



Arizona Child Care Association

2100 N. Central Ave., Ste. 225 Phoenix, Arizona 85004-1400

**ARIZONA CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION (ACCA)
QUALITY ASSESSMENT PILOT PROJECT**

FRAMEWORK, STANDARDS, INDICATORS, & LEVELS

**Funding Provided by
The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust**

December 22, 2004

© ACCA 2004

ACCA QUALITY ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND AND EXPLANATION

ACCA received generous funding from the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust to develop indicators of quality. ACCA used a Steering Committee of operators and directors and conducted “Best Practice” research, reviewed professional literature, consulted with national experts, and reviewed related projects in other states to develop its list of indicators. An overarching statement, “*continuity of care by a nurturing and knowledgeable adult*” captured what researchers and professionals in the field recognized as essential for quality.

ACCA and the Steering Committee recognized that the vast majority of centers can take steps to improve the quality of care, yet embarking on national accreditation can be a daunting process and can require additional resources.

ACCA’s Quality Assessment and Indicators are based upon:

1. Not duplicating State licensing regulations and building on existing measures.
2. Identifying a few “key” standard categories and indicators that are the most important or have the greatest impact.
3. Providing “foundation” indicators that correlate with other measures
4. Giving priority to objective indicators that allow accurate and reliable assessment and are supported by research or evaluation.
5. Using indicators that are meaningful, practical, realistic, and achievable without a significant infusion of resources.
6. Allowing incremental improvements and measurable progress.
7. Measuring results and outcomes versus processes when possible.
8. Using indicators applicable to all ages but “default” to preschool age if necessary.

The ACCA Assessment was piloted in non-profit and proprietary centers, large multi- state operations as well as large, medium, single owner, and faith based facilities. The results of the pilot assessments were evaluated with the assistance of the Trust’s Director of Research and Evaluation, Dr. Wayne Parker. While the sample size was small, the overall internal reliability was excellent. Dr. Parker found that “given the small sample the instrument looks promising” and that even given the weaknesses inherent in self-study instruments, “the instrument has potential to be useful.”

ASSESSMENT FORMAT AND EXPLANATION

ACCA's Quality Assessment groups indicators in the following areas:

1. Culture of Quality
2. Director Qualifications
3. Mentor Teachers
4. Teacher Training
5. Curriculum and Learning Environment:
6. Health and Safety
7. Parent Involvement
8. Self Assessment
9. Compensation

The assessment has 5 levels with the “top” level or the “A+” level being one of the national accreditations and the basic minimum level being a State licensed center in “good standing”.

The three levels in between, “A, B, and C” are used to denote groupings of the indicators. The levels show how the assessment “fits” between the current systems and communicates a progression from basic licensure to accreditation.

Each of the nine groupings contains more specific indicators or measures of quality. The number of indicators per group ranges between six (6) and thirteen (13) with a total of seventy-three (73) total specific indicators.

The tool can be administered as a self assessment. Self assessment is a recognized first step to quality improvement and has the advantage of being less threatening and requiring fewer resources.

In addition to the Assessment, ACCA has an assessment tool with the 73 indicators listed in progression, but not grouped by A, B, or C level. The assessment tool allows centers to measure their current performance against the quality standards and indicators. ACCA recommends determining whether the center “Fully Met”, “Partially Met, or “Did Not Meet” each of the 73 indicators. Please contact ACCA for a copy of the Assessment Tool.

ARIZONA CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION (ACCA) QUALITY ASSESSMENT PROJECT

EXPLANATION OF OVERALL FRAMEWORK & DOCUMENT FORMAT

STANDARDS - The title and description of nine (9) critical quality content areas identified by ACCA

A+ National Accreditation	<p>A <u>general</u> description of the accreditation requirements including the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA) or National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NACECEP). Accreditation involves on-site validation by trained, independent, external early childhood professionals.</p> <p><i>To receive an A+, a center must be nationally accredited and meet any of the indicators that are not addressed by accreditation.</i></p>
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The "A" indicators <p><i>To receive this rating, a center must receive an acceptable score on the C, B, and the "A" indicators</i></p>
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The "B" indicators <p><i>To receive this rating, a center must receive an acceptable score on the C indicators and the "B" indicators</i></p>
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The "C" indicators <p><i>To receive this rating, a center must be licensed in "good standing"* and receive an acceptable score on the C indicators</i></p>

DHS Licensed Child Care Center - a general description of the current licensing requirements. *"Good Standing" means the program must be operating under a valid license and not have numerous, repeated or serious non-compliance with applicable licensing requirements determined by monitoring visits, inspections, and substantiated complaints within the past twelve months.

