STRENGTHENING FAMILIES™ SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR CENTER-BASED EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

ABOUT THE SELF-ASSESSMENT

The Program Self-Assessment helps programs determine how well they are implementing strategies to strengthen families. The Self-Assessment is based on findings from a national study that identified exemplary programs across the country. It allows all programs to compare their practices with those of the exemplary programs and identify areas for improvement. The Self-Assessment outlines how the protective factors can be supported through small but significant changes in program practice. It is written for programs committed to working with and supporting the families they serve. Versions of the Self-Assessment are available for:

- Center-based early care and education programs
- Family child care settings
- Home visiting programs
- Community-based programs such as family resource centers

While there is significant overlap across these different versions, each also contains unique strategies specific to each setting.

The Program Self-Assessment materials in this document are applicable to early childhood programs of any size, budget or structure. The strategies described can be implemented without creating new staff positions, making significant changes to existing facilities or raising additional financial resources.

ORGANIZATION

The Self-Assessment outlines practices used by exemplary programs to support families, organized around five protective factors:

- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
- Concrete Support in Times of Need
- Social and Emotional Competence of Children

Each section starts with a brief description of the protective factor and core strategies for building that protective factor. Self-Assessment items are organized under each of these core strategies. In this version of the Self-Assessment there are two additional sections that address Strengthening

Families in Special Circumstances: Responding to Possible Child Abuse or Neglect and Supporting a Child's Transitions to School or Other Programs.

This version of the Self-Assessment for center-based early care and education programs has been tiered to facilitate use by states' Quality Ratings and Improvement Systems. Items are divided into four tiers that represent different levels of depth of implementation: Baseline (i.e., items that any early childhood program should be able to implement), Mid-level (i.e., items that require more specific attention to parent engagement) and High (i.e., items that reflect a high level of focus on parent engagement and support). The fourth tier, Comprehensive Service Programs, applies to those centers that offer a comprehensive range of supports and services to children and families in addition to high quality early care and education (e.g., Head Start, family support centers).

COMPLETING THE SELF-ASSESSMENT

While the Self-Assessment forms may appear long at first glance, most sections have fewer than fifteen items. To make the process easier, the forms address specific practices; thus, multiple practice examples often appear under a single strategy. While the time it takes to complete the Self-Assessment will vary from program to program and from form to form, on average, each form can be completed in approximately 90 minutes.

CSSP strongly recommends that programs create a Self-Assessment team that represents a number of different perspectives at your program, including:

- Administrative staff and/or program director
- Early care and education teachers
- Family support staff (if applicable)
- Parents whose children participate in the program

Including a diverse group of participants in the Self-Assessment evaluation process allows programs to benefit from a large variety of viewpoints and perspectives. Once a team has been identified, the process begins by following the steps outlined below.

First, each member of the team should fill out the Self-Assessment forms individually.

Next, the team should convene to share and compare assessments. Teams should use this time to discuss rating

results that differ among various team members, giving each person an opportunity to describe why they rated the practice the way they did and—if appropriate—to provide an example. Once everyone has had a chance to speak, all team members should be given an opportunity to re-rate the practice. It is not necessary for the entire team to come to consensus on every practice, but it is important that all team members come to understand each other's perspectives and that a final decision is made on how to rate the item based on broad input.

The consensus version of the Self-Assessment can be entered online at www.mosaic-network.com/gemslive/cssp/. Completing the Self-Assessment online allows the program to print reports showing strengths and areas to focus on improvement, as well as to link to parent and staff surveys.

CREATING AN ACTION PLAN

Once all team members have re-rated the practices, the team should identify areas where the program scored highly. Next, the team should create a sustainability plan to keep these areas strong. In developing a sustainability plan for each successful area, teams should be sure to specify:

- Key reasons for success in the area
- What needs to be done to ensure continued strength in the area
- Who will be responsible for maintaining successful outcomes in the area

Next, the team should highlight practice areas that a majority of the team rated poorly. While we encourage programs to work on each of these areas eventually, the team can begin by deciding whether each poorly rated practice should be addressed (1) immediately, (2) over time, or (3) not at all. Again, teams should allow time for discussion and reevaluation if/when team members disagree on practice ratings. When a majority of team members identify items that should be addressed immediately, teams should brainstorm plans to improve associated area outcomes. Teams should be sure to specify:

- The expected results
- All required resources (including staff hour costs)
- A timeline for achieving the desired results
- Who is responsible for each action step
- Check-in points for monitoring implementation progress
- How and when longer term action steps will be addressed/implemented

PARENTAL RESILIENCE

Being a parent can be a very rewarding and joyful experience. But being a parent can also come with its share of stress. Parental resilience is the process of calling forth one's inner strength to proactively manage stress, meet personal/family challenges and be able to function well. Parental resilience includes the ability to provide nurturing and supportive care to one's child, even when faced with challenges, adversity or trauma. Programs can provide a variety of resources for families to help build and support parental resilience—all with low or no-cost to the program. For example, programs can:

- Demonstrate in multiple ways that parents are valued
- Honor each family's race, ethnicity, language, culture, history and approach to parenting
- Encourage parents to manage stress effectively
- Support parents as decision-makers and help build parents' decision-making and leadership skills
- Help parents understand how to buffer their child during stressful times

When supported by program policies, staff can employ these concrete Everyday Actions to help families reduce personal/parental stress and gain confidence in their ability to overcome challenges.

PARENTAL RESILIENCE: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs demonstrate that parents are valued?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
1.1 Staff strive to recognize and affirm the central role of parents in their children's lives through every interaction with families including policies, practices and informal communication.	**Tier 1**	No Sub-Items.							

PARENTAL RESILIENCE: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs demonstrate that parents are valued?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
1.2 The program has multiple avenues for regular communication with families.	**Tier 1**	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 2	**1.2.1** The program provides an orientation for families about the program philosophy, educational goals and curriculum objectives.							
		1.2.2 Staff regularly ask parents about their observations of their child to inform teaching.							
	Tier 3	**1.2.3** Staff use a variety of methods (e.g., new family orientations, small group meetings, individual conversations, written questionnaires) to regularly provide information to families and to gather family input on curriculum activities.							
		1.2.4 Staff regularly and frequently share information on children's progress with parents.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							
1.3 All family members are made to feel welcome.	**Tier 1**	**1.3.1** Someone is available to greet families when they come in.							
		1.3.2 Staff are respectful even when family visits are unexpected.							
	Tier 2	**1.3.3** Images and artwork throughout the physical space reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of parents and families in the program community.							
	Tier 3	**1.3.4** Parents are welcome to visit at any time.							
		1.3.5 Activities are offered to address the specific interests and needs of fathers, mothers and other family members.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							

PARENTAL RESILIENCE: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs demonstrate that parents are valued?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
1.4 Staff develop mutually respectful relationships with all family members by:	**Tier 1**	**1.4.1** Regularly inquiring about what is happening in their lives.							
		1.4.2 Providing emotional support and encouragement.							
		1.4.3 Using intake forms, applications and surveys that are gender-neutral.							
	Tier 2	**1.4.4** Sharing appropriate information about themselves.							
	Tier 3	**1.4.5** Taking time to get to know family members individually, by name.							
		1.4.6 Recognizing and acknowledging parents' strengths, efforts and contributions.							
	Tier 4	**1.4.7** Taking time to understand the complex needs of individual family members, such as navigating child custody or the child support system, playing dual roles in a single-parent household or having children with different partners.							
1.5 The program supports non-custodial parents' participation in their children's lives by:	**Tier 1 only**	**1.5.1** Including them in mailings and updates about their children's progress.							
		1.5.2 Inviting them to activities and responding to requests for information, when possible and within the bounds of custody agreements.							
		1.5.3 Being aware of barriers that limit involvement, such as a difficult relationship with the custodial parent or lack of information.							

