

4.9 The employment agreement includes policies and procedures related to termination. Employees are not discharged without just cause, and whenever possible, a termination occurs only after the provider and employee have attempted to resolve the conflict.

4.10 An employee is informed of grounds for immediate dismissal upon employment. These grounds for dismissal are: the display of physical violence to children, 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 requirements.

4.11 Work schedules allow for paid breaks: at least 15 minutes for every four hours worked.

4.12 When a work schedule must be changed, two-weeks advance notice is given to the employee.

4.13 The provider offers the employee helpful, consistent, and constructive feedback on job performance.

4.14 The provider and the employee, if working together with children, share observations and plan some activities together. They also keep each other informed of communication with parents/guardians and other family members.

4.15 Employees are involved in decision making as it directly affects their day-to-day practice and are engaged in setting program goals, measuring progress, and solving problems.

4.16 The provider accepts responsibility for ensuring a safe and healthy working environment for employees.

4.17 The provider meets all state requirements regarding the hiring of employees, such as staff health reports, criminal records background checks, and documentation of education.

4.18 The provider assumes all legal responsibilities for the hiring of employees, such as paying the employer's share of social security and worker's compensation, as well as federal and state unemployment taxes. The provider is also aware of applicable state and federal labor laws; for example, by federal law, all hours worked over 40 hours per week must be paid at the overtime rate of time and a half.

4.19 The family child care program honors, respects, and affirms the culture and traditions of all employees of the program and all families served.

4.20 Employees are not discriminated against on the basis of race, color, age, religion, sex, disability, marital status, political persuasion, national origin or ancestry, physical appearance, income level or source of income, student status, sexual preference, gender expression, union activity, or criminal record (except as required by licensing regulations).

Area(s) of Strength:

Area(s) to Prioritize for Making Changes:

V. COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR PROMOTING CAREERS IN FAMILY CHILD CARE

Resources and support within a community can contribute tremendously to promoting careers in family child care. Historically, what communities have to offer varies a great deal in terms of quantity, quality, and accessibility to the provider. Quantity of services may only be one concern: providers working in one community may have fewer community resources, but those that exist are well targeted and useful, while in another community, providers may be surrounded by resources but unaware of them. There is potential to do better in both cases. While you cannot necessarily control what, if any, community support is available to you as a provider, knowledge of the possibilities can influence you as an advocate for careers in family child care. In some cases, certain standards may not be applicable to your program.

5.1 Qualified substitute/respite providers are available for the provider to take leave without the child care program closing, when family or personal emergencies arise, or when the provider is engaged in professional activities that take them away from the program.

5.2 Professional support in the community is available to the provider and may include:

- An organized substitute provider pool that screens and provides training for substitutes;
- Technical assistance and consultation on a range of issues, such as how to become a regulated provider, improve program and business management, improve financial literacy, apply for loans or grants, meet higher quality standards, and design family child care environments;
- A resource and referral program that helps providers maintain their desired enrollment;
- Access to the expertise of other professionals, such as nutritionists, social workers, and health care practitioners;
- Mental health consultants, who can offer support for dealing with children’s challenging behaviors and/or the impacts of trauma; and/or
- Translation services to support communication with families speaking a language that the provider doesn’t speak.

5.3 The provider has access to appropriate, affordable, and relevant training and education provided by adult educators who are knowledgeable about the family child care profession. Access includes consideration for the time of day, the length of the training session, and the location of the training. Basic to advanced training is available, preferably with college credit.

5.4 Information is intentionally disseminated to family child care providers in the community concerning:

- Educational opportunities and funding for education;
- Engagement in professional associations, support groups, and advocacy networks; and
- Resources and services for children with special needs, how to make appropriate referrals when necessary, and the impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on the provider's enrollment practices.

5.5 Opportunities exist for a new provider to work with a mentor during the first two years of operation and for an experienced provider to mentor others. Mentoring programs include appropriate training and compensation for providers serving as mentors.

5.6 Opportunities exist to network with center-based child care teachers in the community for the purposes of sharing information and resources and to work together on advocacy efforts.

5.7 Opportunities exist to promote family child care providers as leaders in the community (e.g., as mentors, members of committees, advocates, providers of professional learning, etc.).

