

Alternate Pathway to Step 4

The Alternate Pathway or sometimes referred to as the 'accreditation pathway' is for programs that have a current certification of accreditation through one of the following approved organizations: NAEYC, NAFCC, NAC and COA. A certificate of accreditation from one of these organizations serves as confirmation that the program meets or exceeds some of the Bright & Early ND Quality Standards.

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Health & Safety Quality Indicators

HS.1 Program holds a current license issued by the North Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS).

Meeting and maintaining child care licensing regulations is the foundation of the Bright & Early ND Steps to Quality.

To meet this indicator, evidence of the program's current DHS license must be submitted.

HS.2 The Program Director, all Lead Teachers and/or all Lead Caregivers have verified employment in the program's Growing Futures organization account.

Growing Futures is the source for training, education, and employment verification.

To meet this indicator, the Program Director, all Lead Teachers and/or all Lead Caregivers must have verified and accurate employment records in the program's Growing Futures organization account.

HS.3 The Program Director, all Lead Teachers and/or all Lead Caregivers have a current Growing Futures Career Pathway placement of Category A or Higher.

Growing Futures is the source for training, education, and employment verification. All training must appear on an individual's Growing Futures Learning Record as approved clock hours. Programs that experience turnover in leadership positions must also submit a Professional Development Action Plan.

To meet this indicator, the Program Director, all Lead Teachers and/or all Lead Caregivers must have a current individual membership in Growing Futures and current Career Pathway placement of Category A or Higher.

Space & Material Quality Indicators

SM.2 Environment Rating Scale® (ERS®) observation conducted by an endorsed ERS® Assessor.

The ERS® is a series of reliable, valid, research-based observation tools designed to assess the early childhood environment.

To meet this indicator, evidence must be valid (dated within the previous 3 years) and represent, at minimum, 33% of the classrooms or groups served.

SM.3 Program develops a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) that:

- Is guided by ERS® assessments,
- Includes both short-term and long-term goals,
- Includes action items to support overall quality improvement.

The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is part of the continuous quality improvement process in which programs assess their strengths and opportunities for growth, set achievable goals, and develop realistic plans for improvement.

To meet this indicator, evidence must reflect all the indicator components above and be dated within the previous 12-months.

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Relationships & Interactions Quality Indicators

RI.1 Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS®) observation conducted by an endorsed CLASS® Assessor.

The CLASS® is a research-based method of measuring, evaluating, and improving teacher-child interactions. Programs must have a valid CLASS® observation conducted every 3 years. CLASS® observations will be conducted in every classroom or group with the tool that best reflects the age group in care.

To meet this indicator, evidence must be valid (dated within the previous 3 years) and represent every classroom or group served.

RI.2 Program develops a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) that:

- Is guided by CLASS® assessments,
- Includes both short-term and long-term goals,
- Includes action items to support overall quality improvement.

The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is part of the continuous quality improvement process in which programs assess their strengths and opportunities for growth, set achievable goals, and develop realistic plans for improvement.

To meet this indicator, evidence must reflect all of the indicator components above and be dated within the previous 12-months.

RI.3 The Program Director, all Lead Teachers and/or all Lead Caregivers have a current Growing Futures Career Pathway placement of Category E or Higher.

Growing Futures is the source for training, education, and employment verification. All training must appear on an individual's Growing Futures Learning Record as approved clock hours. Programs that experience turnover in leadership positions must also submit a Professional Development Action Plan.

To meet this indicator, the Program Director, all Lead Teachers and/or all Lead Caregivers must have a current individual membership in Growing Futures and current Career Pathway placement of Category E or Higher.

RI.4 The Program Director has completed professional development related to business, management, and administration.

Growing Futures is the source for training, education, and employment verification. All training must appear on an individual's Growing Futures Learning Record as approved clock hours. Programs that experience turnover in leadership positions must also submit a Professional Development Action Plan.

To meet this indicator, the Program Director must have a verified and current Aim4Excellence Director Credential.

Clarification for FCC and Group Licensed Programs

This indicator is N/A for Family Child Care and Group licensed programs.

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**RI. 4a All Lead Caregivers have completed professional development related to business, management, and administration.**

Growing Futures is the source for training, education, and employment verification. All training must appear on an individual's Growing Futures Learning Record as approved clock hours. Programs that experience turnover in leadership positions must also submit a Professional Development Action Plan.

To meet this indicator, all Lead Caregivers must complete the following:

- At least 10 clock hours in Core Competency Area VIII. Program Planning and Evaluation

Clarification for Preschool and Center Licensed Programs

This indicator is N/A for Preschool and Center Licensed Programs

RI. 5 All Lead Teachers and/or all Lead Caregivers have completed professional development related to interactions with children.

Growing Futures is the source for training, education, and employment verification. All training must appear on an individual's Growing Futures Learning Record as approved clock hours. Programs that experience turnover in leadership positions must also submit a Professional Development Action Plan.

To meet this indicator, all Lead Teachers and/or all Lead Caregivers must complete one of the following:

- Introduction to the Infant CLASS® (2 clock hours)
- Introduction to the Toddler CLASS® (2 clock hours)
- Introduction to the Pre-K CLASS® (2.5 clock hours)

¹Program Director: The individual located on site who is responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating the program. This individual must be present at least sixty percent of the time during operating hours. This individual should be designated as the 'Director of Record' on the Growing Futures organization account, under the Classrooms tab.

²Lead Teacher: The individual assigned to teach a group of children and who is responsible for daily lesson planning, child assessment and curriculum planning. There must be a Lead Teacher assigned to each classroom. This individual may also supervise other members of the teaching team. In some settings, this individual is called the Head Teacher or Teacher. These individuals should be designated as Lead Teachers in the organization profile, under the Classrooms tab. A Lead Teacher cannot be assigned to more than one classroom at a time

³Lead Caregiver: The individual listed on the Family or Group program license that oversees the day-to-day operations of the program. This individual should be designated as the 'Licensee/Owner' in the Growing Futures organization account, under the Classrooms tab.