SUMMARY OF DRAFT QUALITY IMPROVEMENT STANDARDS

- 1. CULTURE OF QUALITY:** Refers to the leadership, commitment, and involvement of the CEO or owner. Management and personnel policies and practices foster quality and promote continuous quality improvements.
- 2. DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS:** Addresses three dimensions for the individual responsible for the daily operation of the facility: 1) The initial amount and type (early childhood, administrative, or generic) of training, education, or certification 2) the initial amount and type (teaching or administrative) of experience 3) ongoing professional development and involvement.
- 3. MENTOR TEACHERS:** The qualifications and ratio of teachers with higher levels of training or education and experience. Mentor teachers have lead responsibility and support other teaching staff with program development, lesson plans, learning centers, interactions with parents, and program evaluation. Mentor teachers have a CDA, CPC, CCP, or degree with 12 credits in early childhood, or 120 hours of training in child and family development, care and training of young children, family and community contacts, or professional and personal development, of which 50% is approved training.
- 4. TEACHER TRAINING:** Amount of initial and ongoing education and training required of lead teachers (not assistant teachers or other center personnel).
- 5. CURRICULUM and LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:** Research based or nationally recognized instructional philosophy, methods, and materials.
- 6. HEALTH AND SAFETY:** In this context, refers primarily to CPR and First Aid, since State licensing covers health and safety standards extensively.
- 7. PARENT INVOLVEMENT:** Two way communication between staff and parents including involvement, participation, opportunities to provide feedback and suggestions, and satisfaction.
- 8. SELF ASSESSMENT:** Periodic program evaluation that includes a classroom observation component that assesses the nature of the staff and child interaction, child development, measures the effectiveness of education, and is used to make program improvements.
- 9. COMPENSATION:** – Salary considerations and benefits provided to full time staff that affect the ability to attract and retain knowledgeable and nurturing staff that provide continuity of care for children. (The preferred outcome measure of retention and turnover is more difficult to measure.).

Arizona Child Care Association (ACCA) Quality Assessment Pilot Project - DRAFT

I. CULTURE OF QUALITY: Refers to the leadership, commitment, and involvement of the CEO or owner. Management and personnel policies and practices foster quality and promote continuous quality improvements.

A+	National accreditation addresses range of areas including program administration, philosophy, personnel policies, and efficient operations.
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual facility operational or business plan reflects expenditures for improvements in staff training, curriculum costs, equipment replacement, supplies, and maintenance costs that support quality. • System in place that provides employees with incentives, rewards, and performance improvement plans based on staff evaluations or performance. • All employees able to provide direct feedback, through their chain of command, to the CEO or Owner.
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO or Owner personally approves and monitors implementation of curriculum, annual staff development plan, corrective action plans. • Annual goals are established for improvement and innovation and shared with staff and parents. • CEO or Owner is a member of state organization dedicated to improving early care and education.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Mission Statement that reflects commitment to quality. • Statement is communicated clearly to parents and staff. • Employee job descriptions and policy and procedure manuals are accurate and current within the year.

Arizona Licensing Requirements: CEO or responsible party interacts with licensing for regulatory compliance, the school has written policies for staff, and the director evaluates staff in writing annually.

Arizona Child Care Association (ACCA) Quality Assessment Pilot Project - DRAFT

2. DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS: Addresses three dimensions for the individual responsible for the daily operation of the facility: 1) The initial amount and type (early childhood, administrative, or generic) of training, education, or certification 2) the initial amount and type (teaching or administrative) of experience 3) ongoing professional development and community or professional involvement.

A+	National accreditation emphasizes a national credential or Bachelor's degree in early childhood education, or closely related field and three years experience and corresponding amount of training and experience.
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National competency based credential (e.g. CCP, CDA, or CPC) or Associate degree, in a closely related field, that includes 15 credit hours in early childhood or 180 hours of approved training. • 3 years experience in child care. • 24 hours of training annually, including administration, 50% approved. • Involved in 2 professional development activities.
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 early childhood credits or 120 hours of approved training. • 30 months of child care experience including one year of supervisory experience. • Completed training in administration. • 18 hours of approved training annually. • Involvement in one professional development activity.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 early childhood credits or 90 hours of training, 50% approved. • Completed or attending training on administration. • 12 hours of training annually, 50% approved. • S*CCEEDS registered.