5.8 Resources are available to providers to offset some of the expenses of operating a family child care business. These resources could include but are not limited to:

- A service that lends toys, books, and equipment;
- Resource specialists such as storytellers, dancers, musicians, scientists, and others who share their talents in family child care programs;
- A professional library with books, journals, brochures, videos, and other materials on issues of interest to family child care providers;
- Business management tools and/or recordkeeping services;
- Access to a group health care pool;
- Tax preparation assistance;
- Access to technology, including computers, photocopiers, and email;
- Buying clubs to purchase food and/or other consumable supplies in bulk with other providers;
- Cleaning services;
- Maintenance and repair services;

- Food preparation services;
- Diaper services; and/or
- Other: _____ .

5.9 A community-based speakers bureau and/or other public education activities engage providers and other community leaders in improving the image of family child care in their community.

Area(s) of Strength:

Area(s) to Prioritize for Making Changes:

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

The Model Work Standards, taken as a whole, are designed to describe a high-quality work environment in a family child care setting. Through a self-assessment process, providers reflect on their program's particular strengths and determine priorities for making changes. Provider assistants (if you have them), other trusted providers, colleagues, and parents can all be engaged in this process, creating a "team" approach to the program assessment. Using the following assessment sheets as a launching point, providers can 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. In order to develop a plan for improving the work environment, 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

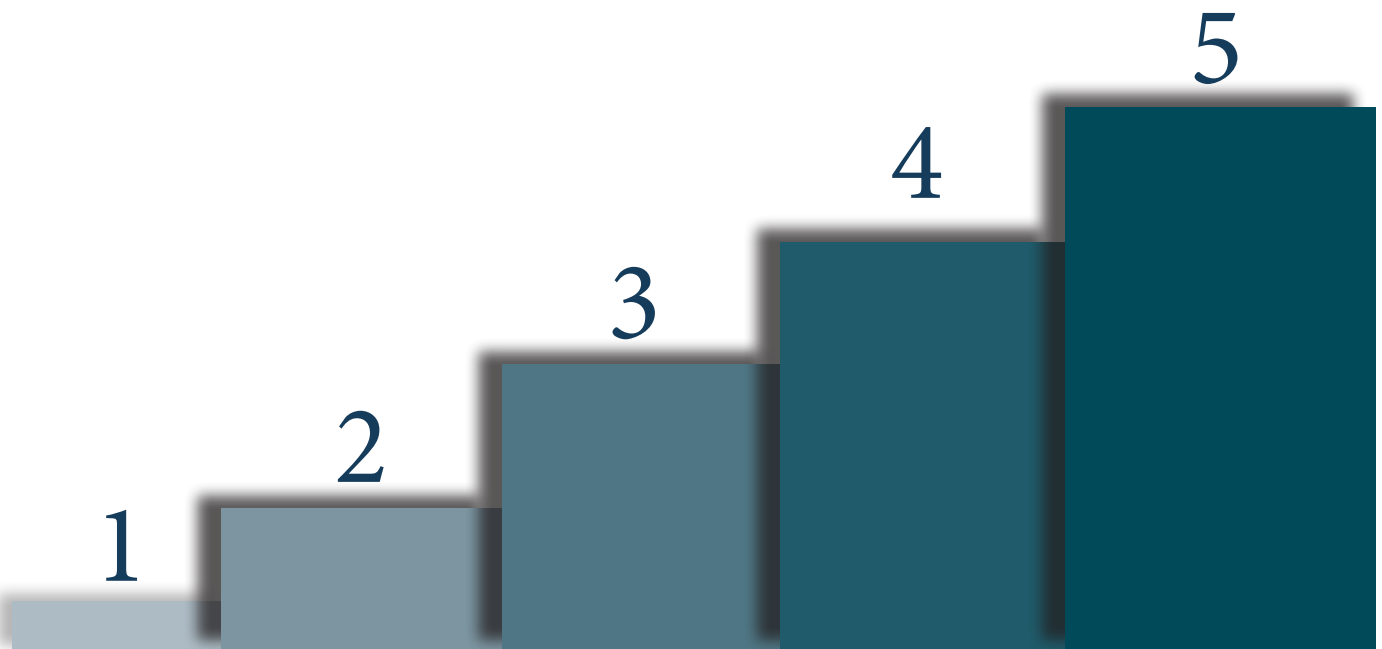
2 - In Planning Stage

3 - In Progress

4 - Near Completion

5 - Consistently Met

N/A - Not Applicable – In some cases, certain standards may not be applicable to your program. Note such items in your review on the following pages.



