Curriculum Checklist

One goal of Virginia's Quality Rating and Improvement System is to help programs promote school readiness for the children and families they serve. Research shows that intentional teaching has a positive impact on children's school readiness, so assessing early learning and development is an important part of Virginia's Quality Rating and Improvement System. Virginia has developed the *Milestones of Child Development: A Guide to Young Children's Learning and Development from Birth to Kindergarten (Milestones)* and the *Foundation Blocks for Early Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds (Foundation Blocks)* to guide early childhood educators in promoting school readiness. To meet the criteria for Quality Level 3, programs (both classroom-based and family child care homes) will use the Level 3 Curriculum Checklist to assess their program's practices to support children's learning and development.

Completing the Level 3 Curriculum Checklist online will allow programs to consider their curricular or intentional teaching practices and examine how well they are aligned with Virginia's *Milestones of Child Development*, which outlines what children should know and be able to do in the different domains of early learning and development. By examining how well practices are aligned with the *Milestones*, programs will be able to identify which areas are strengths for the program, and where there are opportunities for improvement.

Programs will use the curriculum checklist to examine any curricula or other intentional teaching approaches used to support learning and development of the children in their care. The checklist should be completed by a director, family child care home owner, or other individual in an educational leadership position in the program. A team of these individuals may also complete the checklist. Prior to beginning the checklist, programs will view the LearnPoint online module with instructions and other valuable information and tips for completing the checklist process successfully. The checklist has **three** components that will assess:

1. **Alignment**: The extent to which the program's curriculum or intentional teaching approach addresses the domains of early learning and development identified as significant for young children in Virginia to promote school readiness.
2. **Developmentally Appropriate Practices**: The extent to which the program's curriculum or intentional teaching approach is aligned with developmentally appropriate practices.
3. **Training & Support**: The support and training teaching staff receive on implementing the curriculum or intentional teaching approach.

Part One of the checklist will be considered successfully complete if 75% of responses are "partially" or "fully met". To successfully complete Part Two, each item in the chart will be answered "yes". Part Three will also be answered "yes".

Several different levels of assistance will be available to support programs during the process of completing the Level 3 criteria and requirement improvement activities. A Quality Coordinator can provide information about options such as on-site coaching or

mentoring, participating in learning communities with other Virginia Quality programs, or additional types of technical assistance.

Validation Visit

After the curriculum checklist has been submitted, a validation visit will be conducted to confirm that there are no major discrepancies between the information submitted by the program on their curriculum checklist and program practices. Validation visits are conducted by Virginia's QRIS Curriculum Specialists. Every effort will be made to assign a Curriculum Specialist who can also provide technical assistance (TA) to the program as needed.

The validation visit is designed to be a **quick check** to determine whether a program understands integration of the Milestones into their curriculum or other teaching approach and has completed the curriculum checklist **realistically**.

During the validation visit, the Curriculum Specialist will gather information about the program's curriculum and assessment practices using interview questions (to confirm Parts 1 and 3 of the Checklist) and a quick-check observation (to confirm Part 2 of the Checklist).

If there are no major discrepancies noted during the validation visit, the program will be awarded Level 3 status by the Hub*. If there are major discrepancies between information submitted by the program and the Interview/Observation portion of the validation visit, the Curriculum Specialist or the program can initiate a request for technical assistance to address the issue. Once the issue(s) are resolved via the technical assistance process, the Validation Form will be updated and submitted to reflect quality improvement. Following submission of a successful Validation Form, the program will be awarded Level 3 status*.

Provided that Level 3 required improvement activities (self-study) have also been completed.

Self-Study

High quality child care and preschool programs regularly assess their own practices to determine what changes they can make to improve their early care and education services. Why? Because better quality services result in better outcomes for children. The Level 3 self-study process is a guided format for programs to begin to reflect on their own practices and identify where they want to make improvements.

