



This component has been excerpted from the complete **System Framework**.

Glossary terms appear underlined. The glossary of terms, their definitions and references for this and other **System Framework** components are online at:

**<http://ectacenter.org/sysframe>**

The ECTA Center is a collaborative effort between the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute; SRI International; PACER Center; University of Colorado, Denver; University of South Florida; Puckett Institute; RTI International; University of Nebraska Medical Center; and Walsh Taylor Associates. Additional information about the ECTA Center can be found at [ectacenter.org](http://ectacenter.org)

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The purpose of the Quality Standards component of the System Framework is to guide Part C and Section 619 Coordinators, their staff and partners in an ongoing process of evaluating the quality of their programs and services within the context of the larger early care and education community, to ensure continuous program improvement and to develop more effective, efficient systems that support enhanced child and family outcomes.

Infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities have the right to receive services and participate in the full array of public and private early care and education programs that are available to all young children. In order to effectively support early learning and positive child and family outcomes, these programs must be guided by agreed upon, evidence-based standards for what all young children are expected to know and be able to do (child level standards), as well as agreed upon, evidence-based standards for what constitutes quality in early care and education programs (program level standards).

This component includes both child level standards and program level standards. The child level standards subcomponent contains critical elements of quality that are necessary for young children with disabilities (identified by asterisks). For states that do not address these elements of quality within the broad child standards for all children, elements of quality specifically applicable to early intervention (Part C) and early childhood special education (Section 619) are outlined. The program level standards subcomponent contains a quality indicator related to early care and education programs, as well as a separate quality indicator specific to early intervention (EI) and early childhood special education (ECSE).

## Subcomponent 1: Child Level Standards

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**Quality Indicator QS1:** The state has articulated what children under age five, including children with disabilities, are expected to know and do.

### Elements of Quality

- a. Child level standards emphasize significant, developmentally appropriate content and outcomes.
- b. Child level standards are aligned from birth through age five.
- c. Child level standards are age-anchored with specific precision to reflect that there are different expectations for children in each year of life.
- d. Child level standard content reflects the best available evidence on development and learning.
- e. Child level standards are appropriate for children from diverse cultural, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds.
- f. Child level standards are aligned with standards for K-12.
- g. Child level standards are clear and understood by early care and education practitioners, local program administrators and families.
- h. Child level standards represent multiple areas of development and learning and reflect the content of nationally recognized early childhood outcomes frameworks, including the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) child outcomes and the Head Start child outcomes framework. \*
- i. Child level standards reflect universal design for learning (UDL), ensuring the standards are appropriate for young children with disabilities.\*
- j. Child level standards are reviewed and revised as necessary with input from stakeholders, including families of young children with disabilities, practitioners and representatives from Part C and 619 programs. \*
- k. Part C and Section 619 programs use the state child level standards (i.e., those used by other early childhood programs) to support the implementation of high-quality practices. \*

*\* **Note:** If elements of quality h. or i. are not in place (scored 1 or 2 on the self-assessment) AND the Part C or Section 619 program does not use the state child standards (k is scored a 1 or 2 on the self-assessment), then elements of quality l. through n. apply.*

- l. State Part C and Section 619 programs have specified what children birth to 5 are expected to know and do, reflecting universal design, and programs use these standards.
- m. Child level standards developed by Part C and Section 619 are reviewed and revised as necessary with input from stakeholders, including families of young children with disabilities, practitioners and representatives from Part C and 619 programs.
- n. State Part C and Section 619 programs are involved with state efforts to develop child standards appropriate for all children.

**Quality Indicator QS2:** Early childhood programs, including Part C and Section 619, use the child level standards to support the implementation of high-quality practices.

**Elements of Quality**

- a. Child level standards are widely disseminated and easily accessible to practitioners, families and the general public.
- b. Early care and education practitioners working with young children with disabilities are familiar with the child standards.
- c. Practices (e.g. assessment, Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)/Individualized Education Program (IEP) development, development and learning activities) reflect the child level standards.