Assessment Worksheet

I. Model Contract & Program Policies

Part 1 - Provider Income & Benefits

Rank each standard using the following markers:

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

Item	Score
<p>1.1 Fees charged for child care, in combination with other sources of income for the child care business, guarantee that all reasonable and customary expenses will be met and that the provider has an income that at minimum is sufficient to meet the cost of living in the provider’s community.</p>	
<p>1.2 Fees charged for child care, in combination with other sources of income for the child care business, guarantee that the provider has health care coverage that fully covers themselves and any dependents not covered under an alternate health care plan (an alternate plan could be a spouse’s health insurance plan).</p>	
<p>1.3 Fees charged for child care, in combination with other sources of income for the child care business, guarantee an annual increase in income for the provider to reflect a “cost of living adjustment” (COLA).</p>	
<p>1.4 Until compensation reaches the level of those holding occupations in the community with comparable expertise based on combined levels of responsibility, experience, and education, fees charged for child care are raised annually an additional amount above the COLA.</p>	
<p>1.5 The provider’s income is guaranteed by a written provider–parent contract which stipulates that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All contracted hours are paid for in full, regardless of a child’s attendance; and • Fees are paid in full when the program has an unexpected closure due to provider illness or family emergency. A maximum number of paid days for such closures may be established in the contract. 	
<p>1.6 Fee and payment schedules are revised to reflect changes in state reimbursement rates for subsidized child care whenever these occur.</p>	
<p>1.7 When the provider achieves a higher level of formal education (i.e., earns a degree or credential in early childhood education) or becomes nationally accredited, they have the flexibility guaranteed in their contract to revise their fee and payment schedule to reward such achievements.</p>	
<p>1.8 Financial records, including an operating budget, are used to gauge the program’s stability.</p>	
<p>1.9 A recordkeeping system is in place to maximize business deductions available to the provider and to assure compliance with tax laws.</p>	

Assessment Worksheet

I. Model Contract & Program Policies

Part 1 - Provider Income & Benefits, Cont'd.

Rank each standard using the following markers:

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

Item	Score
1.10 The program is covered by insurance policies, including program liability insurance, homeowners insurance, and vehicle insurance (if the program transports children).	
1.11 For the purpose of setting and collecting fees, the provider requests that parents check with their employers about pre-tax child care benefits and/or with local agencies about child care subsidies.	
1.12 The provider receives a minimum of five paid sick/personal days per year, which can be taken to care for sick family members, as well.	
1.13 The provider receives a minimum of seven holidays per year, which are paid in full by families whose contracted hours fall on these days. When holidays fall on a weekend, the day before or after is taken as the paid holiday.	
1.14 The provider earns a minimum of five vacation days per year in the first two years of operation and 10 days per year in subsequent years, which is paid in full by families enrolled in the program. Additional unpaid vacation leave may be negotiated with parents in the contract.	
1.15 The provider receives minimally two paid days per year for their own professional development.	
1.16 In the event that the provider takes leave for the birth or adoption of a child, they may take all accrued sick and vacation time, billing parents for this portion of their leave.	
1.17 The provider sets aside minimally 5 percent of net earnings to support self-sufficiency in retirement.	
1.18 At least annually, the provider assesses their income and benefits and makes necessary adjustments to ensure their ability to continue providing quality care.	

Assessment Worksheet

I. Model Contract & Program Policies

Part 1 - Provider Income & Benefits, Cont'd.

Record your scoring and relevant notes below.