There are two nationally recognized assessment tools used in Virginia's QRIS: the Environment Rating Scale, or ERS, which is primarily focused on safe and organized play-based environments, and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System, or CLASS, which is focused on interactions between early learning professionals and young children.

The self-study process, which is part of the Level 3 required improvement activities, allows programs to take a closer look at current program practices related to environment and interactions, prior to having an on-site observation, and reflect on where they may want to make improvements to prepare for Levels 4 and 5. Most importantly, completing a self-study will provide programs with deeper knowledge about the ERS and CLASS tools, helping programs feel prepared to engage in quality improvement of their environment and interactions. The self-study resources are not actual program assessments. The self-study resources provide programs with a description of the tools and sample reflective questions so that programs can conduct their own observation and reflect on their environment and interactions.

The self-study forms can be used by a director, family child care owner with staff, or another staff member in a leadership position, who is able to observe the practices that are currently occurring in the program and reflect on the observation questions provided on the self-study form. The form can also be used by a family child care provider with no staff or a classroom teacher to reflect on their own practice.

There are 6 self-study forms available, which can be accessed from the online self-study module, or from a quality coordinator or specialist. Three are focused on play-based environments and three are focused on teacher-child interactions.

- ❖ The ERS Self-Study Forms* are based on the:
    - o Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, which is applicable to classrooms or center-based programs serving children from 30 months to 5 years old.
    - o Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale, which is applicable to classrooms or center-based programs serving children from birth to 30 months old.
    - o Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale, which is applicable to family child care homes serving children from birth to 12 years old.

- ❖ The CLASS Self-Study Forms* are based on the:
    - o Pre-K CLASS , which is applicable to classrooms, center-based programs, or family child care homes serving children from 36 months to 5 years old.
    - o Toddler CLASS, which is applicable to classrooms, center-based programs, or family child care homes serving children from 15 months to 36 months old.
    - o Infant CLASS , which is applicable to classrooms, center-based programs, or family child care homes serving children from birth to 18 months old.

In order to achieve Level 3, programs need to complete a minimum of one self-study form from the ERS list and one from the CLASS list.

Although Level 3 requires programs to complete only one self-study from each list, it is preferable to complete self-studies for every age group or classroom in the program. The purpose of completing the self-study forms is to learn more about high quality environments and interactions, and for programs to apply this knowledge within their own program. (Note: Completing the modules and self-studies are not required for Fast Track programs who have already been awarded Level 3, however some Fast Track programs may find the modules helpful for staff training, particularly before requesting an on-site observation.)

It is very important for programs to have a copy of the actual assessment tools prior to engaging in the self-study process, because they will refer to it frequently as they complete the self-study forms. The actual tools will provide additional background information and details that will be important to maximizing the benefits of the self-study, and improving the quality of your environments and interactions. If a program needs financial assistance in order to purchase a copy of any of the Environment Rating Scale or CLASS tools, they should contact their Quality Coordinator.

The self-study forms were developed as a quality improvement activity by Virginia's QRIS and are not meant to be an alternative to the actual tools.

Level 3 Modules (Required)

Title	Description	Length / Training Hours	Prerequisites
Completing the Curriculum Checklist	Participants will learn how to complete the Curriculum Checklist required to achieve Level 3 using resources available through Virginia's QRIS. Course Materials Included • Curriculum Checklist Form • Definition of Terms • Scoring Guidance	30 minutes (0.5 clock hours of training)	• Resources for School Readiness • Introduction to Intentional Teaching
Intro to the Self-Study Process	Participants will learn how to complete a self-study of their child care or preschool program using resources available through Virginia's QRIS. Course Materials Included • CLASS Self Study forms • ERS Self Study forms	15 minutes (0.25 clock hours of training)	• High Quality Interactions • Play-Based Learning Environments

In addition to the two required modules listed above, there is also a VA Quality Language & Literacy module which is available as an additional resource. This module is recommended for programs working on their curriculum checklist and/or those programs wanting to improve in the areas of early literacy development, but it is not required.