California Race to the Top Early Learning Consortia

Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System

TQRIS

Consortia Implementation Guidelines

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# Introduction

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) can bring a wide range of benefits – for children, parents and society at large. However, these benefits are conditional on “quality”. Expanding access to services without attention to quality will not deliver good outcomes for children or long-term productivity benefits for society.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**QRIS** is “a method to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early care and education settings” (Mitchell, 2005, p. 4).  QRIS can exist on a spectrum in terms of their development and implementation and can operate statewide or in a local area.  A fully functioning QRIS, however, includes the following components:  (1) quality standards for programs and practitioners, (2) supports and an infrastructure to meet such standards, (3) monitoring and accountability systems to ensure compliance with quality standards, (4) ongoing financial assistance that is linked to meeting quality standards, and (5) engagement and outreach strategies (Child Trends, 2009)[[2]](#footnote-2).

# California’s Approach

The outcome of California’s QRIS will ensure children entering kindergarten are ready to learn and succeed by increasing access to high-quality programs for children with high need. California Consortia partners believe that a high-quality early learning program includes the following:

* A safe, healthy, and enriched learning environment;
* A developmentally appropriate and inclusive curriculum;
* Instruction that is informed regularly by structured observational assessments;
* Highly effective teachers working in positive, interactive relationships with children;
* Linguistically and culturally sensitive family engagement; and
* An administrative commitment to sound fiscal practices and continuous program improvement.

To achieve this goal, California’s RTT funding will support the development and expansion of successful local programs that are focused on increased outcomes for high-need children by implementing local Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS). California will support these local efforts by partnering with Early Learning Challenge Regional Leadership Consortia that volunteer to strengthen their existing systems, align their systems to a common state framework, and serve as leaders and mentors to other programs and entities in their region. The goal is to use the majority of the RTT-ELC funds to support local activities.

California is taking a unique approach that builds upon the state’s local and statewide successes. This will allow locals to develop and maintain control over their own quality improvement processes and build off of local investments, from First 5 Commissions and others, while still allowing counties to coordinate efforts when feasible and share lessons learned.

Consortia, comprised of 17 lead agencies in 16 counties, will bring together organizations in their regions with the same goal of improving the quality of early learning and expand their current areas of impact by inviting other programs to join their QRIS or reaching out to mentor other communities. By joining California’s Race to the Top effort, the Consortia voluntarily agree to align their local QRIS to a common “Quality Continuum Framework” and will implement three common tiers in addition to any locally-determined tiers. In addition to a statewide evaluation of the common QRIS tiers, Consortia will also set local goals to improve the quality of early learning and development programs in the fol­lowing three areas:

* Child development and readiness for school;
* Teachers and how they interact and teach young children;
* Program and classroom environment

The 17 County Consortia partners have adopted three common tiers with implementation guidelines to ensure consistency of implementation across the counties. To allow for local control, counties may elect to make local decisions about the tiers that are not commonly adopted as well as areas for implementation that are left to local control.

California Department of Education retained funding to invest in professional development; kindergarten readiness; community care licensing; home visitation; developmental screenings; and evaluation of local QRIS efforts.

# California’s Hybrid QRIS Framework

##### In 2012, Consortia partners heard from experts in the field of early childhood quality and researched other states’ QRIS activities to learn about the benefits and challenges of implementing a QRIS rating structure using a building block approach, points system, or hybrid—a combination of block and points. In the end, the Consortia partners agreed that a hybrid system would suit the flexibility of California’s funding while maintain the necessary rigor for evaluation.

***Rating Structure*** - method for determining rating steps, i.e., building blocks, points, combination of block and points

***Building Block*** - The building block approach to QRIS means that all criteria at a particular tier level must be met before moving onto the next tier. California Consortia Partners agreed that only tier 1 will be “block”, meaning that the program must meet basic licensing requirements to be considered Tier 1. Some county consortia may also use the block approach for tier 2, but this is a local decision

***Points*** - Rather than having to meet all criteria in a tier, sites accumulate points based on their level of implementation of each quality element. A site could receive 2 points for one element and 4 points for another. California’s common tiers 3 and 4 have criteria with points that will be used by all RTT counties. Some county consortia may also use points for tier 2, but this is a local decision

***Hybrid Approach*** - The QRIS hybrid approach includes building blocks for some levels and/or some criteria and points for others. California Consortia Partners agreed tier 1 would be a block and tiers 3 and 4 would use a point-based approach, thus identifying California’s QRIS Framework as a Hybrid Matrix

**Rating Levels** are the number of levels included in the QRIS structure, e.g., 2 levels, 3 levels, 4 levels, etc.  These levels are often designed with an easily understood symbol indicating ascending quality such as stars; steps; bronze, silver, gold. In California, the designations are locally dictated. California’s rating system has 3 agreed upon rating levels in a 5 tier system. Tiers 1, 3 and 4 are agreed upon tiers (all counties will meet the same requirements and rate using the same criteria). Tiers 2 and 5 are locally decided, however, the state consortia partners produced point-based recommendations as a starting point.

Every participating QRIS site will receive a **Program Quality Score** based on the 7 elements of quality for centers and 5 quality elements for family child care homes. After meeting licensing requirements (tier 1, block), programs will achieve their final program quality score by adding points based on the level of implementation of each of the elements of quality.

Centers can earn up to 35 points for the 7 elements, and Family Child Care homes, with 5 elements, can earn up to 25 points total.

The final score is translated into a “tier” rating based on the chart below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | *Tier 1* | *Tier 2* | *Tier 3* | *Tier 4* | *Tier 5* |
| *Centers* | *block* | *8 – 19 points* | *20 – 25 points* | *26 – 31 points* | *32 points or more* |
| *Family Child Care* | *block* | *6 – 13 points* | *14 – 17 points* | *18-21 points* | *22 points or more* |

The California RTT-ELC Consortia adopted tiers 3 through 5 as the “***top tiers***.”