PARENTAL RESILIENCE: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs demonstrate that parents are valued?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
1.6 Staff show that they value fathers and are sensitive to their unique needs by:	**Tier 1**	**1.6.1** Inviting fathers to attend programs and working to engage them in activities.							
	Tier 2	**1.6.2** Taking part in periodic training on understanding and appreciating fathers' needs and parenting.							
		1.6.3 Sharing responsibility for inviting fathers to attend programs and working to engage them in activities.							
	Tier 3	**1.6.4** Providing information specific to fathers/male family members in a special area such as a lounge, bulletin board or bookshelf.							
		1.6.5 Providing a diaper changing deck in the men's room or other areas accessible to men.							
		1.6.6 Engaging male participants in greeting other men at program activities.							
		1.6.7 Encouraging fathers and male family members to engage in all aspects of the program, including taking on leadership roles.							
	Tier 4	**1.6.8** Providing peer activities or services that are man-to-man, father-to-father.							
		1.6.9 Establishing ongoing partnerships with community resources that provide services to fathers.							

PARENTAL RESILIENCE: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs honor each family's race, language, culture, history and approach to parenting?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
1.7 Program staff ensure that all families, regardless of family structure; socioeconomic, racial, religious and cultural backgrounds; gender; sexual orientation; abilities; or preferred language are included in all aspects of the program, including volunteer opportunities.	**Tier 1**	**1.7.1** The program displays diverse families and family structures in books, posters and program materials.							
	Tier 2	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 3	**1.7.2** Staff are trained to be knowledgeable about the parenting practices and approaches to family decision-making of different cultural and ethnic groups.							
		1.7.3 The program regularly gathers information about family interests, beliefs and expectations, including those relating to the child's culture and language development, and seeks to partner with families in incorporating those features into the program activities and structure.							
		1.7.4 Parents have opportunities to share their skills, talents and cultural traditions with children and other parents.							
	Tier 4	**1.7.5** Staff engage grandparents, elders and extended family members in discussions on parenting and the transmission of cultural beliefs.							
1.8 An effort is made to ensure that program information and outreach materials are linguistically and culturally appropriate and inclusive. Materials are:	**Tier 1**	No Sub-Items.							

PARENTAL RESILIENCE: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs honor each family's race, language, culture, history and approach to parenting?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
1.8 An effort is made to ensure that program information and outreach materials are linguistically and culturally appropriate and inclusive. Materials are:	**Tier 2**	**1.8.1** Designed or selected to reflect the culture(s) of the program community.							
		1.8.2 Designed or selected to reflect all kinds of family structures, including families with same sex parents.							
	Tier 3	**1.8.3** Translated, whenever possible, into the language(s) spoken by all families in the program community.							
		1.8.4 Reviewed by a Parent Advisory Committee to ensure that they are culturally relevant and linguistically accessible to all families in the program.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							
1.9 As a part of staff orientation and ongoing staff development, program staff regularly have opportunities to develop skills and knowledge to work effectively with diverse families. Staff development may include:	**Tier 1**	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 2	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 3	**1.9.1** Helping staff members understand and appreciate their culturally different communication styles and life styles.							
		1.9.2 Familiarizing staff with the meaning and significance of race and racism for families and community institutions.							
	Tier 4	**1.9.3** Inviting partner organizations to provide workshops for staff on working with diverse families.							
		1.9.4 Coordinating site visits at organizations that serve different populations so that staff can learn how to best serve diverse families.							

PARENTAL RESILIENCE: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs honor each family's race, language, culture, history and approach to parenting?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
1.10 The program seeks to reflect the community and families it serves by:	**Tier 3 only**	1.10.1 Building a staff that reflects the community and families served.							
		1.10.2 Intentionally recruiting and employing staff members who are skilled at working with the diversity of the families in the program.							
		1.10.3 Connecting with elders and other trusted messengers of the diverse cultural groups represented in the program community.							
		1.10.4 Seeking to hire staff members that provide families and children with connections to the diversity that exists in society—even if the program's community is largely mono-lingual, mono-ethnic or mono-cultural.							
1.11 The program supports participating immigrant and refugee families by:	**Tier 1**	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 2	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 3	1.11.1 Ensuring that staff are knowledgeable about immigrant and refugee families' unique challenges and can help to address those challenges in a respectful manner.							
	Tier 4	1.11.2 Maintaining up-to-date information on supports and services most relevant to immigrant and refugee families.							
1.12 The programs supports same-sex families and non-traditional families by:	**Tier 1**	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 2	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 3	1.12.1 Ensuring staff are knowledgeable about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.							
	Tier 4	1.12.2 Maintaining up to date information on supports and services most relevant to LGBT families.							

PARENTAL RESILIENCE: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs encourage parents to manage stress effectively?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
1.13 When common signs of stress occur, program staff reach out to families proactively and supportively. Some commons signs of stress include:	Tier 3 only	• Parents' acknowledgement of stress or problems • Unusual parental behavior • Repeated unexplained absences • Repeated tardiness, late pick-ups or missed appointments • Missed payments • Divorce, separation, military deployment, family dissolution, job loss or other family crises • Changes or fluctuations in a child's emotional state, acting out, distress, challenging behavior, fearful behavior, inappropriate language/behavior (such as sexual acting out), signs of abuse or neglect (such as bruises) or other unexplained changes in child behavior							
1.14 The program provides regular opportunities for parents to relieve stress through:	Tier 3 only	1.14.1 Linking parents to organized support groups.							
		1.14.2 Setting aside space for parents to gather, talk and participate in informal activities.							
		1.14.3 Organizing spa days, exercise classes or other parent-only social activities.							
		1.14.4 Providing occasional child care outside of regular hours so that parents can take a "night out," go shopping or participate in other parent-only activities.							
	Tier 4	1.14.5 Making staff or consultants available to talk to individually with parents about issues that are troubling them.							

PARENTAL RESILIENCE: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs encourage parents to manage stress effectively?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
1.15 Staff know how to respond appropriately to family crises that come to their attention. Staff receive training and support on:	**Tier 1**	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 2	**1.15.1** Understanding trauma and its impact on children and how staff can help.							
	Tier 3	**1.15.2** Supporting families' immediate and long-term plans.							
	Tier 4	**1.15.3** Understanding the impact of family crises and/or loss on all family members—especially children—and how to respond appropriately.							
		1.15.4 Talking to families about difficult issues and helping them access additional help.							
		1.15.5 Maintaining confidentiality.							
		1.15.6 Recognizing domestic violence, depression, developmental delays, mental illness, chronic health problems, substance abuse and other signs of imminent crisis and knowing how to respond.							
1.16 Staff receive program support when working with families under stress through:	**Tier 1**	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 2	**1.16.1** Acknowledgement and support for their efforts from supervisors and administrators.							
		1.16.2 Time off if needed.							

