



Granite Steps For Quality

New Hampshire's Quality Recognition and Improvement System

Granite Steps for Quality

New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services

Division of Economic & Housing Stability

Bureau of Child Development and

Head Start Collaboration

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Table of Contents

Granite Steps for Quality (GSQ): NH's Quality Recognition and Improvement System (QRIS)

1. Welcome to NH's Granite Steps for Quality.....	5
• GSQ Basics: What is It? Who is It For? & How Does It Work?.....	5
• GSQ: Why Participate?.....	6
• GSQ Foundation: Vision & Guiding Principles.....	7
• GSQ System Components: The Keys to Success.....	8
• GSQ Goals, Methods, & Measures.....	9
• GSQ Outcomes.....	10
2. GSQ Eligible Programs & Prerequisites.....	11
3. GSQ Rubric Introduction.....	12
• Family Child Care Rubric.....	13
• Center Based Early Childhood Programs Rubric	15
• Out-of-School Time (OST) Programs Rubric.....	19
4. GSQ Can Help! Quality Incentives and Resources.....	21
• GSQ Financial Incentives.....	22
□ Licensed Programs (non-Accredited, non-Head Start).....	22
□ Head Start/Center Based Early Head Start (non- Accredited).....	23
□ Accredited Programs (non-Head Start/Center Based Early Head Start).....	24
□ Accredited Head Start/Center Based Early Head Start.....	25
• Resources for Providers.....	26
5. GSQ Endorsements.....	27
• Family Engagement Endorsement.....	28
6. Glossary of Terms.....	29
7. Acknowledgements.....	31

Table of Contents

Granite Steps for Quality (GSQ): NH's Quality Recognition and Improvement System (QRIS)

8. Appendices.....	34
• A. NH's Evolving System: What Changed and What Stayed the Same?.....	35
• B. Environment Rating Scale Score Sheet Requirements	36
• C. Environment Rating Scale Pathway Review Process and Timeline	37
• D. Pyramid Model Pathway Review Process and Timeline.....	38
• E. Works Cited.....	39



Welcome to NH's Granite Steps for Quality!

Granite Steps for Quality (GSQ) supports NH's Early Childhood and Out-of-School Time programs on their path to enhanced quality so that children thrive and succeed in school and beyond. If your program is among NH's critical workforce behind the workforce, GSQ is for you! In this section, you will find information about the overall system, from "what is it?" and "why participate?," to how it works and where the path leads for NH's children and families, programs, and (ultimately) communities.

GSQ Basics: What Is It? Who Is It For? & How Does It Work?

What is GSQ?

A system that recognizes program quality

GSQ is designed to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in a program.

Who is GSQ for?

Children and their caring adults

The future prosperity of the next generation rests in large part on how well caring adults foster development to build strong foundations for health, development and learning.

How does GSQ work?

Using defined standards, measurable outcomes, and program supports

GSQ uses a systemic approach, recognizing quality practices that meet a set of defined standards and supports programs on a path to Continuous Quality Improvement.

GSQ: Why Participate?

Invest in Quality...



For Children and Families

- High quality programs build a strong foundation for healthy development.
- Early experiences build the architecture for the brain. Positive, responsive interactions with caring adults at home and in the community are the key ingredient in building a strong foundation for children's future success.
- School-age children who participate in quality Out-of-School Time programs have improved school attendance and academic achievement.
- Families want and deserve quality care and education where they can engage with the program and their children will thrive.



For Yourself and Your Program

- Programs committed to continuous quality improvement can attract and retain staff because they invest in activities that support their growth as professionals. As a result, staff often are more satisfied and confident in their work with children and families.
- GSQ can help! There is no cost for programs to participate, plus financial incentives and resources are available!



For Your Community

- Quality programs are good for business. As the workforce behind the workforce, they enable families to focus on their jobs while their children explore, learn, and grow.

GSQ's Foundation: Vision & Guiding Principles

GSQ Vision

Caring adults work to build a strong foundation for children's healthy development through a system that recognizes program quality using defined standards and measurable outcomes to ensure future success.

GSQ Guiding Principles

- Maintain a system that is accessible and sustainable.
- Utilize valid monitoring tools.
- Establish system-wide accountability measures.
- Connect families and providers to community supports.
- Include achievable, incremental steps.
- Promote a culture of continuous quality improvement.
- Support programs through meaningful and accessible professional development activities to help them achieve and sustain increasing GSQ Steps.
- Support programs through the different GSQ Steps by offering incentives.
- Promote access to high quality child care and Out-of-School Time* programming for all families.
- Evolve and change as the Early Childhood and Out-of-School Time fields continue to advance.
- Inspire eligible programs to participate, advance, and remain in the system.

