Utah’s Child Care Quality System:
Program Guide
For Providers

The Department of Workforce Services, Office of Child Care, developed Utah’s Child Care Quality System with the guidance of early childhood experts, community stakeholders and child care program owners, directors and professionals.
ON BEHALF of the Department of Workforce Services, I want to thank you for your dedication and commitment to the children of Utah and their families. Through your valuable work and service in our state, you are supporting a thriving state economy by allowing parents to work knowing their children are cared for in healthy and safe child care settings.

Your program is part of our state’s network of capable and skilled child care programs which are an important piece of the education pathway for children in our state. Your role supports children in becoming ready for kindergarten, maintaining positive growth throughout their academic careers and establishing a foundation for their success into adulthood.

Thank you for building on that role by participating in Utah’s Child Care Quality System. We are committed to support you in your efforts to serve the families of our state.

Sincerely,

Tracy Gruber
Director, Office of Child Care
Department of Workforce Services

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Department of Workforce Services, Office of Child Care, developed Utah’s Child Care Quality System with the guidance of early childhood experts, community stakeholders and child care program owners, directors and professionals. The creation of the system was not possible without the help of the following partners:

• Utah Private Child Care Association
• Utah Family Child Care Association
• Early Childhood Utah
• Care About Childcare Agencies
• Utah Afterschool Network
• Utah Registry for Professional Development
• Office of Child Care Advisory Committee
• Utah Association for the Education of Young Children
• Terry Farnsworth, Professional Childcare Association of Utah
• Shauna Avila, Director, Bennion Learning Center
• Tim Carter, Utah Private Child Care Association

In addition, the Office of Child Care worked with several child care program owners to better understand the business of child care and the cost of maintaining high-quality child care. These discussions helped determine the structure and amount of the Enhanced Subsidy Grant. These individuals include the following:

• Johnny Anderson, Owner, ABC Great Beginnings
• Brian Zabriskie, Business Manager and Owner, A to Z Building Blocks
• Jody Zabriskie, Owner, A to Z Building Blocks
• Andrew Drage, Owner, Tender Years

The Office of Child Care extends special thanks to the Child Care Quality System Subcommittee, which met monthly for 15 months, and continues to meet to provide feedback and input on the system. The members include:

• Jamie Bitton, Owner, Progressive Preschool
• Katie Ricord, Executive Director, Utah Association for the Education of Young Children
• Sharon Miller, Professional Family Childcare Association of Utah
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Equal Opportunity Employer/Program
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INTRODUCTION: UTAH’S CHILD CARE QUALITY SYSTEM

BACKGROUND

In 2014, the United States Congress reauthorized the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG). Prior to 2014, the law had not changed much since 1995 when it was first passed, although there has been significant advancements in our understanding of early childhood development. It is clear that the dramatic growth of brain development between birth and three years has an incredible impact on the cognitive, behavioral and social development of children. Research also shows that participation in high quality early childhood experiences leads to positive outcomes for children both while they are participating in those experiences and throughout their educational careers. These experiences happen in many places, including children’s homes and early care and learning programs, and through nurturing relationships with caregivers, parents, grandparents and friends.

As a result of this new information, the reauthorization of the CCDBG includes more guidance on providing financial support to working families to help cover the costs of child care and supporting the healthy development of children whose families choose child care. The law requires states to invest in programs that provide high quality care to children and consider the level of quality of a child care program when establishing payment rates to those programs. In response, the Department of Workforce Services (DWS), Office of Child Care (OCC), developed Utah’s Child Care Quality System (CCQS). This system helps support Utah families in making informed decisions about the type of child care program that best serves their child’s needs while creating a safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate experience.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD CARE QUALITY SYSTEM

The updated CCDBG requires that the Office of Child Care consider the quality of early learning experiences provided to children in child care when setting subsidy rates, but did not define the meaning of “quality.” Instead, the grant allows each state to determine the approach to meeting this requirement. Although there is a large amount of research supporting positive outcomes for children in high-quality settings, there is no common definition and no single part of a program that leads to positive outcomes for children. Rather, there are many evidence-based practices that should be present to prepare children for kindergarten.

Beginning in 2017, Utah’s Office of Child Care began an 18 month process to develop Utah’s Child Care Quality System. The Office of Child Care had four guiding principles:

1. The system needed to be consumer-friendly, allowing parents to easily understand how to use the system to support their child care choices.
2. The system needed to be flexible, allowing child care programs to determine the areas of quality on which to focus.

3. The system needed to be designed so that higher levels of quality were attainable for child care programs.

4. The system needed to be voluntary, giving providers the choice to participate.

In addition to these principles, the Office of Child Care relied on current research to decide which practices of quality to include in the system.

Developing the system required working with Utah’s child care community. The Office of Child Care held multiple meetings with these professionals throughout the state, and as a result, the CCQS framework underwent several revisions before being finalized during summer 2018. This program guide reflects the work of all Office of Child Care partners to develop a system that balances the needs of Utah families and its network of licensed child care programs.

