

Standard 1 – Relationships		
Number	NAFCC Accreditation Criterion	Paths to QUALITY
1.2	The provider shows affection to each child in some way. She holds or carries babies frequently, depending upon their individual preferences as shown by expressions of discomfort, such as crying or fussing, as well as their expression of well-being, such as smiling and cooing as well as their body language or settling in or pulling away.	Level 2, Standard 10a.5 Standard 10b.1
1.5	The provider observes children’s behavior, verbal and body language, and abilities. The provider uses this information to respond to each child. For example, the provider responds to a baby’s crying as promptly and effectively as possible.	Level 2, Standard 10a.5 Standard 10a.6 Standard 10b.1 Standard 10b.4
1.14	The provider keeps parents informed, through conversation or in writing, about what their children do. This happens daily for babies and at least weekly for older children.	Level 2, Standard 7
1.16	In addition to ongoing conversations, the provider has a conference with each child’s parent at least once per year. Together they review the child’s progress and needs and set goals for the child.	Level 2, Standard 7
1.21	The provider helps children understand their own feelings and those of others.	Level 2, Standard 10a.7 Standard 10a.10 Standard 10b.6

Standard 2 – Environment		
Number	NAFCC Accreditation Criterion	Paths to QUALITY
2.1	The areas of the home used by children are welcoming and friendly, appearing like a family home, a small preschool, or a combination of the two.	Level 2, Standard 10a.1
2.5	The environment is pleasant, not over stimulating or distracting. The provider chooses music and other recordings that the children enjoy. At least half the time there is no background music, TV, radio, or other recordings.	Level 2, Standard 10a.12 Level 3, Standard 7a.8
2.8	Outdoors, the play areas have open space for active movement, some play equipment and materials and places for open-ended explorations.	Level 2, Standard 11b.2
2.9	The provider makes reasonable adaptations to the environment and activities to meet the special needs of each child. If the child has been diagnosed with a specific conditions, the provider follows the IFSP or IEP	Level 3, Standard 9.1 Standard 9.2 Standard 9.3
2.11	Each child has a space for personal belongings.	Level 2, Standard 10a.4

2.12	Space is available for babies to explore feely, to crawl and to stand. Sturdy, low furniture is available for those who are learning to walk.	Level 2, Standard 11c.2 Standard 12b.2 Standard 12b.5 Standard 12b.6
2.16	Equipment is modified to accommodate children’s special needs, or special equipment is provided. If a child is in a wheelchair, there is sufficient space for it to move around.	Level 3, Standard 9.3
2.22	There are enough toys and materials, home-made or purchased to engage all the children in developmentally appropriate ways.	Level 2, Standard 12a Standard 12b.3
2.23	Suggested materials for large and small motor development: For Babies – Balls, grasping toys, stacking and nesting toys. Toys to look at, feel and chew on	Level 2, Standard 12b.4
2.24	Suggested materials for large and small motor development: For Toddlers – equipment for climbing, riding toys, balls, large interlocking blocks and puzzles, water and sand for sensory play	Level 2, Standard 11b.2 Standard 12a.9 Standard 12a.10
2.25	Suggested materials for large and small motor development: For Preschoolers – Toddler equipment plus peg boards, blocks, sewing materials, dancing music and props.	Level 2, Standard 12a.10
2.27	Materials are stored in consistent places and some of them are easy for children to find, help themselves to, and put away. Separate containers are provided for different kinds of materials.	Level 2, Standard 12b.1
2.29	Materials are rotated, put away for a while and then brought out again, to maintain children’s interests.	Level 2, Standard 11a.7
2.32	The books are in readable condition.	Level 2, Standard 13b.1
2.34	Books for children under age two: at least 10 books made of durable materials, simple pictures of people and familiar objects, short stories about everyday activities.	Level 2, Standard 13b.1 Standard 13b.2 Standard 13b.3 Standard 13b.4 Standard 13b.5 Standard 13b.6
2.35	Suggested materials for language and literacy: books for children over age two – at least 10 books, nursery rhymes, a variety of stories about pretend and real situations, information books.	Level 2, Standard 13a.8
2.36	Books for school agers – at least 10 books, chapter books, adventure stories, mysteries, information books, magazines/comics, a variety of reading levels and topics.	Level 2, Standard 13a.9
2.37	Suggested materials for language and literacy development – telephones, puppets, and interactive games, written or audio materials in the child’s home language.	Level 2, Standard 12a.5 Level 3, Standard 7a.6

