

AIM HIGH ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS AT A GLANCE
Voluntary: Not Required for Basic Licensure

<p align="center">2-STAR* (AIM HIGH Level Two) <i>Programs must meet all Child Care Licensing Regulations plus:</i></p>	<p align="center">3-STAR (AIM HIGH Level Three)</p>	<p align="center">4-STAR (AIM HIGH Level Four)</p>	<p align="center">5-STAR (AIM HIGH Level Five)</p>
<p>2A) <u>Staff Qualifications, Evaluation and Communication</u></p> <p>Staff Qualifications – No requirements for this level.</p> <p>Staff Evaluation—No requirements for this level.</p> <p>Staff Communication—No requirements for this level.</p>	<p>3A) <u>Staff Qualifications, Evaluation and Communication</u></p> <p>1. Staff Qualifications – Continue meeting requirements for Level Two plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Effective July 1, 2010, all NEW staff/caregivers working directly with children must have a high school diploma or equivalent (GED) b) Group Child Care Home—Second caregivers have completed at least the 45-Hour Entry Level Course or equivalent approved by the Office of Child Development or have or are currently working toward a higher level of certificate or degree as defined in the career lattice. c) Out-of-School Time Care—All school-age staff have completed at least the 45-Hour Entry Level Course or equivalent approved by the Office of Child Development or have or are currently working toward a higher level of certificate or degree as defined in New Mexico’s Early Care, Education and Family Support Career Lattice. <p>2. Staff Evaluation – No requirements for this level.</p> <p>3. Staff Communication – No requirements for this level.</p>	<p>4A) <u>Staff Qualifications, Evaluation and Communication</u></p> <p>1. Staff Qualifications – Continue meeting requirements for Level Two and Level Three. No additional requirements for this level.</p> <p>2. Staff Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A tool, which includes criteria for evaluation and the process of evaluation for staff/non-relative caregiver in a family child care home at least on an annual basis; b) A plan for improvement for each staff member and non-relative caregiver in a family child care home, if appropriate, based on evaluation results. <p>3. Staff Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Meetings are held on a regular basis, at least quarterly; b) Staff participation in developing agendas; c) Evidence that meeting provide a safe environment where staff members can ask questions, present alternative ideas, and share feelings. 	<p>5A) <u>Staff Qualifications, Evaluation and Communication</u></p> <p>Continue meeting requirements for Level Two, Level Three and Level Four. No additional requirements for this level.</p>
<p>2B) <u>Environment</u></p> <p>1. Physical Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Environment is organized into functional, 	<p>3B) <u>Environment</u> – Continue meeting Level Two requirements plus:</p> <p>1. Physical Environment:</p>	<p>4B) <u>Environment</u> – Continue meeting requirements for Level Two and Level Three plus:</p>	<p>5B) <u>Environment</u> – Continue meeting requirements for Level Two, Level Three and Level Four. No additional</p>

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<p>identifiable learning areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Dramatic Play – Creative Art – Books – Blocks and Accessories – Manipulatives – Music – Science – Math/Number – Sensory <p>b) For Homes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A place for messy play – A place for loud, active play – A space for playing quietly – A place to pretend – A place to read – A place to eat – A place to rest or sleep <p>c) Noisy and quiet areas are arranged so that children’s activities can be sustained without interruption.</p> <p>d) Materials are cleaned and well care for and organized by type and, where appropriate, are labeled with words and/or pictures. Adaptations to materials are made when needed to accommodate various abilities of all children. Unused materials are stored in inaccessible storage.</p> <p>e) Interest areas are functional with adequate space and are logically placed. The environment is set up so children are not continually interrupting one another.</p> <p>f) Examples of children’s individually expressed artwork are displayed in the environment or in the home.</p> <p>g) Floor surface is suitable for activities that will occur in each interest area or in the family child</p>	<p>a) Materials and equipment are rotated and adapted on a regular basis to conform to curriculum goals.</p> <p>b) Staff of the program are very familiar with the environment rating instrument and feel confident that they will score an average score of four.</p> <p>c) Evaluation of program’s environment requires the completion of a post rating scale*, scoring an average of 4.</p> <p><i>*See list of environment rating scales in Element 3B.</i></p> <p>2. Social- Emotional Responsive Environment – No additional requirements for this level.</p>	<p>1. Physical Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Outdoor space has some protection from the elements. b) Outdoor space has some play interest centers (refer to page 41 of the Essential Elements for a detailed list). c) Opportunities to develop motor skills. <p>2. Social- Emotional Responsive Environment – No additional requirements for this level.</p>	<p>requirements for this level.</p>

