

# Rating Request Form

for Child Care Centers, Head Starts, Preschools,  
and School-Based Early Childhood Programs



## What is this form?

The Step Up to Quality Rating Request Form (RRF) is your official request for an on-site observation and rating review. You complete this form to choose the indicators you wish to have evaluated for the Step 3 – 5 observation and rating review process.

## How do I fill it out?

Choose at least one indicator in each Quality Standard area. Place a checkmark in the corresponding “Ready for Rating” column for all indicators you wish to have considered for rating. Do not make marks or notations near any indicators you are not selecting for review (leave them blank). Any indicator which does not contain a checkmark noted in the boxes of the corresponding “Ready for Rating” column will not be reviewed at the Rating Review visit, and no points will be earned for those indicators.

### TWO OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE:

- Rating Request for **STEP 3 ONLY** (\*no ERS/CLASS Observation) **OR**
- Rating Request for **STEPS 3 or 4 or 5** (\*including ERS or CLASS Observation)

The entire RRF must be completed upon submission. Describe where the evidence or documentation can be found for your selected indicators. Once you have submitted your Rating Request Form, no changes may be made.

## What should I prepare?

Gather up a file/notebook of supporting materials as evidence for the rating/observation process. Examples of materials include maps of the program, schedules, training certificates, diplomas/transcripts, handbooks, and parent consent forms.

## What Step level will I achieve?

### STEP 3 ONLY OPTION (\*NO ERS/CLASS OBSERVATION):

- **Step 3** = Minimum of 50 indicator points earned

### STEPS 3 OR 4 OR 5 OPTION (\*INCLUDING ERS OR CLASS OBSERVATION):

- **Step 3** = Minimum of 50 indicator points earned and a Program Overall Observation score below minimum threshold of 3.75
- **Step 4** = Minimum of 50 indicator points earned and at least a 3.75 Program Overall Observation Score
- **Step 5** = Minimum of 50 indicator points earned and at least a 4.75 Program Overall Observation Score

## Site Information

Complete the following with site information as listed in the Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System.

**Site name:**

**Site address & city:**

**Site's primary contact name, phone & email:**

**Coach name** (if applicable):

**Choose One:**

Rating Request for STEP 3 ONLY (\*no ERS/CLASS Observation)

Rating Request for STEPS 3 or 4 or 5 (\*including ERS or CLASS Observation)

Preparing for Review	Placed in File of Supporting Materials
1. Location of supporting materials file (the RRF should be kept in your file of supporting materials)	
2. Map of facility which notes the location of curricular files, staff files, and children's files	
3. Copies of signed parent consent forms for child files to be potentially selected for review by Step Up to Quality (remove child files which do not have parental consent for review)	
4. Copy of parent handbook, staff handbook, and other relevant policy documents to be considered	
5. Copy of teacher schedules	
6. Location of child records noting the date of enrollment and birth date of each child in the program	
7. Copies of daily schedules indicating when activities may be occurring in a different area, such as outside time	
8. List of children whose files should not be considered (children who have been enrolled in the program for less than 90 days)	
9. Quality Action Plan and/or Action Planning Documents	

## QUALITY STANDARD 1: Program Administration (10 Points)

Quality Indicator	Evidence	Points	Ready for Rating	List Location of Evidence
1. The program has procedures for orienting new staff and assistants to the program. The program has a written staff handbook.	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.	1		
2. There are self-assessments or appraisals of teaching staff competencies and professional development plans for improving skills.	The program has completed annual performance appraisals 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.	1		
3. 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.	The program has a salary scale that accounts for staff's education, training, and years of experience.	1		
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		
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		
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		
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 signed agreements with parents that notes the parent has been informed of fees, closing time, closing days, and any additional fees or late fees.	1		

## QUALITY STANDARD 1: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION CONTINUED

<b>8. The program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.</b>	The program can provide documentation of forms submitted to participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.	1		
<b>9. The program lead designee has completed a business training series or a college course on business practices.</b>	Completion of Getting Down to Business, Child Care Management Training, Child Care Administration or Business college courses, etc. (certificate of completion or college transcripts available for review)	2		

