

QUALITY STANDARDS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION (ECCE)



**MINISTRY OF WOMEN
AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

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Quality Standards for ECCE

Approach and Structure of the Framework

The Quality Standards framework identifies the key principles, indicators and exemplary good practices required for assuring quality in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) services. Defining these standards will allow for the progress towards self - assessment, accreditation and finally certification of ECCE provisions. The framework allows programmes to assess quality, and identify the possible lacunae that need to be addressed if quality ECCE is to be provided.

The main purpose of this document is to provide a framework that will assess the implementation of the ECCE programmes across the country and assist the ECCE centres and service providers in developing and maintaining dynamic quality programmes that reflect the objectives, the programme standards and practices of the ECCE policy. It provides an opportunity for the authorities to ensure on a regular basis that the standards and practices of the programmes are being maintained. The Quality Standards framework does not seek to appraise or assess individual teachers or students. ECCE programmes are not static systems; they are essentially evolutionary, requiring adjustment and development in the light of experience. It will be successful in achieving its aims only if multiple stakeholders are involved in the process: ECCE teachers, programme coordinators, administrators and other staff, students, parents, community members.

The framework aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvements in the care and education services in the ECCE sector by proposing three distinct but interlinked sections:

- The Quality Standards Framework
- The Key Standards of Quality with Elements
- Indicative Assessment Tools for grading and accreditation as a reference.

Section-1: The Quality Standards Framework

1.1 Preamble

The quality standards are being framed for ECCE centres across all sectors. These are applicable to all ECCE provisions that cater to care, learning and developmental needs of young children from birth – 6 years. To enable smooth transition to primary schools as well as continue the provision and quality of services, the early primary education will also need to consider the guidelines laid in the present document.

The quality standards adhere to the philosophy of integrated approach for holistic child development, of which both early stimulation and education are an integral part. The present framework is set in the context of the National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy and National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education. It is informed by the National Curriculum Framework Position Paper on ECCE, 2005 and other national and international work on developing minimum specifications and quality standards for ECCE.

It lays down norms and standards relating *inter alia* to building and infrastructure; pupil- teacher interaction; learning experiences planned for children; parent involvement. The framework does not merely indicate the norms, but a systemic revamp that encompasses the vision of holistic child development opportunities for all children attending any kind of ECCE provision.

This quality criterion states upfront the following **non-negotiable indicators** which must be made available to all children (birth to six years) attending any kind of ECCE provision:

Non- Negotiable Indicators

- An ECCE programme of 4 hours duration with snack/break time of half an hour
- 1 classroom measuring at least 35 square meters (carpet area) for a group of 30 children and availability of adequate (at least 30 square meters) outdoor space for a group of 30 children
- Adequately trained staff
- Age and developmentally appropriate, child centric curriculum transacted in the mother tongue/local vernacular
- Adequate developmentally appropriate toys and learning materials
- The building should be structurally safe and within easy approach. It should be clean and should have surrounding green area
- Adequate and safe drinking water
- Adequate and separate child-friendly toilets and hand wash facilities for girls and boys
- Separate space allocated for cooking nutritionally balanced meals and nap time for children
- Immediate health service in terms of First Aid/ Medical Kit available at the centre
- The adult/ caregiver: child ratio of 1:20 for 3-6 year old children and 1:10 for under 3s should be available at the ECCE Centre. Children should not be unattended at any given point of time.

It must be noted that these **minimum norms/ non negotiable indicators** for any ECCE centre do not equate with quality services. ECCE Centres would be encouraged to exceed mere compliance with these minimum norms and make continuous improvement to attain the desirable elements and indicators specified in the quality standards framework.

1.2 Current Situation

At present, in India, as in many other countries, there is a great diversity in the nature of programmes available for ECCE. The number of players in the field is ever increasing; this multiplicity of service providers has led to diverse models of ECCE entering the field, bringing with them a multitude of philosophies of childhood and education, often without examining the cultural and contextual relevance of the models. However, there is no certain qualification for an individual to enter the field of ECCE, and there have hardly been any attempts made to lay down some guidelines to ensure that the ECCE services offered are of acceptable quality and serve the best interests of the young child. At times, many of these ECCE provisions are detrimental rather than being beneficial to the young child.