# Eligible Child Care Facilities

**Facility**  - Any child care center or child care arrangement which provides child care for children unrelated to the operator and which receives a payment, fee, or grant for any of the children receiving care. Licensing of facility is governed by the California Community Care Licensing Division of the Department of Social Services which defines facility as “any place or building in which less than 24-hour per day nonmedical care and supervision are provided to children in a group setting

The QRIS is open to select early childhood facilities in one of the 17 counties awarded a Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant. Counties may identify *participating programs* using the criteria for number, eligibility and high needs population established by the RTT grant application.

**Participating Programs** are licensed centers and family child care homes including the exceptions noted in this document who have volunteered to participate in the local QRIS. Priority is given to participating programs that are serving children with high needs.

Exceptions to licensed programs that may participate

* CalSAFE child development programs
* Tribal-approved child care programs
* Military installation child care programs
* Adult Education preschool programs that are legally exempt from licensing

All participating sites must be licensed “*Current and In Good Standing*”[[3]](#footnote-3), which means a licensed child care center or family child care home that currently does not have or in the past 12 months has not had any of the following 1) a non-compliance conference ; 2) an administrative action taken or in the process of being taken; 3) a probationary license; or 4) a zero tolerance violation.

A **Zero tolerance violation** isa serious violation that warrants an immediate civil penalty of $150 per day, per violation until corrected and include the following violations

1.     Fire clearance (child care centers only)

2.    Absence of supervision

3.    Accessible bodies of water

4.    Accessible firearms, ammunition, or both

5.    Refused entry of authorized licensing staff to a facility or any part of a facility

6.    Presence of an excluded person on the premises

7.    Violations that result in the illness, injury or death of a child

If a site license is changed to anything other than “In Good Standing” the QRIS rating is invalidated/terminated (rating removed and program no longer receiving RTT-ELC site-level QI resources including financial incentives, TA, coaching, site-training)

# high needs priority

The RTT-ELC funds are designed for use to improve quality in sites serving high needs children. Priority should be given to sites serving children defined by the California RTT-ELC as high needs.

The term **Children with High Needs** is defined in the RTT-ELC application as

“Children from birth through kindergarten entry who are from low-income families or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, including children who have disabilities or developmental delays; who are English learners; who reside on “Indian lands” as that terms defined by section 8013(6) of the ESEA; who are migrant, homeless, or in foster care; and other children as identified by the State. California includes infants and toddlers and “children receiving protective services through the local county welfare department as well as children identified by a legal, medical, social service agency or emergency shelter as abused, neglected or exploited or at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.”  The referral from the County Welfare Department’s Child Protective Services unit needs to certify that the need for child care is a component in the case plan.
*Source Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Application, p. 14, California’s RTT-ELC application, and Title 5 sections 18078(c) and 18092*

A required minimum threshold of high needs children has not been established at the state-level. Counties are encouraged to identify sites serving children with high needs as a primary population of service and may complement services with matching funds if participating sites are serving a majority of children who do not fit into the “high needs” definition.

Children with high needs have one or more of these characteristics:

1. Low income family
2. Migrant/Seasonal
3. Homeless
4. Dual Language Learner
5. Tribal
6. Special Needs
7. In Child Protective Services
8. Living in neighborhood of low-API schools
9. Receiving child subsidy/vouchers
10. Infants/Toddlers

Counties may, but are not required to, verify high needs status. While it is encouraged that sites collect this information for the purpose of assessment and reporting, counties are not required to verify the level or type of family need or the relative proportion of families that fit into one or more of the high needs categories.

Often, families of children who fall into multiple “high needs” categories receive subsidy. These families may be referred to as a **subsidized family** , meaning, the family receives child care services from a subsidized program or receives a voucher for services from the parent-selected program or provider.

## Subsidized Sites Serve High Needs Children

Subsidized programs are a priority for RTT services; by definition, they serve children with high needs. These include General Child Care Licensed Sites, Head Start, Early Head Start, State-funded Preschool, and Tribal sites.

**Site**An early learning and development program operating by an administration/ entity at one physical location with at least one child care license from Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing Division. If two administrations/entities are operating on the same site and are operating separately from one another (e.g, co-located), each is counted as a separate site

**General Child Care Licensed Sites -** Infant/Toddler child development programs with a current CCTR contract with the California Department of Education.

 **Head Start/Early Head Start** - Head Start (and Early head Start) is a federally-funded program targeting low income children and provides a variety of services, including education, nutrition, and medical services.

**State-funded Preschool Licensed Sites** - A California State Preschool Program with a current CSPP contract with the California Department of Education.

**Subsidized Program** - The child care program has a contract or agreement with the state or federal government to provide early care and education services.

**Tribal Sites** - Child care operated for the Indian children of a tribal community. The tribal child care programs are exempted from having a state child care license, but must meet the child care standards established by the Tribe. In order to qualify for federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) funds, Tribes must be federally recognized. Not all Tribes receive CCDF funds. Tribes that receive Head Start American Indian Program Bureau funds are to be counted under tribal sites, rather than under Head start sites.

# Funding

Many classrooms that serve children with high needs use **Braided funding**, which means that at least two federal or state funding sources to support program services. It is commonly called the “braided,” “blended,” or “mixed” classroom. All children or only some of the children in the classroom must meet the funder’s eligibility requirements—either situation is acceptable. A cost-allocation plan is required for this model unless all costs of the two programs are kept separate.

Example 1 Head Start and State Preschool Partnership—Braiding Funds to Operate as a Single Program. In this model, California State Preschool Program (CSPP) funds half-days for part of the year, typically for 175 days, and Head Start (HS) funds the other half-days for the same part of the year. The funds are mixed in order to provide a seamless, full-day program.

The mixing of funds in this model can be expressed by the following formula SP (part-year) + HS (part-year) + additional funds = full-day, full-year.

Example 2 Head Start and Full-day CSPP or General Child Care Partnership, Head Start and Family Child Care Home Network Partnership. - CSPP or General Child Care (CGCC)\* provides funds for the full year, typically for 246 days, and for the full day. Head Start provides an “umbrella” of additional services, including comprehensive services for children and families, additional training resources, additional staff and/or materials, and so forth. In this model, all children in each classroom or family child care home (FCCH) participating in the collaboration must be enrolled in CGCC *and* must be Head Start eligible. However, agencies may operate additional classrooms that are not involved in the collaboration for children who do not have dual eligibility and/or enrollment.

