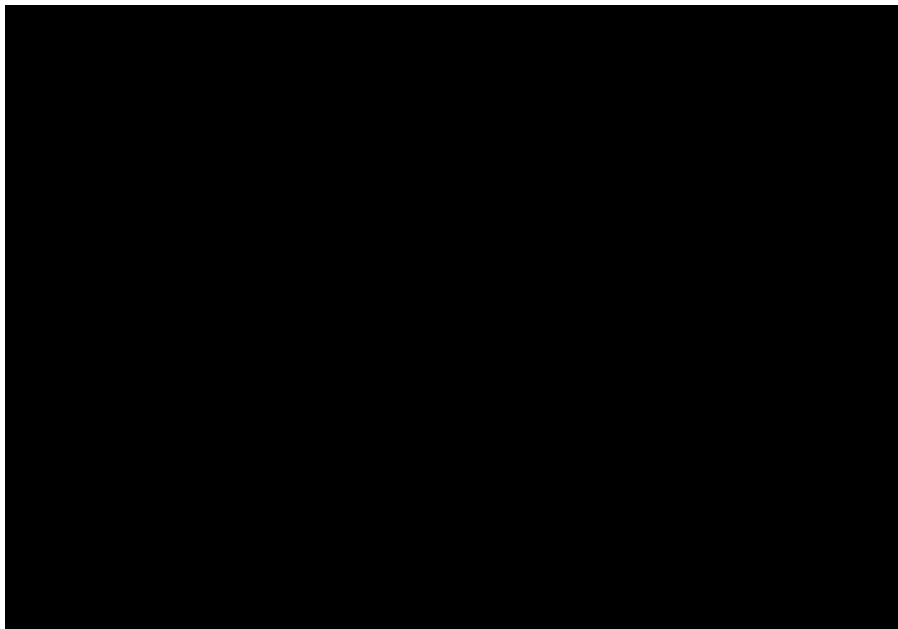


FY 08 AIM HIGH GUIDELINES
July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009

**EARLY CHILDHOOD TRAINING
AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
PROGRAMS**



FAMILY SERVICES
Office of Child Development

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HISTORY OF THE AIM HIGH QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT	3
PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES.....	4
INTENT AND VISION OF AIM HIGH	5
MEDIA CAMPAIGN	7
THE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE.....	8
PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AND THE USE OF THE APPLICATION	9
PROCESS FOR DETERMINING AIM HIGH CASELOAD	11
PROCESS FOR WORKING WITH AIM HIGH PROGRAMS.....	12
FACTORS DETERMINING PROGRAM STATUS	14
THE 25% SET-ASIDE	16
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST.....	18
PROTOCOL FOR INTERACTION BETWEEN PDS AND THE CYFD CHILD CARE LICENSING SECTION (currently being revised).....	21
SUPPORT OF GRADUATE SUPPORT OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS.....	24
EVALUATION OF AIM HIGH.....	25
APPENDIX	26

HISTORY OF AIM HIGH

The AIM HIGH Initiative started on July 1, 1999. The pilot project was developed by the Children, Youth and Families Department, Office of Child Development to improve the quality of child care services to families in New Mexico.

It began with the identification of five levels of quality:

- Level One.....Administrative Policies and Procedures
- Level Two.....Environment and Curriculum
- Level Three.....Staff Development
- Level Four.....Child/Staff Ratios
- Level Five.....National Accreditation

Family child-care homes, centers, and school-age programs that are licensed or registered are eligible to participate in the project. Programs with at least 25% of their total enrollment receiving the child care subsidy are given priority to participate in the project.

The initiative was and continues to be implemented by the Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance Programs in New Mexico. Each of the Training and Technical Assistance Programs have Program Development Specialists who work individually with program staff.

Changes in the New Mexico Child Care Licensing Regulations beginning in February of 2005, required some modification of the AIM HIGH Project. Some of these changes include:

- Changing the name from AIM HIGH Pilot Project to AIM HIGH Program.
- AIM HIGH Level One to become basic licensing regulations (1-STAR) thus eliminating Level One from the AIM HIGH program.
- Embedding AIM HIGH Essential Elements into the Five Star Quality Recognition Child Care Licensing System.
- Adding and/or modifying some of the Essential Elements in AIM HIGH Levels two, three, and four.

PURPOSE OF THE FY 08 GUIDELINES

It is the intent of the Children, Youth and Families Department, AIM HIGH Program to help licensed child care programs and registered family child care providers improve the quality of services offered primarily to children and families receiving the child care subsidy administered by the Children, Youth and Families Department, Child Care Services Bureau. The program is funded through the federal Child Care Development Fund and State General Funds earmarked for quality improvement.

The purpose of the AIM HIGH Guidelines is to provide the Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance programs and the AIM HIGH Program Development Specialists, with a procedural guide for delivering AIM HIGH services to child care providers. It is expected that these guidelines be implemented to the best of the Program Development Specialist's ability. If for some reason unique circumstances arise, the Director of the Training and Technical Assistance Program and Program Development Specialist must consult with the Office of Child Development.

