</li> <li>Instructional Support – 3</li> </ul> <p><b>Toddler:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional &amp; Behavioral Support – 5</li> <li>Engaged Support for Learning – 3.5</li> </ul> <p><b>Infant:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsive Caregiving – 5</li> </ul>	<p>Independent CLASS assessment by a reliable observer with minimum CLASS scores:</p> <p><b>Pre-K:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional Support – 5.5</li> <li>Classroom Organization – 5.5</li> <li>Instructional Support – 3.5</li> </ul> <p><b>Toddler:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional &amp; Behavioral Support – 5.5</li> <li>Engaged Support for Learning – 4</li> </ul> <p><b>Infant:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsive Caregiving – 5.5</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> CLASS or CLASS 2nd Edition may be used by programs who are not funded through CSPP for purposes of quality improvement.

Element	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
<b>Element 4b: Required Rating Element For Use By California State Preschool Programs</b>					
Core II: Teachers and Teaching  <b>4b. Effective Teacher-Child Interactions: Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)</b>	-	-	CLASS 2nd Edition Pre-K-3rd Assessment completed by an independent certified CLASS observer to inform continuous quality improvement <b>AND</b> CLASS Environment Observation completed by an independent certified CLASS observer	CLASS 2nd Edition Pre-K-3rd Assessment completed by an independent certified CLASS observer to inform continuous quality improvement <b>AND</b> CLASS Environment Observation completed by an independent certified CLASS observer <b>AND</b> Meets domain score requirements of: <b>Pre-K:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional Support – 5</li> <li>Classroom Organization – 5</li> <li>Instructional Support – 3</li> </ul>	CLASS 2nd Edition Pre-K-3rd Assessment completed by an independent certified CLASS observer to inform continuous quality improvement <b>AND</b> CLASS Environment Observation completed by an independent certified CLASS observer <b>AND</b> Meets domain score requirements of: <b>Pre-K:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional Support – 5.5</li> <li>Classroom Organization – 5.5</li> <li>Instructional Support – 3.5</li> </ul>

Element	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
Core III: Program and Environment <sup>3</sup>  <b>5. Ratios and Group Size</b> (Centers only beyond licensing regulations)	<b>Center:</b> Title 22 Regulations Infant ratio of 1:4 Toddler Option ratio of 1:6 Preschool ratio of 1:12 <b>FCCH:</b> Title 22 Regulations (excluded from point values in ratio and group size)	<b>Center:</b> Ratio: Group Size Infant/Toddler – 4:16 Toddler – 3:18 Preschool – 3:36	<b>Center:</b> Ratio: Group Size Infant/Toddler – 3:12 Toddler – 2:12 Preschool – 2:24	<b>Center:</b> Ratio: Group Size Infant/Toddler – 3:12 or 2:8 Toddler – 2:10 Preschool – 3:24 or 2:20	<b>Center:</b> Ratio: Group Size Infant/Toddler – 3:9 or better Toddler – 3:12 or better Preschool – 1:8 ratio and group size of no more than 20
Core III: Program and Environment  <b>6. Director Qualifications</b> (Centers only)	12 units ECE or CD, plus/with 3 units management or administration	24 units ECE or CD, plus 16 units General Education, plus/with 3 units management or administration <b>OR</b> Master Teacher Permit	AA/AS with 24 units ECE or CD, plus/with 6 units management or administration and 2 units in supervision <b>OR</b> Site Supervisor Permit <b>AND</b> 21 hours of PD annually	BA/BS with 24 units ECE or CD, plus/with 8 units management or administration <b>OR</b> Program Director Permit <b>AND</b> 21 hours of PD annually	Master's degree with 30 units ECE or CD, including specialized courses, plus/with 8 units management or administration <b>OR</b> Administrative Credential <b>AND</b> 21 hours of PD annually

<sup>3</sup>Effective August 2023, ERS was removed as a QCC rating requirement, however, Title 5 programs using CDSS contract funds are required, per statute (5 CCR 18281), to use the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) as part of the self-assessment requirement.

### Total Point Ranges for Quality Improvement

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

### California State Preschool Program Rating (Element 4b only)

Program Type			Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5
<b>CSPP</b> (Centers and FCCHENs)	-	-	3 points	4 points	5 points

<sup>4</sup> Local Tier 2: Local decision if blocked or points and if there are additional elements.

<sup>5</sup> Local Tier 5: Local decision if there are additional elements included.