Partnerships of this kind may operate as a single program with mixed funds or may operate with funds and services separately accounted for by each partner agency[[4]](#footnote-4).

Example 3 Title I, Head Start and State Preschool - ESEA/NCLB Title I, Part A funds are available to support preschool programs, with requirements for teachers and paraprofessionals. These programs must coordinate with other federal programs, so a braided program might include Title I, Head Start and State Preschool or other combinations.[[5]](#footnote-5)

# Rating and Monitoring

After the 17 Consortia representatives reached agreement on the QRIS framework and common elements, a “tier implementation” workgroup consisting of volunteers from regional or county RTT consortia met to discuss the details of tier implementation. The “tier implementation” workgroup made recommendations, which were adopted by the larger Consortia, which defined common methodology for rating programs and identified areas left to local control. This section outlines these agreements.

Consortia agreements ensure that the California RTT-ELC program maintains **fidelity of implementation** across counties. These agreements designate where counties have local control, and where the delivery of the program is consistent across counties, and implemented in the way in which it was designed to be delivered. All counties agree to implementing all tools, measures, and documents to fidelity, adhering to the author’s original approach. Preserving the components that made the original practice effective can directly impact the success of desired outcomes.

One way to ensure high quality program implementation is for Consortia to identify and clearly stipulate four distinct QRIS Functions:

* ***Raters*** review and validate portfolio documentation;
* ***External Assessors***, trained in the Environmental Rating Scales and/or CLASS tool will carry out the assessment portion of the rating;
* ***Monitors*** ensure that sites maintain their rated quality and compliance with program requirements
* ***Technical Assistance Providers*** support the creation and/or implementation of the Program Improvement Plan. TA providers may also assist sites with the development of the basic portfolio for rating.

While some functions may be fulfilled by the same person, individuals cannot serve as an external assessor and provide technical assistance or coaching services to the same group of teachers/sites.

# Site Rating

The RTT-ELC Consortia has adopted a portfolio-based rating process in combination with assessment. The information below provides more specific information about frequency, assessment, and specific elements.

## Rating Frequency

A site’s rating will be valid for two years. Participating early childhood programs develop program improvement plans after they receive a full rating and commit to engaging in an ongoing continuous quality improvement process between rating periods.

RTT-QRIS Consortia will **monitor** participating sites between rating, to assure that they are continuing to meet the criteria for their level of rating.  Failing to maintain the criteria may be demonstrated by significant turnover in staff, new director, significant licensing violation, etc.  All of these may trigger a new rating. In general, events that may trigger reconsideration of the rating before the 2 years have passed include:

* Changes to a site the license, such as change of physical location, change in status, or other licensing changes
* Changes that warrant re-assessment of an individual classroom
* Other reasons determined by local consortia

## Rating Guidelines

The QRIS Hybrid Matrix will employ a portfolio-based system (with monitoring and administrative verification) for a programs to self report most elements of quality as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Element | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. Child Observation
 | self report at all levels |
| 1. Development and Health Screening
 | self report at all levels |
| 1. Lead Teacher Qualification and Professional Development
 | self report at all levels |
| 1. CLASS Assessment
 | self report | external assessment |
| 1. Ratios and Group Size
 | self report | verify by assessor |
| 1. Environmental Rating Scale
 | self report | external assessment |
| 1. Director Qualifications
 | self report at all levels |

## Self Report

All QRIS sites will use a **portfolio** for self-report elements. In order to verify level of quality, all programs will be required to provide common documents demonstrating the level of quality for each element of the QRIS Matrix. The portfolio may be managed online (e.g., via upload) or on paper, and is a local decision. All portfolios should be subject to random observation and file pulls at the discretion of local Consortia.

## External Assessment

As indicated above, assessment is conducted for tiers 3 through 5 of elements 4 and 6, using the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS) tool and the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) for the appropriate age level. The following sections describe frequency of assessment and classroom selection.

**Assessment Frequency**: Every site will receive a formal, external assessment using the Environmental Rating Scale and the CLASS (if warranted) every other year. The same classrooms, selected through random sampling (see next page) will receive both the CLASS and the Environmental Rating Assessment in the same ***year***, or within 13 months of the final rating.For the purpose of assessment, a year is considered 13 consecutive months.

*For example, if the ERS assessments are conducted in May, and the CLASS assessments are conducted on the same classrooms with the same lead teachers in September, then the program must be rated by June of the following year in order for the ERS assessment to be valid.*

## Defining Classrooms for Assessment

For the purpose of the California RTT-ELC, a **classroom** is defined as:

* One teaching team using same physical classroom space and working with same age group
* Group of children under a single teaching team. A classroom may be full day or half day. The definition of “group=classroom” in half day morning and afternoon preschool is based on the consistency of the teaching team and consistency of the ages of children served.

The ***teaching team*** consists of the same group of teachers over time. However, for the purpose of determining whether a new assessment and rating is required, if the lead teacher changes, then a new assessment is required. If other teachers change but the lead teacher remains the same, then a new assessment is not required.

*But this is considered TWO classrooms because although the teaching team is the same, the ages of children served are different (based on the assessments*

*Same teaching team for AM & PM*

Morning toddlers

Afternoon preschool

For example,

*This is considered ONE classroom because the ages served and teaching team are the same*

*Same teaching team for AM & PM*

Afternoon preschool

Morning preschool

*This is also considered TWO classrooms because although both morning and afternoon serve the same age children, the teaching team is different*

*Different teaching team in AM & PM*

Afternoon preschool

Morning preschool

## Selecting Classrooms for Assessment

 ***Stratified Random Sampling*** - A method of sampling where a population is divided into smaller groups, or strata, and participants in a strata have shared attributes. A random sample from each stratum is taken in a number proportional to the stratum's size when compared to the population. These subsets of the strata are then pooled to form a random sample.

County Consortia will use a stratified random sampling process to select classrooms for assessment. Stratified random sampling means that representation from every age group is in the assessment sample, in a proportion relative to the number of overall classrooms. Final selection should be randomized, meaning that if there is more than one classroom at a particular age group, an unbiased process is used so that classrooms have an equal chance of being selected.

