

AIM HIGH ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS AT A GLANCE

Voluntary: Not Required for Basic Licensure

<p style="text-align: center;">2-Star* (AIM HIGH Level Two) <i>Programs must meet all Child Care Licensing Regulations plus:</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3-Star (AIM HIGH Level Three)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">4-Star (AIM HIGH Level Four)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5-Star (AIM HIGH Level Five)</p>
<p>2A) <u>Staff Qualifications, Evaluation and Communication</u></p> <p><u>Staff Qualifications</u>—All staff members working directly with children must have a high school diploma or equivalent (GED) by July 1, 2008.</p> <p><u>Staff Evaluation</u>—No requirements for this level.</p> <p><u>Staff Communication</u>—No requirements for this level.</p>	<p>3A) <u>Staff Qualifications, Evaluation and Communication</u>. Continue meeting requirements for Level Two plus:</p> <p><u>Staff Qualifications</u></p> <p>a) 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.</p> <p>b) 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 the career lattice.</p> <p><u>Staff Evaluation</u>—No requirements for this level.</p> <p><u>Staff Communication</u>—No requirements for this level.</p>	<p>4A) <u>Staff Qualifications, Evaluation and Communication</u></p> <p><u>Staff Qualifications</u>—Continue meeting requirements for Levels Two and Three. No additional requirements for this level.</p> <p><u>Staff Evaluation</u></p> <p>a) A tool, which includes criteria for evaluation and the process of evaluation for staff at least on an annual basis;</p> <p>b) A plan for staff improvement for each staff member, if appropriate, based on evaluation results.</p> <p><u>Staff Communication</u></p> <p>a) Meetings are held on a regular basis, at least quarterly;</p> <p>b) Staff participation in developing agendas;</p> <p>c) Evidence that meeting provides a safe environment where staff members can ask questions, present alternative ideas, and share feelings.</p>	<p>5A) <u>Staff Qualifications, Evaluation and Communication</u></p> <p>Continue meeting requirements for Levels Two, Three and Four. No additional requirements for this level.</p>
<p>2B) <u>Environment</u></p> <p>a) Noisy and quiet areas are arranged so that children's activities can be sustained with out interruption.</p> <p>b) Materials are organized by type and, where appropriate, are labeled with words or pictures. Unused materials are stored in inaccessible storage.</p> <p>c) Centers of interest are placed near needed resources (e.g., art area is near water supply).</p> <p>d) Traffic patterns prevent children from continually interrupting one another.</p> <p>e) Floor surface is suitable for activities that will occur in each center</p> <p>f) No one's on the appropriate rating scale. See list of rating scales in Element 3B.</p>	<p>3B) <u>Environment</u> –Continue meeting Level Two requirements plus:</p> <p>a) Evidence that materials and equipment are rotated on a regular basis to conform to curriculum goals.</p> <p>b) Staff of the program are very familiar with the rating instrument and feel confident that they will score an average score of four with no ones.</p> <p>c) Evaluation of program's environment requires the completion of a post rating scale*, scoring an average of 4 with no one's.</p> <p>*See list of environment rating scales in Element 3B.</p>	<p>4B) <u>Environment</u>—Continue meeting requirements for Levels Two and Three plus:</p> <p>a) Outdoor space has some protection from the elements;</p> <p>b) Outdoor space has some play interest centers (refer to page 36 of the Essential Elements for a detailed list);</p> <p>c) Opportunities to develop motor skills.</p>	<p>5B) <u>Environment</u>—Continue meeting requirements for Levels Two, Three and Four. No additional requirements for this level.</p>