PARENTAL RESILIENCE: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs encourage parents to manage stress effectively?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
1.16 Staff receive program support when working with families under stress through:	Tier 3	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 4	1.16.3 Opportunities to process their own emotional reactions with appropriate support.							
		1.16.4 Access to a mental health consultant.							
		1.16.5 Case conferences with the program supervisor and/or cross discipline team.							
		1.16.6 Identification of their successes and family or client progress.							
		1.16.7 Support to recognize the limits/boundaries of their role and scope of practice.							
		1.16.8 Supportive supervision to reduce isolation.							

PARENTAL RESILIENCE: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs support parents as decision-makers and help build decision-making and leadership skills?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
1.17 Staff reinforce parental authority by:	Tier 1	1.17.1 Respecting parents' directions and/or decisions about their children.							
		1.17.2 Talking respectfully with parents about differences in expectations regarding children's behavior and development.							
		1.17.3 Being careful not to contradict a parent in front of his or her child or other children.							
		1.17.4 Encouraging active parental decision-making about their children's education.							
	Tier 2	1.17.5 Learning about parents' expectations and limits for their children.							
		1.17.6 Understanding the parenting and child behavior norms of the parent's culture.							
		1.17.7 Working cooperatively with families on shared child caregiving issues (e.g., routine separations, activities, developmental milestones, special needs, the food being served and consumed, daily care issues).							
	Tier 3	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							

PARENTAL RESILIENCE: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs support parents as decision-makers and help build decision-making and leadership skills?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
1.18 Parents are always consulted on decisions that have an impact on their child.	**Tier 1**	**1.18.1** The program informs parents immediately in the case of an emergency involving their children.							
	Tier 2	**1.18.2** The program consults with parents immediately when child health, behavior or developmental issues are suspected or identified.							
		1.18.3 The program discusses changes in individual children's teachers, schedules and classroom assignments with parents before implementing the changes.							
	Tier 3	**1.18.4** The program provides information to parents about potential changes in the program's overall operation and solicits parental input before implementing the changes.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							
1.19 Parents are engaged as partners in developmental screenings or assessments of their child.	**Tier 1**	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 2	**1.19.1** Parents are informed about the purpose of screenings or assessments and are told how the results will be used.							
		1.19.2 Parents participate in screenings and/or are informed of the results of all screenings as soon as possible.							
	Tier 3	**1.19.3** Parents work with staff to develop response plans and accommodations for their children based on screening results.							
		1.19.4 The program assists parents in finding and connecting to specialists (e.g., a physician, physical therapist, child study team) for further evaluation when their children are identified in the screening process as having possible special needs.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							

PARENTAL RESILIENCE: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs support parents as decision-makers and help build decision-making and leadership skills?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
1.20 Parents and staff develop family plans together that:	**Tier 4 only**	**1.20.1** Identify the family's assets, interests, skills, needs and goals for themselves and their children.							
		1.20.2 Identify services and opportunities within the program that may help parents achieve their goals and effectively use their skills and talents.							
		1.20.3 Identify other community resources and opportunities that may help families achieve their goals, continue their learning and/or provide other avenues for involvement and leadership.							
		1.20.4 Are updated regularly.							
1.21 The program supports a parent's personal education and career goals by:	**Tier 2 only**	**1.21.1** Inviting past program parents and community volunteers to share their educational and career experiences with families.							

PARENTAL RESILIENCE: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs support parents as decision-makers and help build decision-making and leadership skills?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
1.22 The program provides opportunities and support for families to serve as leaders and decision-makers by:	**Tier 1**	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 2	**1.22.1** Asking families for regular input on programmatic decisions.							
		1.22.2 Providing opportunities for families to volunteer and contribute to the program.							
	Tier 3	**1.22.3** Encouraging and supporting parents in becoming active members of the program's governing/advisory groups and in taking on leadership roles.							
		1.22.4 Asking families for input into staff hiring and training.							
		1.22.5 Providing families with roles in evaluating the program (e.g., parent questionnaires, group evaluation meetings).							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							
1.23 The program promotes participation in activities by:	**Tier 1**	**1.23.1** Face-to-face or telephone outreach to families who might not otherwise participate.							
	Tier 2	**1.23.2** Activities designed to address interests of different family members (e.g., fathers, mothers, other family members).							
	Tier 3	**1.23.3** Addressing topics identified by families as important to them.							
		1.23.4 Providing child care during trainings or workshops.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							

PARENTAL RESILIENCE: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs support parents as decision-makers and help build decision-making and leadership skills?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
1.24 The program helps to support the continued development of parent leaders by supporting:	**Tier 4 only**	**1.24.1** Personal growth—such as attending conferences or special events and sharing information of interest with other parents.							
		1.24.2 Leadership development trainings and mentoring activities.							
		1.24.3 Training opportunities for advocacy and civics (e.g., how local and state government works, how to foster change).							
1.25 The program helps to support parents' opportunities for leadership in community change by:	**Tier 1**	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 2	**1.25.1** Hosting or linking parents to community events that help raise awareness of emerging community needs and assets.							
	Tier 3	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 4	**1.25.2** Connecting parents to advocacy groups that work on issues related to child, family and community needs.							
		1.25.3 Connecting parents to groups that inform and shape policy at the local, state or national level.							
		1.25.4 Ensuring that local, state and federal policy information is discussed at staff meetings and relevant information is shared with families.							
1.26 Staff receive training on talking with parents about helping children in times of family crisis.	**Tier 2 only**	No Sub-Items.							

PARENTAL RESILIENCE: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs help parents understand how to buffer their child during stressful times?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
1.27 Parents and staff receive ongoing training and up-to-date information on dealing with stress and trauma, including:	**Tier 2 only**	• How stress impacts the child's brain, behavior and development • Recognizing the signs of stress in children • How stress may impact the child's behavior and how to shape adult responses to the child's behavior accordingly • The important role that parents and caring adults play in buffering children during stressful times							
1.28 Staff and parents talk together about their observations or concerns about a child who is experiencing stress, discuss how they will respond appropriately and follow up with each other to evaluate how they are doing.	**Tier 3 only**	No Sub-Items.							
1.29 Parents and staff have access to a mental health consultant who can help them proactively address the needs of children during stressful times.	**Tier 3 only**	No Sub-Items.							

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

People need people. Parents need people who care about them and their children; who can be good listeners; who they can turn to for well-informed advice, hope and encouragement; and who they can call on for help in solving problems. Parents' supportive social connections—that is, high quality relationships with family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, community members and service providers—help buffer parents from stressors. Good social connections also support nurturing parenting behaviors that promote secure attachments in young children. Programs can provide opportunities for parents to create and strengthen positive social connections. Programs should:

- Help families value, build, sustain and use social connections
- Create an inclusive environment
- Facilitate mutual support
- Promote engagement in the community and participation in community activities

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs help families value, build, sustain and use social connections?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
2.1 Families have access to a comfortable, onsite space where they can meet informally.	**Tier 1 only**	No Sub-Items.							
2.2 The program provides opportunities for families with similar interests, children's ages and/or circumstances (such as those with twins, parents of infants, parents with special-needs children, parents who speak the same language) to connect with one another.	**Tier 2 only**	No Sub-Items.							