If all classrooms in the program serve the same age group (e.g., all infant/toddlers or all preschoolers), use the following guidelines for determining the number of classrooms to assess with the CLASS and ERS.

***Age Group*** – the age group of children served is defined by the assessment tool used. The ERS has an infant-toddler tool, and the CLASS has a toddler and Preschool/PreK tool (the infant tool is not yet available). Thus, infants and toddlers are considered one age group, and preschool and pre-K are considered a second age group

|  |
| --- |
| All classrooms serve the same age group |
| # classrooms at site | % of classrooms to to rate | # of classrooms to assess |
| 1 | 100% | 1 |
| 2 | 100% | 2 |
| 3 | 50% | 2 |
| 4 | 50% | 2 |
| 5 | 33% | 2 |
| 6 | 33% | 2 |
| 7 | 33% | 2 |
| 8 | 33% | 3 |
| 9 | 33% | 3 |
| 10 | 33% | 3 |

If the program has classrooms for children of different ages – that is, some toddlers, some preschool, apply the guidelines above for each age group, or strata. The chart and examples on the next page give more information.

|  |
| --- |
| Site serves children in Different Age Groups |
| # classrooms at site | **# classrooms**  |  | **# randomly sampled** | **Total # to assess** |
| Infant or toddler | Preschool or preK |  | Infant or toddler | Preschool or preK |
| 2 | 1 | 1 |  | *1* | *1* | 2 |
| 3 | 1 | 2 |  | *1* | *1* | 2 |
| 4 | 1 | 3 |  | *1* | *2* | 3 |
| 4 | 2 | 2 |  | *1* | *1* | 2 |
| 5 | 2 | 3 |  | *1* | *2* | 3 |
| 6 | 2 | 4 |  | *1* | *2* | 3 |
| 6 | 3 | 3 |  | *2* | *2* | 4 |
| 7 | 2 | 5 |  | *1* | *2* | 3 |
| 7 | 3 | 4 |  | *2* | *2* | 4 |
| 8 | 2 | 6 |  | *1* | *2* | 3 |
| 8 | 3 | 5 |  | *2* | *2* | 4 |
| 8 | 4 | 4 |  | *2* | *2* | 4 |
| 9 | 3 | 6 |  | *2* | *2* | 4 |
| 9 | 4 | 5 |  | *2* | *2* | 4 |
| 10 | 3 | 7 |  | *2* | *2* | 4 |
| 10 | 4 | 6 |  | *2* | *2* | 4 |
| 10 | 5 | 5 |  | *2* | *2* | 4 |

Now let’s put it all together scenarios based on age groups, sampling, teaching team, and classroom:

 ***Scenario 1***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Age group** | **AM/PM/ full day** | **Teaching Team** | **# RTT classrooms at each age group** | **Rationale** | **# for random sampling** |
| 1. Toddlers1
 | AM | A | 1 Toddler | T1 & T2 have same teaching team | 1 |
| 1. Toddlers2
 | PM | A |
| 1. Preschool
 | Full Day | B | 2 Preschool/Prek | The same tool is used for both levels | 2 |
| 1. PreK
 | Full day | C |
| **TOTAL** | 3 QRIS classrooms | 3 teams | 2 age groups |  | 3 classrooms sampled |

***Scenario 2***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Age group** | **AM/PM/ full day** | **Teaching Team** | **# RTT classrooms at each age group** | **Rationale** | **# for random sampling** |
| 1. Infants
 | AM | A | 2 Infant/Toddler | T1 & T2 have same teaching team | 1 |
| 1. Toddlers1
 | AM | B |
| 1. Toddlers2
 | PM | B |
| 1. Preschool 1
 | AM | C | 3 Preschool/PreK | P1 & P2 have same teaching team | 2 |
| 1. Preschool2
 | PM | C |
| 1. Preschool3
 | Full day | D |
| 1. PreK
 | Full Day | E |
| **TOTAL** | 5 QRIS classrooms | 5 teams |  |  | 3 classrooms sampled |

***Scenario 3***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Age group** | **AM/PM/ full day** | **# RTT classrooms at each age group** | **Prior Assessments** | **Current rating period:**  **June 2013** |
| 1. Infants
 | AM | 2 Toddler random sample of 1 classroom | The POP classroom had an ITERS in May 2012 | If the toddler classroom is randomly selected, the ITERS may be used for the rating because it falls within the 13 month time period. |
| 1. Toddlers-POP classroom
 | Full Day |
| 1. Preschool
 | Full Day | 2 Preschool/ PreK Random sample of 1 classroom |  The CSP Classroom had an ECERs in February2012 and a CLASS assessment in September 2012 | If the CSP classroom is randomly selected for QRIS, the ECERS will need to be redone, but the CLASS may be used for this rating |
| 1. Preschool – CSP classroom
 | Full day |

## Use of existing Assessment

A County Consortia may elect (but not required) to accept ERS and CLASS assessments conducted by others or assessment conducted within the past 13 months in lieu of the County Consortia sending an assessor under the following conditions. If the assessment was:

* + - completed within 13 months of the rating
		- performed by a valid and reliable external assessor
		- conducted with the same teaching team, child age group, and physical location as the randomly selected classroom

# Assessor qualifications

All assessors must be external (or independent), and have certification showing reliability to assess or other such documentation, and experience (see CLASS and Environmental Rating for specific definitions). An **Independent Assessor** is a trained and reliable person or entity who is not part of the program being assessed. A **Reliable Assessor** a person with experience in the child development field who is trained to evaluate child care programs using the particular instrument. Assessors attend thorough trainings to learn about using the scales/instrument to measure the quality of child care programs and complete multiple practice observations. Assessors are deemed reliable when they closely match scores of an Anchor (experience reliable "expert" assessor responsible for score interpretation). Assessors maintain their reliability by periodically "double coding" with another reliable observer to ensure the assessments closely match

## Communicating the Site Rating

## County Consortia will communicate, at minimum, the final tier rating in the RTT-ELC Consortia Annual Report. At the end of the grant period, the final tier rating must be communicated to the public. Communication of the overall points is not recommended, but optional.