Therefore, it follows as a logical corollary to set some acceptable standards for ECCE in order to ensure improved quality across all the programmes and provisions available to the young children across the country.

1.3 Rationale

The drive to improve access to ECCE with equity and inclusion is being accompanied by a parallel focus in addressing the issues of quality. There is a need to know how well the children and families are being served. Thus, the purpose of the Quality Framework is to provide directives regarding areas known to be important for ensuring the optimum developmental opportunities for children. It also involves developing appropriate support mechanisms to ensure that quality is achieved and maintained.

The Standards, Elements and Indicators in this framework are crucial to:

- Promote, reinforce and safeguard quality services for all young children
- Encourage ECCE centres to pursue excellence
- Provide a basis for assessing and where required, rating the effectiveness of an ECCE centre
- Establishing systems to enable learning, self development and improved performance.
- Promote professionalism in the field

1.4 Underlying Principles

The following principles form the cornerstones for the quality standards being laid in this document:

- **Developmentally/ age appropriate services:** Every child has the need and right to positive experiences in early childhood. Services and programmes for children from birth-six years have to be developed keeping in mind the developmental abilities .i.e. developmental domains, developmental tasks, needs and interests of the child. It is expected that best practices is exhibited in the provisions of care and education services.
- **Ensuring holistic development of children:** Pedagogies used in ECCE programmes should emphasize the holistic development of the young child, also keeping in mind the needs of special children. Both care and education are important, and the linkages between them need to be explored and drawn on. Interlinkages across domains should also be addressed as the domains of development are not exclusive to each other.
- **Relevant to the child's context:** The pedagogy should reflect the learning of the child in his/her context. Transactions should be based on understanding of the context of the child, the socio-economic background and the constraints of the family.
- **Partnership with family and community:** It is important to recognize the family as the first context where learning and development for all children takes place. The family and parents are of paramount importance in the delivery of ECCE programmes and services. While respecting the role of parents it is necessary to support the family and develop a harmonious relationship with them to ensure optimum development of children.
- **The centrality of the child's learning in the environment:** The child is an active agent in learning, and this has to be encouraged and facilitated in order to allow him/her to develop his/her full potential. The child should be free to make choices, explore and experiment, for which the child should be provided with such opportunities in the surroundings. The voices of the children, along with the voice of the special children, need to be listened to, in order to ensure that their interests are being met by the practitioners, researchers, teachers, professionals and various stakeholders.
- **Equity, Inclusion, Diversity:** All children should have access to, and participate in and benefit from early years services. Quality ECCE programmes should value and respect diversity of all kinds – cultural, linguistic, caste, gender, class, ability etc. Quality programmes

should promote a sense of belonging among children from varied cultural contexts, different socio-economic backgrounds and different abilities. Programmes should embrace diversity by introducing variety of rich and varied experiences, thus allowing children to value and respect diversity.

- **Role of Adults:** The competencies, dispositions, qualifications and experiences of adults are essential in supporting and ensuring quality services for children. Their fundamental role in ECCE programme and most importantly in the life of the young child needs to be adequately acknowledged, supported and respected.

The approach of Quality Standards framework is informed by the principle that quality is a multifaceted concept, and in this context relates to the distinguishing nature of attributes of early child care and education programmes. Quality assurance is an ongoing process of building and sustaining quality of ECCE programmes by assessing, anticipating, and fulfilling stated and implied needs. It should be seen as a dynamic and a continuous process and not an end in itself, wherein organisations move towards optimum level by adopting a cumulative approach towards quality improvement. This would lead to continuous improvement in the services offered by centres in a manner that meets the needs of the young child and promote equitable quality. A graded approach will be adopted wherein the essential criteria will be laid down in a graded and weighted form.

1.5 Systemic Requirement

The 'quality standards' is not a standalone exercise. It is supported by an enabling environment, with genesis of associated National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy; National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education. It would also require an aligned system of supportive supervision; teacher education framework and professional support for ECCE personnel.