## QUALITY STANDARD 2: Child Outcomes (9 Points)

Quality Indicator	Evidence	Points	Ready for Rating	List Location of Evidence
1. Developmental screening is conducted within 90 days of the child's enrollment and results are shared with families.	Records show the child's name, date of enrollment, date of developmental screening and explanation of developmental screening instrument used.	2		
2. Ongoing assessment of children's strengths and needs are conducted to monitor children's progress.	Examples include child portfolio, work sampling, etc. Program should be prepared to explain how they monitor and measure children's learning and development.	3		
3. Procedure in place to meet with community service providers for IFSP and/or IEP planning for children with special needs.	Program has a written policy on the importance of supporting Individualized Education Program (IEP) and/or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) goals.	2		
4. Program participates 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.	2		

## QUALITY STANDARD 3: Professional Development (18 Points)

Quality Indicator	Evidence	Points	Ready for Rating	List Location of Evidence
<b>1A. Center Director</b> Select the one option which describes your highest level of education				
Child Development Associate credential, or one-year certificate/diploma in Early Childhood Education from a community college or higher	Official CDA credential, one-year certificate, diploma, and/or official transcripts as applicable, available for review	2		
Has at least 20 semester credit hours in Early Childhood Education	Official transcripts available for review	2		
Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education or related field*	Official diploma, and/or official transcripts available for review	3		
Bachelor's degree or higher in Early Childhood Education or related field*	Official diploma, and/or official transcripts available for review	4		

<b>1B. Lead Teaching Staff (at least one staff person per classroom must be designated as lead)</b> Select one of the following four options				
25% have a Child Development Associate credential, or one-year certificate/diploma in Early Childhood Education from a community college or higher	Official CDA certificate, diploma, and/or official transcripts as applicable, available for review	1		
25% have at least 20 semester credit hours in Early Childhood Education	Official transcripts available for review	1		
25% have an Associate's degree or higher in Early Childhood Education or related field*	Official diploma, and/or official transcripts as applicable, available for review	2		
25% have a Bachelor's degree or higher in Early Childhood Education or related field*	Official diploma, and/or official transcripts as applicable, available for review	3		

\*NOTE: Related fields are Elementary Education, Early Childhood Special Education, Curriculum and Instruction, Social Work, Nursing, Psychology, Human Development & the Family, Family & Consumer Science, Youth Development, Mental Health/Counseling.

## QUALITY STANDARD 3: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTINUED

<b>1C. All Other Teaching Staff (assistants and aides)</b> Select one of the following four options				
25% have a Child Development Associate credential, or one-year certificate/diploma in Early Childhood Education from a community college or higher	Official CDA certificate, diploma, and/or official transcripts as applicable, available for review	1		
25% have at least 20 semester credit hours in Early Childhood Education	Official transcripts available for review	1		
50% have a Child Development Associate credential, or one-year certificate/diploma in Early Childhood Education from a community college or higher	Official CDA certificate, diploma, and/or official transcripts as applicable, available for review	2		
25% have an Associate's degree or higher in Early Childhood Education or related field*	Official diploma, and/or official transcripts available for review	3		

\*NOTE: Related fields are Elementary Education, Early Childhood Special Education, Curriculum and Instruction, Social Work, Nursing, Psychology, Human Development & the Family, Family & Consumer Science, Youth Development, Mental Health/Counseling.

<b>2. Ongoing Professional Development</b>  <b>All full-time staff have at least 24 clock hours of in-service training within the past 12 months (or 3 semester credit hours of college coursework).</b>  (The past 12 months are counted back from the date the Rating Request Form was submitted. In-service training obtained from the time the Rating Request Form has been submitted to the time the Rating Review site visit occurs will also be counted.)	In-service training must be approved by the Early Childhood Training Center.  A minimum of 4 clock hours of the 24 clock hours should be on the topic of health and safety and/or training on children with special needs. 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*. Official transcripts will serve as verification of semester credit hours. In-service training certificates will serve as verification of in-service training.	3		
<b>3. Participates in an additional quality improvement initiative (other than Go NAPSACC) in the last 12 months.</b>	Documentation from the organization describing the initiative and confirming the current participation in the additional initiative(s)*	4		
<b>4. Works with a Step Up to Quality Coach assigned by the Step Up to Quality Coach Specialist.</b>	Name of assigned coach listed as evidence	1		

\*Examples of possible early childhood initiatives include, but are not limited to, [this list](#).