On October 1, 2019, CCQS began for all Utah licensed child care programs, with a planned start date of July, 2021 for all Utah licensed family child care programs. Parents are now able to make informed decisions about the care provided to their children and ensure that care includes safe, nurturing and developmentally appropriate experiences.

**HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAM GUIDE**

This program guide is a resource for programs and staff participating in Utah’s CCQS. The guide will:

- Help programs understand the structure, requirements and benefits of the CCQS, including the research supporting each domain.
- Provide a detailed overview of the Child Care Quality System Framework including its domains, components and scoring structure.
- Describe the process of applying for and obtaining a CCQS certified quality rating.
- Provide supports, resources and worksheets available from the Office of Child Care to assist programs in establishing and sustaining best practices that support improved outcomes for children.
- Provide answers to frequently asked questions.

The program guide is organized in four easy-to-read sections:

**Section 1: Understanding the Child Care Quality System Framework**

This section provides information on eligibility, participation and structure of the framework, including the possible ratings and incentives for achieving high quality.

**Section 2: Receiving a Certified Quality Rating**

This section provides details on each rating, the application process for obtaining a rating, recertifying a rating, applying for a review of a decision related to a rating and other important dates of the process.

**Section 3: Getting to High Quality**

This section explains the supports provided to your program by the Office of Child Care, including online supports, cost sharing for professional development, Quality Classroom Awards, technical assistance and coaching and online training videos.

**Section 4: Resources to Assist in Reaching High Quality**

This includes a list of frequently asked questions, glossary of terms, resource tools, and roles and contact information for the Office of Child Care and its partners.
SECTION 1: UNDERSTANDING UTAH’S CHILD CARE QUALITY SYSTEM FRAMEWORK

WHY IS QUALITY CHILD CARE IMPORTANT?

In Utah, 49 percent of children under six years old are in families where there is a need for child care. The research on early childhood development demonstrates the important contributions of child care providers to the healthy development of children while their parents are working. This research reveals that experiences in early childhood are the basis for success in adulthood. In these early years, child care programs help establish a foundation for later academic success. The quality of these programs directly impacts these important outcomes, with high-quality programs leading to positive cognitive, social and emotional development in children.

Extensive research reveals the practices that should be emphasized in order to achieve quality outcomes for children. The Utah Child Care Quality System uses this research to include these practices in its framework and include the following:

- Higher levels of education for directors and classroom educators which correlate with higher program quality and improved child outcomes.  
- Meaningful engagement of families in their children’s learning. This supports children’s school readiness and later academic success, which correlates with improved lifelong health, developmental and academic outcomes.
- Good business and management practices, critical to maintaining high-quality, early education programs.
- Children in classrooms with smaller group sizes and lower teacher-to-child ratios, as well as care provided in attentive and warm settings. This leads to improved developmental outcomes, including higher cognitive development and pre-literacy scores; decreased behavioral problems and increased positive verbal and nonverbal interactions between children and adults.
- Secure and positive relationships and quality interactions with adults, which supports positive development and learning.

ELIGIBILITY AND PARTICIPATION: WHICH CHILD CARE PROGRAMS ARE INCLUDED IN THE CHILD CARE QUALITY SYSTEM?

Beginning October 1, 2019, all child care center programs with licenses in good standing issued by the Department of Health, Child Care Licensing Program, are eligible to participate in Utah’s Child Care Quality System. The target date for licensed family child care programs to be eligible for CCQS is July 2021; until then, the information in this guide only applies to licensed child care centers.

Participating in Utah’s Child Care Quality System will:

- Help improve outcomes for children in child care programs.
- Allow programs to highlight the quality of their programs as a marketing tool.
- Empower parents to find a child care program that best meets their needs and the needs of their children.
- Provide incentives for programs that achieve high quality benchmarks.
OVERVIEW OF UTAH’S CHILD CARE QUALITY SYSTEM FRAMEWORK

Ratings within Utah’s Child Care Quality System

Utah’s Child Care Quality System recognizes multiple levels of quality. This begins with a program maintaining a child care license in good standing, which is the foundation of quality. The framework then builds to recognize a growing emphasis on quality through three additional certified quality ratings:

- Certified Foundation of Quality
- Building Quality
- High Quality
- High Quality Plus

Electing the Default “Foundation of Quality” Rating

Instead of a certified quality rating, certain licensed child care programs will receive a DEFAULT rating of “Foundation of Quality.” The DEFAULT rating will only be assigned to licensed child care centers that both (1) choose not to apply for a certified rating AND (2) serve children whose care is covered by a Utah child care subsidy payment. Programs with a default “Foundation of Quality” rating can continue to receive subsidy payments.

Foundation of Quality is determined by the Utah Department of Health, Child Care Licensing Program, and recognizes that a program is meeting all required licensing standards. These foundational standards of quality ensure that the children in the program are healthy and safe. All licensed center programs maintaining a license in good standing are eligible to receive the certified “Foundation of Quality” rating and are eligible to receive subsidy payments.