INTENT AND VISION OF AIM HIGH

- The AIM HIGH program is implemented across the state through contracts with the eight (8) Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance Programs (TTAPs). See *Appendix A* for a list of the TTAPs.
- Each TTAP will convene a Community Advisory Board to assist in the selection of programs for participation and provide input for other programmatic aspects of the initiative.
- Each TTAP employs Program Development Specialists (PDS) for the AIM HIGH Program.
- Once a child-care program is approved to participate in the AIM HIGH Program, a PDS will be assigned to work with the program. Together the PDS and the program administrators and staff will develop a plan for improvement by setting program goals based on the AIM HIGH Essential Elements and other nationally recognized guidelines for best practice in the field of early care and education. See *Appendix B* for a copy of the AIM HIGH Essential Elements.
- The New Mexico Child Care Licensing Regulations uses a “STAR” rating system (Look for the STARS) that indicates the level of quality of an early childhood program. The criteria used to indicate the level of quality are the AIM HIGH Essential Elements. Participating AIM HIGH programs determine what STAR level they wish to attain. As programs progress through each STAR level, it is expected that there will also be higher quality of services provided to young children and families in the program. The greater number of STARS on a child care license indicates a higher level of quality.
 - A 1-STAR license indicates that the program meets basic licensing regulations.
 - State regulations state that starting on July 1, 2006, programs are required to obtain a 2-STAR license by their annual renewal date in order to continue to serve children through the subsidy program. Programs wishing to obtain a 2-STAR license must meet basic licensing regulations and all criteria in AIM HIGH Level 2.
 - Programs wishing to attain a 3-STAR license must meet basic licensing regulations, and all criteria in AIM HIGH Level 2 and all the criteria in AIM HIGH Level 3.
 - Programs wishing to attain a 4-STAR license must meet basic licensing regulations, and all criteria in AIM HIGH Level 2, and all criteria in AIM HIGH Level 3 and all the criteria in AIM HIGH Level

- 4 criteria for 4-STAR.
 - Programs wishing to obtain a 5-STAR license must obtain and maintain national accreditation through an approved accrediting body approved by CYFD. As of April 2008, the following bodies have been approved by CYFD:
 - NAEYC (National Assoc. for the Education of Young Children)
 - NECPA (National Early Childhood Program Assoc.)
 - NAC (National Accreditation Commission)
 - ASCI (Assoc. of Christian Schools International)
 - COA (Council of Accreditation)
 - NAFCC (National Assoc. of Family Child Care)
 - NAA (National After-school Assoc.)
 - ICAA (International Christian Accrediting Assoc.)
 - The Five Star licensing system became effective on July 1, 2005. See *Appendix C*
 - for a copy of the licensing regulations.
- The PDS will focus on working with those AIM HIGH Programs wishing to attain a 3-STAR, 4-STAR or 5-STAR license. *Licensed Child Care programs must have a 2-STAR license in order to participate in the AIM HIGH Program.* Registered family child care programs who can not meet Child Care Licensing requirements may be eligible to participate in the AIM HIGH Program if they meet registration regulations, child care licensing regulations, and 2-STAR criteria. If the TTAP has available staff, registered family child care providers who want to become licensed and who want to work through the STAR system may apply to be on AIM HIGH. Programs who have not attained a 2-STAR license may receive training and technical assistance from the TTAP in order to attain a 2-STAR license.
- Although the AIM HIGH Program is voluntary for licensed child care programs, the intent of the AIM HIGH Program is to work with child care programs who are committed to progress through the higher STAR levels based on identified goals that are set with the PDS. There are graduated and higher reimbursement rates beginning with the completion of Level 2. See Appendix E for a copy of the Child Care Services Bureau Assistance Regulations.
- Each Training and Technical Assistance Program will assist the Children, Youth and Families Department in publicizing the Five Star Quality Rating System through a media campaign and personal contacts. This will assist in CYFD's consumer education and parent outreach activities. See Appendix D for the Parent Guide developed by the Child Care Services Bureau.

MEDIA CAMPAIGN

The media campaign provides awareness to parents and community agencies that work with children and families about the AIM HIGH program, the Five Star Licensing System, and how these programs can improve the quality of child care.

Each TTAP will assist CYFD in the media campaign by:

- Including the entire service delivery area;
- Educating licensed child care/early childhood facilities, registered homes, out-of-school time care programs;
- Continuing the campaign activities on an on-going basis; and
- Establishing procedures to provide acknowledgement to the community of program accomplishments through AIM HIGH. Utilize press releases to acknowledge level-change accomplishments. Use methods that include but are not limited to:
 - Public meetings/Community Agency meetings
 - TV, radio and newspaper advertisements and PSAs
 - Web sites
 - Personal letters, newsletters
 - On-site visits to child care programs
 - Use of all opportunities such as visits to toy lending libraries, workshops, telephone inquiries, health fairs, community celebrations, and written materials to inform parents and other community members of the program initiative;
- Utilizing public awareness strategies such as AIM HIGH banners, t-shirts, aprons, etc.

THE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Community Advisory Committee must be voluntary and made up of at least one representative from licensed center-based care (both non-profit and for-profit), family child care (licensed and registered) and out-of-school time programs. The committee can also include experienced early childhood and school-age professionals. Committee members should sign a confidentiality statement. It is recommended that this committee be a standing sub-committee of the TTAP Advisory Committee.