*Formerly “Afterschool”

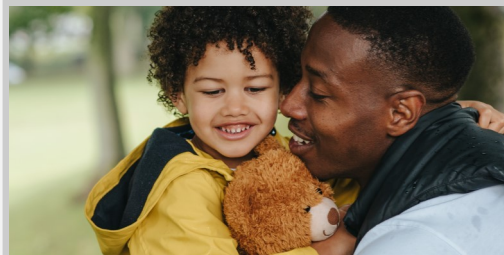


GSQ System Components: The Keys to Success



Program Quality

GSQ has two Standards for Quality: Staff Qualifications and Learning Environments.



Families

NH families will grow their knowledge of child care quality, have ready access to quality designations, and become well-informed consumers when choosing and engaging in a program.



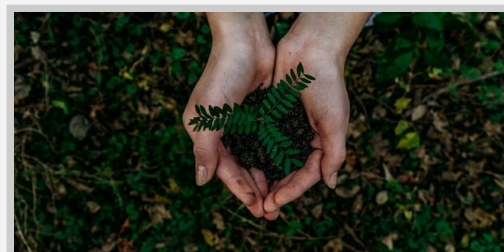
Program Incentives

Programs will receive incentives through New Hampshire Child Care Scholarship Program participation, quarterly and annual quality incentives, and program supports.



Program Supports

Programs will have access to materials, supplies, and professional development opportunities, including but not limited to consultation, coaching, training, and technical assistance.



Program Engagement

GSQ will promote engagement in the system among providers, families, and community partners.



Monitoring & Accountability

Programs will submit documentation and be observed, assessed, and supported based on their chosen pathway.

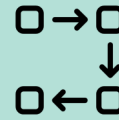
GSQ Goals, Methods, and Measures

Goals



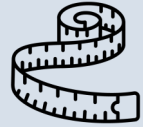
- Improve the overall quality of early care and education and Out-of-School Time programs in the state, thereby improving outcomes for children and families.
- Increase families' understanding of and demand for higher quality early care and education and Out-of-School Time programs.

Methods



- Create a cross-sector framework linking standards, professional development/support, community supports, and consumer engagement.
- Align the many aspects of our state's early care and education and Out-of-School Time system, including Child Care Licensing, Head Start/Early Head Start, NAEYC Accreditation, NH Early Childhood and Out-of-School Time Professional Development Systems, NH Child Care Scholarship Program, professional development/program supports, and more.

Measures



- Programs are assessed using quality indicators, data collection, and formal assessment tools. Data and assessment results will be consistently monitored to determine impact on quality.
- Programs are surveyed annually and asked to self-assess their competence in providing care and education and improving quality over time.
- Families are surveyed annually and asked to self-assess their understanding of high quality care and education and its availability.



GSQ Outcomes

Program Outcomes

- Programs engaged in Continuous Quality Improvement.
- Programs advanced in the GSQ system.
- Programs earned GSQ endorsements.
- Programs engaged in partnerships with families, community organizations, and schools to coordinate services and work effectively together.



Family and Child Outcomes

Short Term

- Families and children had equitable access to quality programs.
- Families' knowledge of and demand for quality programming increased.
- Families gained skills, knowledge and resources to promote their children's development and learning, and engage in positive parent-child relationships.
- Children engaged in positive relationships with family members, caregivers, and other children.
- Children were learning and developing in safe and healthy environments.

GSQ System Outcomes

- Program participation increased each year.
- Programs remained in GSQ.
- Programs had equitable access to GSQ resources.
- The percentage of programs participating at higher GSQ Steps increased over time.



Long Term

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and retention of teachers/staff improved in GSQ programs. • GSQ programs provided effective learning opportunities and safe, healthy environments for children. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children transitioning from early care and education to kindergarten programs were prepared for success in school and life. • Family engagement with the system (e.g., as advocates and leaders) increased for interested families. • Children in Out-of-School Time programs had improved school attendance and academic achievement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSQ Steps were associated positively with external measures of quality and gains in children's development. • GSQ utilized data to guide statewide professional development opportunities and system investments, policy, and practices. |
|--|--|---|

GSQ Eligible Programs and Prerequisites

Eligible Programs Include: 1) Family Child Care; 2) Center Based Early Childhood Programs (Including a crosswalk for both Head Start/Center Based Early Head Start & NAEYC* Accredited Programs.); 3) Out-of-School Time (formerly afterschool) Programs; and 4) Center Based Programs providing both Early Childhood and Out-of-School Time Services.