County Consortia will adopt use of the terms “Core” and “Elements” to refer to the three overarching categories and sub-measures as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CORE | Elements |
| Core 1: Child Development & School Readiness | Element 1: Child ObservationElement 2: Developmental and Health Screenings |
| Core 2: Teachers and Teaching | Element 3: Early Childhood Educator Qualifications: Minimum Qualifications for Lead Teacher/Family Child Care Home Element 4: Effective Teacher-Child Interactions |
| Core 3: Program and Environment | Element 5: Licensing and Regulatory Requirements: Ratios and Group Size *(Centers Only)*Element 6: Program Administration and Leadership: Environment Rating Scale(s) – ECERS-R, ITERS-R, FCCERS-RElement 7: Program Administration and Leadership: Director Qualifications (Centers Only) |

The distinction of “category”, which was used in the early stages of discussion and is being used by California Department of Education in its work, may be an option for use by counties.

The Elements are numbered 1 through 7, consecutively, with elements 5 and 7 for centers only.

# Detailed Guidance for each Element

## Core 1: Child Development and School Readiness

|  Element 1. Child Observation |
| --- |
| **BLOCK(Common Tier 1)****Licensed In-Good Standing** | **2 POINTS**  | **3 POINTS**  | **4 POINTS**  | **5 POINTS**  |
| 🞏 Not required | 🞏 Program uses evidence-based child assessment/ observation tool once a year  | 🞏 Program uses valid and reliable child assessment/observation tool aligned with CA *Foundations & Frameworks* twice a year  | 🞏DRDP 2010 (minimum twice a year) and results used to inform curriculum planning  | 🞏Program uses DRDP 2010 twice a year and uploads into DRDP Tech and results used to inform curriculum planning |

Definitions

DRDP Refers to the use of the DRDP child observational assessment, not to the use of the Desired Results for Children and Families - Parent Survey, which is an option in Professional Development Pathway for Family Engagement. The assessment instrument must be on either approved list of RTT evidence based child assessments (2 points) or the list of valid and reliable child assessments (3 points) to be considered as a rated instrument. Programs or assessment creators may contact ? to obtain approval. At the 4 point level, the program must use the DRDP on every child at least twice per year and at the 5 point level, upload into DRDP-tech is added.

DRDP-techUse of DRDP Tech creates psychometrically valid reports for teachers and also meets the Federal RTT-ELC grant requirements of state-level data. Use of DRDP Tech is free to Head Start and State funded programs and will be available at a minimal per child cost for non-publicly funded programs. (5 points level)

Evidence basedThe level of evidence that supports the efficacy and generality of a practice as indicated by research. Evidence may come from empirical evidence, through evaluation reports by an outside source or by the developer, or by consensus documents published by a professional organization. THIS WILL BE UPDATED TO EXPAND DEFINITION

**"**Use of" or "Using" or “Utilize**”** refers to any assessment, instrument or tool that yields individual and group information. In most cases, the tool will be implemented by the program; however, in the case of the screening tool, programs may use information from a doctor’s or specialist’s assessment. This term requires that the program accesses and *analyzes results* and then, those results (whether individual information or aggregated group data) are used to inform practice.

Valid and Reliable refers to any assessment or tool whereby (reliability) implementation from one time to the next and from one observer/implementer to the next is likely to yield the same results. Validity means that the instrument or tool measures what it says it measures in the defined audience or group, Often instrument validity is limited to a specific language, culture or age group.

Guidance

* Local decision to determine if assessment/observation tool is evidence based for point-value 2

Portfolio Documentation

Elements 1, 2, 3 and 7; and Point-value 2 of elements 4 (CLASS) and 6 (ERS)

* + Training certificate required for CLASS and ERS point-value 2
	+ ERS point-value 2 overview/familiarity and Quality Improvement Plan – documentation is local decision

## Core 1: Child Development and School Readiness

|  |
| --- |
|  Element 2. Developmental and Health Screenings |
| **BLOCK(Common Tier 1)****Licensed In-Good Standing** | **2 POINTS**  | **3 POINTS**  | **4 POINTS**  | **5 POINTS**  |
| 🞏 Meets Title 22 Regulations  | 🞏 Health Screening Form (Community Care *Licensing form LIC 701 "Physician's Report - Child Care Centers")* used at entry, then:1. Annually **OR**
2. Conducts vision and hearing screenings annually
 | 🞏 Program works with families to screen all children using a **valid and reliable child screening tool** at entry and as indicated by results thereafter **AND**🞏 Meets Criteria from point level 2 | 🞏 Program works with families to screen all children using the **ASQ** at entry and as indicated by results thereafter**AND** 🞏 Meets Criteria from point level 2  | 🞏 Program works with families to screen all children using the **ASQ & ASQ-SE**, if indicated, at entry, then as indicated by results thereafter **AND**🞏 Program staff uses children’s screening results to implement intervention strategies and adaptations as appropriate**AND** 🞏 Meets Criteria from point level 2  |

Definitions

Screening

ASQ Ages and Stages Questionnaire

ASQ-SE Ages and Stages Questionnaire Social-Emotional

Indicated by results thereafter or As Indicated

Indicated by results thereafter includes providing information and referral as necessary. (Hybrid Points 3-5)

#### Guidance

Tier 1: meets Title 22 licensing regulations

Tier 2: must use health care screening tool (including FCCH)

TheScreening process in Common-Tiers 3 & 4 and Hybrid points 3-5 for programs working with families includes

* Families are engaged in the screening process. Results are shared with the family in a confidential and supportive manner. Program staff use screening results to refer families to the appropriate agencies for further assessment, such as the local Regional Center, school district and/or other resources.
* *In Hybrid points 4*, ASQ must be the tool used
* *In Hybrid points 5 the process also adds*: Program works with families to screen all children using the ASQ and ASQ-SE, as indicated (see definition of “as indicated”), at entry, then as indicated thereafter. Program staff uses children’s screening results to implement intervention strategies and adaptations as appropriate.