The quality systems and process for standards would be established under the National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Council. National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Council would play a leading role in defining and promoting 'quality ECCE'. It will be a national organisation under the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, with members selected from a range of sectors within the field of child development like Higher Learning Institutions; professionals and members from civil society for carrying out all the key activities in order to establish best practices and ensure consistently high standards of service.

The Council would be the apex body to guide and oversee the implementation of the National ECCE Policy as well as advice and guide ECCE programmes, consistent with the National ECCE Policy/ legislations etc. The Council will be establishing systems and guidelines for the external evaluation of the centres. The formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring will be established under the Council. The Council will ensure capacity building of human resources who can become quality advisors and accreditors. A support framework to encourage compliance with quality standards by ECCE providers, reflective practitioners will be developed.

1.6 Accreditation

Accreditation is defined as a process by which a recognized organization establishes standards for services. It helps to ensure that care, educational and support processes have synergy to provide for a holistic and optimal development of the child. Accreditation within the purview of this document is the evaluation of the quality standards of the infrastructure and processes that support ECCE practices and follows a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) methodology. Accreditation is awarded, after carrying out structured assessment of compliance to the accreditation standard.

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) approach states that 'Quality improvement is the disciplined use of evidence-based quantitative and qualitative methods to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, equity, timeliness or safety of service delivery processes and systems (inclusive of the human resources within that system) toward the pursuit of better services or outcomes for 'users' or customers of the system'. The key features of the quality improvement process are:

- focus on system outcomes for a defined population of beneficiaries, as well as the processes that lead to these results
- focus on system performance, inclusive of processes and outcomes, essential to improvement work
- Integrating quality improvement at different levels of the organization.
- the ability to 'see the system' and the frequency of quality improvement work
- The capacity to measure and track key processes and outcomes.
- Specific and coherent methodology to improve system services and processes.
- The extent of contextualization within a system of work processes.

Standards and Elements

The standard focuses on establishing systems to enable learning, self development and improved performance. It provides a framework to plan, establish, operate, monitor and improve care and educational service. It encourages ECCE centres to pursue continual excellence. The standard is non- prescriptive; but its compliance is in conjunction with the applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. The standard can be adapted

- as a self improvement tool,
- for third party accreditation/certification,
- by statutory and regulatory authorities.

There are several benefits of accreditation to different stakeholders. Parents and children benefit as it assures improved quality of care and education; organized ECCE system for better day to day experience for children and parents and a feedback system to get child and parent's issues addressed. The ECCE centre benefits by enhancing its capability for delivering quality care and education, improvement in the system/process and a viable model to run an ECCE centre. In the process of achieving goals and objectives and moving ahead, it aims to establish centre of excellence and continuous improvement. Furthermore, it motivates the staff, continuous professional development, improved work environment and a quality work culture to be proud of.

In view of the same, a set of standards have been devised to ensure that all kinds of ECCE programmes run by public, private, civil society or any other bodies follows certain kind of quality. Based on these standards, the ECCE centres are to be reviewed and then accredited by an appointed body. The focus is to move ahead from just the minimum norms/ indicators to continuously strive towards higher standards.

1.7 Quality Standards and Framework

Standard I	Standard II	Standard III	Standard IV
Interaction	Health, Nutrition, Personal Care and Routine	Protective Care and Safety	Infrastructure/ Physical Environment
Caregiver/ ECCE Teacher-child interaction Child - child interaction Child – environment interaction Staff- family/ parent interaction Intra staff interaction	Health (check-up, first aid, immunization, handling illness) Nutrition Hygiene Habit formation	Adult supervision Socio/Emotional protection Physical safety	Space, building, outdoors Aesthetics, cleanliness, green area Safety and approach Water facility Toilet facility
Standard V	Standard VI	Standard VII	Standard VIII
Organization and Management	Children experiences and learning opportunities	Assessment and outcome measures	Managing to support quality System
Programme philosophy and methods Documentation and records Programme planning Parent involvement Financial management (fee, salary, fund allocation) Staffing(adequacy, professional qualifications, professional development)	Provide opportunities for exploration, experimentation Encourage child to make choices and participate in play Foster child's language and literacy abilities Develop problem solving and mathematical abilities Promote each child's physical abilities Nurture development and maintenance of relationships Cultivate enjoyment of and participation in expressive art	Assessment methods Assessment reporting Facilitating development through assessment Staff assessment and Development Programme assessment	Caregiver/ ECCE Teacher education and on site professional development Monitoring and supportive supervision Research