GSQ Prerequisites

- The program holds an active child care license from the NH DHHS Child Care Licensing Unit. Programs must hold the license at least 12 months prior to application. An active child care license is current (not expired) and has not been suspended, revoked, surrendered, or subject to administrative action by the Department within the 12 months preceding the GSQ application.
- The program administrator views *Children: The Bedrock of the Granite State* presentation – available at <https://earlylearningnh.org/bedrock>.
- The program administrator completes two Business Practices Trainings – available on ProSolutions- <https://www.prosolutionstraining.com/login/>.
 - Accepted Business Practices Trainings are as follows:
 - Taking Care of Business: An Administrator's Overview
 - Leading With Heart: how to Build Effective Teams
 - Successful Coaching and Mentoring for Employee Growth
 - An Administrator's Overview of Assessment in Early Care and Education
 - **Creating a Business Plan for Your Family Child Care Program
 - **Budgeting and Financial Planning for Your Family Child Care Program
- The program is enrolled to receive NH Child Care Scholarship Program*** payments on behalf of families who are eligible. Please visit <https://www.nh-connections.org/child-care-scholarship/> to learn more about enrolling to accept the NH Child Care Scholarship Program payments.

*National Association for the Education of Young Children

** These two Business Practices Trainings are only accepted for Family Child Care Programs.

***Not applicable to Head Start/Center Based Early Head Start programs.

GSQ Rubric Introduction

GSQ focuses on two Standards:

- Standard 1: Staff Qualifications
- Standard 2: Learning Environments*

*Center Based Early Childhood Programs have the option of two pathways under Standard 2: Environmental Rating Scales Pathway or Pyramid Model Pathway.





There are four GSQ Quality Steps (Steps 1—4). The following rubrics show the criteria separated by program type, as indicated by the headers on each rubric. A program must demonstrate meeting the criteria for the same selected level from Standard 1 and 2.

Please note: Regardless of the pathway chosen, Center Based Programs Providing both Early Childhood and Out-of-School Time Services must meet the requirements for both the Center Based Early Childhood Programs on p. 15 and the Out-of-School Time Rubric on p. 19 for the desired Quality Step.



Family Child Care

Provider must demonstrate meeting the criteria for the same selected Step from Standards 1 and 2.

Standard 1: Staff Qualifications	Criteria	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
<u>Staff Qualifications</u> This standard ensures that all providers are qualified and committed to ongoing professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider meets licensing requirements. 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider holds a NH Early Childhood Credential* or a NH Out-of-School Time Credential.** 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider holds a minimum of one of the following NH Credentials: Early Childhood Family Child Care Level 3 (2015), Early Childhood Educator 1 (2022), or Afterschool Direct Service Level 3. 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider holds a minimum of one of the following NH Credentials: Early Childhood Family Child Care Level 5 (2015), Early Childhood Educator 2 (2022), or Afterschool Direct Service Level 4. 				

*Accepted NH Early Childhood Credentials include:

2015 Version: Family Child Care Level 1+, Early Childhood Teacher Level 2+, Early Childhood Master Teacher Level 1+, Early Childhood Administrator Level 1+, Early Childhood Master Professional (any endorsement)

2022 Revised Version: Early Childhood Associate Educator or higher, Early Childhood Administrator 1+, Early Childhood Professional Development Specialist (any endorsement)





** Out-of-School Time is formerly known as “Afterschool”.

Accepted NH Out-of-School Time Credentials include:

Afterschool Direct Service Level 1+, Afterschool Administrator Level 1+, Afterschool Master Professional (any endorsement)

Family Child Care cont.





Provider must demonstrate meeting the criteria for the same selected Step from Standards 1 and 2.

Standard 2: Learning Environments	Criteria	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
<p><u>FCCERS Pathway</u></p> <p>The Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS) is designed to assess what children directly experience in their program that has a direct effect on development.</p> <p>The Learning Environment includes interactions children have with other children, staff, space, materials, and equipment in their environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider has completed an <u>approved FCCERS training</u>. 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider has completed an approved FCCERS training. AND Provider has submitted FCCERS self-assessment. 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider has completed an approved FCCERS training. AND Provider has submitted FCCERS self-assessment. AND FCCERS observation has been conducted in the program. Total Average Scores must be 3.5 or higher with no score less than 2.5 on the subscales: Activities and Interactions. 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider has completed an approved FCCERS training. AND Provider has submitted FCCERS self-assessment. AND FCCERS observation has been conducted in the program. Total Average Scores must be 4.5 or higher with no score less than 3.5 on the subscales: Activities and Interactions. 				