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## Core 2: Teachers and Teaching

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| --- |
| **CORE II: TEACHERS & TEACHING** |
| Element 3. Early Childhood Educator Qualifications: Minimum Qualifications for Lead Teacher/Family Child Care Home (FCCH) |
| **BLOCK(Common Tier 1)****Licensed In-Good Standing** | **2 POINTS**  | **3 POINTS**  | **4 POINTS**  | **5 POINTS**  |
| 🞏 Meets Title 22 Regulations | 🞏 **Center:** 24 units of ECE (core 8)🞏 **FCCH:** 12 units of ECE (core 8)  | 🞏 24 units of ECE (core 8) and 16 units of General Education**AND**🞏 21 hours professional development (PD) annually | 🞏 Associate's degree (AA) in ECE OR 60 degree-applicable units, including 24 units of ECE OR AA in any field plus 24 units of ECE**AND**🞏 21 hours PD annually | 🞏 Bachelor’s degree in ECE (or closely related field) with 48+ units of ECE OR master’s degree in ECE**AND**🞏 21 hours PD annually |

Definitions

Lead teacher

The a*dult with primary responsibility for a group of children*.

For the purposes of rating an early childhood classroom, lead teacher is the adult is the teacher who meets the minimum licensing requirements as a teacher and any additional requirements for the tier-level of the rating. When there is more than one teacher working in a group, the lead teacher shall be considered the person with the highest degree.

A *group* of children in a Center is defined as those children who are assigned for most of the day to a specific teacher or a team of teaching staff members and who occupy an individual classroom or well-defined space that prevents intermingling of children from different groups within a larger room or area. Each group must have at least one designated lead teacher. The lead teacher must spend the vast majority of time with one group of children who attend at the same time rather than divide time between classrooms or float between groups. The group size is determined by the tier-level of the rating. *Based on the NAEYC accreditation definition of a teacher.*

For the purposes of rating a licensed family child care home (FCCH), the lead teacher is the adult who is the owner and full-time operator of the FCCH. If the owner is not teaching the children, the FCCH lead teacher is defined as the adult with the highest degree who spends the vast majority of time with the children.

A *group* of children in an FCCH is defined as those children who are enrolled in the FCCH. The group size is determined by licensing requirements based on the ages of the children enrolled.

Professional Development/Continuing Education

21 hours of professional development per year must be consistent with the professional growth activities as described in Commission on Teacher Credentialing’ Child development Permit Professional Growth Manual ([http //www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/manuals-handbooks/PG\_manual\_ChildDev.pdf](http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/manuals-handbooks/PG_manual_ChildDev.pdf%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)), pages 8 and 9, even if the person does not hold a Child Development Permit. These activities/hours must be pre-approved by the individual’s professional growth advisor or the Consortium’s designee, either of whom must meet the advisor standard as described in the Manual on pages 5 and 6.

Professional growth activities may include documented workshops, coaching, equivalency of coursework, or other activities defined in the CTC Professional Growth Manual. Professional growth activities should stem from the needs of the teacher and program, based on the QRIS rating. Professional development includes, but is not limited to, the Professional Development Pathways.

#### Guidance

Threshold:

Qualifications are checked for all lead teachers employed at site AND

75% of them must meet requirements in point-values 2 to 5

Portfolio Documentation

## Core 2: Teachers and Teaching

|  |
| --- |
| Element 4. Effective Teacher-Child Interactions: CLASS Assessments (\*Use tool for appropriate age group as available) |
| **BLOCK(Common Tier 1)****Licensed In-Good Standing** | **2 POINTS**  | **3 POINTS**  | **4 POINTS**  | **5 POINTS**  |
| 🞏 Not Required | 🞏 Familiarity with CLASS (e.g. 2-hour Overview training) for appropriate age group as available by one representative from the site (on-line or face-to-face via facilitator) | 🞏 Independent CLASS assessment by reliable observer (for appropriate age group as available) to inform the program’s professional development/improvement plan | 🞏 Independent CLASS assessment by reliable observer (for appropriate age group as available) with minimum CLASS scores:* Emotional Support - 5
* Instructional Support –3
* Classroom Organization -5
 | 🞏 Independent assessment with CLASS (for appropriate age group as available) with minimum CLASS scores:* Emotional Support – 5.5
* Instructional Support – 3.5
* Classroom Organization – 5.5
 |

Definitions

Familiarity

Refers to the participating program’s management, center director, family child care operator, and lead teacher, as appropriate, having a basic understanding of a particular program or staff assessment tool. This can include having attended overview orientations, webinars, trainings, college courses in which the tool was presented, or other forms of knowing the intent, purpose, and use of the tool, but not to the depth of completing assessments or observations. The decision about what constitutes familiarity is a local one.

Independent (external) Assessment

An external assessment completed or conducted by an entity or persons not part of the program that is(are) trained to reliability on the tool. Independent assessments (*e.g., CLASS element II.4 – tier 4 of the QRIS block system and 4 points in the hybrid QRIS; ERS element III.2 - tier 3 of the QRIS block system and 3 points in the hybrid QRIS*) are completed by third party reliable assessors for scale users who will be doing “high stakes” assessments, for example in quality rating systems, or program monitoring, and also for technical assistance staff using the scales in program quality improvement efforts.

Reliable CLASS Observer

individuals who qualify as a reliable CLASS observer have demonstrated their ability to observe and rate classrooms based on the CLASS quality indicators. CLASS reliability must be renewed annually and is available for the Toddler and PreKindergarten CLASS tools. A reliable CLASS observer should be able to provide a certificate indicating current reliability (issued within the previous 12 months).

Certified CLASS Trainer

 individuals who qualify as a Certified CLASS trainer receive their certification through Teachstone, Inc. for having participated in at least 4 days of training (Observer training and Train the Trainer training) and have passed reliability on the CLASS tool. These trainers should be able to produce a certificate indicating that they successfully completed the Train the Trainer program and a certificate demonstrating their reliability on the CLASS tool is current (must be renewed annually). Certification is specific to a certain age level based on the particular CLASS tool. Currently, counties may have certified PreKindergarten CLASS trainers who they can call upon (known as affiliate trainer), or programs may arrange training through Teachstone. Currently, only Teachstone is able to provide certified CLASS trainers for the Toddler CLASS tool.