1.8. Process of Registration, Accreditation and Certification

The process of accreditation may take following steps for the certification:

- Establishment of a national registration system for all ECCE service providers where in it would be mandatory for all ECCE Centres to **register** with the respective authorities, (State, Regional, and National) or as may be prescribed from time to time. .
- Appropriate mechanisms would be evolved and adopted for certification, adherence to the quality standards and handling violations.
- While mechanisms would be laid down the process would involve three important stages as follows.
 - ✓ **Centre Self Evaluation:** This is the first phase which will happen when ECCE centre conduct regular, rigorous, professional self - assessment of their ways of working and the outcomes they obtain as a result. The responses to the self study should be the outcomes of discussions and of reflections on the evidence gathered in the process.
 - ✓ **Centre Improvement Plan:** This is the second phase which will happen when, based on their findings through the self assessment which will reveal both the strength and weakness of their systems, the leadership establishes priorities for development, make formative action plans that will span for a time period and implement them in a planned and phased manner.
 - ✓ **External Assessment:** This is the last phase of the developmental cycle and will happen when the ECCE centres are ready; they request an external assessment by the ECCE Council. The practitioner would fill the self-assessment tool and deposit along with supportive documents to the Council. The centres must comply with the requirements of the accreditation process and should fulfil the requirements related to each standard.
 - ✓ This would be followed by an examination of the deposited form to verify the contents and assess if the practitioner follows the essential requirements. In case it does, the ECCE Council will organize/arrange a visit the ECCE centre for an inspection to ensure compliance with the regulations prescribed for assessment and accreditation.
 - ✓ The valuator would visit the ECCE Centres; interview the teachers/caregivers, other staff and parents; make observations and validate the processes of self evaluation, verify the improvement plans made and outcomes achieved through the centre improvement plan and offer feedback to each centre. The visit aims to be diagnostic and constructively critical, supporting the centre's self evaluation processes, informing

the ECCE centre's activities, and assisting effective management and allocation of resources.

- The National ECCE Council will allocate/assign responsibility through multidisciplinary support teams and develop guiding material and best practices publication for mentoring the ECCE programmes to become quality service providers.
- Periodic reviews would be taken up on cyclic basis.

Section 2: The Key Standards of Quality with Elements

The quality standards form the core of the present framework. Eight key standards are proposed herewith, along with elements under each standard for further unpacking of the details within each standard. Each element has indicators which further details out what the elements might look like in everyday practice and way each program would be required to use it as essential requirements. The indicators provided below are not exhaustive. The assessment tool will further have critical areas and graded levels under each element that make quality indicators measureable and assessable, to make the quality standards operational.

The ECCE centres will be assessed and granted weighted grades according to the element and respective indicators of the quality standard.