The purpose of the Community Advisory committee is to:

- Serve on the search and interviewing sub-committee for the selection of PDS/s. See Appendix M for PDS qualifications;
- Participate in the prioritizing of the programs selected for participation by:
 - Reviewing the initial application and other pertinent information provided by the TTAP Program Development Specialist; and
 - Utilizing the AIM HIGH Program Application Score Sheet.
- Provide guidance on expenditures for funds in the 25% set-aside. The 25% set-aside is in the AIM HIGH budget to be used for necessary programs expenses for the attainment of program improvement goals.
- Provide guidance on the timeliness of making progress and forward movement through the levels.
- Provide guidance on the comprehensive AIM HIGH Program evaluation, including exit interviews with program when they graduate or have dropped from the AIM HIGH Program.

If advisory board members cannot attend meetings, insure that other methods are in place that allows participation in the decision-making process.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AND USE OF THE APPLICATION

Licensed homes, centers or out-of-school time programs that have a 2-STAR license and serve at least 25% state subsidized children may be eligible. Registered family child care providers may be eligible if they meet registration regulations and meet child care licensing regulations and 2-STAR criteria. If the TTAP has available staff, registered family child care providers who want to become licensed and who want to work through the STAR system may apply to be on AIM HIGH. Please contact the Office of Child Development when a registered provider applies to participate in AIM HIGH.

Programs must be in substantial compliance with licensing regulations and must not have a history of numerous, repeated, or serious non-compliance citations. Programs receiving other state and federal funds must be in compliance with those program's regulations.

Head Start programs are not eligible to be active AIM HIGH participants unless they serve at least 25% of state subsidized children. If the Head Start Program does not meet this criteria, it may be possible for Head Start programs to *contract* with the Training and Technical Assistance Program in order to receive AIM HIGH mentoring services without access to set-aside funds. This would be dependent on the availability of PDS's and/or workload of the TTAP. Please contact the Office of Child Development if a Head Start program requests to be an active AIM HIGH Program. Otherwise, Head Start programs are encouraged to use training and technical assistance provided by the Training and Technical Assistance Programs.

Interested programs should contact the Training and Technical Assistance Program in their region to obtain and complete the Eligibility Form. Once the TTAP has received the Eligibility Form, the applicant will be contacted within two weeks to set up an initial on-site visit. See *Appendix F* for a copy of the Eligibility Form.

At the time of the on-site visit, the Program Development Specialist will present and describe in detail the following:

- The intent of AIM HIGH to serve programs with the highest percentage of income eligible children, with priority for those programs serving at least 25% children receiving child care subsidy or, if there is no waiting list, programs serving less than 25% will be prioritized (in descending order) based on the percentage of income eligible children

- A description of the AIM HIGH criteria and the accompanying tiered reimbursement. Reimbursements are formulated by CYFD, Child Care Services Bureau; (*Appendix G*)
- The commitment of time and effort required by the program administration and classroom staff that is required; and
- The benefits of participation that include training and access to the 25% set-aside. Refer to page 17 for more information on the 25 % Set-A-Side Guidelines).

During this initial visit, the Program Development Specialist informally assesses the program by visiting and meeting the staff in each classroom/space. At the conclusion of this visit, the Program Development Specialist will leave the AIM HIGH Application for the program to complete and return to the TTAP. All programs will use the standardized AIM HIGH Application (*Appendix H*). All the Program Development Specialists will use the standardized AIM HIGH Score Sheet (*Appendix I*) and the AIM HIGH Performance Measures Quarterly Report (Excel Form *Appendix J*).

Once the AIM HIGH Application, the Score Sheet and the Summary Sheet are received, it is presented to the Community Advisory Committee for the selection process.

PROCESS FOR DETERMINING AIM HIGH CASELOAD

The Office of Child Development expects each TTAP to establish a manageable caseload for each PDS. The process for determining AIM HIGH caseloads is as follows:

- The TTAP Director will use the AIM HIGH Performance Measures Quarterly Report (Excel Form *Appendix J*) along with projections for the next three months, to establish a manageable caseload for each Program Development Specialist for the upcoming quarter. The program summary sheet should be submitted with the TTAP Quarterly Report to the OCD staff who is responsible for oversight of the TTAP.
- The Office of Child Development will review, approve and/or make recommendations to each program within ten working days from receipt of program documents. The number of active programs, the number of total classrooms, the physical location of the program will be used as a guide.
- For programs with more than 6 classrooms, two PDS's should jointly work together in order for the program to progress in a timely manner to meet stated goals.