Center Based Early Childhood Programs

Program must meet the criteria for the same selected Step from Standards 1 and 2.

Standard 2 can be met by following one of two pathways. **Choose the Standard 2 Pathway that best fits your program.**

Standard 1: Staff Qualifications	Criteria	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
<u>Staff Qualifications</u> This standard ensures that all administrators and teachers are qualified and committed to ongoing professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator and 20% of eligible staff hold a current NH Early Childhood Credential.* 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator and 40% of eligible staff hold a current NH Early Childhood Credential.* 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator and 60% of eligible staff hold a current NH Early Childhood Credential* <i>of which</i> 30% hold a minimum of an Early Childhood Teacher Level 4 (2015) with 6 additional ECE credits, or Early Childhood Educator 1 (2022). Head Start Programs may meet this criteria by presenting documentation relative to Teacher Qualifications from their most recent OHS Monitoring Report. <i>NAEYC Accredited Programs may meet this criteria by presenting their current NAEYC Accreditation certificate.</i> 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An administrator and 80% of eligible staff hold a current NH Early Childhood Credential* <i>of which</i> 40% hold a minimum of an Early Childhood Teacher Level 5 (2015) or Early Childhood Educator 2 (2022). 				

*Accepted NH Early Childhood Credentials include:





2015 Version: Early Childhood Teacher Level 2 +, Early Childhood Master Teacher Level 1+, Early Childhood Administrator Level 1+, Early Childhood Master Professional (any endorsement)

2022 Revised Version: Early Childhood Associate Educator or higher, Early Childhood Administrator 1+, Early Childhood Professional Development Specialist (any endorsement)

Center Based Early Childhood Programs cont.

Program must meet the criteria for the same selected Step from Standards 1 and 2.



Standard 2 can be met by following one of two pathways. ***Choose the Standard 2 Pathway that best fits your program.***

Standard 2: Learning Environments	Criteria	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
<p><u>ERS Pathway</u></p> <p>The Environment Rating Scales (ERS) are designed to assess what children directly experience in their program that has a direct effect on development.</p> <p>The Learning Environment includes interactions children have with other children, staff, space, materials and equipment in their environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator and 25% of eligible staff have completed an <u>approved ERS training</u>. 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator and 25% of eligible staff have completed an approved ERS training. AND Program has submitted ERS self-assessments for all classrooms using age appropriate ERS tools. 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator and 25% of eligible staff have completed an approved ERS training. AND Program has submitted ERS self-assessments for all classrooms using age appropriate ERS tools. AND ERS observations have been conducted in one third of classrooms. Total Average Scores must be 3.5 or higher with no classroom scoring less than 2.5 on the subscales: Activities and Interactions. Head Start Programs may meet this criteria by documenting 3 out of the 5 following Performance Standards (1302.30, 1302.31, 1302.45, 1304.21 and 1304.53) during their most recent federal monitoring visit. <i>NAEYC Accredited Programs may meet this criteria by presenting documentation of meeting NAEYC Learning Environment standards.</i> 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator and 25% of eligible staff have completed an approved ERS training. AND Program has submitted ERS self-assessments for all classrooms using age appropriate ERS tools. AND ERS observations have been conducted in one half of classrooms. Total Average Scores must be 4.5 or higher with no classroom scoring less than 3.5 on the subscales: Activities and Interactions. 				

Center Based Early Childhood Programs cont.

Program must meet the criteria for the same selected Step from Standards 1 and 2.

Standard 2 can be met by following one of two pathways. **Choose the Standard 2 Pathway that best fits your program.**

