

Getting Started

Participation in Virginia Quality is voluntary. Eligible programs wishing to participate will need to complete an online program profile, agree to the terms of participation and complete VA Quality Orientation Training. By completing the online profile form, participation agreements and orientation, programs may achieve Level 1 or Fast-Track to Level 3.

Virginia Quality Access website : <https://vaquality.virginiainteractive.org/>

Eligibility

Health and safety compliance is the foundation of participation in Virginia's Quality Rating and Improvement System (Virginia Quality) and the launching pad for programs striving to achieve higher levels of quality.

Early learning programs must be in good standing with all requirements of their regulating authority. "In good standing" indicates that while there may be noncompliance with one or more standards that represent a minor or minimal risk or violation, compliance clearly and obviously exists with the standards as a whole. In an effort to streamline the application process, and align with and build on existing standards, Virginia Quality staff do not monitor the Level 1 requirements directly.

Virginia's Health and Safety regulatory system is in place through systems such as the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Child Care Licensing Program, the Virginia Department of Education Virginia Preschool Initiative, Head Start and the VDSS Child Care Subsidy Program.

Participating programs must meet be recognized as one of the program types below and be in good standing with all requirements of the regulating authority:

- a. Virginia Department of Social Services licensed child day center or family day home;
- b. Religious Exempt and approved Department of Social Services Subsidy vendor;
- c. Head Start program;
- d. Department of Defense;
- e. Virginia Preschool Initiative; or
- f. State Entity Operated Program (legally prohibited from licensure)

Participating programs are also required to have no history of Child Care License revocation by the owner or director in the -12 months preceding the application date.

Orientation to Virginia Quality

All programs are required to complete an Orientation of Virginia's Quality Rating and Improvement System, which covers the following information:

- What is a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)?
- The importance of high quality child care and preschool
- The goals and standards of Virginia's QRIS
- The criteria and required improvement activities at each Quality Level.

The Virginia Quality Orientation may be completed through in-person training or online. Programs will need to document the date their Orientation was completed and which staff members completed the Orientation.

- In-Person Virginia Quality Orientation Sessions
 - Contact a Regional Quality Coordinator to find out when Orientation trainings are being held, or to schedule an on-site Orientation for program staff.
- Online Virginia Quality Orientation Module
 - Recorded Virginia Quality Orientation Webinar
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/7529414214402075905>
 - Virginia Quality LearnPoint website : <http://virginiaquality.learnpointlms.com/>

Multi-program Facilities

In order to promote systems-building across early childhood education programs and make Virginia’s QRIS more intuitive and easier to navigate for parents, quality levels will be assigned by facility. This means that if multiple programs operate out of the same location (facility), all early childhood classrooms (infant-prekindergarten) at that location may be included in that facility’s QRIS participation (ex: an elementary school campus with VPI and HS classrooms or a private child care center with a VPI classroom).

Protocol

- For multi-program facilities where all programs are “fast track” eligible, the facility will enroll in VA Quality and decide whether to remain at Level 3 or request an on-site observation, seeking Level 4 or 5. If the facility requests an on-site observation, random selection of classrooms will take place as usual (1 out of every 3 classrooms within an age range) with one additional requirement. At least one classroom from each program at the facility must be observed. If this requirement is not met through the usual random selection process, an additional classroom will be selected to ensure that each program is represented by at least one observed classroom.
- For multi-program facilities where NOT all programs are “fast track” eligible, the facility will proceed with the application process as usual, including all early childhood classrooms at the facility. If the facility requests an on-site observation, random selection of classrooms will take as usual (1 out of every 3 classrooms within an age range) with one additional requirement. At least one classroom from each program at the facility must be observed. If this requirement is not met through the usual random selection process, an additional classroom will be selected to ensure that each program is represented by at least one observed classroom.
- Requiring that each program is represented by at least one classroom observation (if the facility decides to go beyond Level 3) will ensure that all programs at a facility are represented in the facility’s Quality Level status.