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs help families value, build, sustain and use social connections?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
2.3 The program provides opportunities for families to socialize and fosters a sense of community by organizing/hosting:	**Tier 1**	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 2	**2.3.1** Periodic events like coffee breaks and breakfasts.							
		2.3.2 Celebrations, graduations and holidays.							
		2.3.3 Events celebrating cultural customs, potlucks and other opportunities for parents to share and learn about each other's home lives and cultural backgrounds.							
		2.3.4 Affordable family activities.							
	Tier 3	**2.3.5** Special programs for moms, dads, grandparents, teen moms, teen dads and other caregivers who would enjoy activities directed at their unique needs and interests.							
		2.3.6 Field trips and activities that include parents.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							
2.4 The program encourages positive relationships between families and staff members by planning informal social events where staff can interact with families.	**Tier 1 only**	No Sub-Items.							
2.5 The program connects families to resources to strengthen relationships between adults (e.g., healthy marriage skills, communication skills, conflict resolution, co-parenting).	**Tier 4 only**	No Sub-Items.							

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs help families value, build, sustain and use social connections?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
2.6 Program staff engage newcomers and isolated or marginalized families by:	**Tier 1**	**2.6.1** Making special efforts to connect them with other families who share similar interests.							
		2.6.2 Matching families with staff or other families who can help them feel welcome and valued in program activities.							
	Tier 2	**2.6.3** Calling, sending notes or making home visits inviting them to program activities.							
	Tier 3	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 4	**2.6.4** Offering support with transportation, childcare or other barriers to participation.							
		2.6.5 Connecting them with resources (including mental health consultation) that can help them explore their difficulties forming social connections.							

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs create an inclusive environment?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
2.7 The program and its staff model positive social skills and community building by:	**Tier 1**	**2.7.1** Welcoming all families.							
		2.7.2 Inviting all children and families to parties or social events.							
		2.7.3 Encouraging newcomers and reluctant families to participate through special outreach efforts.							
	Tier 2	**2.7.4** Promoting families' understandings of different cultures and backgrounds.							
	Tier 2	**2.7.5** Promoting families' understandings of different cultures and backgrounds.							
	Tier 3	**2.7.6** Helping to resolve conflicts among families.							
	Tier 4	**2.7.7** Addressing social exclusion due to differences in race, language, culture, appearance, gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc.							
2.8 The program helps staff learn how to reduce stereotyping and biases by:	**Tier 1**	**2.8.1** Intervening appropriately to counteract prejudicial or discriminatory statements from children or parents in the program (e.g., discussing similarities and differences, establishing rules for fair treatment of others).							
	Tier 2	**2.8.2** Teaching staff to model inclusive behavior.							
		2.8.3 Regularly reviewing policies, forms and documents to ensure that all content discourages beliefs and practices that stereotype, marginalize or discriminate against families.							
		2.8.4 Ensuring that any instances of prejudice are quickly and explicitly addressed, and that staff use any such incidents as opportunities to demonstrate program values of inclusion and respect.							

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs create an inclusive environment?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
2.8 The program helps staff learn how to reduce stereotyping and biases by:	**Tier 3**	**2.8.5** Providing professional development opportunities on intentionally countering stereotypes and biases (including explicit and implicit forms of biased behaviors).							
		2.8.6 Helping families and children resolve conflicts effectively.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							
2.9 Families are encouraged to reach out and engage other families, including newcomers and more isolated program members, in the program community.	**Tier 1 only**	No Sub-Items.							

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs facilitate mutual support?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
2.10 The program encourages parents to set up mutual support mechanisms (e.g., phone trees, car pools, babysitting co-ops, play groups).	**Tier 2 only**	No Sub-Items.							
2.11 Parents are encouraged to share parenting information with each other.	**Tier 1 only**	No Sub-Items.							
2.12 Parent-organized social/educational events and activities are encouraged and supported by:	**Tier 1**	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 2	**2.12.1** Providing information on outside activities for parents to attend together (for example, gathering at playgrounds, fun fairs or libraries).							
	Tier 3	**2.12.2** Providing supports such as gathering spaces, childcare and food so that parents can organize and participate in activities together.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs promote engagement in the community and participation in community activities?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
2.13 Administrators and staff seek opportunities to build good relations within the immediate neighborhood or local community (e.g., inviting neighbors to open houses, using neighborhood resources for special projects).	**Tier 2 only**	No Sub-Items.							
2.14 The program encourages staff and families to participate together in community improvement or advocacy projects.	**Tier 1 only**	No Sub-Items.							
2.15 Staff are visible in their engagement with issues of concern to the community and involvement with other community organizations.	**Tier 3 only**	No Sub-Items.							
2.16 The program provides and receives support from the local community (e.g., financial support, donated services, tangible gifts, discounted services, letters of support).	**Tier 3 only**	No Sub-Items.							

KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Mounting scientific evidence points to the critical importance of early childhood as the period in which children's foundations for cognitive, language, social, emotional and moral development are established. While no parent knows everything about children, all parents can benefit from increasing their knowledge of parenting best practices. Gaining a deeper understanding of child development—including early brain development—helps parents know what to expect from their child. Knowledge of parenting and child development can also help parents understand what children need during each developmental phase. Programs can help parents increase their knowledge of parenting and child development. Programs should:

- Model developmentally appropriate interactions with children
- Provide information and resources on parenting and child development
- Encourage parents to observe, ask questions, explore parenting issues and try out new strategies
- Address parenting issues from a strength-based perspective

Early care and education staff can help parents gain a high level of expertise about child development and parenting. It is crucial that staff provide information in multiple ways and at times that parents really need it and will put it into practice.

KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs model developmentally appropriate interactions with children?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
3.1 Staff demonstrate a strong understanding of child development.	**Tier 1**	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 2	**3.1.1** Staff model developmentally appropriate responses to children's behavior, interests, temperaments and need for exploration and learning.							
		3.1.2 Staff participate in regular trainings to stay up-to-date on advances in the understanding of child development.							
	Tier 3	**3.1.3** Staff understand and can explain the development arc for the young children they are responsible for.							
		3.1.4 Staff understand and can explain the significant role and influence of culture on child development.							
		3.1.5 Staff can explain to parents how aspects of the classroom environment support their child's development and how classroom activities can be adapted for home use.							

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KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs model developmentally appropriate interactions with children?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
3.1 Staff demonstrate a strong understanding of child development.	**Tier 4**	No Sub-Items.							
3.2 Staff work collaboratively with parents to coordinate support for children's development. Staff:	**Tier 1**	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 2	**3.2.1** Develop ongoing partnerships with parents to ensure a common understanding of the child's development.							
		3.2.2 Coordinate with parents to provide children with appropriate experiences for their developmental stage.							
	Tier 3	**3.2.3** Work collaboratively with other staff members to provide information and insight about individual children that enhances the child's experience and development throughout the program.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							
3.3 Physical discipline (i.e., spanking or hitting) is not allowed in the program by staff or parents.	**Tier 1 only.**	No Sub-Items.							

KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs model developmentally appropriate interactions with children?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
3.4 When staff talk with parents about discipline, they:	Tier 1	3.4.1 Explain why the program does not support the use of physical discipline.							
		3.4.2 Explain why the program uses the forms of discipline it does.							
		3.4.3 Encourage parents to discuss behavior challenges they may have at home.							
		3.4.4 Emphasize the importance of positive messaging to support children's healthy development.							
	Tier 2	3.4.5 Provide information on age-appropriate positive discipline techniques and reasonable expectations.							
		3.4.6 Connect parents to other parents who can share or model positive parenting approaches.							
	Tier 3	3.4.7 Offer ideas for alternate ways to manage children's behavior and to recognize and reinforce desired/appropriate behavior.							
		3.4.8 Recognize different parental and cultural approaches to discipline.							
	Tier 4	3.4.9 Make arrangements to have appropriate language and cultural interpreters available to support difficult conversations with families.							

KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs provide information and resources on parenting and child development?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
3.5 Information is provided to parents about the stages of child development and what to expect of their children at each stage.	**Tier 1 only**	No Sub-Items.							
3.6 Parenting information and materials used by the program are culturally and linguistically appropriate, and:	**Tier 1**	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 2	**3.6.1** Reflect a diversity of racial and ethnic backgrounds and family structures.							
		3.6.2 Encourage parents to reflect on their own parenting history and culture, rather than encouraging stereotypes.							
	Tier 3	**3.6.3** Are available in the languages spoken by program families.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							
3.7 Parenting and child development information is provided through multiple avenues to meet diverse learning styles, including:	**Tier 2 only**	• Books and videos in a resource library • Parenting classes and discussion groups • Regular postings on bulletin boards in public spaces • Take-home materials distributed regularly to parents • Opportunities for parents with similar concerns to come together and share information • Posting of information and links on a program website and/or social media pages accessed by participants • Mentoring or coaching connections between parents • Parenting groups that respond to different ethnic, cultural or linguistic groups in the community							

KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT:
SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs provide information and resources on parenting and child development?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
3.8 Parent education is responsive to the needs of parents in different circum-stances. For example:	**Tier 3 only**	• Different parenting styles of mothers and fathers and the strengths of each • Needs and concerns of first time parents • Needs of parents who are parent-ing a child with a disability • Families that are co-parenting • Noncustodial parents • Nontraditional caregivers (e.g., grandparents, foster parents)							
3.9 Staff provide "just in time" parenting tips and discuss par-enting issues with parents when:	**Tier 1**	**3.9.1** Families are arriving and departing each day.							
		3.9.2 A parent appears to be frustrated or stressed and in need of support.							
	Tier 2	**3.9.3** Child behavior or development issues arise (e.g., potty training, changes in eating or sleeping pat-tern, separation issues, aggressive behavior).							
		3.9.4 Staff meet one-on-one with parents.							
		3.9.5 A parent appears to be having difficulty relating to or communicat-ing with their child.							
	Tier 3	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							
3.10 Staff participate in the program's parenting education sessions so they can better share information and answer parents' questions.	**Tier 3 only**	No Sub-Items.							

KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT:
SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs encourage parents to observe, ask questions, explore parenting issues and try out new strategies?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
3.11 Family members are encouraged to visit at any time; observe their children participating in programming when appropriate; and talk with staff about their observations and questions.	**Tier 1 only**	No Sub-Items.							
3.12 Staff discuss the program's systems for formally and informally assessing children's progress with families, including:	**Tier 3 only**	• The purposes of assessments • The procedures used for assessments • The procedures for gathering family input and information • The timing of assessments • The way assessment results or information is shared with families • How the program uses information from assessments • Why assessments are helpful to the child, the program and the family							
3.13 Parents and staff work together to design and organize opportunities for parent-led discussions (such as a Community Café or Parent Café series) to explore:	**Tier 3 only**	**3.13.1** Cultural/ethnic expectations and practices related to parenting.							
		3.13.2 Different parenting practices.							
		3.13.3 Parent/child relationships.							
		3.13.4 How to interact effectively with their children (e.g., listening; appreciating ideas, efforts and feelings; creating a non-threatening environment).							
3.14 Staff recognize and support parenting challenges experienced by families with children who have special needs by:	**Tier 1**	**3.14.1** Regularly checking in with parents about parenting issues.							
		3.14.2 Being sensitive to parents' frustration, protectiveness, guilt, loss and other related feelings, and acknowledging the challenges families may be experiencing.							
		3.14.3 Being especially supportive at the time that special needs are initially identified.							

KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT:
SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs encourage parents to observe, ask questions, explore parenting issues and try out new strategies?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
3.14 Staff recognize and support parenting challenges experienced by families with children who have special needs by:	**Tier 2**	**3.14.4** Supporting parents in under-standing appropriate developmental expectations for their children with special-needs.							
		3.14.5 Ensuring that program parent-child activities are appropriate for families with children with special needs.							
	Tier 3	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 4	**3.14.6** Connecting parents with materials, websites, support groups, play groups and community resources specific to their children's special needs.							

KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs address parenting issues from a strength-based perspective?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
3.15 Staff share their observations of children with parents to help the parents recognize:	Tier 1	**3.15.1** Their children's unique assets, temperament, personality, communication styles and behavioral cues.							
		3.15.2 Their child's independence and abilities.							
	Tier 2	**3.15.3** Their children's growth and development patterns.							
		3.15.4 Their children's positive social skills and developmentally appropriate emotional behavior.							
		3.15.5 Potential differences between the child's home culture and the expectations of the program and how to manage these differences.							
	Tier 3	**3.15.6** Activities families can use at home to foster development.							
		3.15.7 Signals that development may not be on track.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							
3.16 Staff reinforce positive parent-child interactions by:	Tier 1	**3.16.1** Sharing something positive with parents about what their child has done each day, written or verbally.							
	Tier 2	**3.16.2** Noticing and acknowledging when parents are attuned to their children's needs or are communicating effectively with their children.							
		3.16.3 Modeling positive discipline.							
	Tier 3	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							

CONCRETE SUPPORT IN TIMES OF NEED
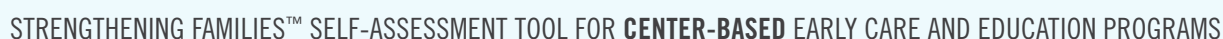
All parents need help sometimes. When parents are faced with very challenging situations, such as losing a job or not being able to feed their family, they need access to resources and services that address their needs and minimize their stress. This type of support helps to ensure that families receive the basic necessities that everyone deserves in order to grow. Providing concrete support also ensures that families have access to any specialized medical, mental health, social, educational or legal services they may need.