2.38	Suggested art materials for children age 2 and under – the provider sets out inviting art materials at least once per day – crayons, markers or pencils, paint brushes, large pieces of paper, non-toxic paint, and play dough.	Level 2, Standard 12a.3
2.39	For children age 3 and over, basic art materials are accessible during free play times – tools for drawing and painting, scissors, papers of various sizes and colors, glue or paste, play dough and/or clay, miscellaneous materials such as scraps of construction paper, fabric, yarn, or wood, household recycles, second-hand materials.	Level 2, Standard 12a.3
2.40	Suggested math materials – matching, sorting, and arranging things in sequence, counting things, measuring, recognizing and creating patterns, comparing differences and similarities.	Level 2, Standard 12a.6 Level 3, Standard 7a.7
2.41	Suggested science materials – magnet, magnifying glass, outdoor thermometer, balance scale, sand or similar substance, blocks, toy cars and ramps, water	Level 2, Standard 12a.8 Level 3, Standard 7a.9
2.42	Suggested dramatic play materials – materials for children to create their own costumes and props, dress-up clothing, blocks, stuffed animals and dolls, miniature animals and people.	Level 2, Standard 12a.4 Standard 12a.5

Standard 3 – Developmental Learning Activities		
Number	NAFCC Accreditation Criterion	Paths to QUALITY
3.1	Children have opportunities to make choices and explore their own interests. They direct their own free play for at least ½ hour at a time, totaling at least one hour in each half day. The provider offers several activities appropriate for the abilities and interests of the children. Free play may occur indoors or outdoors.	Level 2, Standard 11a.2 Level 3, Standard 8.1
3.3	The provider supports and extends children’s self-directed play as well as offering activities and materials that build on their interests and skills.	Level 2, Standard 10a.11 Level 3, Standard 8.3
3.4	The provider gathers information about children’s interests and needs through observation and conversation with parents. She uses this information to set goals that support the children’s development.	Level 3, Standard 8.2
3.6	The provider plans some activities building on the needs and interests of the children. She is flexible in adapting the plans.	Level 3, Standard 8.3 Standard 8.5
3.7	Most of the children’s activities promote many kinds of development simultaneously – the curriculum is integrated and holistic rather than focused on one area of development at a time. For example, a play dough activity includes art,	Level 3, Standard 6.1

	math, science, self, social and language development. Children age 4 or older can pursue special interests or hobbies, working on projects that may evolve over days or weeks.	
3.8	The provider offers opportunities to practice and explore new skills in a range of developmental areas.	Level 3, Standard 8.5
3.10	The provider extends children’s learning by describing what they are doing and asking them open-ended questions.	Level 3, Standard 8.4
3.12	The provider finds opportunities to help children learn specific skills and concepts when they show interest in learning them.	Level 3, Standard 8.5
3.13	The provider takes advantage of and builds upon the many natural learning experiences and “teachable moments” associate with daily life in a home.	Level 3, Standard 8.6
3.14	The provider supports children’s play, without dominating it, by simply observing, offering materials, joining in, or making gentle suggestions as needed. She plays interactive games, especially with babies and toddlers.	Level 2, Standard 10a.11 Level 3, Standard 8.2 Standard 8.3
3.15	Except for necessary routines and transitions, the provider does not force children into activities they do not enjoy. Most of the time, for example, toddlers can move in and out of an activities, stand and watch or choose not to participate at all.	Level 3, Standard 7b.1 Standard 8.1
3.17	The provider usually maintains a consistent sequence of daily events, while the flow of activities is adapted to the individual and developmental needs of each child and the changing group.	Level 2, Standard 11a.1
3.18	Activities and transitions are generally smooth and unhurried; children can usually finish activities at their own pace. They seem to know what is expected of them.	Level 2, Standard 11a.4
3.19	The provider greets children and parents warmly every day. Upon arrival, she helps children get involved in an activity or social interaction.	Level 2, Standard 10a.1
3.21	The provider takes children outdoors every day, weather permitting, unless the neighborhood is not safe. Active play is offered in another way if they do not go outside.	Level 2, Standard 11b.1
3.22	Rest time is relaxing and comfortable for children. Non-sleepers can have books and quiet toys to play with during rest time.	Level 2, Standard 11a.6
3.23	Babies and toddlers can nap when they are sleepy. If needed, the provider helps them fall asleep through rocking, patting, and/or soft music.	Level 2, Standard 11c.1

