# **VII. COMMUNICATION & TEAM BUILDING**

**7.1** Communication among teaching staff, administration, and supervisory staff models respect for the value of the work and the value of each individual's contributions.

**7.2** An effective communication system ensures that everyone on staff is informed about new procedures, policies, and events. The communication system respects the various learning styles of staff (i.e., it incorporates both visual and verbal messages and "walks" people through new procedures).

**7.3** Communication honors the primary language of each employee, and whenever possible and practical, written policies and procedures for the program are translated into the employee's primary language.

**7.4** Proposed changes in policies and procedures are circulated in writing to all staff, and a sufficient period is allowed for meaningful staff input and response before changes are adopted or implemented.

7.5 Staff meetings are designed with the primary purpose of enhancing staff communication and collaboration, building a cohesive community, and working together to understand the needs of children, solve problems, and improve program quality. Announcements, reminders, and general issues of efficient program operation are secondary.

**7.6** Staff have input into the agenda of staff meetings, the agenda is distributed in advance of meetings, and a written record of the meeting is kept and posted.

**7.7** Opportunities exist for staff members to work collaboratively on projects, share resources, and solve problems together outside of staff meeting time.

**7.8** In addition to adhering to a non-discrimination policy, the program intentionally honors, respects, and affirms each individual staff member. Fulfillment of this goal is evaluated regularly with staff input.

**7.9** The program encourages collegiality, a sense of community, and a positive work climate through team-building activities, group projects, and the creation of traditions/rituals among staff. The program does not tolerate bullying among adults; employees experiencing bullying can use the grievance procedure to address it.

Area(s) of Strength:

Area(s) to Prioritize for Making Changes:

## **VIII. DECISION MAKING & PROBLEM SOLVING**

**8.1** Teaching staff make decisions regarding daily activities, room arrangements, and other matters that affect their day-to-day practice.

**8.2** Teaching staff share decision-making with the administration in situations where decisions impact their work life. These decisions include, but are not limited to: staffing for paid leave time; scheduling; rotation of responsibilities; choosing curriculum and assessment materials; ordering materials for the classroom; screening and interviewing new staff; and managing staff turnover with consideration for the needs of children and staff.

**8.3** Staff are engaged in setting program goals, identifying priorities to meet the goals, and measuring progress.

**8.4** The program philosophy and vision are created jointly by administrative and teaching staff and reviewed at least annually for changes/modifications.

**8.5** All staff members, including the administration, are committed to examining what is not working and open to and supportive of trying new ideas.

8.6 Problems are viewed as opportunities for program improvement.

#### Area(s) of Strength:

#### Area(s) to Prioritize for Making Changes:

# IX. HEALTH, SAFETY, & PHYSICAL SETTING

9.1 The program accepts responsibility for providing a safe and healthy work environment for employees.

**9.2** Personal protective equipment or clothing (e.g., disposable gloves) are available without cost to the employee.

**9.3** At the time of hire, staff receive training on safe methods for handling objects and children (e.g., lifting toddlers, handling food, dispersing medications), management of infectious diseases, and security procedures and systems.

**9.4** Regularly used equipment (e.g., diapering tables, storage areas) are designed on ergonomic principles and are at a height and location that allow staff to use gestures and postures that are safe.

**9.5** Adult-size chairs and workstations are available in all classrooms; adult restroom facilities are available at the center.

**9.6** Clear policies delineate the conditions under which children are excluded from the classroom because of illness or injury, and these policies are consistently implemented.

**9.7** Copies of workplace inspection reports from building, health, safety, and/or licensing officials are posted.

**9.8** No retaliatory action is taken against employees who refuse to perform work that is in violation of regulations, after notifying the employer of the violation.

**9.9** Security measures, as identified with input from all staff, are in place to ensure staff members' physical well-being (e.g., alarms and other security systems; a safe and well-lit parking area; well-rehearsed emergency plans; no teacher alone at the end of the day).

**9.10** Policies are in place to assure a work environment that is free of sexual harassment, racial discrimination, bullying, and other forms of abuse.

**9.11** The program provides in-service training for staff on management of stress and other issues relating to physical, emotional, and mental well-being.

#### Physical Setting

**9.12** There is adequate classroom space designed with the developmental needs of children in mind. Staff have input into room arrangements and are provided resources, training, and support to improve classroom space.

