

MARYLAND EXCELS

Quick Guide to Quality Ratings 1-3
Family & Large Family Child Care Homes



Updated February 2024

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Program Information and Contacts

Maryland EXCELS Information	
Username (email address):	
Password:	
Program Expiration Date ("Must publish by"):	
Quality Assurance Specialist (QAS) Contact information:	
Program Coordinator (PC) Contact information:	
24/7 Technology Support:	<p>443-872-9250 Submit a Technology Support form for technical support. Also found at tinyurl.com/excels-helpdesk.</p> <p>All fields are required to help us better support you.</p>
Maryland EXCELS Tutorials:	<p>Maryland EXCELS Tutorials for Child Care Programs Also found at tinyurl.com/excels-tutorials</p>
Maryland EXCELS Toolkit:	<p>Please review the Maryland EXCELS Toolkit to review resources to support increasing quality ratings. Also found at marylandexcelstoolkit.org/.</p>
Division of Early Childhood Information	
Regional licensing office:	
Maryland Child Care Credential Program:	<p>Child Care Central 1-877-355-1229 mcccredential@conduent.com P.O. Box 598 Baltimore, MD 21203</p>
Child Care Scholarship Invoices:	<p>Fax: 202-478-5117 CCSInvoices@maryland.gov</p>
Child Care Scholarship Customer Service:	<p>CCS Central 2 1-877-227-0125 Submit a Child Care Scholarship Provider Inquiry form for CCS support. Also found at tinyurl.com/scholarship-question.</p> <p>If no response in 5 business days contact Shavon.matthews1@maryland.gov</p>
Other support resources	
Regional Child Care Resource Center:	

Step 1: Complete enrollment information:

- Select My Programs→ Program Menu wheel→ Enrollment.

Step 2: Open profile:

- Select My Programs→ Work on My Maryland EXCELS Rating.

Quality Rating 1 Requirements

Subcategory and Required Documentation to Upload	Date Uploaded
DAP 3.1: Positive Behavioral Practices Policy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The positive behavioral practices policy shared with families and/or staff (for example, in your handbook) includes the following supports and explains what they are or how they are used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing children with choices ○ Redirection 	
DAP 6.1: Daily Schedule or Lesson Plan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The daily schedule or a daily or weekly lesson plan includes one or more of each of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Activity individualized to meet the developmental needs of each child ○ Activity informed by information from IFSP/IEPs, if any has been provided ● Identify the required items by circling and labeling these activities on your daily schedule or lesson plan. ● Update the Enrollment page (accessible from the Program Menu dropdown list) if there have been changes since it was previously completed. ● Add a comment noting if the program has or has not been provided with an Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or information from them for any of the currently enrolled children. 	
ADM 1.1: Family Handbook, Written Agreement, or Contract	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The family handbook, written agreement, or contract, includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health policies and practices ○ Safety policies and practices ○ Information on tuition, fees, and enrollment ○ A statement on the inclusion of children with disabilities and children with special health care needs ● Adding a comment that identifies the page numbers on which each bulleted item appears will enable the PC to conduct the review more quickly. 	
ADM 6.1: Conference Schedule and Statement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include a conference schedule that is shared with families. ● Include a statement describing both of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How families are informed about conferences ○ The process families follow to sign up for a conference 	

Quality Rating 1 Requirements, continued

ADM 7.1: Enrollment/Intake Documentation Requesting IFSP/IEP

- The enrollment/intake documentation shows that the program requests that families share IFSP/IEPs.
- If an IFSP/IEP has been shared with the program, upload a statement of how the program works with families and service providers to support child and family outcomes. **OR**
- If no IFSP/IEP (or information from one) has been shared, add a comment noting this.

