

# Rating Readiness Tool (RRT) and Request for On-Site Observation and Rating Review

Revised January 10, 2017



Nebraska Step Up to Quality  
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor  
PO Box 94987  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

## Purpose

The Step Up to Quality Rating Readiness Tool (RRT) will help programs determine what areas in Steps 3 – 5 they want raters and observers to review in recommending a rating to the Department of Health and Human Services.

## Instructions

The program completes the RRT, and may work in partnership with an assigned coach, if the program has elected to have a coach.

After reviewing each item, the program will specify which indicators they would like to be rated on by selecting the ready for rating checkbox that corresponds to those indicators.

The RRT must be completed in its entirety upon submission, this includes the Request for On-Site Observation and Rating Review at the end of the RRT. A program will not be allowed to make changes to their RRT once it has been submitted.

Note: Raters and observers will make every effort not to disrupt current program operations and use of materials when conducting visits to the program. The RRT should specify where materials are located in the program to keep disruptions to a minimum.

## Rating Cycle

Programs rated at Steps 3-5 may submit a request for an on-site observation and rating review once a year (based on the date printed on their last certificate) if they believe they are ready to move up a step. Otherwise, programs will be reviewed as follows:

Step 3 - Every two years

Step 4 - Every two years

Step 5 - Every five years

The completed Rating Readiness Tool must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the date as per the Rating Readiness Cycle.

## Step Up to Quality Indicators

Programs select (check mark) the indicators they want reviewed.

There are certain indicators that must be in place before a program can be approved for an evaluation. Programs must have at least one point in each standard area. Therefore, programs need to respond to at least one indicator in each standard area.

Any indicators not selected will not be evaluated and thus no points will be earned toward the program rating.

Once a program completes and submits the RRT, the program cannot go back and change selections during the rating/observation visit.

## File of Supporting Materials

The file of supporting materials includes the RRT as well as other documents that the program submits for consideration during the rating/observation process. Examples of materials include:

- maps of the facility
- teacher schedules
- classroom schedules
- parent consent forms

# Rating Readiness Tool

Site name (as listed in the Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System):	
Site address:	Site's primary contact name, phone number and email:
Coach name (if applicable):	

Requirement for Review of Documentation	Placed in File of Supporting Materials
1. Where can the rater find the File of supporting materials? The RRT should be kept in the File of supporting materials.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Provide a map of the facility that indicates where to find: curricular files, staff files, and child files.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Copies of all signed parent consent forms, organized by classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Provide a copy of the parent handbook, staff handbook, and other relevant policy documents that you would like considered.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Provide teacher schedules.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Provide the location of child records that track the date of enrollment and the birth date of each child in the program.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Provide classroom schedules that indicate when activities may be occurring in a different area, such as outside time.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. List of children whose files should not be considered (organized by classroom). Children who have not been in the program for 90 days.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Provide Quality Action Plan and/or Action Planning Documents.	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Quality Standard 1: Learning Environments, Program Curriculum, and Interactions

### 1A: Child Care Centers (56 Points)/Family Child Care Homes (38 Possible Points)

Training	Quality Indicator	Evidence	Points	Ready for Rating	Location and/or process for Rater to find records, policies, and practices
	1. The program lead designee attends the Introduction to the Environment Rating Scale training.	Certificate of completion	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	2. The program lead designee attends the Practice Using the Environment Rating Scale training.	Certificate of completion	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	3. The program lead designee attends the Introduction to the CLASS training.	Certificate of completion	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	4. The program lead designee attends the CLASS Observation training.	Certificate of completion	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	5. The program lead designee completes the Go NAP SACC training.	Certificate of completion	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Quality Action Plan Based on Self-Assessment	Quality Indicator	Evidence	Points	Ready for Rating	Location and/or process for Rater to find records, policies, and practices
	6. The program lead designee completes the Quality Action Plan based upon the ERS self-assessment.	Copy of ERS self-assessment and Quality Action Plan are available for review.	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	7. The program lead designee completes the Quality Action Plan based upon CLASS self-assessment. (Not applicable for FCCH)	Copy of CLASS self-assessment and Quality Action Plan are available for review.	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	8. The program lead designee completes an Action Planning Document based upon the Go NAP SACC Pre self-assessment.	Pre Self-Assessment completed and Action Plan Document uploaded on Nebraska Go NAP SACC site.	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	

9. Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Observation					
Observations (ERS)	<p>Three ERS Scales may be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R) for children from birth to 2 1/2 years of age.</li> <li>• Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale- (ECERS-3) for preschool-kindergarten children, from ages 2 1/2 through 5.</li> <li>• Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R) for family child care home programs.</li> <li>• ERS items are scored on a 1-7 continuum with 7 considered excellent and 1 considered inadequate.</li> </ul>	<p>In order to provide care and education that will permit children to experience a quality of life while helping them develop their abilities, a quality program must provide for the three basic needs all children have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of their health and safety</li> <li>• Building positive relationships</li> <li>• Opportunities for stimulation and learning from experience</li> </ul> <p>No one component is more or less important than the others, nor can one substitute for the other. It takes all three to create a quality program. The Environment Rating include each of these three basic components of quality which are observed in the program's environment, curriculum, schedule, and interactions.</p>			
		<b>Average Score</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Ready for Rating</b>	
	Program Overall	3.5-4.49	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		4.5-5.49	6		
		5.5 and higher	9		
		<b>Subscale Name</b>	<b>Average Subscale Score</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Ready for Rating</b>
	Personal Care Routines	3.0-3.9	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		4.0-4.9	2		
		5.0 and higher	3		
	Learning Activities (ECERS-3)	4.0-4.9	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Activities (ITERS-R and FCCERS-R)	5.0-5.9	2			
	6.0 and higher	3			
Language and Literacy (ECERS-3)	4.0-4.9	1	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Listening and Talking (ITERS-R and FCCERS-R)	5.0-5.9	2			
	6.0 and higher	3			

For center-based programs, at least 30 percent of groups (classrooms) of children will be randomly selected for observation. At least one group (classroom) will be selected from each age group.

10. Classroom Assessment Score System (CLASS)					
Observations (CLASS)	Three CLASS observation tools may be used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CLASS Infant</li> <li>CLASS Toddler</li> <li>CLASS Prekindergarten (PreK)</li> <li>CLASS items are scored on a 1-7 continuum with 6-7 considered high, 3-5 medium, and 1-2 low.</li> </ul>	CLASS measures the quality of interactions between teachers and children. In preschool, more effective teacher-child interactions may be associated with higher scores in vocabulary and math, which are key skills for children about to enter kindergarten. More effective interactions may be associated with gains in social competence and lower behavior problems.			
		<b>Average Score</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Ready for Rating</b>	
	Program Overall	3.5-4.9	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		5.0-5.9	6		
		6.0 and higher	9		
		<b>CLASS Domains</b>	<b>Average Domain Score</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Ready for Rating</b>
	Engaged Support for Learning (Toddler)	2.0-3.4	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Instructional Support (PreK)	3.5-4.9	2		
		5.0 and higher	3		
	Responsive Caregiving (Infant)	4.0-4.9	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Emotional and Behavioral Support (Toddler)	5.0-5.9	2			
Emotional Support (PreK)	6.0 and higher	3			
Classroom Organization (PreK)	4.0-4.9	1	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	5.0-5.9	2			
	6.0 and higher	3			

For center-based programs, at least 30 percent of groups (classrooms) of children will be randomly selected for observation. At least one group (classroom) will be selected from each age group.