STANDARD I: INTERACTION

STANDARD I	INTERACTION
Teacher/Adult- Child Interaction	Teacher greets every child on arrival & departure.
	Children greet the teacher on arrival & departure.
	All children are treated equally and with respect, affection and care.
	Caregivers do not use physical punishment or verbal abuse to discipline children.
	Caregivers appreciate the cultural/ social and religious diversity of the children and promote tolerance and unity.
	Caregivers/teachers demonstrate sensitivity & awareness regarding needs of children with special needs.
	Children with special needs are encouraged and enabled to participate in the learning environment.
	Children approach the teachers/ caregivers freely at any time.
	ECCE Teachers/Caregivers do not demonstrate any bias related to gender, caste or class.
	Caregivers encourage children to think, reason, question and experiment during the day.
	Meaningful interaction with their teachers during meal/snack time.
Child- Child Interaction	Children show empathy and healthy assertiveness.
	Meaningful interaction between peers during meal/snack time.
	Positive communication and mutual respect is encouraged among all children including children with special needs, from different background etc.
	Children are encouraged to negotiate and resolve conflicts peacefully with adult intervention and guidance where necessary.
	Encouragement of social interaction among children during play
Child- Environmental/material Interaction	Availability of varieties of equipment/ materials for indoor learning/play activities
	Access and usage of age appropriate books and other related learning materials and adapted to children's developmental needs.
	Opportunities provided for children to explore materials, use in learning concepts, develop and practice skills.
	Opportunities given to play with things available in nature.

	Locally made learning materials available and used by children.
	Children can access the play and learning material freely
	Children take care of the material and put the material back at the designated spot
Staff – family Interaction	Teachers/ caregivers visit children’s homes to maintain good relationship with parents/ family members.
	Teachers/ caregivers have regular meetings with parents, conduct parenting education sessions and take feedback from the parents.
	Teacher/ Caregiver provide relevant information about child nurturing and parenting based on cultural context.
Intra Staff Interaction	All staff members interact, collaborate and support each other as a team.
	Staff development activities are conducted and effective ideas for working with parents are shared.
	Staff members are respectful and maintain high ethical standards.

**STANDARD II
HEALTH, NUTRITION,
PERSONAL CARE
AND ROUTINE**

STANDARD II	HEALTH NUTRITION, PERSONAL CARE AND ROUTINE
Health (check-up, first aid, immunization, handling illness)	Children's height and weight is measured regularly to identify malnourished children.
	Children are immunized at regular intervals and records maintained.
	Routine health check-ups are conducted for children and referral provided, when required.
	Make reasonable adaptations to physical environment or program to accommodate children with special needs.
	Each child's health needs and comfort (e.g. sleep, rest, and relaxation) is adequately provided.
	Centre uses basic tools for children (e.g. WHO growth charts, Mother-Child Protection Cards), track growth faltering and provide counseling support.
Nutrition	Caregivers have adequate knowledge about balanced and healthy diet for children and encourage the same at the centre.
	Adequate social atmosphere visible during meal/snack times.
	Ensure that children have sufficient time to eat well.
	Ensure that children have nutritious meals/ snacks.
	Supplementary nutrition/ home food as per norms provided to children regularly
Hygiene	Regular checking of personal grooming of children.
	Food is stored, prepared and served under hygienic conditions.
	Classrooms as well as toilets are clean and hygienic.
	Reinforce good practices of keeping the environment clean.
Habit formation	Teacher/ caregivers inculcate habits in children such as washing hands before and after meals, putting materials back in their place after using them etc.
	Teacher/ caregivers discuss these habits with parents, so they can encourage children at home to practice good habits.
	Children are encouraged to develop self-discipline.

**STANDARD III :
PROTECTIVE CARE
AND SAFETY**

STANDARD III	PROTECTIVE CARE AND SAFETY
Adult supervision	Provide children with consistent adult supervision.
	At least 1 adult for every 20 children in 3- 6 years age group and for every 10 children for under 3s
	Children are adequately supervised at all times and encouraged to express their opinion.
Socio/Emotional Protection	Teachers/ caregivers are sensitive to the children's needs and are able to provide emotional support to children, when needed, particularly those who are facing deprivation.
	Families of children facing severe deprivation are supported in terms of a nurturing home, including referral or counselling support if necessary.
Physical safety	Availability of first aid kit for children, in case of an emergency.
	Center has preventive measures, in case of fires and other natural disasters (fire extinguishers, sand buckets etc.)
	Centre has a nearby health care centre/hospital for emergency or referral services.
	Immediate health service in terms of First Aid/ Medical Kit available at the centre
	Caregiver/ teacher are trained to provide first aid to children, in case of an emergency.
	Caregiver/ teacher are aware of the nearest health care centre/hospital for emergency or referral services.
	Emergency contact information is on file and available to staff
	Nap/rest time for children with adequate and relevant supervision.
	Plans to manage incidents and emergencies are developed.