Quality Rating 2 Requirements

Subcategory and Required Documentation to Upload	Date Uploaded
STF 1.2: Provider, Co-Provider, and Lead Staff Credential Certificates	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The provider, co-provider (if applicable) and, if LFCCH, at least 50% of lead staff are credentialed at Staff Level 2 or higher OR Administrator Level 1 or higher OR upload equivalent training documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For the provider, co-provider (if applicable) and, if LFCCH, at least 50% of lead staff: Submit their Current Maryland Child Care Staff or Administrator Credential certificate or award letter, OR equivalent training documentation. ● Add a comment identifying the provider, co-provider (if applicable) and, if LFCCH, all lead staff. 	
ACR 1.2: Accreditation Reflection Form	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Within the past 12 months, the provider has completed MSDE-approved accreditation training. ● Upload completed Accreditation Reflection Form, also found at tinyurl.com/accred-reflection. 	
DAP 1.2: Daily Schedule and Philosophy Statement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The daily schedule demonstrates a balance of child-initiated and teacher-directed activities. ● The program's Philosophy Statement shared with families and/or staff clearly describes a developmentally appropriate environment that is welcoming of children of all abilities. 	
DAP 2.2: Selection and Use of Materials Statement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A selection and use of materials statement describing the selection and use of learning materials explains how materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are developmentally appropriate ○ Are accessible ○ Reflect children's interests ○ Support children of all abilities 	

Quality Rating 2 Requirements, continued

DAP 3.2: Positive Behavioral Practices Policy

- The positive behavioral practices policy shared with families and/or staff (for example, in your handbook) includes the following supports and explains what they are or how they are used:
 - Providing children with choices
 - Redirection
 - Clear rules and expectations

DAP 4.2: Curriculum Statement

- A curriculum statement:
 - Explains how Healthy Beginnings and/or the Maryland Early Learning Standards and/or a curriculum/curricula aligned with the Maryland Early Learning Standards **guide(s)** the lesson planning process for all ages enrolled. **OR**
 - Identifies curriculum/curricula aligned with the Maryland Early Learning Standards that is/are **implemented** by the program for all ages enrolled.

DAP 5.2: Lesson Planning Process Statement

- A statement describing the lesson planning process explains the program's method for developing activities that:
 - Are age appropriate
 - Reflect children's interests and skills
 - Address the developmental needs of each child enrolled
 - Address information from IFSP or IEP when provided by the family

DAP 6.2: Daily Schedule and Recent Lesson Plan

- The daily schedule and
- A daily or weekly lesson plan implemented within the past 6 months together include:
 - One or more of each of the following:
 - Activity individualized to meet the developmental needs of each child
 - Activity informed by information from IFSP/IEPs, if any has been provided
 - Two or more of each of the following:
 - Whole group learning experiences
 - Small group learning experiences
 - Individual learning experiences
 - Literacy/reading opportunities
 - Transition times
- Identify the required items by circling and labeling these activities on the daily schedule and/or lesson plan. Ensure the lesson plan is dated.
- Add a comment noting if the program has or has not been provided with an Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or information from them for any of the currently enrolled children.
- Update the Enrollment page (accessible from the Program Menu dropdown list) if there have been changes since it was previously completed.

Quality Rating 2 Requirements, continued

DAP 7.2: Screen Time Policy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The screen time policy shared with families and/or staff reflects the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Television, computers, or other media devices are used only when directly related to facilitated learning experiences. ○ No screen time is allowed for children under the age of 2. 	
DAP 9.2: Observation Practices Statement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The statement describing observation practices explains all the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How the program conducts observations ○ Who conducts the observations ○ When and how often observations are conducted ○ How information from observations is used to inform program activities 	
ADM 5.2: Examples of Family Engagement Opportunities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include documentation shared with families for at least two different types of family engagement opportunities. Ensure all documentation is dated and no more than 12 months old. 	
ADM 6.2: Family Conference Schedule and Statement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The conference schedule shared with families demonstrates that conferences are offered at least once per year. ● A statement describes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How families are informed about conferences ○ The process families follow to sign up for a conference 	
ADM 8.2: Yearly Staff Meeting Schedule, Agenda, and Sign-In Sheet	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include a staff meeting schedule shared with staff and dated within the past 12 months that demonstrates that meetings are conducted at least four times per year. ● Include a staff meeting agenda dated within the past 12 months. ● Include a staff meeting sign-in sheet is dated within the past 12 months. 	
ADM 9.2: Staff Performance Evaluation Schedule	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include an evaluation schedule that is shared with staff and demonstrates that staff performance is evaluated at least annually. 	
ADM 10.2: Staff Handbook or Statement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff handbook or statement 	