Standard 2: Learning Environments	Criteria	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
<u>Pyramid Model Pathway</u> The Pyramid Model provides early educators a way to build skills for supporting nurturing and responsive caregiving, to create learning environments, to provide targeted social-emotional skills, and to support children with challenging behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator and all eligible staff have completed the approved Pyramid Model introductory training: <i>Building Positive Social Emotional Skills for All Children: Introducing the Pyramid Model Framework</i> AND Administrator and 25% of eligible staff have completed at least two modules (minimum of 12 hours) of Pyramid Model: Infant & Toddler, Preschool or Birth through Five Trainings. Please note: Programs awarded a Quality Step 1 are committing to participation in and completion of the Pyramid Model readiness series within one year of application and will be expected to reapply at a Quality Step 2 upon renewal. 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator and all eligible staff have completed the approved Pyramid Model introductory training. AND a consistent cohort that includes representatives of program administration and 25% of teaching staff have completed the professional learning community: <i>“Program Wide Pyramid Model Implementation: An Introduction and Overview for Child Care Providers”</i> and have confirmed commitment to the Pyramid Model Pathway. AND An administrator and 25% of eligible staff have completed <i>Pyramid - Wellness: Taking Care of Yourself</i> and <u>all</u> lessons included in one of the following trainings: Infant & Toddler, Preschool or Birth through Five Trainings (Modules 1-3). AND Program has been assigned a program coach, established a leadership team, created mission and vision statements, completed their Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) and created their action plan based on the BoQ. 				

Center Based Early Childhood Programs cont.





Program must meet the criteria for the same selected Step from Standards 1 and 2.

Standard 2 can be met by following one of two pathways. **Choose the Standard 2 Pathway that best fits your program.**

Standard 2: Learning Environments	Criteria	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
<u>Pyramid Model Pathway</u> The Pyramid Model provides early educators a way to build skills for supporting nurturing and responsive caregiving, to create learning environments, to provide targeted social-emotional skills, and to support children with challenging behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program has met all requirements of Steps 1 and 2. • AND Administrator and 50% of eligible staff have completed <i>Trauma-Informed Care & The Pyramid Model</i> AND <i>Pyramid - Reducing Implicit Bias</i> trainings. • AND Leadership team is actively engaged (meets monthly), Practice-Based Coaching and Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) or Teaching Pyramid Infant-Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS) is occurring in 1 classroom in the program. 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program has met all requirements of Steps 1-3. • AND Administrator and 50% of all eligible staff have completed the <i>Prevent Teach Reinforce for Young Children</i> (PTR-YC) training. • AND Pyramid Model practices are being implemented to fidelity as evidenced by TPOT and TPITOS data and the leadership team is collecting, analyzing and using data for program improvement. 				

Out-of-School Time Programs

Program must demonstrate meeting the criteria for the same selected Step from Standards 1 and 2.

Standard 1: Staff Qualifications	Criteria	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
<u>Staff Qualifications</u> This standard ensures that all group leaders, site directors and site coordinators are qualified and committed to ongoing professional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator and 20% of eligible staff* hold a current NH Out-of-School Time Credential.** 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator and 40% of eligible staff* hold a current NH Out-of-School Time Credential.** 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator and 60% of eligible staff* hold a current NH Out-of-School Time Credential** <i>of which</i> 30% hold a minimum of a current Afterschool Direct Service Level 4 Credential. 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator and 80% of eligible staff* hold a current NH Out-of-School Time Credential** <i>of which</i> 40% hold a minimum of a current Afterschool Direct Service Level 4 Credential. 				

*For programs who serve both Early Childhood and OST populations, when determining the percentages needed to meet this criterion, count only the eligible staff who work with your school-aged population.





**Out-of-School Time is formerly known as “Afterschool”.

Accepted NH Out-of-School Time Credentials include:

Afterschool Direct Service Level 1+, Afterschool Administrator Level 1+, Afterschool Master Professional (any endorsement)

Out-of-School Time Programs cont.

Program must demonstrate meeting the criteria for the same selected Step from Standards 1 and 2.

Standard 2: Learning Environments	Criteria	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
<p><u>SACERS Pathway</u></p> <p>The School Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS-U) is designed to assess what children directly experience in their program that has a direct effect on development. The Learning Environment includes interactions children have with other children, staff, space, materials, and equipment in their environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator and 25% of eligible staff have completed an approved SACERS training: <u><i>Introduction to ERS & SACERS Trainings for OST Programs</i></u> 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator and 25% of eligible staff have completed an approved SACERS training. AND Program has submitted SACERS self-assessments for all groups using the SACERS tool. 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator and 25% of eligible staff have completed an approved SACERS training. AND Program has submitted SACERS self-assessments for all groups. AND SACERS observations have been conducted in one third of groups. Total Average Scores must be an average of 3.5 with no group scoring less than 2.5 on the subscales: Activities and Interactions. 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator and 25% of eligible staff have completed an approved SACERS training. AND Program has submitted SACERS self-assessments for all groups. AND SACERS observations have been conducted in one half of groups. Total Average Scores must be 4.5 with no group scoring less than 3.5 on the subscales: Activities and Interactions. 				