I. Model Contract & Program Policies - Part 1 - Provider Income & Benefits

Number of Items	1 Not Met	2 In Planning Stage	3 In Progress	4 Near Completion	5 Consistently Met
18					

Notes on Provider Income & Benefits:

Assessment Worksheet

I. Model Contract & Program Policies

Part 2 - Hours of Work & Provider–Parent Communication

Rank each standard using the following markers:

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

Item	Score
<p>1.19 In calculating hours worked for the purpose of setting fees, the provider includes time for planning, preparation, cleaning, shopping, recordkeeping and other paperwork, and conversing with enrolled or prospective parents.</p>	
<p>1.20 The provider establishes a work schedule that allows them the respite they need to maintain the energy and stamina required to care for children. This work schedule may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A set number of hours worked per day or per week; • Enrollment patterns that ensure some “down time” during the day; • The use of qualified assistants or family members onsite during “down times,” such as naptime, to allow for breaks; • A system of parent volunteers and/or family members to take on or help with certain program tasks, such as grocery shopping, laundry, and equipment repairs; • Employment of a regular provider assistant or substitute providers as needed; • Contracting out for certain services, such as catering, cleaning, and facility maintenance; and/or • Other: _____ . 	
<p>1.21 The provider and parents sign a contract/agreement that defines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hours of care; • Fee schedule and payment policies, including late fees for overdue payments, overtime rates for late pick-ups, and fees for non-contracted hours if provided (such as drop-in during unscheduled time and weekend or overnight care); • Other charges, which may include, but are not limited to: registration or other administrative fees, meal expenses (if not on the Child and Adult Care Food Program), special activity fees, infant supplies, an annual continuing education fund for the provider, fees for returned checks, fees associated with any court or collection agency costs incurred in the collection of overdue payments, and fees associated with seeking emergency medical attention; • Policies covering absences of both the provider and children, including vacation, holiday, and sick leave; • A provision for contract updates and renewals, occurring at least annually; 	

Assessment Worksheet

I. Model Contract & Program Policies

Part 2 - Hours of Work & Provider–Parent Communication, Cont’d.

Rank each standard using the following markers:

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

Item	Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisions for termination of care: Parents who are withdrawing their children are required to minimally provide a two-week notice during which time all fees are paid regardless of attendance (except during an identified initial trial period); providers are required to identify any conditions warranting immediate termination, such as non-payment of fees and conditions specified by licensing regulations; all other reasons for termination are first subject to an identified process of conflict resolution; and • Parents’ responsibility for finding alternate care and/or circumstances under which a provider hires a substitute. 	
<p>1.22 Written program policies are provided to all parents that specify such things as emergency procedures, discipline and guidance policies, and the daily schedule and also may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider’s job description, which in addition to the care and education of children includes such tasks as program planning, child assessments, recordkeeping, budgeting, shopping for groceries and program supplies, food preparation, and cleaning and maintaining the child care environment; • Provider’s professional experience, credentials, and/or level of education; • Statement of how the program is regulated and where parents can get more information on child care regulations and their rights as consumers; • Statement of the program’s quality rating, if participating in a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS); • Statement of program philosophy and goals; and/or • List of items that parents are expected to provide to the program for their child’s care, if any (such as diapers, formula, clothing, bedding, etc.). 	
<p>1.23 Ongoing communication mechanisms ensure that family members are informed about new procedures, policies, and events, etc. This communication can take a variety of forms, including but not limited to bulletin boards, newsletters, and daily activity reports (printed or online), individual child journals, phone conversations, and parent–provider conferences.</p>	
<p>1.24 Family engagement is encouraged through an “open-door” visitation policy, volunteer opportunities, potlucks, and other social activities, fundraising projects, advocacy, and/or sharing information about learning opportunities for children in the communities where they live.</p>	

Assessment Worksheet

I. Model Contract & Program Policies

Part 2 - Hours of Work & Provider–Parent Communication, Cont'd.

Rank each standard using the following markers:

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

Item	Score
1.25 Parents are aware of the family child care provider’s plan to ensure the safety and privacy of children and their families in regard to protection from immigration enforcement. Federal guidelines list “known and licensed child care and other early care and education programs as ‘sensitive locations’ where immigration enforcement actions should generally be avoided.”	
1.26 Parents are aware of the family child care budget, particularly the expenses involved in the operation of the program.	

Record your scoring and relevant notes below.