9.13 Classrooms have comfortable places for adults to sit and be with children.

**9.14** Staff are encouraged to add artifacts, photographs, and other objects that reflect their lives as well as the lives of the children.

**9.15** The staff room or designated area allows for both staff interaction and a relatively quiet place for reflection and breaks.

9.16 Staff have a safe place to put personal belongings and a work area for preparation and planning.

**9.17** The physical setting is evaluated periodically for the health and safety needs of employees; improvements are planned in response to staff needs.

**9.18** Reasonable accommodations are made for staff with special needs, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

9.19 Overall maintenance of the facility is the responsibility of persons other than teaching staff.

#### Area(s) of Strength:

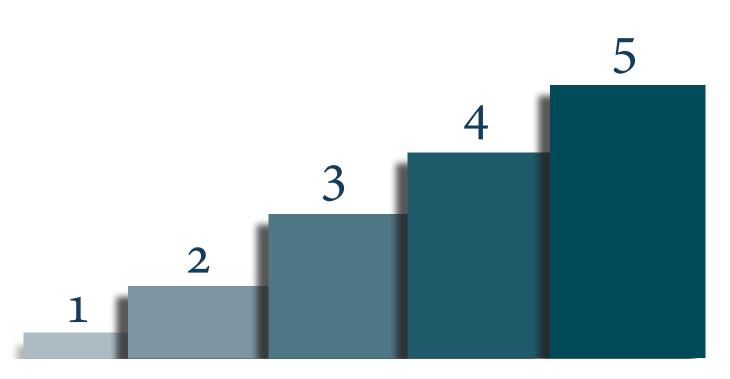
#### Area(s) to Prioritize for Making Changes:

# **PROGRAM ASSESSMENT**

The Model Work Standards are presented as statements that specifically identify what a high-quality program is striving to achieve. Through a self-assessment process, teaching staff and administrators can reflect on their program's particular strengths and determine priorities for making changes. The group may decide to establish a leadership team with representation from both teaching and administrative staff to develop an action plan that identifies concrete goals, a process of achieving them, and a means to measure progress.

On the following pages, you'll find an assessment sheet for each standard to facilitate your review process. Please rank each standard individually as it applies to your child care program. Ranking is on a five-point scale based on these markers:

- 1 Not Met
- 2 In Planning Stage
- 3 In Progress
- 4 Near Completion
- 5 Consistently Met



# Standard I - Wages

Rank each standard using the following markers:

Item	Score
<b>1.1</b> Salary scales for all positions are provided to every employee in a written format, either online or in a printed program policy document.	
<b>1.2</b> Salary scales identify different levels of pay for educators according to their levels of education and years of experience and are not based on the ages of the children with whom they work (e.g., if an infant-toddler educator and a preschool educator have the same credentials, they are both on the same wage scale).	
<b>1.3</b> Earning an early childhood degree or specialized credential is immediately rewarded with an increase in compensation.	
<b>1.4</b> Salary scales assure a living wage for all. The establishment of salary scales leads to the ultimate goal of achieving salary and benefit parity with K-3 teachers when education and experience are equivalent.	
<b>1.5</b> Until salaries reach target levels, salary scales are reviewed annually and revised as additional funds become available (e.g., subsidy rate increases or other new public or private investments are made). Minimally, an annual cost of living adjustment is provided to all employees.	
<b>1.6</b> Wages are paid in full when the program has an unexpected closure (e.g., inclement weather days) or when teaching staff are released due to low enrollment.	
<b>1.7</b> There is no differential in pay for work that includes direct care of children and that which fulfills professional responsibilities beyond direct care (e.g., planning time, staff meetings, recordkeeping, etc.).	
<b>1.8</b> Any staff member who is qualified to perform a higher-paid position and is assigned to work in that position for two consecutive weeks or more is paid at the higher rate of pay for all hours worked in that position.	
<b>1.9</b> In a 40-hour work week, one paid 15-minute break for each four-hour period is scheduled, as well as an unpaid 30-minute lunch break.	
<b>1.10</b> As required by federal law, all work by teaching staff that is more than 40 hours per week is paid at the overtime rate of time and a half.	

# Assessment Sheet Standard I - Wages, Cont'd

Record scoring and relevant notes below.