<b>11. Go NAP SACC Post Self-Assessment Results</b>				
<p>Childhood obesity has become an important issue in early childhood. Go NAP SACC is intended to help early care and education programs develop quality practices that will prevent childhood obesity. Obese children may experience immediate health consequences, which can lead to weight-related health problems in adulthood.</p> <p>Health, nutrition, and physical activity helps promote health and learning in young children.</p>				
<b>Go NAP SACC</b>	<b>Post Self-Assessment Results</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Ready for Rating</b>
	Breastfeeding and Infant Feeding Policy and Practices	7-11 Best Practices	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
		12-15 Best Practices	2	
		16-23 Best Practices	3	
	Nutrition Policy and Practices	13-22 Best Practices	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
		23-31 Best Practices	2	
		32-45 Best Practices	3	
	Physical Activity and Screen Time Policy and Practices	16-27 Best Practices	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
		28-38 Best Practices	2	
		39-54 Best Practices	3	

Note: Before programs are eligible to complete the Go NAP SACC Post Self-Assessment, the program lead designee must attend the Go NAP SACC Training and complete an Action Planning document based upon the Go NAP SACC Pre Self-Assessment.

## 1B: Curriculum, Learning and Staff Supports (10 Possible Points)

Quality Indicator	Evidence	Points	Ready for Rating	Location and/or process for Rater to find records, policies, and practices
1. Utilizes an evidence-based/developmentally appropriate curriculum.	Program uses one of the curricula found to align with ELG on the Step Up to Quality website or will need to complete the Curricula Alignment tool and have received NDE confirmation that the curriculum aligns.	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Curriculum aligns with the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines (Curriculum alignment tool completed if applicable).	See above.	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Lead Teaching staff or Family Child Care Home owner has been trained on the program curriculum.	Copies of training certificates on curriculum training for lead teaching staff.	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Lead Teaching Staff or Family Child Care Home owner complete the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines Domain training series.	Copies of training certificates on Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines Domain training series for lead teaching staff.	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Program provides a curriculum that incorporates nutrition and/or physical activity for children.	Program uses one of the curricula found to align with physical activity and nutrition curricula or complete and submit the curricula alignment tool.	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A list of aligned curriculum is available on the Step Up to Quality website under Resources.

## Quality Standard 2: Child Outcomes (9 Possible Points)

	Quality Indicator	Evidence	Points	Ready for Rating	Location and/or process for Rater to find records, policies, and practices
<b>Child Outcomes</b>	1. Developmental Screening is conducted within 90 days of child's enrollment and results are shared with families.	Chart shows child name, date of enrollment, and date of developmental screening, and explanation of developmental screening instrument used.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	2. Ongoing assessment of children's strengths and needs aligned with the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines are conducted to develop plans to monitor children's progress.	Examples include: Child portfolio, work sampling assessments, authentic assessments. Program should be prepared to explain how they assess children's learning and development.	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	3. Periodic review and use of child assessment data for continuous program improvement.	Program has examples of how data was used to determine if children were meeting widely held expectations. If not, what changes would be made to improve children's learning.	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	4. Share individualized child data from ongoing assessments with families.	Program has examples of child data and can describe how it is shared with families.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	5. Evidence of family involvement in the development of transition plans for individual children.	Program has written description of how families are informed when a child will change classrooms.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	6. Procedure in place to meet with community service providers for IFSP and/or IEP planning for children with special needs.	Program has written policy on the importance of being part of the team when serving children with special needs and the program includes children with special needs.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	7. Staff participate in IFSP and IEP planning for children with special needs.	Program has minutes or plans from IFSP and IEP planning meetings related to children in the program.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A list of aligned curriculum is available on the Step Up to Quality website under Resources.  
January 10, 2017

## Quality Standard 3: Professional Development and Training (11 Possible Points)

			Points	Ready for Rating
<b>1. Center Director</b>	CDA or one-year certificate/diploma related to ECE from community college or higher*	Level Three of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Has at least 20 semester credit hours in early childhood education	Level Three of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	AA/AAS in ECE or related field*	Level Four of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	BA in ECE or related field*	Level Five of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
	MA in ECE or related field*	Level Six of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>1B. Center: Designated Lead Teaching Staff</b> (At least one staff person per classroom must be designated as lead.)	25% have CDA or one-year certificate/diploma related to ECE from community college or higher*.	Level Three of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	25% have at least 20 semester credit hours in early childhood education.	Level Three of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	25% have AA/AAS or higher in ECE or related field*.	Level Four of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	25% have BA or higher in ECE or related field*.	Level Five of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals	3	<input type="checkbox"/>

Continued on next page.