Building Quality is issued to programs that are implementing practices leading to high quality, including participation in classroom observations, incorporating family engagement programming and providing professional development and coaching to staff. All licensed center programs with a certified quality rating of “Building Quality” are eligible to receive subsidy payments.

High Quality programs create an environment that not only focuses on the health and safety of the children in the program but also uses practices shown to support good outcomes for children, including positive interactions and trusting relationships between educators and children and ongoing professional development and coaching of staff. All licensed center programs with a certified quality rating of “High Quality” are eligible to receive subsidy payments.

High Quality Plus programs build on the important components of quality established at the High Quality rating and go beyond those required standards. Practices such as achieving a national accreditation, developing strong partnerships with families to support children’s development, greater emphasis on early literacy skills and ensuring educators obtain greater levels of training and education are some of the characteristics of a High Quality Plus rating. All licensed center programs with a certified quality rating of “High Quality Plus” are eligible to receive subsidy payments.

Points Framework

A licensed child care program’s progression in quality is determined by a system of points tied to five areas or “domains” of research-based practices that help children succeed. The points system is flexible, allowing each program to determine which domains it wants to concentrate on to demonstrate quality. Each level requires a minimum number of points across the five domains of quality. Each of these domains are selected based on the research discussed in Why is Quality Child Care Important? The framework for licensed child care centers is found under Quality Resources at jobs.utah.gov/occ/provider/quality.html

- Domain 1: Health and Safety measures the physical environment of the program.
- Domain 2: Learning Environments and Relationships measures the emotional, academic and social environment for children who attend the program.
- Domain 3: Leadership and Professional Development measures the training and educational background of the child care professionals who work in the program.
- Domain 4: Management and Administration measures the training and educational background of the director or business manager who support the administrative side of the program.
- Domain 5: National Accreditation awards points for the program’s efforts to align practices with national standards of quality.
The following provides an overview of the minimum points required from programs to be rated at Building Quality, High Quality or High Quality Plus.

**Child Care Quality System: Quality Rating Checklist**

**CENTER-BASED PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

**FOUR RATINGS:**

1. **Foundation of Quality Rating**
   - The program is fully licensed by the Utah Dept. of Health Child Care Licensing Program, which enforces foundational health and safety standards in child care facilities.
   - [ ] License in good standing (not conditional)

2. **Building Quality Rating**
   - The program is implementing practices that can lead to high quality including participating in observations and may also include additional technical assistance, professional development and coaching for program staff.
   - [ ] License in Good Standing (not conditional)
   - [ ] Minimum 60 total points required from components
   - [ ] Scored at least 10 points on the Observation component
   - [ ] Scored at least 3 on each SAPQA conducted

3. **High Quality Rating**
   - The program creates an environment that supports good outcomes for children. Observed interactions are educational and built on positive relationships. The program continues to support high-quality care through ongoing professional development of staff.
   - [ ] License in Good Standing (not conditional)
   - [ ] Minimum 110 total points required from components
   - [ ] Scored at least 5 points in each of the following components:
     - Licensing Compliance
     - Education of Director
     - Education of Caregivers
   - [ ] Scored at least 10 points on the Observation Component with a minimum ERS score of 3.67 in each classroom observed
   - [ ] Scored at least a 4 on the Language and Books (ITERS)/Language and Literacy (ECERS) subscale for each ERS observations conducted
   - [ ] Scored at least a 4 on the Interactions subscale for each ERS observation conducted
   - [ ] Scored at least a minimum of 3.5 on each SAPQA conducted

4. **High Quality Plus Rating**
   - The program is shown to continually go beyond the required standards for high quality.
   - [ ] License in Good Standing (not conditional)
   - [ ] Minimum 160 total points required from components
   - [ ] Scored at least 10 points in each of the following components:
     - Licensing Compliance
     - Education of Director
     - Education of Caregivers
   - [ ] Scored at least 25 points on the Observation Component with a minimum ERS score of 3.67 in each classroom observed
   - [ ] Scored at least a 4 on the Language and Books (ITERS)/Language and Literacy (ECERS) subscale for each ERS observations conducted
   - [ ] Scored at least a 4 on the Interactions subscale for each ERS observation conducted
   - [ ] Scored at least a minimum of 4 on each SAPQA conducted
CHILD CARE QUALITY SYSTEM STATUSES

In certain circumstances, a licensed child care center will receive a status instead of a quality rating.

There are two statuses that a licensed program may receive:

1. Not Participating
2. Denied Participation

Status: Not Participating

The “Not Participating” status is available to certain licensed child care programs. The programs that may receive “Not Participating” status include licensed child care program that do not want to participate in the Child Care Quality System AND do not serve, or intend to serve, children whose care is covered by a Utah child care subsidy.