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<p>care home.</p> <p>h) File and storage space is available for teacher/caregiver materials.</p> <p>2. Social-Emotional Responsive Environment:</p> <p>a) The environment reflects an atmosphere where all children feel accepted and able to be successful. The classroom/school-age space/home environment has a positive social atmosphere where staff/caregiver and children spend time talking and interacting with one another in general conversation during the day as well as at mealtimes and other scheduled activities. Various methods are used to communicate with nonverbal or language delayed.</p> <p>b) Staff/caregivers endeavor to establish a positive, caring relationship with every child in their care. Physical contact is used to comfort and/or positively support children in daily routines and interactions.</p> <p>c) Staff/caregivers encourage children to interact with one another in a positive manner. Staff/caregivers intentionally prepare (coach) children to interact positively with children of various abilities.</p> <p>d) Staff/caregivers are attuned to and respond promptly and consistently to children's needs and interests during regular routines and activities.</p> <p>e) Staff/caregivers facilitate children's growing independence and initiative by giving them many opportunities to make decisions, choose their own activities, and take charge of their own learning.</p> <p>f) Relationships among staff/caregivers are professional and do not interfere with their responsibilities in caring for and interacting with</p>			

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<p>children both indoors and outdoors.</p>			
<p>2C) <u>Observation and Documentation of Children's Progress and Curriculum Planning</u> – no requirements for this level.</p>	<p>3C) <u>Observation and Documentation of Children's Progress and Curriculum Planning</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a system teachers will use for observing & documenting children's development, in all developmental domains, and used as a means to individualize curriculum planning in support of the whole child. 2. Develop a basic understanding of key components of an early childhood curriculum and begin implementation by using an observation, documentation, and evaluation process- a continuous process of observing children, documenting, planning, implementing activities and routines, observing the activities and assessing outcomes. Demonstrate evidence that the director and/or curriculum coordinator have the knowledge to provide support to classroom teachers resulting in teachers using the information gained from the use of an assessment instrument to plan curriculum based on individual children's needs for 75 % of the classrooms. 3. Describe how the program will communicate information with families regarding their child's growth and development. 4. Posted weekly lesson plans organized around an appropriate curriculum that incorporate a posted daily schedule (one for parents and one for children) and a written description of the role of the 	<p>4C) <u>Observation and Documentation of Children's Progress and Curriculum Planning</u> – Continue meeting Level 3 requirements plus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A written curriculum that is carefully planned to meet both short-term and long-term goals for the program and for individual children and includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Knowledge of children's needs and interests based on observation and assessment completed in the classroom or in the family child care home program; b) Continued use of the curriculum development process of gathering information through observations for individual curriculum and program planning in every classroom or in family child care homes (evidence that the program ties assessment of children to curriculum) c) Reflection of ongoing implementation demonstrated in classroom environment or in the home; d) Social and Emotional teaching strategies; e) Variety of instructional strategies; small/large group activities, puppets, role play, visual supports, peer buddies, scripted stories, pictures prompts; f) Sequencing of activities from simple to complex; g) Support for children's thinking, reasoning, decision-making, and problem-solving. Teachers facilitate 	<p>5C) <u>Observation and Documentation of Children's Progress and Curriculum Planning</u> – Continue meeting requirements for Level Three and Level Four. No additional requirements for this level.</p>

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	<p>teacher(s)/caregiver(s) and teaching/learning strategies used. Together with the children, teachers/caregivers develop classroom/program rules. They are posted and reviewed regularly with children.</p> <p>5. Develop a written curriculum that represents: Staff begins to implement the beginning stages of the items listed above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Review and update mission, and philosophy statement. Curriculum planning and implementation should be consistent with the mission and philosophy statement, short-range and long-range goals; b) Knowledge of child development. Staff/caregivers are familiar with ages and stages of development. Evidence is demonstrated through appropriate expectations for all children including children with special needs; c) Activities are meaningful, developmentally appropriate, adapted/modified according to the needs and abilities of children; d) Facilitation of all areas of development; social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive. Some programs might also include a spiritual domain; e) Integrates foundations for the following content areas: Math, Science, Social Studies, Language Arts/Literacy, Health and Fine Arts; f) Variety of learning experiences; g) Variety of materials that range from 	<p>discussions to challenge (scaffold) children's thinking;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> h) Support for development of children's self-regulation using methods such as logical and natural consequences. Teacher/caregivers facilitate discussions to problem-solve conflict; i) Evidence that each child's language and culture are integral components of the daily program; j) Evidence of child participation in planning activities and developing program rules and routines; k) Evidence that teachers/ caregivers challenge children just beyond their current level of development (scaffold their learning); l) Documentation verifying at least a 3-month history of curriculum planning and preferably a year's history of planning. 	