THE PROCESS FOR WORKING WITH AIM HIGH PROGRAMS

After the applicant has been approved, the PDS will set up the second visit to the program site. This visit should be conducted “after hours” or at a time most convenient for all parties to include all staff and other stakeholders such as parents and/or board members. The PDS will give a comprehensive overview of AIM HIGH. The AIM HIGH Agreement form should be reviewed and signed by both the TTAP and the program director/family child care provider this time. The annual AIM HIGH Agreement (*Appendix K*) shall be completed on July 1st of each year and shall include:

- A statement of understanding that centers, out-of-school time, homes are aware that standards must be continually met to receive the higher level of reimbursement.
- A statement in which AIM HIGH has the right to terminate the AIM HIGH Agreement and reclaim any equipment or materials purchased if the childcare program closes or is sold or is transferred to new owners.
- A statement of commitment from the program director/owner of family child care provider to support programmatic change in order to sustain high quality services to young children and families.
- A statement of commitment from the owner/program director/owner and staff to attend training conducted specifically for AIM HIGH participants.
- An expectation to contribute to the cost of improvements and sustaining quality. Matching and/or in-kind contributions are examples of acceptable contributions. The program’s willingness to contribute to the cost of improvements and sustaining quality will directly impact the monetary support from AIM HIGH. On an annual basis, active AIM HIGH programs are required to submit a signed document that identifies the programs matching and/or in-kind contributions. The document shall be signed by the owner/program director. (Form to be developed)
- This agreement should be reviewed and signed every year by July 1st.

At the conclusion of the second visit, the PDS will provide information to the program on how to obtain/purchase copies of the appropriate Environmental

Rating Scale(s) and the accompanying video(s) for the program staff/family child care provider for review. A tentative date for the PDS to administer the "pre" rating scale(s) will be set. This date should be set to occur as soon as possible.

Upon completion of the "pre" scale(s), the PDS and the program staff/family child care provider will use this information as "baseline" data to develop goals for program improvement by completing the **AIM HIGH Action Plan** (*Appendix L*). The **AIM HIGH Action Plan** is based on the findings of past surveys by Child Care Licensing, narratives from the "pre" environment rating scales, the AIM HIGH Essential Elements and other identified program needs. *See Appendix N*. Based on the program goals, AIM HIGH Action Plan will be developed using the Essential Elements as a framework. The Action Plan will be developed within thirty (30) days of the administration of the "pre" environment scale(s). The Action Plan shall include at a minimum:

- Program and classroom goals listed in order of the priority;
- An outline of the work to be done by the program and the support to be provided by the PDS;
- Time lines for completion of tasks and goals;
- Resources to be provided by the TTAP and/or the program; and
- Signatures of the Program Development Specialist, the program director and center manager, if applicable, or family child care provider and appropriate stakeholders such as board president, school principal or center owner, if different than director.

The Program Development Specialist and the program shall review the goals at least every three (3) months to determine if any changes are necessary and if the program is accomplishing its goals. If warranted, a revision of the action plan should be completed. Remember the intent of the AIM HIGH is to move forward in obtaining higher STAR levels.

BEST PRACTICES PLACE HOLDER

FACTORS DETERMINING PROGRAM STATUS

Programs must maintain compliance with licensing regulations and must not have a history of numerous, repeated, or serious non-compliance. In addition, licensed programs must maintain the Program STAR level.

Using the goals and time lines established in the Action Plan, the PDS and the program would agree upon the projected length of time needed to complete each goal. The PDS together with the program will review the Action Plan and goals set at least every three (3) months. As objectives are accomplished, new goals and objectives will be established.

If it is determined that the program is steadily progressing but needs more time, the PDS may modify the original time lines. If it is determined that a program is not meeting its obligation, the PDS will establish a more acceptable timeline for improvement with specific dates and identified roles and responsibilities. If the timeline is not adhered to by the program and progress continues not to be made as documented on the action plans and the program contact logs, the program will be dropped. The Office of Child Development must be contacted prior to the TTAP communicating this decision with the program being dropped from the AIM HIGH program. The program may re-apply to the AIM HIGH Program and will be granted equal consideration for participation.

If a program voluntarily decides that they can no longer commit to the AIM HIGH program, they will be dropped and can re-apply in the future. When they re-apply, they will be placed on the waiting list, if one exists. We understand that there may be extenuating circumstances. The Office of Child Development, in conjunction with the PDS, will review these circumstances and make a determination of program status.

If an active program intends to change location, they must notify the PDS. The PDS will schedule an on-site visit to the new location within 30 days of the move to verify compliance of AIM HIGH 3 or 4 level criteria by the program.

If a program experiences more than two staff turn-over in the same classroom, it will be the directors responsibility to bring that classroom to the level it was performing before services can resume in that classroom. (Please be in close communication with OCD for additional guideness with this new policy.)

Programs receiving other state and/or federal funds must be also in compliance with those program's regulations. Substantiated findings that result in a program being terminated from state and/or federal programs will also result in termination from the AIM HIGH program.

A program may be on an "On Hold" status for a short period of time if there is a life emergency or other serious situations prevent the program from continuing. Prior to placing a program "on hold", the PDS should contact the Office of Child Development to discuss the situation. Programs that are "on hold" status will be reviewed every three months by the Office of Child Development, the TTAP Director and the assigned PDS to determine continuation or discontinuation of the "on-hold" status and set new timelines to reflect the "on-hold" decision.

Time limitations have been set for program participation in AIM HIGH. Programs have 2 years to complete Level 3, 1 year to complete Level 4 and 18 months to work on Level 5 (for a total of 4 years and 6 months).