I. Model Contract & Program Policies -

Part 2 - Hours of Work & Provider–Parent Communication

Number of Items	1 Not Met	2 In Planning Stage	3 In Progress	4 Near Completion	5 Consistently Met
8					

Notes on Hours of Work & Provider–Parent Communication:

Assessment Worksheet

II. Professional Development

Rank each standard using the following markers:

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

Item	Score
<p>2.1 The provider has received education in both child development and small business management, including the special aspects of running a family child care business.</p>	
<p>2.2 The provider has received training in implementing curriculum that meets the developmental needs of a mixed-age group of children.</p>	
<p>2.3 The provider has received training in the use of observation and assessment tools to facilitate curriculum planning.</p>	
<p>2.4 The provider has received training in child care health and safety issues, including those areas which affect their own well-being and receives updated training as needed. Such training may focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe practices for lifting children and heavy objects in order to prevent back and knee injuries; • Management of infectious diseases and universal precautions for blood-borne pathogens; • Child/Infant CPR and SIDS prevention; • Nutrition and safe food-handling practices; and/or • Stress management and other issues related to the emotional and mental well-being of the provider and children. 	
<p>2.5 The provider creates a professional development plan each year in which they set challenging but reachable goals and seek out the resources needed to achieve these goals.</p>	
<p>2.6 The professional development plan incorporates participation in continuing education, which includes but is not limited to: state-mandated training; workshops; college classes; multi-session in-depth learning experiences; discussion groups; professional conferences; observation time in other child care programs; and/or engagement in advocacy activities.</p>	
<p>2.7 The provider participates in ongoing equity, inclusion, and diversity training to support their work with both children and adults in a way that is culturally responsive and age appropriate.</p>	
<p>2.8 The program budget allocates an annual fund for professional development expenses sufficient to cover the cost of training and related expenses, such as substitute providers.</p>	

Assessment Worksheet

II. Professional Development, Cont'd.

Rank each standard using the following markers:

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

Item	Score
<p>2.9 Through increased parent fees and/or other available sources of income (such as grant programs, salary supplements, or scaled reimbursement rates from state subsidy programs), the provider is recognized and rewarded for attaining higher levels of formal education and/or achieving accreditation.</p>	
<p>2.10 The provider conducts an annual assessment of the quality of their program that includes feedback from families and uses the results of this evaluation to plan professional development activities.</p>	
<p>2.11 The provider has peer support through either a formal or informal network of providers in order to reflect on their current practices and deepen their thinking, reduce feelings of isolation, engage in problem-solving with colleagues, and benefit from the experiences and encouragement of others.</p>	
<p>2.12 The provider participates in a professional association, family child care support group, shared services alliance/family child care network, and/or some other early childhood organization as part of ongoing professional development.</p>	
<p>2.13 The provider is aware of community supports that enhance professional development, such as family child care mentoring programs or leadership opportunities that may exist in a community.</p>	

Assessment Worksheet

II. Professional Development, Cont'd.

Record your scoring and relevant notes below.

II. Professional Development

Number of Items	1 Not Met	2 In Planning Stage	3 In Progress	4 Near Completion	5 Consistently Met
13					

Notes on Professional Development:

Assessment Worksheet

III. Family Child Care Work Environment

Rank each standard using the following markers:

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

Item	Score
3.1 The provider follows applicable state and local regulations regarding the physical space.	
3.2 The arrangement of space, the daily schedule, and the use of materials are balanced to meet the needs of both the child care program and the provider/provider's family.	
3.3 Adult-sized chairs and workstations are available in the child care space of the home. The provider has a comfortable place to sit and be with children.	
3.4 Regularly used equipment (such as diapering tables and infant carriers) and storage areas are designed at a height and location that allow the provider to use gestures and postures that are safe and comfortable.	
3.5 There is ample and easily accessible storage space.	
3.6 There is adequate space and enough toys and equipment to meet the developmental needs of all the children enrolled.	
3.7 There is an office or designated area equipped with a telephone and computer, with reliable access to the Internet, for conducting family child care business.	
3.8 There is a place in the home for the provider and parents to meet together.	
3.9 Included in the child care environment are artifacts, photographs, and other objects that reflect the provider's life and family, as well as the lives of the children in care.	
3.10 Clear policies delineate the conditions under which children are excluded from the family child care program because of illness, and these policies are consistently implemented.	
3.11 Policies describe emergency plans in the event that care cannot be offered due to provider illness or injury or a natural or man-made disaster (for example, what to do and where to go in the event of a fire or how to respond to an active shooting in the area).	
3.12 Copies of reports resulting from inspection of the child care home by building, health, safety, or licensing officials are posted for parents (and employed staff, if any) to see.	
3.13 The provider is aware of community resources that can enhance the family child care home as a safe and healthy work environment. (For further information, see Section V. Community Support for Promoting Careers in Family Child Care, p. 22).	