Arizona Licensing Requirements 21 years of age, High school diploma or equivalency, 6 credit hours in Early Childhood or closely related field from an accredited college, or 60 hours of actual instruction provided in conferences, seminars, lectures, or workshops in the areas of early childhood, child development, or closely related fields and 24 months of child care experience.

Arizona Child Care Association (ACCA) Quality Assessment Pilot Project - Draft

3. MENTOR TEACHERS: The qualifications and ratio of teachers with higher levels of training or education and experience. Mentor teachers have lead responsibility and support other teaching staff with program development, lesson plans, learning centers, interactions with parents, and program evaluation. Mentor teachers have a CDA, CPC, CCP, or degree with 12 credits in early childhood, or 120 hours of training in child and family development, care and training of young children, family and community contacts, or professional and personal development, of which 50% is approved training.

A+	Accreditation prefers teachers with Bachelor's degree in early childhood education or credential and corresponding early childhood experience, e.g. Bachelors and one year experience, Associate and two years, credential and 3 years.
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One mentor teacher per 50 preschool age and younger children in attendance, not including the Director.
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One mentor teacher per 100 preschool age and younger children in attendance, not including the Director.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One mentor teacher per center, may include the Director if licensed as school or the majority of children are school age.

Arizona Licensing Requirements - Not addressed

Arizona Child Care Association (ACCA) Quality Assessment Pilot Project - DRAFT

4. TEACHER TRAINING: Amount of initial and ongoing education and training required of lead teachers (not assistant teacher's or other center personnel).

A+	Accreditation generally emphasizes teachers with early childhood credentials or degrees with and corresponding early childhood experience, e.g. credential and 3 years. Associate and two years Bachelors and one year experience,
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 hours of training, of which 50% is approved, within 90 days of employment or early childhood credential. • 24 hours of training, of which 50% is approved, annually.
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 hours of training prior to working directly with children in addition to required orientation. • 18 hours of training annually thereafter, of which 9 is approved training. • Training includes how to prepare and utilize center's curriculum and developmentally appropriate practices.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 hours of the 12 hours required annually are approved training. • Training addresses the areas of caring for children, health and safety, and positive discipline and guidance.

Arizona Licensing Requirements: Must be 18 years of age or older and provides the licensee with documentation of high school diploma or equivalency and 6 months of child care experience (may be as an assistant teacher in a center), an orientation within the first 10 days, and 12 hours of training within the first year.

Arizona Child Care Association (ACCA) Quality Assessment Pilot Project - DRAFT

5. CURRICULUM and LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: Research based or nationally recognized instructional philosophy, methods, and materials used.

<p>A+</p>	<p>Written philosophy and written plans that include goals for individual children. Addresses developmentally appropriate activities that reflect a variety of both indoor and outdoor activities that are balanced between teacher planned and child initiated activities.</p>
<p>A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers enhance the curriculum. • Provides a variety of planned indoor and outdoor activities.
<p>B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center uses a comprehensive nationally recognized or researched based curriculum or components and provides training to staff on how to implement the curriculum. • Curriculum reviewed annually. • Activities and routines occur in relatively the same sequence most days. • Caregiver reacts quickly to solve problems in a comforting, supportive and problem solving manner.
<p>C</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers read to children minimum of 15 minutes per day. • Interest areas for children two years and older, including dramatic play, block building, manipulatives, art, table toys, language arts, science, and music. • A variety of play activities occur each day, some teacher directed, some child initiated. • Attention is on caregiving versus routine housekeeping or maintenance activities (Note: does not preclude tasks required by licensing).

Arizona Licensing Requirements Prepares and posts a dated daily lesson plan in each activity area for each calendar week which is maintained on the premises for 12 months from the lesson plan date and provides opportunities for each child to gain a positive self image, and develop in the areas of social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and large and small muscles.

Arizona Child Care Association (ACCA) Quality Assessment Pilot Project - DRAFT

6. **HEALTH AND SAFETY**: In this context refers primarily to CPR and First Aid since state licensing covers health and safety extensively.

A+	Accreditation, like State licensing, covers a broad array of health and safety standards including the indoor and outdoor physical environment, nutrition, and food services. Requires increasing number or percentage of staff certified in CPR and First Aid than licensing.
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 75% of all full time staff are certified in age appropriate CPR and First Aid and 100% of staff working with infants.• All full time staff trained in handling exposure to body fluids.• Training in identifying child abuse and mandatory reporting.
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 50% of full time staff certified in age appropriate CPR and First Aid.• Evidence of routine safety inspections indoors and outdoors.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 30% of all full time staff are certified in age appropriate CPR and First Aid.