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	<p>simple to complex;</p> <p>h) Active engagement of children;</p> <p>i) Opportunities to make choices;</p> <p>j) Ensures smooth transitions from one activity to another;</p> <p>k) Opportunities to experiment and explore;</p> <p>l) Large blocks of time for discovery and child-initiated learning activities;</p> <p>m) A balance of active/quiet, individual/small group/large group activities and indoor/outdoor time;</p> <p>n) Emphasis on the value of social interaction through peer learning;</p> <p>o) A positive social/emotional foundation is valued as essential for the development of lifelong positive interpersonal relationships and the growth in all other developmental domains;</p> <p>p) Social Skills are intentionally taught.</p> <p><i>Refer to pages 29 and 30 for curriculum for Infants and toddlers</i></p>		
<p>2D) <u>Staff/Caregiver Professional Development Plan</u></p> <p>1. Development of a written plan for ongoing professional development for each staff member, including the director or for each person working in the family child care home with the children. See sample forms in Element 2D.</p>	<p>3D) <u>Staff/Caregiver Professional Development Plan</u> – Continue meeting Level Two requirements plus:</p> <p>1. Evidence of progression of the professional development plan from Essential Element 2D. The progress should show evidence that the program is beginning to meet the professional development criteria in AIM HIGH Level 4 (if the program is planning on attaining AIM HIGH Level 4).</p> <p>Beginning July 1st, 2010 at the time of annual visits, all classroom, administrative staff & family caregivers have completed the 6-hour <u>Quality Early Childhood Programs for All</u> course</p>	<p>4D) <u>Staff/Caregiver Professional Development Plan</u>- Continue meeting Level Two and Level Three requirements plus:</p> <p>1. Evidence that individual professional development plans established at Level Two & Level Three are progressing for each staff member, including the director or for each person working in the family child care home with the children.</p> <p>2. Evidence of career guidance to ensure that all training contributes to program and individual goals</p>	<p>5D) <u>Staff/Caregiver Professional Development Plan</u> – Continue meeting requirements for Level Two, Level Three and Level Four. No additional requirements for this level.</p>

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	<p>developed by the Office of Child Development and offered at all Early Childhood Training & Technical Assistance Programs or an equivalent approved by the Office of Child Development (e.g. Young Children with Diverse Abilities).</p>		
<p>2E) <u>Family Involvement Plan</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A statement supportive of family involvement is incorporated into the Family Handbook that includes an unrestricted open door policy to the classroom/school-age program/family child care home. 2. Children and family members are acknowledged upon arrival and departure. 	<p>3E) <u>Family Involvement Plan</u> – Continue meeting Level Two requirements plus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide at least two family involvement activities including but not limited to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Suggestion Box, Family Bulletin Board, Newsletter; b) Family meetings, Socials, Informational Workshops, minimum of one activity that encourages male participation c) Child developmental milestone information, Family/Staff Conferences d) Classroom and/or Field Trip volunteer, Support of program operation e) Daily (written) communication system between family member and teacher. 	<p>4E) <u>Family Involvement Plan</u> – Continue meeting requirements for Level Two and Level Three plus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide at least three family involvement activities (review list in Element 3E). 	<p>5E) <u>Family Involvement Plan</u> – Continue meeting requirements for Level Two, Level Three and Level Four. No additional requirements for this level.</p>
<p>2F) <u>Administrative Policies</u> – Financial Policies and Procedures and Operational Evaluation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial Policies and Procedures – No requirements for this level. 2. Operational Evaluation—No requirements for this level. 	<p>3F) <u>Administrative Policies</u> – Financial Policies and Procedures and Operational Evaluation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial Policies and Procedures <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Evidence that program has a business plan; b) Evidence that program has a one-year budget showing all income and expenditures; c) Policies and procedures for the handling of financial transactions. 2. Operational Evaluation – No requirements for this level. 	<p>4F) <u>Administrative Policies</u> – Financial Policies and Procedures and Operational Evaluation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial Policies and Procedures – Continue meeting Level Two requirements. No additional requirements for this level. 2. Operational Evaluation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) A written plan for a process that is comprehensive and includes all aspects of the program’s operations, is ongoing and occurs on a regular basis; b) A plan for using evaluation results for program improvement; 3. Exit interviews all staff that terminate, feedback incorporated into program planning/evaluation. 	<p>5F) <u>Administrative Policies</u> – Financial Policies and Procedures and Operational Evaluation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial Policies and Procedures – Continue meeting Level Two requirements. No additional requirements for this level. 2. Operational Evaluation – Continue meeting Level Four requirements. No additional requirements for this level