**STANDARD IV:
INFRASTRUCTURE/
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

STANDARD IV	INFRASTRUCTURE/ PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT
Space, building, outdoors (size, ventilation, light, disabled friendly)	Provision of adequate light and ventilation in the rooms.
	Provision of electricity to provide light and to operate equipments.
	Adequate space available for outdoor play and activities.
	Schools located in a place away from the sources of excessive noise.
	ECCE center is disabled- friendly and allows easy access for children with special needs.
	Adequate space available for children. (1 classroom measuring 35 square meters (carpet area) for a group of 30 children and availability of 30 square meters of outdoor space for a group of 30 children)
	Availability of equipments for outdoor play/ activities for all children.
	Allocated space for cooking meals, storage of food items, hygienic kitchen and nap time for children.
	Availability of shelves or a place for children to keep their belongings.
	Proper storage for teacher to keep material and records.
Aesthetics , cleanliness, green area	Clean surroundings in and around centre.
	Indoor space, furniture and equipments are clean and well maintained.
	Designated area for garbage disposal, dustbins, brooms etc.
	Within 15 meters of the ECCE centre there are no heaps of garbage, cattle shed/animal shelter, slush and stagnant water and uncovered drains.
	Children are supported to be environmentally responsible and respect the environment.
Safety and approach	No hazards, such as uncovered drains/ wells, around the ECCE center.
	ECCE Centre is located in a safe place.
	Safety level of building is adequately maintained.
	ECCE center building is maintained in a good condition.
	Structurally stable, weather proof building according to local environmental condition and easily exited in case of emergency.

Water facility	Availability of adequate, clean and potable water for all children.
	Drinking water is stored in covered vessels which is regularly cleaned and refilled with hygienic handling.
Toilet facility	Appropriate toilet provisions for toddlers.
	Clean, child friendly toilet available and used by all.
	Availability of water and soap in the toilet.
	Separate toilets for girls and boys, which are safe and hygienic.

**STANDARD V:
ORGANISATION
AND MANAGEMENT**

STANDARD V	ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT
Programme philosophy and methods	Programme aligns with the vision for children in the National ECCE policy.
	Incorporates the principles and guidelines of National ECCE Curriculum Framework to plan curriculum.
	Children are NOT left unattended at any point of time.
	ECCE programme is conducted <i>for 4 hours</i> daily with children (with ½ hr snack/break time).
	Centre does not conduct rote-learning activities or formal teaching of 3Rs (reading, writing & arithmetic).
	Activities for development of reading, writing & number readiness are planned and implemented according to children's needs.
	Centre maintains close linkages with the primary school, to ensure smooth transition of children.
Documentation and Records	Documentation/Portfolio of each child's performance and progress is done and available to families and staff.
	Records of children's attendance, leave, and absence are kept and regularly updated.
	Notebook is kept on each child where staff and parents exchange information about child's interests, needs etc.
Programmed planning	All areas of development are offered in an integrated manner.
	Balance of age-appropriate structured, guided activities and free play for children provided.
	Age appropriateness of activities ensured by teacher.
	Activities planned to ensure learning of cooperation & sharing
	Display of materials, children's artwork and handicrafts on the walls at the eye level of children or on a table.
	Language of interaction is the mother tongue/ home language of children, while supporting the development of other languages.
	Learning/ Activity corners available and used so that the children can play according to their interests and choose their activity.
	Flexible seating arrangements and layout of the class according to activities available