### Score Distribution, Standard I -Wages

Number	5	4	3	2	1
of	Consistently	Near	In	In Planning	Not
Items	Met	Completion	Progress	Stage	Met
10					

### Notes on Wages:

## Standard II - Benefits

Rank each standard using the following markers:

Item	Score
2.1 All employees have access to health care coverage. Full-time employees are offered	
employer-paid health insurance, with 75 percent of the premium covered by the employer.	
Health insurance for part-time employees is prorated.	
2.2 A negotiable package equivalent to 10 percent of salary is available for benefits such as:	
child care for employee's own children; family member health coverage; short- and long-term	
disability insurance; dental insurance; optical insurance; and life insurance.	
2.3 All employees have access to retirement savings. A retirement savings plan (e.g., 401K or	
IRA) is available with an employer contribution, which equals no less than 3 percent of salary,	
and includes an option for employee contributions.	
2.4 Staff receive at least 12 paid sick/personal days per year, which can be taken to care for sick	
family members, as well.	
2.5 At least one year's worth of unused sick days can be carried over to the next year in	
recognition of the frequent exposure to illness that child care teachers experience.	
2.6 A minimum of eight holidays are paid each year. When holidays fall on a weekend, the day	
before or after is the paid holiday.	
2.7 Employees may use personal or vacation time for religious or cultural holidays when the	
center is not closed.	
2.8 Employees accrue paid vacation time based on longevity in their program: minimally five	
days per year during the first year of employment; 10 days per year during years two through	
four; and 15 days per year with five or more years of employment. Part-time employees earn	
paid time off on a prorated basis.	
<b>2.9</b> Up to five days of paid vacation time may be carried over into the following year.	
<b>2.10</b> There are written policies describing the conditions and approval procedures under which	
an unpaid leave of absence may be taken by employees.	
<b>2.11</b> Up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave is allowed each year for the birth or adoption of a child,	
acceptance of a foster child, or employee or family member illness. The employee is guaranteed	
continued health coverage and their job back at the same rate of pay and benefits as prior to	
the leave.	

# Assessment Sheet Standard II - Benefits, Cont'd

Record scoring and relevant notes below.

# Score Distribution, Standard II - Benefits

Number of	5 Consistently	4 Near	3 In	2 In Planning	1 Not
Items	Met	Completion	Progress	Stage	Met
11					

Notes on Benefits:

## **Standard III - Employment Policies & Practices**

Rank each standard using the following markers:

Item	Score
3.1 Employees are not discriminated against based on personal characteristics, including but	
not limited to: race; skin color; age; religion; sex; sexual orientation; gender expression;	
disability; marital status; political persuasion; national origin or ancestry; immigration status;	
physical appearance; income level or source of income; student status; union activity; or	
criminal record (except as required by licensing regulations). Some, but not all of the above, are	
covered by federal law.	
<b>3.2</b> Staff files are kept in a secure and locked location, only accessible by appropriate personnel.	
Personnel information is considered confidential.	
<b>3.3</b> All staff are made aware of the child care center's plan to ensure the safety and privacy of	
children, families, and staff in regards to ensuring a safe space from immigration enforcement.	
Federal guidelines list schools, including "known and licensed child care and other early care	
and education programs," as "sensitive locations" where immigration enforcement actions	
should generally be avoided.	
3.4 Job descriptions are accurate, specific, and include minimum qualifications for	
the position.	
3.5 Job descriptions and job expectations are reviewed at least annually or in the event of	
changes in employee responsibilities; teaching staff have input into revisions of their own	
job description.	
<b>3.6</b> At the time of hire, written policies and procedures for the program are provided to	
employees, including but not limited to: job descriptions; personnel policies; salary/benefit	
schedules; staff disciplinary policies; policies on developing employees for promotions and	
leadership; program policies; expectation for staff involvement in parent meetings,	
conferences, fundraising events, and other activities; and health policies for both children	
and staff.	
3.7 Orientation is provided before a new employee begins teaching responsibilities and engages	
the expertise of current staff. Orientation includes a thorough review of employment policies,	
the evaluation cycle/process, grievance procedures, health and safety practices, and the	
employee's legal rights in the workplace.	
3.8 Staff work schedules and classroom assignments are set at the time of hire.	