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<p>2G) <u>Employee Compensation and Benefits</u></p> <p>1. Development of a compensation philosophy statement that is incorporated into the personnel handbook. A compensation philosophy statement for family childcare homes is required only in the case of a second caregiver who is non-related.</p>	<p>3G) <u>Employee Compensation and Benefits</u></p> <p>1. Develop and implement an incremental compensation plan that includes tangible recognition and salaries.</p> <p>2. Provide at least three employee benefits including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Payment of individual professional membership or association fee b) Insurance supplement c) Paid Leave (sick, vacation, personal, maternal, parental or bereavement) d) Monetary bonuses e) Insurance (health, life, accident, disabilities, dental or vision) <p>3. Director is knowledgeable of resources regarding the Fair Labor Standards Act</p>	<p>4G) <u>Employee Compensation and Benefits</u> – Continue meeting Level Two and Level Three requirements plus:</p> <p>1. Continue to implement an incremental compensation plan that includes tangible recognition and salaries.</p> <p>2. Program must provide at least four employee benefits (review list on Element 3G).</p>	<p>5G) <u>Employee Compensation and Benefits</u> – Continue meeting requirements for Level Three and Level Four. No additional requirements for this level.</p>
<p>2H) <u>Ratios and Group Size</u> – No requirements for this level.</p>	<p>3H) <u>Ratios and Group Size</u> – No requirements for this level.</p>	<p>4H) <u>Ratios and Group Size</u> – Implement ratios and group size:</p> <p>1. Licensed Child Care Centers Child Care Centers in which children are grouped by age:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 weeks through 24 months 1:5 2 years 1:8 3 years 1:10 4 years 1:10 5 years 1:12 6 years 1:12 <p>2. Child Care Centers in which age groups are combined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 weeks through 24 months 1:5 2, 3 and 4 years 1:10 3, 4 and 5 years 1:12 6 years 1:12 	<p>5H) <u>Ratios and Group Size</u> – Continue to meet Level Four requirements. No additional requirements for this level.</p>

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		<p>Maximum group size: 6 weeks through 24 months 10 2 years 16 3, 4, and 5 years 24 6 years and up 24</p> <p>3. Licensed Family Child Care Homes: a) 1:6 for programs licensed for 6 children b) 2:12 for programs licensed for 12 children</p> <p>4. Licensed Out-of-School Time Programs: Group size does not exceed 30.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ratio is between 1:8 and 1:12 for groups that include children 6 years of age or younger. • The ratio is between 1:10 and 1:15 for groups of children 6 years of age and older. <p>5. Registered Family Child Care Homes: A caregiver will have no more than four (4) non-resident children at any one time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A caregiver will have no more than two (2) children under the age of two years old at any one time, including the providers own children. • A caregiver will have no more than six (6) children under the age of six at any one time, including providers own children. • Shifts are allowed provided there are never more than 4 non-resident children present at any one time. 	
<p>1) Accreditation – No requirements for this level.</p>	<p>3I) Accreditation – No requirements for this level.</p>	<p>4I) Accreditation – No requirements for this level.</p>	<p>5I) Accreditation through a nationally recognized accrediting body approved by the Office of</p>

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<p><i>*Programs serving children on Child Care Assistance will be required to achieve 2-STAR status at the time of their annual visit effective 7/1/2006.</i></p>			<p>Child Development Board through demonstration that their accreditation significantly matches standards set by the NAEYC Academy of Early Childhood Program Accreditation. Refer to the AH Essential Elements document for a complete list of accepted accrediting organizations.</p>