In addition to those licensed child care programs, other programs may receive a status of “Not Participating.” These programs include programs that the Utah Department of Workforce Services has determined ineligible to receive federal funding through the Child Care and Development Block Grant, as outlined in the Utah Administrative Code.

Status: Denied Participation

Child care center programs that receive a conditional license from the Child Care Licensing Program, will receive a status of “Denied Participation.” That status will remain for that program until Child Care Licensing issues a license in good standing. At that point, the child care program may choose one of three options:

1. Apply for a certified quality rating;
2. Elect to accept children whose care is covered by a Utah child care subsidy payment and then be assigned the default “Foundation of Quality” rating; or
3. Elect not to provide services to children whose care is covered by a child care subsidy payment and obtain the “Not Participating” status.

SUPPORTING HIGH QUALITY PROGRAMS

The Office of Child Care recognizes its role in supporting Utah’s child care providers in maintaining high-quality programs. The Office of Child Care provides resources so

What Does a “Not Participating” Status Mean for Licensed Child Care Programs?
When a program has a status of “Not Participating,” the program will not be able to receive subsidy or CCQS grant funding through contracts from the Office of Child Care.

What Does “Denied Participation” Status Mean for Child Care Programs?
When a program has a conditional license and a status of “Denied Participation,” the program will not be able to receive funds through contracts from the Utah Office of Child Care.
that programs achieving High Quality or High Quality Plus ratings are able to maintain those ratings and that programs with classrooms that meet quality observation standards can maintain those standards. The two resources include:

1. Quality Observation Awards; and
2. Enhanced Subsidy Grants.

**Quality Observation Award:**

The CCQS Framework requires a minimum score on the classroom observations. This minimum score demonstrates that a child care classroom provides a level of quality that supports a child’s healthy emotional and cognitive development. The Office of Child Care provides a monetary award to each classroom that achieves the minimum observation score. Additional details are found in the CCQS Policy.

**Eligibility:**

- Licensed Center Child Care Programs
- Receive a CCQS certified quality rating. This can be a certified quality rating of Foundation of Quality, Building Quality, High Quality or High Quality Plus.
- Receive a high quality scores in one or more classroom observations conducted for the purpose of the certified quality rating, as follows:
  - An average score of 3.67 or higher on an ERS observation, with a minimum score of 4 on the Language and Books (ITERS) / Language and Literacy (ECERS) subscale and a minimum score of 4 on the Interactions subscale;
  - A score of at least 3.5 points on an SAPQA observation

**Quality Observation Award Plan:**

- Eligible programs will be notified of this opportunity when their CCQS Certified Quality Rating is awarded.
- Eligible programs that submit a completed application by the last day of the program’s certified rating period will receive a Quality Observation Award.
- Award is a set amount for each classroom in which a high quality observation score is achieved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation Tool</th>
<th>Quality Observation Award per high quality classroom observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS)</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Age Program Quality Assessment (SAPQA)</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Award amounts are issued once per year after the program's annual CCQS Certified Quality Rating is awarded.
Enhanced Subsidy Grant

Child care programs that achieve a High Quality or High Quality Plus certified quality rating may be eligible to receive an Enhanced Subsidy Grant. The Office of Child Care understands that requiring ongoing professional development, lower classroom ratios and group sizes, enriching classroom experiences and national accreditations adds costs for child care programs. This grant offsets those expenses for programs serving children covered by child care subsidies.

The Enhanced Subsidy Grant is limited to licensed child care centers that served children covered by child care subsidies during the 12-month documentation period used to determine the certified quality rating. The amount of the award is based on the average number of children covered by child care subsidies during that 12-month documentation period.

The following provides an overview of the Enhanced Subsidy Grant. Additional information on the policy related to the Enhanced Subsidy Grant is available in the CCQS Policy.

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**Children Care Quality System:**

**Enhanced Subsidy Grants for Centers**

Programs that are **High Quality** or **High Quality Plus** will receive an enhanced monthly subsidy grant for each subsidy child the program served during the 12-month documentation period.

The fixed monthly grant payment will be calculated based on the average monthly number of subsidy children cared for in the previous 12 months and multiplying that by the High Quality or High Quality Plus payment amount.

The CCQS emphasizes components of quality that support the best outcomes for children. The Office of Child Care will provide an enhanced subsidy grant that compensates providers for those components of quality leading to the best outcomes for children. The amount of the enhanced subsidy grant considered fixed costs of quality (included at the left).

The monthly amount for each subsidy child:

- **High Quality**: $175
- **High Quality Plus**: $200

Example of enhanced subsidy grant payment for a High Quality center provider that served an average of 25 subsidy children in the past 12 months:

- Average number of subsidy children over past 12 months = 25
- $175 monthly enhanced subsidy grant payment = $4,375 per month for 12-month certification period.

Enhanced subsidy grant payments will be:

- A separate payment from the subsidy payment
- Deposited the middle of the month
- Deposited into the same bank account as subsidy payments

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The grant payment compensates a program for its previous investments in quality. Once a child care program is High Quality or High Quality Plus and receives the enhanced grant payment, it will have discretion on how it utilizes these additional resources. Programs will not have to provide documentation of how the enhanced subsidy grant payment is used.