Quality Rating 2 Requirements, continued

ADM 13.2: Community Resources Statement

- A community resources statement describes the following:
 - What community resources are shared families and staff
 - What referral resources for children with disabilities and children with special health care needs are shared with families and staff
 - How the resources are identified and kept current
 - How these resources are made available to families and staff

Quality Rating 3 Requirements

Subcategory and Required Documentation to Upload	Date Uploaded
STF 1.3: Provider, Co-Provider, and Lead Staff Credential Certificates	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The provider, co-provider (if applicable) and, if LFCCH, at least 50% of lead staff are credentialed at Staff Level 3 or higher OR Administrator Level 1 or higher OR upload equivalent training documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For the provider, co-provider (if applicable) and, if LFCCH, at least 50% of lead staff: Submit their Current Maryland Child Care Staff or Administrator Credential certificate or award letter, OR equivalent training documentation. ● Add a comment identifying the provider, co-provider (if applicable) and, if LFCCH, all lead staff. 	
ACR 1.3: Accreditation Interview Verification Form	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Within the past 12 months, the provider has visited or had a conversation with a program accredited by an MSDE-recognized organization. ● Upload completed Accreditation Interview Verification Form (also found at tinyurl.com/accred-interview). 	
ACR 2.3: Self-Assessment Score Sheet(s)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct self-assessment(s) (also found at tinyurl.com/excels-center-assess) for at least one classroom/designated space from each age group. ● Submit completed Summary Score Sheet(s) from the Maryland EXCELS Self-Assessment or CLASS®. ● Submit completed SACERS™ Score Sheet (first/last pages) for a school-age classroom or designated space. 	
ACR 3.3: Program Improvement Statement and Plan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include a statement that describes the provider's process for developing and maintaining a Program Improvement Plan (for example, who is involved in the developing the PIP, methods for identifying goals, how often the PIP is reviewed and updated, etc.). ● Include a Program Improvement Plan (also found at tinyurl.com/excels-pip) created or updated within the past 12 months that includes goals related to, but not limited to, the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All self-assessment areas with an average score under 4.00 (from self-assessment(s) submitted to ACR 2.3) ○ School (kindergarten) readiness ○ Other program priorities, if identified by the program 	

Quality Rating 3 Requirements, continued

DAP 1.3: Daily Schedule and Philosophy Statement

- The daily schedule shows a balance of child-initiated and teacher-directed activities.
- The program's Philosophy Statement shared with families and/or staff explains how the program:
 - Provides a developmentally appropriate environment for all children
 - Welcomes children of all abilities
 - Balances child-initiated and teacher-directed activities
 - Reflects the children's interests, primary languages, and cultural backgrounds

DAP 2.3: Selection and Use of Materials Statement

- A statement describing the selection and use of materials explains how materials are:
 - Developmentally appropriate
 - Accessible
 - Reflective of children's interests
 - Supportive of children of all abilities
 - Supportive of multiple modes of exploration and learning

DAP 3.3: Positive Behavioral Practices Policy

- The positive behavioral practices policy (discipline policy) shared with families and/or staff includes the following supports and explains what they are or how they are used:
 - Providing children with choices
 - Redirection
 - Clear rules and expectations
 - Reflection and problem solving

DAP 5.3: Lesson Planning Process Statement

- A statement describing the lesson planning process explains the program's method for developing activities that:
 - Are age appropriate
 - Are domain-based
 - Reflect children's interests and skills
 - Address the developmental needs of each child enrolled
 - Are informed by an IFSP or IEP when provided by the family
 - Are informed by observations