<p>2C) Curriculum and Assessment of Children Progress—no requirements for this level.</p>	<p>3C) Curriculum and Assessment of Children's Progress</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a written curriculum that represents: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Consistency between the mission and philosophy statement, short-range and long-range goals. b) Knowledge of child development (i.e., the curriculum is developmentally appropriate) c) Facilitation of all areas of development; d) Variety of learning experiences; e) Variety of materials that range from simple to complex; f) Meaningful content (i.e., it is worth knowing for the children involved); g) Active engagement of children; h) Opportunities to make choices; i) Opportunities to experiment and explore; j) Integrates foundations for the following content areas (math, science, social studies, language arts/literacy, health, fine arts); k) Large blocks of time for discovery and child-initiated learning activities; l) A balance of active/quiet, individual/small group/large group activities and indoor/outdoor time; m) Emphasis on the value of social interaction through peer learning; n) Protection of children's psychological safety. 2. Staff implements the beginning stages of the items listed above (a-k). 3. Research and choose an assessment instrument. Staff receives training on how to observe children, and on the use of the assessment instrument. 4. Develop and implement an observation and assessment process (i.e. anecdotal observations or a developmental checklist) for individual curriculum and program planning. 5. Describe how the program will communicate assessment information with families. 6. 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 teacher(s) and teaching/learning strategies used. 	<p>4C) Curriculum and Assessment of Children's Progress—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; b) Continued use of assessment information and child observations for individual curriculum and program planning (evidence that the program ties assessment of children to curriculum); c) Reflection of on-going implementation demonstrated in classroom environment; d) Broad range of content; e) Variety of instructional strategies; f) Sequencing of activities from simple to complex; g) Support for children's thinking, reasoning, decision-making, and problem-solving; h) Evidence that each child's language and culture are integral components of the daily program; i) Evidence of child participation in planning activities and developing program rules and routines; j) Evidence that adults challenge children just beyond their current level of development (scaffold their learning); k) Documentation verifying at least a 3 months history of curriculum planning and preferably a year's history of planning. 	<p>5C) Curriculum and Assessment of Children's Progress—Continue meeting requirements for Levels Three and Four. No additional requirements for this level.</p>
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<p>2D) <u>Staff Professional Development Plan</u></p> <p>a) Development of a written plan for on-going professional development for each staff member, including the director. See sample forms in Element 2D.</p>	<p>3D) <u>Staff Professional Development Plan</u> – Continue meeting Level Two requirements plus:</p> <p>a) 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>4D) <u>Staff Professional Development Plan</u></p> <p>a) Evidence that individual professional development plans established at Levels 2 & 3 are progressing for each staff member, including the director.</p> <p>b) Evidence of career guidance to ensure that all training contributes to program and individual goals.</p>	<p>5D) <u>Staff Professional Development Plan</u>—Continue meeting requirements for Levels Two, Three and Four. No additional requirements for this level.</p>
<p>2E) <u>Family Involvement Plan</u></p> <p>a) Statement supportive of family involvement is incorporated into the parent handbook that includes an open door policy to a child’s classroom.</p>	<p>3E) <u>Family Involvement Plan</u>—Continue meeting Level Two requirements plus: Provide at least two family involvement activities including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion Box, Parent Bulletin Board, Newsletter; • Parent meetings, Socials, Informational Workshops, Minimum of one activity that encourages male participation • Child developmental milestone information, Parent/Staff Conferences • Classroom and/or Field Trip volunteer, Support of program operation • Daily (written) communication system between parent and teacher. 	<p>4E) <u>Family Involvement Plan</u>—Continue meeting requirements for Levels Two and Three plus: Provide at least three family involvement activities (review list in Element 3E).</p>	<p>5E) <u>Family Involvement Plan</u>—Continue meeting requirements for Levels Two, Three and Four. No additional requirements for this level.</p>
<p>2F) <u>Administrative Policies--Financial Policies and Procedures and Operational Evaluation</u></p> <p><u>Financial Policies and Procedures</u>—no requirement for this level.</p> <p><u>Operational Evaluation</u>—no requirement for this level.</p>	<p>3F) <u>Administrative Policies--Financial Policies and Procedures and Operational Evaluation</u></p> <p><u>Financial Policies and Procedures</u></p> <p>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.</p> <p><u>Operational Evaluation</u>—no requirements for this level.</p>	<p>4F) <u>Administrative Policies--Financial Policies and Procedures and Operational Evaluation</u></p> <p><u>Financial Policies and Procedures</u>—Continue meeting Level Two requirements. No additional requirements for this level.</p> <p><u>Operational Evaluation</u></p> <p>a) A written plan for a process that is comprehensive and includes all aspects of the program’s operations, is on-going and occurs on a regular basis; b) A plan for using evaluation results for program improvement; c) Exit interviews with all staff who terminate, with feedback incorporated into program planning/evaluation.</p>	<p>5F) <u>Administrative Policies--Financial Policies and Procedures and Operational Evaluation</u></p> <p><u>Financial Policies and Procedures</u>—Continue meeting Level Two requirements. No additional requirements for this level.</p> <p><u>Operational Evaluation</u>—Continue meeting Level Four requirements. No additional requirements for this level.</p>

<p>2G) <u>Employee Compensation and Benefits</u></p> <p>a) Development of a compensation philosophy statement that is incorporated into the personnel handbook.</p>	<p>3G) <u>Employee Compensation and Benefits</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and implement an incremental compensation plan that includes tangible recognition and salaries. 2. Provide at least three employee benefits including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment of individual professional membership or association fee • Insurance supplement • Paid Leave (sick, vacation, personal, maternal, parental or bereavement) • Monetary bonuses • Insurance (health, life accident, disabilities, dental or vision) • Work release time to attend professional development 	<p>4G) <u>Employee Compensation and Benefits</u>—Continue meeting Level Two and Three requirements plus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to implement an incremental compensation plan that includes tangible recognition and salaries. 2. Program must provide at least four employee benefits (review list on Element 3G). 	<p>5G) <u>Employee Compensation and Benefits</u>—Continue meeting requirements for Levels Three and 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>Licensed Centers:</p> <p>Center in which children are grouped by age:</p> <table style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td>6 weeks through 24 months</td><td>1:5</td></tr> <tr><td>2 years</td><td>1:8</td></tr> <tr><td>3 years</td><td>1:10</td></tr> <tr><td>4 years</td><td>1:10</td></tr> <tr><td>5 years</td><td>1:12</td></tr> <tr><td>6 years</td><td>1:12</td></tr> </table> <p>Centers in which age groups are combined:</p> <table style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td>6 weeks through 24 months</td><td>1:5</td></tr> <tr><td>2,3 and 4 years</td><td>1:10</td></tr> <tr><td>3,4 and 5 years</td><td>1:12</td></tr> <tr><td>6 years</td><td>1:12</td></tr> </table> <p>Maximum group size:</p> <table style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td>6 weeks through 24 months</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>2 years</td><td>16</td></tr> <tr><td>3, 4, and 5 year</td><td>24</td></tr> <tr><td>6 years and up</td><td>24</td></tr> </table> <p>Licensed Homes:</p> <p>1:6 for programs licensed for 6 children 2:12 for programs licensed for 12 children</p>	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	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	6 weeks through 24 months	10	2 years	16	3, 4, and 5 year	24	6 years and up	24	<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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		Licensed School-age Programs Group size does not exceed 24	1:12
<p>2) Accreditation—No requirement for this level.</p>	<p>3) Accreditation—No requirement for this level.</p>	<p>4) Accreditation—No requirement at this level.</p>	<p>5) Accreditation through a nationally recognized accrediting body approved by the Office of Child Development Board through demonstration that their accreditation significantly matches standards set by the NAEYC Academy of Early Childhood Program Accreditation.</p>
<p>*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.</p>			