Programs will need to be High Quality or High Quality Plus at the beginning of each renewal period in order to continue receiving the enhanced subsidy grant payment. The average number of subsidy children will be recalculated at the beginning each renewal period.
SECTION 2: STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR RECEIVING A CERTIFIED QUALITY RATING

Once a program decides to participate in Utah’s Child Care Quality System, it needs to obtain a certified quality rating. This section describes that process.

1. Apply for a certified quality rating
2. Obtain a certified quality rating
3. Annual recertification process
4. Process for obtaining a review of a CCQS decision

Additional details are also provided in the CCQS Policy

1. APPLY FOR A CERTIFIED QUALITY RATING

Program applications for a certified quality rating are available online at [jobs.utah.gov/occ/provider/quality.html](http://jobs.utah.gov/occ/provider/quality.html). Programs are required to submit completed applications to receive a certified quality rating. Programs are required to provide the following information on the application:

- Name of the primary director
- Name of the administrator responsible for business operations
- A list of all classrooms and names of caregivers assigned to those rooms, including substitutes
- Dates on which the program requests that observations not be scheduled, known as “blackout dates”

Prior to completing the application, programs are required to view the online training video, “Utah’s Child Care Quality System.”

2. OBTAIN THE CERTIFIED RATING

Once the Office of Child Care receives the completed application, it will process it and coordinate with the program to schedule an initial visit and identify the observation month for the classroom observations. The process and requirements for the observation are included in CCQS Policy. Programs are encouraged to require their early childhood educators to watch the online training video, “What to Expect During Your Observation” prior to the scheduled observation month.

The program applying for a certified quality rating will receive the certified rating no later than 180 days after the application was submitted. A program’s certified quality rating will be published on the Care About Childcare website the first day of the month after the certified rating is issued.

3. ANNUAL RECERTIFICATION PROCESS

Programs must recertify their certified quality rating annually. The recertification period begins four months before the expiration date of a program’s certified quality rating. Programs begin the recertification process by completing a new application for a rating when the recertification period begins. Programs failing to recertify during the recertification period will receive a default Foundation of Quality rating until they apply for and complete recertification. Additional information can be found in the CCQS Policy.

4. CCQS REVIEW PROCESS

Programs have the right to request a review of certain CCQS decisions within 30 days of the Notification of Certified Quality Rating. Instructions and forms to initiate a review are at [jobs.utah.gov/occ/provider/quality.html](http://jobs.utah.gov/occ/provider/quality.html). Once a review is initiated, any enhanced subsidy grant payments will be frozen until a decision is reached. A requested review may include a new observation, which may result in the program receiving a lower rating. Additional information can be found in the CCQS Policy.
The following table provides a summary of the important dates programs need to be aware of throughout the ratings and recertification process.

**Child Care Quality System (CCQS) Timeline**

**Documentation Period Begins:** The 12-month documentation and annual training period begins 12 months prior to the last day of the program’s assigned observation month. The program should begin documentation submission at this time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Application Month</th>
<th>Program receives an initial visit during the calendar month following Program Application Month</th>
<th>Observation Month will occur the calendar month after the initial visit</th>
<th>Scoring and Verification month will occur the calendar month after the observation month</th>
<th>Certified Quality Rating will be posted the first day of the calendar month following the scoring month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Program applies for a certified quality rating. • Program is assigned an observation month. • Program should continue documentation submission. • Program should ensure roles of all staff are assigned and accurate in the Child Care Licensing Portal.</td>
<td>• Program receives an initial visit prior to observations. • Program should continue documentation submission. • Program should ensure roles of all staff are assigned and accurate in the Child Care Licensing Portal.</td>
<td>• Observations are conducted and feedback is shared with programs. • All documentation must be submitted by the last day of the month. • Program should ensure roles of all staff are assigned and accurate in the Child Care Licensing Portal.</td>
<td>• Verification of submitted documentation is completed. • CCQS scoring is completed. • Programs receive notification of their certified quality rating. • The program’s certified quality rating is official and posted publicly on the first day of the month. • Qualified programs will begin to receive Enhanced Subsidy Grant. Program will be notified if they qualify for any CCQS additional payments. Qualified programs must apply to receive additional payments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Certified Quality Rating Period:** Certified quality ratings are current for twelve months starting the first day of the certified quality rating month.

**Recertification Application Submission:** In order to maintain a certified quality rating, a recertification application must be submitted during the fourth month prior to the certified quality rating expiration date. In most cases, this should be the same month of the program’s initial application submission.