#### Guidance

* Informal CLASS assessment with no minimum score on each classroom; if multiple age groups, assessment on age group with the most number of children. (Hybrid Points 4, Common Tier 4)
* Certified trainer one person per agency or someone through a network of shared independent assessors. (Hybrid Points 4, Common Tier 4)
* Independent assessment with CLASS (for appropriate age group as available) with minimum CLASS scores

*Note: Teachstone Feedback Emotional Support and Classroom Org. need to be fairly high, at about a 5, to promote positive social development and decrease challenging behaviors. Instructional Support is different, and a bit lower, at 3 or above, for children to demonstrate greater academic and language gains. (Hybrid Points 4, Common Tier 4)*

Portfolio Documentation

## Core 3: Program and Environment

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| --- |
| Element 5. Licensing and Regulatory Requirements: Ratios and Group Size *(Centers Only)* |
| **BLOCK(Common Tier 1)****Licensed In-Good Standing** | **2 POINTS**  | **3 POINTS**  | **4 POINTS**  | **5 POINTS**  |
| 🞏 **Center:** Title 22 Regulations **Infant** Ratio of 1:4**Toddler Option** Ratio of 1:6**Preschool** Ratio of 1:12🞏 **FCCH:** Title 22 Regulations *(excluded from point values in ratio and group size)* | 🞏 **Center:** **Infant/Toddler** Ratio of 4:16 **Toddler** Ratio of 3:18 **Preschool** Ratio of 3:36  | 🞏 **Center**: **Infant/Toddler** Ratio of 3:12 **Toddler** Ratio of 2:12 **Preschool** Ratio of 2:24  | 🞏 **Center:** **Infant/Toddler** Ratio of 3:12 or 2:8 **Toddler** Ratio of 2:10 **Preschool** Ratio of 3:24 or 2:20  | 🞏 **Center:** **Infant/Toddler** Ratio of 3:9 or better**Toddler** Ratio of 3:12 or better**Preschool** Ratio of3:20 or better  |

Definitions

Ages – for group size

* Infant A child birth to 18 months of age.
* Toddler A child who is 18 to 36 months of age.

*Based on Education Code Section 8265.5*

* Preschooler A child who is 3 years of age to kindergarten entry. The child’s third birthday must be on or before the following dates
	+ - November 1 of the 2012-13 fiscal year
		- October 1 of the 2013-14 fiscal year
		- September 1 of the 2014-15 fiscal year and thereafter

*Based on Management Bulletin 12-15*

Ratios

Centers must meet the Community Care Licensing standards at a minimum

Staff must meet the needs of the children in attendance and provide visual observation and supervision at all times. Centers may need additional staff depending on the age of children and their needs. Additional staff are needed for backup. An Aide cannot be left alone with children except during naptime and to escort children to the restroom.

* One teacher can supervise no more than 12 children.
* One teacher and one aide can supervise up to 15 children.
* A fully qualified teacher and an aide with 6 early childhood education units can supervise up to 18 children.
* A ratio of one teacher or aide for 24 napping children is permitted, providing that the additional staff to meet the “awake” ratios are immediately available at the center.
*Reference California Code of Regulations, Title 22 section 101216.3*

Guidance

This element does not apply to family child care homes; ratios in family child care depend on whether licensed as a small or large family child care home.

*Reference California Code of Regulations, Title 22 section 102416.5*

Centers: Ratios and group size

* Verify through in person visit for point-values 3-4-5 (checked during the ERS assessment)
* For point-values 1-2: Self-reported during portfolio and certified through portfolio submittal process
* Need local protocol for out of ratio and child endangerment

Portfolio Documentation

## Core 3: Program and Environment

|  |
| --- |
| Element 6. Program Administration and Leadership: Environment Rating Scale(s) – ECERS-R, ITERS-R, FCCERS-R |
| **BLOCK(Common Tier 1)****Licensed In-Good Standing** | **2 POINTS**  | **3 POINTS**  | **4 POINTS**  | **5 POINTS**  |
| 🞏 Not Required | 🞏 Familiarity withERS and every classroom uses ERS as a part of a Quality Improvement Plan | 🞏 Independent ERS assessment using scale for the appropriate setting; All subscales completed and averaged to meet overall score level of 4.0 | 🞏 Independent ERS assessment using scale for the appropriate setting; All subscales completed and averaged to meet overall score level of 5.0  | 🞏 Independent ERS assessment using scale for the appropriate setting; All subscales completed and averaged to meet overall score level of 5.5 |

* Tier 1: remove overview and add “Not Required”
* Tier 2: update definition of familiarity as having received ERS overview

Definitions

 Familiarity (see Teachers and Teaching, Element 4)

 Independent (external Assessment) (see Teachers and Teaching, Element 4)

#### Guidance

ERS (ONE total averaged scale score) and CLASS scores (THREE averaged by domain) across selected classrooms will be recorded SEPARATELY for a site’s score on these two elements

Portfolio Documentation

## Core 3: Program and Environment

|  |
| --- |
| Element 7. Program Administration and Leadership: Director Qualifications *(Centers Only)* |
| **BLOCK(Common Tier 1)****Licensed In-Good Standing** | **2 POINTS**  | **3 POINTS**  | **4 POINTS**  | **5 POINTS**  |
| 🞏 12 units core ECE (early childhood education, child development, family/consumer studies, or related field), 3 units management/administration  | 🞏 24 units core ECE, 16 units General Education, 3 units management/Administration | 🞏Associate’s degree with 24 units core ECE, 6 units management/administration, 2 units supervision**AND**🞏 21 hours PD annually | 🞏 Bachelor’s degree with 24 units core ECE, 8 units management/administration**AND**🞏 21 hours PD annually | 🞏 Master’s degree with 30 units core ECE including specialized courses, 8 units management/administration, or Administrative Credential**AND**🞏 21 hours PD annually |

Definitions

Center Director

the Center Director provides supervision and administrative support to teaching staff and children, provides ongoing communication with public and private agencies, and support to families in an early care setting with at least one classroom.  Center director is

* Responsible for scheduling staff in accordance with licensing requirements and site needs.
* Manages all aspects of employee relations including performance review and training.
* Responsible for meeting all licensing regulations, agency policies & procedures and the Education Code as applicable.
* Responsible for accurate update of records on site including but not limited to enrollment, attendance, meal counts, daily logs, curriculum, child observations, and parent participation.
* The designee for insuring implementation of requirements of funding, including assessment, screening, curriculum, etc.
* The legal designee to send and/or receive legal documents (i.e. restraining orders, suspected child abuse reports, unusual incident reports, etc.).