Effective January 1, 2006, current (active) programs participating in AIM HIGH for more than four (4) years will be given a limited timeline to complete their goal level. The timeline will be determined by the Office of Child Development.

THE 25% SET-ASIDE

The overall intent of the 25% set-aside funds is to benefit programs in sustaining long-term quality of care. If a program chooses not to use the 25% set-aside on purchasing needed equipment/materials/supplies/training, the program will be expected to use their own financial resources and will be expected to meet the goals and time lines outlined in the Action Plan (*Appendix L*).

The Program Development Specialist and the TTAP Director are the key staff members in determining the use of the 25% set-aside budget. Set-aside monies should not be used by the TTAP without the knowledge and agreement of the PDS.

Programs are expected to equally contribute to the cost of improvement and sustaining quality. Matching and/or in-kind contributions are examples of acceptable contributions.

The Program Development Specialist and the program should make joint decisions when purchasing program supplies and materials to ensure they are appropriate and meet the program's goals. The intent of these funds is to purchase materials and equipment that are safe, durable and of lasting quality. Purchases from discount stores are not usually of the expected quality. Purchases on a single item over \$1000.00 must have prior approval from the Office of Child Development.

The Program Development Specialist will inform the Community Advisory Committee of participating program expenditures and how they are tied to meeting current goals and the Essential Elements.

Acceptable expenditures include the following:

- Banners or other items to promote AIM HIGH for public awareness and quality recognition;
- AIM HIGH materials or resources for *Program Development Specialist* use in training AIM HIGH participants.
- Stipends for conducting post-rating scales; and
- Program expenditures must be specifically tied to promoting attainment of stated goals and the STAR level.

- Expenses involved with the 45-Hour Entry Level Course, CDA assessment, Level 4 programs applying for first-time accreditation, and other training costs such as purchasing books or materials, covering costs for substitutes to allow staff to attend training or, if feasible, paying stipends to staff as an incentive to attend training.
- Fees to complete the accreditation process not to exceed \$3300.00 per program.
- Tuition and books for early childhood education course(s) from an accredited institution of higher education if it is required to meet the programs goals related to the Essential Elements and only after exploring all other possibilities for financial assistance (i.e., T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships, receiving a letter of decline for financial assistance). (PLEASE NOTE THAT AIM HIGH FUNDS MAY BE USED FOR A MAXIMUM OF three (3) EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CORE COURSES per person within the program AND MAY NOT BE USED FOR BASIC/GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES. Course transcripts for each person must be kept on file at the TTAP office.

By March or April of each contract year, if a 25% set-aside balance remains the TTAP may choose to survey toy lending library materials and replace any necessary items or develop a procedure to equally distribute funds and ensure that requests meet individual program goals;

Unacceptable expenditures (although under unique circumstances, approval may be obtained through the Office Of Child Development) include the following:

- Structural changes/capital improvements to an environment
- Furniture or playground equipment valued at more than \$1000 per item
- Computer hardware and data systems
- Operational costs such as phones, rent, salaries
- Fees or costs for accreditation renewal
- Consumables such as paper, glue, paint, etc.
- Out of state travel

Each PDS must keep a record of all requests in each program's file. An itemized inventory of all expenditures will be a part of each program's file and documented under "funding" on the NewMexicoKids.org database.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST (PDS)

The Program Development Specialist roles and responsibilities shall include:

- Meeting the staff qualifications for a PDS (*Appendix M*),
- Having a thorough knowledge of the approved environment rating scales, the AIM HIGH Essential Elements and state licensing and registration regulations.
- Meeting the 60/40 percent formula for time spent on-site and on other activities. The Program Development Specialist is expected to be a mentor to the participating AIM HIGH programs and therefore must spend as much time on-site as possible and that the majority of their work time maintains the 60/40 formula. For a full-time Program Development Specialist, 60 percent of a regular 40-hour workweek equals 24 hours spent on-site. Under certain circumstances, the Program Development Specialist may adjust the percentage of work time to 55/45. This could include:
 - a) Ordering and processing materials ordered for AIM HIGH programs;
 - b) Establishing contacts with community resources;
 - c) Enrolling additional AIM HIGH programs and/or;
 - d) Attending workgroup meetings or professional development training.

The remaining 40 percent of a regular 40-hour workweek (16 hours) would be used for:

- a) Entering information for database entries;
- b) Maintaining files and other documentation;
- c) Staff meetings and;
- d) Telephone consultation and contact.