\*Note: Related fields are Social Work, Nursing, Psychology, Human Development & the Family, Family & Consumer Science, Youth Development, Mental Health/Counseling.

Continued from previous page			Points	Ready for Rating
<b>1C. Center: All Other Teaching Staff</b> (assistants and aides)	25% have CDA or one-year certificate/diploma related to ECE from community college or higher*.	Level Three of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	25% have at least 20 semester credit hours in early childhood education.	Level Three of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	50% have CDA or one-year certificate/diploma related to ECE from community college or higher*.	Level Three of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	25% have AA/AAS or higher in ECE or related field*.	Level Four of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2. Family Child Care Provider</b>	CDA or one-year certificate/diploma related to ECE from community college or higher*.	Level Three of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	FCCH provider has at least 20 semester credits hours in early childhood education.	Level Three of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	AA /AAS in ECE or related field*	Level Four of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
	BA in ECE or related field*	Level Five of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals	8	<input type="checkbox"/>
	MA in ECE or related field*	Level Six of Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education Professionals	10	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3. Ongoing Professional Development (Both Center-Based and Family Child Care Homes)</b>	All full-time administrative/teaching staff have at least 24 clock hours of in-service training per calendar year (or 3 semester credit hours of college coursework per calendar year).	A minimum of 4 clock hours of the 24 clock hours should be in the area of health and safety. The 3 semester college credit hours must be related to the employee's current role in the early childhood program, or required for the completion of a degree program in ECE or a related field*.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

\*Note: Related fields are Social Work, Nursing, Psychology, Human Development & the Family, Family & Consumer Science, Youth Development, Mental Health/Counseling.

## Quality Standard 4: Family Engagement and Partnerships (6 Possible Points)

	Quality Indicator	Evidence	Points	Ready for Rating	Location and/or process for Rater to find records, policies, and practices
<b>Family Engagement and Partnerships</b>	1. The program honors the child's home language and encourages home language development by greeting English language learning (ELL) children and their families in their home language or using simple phrases from a child's home language in daily communication with the child.	The program provides an overview of the various cultures and languages of children in the program. Classrooms have materials that reflect the various cultures and languages of the children and families in the program.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	2. The program provides materials and resources in a way that is accessible to all families including ELL families.	The program utilizes interpreters or has materials translated for families if there are children and families whose primary language is other than English.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	3. The program informs parents and children when there will be a change in teacher or a substitute teacher, when a field trip is planned, or when a child will change classrooms.	Programs can provide written permission slips from parents about field trips, programs have policies about how the program will inform families in the case of a change in teacher, or if there is a substitute.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	4. The program has communication strategies for informing families about their children's learning and development.	The program has policies and procedures for how parents will be informed about children's learning and development. It might include notes home to the family, parent nights, home visits, or parent-teacher nights.	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Continued on next page.

Family Engagement and Partnerships (cont.)	Quality Indicator	Evidence	Points	Ready for Rating	Location and/or process for Rater to find records, policies, and practices
	5. There is a defined procedure for the family to provide feedback to the program.	The program has a written description of how families provide feedback to the program on what they like and what can be improved. Program has examples of parent feedback to the program and can explain how they have improved the program based upon that feedback.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Quality Standard 5: Program Administration (8 Possible Points)