For more information, go to [https://jobs.utah.gov/ccc/policy.html](https://jobs.utah.gov/ccc/policy.html).
SECTION 3: GETTING TO HIGH QUALITY

The Office of Child Care also supports programs working toward a higher quality of care for children. The Child Care Quality System is designed to allow child care programs the flexibility to determine what domains within the framework to focus on to create the practices that lead to high quality. The Office of Child Care then offers several options to support this flexibility, ranging from basic support in understanding CCQS to intensive onsite support to programs. Intensive support is aimed at programs serving multiple children covered by child care subsidies, although there is support available to programs with only a few or no children covered by child care subsidies. The following provides an overview of the support available from the Office of Child Care and its partners to programs working towards higher levels of quality.

ONLINE SYSTEMS SUPPORTING CHILD CARE QUALITY SYSTEM

- Care About Childcare
- Utah Registry of Professional Development

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

Scholarships for Credentials and Degrees

To assist with the costs of education, training and professional certificates and credentials, the Office of Child Care and the Utah Registry for Professional Development (URPD) provide financial support for individuals working towards professional development goals in the youth and early childhood field. Scholarships are available for demonstrated competency credential applications and renewal fees, college credit courses and community-based Career Ladder approved courses. Eligibility requirements and a list of current scholarships are on the Office of Child Care’s website, in the “For Professionals” section.

Professional Development Incentive

The Professional Development Incentive (PDI) supports progression along Utah’s Career Ladder by offering financial incentives to eligible youth and early learning professionals as they reach professional development milestones. Incentive amounts are awarded to eligible applicants at the successful completion of each level on the Career Ladder. More information about PDI is found on the Office of Child Care’s website, in the “For Professionals” section.

Professional Development Cost Sharing

The goal of this payment is to share professional development costs with eligible programs that meet Child Care Quality System (CCQS) professional development goals. To be eligible for this additional one-time payment, licensed child care center programs must (1) receive a CCQS certified quality rating, (2) earn points for 20 percent or more of the program’s caregivers completing at least 20 hours of Career Ladder approved annual training; and (3) apply for the reimbursement. Qualified programs will be notified of this opportunity shortly after their CCQS certified quality rating is awarded. Programs that complete the Professional Development Cost Sharing application by the last day of their current certified quality rating period will receive the reimbursement to assist with the prior year’s professional development costs. Reimbursement amounts are flat rates based on the type of program and the number of caregivers employed. More information about Professional Development Cost Sharing may be found on the Office of Child Care’s website, jobs.utah.gov/occ.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Technical Assistance from CCQS Specialists is available to programs and includes sharing resources to help programs improve quality; assisting programs in completing the Certified Quality Rating application process; and assisting programs in applying for CCQS support grants.
- Intensive Program Support and Coaching – Coming in 2020

SCHOLARSHIPS AND INCENTIVES ARE AVAILABLE FOR THOSE WORKING TOWARDS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND MILESTONES.
SECTION 4: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

• Do I have to participate in CCQS?

All licensed child care centers that accept child care subsidy must have a CCQS rating in order to continue to be able to accept child care subsidy payments. Licensed child care centers that accept subsidy and do not want a certified quality rating will receive a default rating of Foundation of Quality. Programs may choose to not participate in CCQS and receive a status of “Not Participating.” Programs with a status of “Not Participating” will be ineligible to receive subsidy or CCQS grant funding from the Office of Child Care.

• Do I have to participate in every domain and option in the CCQS framework?

Programs are second in every domain, however, the system is designed to be flexible, allowing programs to choose which parts of the framework to emphasize to reach quality. While the system is flexible, a minimum number of points are required for each certified quality rating past Foundation of Quality and all certified quality ratings have minimum requirements.

• Who do I contact if I have questions regarding participating in CCQS?

After reviewing this guide and the linked CCQS Policy, if programs have questions, they may contact their local Care About Childcare or ccqs@utah.gov.

• Where can I get more information about the Child Care Quality System?

Programs may get more information about the Child Care Quality System at careaboutchildcare.utah.gov or jobs.utah.gov/occ/provider/quality.html.

• What if I disagree with the Certified Quality Rating assigned to my child care program?

If a program disagrees with its Certified Quality Rating, the owner or director of record may request a review within 30 days of the Certified Quality Rating notice. Review policies are found at jobs.utah.gov/occ/policy.html.

• What changes to my child care program will be considered during the Certified Rating Period?

No ratings will be recalculated during the Certified Rating Period unless a program loses licensure or changes to a conditional license.

• What if my program becomes accredited during the Certified Rating Period?

If a program becomes accredited during the Certified Rating Period, it can submit the accreditation during the recertification period to count toward the program’s upcoming Certified Quality Rating. No ratings will be recalculated during the Certified Rating Period unless a program loses licensure or changes to a conditional license.

• What if I sell/buy a child care program during the Certified Rating Period?

If a program is bought/sold, the Certified Rating Period will end when the license from the previous owner ends and the new owner must apply for a Certified Quality Rating.

• What if I lose my director during the Certified Rating Period and the education of the new director is lower?

As long as a program maintains a license in good standing, a rating will not be recalculated during the Certified Rating Period. The program may choose to increase professional development opportunities during the time period prior to re-certification.