	Weekly/Daily schedule followed by teacher to meet the different needs and interests of children.
	Children are not pressurized and allowed to progress at their own pace.
Parent involvement	Parents and children are provided information on nutritionally balanced diet and health education.
	Parents encourage children at home to practice good habits that are modeled and practiced at ECCE center.
	Parents and community members also share their abilities and skills at the ECCE center.
	Teachers/ caregivers hold regular consultation with the community on ways to support and improve the ECCE center.
	Parent teacher conferences are held in which there is exchange of information about the child and the knowledge is used to follow up appropriately.
	Parents and families provided with relevant information and a resource to reinforce children's care and learning experiences.
	Parents and family members are encouraged to give feedback about staff and centre and involved in the decision making process.
	Staff, parents and community participate in different activities collaboratively.
	Have regular community participation in events like ECCE day, health and nutrition day, bal melas, healthy baby show, nutrition week, awareness campaigns, grandfathers and grandmothers day etc.
Financial management(fee, salary, fund allocation)	ECCE center has good financial system. It maintains records of all funds/ contributions and these are reviewed by the community (social audit).
	Parent –Teacher Associations and other organizations linked with ECCE centers review and give feedback in the financial management aspects.
Staffing(adequacy, professional qualifications, professional development opportunities, reflective practitioners)	Adequate number of staff is hired.
	Staffs have the appropriate education and qualification/ experience.
	Basic needs of teachers and caregivers met (chair/stool/bench etc).
	Professional development program with ongoing support of coaching and mentoring is provided.
	Policies and guidelines in practice that support staff development and retention.
	Adequate and relevant supervision and mentoring is provided for staff

	development and retention.
	Staff encouraged and supported to undertake continual education for professional growth.
	Appropriate methodologies, tools and techniques used by the Caregivers at the centre.
	ECCE teachers/caregivers reflect on the classroom practices and make changes if required.

**STANDARD VI:
CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES &
LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

STANDARD VI	CHILDREN EXPERIENCES AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES
Provide opportunities for exploration, experimentation	Adequate developmentally appropriate toys and learning materials available for children to play and gain mastery and success.
	Children use learning materials (culturally relevant and region specific) in the class.
	Open ended play materials provided for children to explore different properties of the environment, both indoors and outdoors.
	Opportunities are provided for play/exploration with other children and adults.
	Planning for learning through play and exploration accommodates the individual child, local settings and specific needs.
Encourage child to make choices and participate in play	Classroom arrangement & time provided by teacher for free play.
	Teacher provides opportunities for free play & interact with children during play.
	Learning centres/corners' are used for children to play according to their interests and choose their activity.
Foster child's language and literacy abilities	Teacher uses the language understood by children for interaction within the classroom.
	Listening opportunities provided by teacher.
	Opportunities to speak are provided by teacher.
	Language is used to extend children's thinking & expression.
	Teacher/ caregiver use activities & material for language development of children.
	Centre has a comprehensive library to encourage children to borrow books to read with their families.
	Time is set aside daily for reading and storytelling.
	Additional resources obtained from the community library or from the community if necessary.
Develop problem solving and mathematical abilities	Activities & materials are used by the children for concepts formation
	Manipulative activities are extended with learning of other concepts.
	Appropriate materials available and used to promote environmental

	awareness.
	Provides interesting activities and resources to challenge and develop children's conceptual understanding.
Promote each child's physical abilities	Opportunity for free & guided activities under supervision
	Provide materials and conduct activities for fine motor development & ensuring participation of all.
	Supervision of gross motor activities is provided where needed.
	Outdoor equipments are used for large muscle development where necessary.
	Ensure active participation of children in outdoor activities
	Conduct activities for gross motor development
Nurture development and maintenance of relationships	Provides opportunities to work and play in groups
	Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included.
	Each child is supported to manage their own behavior and respond appropriately to the behavior of others.
	Each child is supported to work with, learn from and help others through collaborative learning opportunities.
Cultivate enjoyment of and participation in expressive arts	Opportunity for all children in creative activities
	Opportunity for the children to sing rhymes & songs
	Opportunity provided for children to participate in activities involving music & movement
	Teacher encourages self expression in arts & craft activities & appreciation with guidance
	Encourage children to develop observation skills and imagination and express their ideas through art and craft.
	Avoid using templates, stencils and outlines in children's drawings that would inhibit their creativity.
	Dramatic play is encouraged indoors and outdoors and integrated with other activities.

