

Quality Early Learning Initiative (QELI) Eight Components of High-Quality Early Learning

JWB has identified Eight Components of High-Quality Early Learning that are central to the success of children in early learning environments. There may be related additional contract requirements.

1. Licensed Facility

Required to maintain compliance with Pinellas County Licensing Board.

2. National Accreditation

Accreditation by NAEYC (National Association for Education of Young Children) is required and can be obtained within three years of funding.

3. Staff Qualifications

JWB desires for every classroom to be led by a teacher with a higher education degree preferably a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education but recognizes with the current workforce this is a challenge. It is also the desire to have a center director with a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education. Exceptions to this would be if the center were a part of a larger organization and the director receives administrative support and supervision from credentialed administrators. Lead teachers must have formal education in early childhood with a minimum of an associate degree. The teacher assistant position is required to have a Child Development Associate (CDA). JWB will require centers to adhere to NAEYC Staff Standards. JWB strongly encourages all center staff to have an infant and toddler specialization.

4. Ratios and Group Size

JWB will require centers to adhere to Zero to Three and the National Association for the Education of Young Children standards.

Infants	1:3	Maximum group size of 6
Toddlers	1:4	Maximum group size of 8
2-year-olds	1:5	Maximum group size of 10
3-year-olds	1:8	Maximum group size of 16
4-year-olds	1:9	Maximum group size of 18

5. Family Engagement

Families are partners in their child’s education.

Research studies indicate when parents become effective partners in their child’s education, performance in school improves. Family engagement is building a positive working relationship between the parent(s) and the childcare staff and is more extensive than hosting events. Centers will commit to provide evidence-based

curricula and best practices for family engagement. Each center will have a dedicated staff position to support connections to community resources, community health center, school, and home. The dedicated staff position will have regular contact with families and assist with referrals and follow up as needed.

Each child should receive scheduled Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and Ages and Stages Questionnaire-Social Emotional (ASQ-SE). These tools are required to be completed by the family and can be completed in collaboration with the provider. If another provider is involved with a family and completing these tools, the information should be obtained, and the results discussed in a meeting along with the family consistent with age required guidelines.

6. Evidence-Based Curriculum

Sites must implement an evidence-based curriculum that is thoughtfully planned, challenging, engaging, developmentally appropriate, comprehensive, and likely to promote positive outcomes for children and youth. The curriculum is organized around child development and learning principles. A purposeful curriculum will benefit children and achieve a wide range of outcomes including school readiness and school success.

Each center is required to implement the evidenced based Creative Curriculum. This curriculum is thoughtfully planned, challenging, engaging, developmentally appropriate, comprehensive, and likely to promote positive outcomes for children and youth. The curriculum is organized around child development and learning principles.

7. Quality Environments

An effectively designed classroom and/or setting (including an outside learning environment) has the potential to positively influence all areas of child development: physical, social/emotional and cognitive. The environment can support the development of behaviors that are valued in our society, such as cooperation and persistence.

8. Cultural Competence

Staff should be trained in the specific issues that arise when working with at-risk and minority populations including English language learners. Using the basic principles of self-awareness, respect for diversity, and sensitivity in communication as a premise for cultural competency, professional development should not just include racial and ethnic considerations, but also the vulnerabilities of children growing up in generational poverty, children exposed to trauma and children with disabilities and special needs.