Programs can help parents to identify, find and receive concrete support in times of need. Programs should:

- Respond immediately when families are in crisis
- Provide information and connections to services in the community
- Help families to develop skills and tools they need to identify their needs and connect to supports

Even though early care and education programs are not always equipped to provide all the services and supports families may need, they can still play a vital role in helping families access concrete supports in times of crisis. Programs can also play a critical role in helping families develop their own proactive strategies for meeting needs in the future.

CONCRETE SUPPORTS: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs respond immediately when families are in crisis?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
4.1 Parents are encouraged to turn to staff in the event of a crisis through:	**Tier 1**	**4.1.1** The fact that staff listen, show concern and share their personal challenges, as appropriate in informal conversation and regular interaction.							
	Tier 2	**4.1.2** At least one staff member with a close relationship with the family reaches out to the family proactively.							
	Tier 3	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							
4.2 Parents are provided information about the role staff play in assisting families and on which staff members can help families with particular issues.	**Tier 1 only**	No Sub-Items.							

CONCRETE SUPPORTS: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs respond immediately when families are in crisis?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
4.3 The program responds to family crises immediately by:	Tier 1	4.3.1 Ensuring that parents can talk with staff members with whom the parents are the most comfortable.							
	Tier 2	4.3.2 Making a space available for staff to meet with parents privately.							
	Tier 3	4.3.3 Ensuring that a staff member is available at all times to help families needing crisis support.							
		4.3.4 Including additional family members or close family supports in meetings whenever parents believe that doing so would be beneficial.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							
4.4 Staff proactively respond to signs of parent or family distress by:	Tier 1	4.4.1 Expressing concern and offering help.							
		4.4.2 Being sensitive and responsive to the impact of family stress on children.							
		4.4.3 Keeping family issues confidential unless given explicit permission to share information (except when potential abuse or neglect is at issue).							
	Tier 2	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 3	4.4.4 Offering to connect families to resources, including help lines, community resources or public agencies.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							

CONCRETE SUPPORTS: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs respond immediately when families are in crisis?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
4.5 When a family is experiencing extreme difficulties or crisis:	**Tier 1**	**4.5.1** At least one staff member with a close relationship with the family reaches out to the family proactively.							
	Tier 2	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 3	**4.5.2** If the family wants assistance, staff members, including supervisors or a staff team, work with the family to help them manage the crisis.							
		4.5.3 If appropriate, staff mobilize community partners or other parents in the program to help out.							
		4.5.4 Staff continue to offer support to the family and monitor the situation daily until the situation is manageable.							
	Tier 4	**4.5.5** A small program emergency fund or donations from other families are used to help the family access immediate needs, such as clothing, meals or transportation.							
		4.5.6 The program extends its hours of operation to support families during crises, if necessary.							
		4.5.7 If the family agrees, staff connect the family to resources outside the program that can help them, such as medical or mental health specialists, or services such as respite care or emergency crisis services.							

CONCRETE SUPPORTS: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs respond immediately when families are in crisis?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
4.6 If parents bring up issues that staff feel unequipped to handle, staff can refer parents to:	**Tier 1**	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 2	**4.6.1** A supervisor.							
	Tier 3	**4.6.1** A specialist with knowledge in the area.							
		4.6.2 Community resources.							
	Tier 4	**4.6.3** A cross-disciplinary staff team.							

CONCRETE SUPPORTS: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs provide information and connections to services in the community?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
4.7 Parents are encouraged to share information about community resources (e.g., toy exchanges, resale shops, play lots, family activities), as well as more formal services.	**Tier 2 only**	No Sub-Items.							
4.8 The program maintains up-to-date information about services in the community, including hours of operation, fees, locations, eligibility requirements, language capacities, etc. Services to be included are:	**Tier 3 only**	• Food pantries • Health providers • Domestic violence services • Shelters • Respite care for children • Alcohol and substance abuse services • Mental health services (for adults and children) • Economic supports • Legal assistance							
4.9 The program actively builds collaborative links with other service providers by:	**Tier 1**	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 2	**4.9.1** Sharing information about resources with parents.							
	Tier 3	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 4	**4.9.2** Bringing services on site, when possible.							
		4.9.3 Easing the referral process by ensuring the workers in different programs know each other and work together.							
		4.9.4 Coordinating follow-up efforts across service providers.							
		4.9.5 Identifying and advocating to fill resource gaps in the services available to families.							
		4.9.6 Ensuring that cooperating service providers have a good record of effectively serving families of racial and ethnic backgrounds consistent with those represented in the program community.							

CONCRETE SUPPORTS: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs help families to develop skills they need to identify their needs and connect to supports?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
4.10 Staff help parents to identify and mobilize their own resources to address their families' needs by:	Tier 1	**4.10.1** Encouraging families to take the lead when creating a plan to address family needs.							
		4.10.2 Communicating to families that seeking help is not an indicator of weakness or failure as a parent, but rather is a step toward building resilience.							
		4.10.3 Encouraging parents to advocate for themselves and their child.							
	Tier 2	**4.10.4** Providing information and guidance to families so that they understand their rights in accessing services, gain knowledge of relevant services and learn how to navigate through service systems.							
	Tier 3	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							
4.11 When staff make referrals to outside services, they support family leadership by:	Tier 1	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 2	**4.11.1** Brainstorming with families about what resources would be helpful.							
		4.11.2 Coaching parents as they fill out initial paperwork required to access these services (e.g., insurance and eligibility forms).							
	Tier 3	**4.11.3** Respecting families that are not comfortable with a specific provider by helping them to either address and resolve the issue or identify other resources.							
		4.11.4 Helping parents learn how to address barriers to utilizing services (e.g., lack of transportation or child-care, fees, language barriers, lack of translation services, lack of cultural sensitivity and inclusiveness).							

CONCRETE SUPPORTS: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs help families to develop skills they need to identify their needs and connect to supports?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
4.11 When staff make referrals to outside services, they support family leadership by:	Tier 4	4.11.5 Following up with families on referrals to ensure that they were satisfied with the services they received, and providing help in advocating for themselves if they were not satisfied.							
		4.11.6 Making a personal connection between families and service providers (if families have agreed to share information through written consent).							
		4.11.7 Troubleshooting alongside parents when families have a negative experience with service providers.							
4.12 When working with expecting families, program staff work with parents to ensure that they receive appropriate care, including:	Tier 1	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 2	4.12.1 Helping the family enroll in a home visiting program, whenever necessary and appropriate.							
	Tier 3	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 4	4.12.2 Helping pregnant women access comprehensive pre-natal and post-partum care (e.g., early and continuing risk assessment, health promotion and treatment, mental health interventions and follow-up) as appropriate.							