	Quality Indicator	Evidence	Points	Ready for Rating	Location and/or process for Rater to find records, policies, and practices
<b>Program Administration</b>	<p><b>1. Center-Based Programs</b></p> <p>The program has procedures for orienting new staff and assistants to the program. The program has a written staff handbook.</p>	<p>The program has documentation of dates staff started, dates orientation completed, and the various components included in the orientation. Staff handbook is available for review.</p>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<p><b>Family Child Care Programs</b></p> <p>The program has procedures for orienting assistants and/or substitutes to the program including meeting children and families before assuming responsibilities.</p>	<p>The program has written procedures for how assistants and/or substitutes will be oriented to the program. Documentation of who was oriented and what date the orientation was completed.</p>			
	<p><b>2. There are self-assessments or appraisals of teaching staff competencies and professional development plans for improving skills.</b></p>	<p>The program has completed performance appraisals annually and/or conducted self-assessments using Nebraska's Core Competencies to determine what knowledge and skills need to develop. Professional development plans are in place. (See resources in program guide)</p>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<p><b>3. Center-Based Programs</b></p> <p>A written salary scale or a plan for compensation of all teaching staff, substitutes, and assistants in the program is defined and implemented taking into account staff education and years of experience.</p>	<p>The program has a salary scale that accounts for staff's education, training, and years of experience. (See resources in program guide)</p>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Continued on next page.				

	Quality Indicator	Evidence	Points	Ready for Rating	Location and/or process for Rater to find records, policies, and practices
Program Administration (cont.)	Cont. from previous page <b>Family Child Care Programs</b>  A plan for compensation of owners, substitutes, and assistants working in the family child care home is defined and implemented taking into account staff education and years of experience.	The program has written documentation of how they set rates based upon costs and to ensure that the provider is fairly compensated based upon their education and years of experience.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	4. The program has a budget that projects income and expenses annually.	A written annual budget is developed that shows income and anticipated expenses.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	5. The program reports income to the IRS and claims expenses related to the program.	The program can provide copies of their previous year's tax return or spreadsheets.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	6. The program has records to keep track of income and expenses.	The program has written records or computer spreadsheets that show income and expenses for the program as compared with the annual budget.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	7. The program has a written agreement with families for hours of operation, days the program is closed, fees, and a fee payment schedule, including late fees.	The program can provide a signed agreement with the parents that reflects the parent has been informed of fees, closing time, closing days, and any additional fees or late fees.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	8. The program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.	The program can provide documentation of the forms submitted to participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	

# Request for On-Site ERS and/or CLASS Observation & Rating Review

Step Up to Quality staff will use this information to schedule an on-site observation and review.

\_\_\_\_\_ Full Day Program (6 hours or more)

\_\_\_\_\_ Part Day (Less than 6 hours)

\_\_\_\_\_ Full Day Year

\_\_\_\_\_ Part Year (Example: August to May)

\_\_\_\_\_ 24 Hours

## Classroom Information (Center-Based Programs Only)

Name of Classroom	Age of children in classroom	# of children enrolled in classroom	Name of teacher(s) assigned to classroom
<b>Total number of classrooms</b>		<b>Total number of children enrolled</b>	

Hours of Operation:

Sunday	Start Time_____	End Time_____	Not Open_____
Monday	Start Time_____	End Time_____	Not Open_____
Tuesday	Start Time_____	End Time_____	Not Open_____
Wednesday	Start Time_____	End Time_____	Not Open_____
Thursday	Start Time_____	End Time_____	Not Open_____
Friday	Start Time_____	End Time_____	Not Open_____
Saturday	Start Time_____	End Time_____	Not Open_____

Please select the preferred three-month period (90-day window) when you would like the on-site observation and review:

- \_\_\_\_\_ January - March
- \_\_\_\_\_ April - June
- \_\_\_\_\_ July - September
- \_\_\_\_\_ October - December
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please specify a consecutive three-month period)

Block Out Dates

Block out dates are dates a program chooses to not have an onsite observation and/or review. A program may choose up to two block out dates per month of the preferred quarter for the on-site observation & review.

Dates that the program chooses to not have an on-site visit during the three month period indicated above:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I understand that submission of this RRT means that no further alterations can be made. I assure that to the best of my knowledge, all information in this document is true and correct.

Signature of Director\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Email or mail the completed Rating Readiness Tool and Request for On-Site Observation & Rating Review to:

Step Up to Quality  
Nebraska Department of Education  
P.O. Box 94987  
Lincoln, NE 68509  
Email: [nde.stepuptoquality@nebraska.gov](mailto:nde.stepuptoquality@nebraska.gov)  
Phone: 1-844-807-5712