Assessment Worksheet

III. Family Child Care Work Environment, Cont'd.

Record your scoring and relevant notes below.

III. Family Child Care Work Environment

Number of Items	1 Not Met	2 In Planning Stage	3 In Progress	4 Near Completion	5 Consistently Met
13					

Notes on Family Child Care Work Environment:

Assessment Worksheet

IV. Provider as Employer

Rank each standard using the following markers:

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

If this section does not apply to you, please skip to

V. Community Support for Promoting Careers in Family Child Care.

Item	Score
4.1 Employees are provided a written job description that is accurate and specific. Any changes in the job description are discussed with the employee prior to implementation.	
4.2 Employees are evaluated at least annually on their job performance and have an opportunity to evaluate themselves and their employer in the process. The evaluation procedure is discussed with the employee at the time of hire.	
4.3 The provider offers an orientation to the program before the new employee takes on their responsibilities, including meeting the children and their families; a review of the program’s written policies, procedures and philosophy; any other “house rules” pertaining to the home; health and safety practices; and the employee’s legal rights in the workplace.	
4.4 An employment agreement identifies an equitable wage that rewards the employee’s education, experience in the profession, and job responsibilities, as reflected in a salary scale that identifies starting salary and provides transparency for wage adjustments.	
4.5 Employees working more than 20 hours per week on a regular basis have the following benefits prorated for the number of hours worked: health care coverage, paid sick and vacation leave, paid holidays, paid planning time, and a professional development fund.	
4.6 The wage and benefit plan is reviewed annually, and employees receive an annual cost of living raise, at a minimum.	
4.7 Employees are encouraged to participate in ongoing educational opportunities.	
4.8 A grievance procedure is included in the employment agreement and is reviewed with the employee at the time of hire.	
4.9 The employment agreement includes policies and procedures related to termination. Employees are not discharged without just cause, and whenever possible, a termination occurs only after the provider and employee have attempted to resolve the conflict.	
4.10 An employee is informed of grounds for immediate dismissal upon employment. These grounds for dismissal are: the display of physical violence to children, 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 requirements.	

Assessment Worksheet

IV. Provider as Employer, Cont'd.

Rank each standard using the following markers:

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

If this section does not apply to you, please skip to

V. Community Support for Promoting Careers in Family Child Care.

Item	Score
4.11 Work schedules allow for paid breaks: at least 15 minutes for every four hours worked.	
4.12 When a work schedule must be changed, two-weeks advance notice is given to the employee.	
4.13 The provider offers the employee helpful, consistent and constructive feedback on job performance.	
4.14 The provider and the employee, if working together with children, share observations and plan some activities together. They also keep each other informed of communication with parents/guardians and other family members.	
4.15 Employees are involved in decision making as it directly affects their day-to-day practice, and are engaged in setting program goals, measuring progress, and solving problems.	
4.16 The provider accepts responsibility for ensuring a safe and healthy working environment for employees.	
4.17 The provider meets all state requirements regarding the hiring of employees, such as staff health reports, criminal records, background checks, and documentation of education.	
4.18 The provider assumes all legal responsibilities for the hiring of employees, such as paying the employer's share of social security and worker's compensation, as well as federal and state unemployment taxes. The provider is also aware of applicable state and federal labor laws; for example, by federal law, all hours worked over 40 hours per week must be paid at the overtime rate of time and a half.	
4.19 The family child care program honors, respects, and affirms the culture and traditions of all employees of the program and all families served.	
4.20 Employees are not discriminated against on the basis of race, color, age, religion, sex, handicap, marital status, political persuasion, national origin or ancestry, physical appearance, income level or source of income, student status, sexual preference, gender expression, union activity, or criminal record (except as required by licensing regulations).	