- Submitting a report of AIM HIGH Program status on a quarterly basis by e-mail to the Office of Child Development using AIM HIGH Performance Measures Quarterly Report (Excel Form *Appendix J*) ;
- Maintaining the AIM HIGH Master Filing System (*Appendix O*) and the Individual Program File Checklist (*Appendix P*);
- Using the standardized Program Contact Form to record all communications/site visit (*Appendix Q*);
- Entering all AIM HIGH data into the database on a bi-monthly basis;
- Submitting in each quarterly report, the following information:
 - a) Number of programs in self-study for accreditation
 - b) Number of programs that have applied for accreditation and are waiting for validation visits. Track how long it is before the visit happens.
 - c) Number of programs that have had validation visits and are waiting to receive notification. Track how long it takes to be notified;
- Compiling a journal entry (journal entry is the PDS's reflection of her/his work with programs) once a month;
- Acting in a professional manner including timeliness of appointments, compiling rating scale narratives, maintaining confidentiality and other requests for information;
- Before a level change is given to a program, a designated staff member (another PDS not assigned to the program or the TTAP Director) will visit the program to verify the change using the 3- or 4-STAR *Verification Tool* found in the On-Line Library.
- Working with the CYFD Child Care Services Bureau to coordinate and schedule annual joint visits and exit meetings with AIM HIGH programs as

well as completing and ensuring that the respective Child Care Licensing Office and the Office of Child Development has all the required documents (i.e. Final Notice of Verification for STAR Level *Appendix R*). This is important so that the Child Care Services Bureau can follow through on increasing the reimbursement rate. This may require follow-up communication by telephone, fax, email;

- Submit quarterly updates on program levels with a brief narrative description of status to the respective Child Care Licensing Supervisor.
- Networking with CYFD Family Nutrition Bureau, when appropriate;
- Attending all PDS trainings as required by CYFD;
- Meeting with the Office of Child Development and/or Child Care Services Bureau Child Care Licensing; and
- Adhering to the current CYFD AIM HIGH Guidelines.

The Office of Child Development estimates that it will take the PDS approximately 5 hours per classroom to complete the pre and post environmental rating scale. This does not include writing the narratives for each classroom. Annual visits should takes approximately 2 hours per classroom.

PROTOCOL FOR INTERACTION BETWEEN THE TTAP STAFF (AIM HIGH PDS's and STAR VERIFIERS) AND THE CHILD CARE SERVICES BUREAU, CHILD CARE LICENSING

To ensure ongoing communication with Licensing staff

Attend and participate in regular meetings with licensing staff. Objectives for these meetings are to:

- Build professional working relationships
- Establish a process for scheduling annual joint visits including exit meeting with provider
- Follow the protocol for completing the "Final Notice Verification for Star Level "form
- Provide updates on active AIM HIGH programs
- Discuss concerns, strategies, etc. on specific child care programs
- Obtain clarification of Child Care Licensing regulations procedures
- Clarify criteria and procedures of the AIM HIGH program, the Essential Elements or the verification process for non-AIM HIGH Programs
- Provide Child Care Licensing with a current list of approved trainers who are on the New Mexico Trainer Registry
- Report concerns/suggestions to the Office of Child Development and the Child Care Services Bureau

ACTIVE AIM HIGH PROGRAMS

This process is to be followed for active AIM HIGH programs who are working on attaining higher STAR levels:

1. As soon as an active AIM HIGH Program meets the criteria for a higher level, the Program Development Specialist will notify the regional child care licensing office by submitting the "Final Notice Verification for Star Level "form. **It is critical that this form be submitted to the Child Care Services Bureau licensing office immediately after the**

program achieves a new level. This is extremely important so that the programs subsidy reimbursement is not adversely affected.

2. The regional Child Care Licensing office will document the program's STAR level status as appropriate, making the required changes in the FACTS (CYFD information system) database.
3. The increase in the program's subsidy payment will be effective the first day of the month following the change in the FACTS database.

This process is to be followed for active AIM HIGH Programs after they have attained a 2-STAR, 3-STAR or 4-STAR license level:

1. If, during a licensing visit, the program does not appear to be meeting the current criteria for 2- STAR or 3-STAR or 4-STAR level, the Child Care Licensing Surveyor will make a referral to the appropriate Training and Technical Assistance Program.
2. The assigned AIM HIGH Program Development Specialist from the Training and Technical Assistance Program will visit the program to determine whether or not the program has maintained the STAR level criteria.
3. If the program has not maintained the level criteria, the program will receive a letter listing the criteria that has not been met and will be given information on the Reconsideration Process.

This process is to be followed for official Annual Joint Visits:

- On an annual basis, programs must apply to renew their STAR license through their Child Care licensing application with CYFD. The PDS who is assigned to an active AIM HIGH Program should not conduct the annual visit. The TTAP should assign a different PDS to conduct the annual visit.
- Annual visits should be arranged before hand with the assigned Child Care Licensing Surveyor.

- Programs will be asked to provide copies of all AIM HIGH required written documents for their current STAR Level - either 2-STAR, or 3-STAR or 4-STAR. (Appendix T is a checklist of the required documents for each level)
- The PDS will verify AIM HIGH criteria for 2-STAR or 3-STAR or 4-STAR using the *2-STAR, 3-STAR or 4-STAR Verification Tool* (Appendix V or W) through general observation of the environment, reviewing written lesson plans, observing teacher's responsiveness to children, reviewing assessment process and more.
- At the conclusion of the joint visit, the PDS, Child Care Licensing Surveyor and the Program/Site Director will meet to summarize the visit.
- If a program is currently maintaining their assigned level, the PDS will complete and submit the Final Notice of Verification for STAR Level *Appendix R* and a copy will be given to Child Care Licensing Surveyor, the program and placed in the program's file.
- If a program is not currently maintaining the criteria for their STAR license level, the program will receive a letter listing the criteria that has not been met and will be given information regarding the Reconsideration process.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

After the conclusion of the STAR verification process, a program may request reconsideration of the STAR status if it is determined that the program is not meeting the requirements for the STAR level requested or if they are not maintaining the criteria for their current STAR level. In order to request reconsideration, this completed form and the other required documents (#1 below) must be submitted to the Office of Child Development.