**STANDARD VII:
ASSESSMENT AND
OUTCOME MEASURES**

STANDARD VII	ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOME MEASURES
Assessment methods	Caregivers are sensitive to and are able to understand factors that may be affecting children's progress/ performance.
	Teachers/ caregivers observe children's learning and development and keep a record of how progress is made towards the goals.
	Use information from observations to provide specific intervention for individual children, when required
	Use different tools and strategies that are continuous, ongoing and in the language understood by children.
Assessment reporting	Use of progress cards, developmental checklists etc to compile observations of children
	Maintain portfolios of all children, containing anecdotal records, developmental checklists, samples of drawing, writing and other activities, observation notes and parent teacher meeting notes.
	Uses combination of methods to communicate children's progress with their parents.
Facilitating development through assessment	Conducts periodic observations of children and uses different tools and processes to make decisions about children.
	Use information to identify children's strength and weaknesses and plan accordingly
	Teacher plan activities based on the performance level of children
Staff assessment and development	Staff appraisal, work plan review is done and feedback provided in accordance to policies and guidelines.
	The performance of staff members is evaluated and individual development plans are in place to support performance improvement.
	Staff is regularly updated about recent information and practices around ECCE.
	Support staff affiliation to local, state or national level professional organizations that advocate for young children and families.
Programme assessment (staff meeting, parent feedback)	Teachers/ caregivers share strengths of the children with parents and identify areas of improvement on a regular basis. They also partner with parents to work on these areas.

	Documentation in registers to show attendance, medical records, curriculum planning diary etc.
	Annual review of programme is done to know how it can be improved for better learning outcomes of children.

**STANDARD VIII:
MANAGING TO SUPPORT
QUALITY SYSTEM**

STANDARD VIII	MANAGING TO SUPPORT QUALITY SYSTEM
Teacher education and on site professional development, opportunity for capacity building at all administrative levels, career path for the staff	Teachers/Caregivers have adequate qualification/experience implement the ECCE program effectively.
	Continuous professional development programme for teachers/caregivers is conducted.
	Teachers/ caregivers in our ECCE center attend relevant training to build their knowledge and skills in child development.
	Teachers/ caregivers get regular mentoring support from Supervisors/ Head teachers. Supervisors visit the ECCE centre regularly and demonstrate good practices.
	Teachers/ caregivers are informed about innovative approaches in ECCE, which they are able to practice and reflect on in the centre.
	Parent- teacher committee supports staff development and upgrading of professional qualification of teachers/ caregivers.
	Caregivers are prepared to deal with emergencies and disasters.
Monitoring and supportive supervision	Involve family, staff and community members in annual review of program/ services and further use results to develop plan for implementation.
	Uses child assessment results, program assessment and other relevant data to evaluate how well the program is meeting its goals.
	An effective self-assessment and quality improvement process is in place.
	The programme builds relationships and engages with their local community.
	Home visits are made as per requirements.
Research	Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, is regularly used to implement the program.
	Staff and management discuss and implement innovative ideas and practices that would impact on learning and development of children.
	ECCE teachers and Caregivers are encouraged and supported to do action research either individually or collaboratively.
	Innovations in different areas like curriculum, establishing coordination and convergence, community participation, involvement of local agencies, adolescent girls etc.

Section 3: Indicative Assessment Tools

The assessment tool applicable across all ECCE programmes will be developed through a consultative process. Some existing tools enlisted below will be placed for discussion. The most suitable tool may be adopted/ adapted and then validated in the field across different ECCE settings.

- Programme Evaluation Package, World Bank
- Tamil Nadu Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, developed by M S Swaminathan Research Foundation
- Early Childhood Education Quality Assessment Scale, Centre for Early Childhood Education and Development (CECED), Ambedkar University, Delhi
- Accreditation Tools by branches of Indian Association of Preschool Education
- Balwadi Environment Observation Rating Scale (BEORS), Mobile Crèches
- Development of Guidelines of Benchmarking Requirement of Necessary infrastructure for preschool(nursery and KG) EdCil India Ltd, 2010
- Denver Developmental Screening Tool

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