## Standard III - Employment Policies & Practices, Cont'd

Rank each standard using the following markers:

Item	Score
3.9 Classroom assignments are stable and are not routinely changed in response to daily	
fluctuations in child enrollments. No arbitrary or capricious changes occur.	
<b>3.10</b> When work schedules must be changed temporarily, staff input is considered.	
<b>3.11</b> When work schedules must be changed permanently, a minimum of two weeks notice is given.	
<b>3.12</b> The individual needs of staff to maintain a healthy work/family balance are considered when establishing work schedules.	
<b>3.13</b> Staff are evaluated three months after the date of hire or at the end of a probationary/ orientation period if less than six months and then at least annually thereafter.	
<b>3.14</b> The annual evaluation process includes: 1) a self-evaluation completed by the employee; 2) a written evaluation by the supervisor; and 3) a meeting between the employee and the supervisor to discuss the evaluation. A peer or team evaluation may be an addition to this process.	
<b>3.15</b> A procedure is in place for employee evaluation of supervisors.	
<b>3.16</b> Program recruitment, retention, and promotion policies and practices reflect a commitment to promoting racial, gender, and ethnic diversity and representation across all positions.	
<b>3.17</b> Policies promote equity by developing current employees for promotions and leadership positions.	
<b>3.18</b> In hiring for teaching positions, the interviewing/decision-making committee shall include at least two teaching staff members, at least one of them working in the room where the vacancy has occured.	
<b>3.19</b> In hiring for supervisory or management positions, the interviewing/decision-making committee shall include at least one teaching staff member.	
<b>3.20</b> Grievance procedures state who can initiate a complaint, how it must be initiated, who receives the complaint, when the complaint must be filed, and how the complaint will be resolved.	
<b>3.21</b> Employees have the right to have another person present at any point in the grievance process.	

### Standard III - Employment Policies & Practices, Cont'd

Rank each standard using the following markers:

Item	Score
<b>3.22</b> No retaliatory action is taken against staff who implement the grievance procedure.	
<b>3.23</b> Employees are not discharged without just cause.	
<b>3.24</b> No discharge for unsatisfactory job performance takes place until the employee has been warned of unsatisfactory performance in writing and has been given reasonable time to improve. Written notice of discharge, stating reasons for dismissal, is given to the employee. Exceptions to this standard are described in 3.25.	
<b>3.25</b> Grounds for immediate dismissal, with no prior notice, include: the display of physical violence harmful to children or adults or property; a guilty verdict or substantiated state investigation of child abuse or neglect; evidence of alcohol and/or other drug abuse; misuse of funds; falsification of documents; and violation of confidentiality agreements.	
<b>3.26</b> Any staff member who has their work duties changed or is placed on leave due to an investigation for alleged child abuse and/or neglect will continue to receive full pay and benefits until the investigation is complete.	
<b>3.27</b> In the case of a layoff, employees receive a minimum of two weeks notice and full payment of wages for those two weeks, whether working or not.	

### Standard III - Employment Policies & Practices, Cont'd

Record scoring and relevant notes below.

### Score Distribution, Standard III - Employment Policies & Practices

Number	5	4	3	2	l
of	Consistently	Near	In	In Planning	Not
Items	Met	Completion	Progress	Stage	Met
27					

#### Notes on Employment Policies & Practices:

# **Standard IV - Payment for Professional Responsibilities**

Rank each standard using the following markers:

Item	Score
<b>4.1</b> Work schedules encompass paid contact time with children as well as paid time for completing other professional responsibilities that are not compatible with child supervision, as defined in the job description. This time is reflected in the program's staffing pattern or through the employment of qualified substitutes or floater teachers.	
<b>4.2</b> There is time within the classroom schedule to set up the classroom and to clean up after the day's activities.	
<b>4.3</b> Educators who have professional responsibilities in addition to the direct care and education of children receive a minimum of five hours per week of paid time, without responsibility for children, to engage in such activities as: curriculum planning; gathering and preparing materials; team meetings and staff collaboration; observation and assessment of children's growth and development; and documentation, reporting, and reflection on classroom practices.	
<b>4.4</b> Additional paid time is allocated for meeting with a supervisor, coach, or mentor or for serving in such a role; being in a leadership role (e.g., on a committee or board); and conducting parent/guardian conferences and other family engagement activities.	
4.5 Paid staff meetings engaging all staff are held at least once per month.	
<b>4.6</b> The program is closed at least one day each year for renewing the physical environment and one day for long-range program planning. These days are paid time for participating staff.	
<b>4.7</b> Staff have a minimum of 40 hours of paid time for continuing education and professional development each year, the content of which is determined collaboratively with program administration.	
<b>4.8</b> Teaching staff can use professional development time for individualized and state-mandated in-service training, attending college classes or community-based training, observation time in other child care programs, and/or release time for activities related to child care advocacy.	
<b>4.9</b> After six months of employment, each member of the teaching staff is allocated minimally \$200/year for professional development expenses. Unused amounts can be carried over to the next year.	