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN

Early childhood experiences set the stage for later health, well-being and learning. A growing body of research has shown the relationship between young children's social and emotional competence and their cognitive development, language skills, mental health and school success. The development of social and emotional competence—that is, characteristics such as self-regulation, self-confidence and social skills—depends on the quality of nurturing care, communication and stimulation that a child experiences. Programs can help to promote the social and emotional competence of children. Programs should:

* Help parents foster their child's social emotional development
* Model nurturing care to children
* Include children's social and emotional development activities in programming
* Help children develop a positive cultural identity and interact in a diverse society
* Respond proactively when social or emotional development needs extra support

Early care and education staff are often trained on the importance of social and emotional development and know how to provide positive classroom experiences for children. They can also play a significant role in helping parents to both enjoy and facilitate children's growing competencies in this area.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs help parents foster their child's social emotional development?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
5.1 The program introduces all family members to the concept of promoting social and emotional development by:	**Tier 1**	**5.1.1** Providing parents with information on the importance of supporting children's healthy social and emotional development—and its connection to success in school and life.							
	Tier 2	**5.1.2** Helping parents understand children's age-appropriate social and emotional skills and behaviors.							
		5.1.3 Asking about parents' observations of their child's social and emotional development.							
	Tier 3	**5.1.4** Providing opportunities to discuss social and emotional issues within a racial and cultural context.							
		5.1.5 Offering parents ideas on how to foster a child's social and emotional learning at home.							
		5.1.6 Providing face-to-face opportunities for parents to practice social and emotional skill building exercises with their children.							

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs help parents foster their child's social emotional development?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
5.1 The program introduces all family members to the concept of promoting social and emotional development by:	**Tier 4**	No Sub-Items.							
5.2 Program activities provide opportunities to strengthen bonds between parents and their children (e.g., playing together in cooperative games or make believe, cooking, making an art project together).	**Tier 3 only**	No Sub-Items.							

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs model nurturing care to children?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
5.3 Staff nurture children and model nurturing for parents by:	**Tier 1**	**5.3.1** Encouraging children to express their feelings through words, artwork and expressive play.							
		5.3.2 Responding consistently to children in a warm, supportive manner.							
	Tier 2	**5.3.3** Creating an environment in which children feel safe to comfortably express their emotions without fear of judgment.							
		5.3.4 Showing warmth through appropriate physical contact.							
		5.3.5 Demonstrating mutual respect between children and adults (e.g., listening attentively, making eye contact, treating children fairly).							
		5.3.6 Responding sympathetically to help children who are upset, hurt or angry.							
	Tier 3	**5.3.7** Modeling empathy and appropriate emotional responsiveness.							
		5.3.8 Creating an environment where children can explore gender identity (for example, where boys can play with dolls or girls can play "daddy" without shaming or bullying).							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs model nurturing care to children?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
5.4 Staff receive training, consultation and ongoing coaching to support their skills in supporting children's social emotional development, including:	Tier 3 only	5.4.1 Fostering children's social and emotional development in the context of their culture and language.							
		5.4.2 Recognizing behavioral/emotional problems or developmental delays.							
		5.4.3 Understanding the impact of loss or trauma on children and how to respond appropriately.							
		5.4.4 Recognizing the role of sensory awareness and integration in social emotional development and understanding how to promote it.							
		5.4.5 Understanding gender differences in child rearing and its impact on social and emotional development.							
		5.4.6 Understanding the influence of race and racism on social and emotional development.							
		5.4.7 Promoting positive relationships between children living in the same household.							
		5.4.8 Understanding how mental health and wellness affect family relationships and the developmental processes of young children.							
		5.4.9 Recognizing and responding to the impact of child or parental trauma on parent-child relationships.							

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs model nurturing care to children?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
5.5 Staff respect the relationships and attachments that children form in the program by:	Tier 1	**5.5.1** Helping children process class and/or staffing changes.							
		5.5.2 Communicating staff changes to parents.							
	Tier 2	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 3	**5.5.3** Intentionally helping children learn to enter new settings or say goodbye when leaving the program.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							
5.6 Families are invited to observe their children interacting with others, and are able to discuss their observations with a staff member.	Tier 3	No Sub-Items.							

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs include children's social and emotional development activities in programming?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
5.7 The program supports children's social and emotional development with intentional practices that include:	**Tier 1**	**5.7.1** Encouraging children to express their feelings in ways that are the most comfortable for them.							
		5.7.2 Encouraging and reinforcing social skills such as sharing, taking turns and cooperative play.							
		5.7.3 Setting clear expectations and limits for behavior.							
	Tier 2	**5.7.4** Actively involving children in solving their conflicts and problems (e.g., helping children talk out problems and think of solutions; sensitizing children to feelings of others).							
		5.7.5 Helping children separate emotions from actions (e.g., not reacting by hitting even when angry).							
	Tier 3	**5.7.6** Using evidence-based social and emotional screenings and assessments to inform individual lesson plans and appropriate referrals to mental health consultants.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							
5.8 Mental health consultants assist staff in integrating social emotional development into everyday work by:	**Tier 3 only**	**5.8.1** Providing coaching on how to develop a healthy classroom and program environment for social and emotional learning.							
		5.8.2 Providing support for staff working with children and parents around social and emotional issues, including challenging behaviors.							

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs help children develop a positive cultural identity and learn to interact in a diverse society?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
5.9 The program welcomes and affirms the cultures of families it serves, by:	**Tier 1**	**5.9.1** Inviting families to define and express their ethnicity or culture, including the experiences and values they hold to be most important.							
		5.9.2 Including appropriate instructional resources such as books and toys that expose children to role models from their own and other cultural backgrounds.							
	Tier 2	**5.9.3** Implementing classroom activities that include meaningful and relevant activities, stories and discussions regarding cultural and linguistic differences.							
	Tier 3	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							
5.10 Staff receive training on cultural differences and social and emotional development, especially differences in:	**Tier 3 only**	**5.10.1** How the sense of identity is fostered as an individual and/or as part of a family or clan in different cultures.							
		5.10.2 The extent to which nonverbal communication is predominant across cultures.							
		5.10.3 Diverse cultural views of success and appropriate child development.							
5.11 Staff are encouraged to enhance their own understanding and appreciation for different races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, languages and cultural expressions by:	**Tier 1**	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 2	**5.11.1** Professional development opportunities that allow them to learn more about the history and experiences of different racial groups.							
	Tier 3	**5.11.2** Training on how to sensitively ask questions about each family's specific experiences and cultural perspectives.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							

**SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN:
SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS**

How do programs help children develop a positive cultural identity and learn to interact in a diverse society?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
5.12 Program policies and practices support the preservation of home languages/dialects by:	**Tier 1**	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 2	**5.12.1** Encouraging staff to use children's home languages for multiple learning purposes.							
	Tier 3	No Sub-Items.							
	Tier 4	**5.12.2** Instituting a language policy that embraces children's home languages and sets specific language goals for children in conjunction with parents' wishes (e.g., bilingualism, single language).							
5.13 The program's mental health consultant offers consultation that is respectful of differences in parenting and behaviors and child behaviors that stem from traditions and cultural roots.	**Tier 4 only**	No Sub-Items.							

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN:
SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs respond proactively when social or emotional development needs extra support?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
5.14 When staff are concerned about a child's social and emotional development, they respond by:	**Tier 1**	**5.14.1** Discussing concerns with the child's parents without casting blame on the parents.							
	Tier 2	**5.14.2** Arranging for appropriate screenings and assessments.							
	Tier 3	**5.14.3** Connecting the family to resources that can support the child's social and emotional development (e.g., play therapy, mental health services. parenting classes).							
		5.14.4 Helping parents develop strategies for addressing the issue at home.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							
5.15 Staff have access to a mental health consultant to help them:	**Tier 4 only**	**5.15.1** Develop positive approaches for individual children and establish a healthy classroom climate.							
		5.15.2 Identify and receive additional resources and/or training to work effectively with individual children and parents.							
		5.15.3 Talk respectfully with parents about the child's developmental needs or challenges.							