Program Name (On License): _____

Program Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Fax Number: _____

Name of Contact Person: _____

Reconsideration Process:

1. The program completes and submits this form to the Director of the Office of Child Development within ten (10) working days of receipt of the attached letter. In addition, the program must attach written grounds for the reconsideration request. Please limit this to no more than two type-written pages, double-spaced on 8 ½" x 11" paper. You may also include any additional documentation (photographs, receipts, documentation of training etc.) that shows what steps your program has taken to meet the STAR criteria.
2. The Office of Child Development will request written and photographic documents from the Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance Program (TTAP) that pertain to your program's initial STAR verification process. These are the same documents that were shared with you during the verification process.
3. Upon receipt and review of the Request for Reconsideration form, and supporting documents, the Director of the Office of Child Development will:
 - determine that the program has taken sufficient action to meet the STAR criteria and will notify the Child Care Services Bureau; or
 - arrange for an on-site visit to be conducted.
4. If an on-site visit is conducted and it is determined that the program meets the STAR criteria, notification will be provided to the Child Care Services Bureau, Child Care Licensing and any future child care subsidy payments will be adjusted to the new STAR license level for those programs who are moving to a higher STAR level or the subsidy payment will remain the same for those programs who are maintaining their STAR criteria.
5. If it is determined that the program is still not meeting the criteria, the Director of the Office of Child Development will schedule a meeting with the program. The Office of Child Development will designate the participants, date, time and place where the meeting will be held. Representative/s from the TTAP may also be present at the meeting.
6. At the meeting, the program will have the opportunity to make an oral presentation. Please limit the oral presentation to 30 minutes. Documentation related to the verification may be referred to at the meeting.

7. Within ten (10) working days of the meeting, the Director of the Office of Child Development shall send the program a written statement advising of the action and the basis for the action on the reconsideration. Decisions rendered by the Office of Child Development will be final.

Name of Person Submitting Application
Title of Person Submitting Application

Signature of Person Submitting Application

Date _____

CYFD/Office of Child Development
PERA Building, Room 111
PO Drawer 5160
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-5160

Phone: 505-827-7946
Fax: 505-476-0490

State of New Mexico
CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT

BILL RICHARDSON
GOVERNOR



DORIAN DODSON
CABINET SECRETARY

DIANE DENISH
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

BILL DUNBAR

Date: _____

Dear Provider,

As a result of the STAR verification process, it was determined that your program has not met the AIM HIGH *Essential Elements of Quality* criteria corresponding to the STAR level you requested. It has been determined that your program is operating at a _____ STAR level.

If you agree with this determination, you have several options:

- You can remain at the current STAR license level and child care subsidy payments will remain at the current STAR license level, or
- You may work to obtain the higher STAR license by working on meeting the criteria on your own and after six months request to go through the verification process again. The child care subsidy payments will remain at the current STAR license level, or
- You may work to obtain the higher STAR license level by applying to join the AIM HIGH Program. Please be aware that in order to participate in AIM HIGH, your program must have a 2-STAR license, And, in some areas of the state, there is a waiting list of programs wanting to participate in the AIM HIGH Program. During the time you are working on obtaining the higher STAR license, child care subsidy payments will remain at the current STAR license level.

If you do not agree with these options, you may request a reconsideration of the STAR determination. Information regarding the reconsideration process is attached to this letter.

The AIM HIGH *Essential Elements of Quality* are the criteria used for 2-STAR, 3-STAR, or 4-STAR license levels. You may obtain a copy of the AIM HIGH *Essential Elements of Quality* and the STAR verification tools at www.NewMexicoKids.org or through your local Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance Program,

Sincerely,

Dan Haggard
Director
Office of Child Development

State of New Mexico
CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT

BILL RICHARDSON
GOVERNOR



DORIAN DODSON
CABINET SECRETARY

DIANE DENISH
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
Date: _____

BILL DUNBAR

Dear Provider,

As a result of the STAR verification process, it was determined that your program has not maintained the AIM HIGH *Essential Elements of Quality* criteria corresponding to your current STAR level. It has been determined that your program is operating at a _____ STAR level.

If you agree with this determination, you have several options:

- You can remain at the lower STAR license level and any future child care subsidy payments will be adjusted to the new STAR license level, and/or
- You may work on your own to meet the criteria and regain the previous STAR license. When your program has corrected the criteria that was cited as not being met you may request in six months to go through the verification process again. During the time you are working on regaining the previous STAR license, child care subsidy payments will be adjusted to the new lower STAR license level, and/or
- You may work to regain the previous STAR license level by applying to join the AIM HIGH Program. Please be aware that in order to participate in AIM HIGH, your program must have a 2-STAR license. And, in some areas of the state, there is a waiting list of programs wanting to participate in the AIM HIGH Program. During the time you are working on regaining the previous STAR license, child care subsidy payments will be adjusted to the new lower STAR license level.