### Standard IV - Payment for Professional Responsibilities, Cont'd

Rank each standard using the following markers:

Item	Score	
4.10 Information about educational funding is available to staff who wish to pursue college		
degrees in early childhood education or child development. If there are no funding		
opportunities available in the community, the program prioritizes support for educational		
funding in their annual budget and/or fundraising activities.		

## Standard IV - Payment for Professional Responsibilities, Cont'd

Record scoring and relevant notes below.

### Score Distribution, Standard IV - Payment for Professional Responsibilities

Number of	5 Consistently	4 Near	3 In	2 In Planning	1 Not
Items	Met	Completion	Progress	Stage	Met
10					

#### Notes on Payment for Professional Responsibilities:

## Standard V - Professional Development

Rank each standard using the following markers:

Item	Score
<b>5.1</b> Reflective supervision is provided to each staff member by a supervisor, coach, or mentor. This supervision is individualized to meet the needs of each staff member and to engage their curiosity and deeper thinking.	
<b>5.2</b> Guidance is available to staff in the development of a personalized professional development plan that sets challenging but reachable goals. Resources are provided as needed to assist in achieving goals.	
<b>5.3</b> A professional development plan is determined through a mutual process between a staff member and the supervisor/coach. Areas for improvement identified in the annual evaluation are considered in this plan, as well.	
<b>5.4</b> Ongoing feedback on progress towards goals is relayed through reflective supervision provided by a supervisor, coach, or mentor. Feedback is open, honest, and based on observations that occur on a regular basis and at least monthly.	
<b>5.5</b> The center provides accessible and affordable professional development opportunities that promote collaboration and community building with other professionals — both those who work within the program itself and those who work in other programs and across early childhood settings.	
<b>5.6</b> Continuing education and training choices reflect the learning styles and interests of individual staff members and include opportunities for staff to engage in sequential, in-depth (i.e., multiple-session) learning experiences.	
<b>5.7</b> Staff are provided encouragement and support to share their professional development experiences. This process could employ a variety of formats, such as a presentation at a staff meeting, demonstrating new learning in another classroom, or conducting in-service training for co-workers to share information with a team.	
<b>5.8</b> All staff participate in ongoing anti-bias/anti-racism training as part of their professional development; training focuses on working with adults as well as children.	
<b>5.9</b> Opportunities to serve as a mentor or to be mentored are available. Appropriate training is available for staff serving as mentors.	
<b>5.10</b> Opportunities exist for staff to observe one another and work together to improve teaching practices and expand their repertoire of teaching skills.	

### Standard V - Professional Development, Cont'd

Rank each standard using the following markers:

Item	Score
<b>5.11</b> Information is available to staff regarding opportunities for professional development and	
support outside of the center (e.g., support groups, professional associations, informal	
networks, and advocacy groups).	

## Standard V - Professional Development, Cont'd

Record scoring and relevant notes below.