GSQ Can Help! Quality Incentives and Resources

GSQ invests in resources and incentives to help programs along their path to enhanced quality. This section describes the numerous resources and financial incentives available to your program to help you along the way.

Quality Incentives

Quality incentives are available to programs before, during, and after the GSQ application process and come in many forms.

Program Materials and Supplies:

- ERS Assessment Tools
- Pyramid Model Tools
- NH Early Learning Standards
- And more!

Financial Incentives*:

- NH Child Care Scholarship Program Quality Payments
- GSQ Quarterly Quality Incentives
- GSG Commitment to Quality Annual Awards (based on GSQ Step and license capacity)



Access to Support Services:

- Consultation
- Practice-Based Coaching
- Targeted Technical Assistance

Professional Development Opportunities:

- Business Practices Trainings
- Pyramid Model Trainings
- ERS Trainings
- And more!

*The department has the sole authority to determine if a provider shall be awarded quality incentive funding. Quarterly and Annual Quality Incentives shall only be issued to programs with an active child care license. No GSQ incentive funds shall be awarded to any program whose license has expired, has been suspended, revoked, surrendered, or whose license has been subject to administrative action by the Department within the 12 months preceding the award time period.

GSQ Financial Incentives:

Licensed Programs

(non-Accredited or non-Head Start/Center Based Early Head Start)

Quality Incentive Awards in Three Parts:

1. NH Child Care Scholarship Program Incentive

All programs enrolled in and receiving the NH Child Care Scholarship Program funds will automatically receive this payment. Programs will receive a percentage of their monthly Child Care Scholarship billing dependent on their GSQ Quality Step, as shown on the right.

GSQ Quality Step	Percent of Child Care Scholarship Billing
Step 1	5%
Step 2	5%
Step 3	10%
Step 4	10%

2. GSQ Quarterly Quality Incentive

All programs will receive a GSQ Quarterly Quality Incentive after submitting their invoice. Programs must have a State of NH vendor number in order to submit an invoice. A program must be awarded their GSQ Quality Step at least 30 days before the end of the quarter in order to be eligible for that quarter's GSQ Quality Incentive. Programs that progress to a higher GSQ Quality Step during the quarter, but at least 30 days before the end of the quarter, will receive the funding amount associated with their new GSQ Quality Step.

GSQ Quality Step	License Capacity as of Date of Application				
	1-25	26-50	51-100	101-200	201+
Step 1	\$600	\$1200	\$1800	\$2400	\$3000
Step 2	\$1200	\$1800	\$2400	\$3000	\$3600
Step 3	\$1800	\$2400	\$3000	\$3600	\$4200
Step 4	\$2400	\$3000	\$3600	\$4200	\$4800

3. GSQ Commitment to Quality Annual Award

Licensed programs may receive the GSQ Commitment to Quality Annual Award after submitting their invoice through NHCIS. All programs that have been awarded their GSQ Quality Step at least 30 days before the end of the calendar year will be eligible for the annual award. Award amounts will depend on three criteria:

1. A program's GSQ Quality Step as of December 1 of that year;
2. License Capacity; and
3. Funds available through the Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration and its partners (e.g., philanthropy, business).

GSQ Financial Incentives:

Head Start/Center Based Early Head Start (non-Accredited)

Quality Incentive Awards in Three Parts:

1. GSQ Entry at the Highest Levels

GSQ recognizes the commitment to quality Head Start/Center Based Early Head Start programs make in meeting the Head Start/Early Head Start Performance Standards. All Head Start/Center Based Early Head Start programs may enter the system at a higher level, GSQ Step 3, based on a GSQ/Head Start Performance Standards crosswalk.

2. GSQ Quarterly Incentive

All Head Start/Center Based Early Head Start programs will receive a GSQ Quarterly Quality Incentive after submitting their invoice. Programs must have a State of NH vendor number in order to submit an invoice. A program must be awarded their Quality Step at least 30 days before the end of

GSQ Quality Step	License Capacity as of Date of Application				
	1-25	26-50	51-100	101-200	201+
Step 3	\$2300	\$2900	\$3500	\$4100	\$4700
Step 4	\$2800	\$3400	\$4000	\$4600	\$5200

the quarter in order to be eligible for that quarter's Quality Incentive. Programs that progress to a higher GSQ Quality Step during the quarter, but at least 30 days before the end of the quarter, will receive the funding amount associated with their new GSQ Quality Step.