## QUALITY STANDARD 4: Family Engagement and Partnerships (9 Points)

Quality Indicator	Evidence	Points	Ready for Rating	List Location of Evidence
1. The program honors the child's home language and encourages home language development.	Materials that reflect the various cultures and languages of the children and families are available in the program. Examples of encouraging home language usage include 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.	1		
2. The program provides materials and resources in a way that is accessible to all families including English Language Learning families.	The program uses interpreters or has materials translated for families if there are children and families whose primary language is other than English. The program has access to translation resources or services such as language line or translation phone apps.	1		
3. The program has methods of informing parents of changes in the scheduled activities and uses specific communication methods with families.	Programs can provide examples of how parents are informed, using methods such as newsletters, electronic messaging, and social media. Programs have policies about how families will be informed in the event of a change in teacher, or if there is a substitute.	1		
4. The program offers at least one family conference per year to discuss child's progress and behavioral, social, and physical needs. Assessment information is shared with the family.	The program has examples of meeting notes from family conferences, including how screening information has been shared.	1		
5. Resource materials are available to all families which includes information about community services to promote child/family safety, health, and stability.	Examples of resource materials are available for review. Information on local family support initiatives (i.e., Ready Rosie, and Circle of Security) are available.	1		

#### QUALITY STANDARD 4: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS CONTINUED

6. The program provides families with opportunities for involvement in the program such as: open house, opportunities to volunteer, social events, and/or potluck meals.	Examples of notifications to families of these events are available for review	1		
7. The program helps to prepare children and families as children transition to kindergarten.	Examples include: reminders to parents of school open house or kindergarten round-up events, a field trip to visit the school with children, pictures of kindergarten preparation activities with the children, reading books about starting school to the children, etc.	1		
8. The program has a defined procedure for families to provide feedback.	The program has examples of completed parent feedback, and can explain how they have improved the program based upon that feedback.	1		
9. The program currently serves families receiving Child Care Subsidy.	The program has an active Child Care Subsidy agreement with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).	1		

## QUALITY STANDARD 5: Learning Environments and Program Curriculum (28 Points)

Quality Indicator	Evidence	Points	Ready for Rating	List Location of Evidence
1. The program lead designee attends the Closer Look at the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) Training or the Closer Look at the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) Training.	Certificate of Completion	1		
2. The program lead designee attends the Practice Using the Environment Rating Scale OR Item Analysis training.	Certificate of Completion	2		
3. The program lead designee attends the Whole Body Classroom training series.	Certificate of Completion	3		
4. The program lead designee attends the CLASS Observation training.	Certificate of Completion	3		
5. The program lead designee completes a Quality Action Plan based upon the ERS self-assessment.	Copy of ERS self-assessment and Quality Action Plan are available for review	1		
6. The program lead designee completes a Quality Action Plan based upon the CLASS self-assessment.	Copy of CLASS self-assessment and Quality Action Plan are available for review	1		

### 7. Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (Go NAPSACC) Post Self-Assessment Results

#### Check if selecting for rating

NOTE: Ratings will require a current Post Self-Assessment. Contact your Go NAPSACC consultant for more information and guidance.

Post Self-Assessment Results	Score	Available Points
Breastfeeding and Infant Feeding Policy and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7-11 Best Practices</li> <li>12-15 Best Practices</li> <li>16-23 Best Practices</li> </ul>	1 2 3

## QUALITY STANDARD 5: LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND PROGRAM CURRICULUM CONTINUED

<b>Nutrition Policy and Practices</b>	• 13-22 Best Practices	1
	• 23-31 Best Practices	2
	• 32-45 Best Practices	3
<b>Physical Activity and Screen Time Policy and Practices</b>	• 16-27 Best Practices	1
	• 28-38 Best Practices	2
	• 39-54 Best Practices	3

NOTE: The points earned from the Post Self-Assessment are calculated based on the number of best practices achieved. Your Go NAPACC Consultant can help communicate the results of your score.