Quality Rating 3 Requirements, continued

DAP 6.3: Daily Schedule and Recent Lesson Plan

- The daily schedule and
- A daily or weekly lesson plan implemented within the past 6 months together include:
 - One or more of each of the following:
 - Activity individualized to meet the developmental needs of each child.
 - Activity informed by information from IFSP/IEPs, if any has been provided.
 - Two or more of each of the following:
 - Whole group learning experiences
 - Small group learning experiences
 - Individual learning experiences
 - Literacy/reading opportunities
 - Transition times
 - One or more activity from each domain:
 - For ages 0-3: Personal and Social Development, Language Development, Cognitive Development, Physical Development
 - For ages 3-5: Social and Personal Development, Language and Literacy, Mathematical Thinking, Scientific Thinking, Social Studies, The Arts, Physical Development, Health
- Identify the required items by circling and labeling these activities on the daily schedule and/or lesson plan. Ensure the lesson plan is dated.
- Add a comment noting if the program has or has not been provided with an Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or information from them for any of the currently enrolled children.
- Update the Enrollment page (accessible from the Program Menu dropdown list) if there have been changes since it was previously completed.

DAP 9.3: Observation Practices Statement and Developmental Checklist

- A statement of your observation practices describes:
 - How the program uses developmental checklists to monitor children's developmental progress.
 - Who conducts observations using developmental checklist.
 - When and how often observations and developmental checklists are completed.
 - How information from observations and developmental checklists is used to inform program activities.
- Include a developmental checklist used by the program. ([CDC developmental checklists](https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/earlychildhood/devchecklist/) can be found at [tinyurl.com/cdc-devchecklist](https://www.tinyurl.com/cdc-devchecklist).) Use a blank checklist or mark out child's name and identifying information before uploading.

Quality Rating 3 Requirements, continued

ADM 1.3: Family Handbook, Written Agreement, or Contract

- The family handbook, contract, or enrollment agreement includes the following:
 - Mission or philosophy statement
 - Policies and practices for:
 - Health
 - Safety
 - Tuition/enrollment
 - Inclusion of children with special health care needs and children with disabilities
 - Positive behavior practices
- Adding a comment that identifies the page numbers on which each bulleted item appears will enable the PC to conduct the review more quickly.

ADM 3.3: Child and Adult Care Food Program Participation

- Include documentation demonstrating participation in CACFP (CACFP Estimate Claim Reimbursement Report or Site Application) **OR** completed [CACFP Ineligibility/Non-Participation Form](#) (also found at tinyurl.com/excels-cacfp). Documentation must be dated within the past 12 months.

ADM 4.3: Nutrition Policy and Recent Weekly Menu

- The program's nutrition policy shared with families and/or staff demonstrates that the program:
 - Provides fresh fruit and vegetables at least twice per week.
 - Monitors meals provided from home and supplements them, as necessary, to ensure that children receive healthy and balanced meals and snacks.
- Include a weekly menu served within the past month. Ensure menu is dated. (If the program does not provide meals or snacks, add a comment stating this.)

ADM 5.3: Examples of Family Engagement Opportunities

- Include documentation shared with families for at least three different types of family engagement opportunities. Ensure all documentation is dated and no more than 12 months old.

Quality Rating 3 Requirements, continued

ADM 8.3: Yearly Staff Meeting Schedule, Agenda, and Sign-In Sheet	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include one copy of each of the following, all dated within the past 12 months: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yearly staff meeting schedule shared with staff that shows meetings are held monthly. ○ Staff meeting agenda ○ Staff meeting sign-in sheet (with signatures) 	
ADM 9.3: Performance Evaluation Schedule and Performance Evaluation Tool	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A staff performance evaluation schedule shared with staff members demonstrates that evaluations are conducted at least once per year in writing with each staff member. (The schedule may be in any format, including as a policy shared staff members in the staff handbook.) ● Include a copy of the program's performance evaluation tool. Use a blank tool or mark out staff person's name and identifying information before uploading. 	
ADM 10.3: Staff Handbook	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff handbook. 	
ADM 12.3: Incremental Salary Scale	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include an incremental salary scale showing that salaries are based on education and experience. 	
ADM 15.3: Transition Plans Statement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include a statement describing the program's transition plan(s) for children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Upon enrollment (home to program). ○ Upon changing age groups or classrooms (within the program). ○ Upon approaching kindergarten (program to school). ● Including individualized plans for children with disabilities and children with special health care needs. (Must be included even if no children with disabilities or special health care needs are currently enrolled.) 	