3. GSQ Commitment to Quality Annual Award

Head Start/Center Based Early Head Start Programs may receive a GSQ Commitment to Quality Annual Award after submitting their invoice through NHCIS. All programs that have been awarded their GSQ Quality Step at least 30 days before the end of the calendar year will be eligible for the annual award. Award amounts will depend on three criteria:

1. A program's GSQ Quality Step as of December 1 of that year;
2. License Capacity; and
3. Funds available through the Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration and its partners (e.g., philanthropy, business).

GSQ Financial Incentives:

Accredited Programs (non-Head Start/Center Based Early Head Start)

Quality Incentive Awards in Four Parts:

1. GSQ Entry at a Higher Level

GSQ recognizes the commitment to quality Accredited programs make in meeting the NAEYC Accreditation Standards. All Accredited programs (non-Head Start/Center Based Early Head Start) may enter the system at a higher level, GSQ Step 3, based on a GSQ/NAEYC Accreditation crosswalk.

2. NH Child Care Scholarship Program Incentive

All NAEYC Accredited programs enrolled in and receiving NH Child Care Scholarship Program funds will automatically receive this payment. Programs will receive a percentage of their monthly NH Child Care Scholarship Program billing dependent on their GSQ Quality Step, as shown on right.

GSQ Quality Step	Percent of Child Care Scholarship Billing
Step 3	10%
Step 4	10%

3. GSQ Quarterly Quality Incentive

All Accredited programs will receive a Quarterly Quality Incentive after submitting their invoice. Programs must have a State of NH vendor number in order to submit an invoice. A program must be awarded their GSQ Quality Step at least 30 days before the end of the quarter in order to be eligible for that quarter's GSQ Quality Incentive. Programs that progress to a higher GSQ Quality Step during the quarter, but at least 30 days before the end of the quarter, will receive the funding amount associated with their new GSQ Quality Step.

GSQ Quality Step	License Capacity as of Date of Application				
	1-25	26-50	51-100	101-200	201+
Step 3	\$2300	\$2900	\$3500	\$4100	\$4700
Step 4	\$2800	\$3400	\$4000	\$4600	\$5200

4. GSQ Commitment to Quality Annual Award

Accredited Programs may receive the GSQ Commitment to Quality Annual Award after submitting their invoice through NHCIS. All programs that have been awarded their GSQ Quality Step at least 30 days before the end of the calendar year will be eligible for the annual award. Award amounts will depend on three criteria:

1. A program's GSQ Quality Step as of December 1 of that year;
2. License Capacity; and
3. Funds available through the Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration and its partners (e.g., philanthropy, business).

GSQ Financial Incentives:

Accredited Head Start/Center Based Early Head Start

Quality Incentive Awards in Three Parts:

1. GSQ Entry at the Highest Levels

GSQ recognizes the commitment to quality Accredited Head Start/Center Based Early Head Start programs make in meeting the Head Start/Early Head Start Performance Standards, as well as NAEYC Accreditation Standards. All Accredited Head Start/Center Based Early Head Start programs may enter the system at a higher level, GSQ Step 3, based on a GSQ/NAEYC Accreditation crosswalk.

2. GSQ Quarterly Quality Incentive

All Accredited Head Start/Center Based Early Head Start programs will receive a GSQ Quarterly Quality Incentive after submitting their invoice. Programs must have a State of NH vendor number in order to submit an invoice. A program must be awarded their GSQ Quality Step at least 30 days before the end of the quarter in order to be eligible for that quarter's GSQ Quality Incentive. Programs that progress to a higher GSQ Quality Step during the quarter, but at least 30 days before the end of the quarter, will receive the funding amount associated with their new GSQ Quality Step.

GSQ Quality Step	License Capacity as of Date of Application				
	1-25	26-50	51-100	101-200	201+
Step 3	\$2800	\$3400	\$4000	\$4600	\$5200
Step 4	\$3300	\$3900	\$4500	\$5100	\$5700

3. GSQ Commitment to Quality Annual Award

Accredited Head Start/Center Based Early Head Start Programs may receive the GSQ Commitment to Quality Annual Award after submitting their invoice through NHCIS. All programs that have been awarded their GSQ Quality Step at least 30 days before the end of the calendar year will be eligible for the annual award. Award amounts will depend on three criteria:

1. A program's GSQ Quality Step as of December 1 of that year;
2. License Capacity; and
3. Funds available through the Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration and its partners (e.g., philanthropy, business).