**Quality Indicator QS3:** The state has an infrastructure in place to support the effective use of child level standards.

**Elements of Quality**

- a. Two and four year professional preparation programs address child level standards, including their use with children with disabilities.
- b. Ongoing professional development (e.g. mentoring, coaching) supports effective use of the child standards, including individualization for children with disabilities.
- c. Resources are available to support families in understanding and using the child standards to help their children develop and learn.
- d. The state has policies, procedures and/or guidance to support local programs in the alignment of curriculum and assessment with the child level standards.
- e. Evaluating program quality includes monitoring how well child standards are effectively used to guide practice, including individualization for children with disabilities.

## Subcomponent 2: Program Level Standards

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**Quality Indicator QS4:** The state has articulated what constitutes quality in early care and education programs.

### Elements of Quality

- a. Program level standards are consistent with agreed upon program standards in the field (e.g., National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Program Standards, Head Start Performance Standards).
- b. Program level standards reflect the best available evidence on early childhood program quality and effectiveness.
- c. Program level standards apply to the full range of programs in which young children with disabilities participate.
- d. Program level standards address a program's ability to support the needs of a diverse population of children.
- e. Program level standards address program's responsibilities to build on families' strengths to support them in caring for their children and in encouraging them to serve in leadership roles.
- f. Program level standards are clear and understood by practitioners, local program administrators and families.
- g. Program level standards are widely disseminated and easily accessible to practitioners, families and the general public.
- h. Early childhood programs, including Part C and Section 619, use program level standards to drive program improvement.
- i. Program level standards are reviewed and revised as necessary with input from stakeholders, including families of young children with disabilities, practitioners and representatives from Part C and 619 programs.

**Quality Indicator QS5:** State Part C and Section 619 programs have articulated expectations for what constitutes high quality early intervention (EI) and early childhood special education (ECSE) services.

### **Elements of Quality**

- a. The EI/ECSE standards address federal and state legal requirements.
- b. The EI/ECSE standards reflect the best available evidence on early childhood program quality and effectiveness.
- c. The EI/ECSE standards address the qualifications of practitioners providing services to young children with disabilities and their families.
- d. The EI/ECSE standards are consistent with professional practice guidance in the field (e.g., DEC Recommended Practices, American Speech and Hearing Association Practice Policies).
- e. The EI/ECSE standards are coordinated and consistent with other early care and education programs across the state.
- f. The EI/ECSE standards are widely disseminated and easily accessible to practitioners, families and the general public.
- g. The EI/ECSE standards address program's responsibilities to build on families' strengths to support them in caring for their children and in encouraging them to serve in leadership roles.
- h. Part C and Section 619 programs use the standards to drive program improvement.
- i. The EI/ECSE standards are reviewed and revised as necessary with input from a diverse group of stakeholders, including families of young children with disabilities, practitioners and representatives from Part C and 619 programs.

**Quality Indicator QS6:** The state has an infrastructure in place to support the full range of programs in meeting program level standards.

### **Elements of Quality**

- a. The infrastructure includes adequate fiscal and human resources for the development, implementation and monitoring of program standards.
- b. Two and four year professional preparation programs address the application of program level standards to the full range of early care and education programs.
- c. Ongoing professional development (e.g. mentoring, coaching) supports effective application of program level standards to the full range of early care and education programs.
- d. The state has a process to use the program standards as part of monitoring and program improvement.
- e. The extent to which each program has achieved the program level standards is easily accessible to practitioners, families and the general public (e.g. State Performance Plan (SPP), Annual Performance Reports (APR), SPP/APR public reporting, quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS)).
- f. Resources are available to support families in understanding the extent to which each program has achieved the standards in order to help them make informed decisions.
- g. The state evaluates the effectiveness of the infrastructure that supports the use of the program standards.