• Are part-time and substitute caregivers included when scoring CCQS?

Yes, all caregivers listed in the Child Care Licensing database, including part-time and substitutes, count in the percentages used to calculate points for Education of Caregiver.

• Why are observations so important? What do they tell us? How do they help us?

Observations are designed to assess quality practices in an early childhood or school-age care group from the perspective of the children in the program. Quality practices consist of various interactions between staff and children, staff and other adults and between the children themselves. Additionally, observations measure the interactions between children and
their physical environment and available materials. The quality of these practices predict certain child outcomes.

• **Who will be completing the observations?**

All observations will be completed by Office of Child Care Approved Observers who are rated as reliable or endorsed in the observation tool which is being utilized for the observation. For more information regarding Office of Child Care Approved Observers, visit Office of Child Care Policy at jobs.utah.gov/occ/policy.html.

• **What happens before, during and after the observations?**

Programs can find more information about the observation process by watching “What to Expect During your CCQS Observation” found at jobs.utah.gov/occ/provider/quality.html.

• **What if I lose my staff and I have not had my observations yet?**

You can either go ahead with the observations or withdraw your application for a certified quality rating and apply again at a later date. If your program accepts children covered by child care subsidies, your program will receive a default rating of Foundation of Quality until it applies for and receives a certified quality rating.

• **What happens if something goes wrong on the day of an observation? Can I decline an observation and have the observer come back another time?**

Observations can only be rescheduled if there is an act of nature that makes observation impossible. If a program declines an observation, the program’s application will be denied. The program must reapply and complete required observations to receive a Certified Quality Rating. If your program accepts children covered by child care subsidies, your program will receive a default rating of Foundation of Quality until it applies for and receives a certified quality rating. For further information see the CCQS Policy at jobs.utah.gov/occ/policy.html.

• **Can I hire my own external observer?**

No, observations must be conducted by Office of Child Care Approved Observers in order to count for a Certified Quality Rating.

• **Where can I find more information about the observation tools?**

Additional information on the observation tools can be found at jobs.utah.gov/occ/provider/quality.html.

• **Can I request a practice observation to prepare for my CCQS observation?**

Office of Child Care provides classroom self evaluations for each observation tool used (ITERS, ECERS and SAPQA). These self evaluations can be found on page 22 of this guide and also at jobs.utah.gov/occ/provider/quality.html. Programs are encouraged to complete these self evaluations prior to CCQS observations to inform changes in practice that can impact CCQS observations. The Office of Child Care does not conduct practice observations to prepare programs for their CCQS observations.

• **Where can I find out more information about the Career Ladder and approved courses?**

Helpful information about the Career Ladder System, as well as a Course Catalog of all current Career Ladder approved courses, is found in the “for Professionals” section of the Office of Child Care’s website, jobs.utah.gov/occ.

• **After applying for a certified rating, how do I know which months are included for Career Ladder approved annual training?**

The 12-month documentation period ends on the last day of the program’s assigned observation month and begins 12 months prior to that date. All annual Career Ladder approved training must take place within this time frame. A timeline for the recertification and documentation period can be found on page 13 of this guide.

• **How do I submit documentation for Career Ladder approved training hours?**

Courses taken through Care About Childcare and other in-person community trainings are processed and entered on an individual’s transcript on the Care About Childcare Workforce Registry automatically. All other Career Ladder approved training hours must be submitted by the individual to URPD on the Care
About Childcare website, careaboutchildcare.utah.gov, prior to the end of the 12-month documentation period. It is suggested that each individual verify that all information on their transcript is listed correctly.

• How do I apply for a new level on the Career Ladder System?

Individuals can apply for a new level on the Career Ladder by emailing urpd@usu.edu to request the level. Once documentation of all applicable requirements for a level are listed on their Care About Childcare transcript, an individual can apply for a new level on the Career Ladder System at any time.

• How do the Career Ladder annual training hours work if I am the director and the administrator responsible for business operations?

If an individual is listed as the director as well as the administrator of business operations for a program, each of the Career Ladder approved annual training hours will only be counted in one category. In order to receive points in both domains, the individual will need to earn 20 hours of Career Ladder approved annual training as the director and an additional 10 hours of Career Ladder approved annual training in the areas of business and leadership.

• Can a caregiver be counted in the ‘Career Ladder Level 4 or higher’ category and the ‘20 hours of Career Ladder annual training’ category?

Each caregiver employed at a program will only count in one of these two categories. If a caregiver meets requirements for both categories, the caregiver will be placed in the category which will give the program the most possible points.

HELPFUL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CAREER LADDER SYSTEM, AS WELL AS A COURSE CATALOG OF ALL CURRENT CAREER LADDER APPROVED COURSES, MAY BE FOUND IN THE “PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT” SECTION OF THE OFFICE OF CHILD CARE’S WEBSITE JOBS.UTAH.GOV/OCC.
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### ROLES OF CHILD CARE QUALITY SYSTEM STAFF

Licensed child care programs will interact with several staff members including Office of Child Care staff, Care About Childcare staff and other Office of Child Care contractors. The following table provides an overview of the various roles within the Office of Child Care and CCQS with which child care programs will likely interact.