3.29	Positive guidance, appropriate for the developmental abilities of each child, is used to help children gain self-control and take responsibility for their own behavior.	Level 2, Standard 10a.9
3.35	No form of physical punishment or humiliation is ever used. The provider does not criticize shame, tease hurtfully, threaten or yell at children and is not physically rough with the children.	Level 2, Standard 10a.8
3.36	The provider helps children to gain awareness of other people’s feelings and to understand how their own actions affect others.	Level 2, Standard 10a.7 Standard 10b.6
3.37	The provider helps children resolve conflicts and disagreements with each other by talking through their feelings and finding their own solutions.	Level 2, Standard 10a.9 Standard 10a.10
3.41	Sometimes children help with preparing food, setting table, or cleaning up after meals.	Level 2, Standard 11a.3 Level 3, Standard 9.4
3.43	The provider helps children understand and respect people who are different from themselves. The provider responds factually to children’s curiosity about similarities and difference among people.	Level 3, Standard 9.5
3.47	The provider accepts children’s emotional needs, including their see-sawing demands for both dependence and independence.	Level 2, Standard 10a.7
3.51	The provider helps children take responsibility for themselves and their belongings, building self-help skills when they are ready.	Level 3, Standard 9.4
3.52	Children have daily opportunities for large-motor activities, such as crawling, walking, climbing, running, jumping, dancing, balancing, throwing, and catching.	Level 2, Standard 11b.2 Standard 11b.3
3.53	Children have daily opportunities for small-motor activities, such as grasping, scribbling, cutting with scissors, buttoning, using art materials, or playing with manipulatives.	Level 2, Standard 12a.3 Standard 12a.10
3.54	Children, especially babies and toddlers, have rich experiences using their senses – seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching.	Level 2, Standard 12a.9 Level 3, Standard 7b.2
3.55	The provider helps children gain information and understanding through exploration, books and other people.	Level 3, Standard 7a.4
3.58	The provider encourages children to think for themselves, to solve problems on their own and with others, and to have confidence in their ability to find solutions.	Level 2, Standard 10a.10 Level 3, Standard 7a.1
3.59	The provider encourages children to express their thoughts and feelings and listens with interest and respect.	Level 2, Standard 10a.6 Standard 10a.7 Standard 10b.6

3.60	The provider takes time every day for meaningful conversation with each child. The provider takes an interest in and responds positively to babies' vocalizations and imitates their sounds.	Level 2, Standard 10a.5 Standard 13b.5
3.62	The provider adjusts communication to match the understanding of each child.	Level 2, Standard 10a.5
3.64	The provider reads to children for at least 15 minutes during each half day, or all the children are able to read. Books are used to stimulate conversation that expands upon children's interests and imagination, to build vocabulary, or to introduce new ideas and information. If children have short attention spans, reading can occur in brief moments including during snacks or meals. Children who can read independently spend at least ½ hour in each ½ day engage in literacy activities.	Level 2, Standard 13a.1 Standard 13a.3
3.65	Children have access to books every day. The provider encourages children to look at or read books on their own. She teaches children to take care of books as needed.	Level 2, Standard 13a.2 Standard 13b.3
3.66	The provider builds on children's emerging interest in print and writing in the context of meaningful activities. Depending on their developmental levels, she encourages them to scribble; to recognize signs; alphabet letters and their sounds, to write their names, notes and stories; to label their drawings; make books; or keep journals.	Level 2, Standard 13a.4 Level 3, Standard 7a.6
3.67	Children learn math and science concepts in the context of everyday activities, such as setting the table, preparing food, sorting the email, cooking gardening and playing games. As they are able, they match, sort, arrange things in sequences, count things, measure and recognize and create patterns.	Level 2, Standard 11a.3 Level 3, Standard 7a.7 Standard 7a.9
3.68	Children have opportunities to explore the natural and physical environment, such as watching insects, planting seeds and caring for plants, playing with water and sand, and playing with balls and ramps.	Level 2, Standard 12a.8 Level 3, Standard 7a.9
3.70	The provider offers daily opportunities for children to use their imagination and creativity through a variety of activities.	Level 3, Standard 7a.3
3.71	The provider sets out inviting materials for art activities. Children age 3 and older have access to basic art materials during fee play times.	Level 2, Standard 12a.3
3.72	Most art activities are open-ended and child-directed. Children decide what they will create and how they will do it. Coloring books, pre-cut materials, or activities that require	Level 2, Standard 12a.3