Quality Indicator	Evidence	Points	Ready for Rating	List Location of Evidence
8. Uses an evidence based/ developmentally appropriate curriculum for all ages served that aligns with the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines. (Curriculum Alignment tool completed, if applicable)	Program uses one of the curricula found to align with the ELGs on the Step Up to Quality website; <b>OR</b> Has completed the Curriculum Alignment form and has received confirmation from Step Up to Quality that the curriculum aligns	2		
9. Lead teaching staff have been trained on the program curriculum.	Copy of certificates from Curriculum 101 training; <b>OR</b> training certificate on specific curriculum used in the program	2		
10. Lead teaching staff have completed the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines Domain training series.	Copies of training certificates on Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines Domain training series (all 7 domains)	2		
11. 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; <b>OR</b> Has completed the Curriculum Alignment form and has received confirmation from Step Up to Quality that the curriculum aligns	2		

NOTE: A list of aligned curricula is available on the [Step Up to Quality website](#).

## Observations

### ERS Observation or CLASS Observation

Programs pursuing a Step rating including an observation must choose either the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Observation **OR** the Classroom Assessment Score System (CLASS) Observation.

**Check if requesting an ERS Observation**

Date "Introduction to the Environment Rating Scale" training was attended: \_\_\_\_\_

If training was attended by someone other than the director, please provide the name of the lead designee:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Check if requesting a CLASS Observation**

Date "Introduction to the CLASS" training was attended: \_\_\_\_\_

If training was attended by someone other than the director, please provide the name of the lead designee:

\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: Every age group (infants, toddlers, preschoolers) the program serves will be observed. At least 30% of groups (classrooms) of children will be randomly selected for observation.

## Program Information

**Step Up to Quality will use this information to verify staff roles and to schedule the on-site ERS or CLASS observation(s) and site review. Every age group (infants, toddlers, preschool) the program serves will be observed. At least 30% of groups (classrooms) of children will be randomly selected for observation.**

[illegible]

## Schedule

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

### Check the category that best describes your program:

Full Day Program (6 hours or more)

Part Day (Less than 6 hours)

Full Day, Full Year

Part Year (Example: August to May)

### Hours of Operations:

<b>SUN</b>	Start Time: _____ End Time: _____ Closed	<b>THUR</b>	Start Time: _____ End Time: _____ Closed
<b>MON</b>	Start Time: _____ End Time: _____ Closed	<b>FRI</b>	Start Time: _____ End Time: _____ Closed
<b>TUES</b>	Start Time: _____ End Time: _____ Closed	<b>SAT</b>	Start Time: _____ End Time: _____ Closed
<b>WED</b>	Start Time: _____ End Time: _____ Closed		

## Submission

Submit your Rating Request Form for approval in the month prior to your preferred 3-month window for your observation and rating review. (Example: A Rating Request Form that is submitted and approved on May 5 would result in a 3-month window of June-August). Programs requesting a re-rating must submit a Rating Request Form and have it approved no later than the month prior to their rating expiration date, or they will return to a Step 2 rating. Accredited programs will return to a Step 3 rating.

### Block Out Dates & Program Language:

Block out dates are those that a program chooses not to have the onsite observation and/or review conducted. A program may choose up to ten block-out dates.

**Dates that the program chooses not to have the on-site visit(s) conducted during the 3-month window:**

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Is a language other than English spoken exclusively with the children in the classrooms?      Yes      No

If you answered yes, please indicate the language spoken:

*We will make every effort to accommodate the requested language whenever possible.*

### Please check all of the following before signing and submitting:

I understand that submission of this Rating Request Form 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.

_____	_____
<b>Signature of Director/Primary Provider</b>	<b>Date</b>

Once your Rating Request Form has been received and approved by the Step Up to Quality office, a rating reviewer will be assigned to conduct your on-site review. The Rating Review visit will be conducted at any time within your selected 3-month window. If you have selected an ERS or CLASS Observation, you will first be contacted by our Program Quality Specialist within a two-week window of the scheduled observation. Then, the assigned ERS/CLASS observer will confirm the observation date one business day prior to the onsite observation. The Observer and Rating Reviewer will make every effort not to disrupt your regular program activities during their site visits.

### Email or mail the completed Rating Request Form to:

Step Up to Quality, Nebraska Department of Education  
Office of Early Childhood  
P.O. Box 94987  
Lincoln, NE 68509

**Email:** [nde.stepuptoquality@nebraska.gov](mailto:nde.stepuptoquality@nebraska.gov)