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Occasionally, special circumstances arise whereby Everyday Actions alone cannot provide sufficient supports for families. In these special circumstances, programs need additional tools to best help children and parents. Programs can help families navigate especially challenging times by employing clear policies and offering helpful staff support.

One responsibility of early care and education programs is to respond to observations of possible child abuse and neglect. Staff are mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect and receive training every year on the state reporting requirements. However, long before a report needs to be made, staff can also respond positively and supportively to counteract early indicators of potential risk for future maltreatment. The following items capture best practices for programs that effectively work with child welfare officials.

RESPONDING TO POSSIBLE CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs respond to possible child abuse or neglect?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
6.1 When children enter the program, staff discuss child abuse and neglect prevention with parents and caretakers. This discussion includes explanations of:	**Tier 1 only**	**6.1.1** The program's policies and practices that are designed to keep children safe from harm.							
		6.1.2 Staff members' responsibility as mandatory child abuse reporters.							
		6.1.3 How the state defines child abuse and neglect.							
		6.1.4 The program's protocols regarding child abuse and neglect reports.							

RESPONDING TO POSSIBLE CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs respond to possible child abuse or neglect?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
6.2 All staff members are trained according to their state's mandatory child abuse reporting laws, with additional training that includes:	Tier 1	**6.2.1** Following the program's protocols for reporting child abuse and neglect.							
	Tier 2	**6.2.2** Recognizing and responding to early signs of possible child abuse and neglect.							
		6.2.3 Knowing the state's child welfare reporting guidelines and understanding how cases are generally handled once a report is made.							
		6.2.4 Recognizing cultural practices that can trigger reporting of child abuse and neglect (e.g., the practice of coining to treat fevers, the use of corporal punishment for toilet training, leaving a young sibling in the care of an older sibling under the age of ten) and respectfully discussing ways that parents can prevent the likelihood of mandatory reporting.							
	Tier 3	**6.2.5** The relationship between domestic violence and reporting of child abuse and neglect, and clear protocols to follow when domestic violence is suspected or disclosed.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							
6.3 Staff members are trained that when a child abuse or neglect report needs to be filed, they have specific responsibilities to both the child welfare agency and to families that include:	Tier 1	**6.3.1** Coordinating with investigative authorities to ensure that staff actions and interactions with the family do not hinder the investigation.							
		6.3.2 Providing objective and accurate information on the concerns that led to the report, as well as information on family strengths.							
		6.3.3 Explaining their status as mandated reporters to families and their commitment to the goal of keeping children safe.							
		6.3.4 Striving to be calm, caring and supportive of the family during the reporting process.							

RESPONDING TO POSSIBLE CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT:
SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs respond to possible child abuse or neglect?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
6.3 Staff members are trained that when a child abuse or neglect report needs to be filed, they have specific responsibilities to both the child welfare agency and to families that include:	**Tier 2**	**6.3.5** Answering questions that the family may have regarding the reporting process and how the Child Protective Services system typically responds.							
	Tier 3	**6.3.6** Offering support for families by answering questions, connecting them to resources they may need, listening attentively and providing friendly advice.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							
6.4 If a child is placed into child welfare custody, staff are trained to continue to support the child and the family by:	**Tier 3**	**6.4.1** Maintaining contact with the child and family, if possible.							
		6.4.2 Advocating for the family within the Child Protective Services system, when possible.							
	Tier 4	**6.4.3** Helping parents connect with resources to help reunite them with their child.							
6.5 Program staff seek to collaborate with child welfare caseworkers and Child Protective Services staff to promote the child's ongoing healthy development by:	**Tier 4 only**	**6.5.1** Helping to maintain stability for children involved in the system.							
		6.5.2 Engaging in co-case management practices, if possible.							
		6.5.3 Conducting joint home visits.							
		6.5.4 Attending Child Protective Services meetings to share information.							
6.6 Program staff seek to collaborate with child welfare caseworkers and Child Protective Services staff to promote the child's ongoing healthy development by:	**Tier 1 only**	**6.6.1** Are consistent with state child welfare reporting guidelines.							
		6.6.2 Are consistent with state child welfare reporting guidelines.							

SUPPORTING A CHILD'S TRANSITIONS TO SCHOOL OR OTHER PROGRAMS

Increasing evidence points to the need for early care and education programs to address children's transitions more effectively. Transitions are part of every child's life, and effectively navigating transitions can help set the stage for a child's successful development. Children and their parents can be assisted significantly by excellent transition practices in early childhood programs.

SUPPORTING A CHILD'S TRANSITIONS TO SCHOOL OR OTHER PROGRAMS: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs support children's transitions?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
7.1 The program supports families during a child's transition to new programs or to kindergarten by:	**Tier 1**	**7.1.1** Helping families understand parents' and children's educational rights and responsibilities.							
	Tier 2	**7.1.2** Helping families recognize how to choose high quality early child-hood settings and services, including special education services.							
		7.1.3 Encouraging parents to stay involved in children's long-term development and to take leadership roles in children's education.							
	Tier 3	**7.1.4** Helping families understand what to expect from the new program or kindergarten.							
		7.1.5 Providing general information on enrollment procedures and practices, visiting opportunities and program options.							
		7.1.6 Ensuring that families and staff have ongoing opportunities to discuss their observations about their child's strengths and chal-lenges—and that these discussions are especially encouraged prior to a child's transition to another program or kindergarten.							

SUPPORTING A CHILD'S TRANSITIONS TO SCHOOL OR OTHER PROGRAMS: SELF-ASSESSMENT ITEMS

How do programs support children's transitions?

			5: Strongly agree	4: Agree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	2: Disagree	1: Strongly disagree	Not Applicable	Comments
7.1 The program supports families during a child's transition to new programs or to kindergarten by:	**Tier 3**	**7.1.7** Sharing information with families about existing parent-to-parent organizations, family peer networks and/or parent-initiated school-community efforts in order to foster parents' leadership and advocacy roles outside the program.							
	Tier 4	No Sub-Items.							
7.2 The program collaborates with school and community service systems to support, empower and identify leadership opportunities for families. This collaboration includes:	**Tier 4 only**	**7.2.1** Establishing ongoing communications with local service providers and educational agencies.							
		7.2.2 Conducting joint transition trainings with other programs and local educational agencies.							
		7.2.3 Learning both the constraints and opportunities that come with building local partnerships (e.g., policy differences, varying regulations, budgetary differences, inconsistent organizational designs).							
		7.2.4 Establishing formal Memoranda of Understanding about children's transitions with key partners.							
7.3 The program uses a self-assessment process to improve transition practices, including:	**Tier 4 only**	**7.3.1** An annual internal review of transition activities.							
		7.3.2 A community survey or interviews that identify opportunities and challenges in working with other service providers.							
		7.3.3 K-12 data sources, when available.							