	children to produces a specific product are not examples of art activities.	
3.74	If there are children age 3 and older, the provider values children’s work by displaying some of it. She helps parents appreciate some of the children’s creations.	Level 3, Standard 7a.5
3.75	The provider uses music in a variety of ways such as signing, finger plays, clapping games, playing instruments, and playing a variety of recorded music.	Level 2, Standard 12a.7 Level 3, Standard 7a.8
3.76	Children have opportunities to participate in making music with their voices or instruments.	Level 2, Standard 12a.7 Level 3, Standard 7a.8
3.79	If television, videos, or computer games are used, the provider assures that the content is appropriate for the ages of the children. Violent, sexually explicit, or stereotyped content is avoided.	Level 2, Standard 11a.8
3.80	If children watch television or videos, the provider limits their viewing time to no more than one hour per day and one full-length movie per week. Children under age 2 are not encouraged to watch television or videos. Alternate activities are available to all children during these times.	Level 2, Standard 11a.8
3.82	When used, all computer software promotes children’s active involvement, group participation, learning, creativity or fun.	Level 2, Standard 11a.8

Standard 4 – Safety and Health		
Number	NAFCC Accreditation Criterion	Paths to QUALITY
4.4	Children are not permitted to leave the program with anyone other than their parent or specific individuals designated by a parent in writing or verbally. This applies to non-custodial parents.	Level 2, Standard 8.5 Standard 9.1
4.16	Equipment and materials, indoors and outdoors, are safe and in good repair. There are not sharp or rough edges on furniture, toys or outdoor play equipment.	Level 2, Standards 12b.2
4.69	If a child has been diagnosed as having a special need, the provider understands the condition, follows all prescribed treatments and works with parents and other specialists as needed.	Level 3, Standard 9.1
4.86	The provider implements an illness policy defining mild symptoms with which children may remain in care, and more severe symptoms that require notification of parents or back-up contact to pick up child.	Level 2, Standard 9.2

Standard 5 – Professional and Business Practices		
Number	NAFCC Accreditation Criterion	Paths to QUALITY
5.8	The provider is actively involved with other providers or a related professional group, if available.	Level 2, Standard 3
5.16	The provider or sponsoring agency has a signed child care contract with each family. Areas covered in the contract include: hours, fees, payment schedule, provider’s and child’s vacation, providers and child’s sick leave and absences, responsibilities for alternate care, termination policy.	Level 2, Standard 9.1 Standard 9.2 Standard 9.3 Standard 9.4 Standard 9.5 Standard 9.6 Standard 9.7 Standard 9.8 Standard 9.9 Standard 9.10 Standard 9.11 Standard 9.12 Standard 9.13 Standard 9.14
5.19	The provider gives written policies to parents. Areas covered in written policies include: substitute care arrangement, persons authorized to pick up child, illness, administering medication, emergencies, guidance and discipline, parent conferences and visits, if relevant, religious teaching and activities, if relevant, transportation and or field trips.	Level 2, Standard 9.1 Standard 9.2 Standard 9.3 Standard 9.4 Standard 9.5 Standard 9.6 Standard 9.7 Standard 9.8 Standard 9.9 Standard 9.10 Standard 9.11 Standard 9.12 Standard 9.13 Standard 9.14
5.21	The provider has a way of keeping observational notes about insights into children’s interests, accomplishments, concerns and some of the delightful things they say and do. These records are used for program planning and parent conversations.	Level 3, Standard 8.2
5.33	Except in emergencies, parents are notified in advance when a substitute provider will be responsible for their children.	Level 2, Standard 8.1