#### Score Distribution, Standard V - Professional Development

Number	5	4	3	2	l
of	Consistently	Near	In	In Planning	Not
Items	Met	Completion	Progress	Stage	Met
11		L	21051000		

### Notes on Professional Development:

## Standard VI - Staffing & Teaching Supports

Rank each standard using the following markers:

Item	Score
<b>6.1</b> Professional support is available to teaching staff, either at the site or in the community,	
including through (but not limited to): office managers; human resources managers; physical	
and mental health care professionals; social workers; language translators; nutritionists and	
cooks; bus/van drivers; and maintenance/cleaning staff.	
6.2 The program consistently maintains sufficient staff for group sizes and adult/child ratios	
that ensure individual attention for each child every day, with awareness of national guidelines.	
6.3 Trained and qualified substitutes or floater teachers are available and arranged by the	
program administration for all staff leave time, including sick, vacation, personal, and	
professional leave.	
6.4 Trained and qualified substitutes or floater teachers are available for coverage during times	
when a teacher's responsibilities are not compatible with supervision of children (e.g., planning	
time, peer-to-peer reflection, paperwork).	
6.5 The program has learning materials, equipment, furnishings, and curriculum and	
assessment tools to address the developmental needs of all the children enrolled in the	
program.	
6.6 Equipment and materials are repaired or replaced as needed and in a timely manner.	
6.7 All required curriculum and assessment tools are available to staff at the program's expense.	
6.8 A staff room or designated area is fully equipped with supplies needed for adult break time	
(e.g., a place to eat and store snacks/lunches), comfortable adult furnishings, workspace, and	
access to technology (e.g., computers, fax, email, and Internet use).	
6.9 There is a professional library where staff can access books, journals, videos, and online	
resources to support their work with children.	
6.10 Staff have access to petty cash funds for immediate consumable supplies, and a system is	
in place for requesting funds when needs are apparent.	
6.11 Staff have input in determining the program's operating budget for supplies and	
equipment.	
6.12 Peer support is available to all staff, from entry level to those with the greatest education	
and experience.	

## Standard VI - Staffing & Teaching Supports, Cont'd

Rank each standard using the following markers:

Item	Score
<b>6.13</b> Professional support and information about community resources are available to staff working with families and their children who are experiencing trauma or who have special needs or challenging behaviors.	
<b>6.14</b> Sufficient resources are available within the program or through external sources to support staff when there are communication and/or language barriers (e.g., translation services, curriculum supports for dual language learners, etc.).	

## Standard VI - Staffing & Teaching Supports, Cont'd

Record scoring and relevant notes below.

### Score Distribution, Standard V - Staffing & Teaching Supports

Number	5	4	3	2	1
of	Consistently	Near	In	In Planning	Not
Items 14	Met	Completion	Progress	Stage	Met

#### Notes on Staffing & Teaching Supports:

### Standard VII - Communication & Team Building

Rank each standard using the following markers:

Item	Score
<b>7.1</b> Communication among teaching staff, administration, and supervisory staff models respect for the value of the work and the value of each individual's contributions.	
<b>7.2</b> An effective communication system ensures that everyone on staff is informed about new procedures, policies, and events. The communication system respects the various learning styles of staff (i.e., it incorporates both visual and verbal messages and "walks" people through new procedures).	
<b>7.3</b> Communication honors the primary language of each employee, and whenever possible and practical, written policies and procedures for the program are translated into the employee's primary language.	
<b>7.4</b> Proposed changes in policies and procedures are circulated in writing to all staff, and a sufficient period is allowed for meaningful staff input and response before changes are adopted or implemented.	
<b>7.5</b> Staff meetings are designed with the primary purpose of enhancing staff communication and collaboration, building a cohesive community, and working together to understand the needs of children, solve problems, and improve program quality. Announcements, reminders, and general issues of efficient program operation are secondary.	
<b>7.6</b> Staff have input into the agenda of staff meetings, the agenda is distributed in advance of meetings, and a written record of the meeting is kept and posted.	
7.7 Opportunities exist for staff members to work collaboratively on projects, share resources, and solve problems together outside of staff meeting time.	
<b>7.8</b> In addition to adhering to a non-discrimination policy, the program intentionally honors, respects, and affirms each individual staff member. Fulfillment of this goal is evaluated regularly with staff input.	
<b>7.9</b> The program encourages collegiality, a sense of community, and a positive work climate through team-building activities, group projects, and the creation of traditions/rituals among staff. The program does not tolerate bullying among adults; employees experiencing bullying can use the grievance procedure to address it.	

### Standard VII - Communication & Team Building, Cont'd

Record scoring and relevant notes below.

### Score Distribution, Standard VII - Communication & Team Building

Number of	5 Consistently	4 Near	3 In	2 In Planning	1 Not
Items	Met	Completion	Progress	Stage	Met
9					

### Notes on Communication & Team Building: