

Quality Subgroup Discussion

Subgroup Goal: Boil down core elements of quality programming that would be relevant to *any* setting; prioritize most important aspects.

Quality programs meet the minimum state licensing regulations, including basic health and safety requirements, and strive to meet higher standards from other systems such as Head Start, VPI, VSQI, State recognized Accreditations, NAEYC Accreditation, NAFCC, etc. Continuous quality improvement is reflected into the program and supports self study with an assurance of quality through consistent standards and positive outcomes.

Definition of quality in JMU needs assessment:

“Longitudinal studies indicate that the best outcomes for children and their families come from an investment in high quality programs that provide well-trained staff, appropriate adult-child ratios and group sizes, stimulating interactions and learning experiences, and parent education and engagement.”

I. Well-Trained Staff (*Defer to Professional Development Group for full scope*)

- Professional development with an understanding of the foundational value of health and safety requirements and the importance of teacher quality;
- Staff should be able to conduct formal or informal screenings and/or referrals for children who may need additional services

II. Appropriate Adult-Child Ratios and Group Sizes

Adult/ Child ratio and Group size are important to quality and recommend at a minimum meeting state licensing ratios and striving for higher standards in the regulating systems that a program might operate.

III. Stimulating Interactions and Learning Experiences

([From Competencies for Early Childhood - Learning Environment \(pages 43-58\)](#))

1. Overall Learning Environment
2. Learning Strategies
3. Curriculum
4. Schedules, Routines and Transitions
5. Physical environment
6. Materials and Equipment
7. Collaboration

Enriched environments for children will have the following common threads:

[\(From Six Principles of Early Education\)](#)

- Include a steady source of positive emotional support
- Have an atmosphere free of undue pressure and stresses
- Present a series of developmentally appropriate novel challenges
- Allow for social interaction for a significant percentage of activities
- Promote mental, physical, aesthetic, social, and emotional development
- Create an enjoyable atmosphere of exploration and fun learning

IV. Parent Education and Engagement

[From Competencies for Early Childhood - Partnering with Families and Community and Effective Interactions](#)

1. Knowing and Respecting Families
 - Create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all families, accepting their cultural practices
 - learn about and understand families' circumstances, goals, values, concerns regarding their children
 - Maintain confidentiality
 - Nurturing Families as Advocates
2. Communication
 - Communicate daily with the family to exchange information -- share info about the child's progress, activities, interests
 - Communicate program policies with families
 - Share information regularly with the family obtained from child observation, and formal and informal assessments, collaborating with the family to plan strategies and individual services
3. Collaborative Community Partnerships
 - Involve families in program-wide activities

Definition of Accessibility from the JMU needs assessment:

Accessibility refers to the ability to obtain the program or service needed by or for the family or child at the time it is needed. Factors associated with accessibility include program information, eligibility, location, hours of operation, and capacity.