

Guide to Understanding Quality Start Ratings



Excellent early learning programs help children learn and develop during their first five years, so that they are ready for kindergarten and beyond. **Quality Start Riverside County** helps child care and preschool programs in Riverside County achieve excellence. Quality Start rates early learning programs using statewide quality standards for early care and education. Participating early educators then receive training, coaching, and other resources to help raise the quality of their programs. Quality Start Riverside County also helps families search for and find high quality programs to meet the unique needs of their children.

HOW ARE QUALITY START PROGRAMS RATED?

Programs that volunteer to participate in Quality Start Riverside County are measured on the following elements of quality:



CHILD OBSERVATION

How the teachers use observation methods and tools to plan curriculum and activities to help children learn and grow.



HEALTH & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

How well the program supports children's well-being, and pays attention to their physical, social, and emotional needs.



TEACHER TRAINING & EDUCATION

How well the teachers are trained and educated to best support children's learning and growth.



POSITIVE TEACHER-CHILD INTERACTIONS

How well a teacher interacts with children, providing support and teaching children how to communicate and manage their emotions.



TEACHER-CHILD RATIO

How many children there are per teacher, so that students are receiving adequate one-on-one attention and teachers know the strengths and needs of each child.*



ENVIRONMENT

How safe and healthy the program's environment is so that children can learn and develop.



DIRECTOR TRAINING & EDUCATION

How well the program director is educated and trained to maintain a program that is quality-focused and supports children's development.*

* Family Child Care programs do not receive this rating

WHAT DO QUALITY START RATINGS MEAN?

Quality Start ratings help programs and families understand the quality of the care and education of a participating program. Programs receive a rating in each of the above elements of quality. Programs also receive an overall program rating based on the average of their element ratings. Because all Quality Start programs are committed to quality, early educators are given professional development opportunities and resources to help them provide excellent care and education.

QUALITY START RATINGS THAT A PROGRAM CAN RECEIVE:



HIGHEST QUALITY



EXCEEDING QUALITY



ACHIEVING QUALITY



RISING QUALITY



**COMMITTED TO QUALITY
IMPROVEMENT**

To learn more about Quality Start and find participating early learning programs, visit www.qualitystartrc.org or call (800) 266-3880.