A center director who is responsible for two or more centers may serve as the “executive director” of all of the center locations provided that a qualified child care center director is employed for each individual center/location.  In this instance, both the “executive director” and a designated lead teacher will meet the educational qualifications of center director and the executive director will be responsible for insuring the Program Administrative Scale (PAS) is completed for each center location.
*Reference California Code of Regulations, Title 22 sections 101215 and 101215.1*

* For example, state preschools located on the grounds of elementary school may have an “executive director” of all the state preschool locations; however, at least one lead teacher of a state preschool classroom on each site must meet the educational qualifications of “center director”.

Portfolio Documentation

# Professional Development Pathways

(Insert pathways, and explanation of how used)

Professional Development Pathways

The QRIS adopted by California’s Consortia Partners include Professional Development Pathways that are connected to the rated QRIS Matrix, but unrated. Definitions of each Pathway are included in this document. Professional Development Pathways are established for:

* Competency in Foundations and Frameworks
* Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) Pyramid Model
* Health and Nutrition
* Professional Growth Plan and ECE Competencies
* CLASS program-wide professional development intentionally applied for program improvement
* Program Administration Scale (PAS)/ Business Administration Scale (BAS)

Classroom Assessment and Scoring System Professional Development

2-hour overview for familiarity with CLASS for appropriate age group as available by one representative from the site (on-line or with a face-to-face facilitator); approximately $45/user.

4 or 6 hour face-to-face facilitated training; approximately $67 (4 hour) to $111.67 (6-hour, plus Dimensions Guide) per user; facilitated model with trainer who has received certified train-the-trainer training.

Competency in Foundations and Frameworks

In regards to the California Foundations and Frameworks and an Education/Curriculum Plan A developmentally, culturally, linguistically, appropriate (DCLA) curriculum..

*Awareness -* The lead teacher in every classroom and Center Director or FCCH operator is to completeonline Overview of *Foundations* and *Frameworks* training (when available) after entering QRIS in Tier 1 and before moving to next Tier.

*Exploring competency* The lead teacher has received training, from PITC/CPIN, on at least **one** domain in Foundations **&** Frameworks; There is a curriculum that teachers use to plan experiences for children based on what is known about each individual child, including abilities, culture, and home language.

*Developing competency* The lead teacher has received training, from PITC/CPIN, on at least **two** domain in Foundations **and** Frameworks; The lesson plans include experiences, in social, emotional, cognitive and physical domains for children based on what is known about each individual child, including abilities, culture, and home language and the classroom has an assessment tool that can assess children in these domains and based on each child’s ability, culture and home language. A DCLA child assessment is completed for each child and recommendations for each child’s learning is written down with parental input within 60 days of enrollment and again within 6 months from the 60 days assessment.

*Building competency* In addition to previous level of competency, the lead teacher has received training, from PITC/CPIN, on at least **three** domains in Foundations **and** Frameworks

*Integrating competency* The lead teacher has received training, from PITC/CPIN, on at least **four** domains in Foundations **and** Frameworks; The DCLA results for each child are summarized and with parental input the results are used to plan for children.  A plan for the classroom and individual children is in place and lesson plans include experiences, in social, emotional, cognitive and physical domains for children based on these plans; The Program Staff Professional Development Site-Level Plan incorporates *Foundations and Frameworks*

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning Overview (CSEFEL)

Overview can consist either of completing the online training (when available) or completing more in-depth CSEFEL training. (Hybrid Points 2)

Family Engagement

Relates to student-centered activities that promote families as children’s lifelong teachers and children’s success in school and life. Family engagement includes activities that:

* create an environment that helps families feel welcomed, valued, and respected by program staff;
* build strong relationships between families and staff;
* enable families and teachers to set expectations for children’s learning together, where those expectations support family goals and children’s learning and development
* are culturally and linguistically responsive, using regular, two-way communication
* promote partnerships with families where families and staff actively work together, at school and at home, to support children’s learning,
* support parents as children’s lifelong educators
* allow children and families to transition smoothly and continue engagement throughout the K-12 system

Health and Nutrition

* At the most basic level, programs will utilize the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program Guidelines.
* Programs advancing on the pathway will also implement an evidence based physical activity program and/or nutrition curriculum such as but not limited to California Preschools SHINE; I Am Moving, I Am Learning; Let’s Move!; SPARK; Sesame Workshop Curriculum.
* At the highest pathway, program will be implementing a Health/Nutrition Best Practices (nutrition program such as Preschool Foods Initiative, Parent engagement, and Health Literacy cross-curricular effort, etc.

Physical Activity in Programs

At least 30 minutes of activity for programs less than 4 hours and at least 60 minutes of physical activity for programs greater than 4 hours.

Program Administration Scale (PAS)/ Business Administration Scale (BAS)

Self-review with PAS/BAS and continuous improvement through a PAS/ BAS action plan; Can also use assessment through CDD, CCDF and RTT-ELC-funded Director Mentors Project; sites may substitute work toward NAEYC accreditation or the Office of Head Start Monitoring Protocols and a continuous Program Improvement Plan (PIP)

Tobacco Cessation training

 Refers to First 5 California’s on-line training or other similar training completed by all staff.

Transition Plans

Written transition plan that is activated when a child moves into another child care setting or into kindergarten. Minimum components for the Transition Plan

* Specific steps to support transitions
* Timeline
* Description of how families will be included in transitions plans

Description of the communication system supporting transitions

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1. Starting Strong: A quality toolbox for Early Childhood Education and Care © OECD 2012 www.oecd.org/edu/preschoolandschool/startingstrongiii-aqualitytoolboxforearlychildhoodeducationandcare.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Fact Sheet: California’s Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/rt/documents/rttelcfactsheet.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Reference Health and Safety Code sections 1596.773 and 1596.886 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Source Full-Day, Full-Year Early Care and Education Partnerships (2002) developed by the California Head Start–State Collaboration Office*  [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Source Ready for K… with ESEA (2009) developed by the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)