Arizona Licensing Requirements Comprehensive health and safety standards. CPR and First Aid required of one person on premises at all times.

Arizona Child Care Association (ACCA) Quality Assessment Pilot Project - DRAFT

7. PARENT INVOLVEMENT: Two way communication between staff and parents including involvement, participation, opportunities to provide feedback and advice, and satisfaction.

<p>A+</p>	<p>Accreditation may include prospective and new parents receive written descriptions of program's philosophy, operating procedures, and an orientation. Parents are welcome and work with teachers on children's assessments, developmental goals, and discipline. Families are connected with needed resources.</p>
<p>A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent input solicited semi-annually through parent advisory committees, or written satisfaction surveys, or phone interviews. • Uses methods to obtain input from parents that leave the program. • One parent conference offered annually. • Monthly newsletter.
<p>B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent input solicited yearly through parent advisory committees, or written satisfaction surveys, or phone interviews. • Policy of meeting with parents upon request is shared with parents. Regular parent newsletter.
<p>C</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A system is in place for sharing daily happenings and changes in a child's physical or emotional state with parents. • Parents are provided written information on community resources, and parenting.

Arizona Licensing Requirements: Parents are provided a written statement of services and are allowed access to the center at all times while their children are in attendance and are permitted to participate in any child care activity.

Arizona Child Care Association (ACCA) Quality Assessment Pilot Project - DRAFT

8. SELF ASSESSMENT: Periodic program evaluation that includes classroom observation component that assesses the nature of the staff and child interaction, child development, measures the effectiveness of education, and is used to make program improvements.

<p>A+</p>	<p>Accreditation requires self evaluation at least annually that looks at all aspects of the center's total operations including physical environment, nutrition and food, administration, staffing, and qualifications</p>
<p>A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A commitment to continuous improvement in staff and child interaction is evident. • An Independent or external peer review process is utilized or a complete application, with parent and staff surveys, has been submitted for national accreditation.
<p>B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program actively participates in a formal self study process of an accreditation system or staff have been trained on and uses a nationally or state recognized assessment tool to measure the quality of staff and child interactions. • Parents are involved in the process.
<p>C</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operator or Director conducts and maintains a written a self-appraisal at least annually. • Appraisal includes staff and children interactions, the application of the curriculum, and the measurements of the progress of the children.

Arizona Licensing Requirements - Compliance with health and safety licensing regulations primarily.

Arizona Child Care Association (ACCA) Quality Assessment Pilot Project - DRAFT

9. COMPENSATION: Salary considerations and benefits provided to full time staff that affect the ability to attract and retain knowledgeable and nurturing staff that provide continuity of care for children. (The preferred outcome measure of retention and turnover is more difficult to measure.).

<p>A+</p>	<p>Not addressed explicitly (indirectly measured through compliance with range of other measures)</p>
<p>A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partially paid health for employees and dependents. • Training or tuition reimbursement. • Paid sick leave or personal time off. • Retirement contributions or disability or life insurance.
<p>B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary increases based on training, education, and performance evaluations. • Paid vacation or personal time off. • Paid workshop registration. • Partially paid health for employee.
<p>C</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides child care discount. • Offers health and dental insurance. • Unpaid maternity leave.

Arizona Licensing Requirements - Compensation is not addressed

DEFINITIONS

ACCA – Arizona Child Care Association – represents private licensed child care centers.

"Approved" training – Registered with S*CCEEDS or training provided by a national child care organization (NAEYC, NCCA, NACCP, etc.). Credits from a university or college also are counted.

CCP – NCCA Certified Child Care Professional teaching credential

CDA – Child Development Associate Degree

“Course” – a credit, class, or module from an accredited community college or university

CPC – Certified Professional in Child Care (NACCP)

NAC – National Administrator Credential (NCCA)

NACECEP – National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (also called NAC)

NACCP – National Association of Child Care Professionals

NAEYC – National Association for the Education of Young Children

NCCA – National Child Care Association

NECPA – National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NCCA)

“Professional Development Activities” - includes being a member of a professional organization (local, state, national) related to early childhood, registered with the S*CEEDS program, a member of a committee or board member of organizations committed to child advocacy or child development.