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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Location of Role</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Licensing Program Licensor</td>
<td>Utah Dept. of Health</td>
<td>• Record group size and ratio classroom information during unannounced Child Care Licensing inspections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care About Childcare Referral Staff</td>
<td>CAC</td>
<td>• Help connect families with quality child care. • Support families in understanding the Child Care Quality System.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Care Quality System Specialist</td>
<td>CAC</td>
<td>• Support programs through the CCQS Certified Quality Rating process. • Assist programs needing to upload documentation for verification when applying for a Certified Quality Rating. • Support child care programs in utilizing the CCQS Framework worksheet. • Provide resources and guidance in obtaining higher points in the framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Engagement Reviewer</td>
<td>CAC</td>
<td>• Verify the documents submitted to support the Family Engagement component.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah Registry of Professional Development (URPD) Specialist</td>
<td>URPD</td>
<td>• Provide scholarships to directors and youth and early learning professionals. • Process applications and issue funds for Professional Development Cost Sharing and Quality Classroom Awards. • Process Professional Development Incentives. • Verify the documentation submitted for points in the Health and Safety, Leadership and Professional Development, Management and Administration and National Accreditation domains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAC Professional Development Staff</td>
<td>CAC</td>
<td>• Provide professional development advising for youth and early learning professionals. • Support programs and individuals in accessing Career Ladder approved courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Child Care Specialist/Family Quality Improvement Specialist</td>
<td>CAC</td>
<td>• Assist family child care programs with developing individualized Quality Improvement Plans when contracting with OCC for support and grant funding. • Provide technical assistance and coaching to family child care programs to achieve goals and measurable outcomes detailed in the program's quality improvement plan. • Conduct family child care program observations. • Maintain reliability to an OCC-approved Anchor. • Ensure all family child care program observations are finalized, in coordination with the OCC-approved Anchor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCC-Approved Observer</td>
<td>CAC, TCC, UAN</td>
<td>• Conduct classroom observations. • Maintain reliability to an OCC-approved Anchor. • Ensure all classroom observations are finalized, in coordination with the OCC-approved Anchor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
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</table>
| OCC-Approved Anchor                          | OCC, Care About Childcare (CAC) or The Children's Center (TCC) | • Trained to a high standard of fidelity to the relevant classroom observation tools.  
• Ensure OCC-approved observers maintain reliability to the classroom observation tools.  
• Maintain reliability to the OCC Program Specialists. |
| Quality Improvement Specialist               | CAC, TCC, UAN           | • Assist child care programs with developing individualized Quality Improvement Plans when contracting with OCC for support and grant funding.  
• Provide technical assistance and coaching to programs to achieve goals and measurable outcomes detailed in the program’s quality improvement plan.  
• May also act as OCC-approved anchor or OCC-approved observer. |
| OCC Program Specialist                        | OCC                     | • Train and coach Quality Improvement Specialists.  
• Ensure all OCC-approved anchors and observers are reliable on the classroom observation tools.  
• Ensure observations are scheduled by the partner agencies.  
• Review classroom observations.  
• Train and coach Child Care Quality System Specialists.  
• Ensure certified quality ratings are finalized in the Care About Childcare system.  
• Monitor contracts with child care programs receiving technical assistance and grant funding to improve quality. |
| OCC Professional Development Program Specialist | OCC                    | • Maintain and update Utah’s Professional Development System to support CCQS and its Leadership and Professional Development and Management and Administration domains.  
• Work collaboratively with partners to ensure higher education opportunities are available to child care directors and caregivers.  
• Develop any necessary policy to support the Professional Development System.  
• Approve, maintain and update professional development materials and training courses for early childhood professionals. |
| CCQS Review Committee                         | Appointed               | • Conducts hearings on all reviews that are forwarded to the Committee after completion of the OCC Review.  
• Issues a final recommendation for the review to the Department of Workforce Services Director of Adjudication. |
| CCQS Subcommittee                             | OCC                     | • Subcommittee of OCC Advisory Committee  
• Advise OCC on making modifications to the CCQS framework. |
CCQS TOOLS AND RESOURCES

CCQS Framework and Minimums
CCQS Group Sizes and Ratios
Family Engagement Points Rubric
Infant, Toddlers and Twos Classroom Self-Evaluation Tool
Preschool Classroom Self-Evaluation Tool
School Age Classroom Self-Evaluation Tool
CCQS Contact – ccqs@utah.gov

ENDNOTES

1  42 U.S.C. 9858 et seq
2  https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.3102/0013189X17737739
3  https://rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r986/r986-700.htm#E5
4  Ann Austen & Alex Fronk, Summary of Significant Results for the Care About Childcare Validation Project, Utah State University. 2015; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, The NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development (2006).