If you do not agree with these options, you may request a reconsideration of the STAR determination. Information regarding the reconsideration process is attached to this letter.

Please be aware if through the reconsideration process, the STAR determination is upheld, you will still have the right to appeal the drop in the child care subsidy rate payment as specified in 8.15.2.22 of the Requirements for Child Care Assistance Programs for Clients and Child Care Providers regulations.

If you do agree that your program has not maintained the AIM HIGH *Essential Elements of Quality* criteria corresponding to your current STAR level, and you do understand that child care subsidy payments will be adjusted to the new lower STAR license sign below acknowledging you understand the results of accepting this determination.

I _____ do understand that child care subsidy payments will be adjusted to a _____ STAR license.

Signature

Date

Sincerely,

Dan Haggard
Director
Office of Child Development

The AIM HIGH *Essential Elements of Quality* are the criteria used for 2-STAR, 3-STAR, or 4-STAR license levels. You may obtain a copy of the AIM HIGH *Essential Elements of Quality* and the STAR verification tools at www.NewMexicoKids.org or through your local Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance Program,

NON-AIM HIGH PROGRAMS

REFER TO VERIFICATION FLOW CHART

SUPPORT OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Maintain open communication and search for opportunities to support programs that have reached their desired level and graduated from AIM HIGH with services such as free training, emergency technical assistance and program observation.

Time spent with graduated programs is counted within the 60 percent of on-site time and should be documented under "contacts" in the graduated program's file on the database.

The Office Of Child Development will support the development of mentoring groups to support participating and graduate AIM HIGH programs with on-going guidance from the PDS when required. Members of the mentoring group will be directors of graduate AIM HIGH programs.

If an AIM HIGH graduate program who is accredited and loses their accreditation status, the TTAP will assign a PDS to determine the STAR level the program is currently meeting. Once this determination is made, the PDS will notify the Child Care Services Bureau and submit the necessary documents.

EVALUATION OF AIM HIGH

Each TTAP must participate in an external evaluation and conduct internal self-evaluation of the AIM HIGH program. The results of the evaluation are due to the Office of Child Development by the end of the second quarter. The evaluation should be based on the AIM HIGH program's previous year. The TTAP Network Office will develop, publish, and disseminate the results of the external evaluation.

Forms

Most forms can be downloaded from NewMexicoKids.org AIM HIGH Library or obtained by contacting the Office of Child Development.

	Page
APPENDIX A – List of TTAPs.....	5
APPENDIX B – AIM HIGH Essential Elements.....	5
APPENDIX C – Child Care Licensing Regulations	6
APPENDIX D – Child Care Assistance Regulations)	6
APPENDIX E – CYFD Parent Guide (Developed by the Child Care Services Bureau.....	6
APPENDIX F – AIM HIGH Eligibility Form	9
APPENDIX G – CYFD Subsidy Reimbursement Rate Chart.....	10
APPENDIX H – AIM HIGH Application Form	10
APPENDIX I – AIM HIGH Score Sheet.....	10
APPENDIX J – AIM HIGH Performance Measures Quarterly Report.....	10/11/19
APPENDIX K – AIM HIGH Agreement Form	12
APPENDIX L – AIM HIGH Action Plan Form.....	13/16
APPENDIX M – PDS Qualifications.....	8/18
APPENDIX N – Rating Scale Narratives	13
APPENDIX O – AIM HIGH Master Filing System	19
APPENDIX P – Individual Program File Checklist.....	19
APPENDIX Q – Program Contact Form	19
APPENDIX R – Final Notice Verification For Star Level.....	20/23/24
APPENDIX S – AIM HIGH Quarterly Update for Licensing	19
APPENDIX T – Checklist of Required Documents.....	23
APPENDIX U – 2-STAR Verification Tool	23
APPENDIX V– 3-STAR Verification Tool	23
APPENDIX W – 4-STAR Verification Tool.....	23

CONTRACTOR LIST

Eastern New Mexico University
Station 11 FCS Department
Portales, New Mexico 88130
(505) 562-2953
Contact: Michelle Terry

Family Resource and Referral, Inc.
P. O. Box 3038
Roswell, New Mexico 88202
(505) 623-94338
Contact: Katie Harton

New Mexico State University
755 South Telshor Suite 201B
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88011
(505) 527-1149
Contact: Gloria Gonzales

San Juan College
4601 College Blvd.
Farmington, New Mexico 87402
(505) 566-3207
Contact: Lyn Garrison

Santa Fe Community College
6401 Richards Road
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505
(505) 428-1344
Contact: Leigh Fernandez

University of New Mexico @ Taos
1335 Gusdorf Rd., Suite Q
Taos, New Mexico 87571
(505) 758-1395
Contact: Brandy Corry

YWCA - Cariño
210 Truman NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87108
(505) 265-8565
Contact: Malisa Kasparian

Western New Mexico University
P. O. Box 680
Silver City, New Mexico 88061
(505) 538-6801
Contact: Terry Anderson