Exception: If a multi-program facility finds that some programs wish to participate in Virginia Quality, but not others, they may submit a request for an exemption. The request should include a clear reason for the exemption. If the exemption is granted, a Virginia Quality Level would be assigned to only one program operating at that facility, but not others. (For example: the HS classrooms on the elementary school campus participate, but the VPI programs do not wish to participate). The name that is listed on the certificate will indicate which program(s) are included in the Quality Level.

Terms of Participation in Virginia Quality

Programs will agree to participate in scheduled Quality Level reviews and demonstrate that current level criteria as defined in the standards are being maintained.

Programs will grant permission for the Hub to release data gathered during the rating process for evaluation and research purposes. Aggregate data will be reported in evaluation and research results; no individual program, staff or child information will be identified.

Programs will maintain good standing with the requirements of the appropriate regulating authority and/or affiliation requirements of the Virginia Quality Crosswalk approved accrediting organization.

Terms for Suspension or Termination of Participation

Programs may select to terminate their participation in the program at any time by notifying their Regional Coordinator in writing. Upon confirmation of the request to terminate participation, program services provided through Virginia Quality will be discontinued and the program will be identified as inactive in the Virginia Quality database. The program will be removed from Hub administered Virginia Quality rated program lists. The program will need to remove the Virginia Quality Rating Certificate from public view and will remove mention of their Virginia Quality rating from their printed materials and website.

The Hub reserves the right to revoke a quality level rating; or suspend or remove a program/provider for reasons that include but are not limited to:

- consistent problems with maintaining their regulatory authority's standards and maintaining Level 1 Criteria
- physical move to a different location
- a founded case of abuse or neglect as noted in § 63.2-1508 of the Code of Virginia
- under investigation or engaged in a lawsuit for maltreatment of children
- any pending legal action for allegations of actions that compromise the safety and wellbeing of children, families and staff
- failure to maintain facility's inspection reports in accordance with DOE requirements (for public schools)
- failure to maintain affiliation with Virginia Quality approved accrediting organization when program level designation was based (in part) on a Crosswalk agreement; or
- a notice of proposed denial or revocation of licensure is issued (for private programs)

Any facility that receives notification of a proposed denial or revocation of state child care licensure or approval must verbally notify the coordinator within five (5) business days and in writing within ten (10) business days.

Any facility that used the fast track option and receives notification of a proposed denial or revocation of their affiliation with an approved Virginia Quality accrediting organization must verbally notify the coordinator within five (5) business days and in writing within ten (10) business days.



Fast Track to Level 3

Programs in Virginia that are participating in other quality improvement efforts may be able to get recognition within Virginia's QRIS for the quality they're currently demonstrating to another organization such as the Virginia Preschool Initiative, Head Start, or a national accreditation program through the Virginia Quality fast track process. To qualify for the fast track, a "crosswalk" needs to have been completed between the organization's early childhood education standards and Virginia's QRIS standards, so that Virginia programs can receive QRIS recognition for the standards they are already meeting.

In order to facilitate the accelerated ("fast track") process for child care and preschool programs accredited by their organization, the accreditation organization must (1) demonstrate their current status as an accrediting organization for programs located in Virginia, and (2) show evidence of quality early childhood standards through submitted crosswalk data and a copy of the standards currently being used to accredit programs in Virginia.

As of January 1st, 2017 early learning programs participating in the following quality improvement systems may apply for the fast track process:

- Head Start
- Virginia Preschool Initiative
- NAEYC Accredited
- AdvancED Accredited
- NAC Accredited

Programs qualifying for the "fast track" will need to complete a program profile, agree to the terms of participation and complete VA Quality Orientation Training. They will then quickly be awarded Level 3 status, and may choose to seek Level 4 or Level 5 by requesting an on-site observation. Fast Track programs will have access to all Level 2 and Level 3 online training modules and self-study forms, and are encouraged to utilize these resources in their program as part of their quality improvement plan. (Completing the modules and self-studies are not required for Fast Track programs, however some Fast Track programs may find the modules helpful for staff training, particularly before requesting an on-site observation for Levels 4/5).

Other organizations interested in the Crosswalk should contact qris@vecf.org