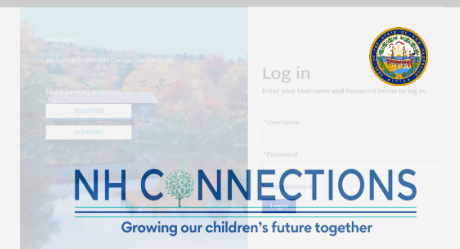
Resources for Providers

Support is available for programs and staff in a number of GSQ System areas:



NH Connections

Consumer education, resources & referrals for families, providers and communities



NHCIS

Program Profile, Individual registry accounts, training registrations, and more



Child Care Aware of NH

Resources for early care and education programs.
603-578-1386 ext. 2532
ccrta@snhs.org



ACROSS NH

Resources for Out-of-School Time programs
603-206-6848
acrossnh@seresc.net



Pyramid Model Consortium

Positive behavioral intervention and support framework that uses systems-thinking and implementation science to promote evidence-based practices



Preschool Technical Assistance Network

Consultation to support inclusion, provision of Coaches to support implementation of Pyramid Model practices program-wide
603-865-7145
PTANCoordinator@gmail.com



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GSQ Endorsements

In addition to quality standards, GSQ Endorsements are available to programs as described in this section. GSQ Endorsements are awarded in recognition of a program's strengths in meeting the GSQ criteria in specific areas known to promote quality care and education.

At this time, a GSQ Family Engagement Endorsement is available. It is anticipated that GSQ Endorsements in other areas will be developed over the next year.



Family Engagement Endorsement:

There are four options to attain this endorsement. Choose the option that **best suits your program**.

Option 1

Child care program has a written collaborative agreement with a state contracted Family Resource Center (FRC) or a community FRC affiliated with Family Support NH

AND Family Child Care Provider OR an administrator and 25% of eligible staff have completed a minimum of 6 hours of training in Bringing the Protective Factors to Life

AND Program has completed a Strengthening Families Self-Assessment and Action Plan

Option 2

Family Child Care Provider OR an administrator and 25% of eligible staff have completed a minimum of 6 hours of training in [Bringing the Protective Factors to Life](#)

AND Program has completed a Strengthening Families Self-Assessment and Action Plan

AND Program:

- Has and implements a written open door policy
- Conducts an annual family survey that includes family perspective on their engagement with the program and their child's development
- Offers ongoing family communication either with a monthly newsletter or with an app

AND Program implements two of the following practices:

- Provides referrals to outside agencies for families
- Provides ideas/suggestions to support learning at home
- Supports transitions to new classrooms/programs/public schools

Head Start Option

Head Start Program met Family Engagement requirements during most recent Federal Monitoring Review.

Accreditation Option

Program holds a current NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) Accreditation or NAFCC (National Association of Family Child Care) Accreditation.



Glossary of Terms

Active Child Care License: Child care licenses are issued by NH DHHS Child Care Licensing Unit.

- For GSQ Applicants: An active child care license is current (not expired) and has not been suspended, revoked, surrendered, or subject to administrative action by the Department within the 12 months preceding the GSQ application.
- For GSQ Financial Incentives: (Quarterly and Annual): The Department has the sole authority to determine if a provider shall be awarded incentive funds. Quarterly and Annual Quality Incentives shall only be issued to programs with an active child care license. No incentive funds shall be awarded to any program whose license has expired, has been suspended, revoked, surrendered, or whose license has been subject to administrative action by the Department within the 12 months preceding the award time period.

Administrator: A Director (or Provider of a Family Child Care)/Site Director or Assistant Director of the program applying.

Eligible Staff: Eligible staff for Early Childhood programs are lead teachers and associate teachers as defined by CCLU requirements. The staff member should be both qualified for, and acting as a lead or associate teacher. For Out-of-School Time programs, eligible staff are group leaders, site directors and site coordinators, as defined by CCLU requirements. The staff member should be both qualified and serving as a group leader, site director, or site coordinator.

Endorsements: GSQ Endorsements are awarded in recognition of a program's strengths in meeting the GSQ criteria in specific areas known to promote quality care and education.

Environment Rating Scale (ERS): Valid and reliable tools that measure process quality in child care settings. GSQ uses the following ERS tools:

- Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale- 3 (ITERS-3): This scale is designed to assess center-based child care programs for infants and toddlers, birth through age 2.
- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-3 (ECERS-3). This scale is designed to assess center-based child care programs for children ages 3 through 5.
- School Age Child Care Environment Rating Scale- Updated (SACERS-U). This scale is designed to assess group care programs for children ages 5 through 12, during their Out-of-School Time.
- Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS-3): This scale is designed to assess family child care programs located in a provider's home for children from infancy through school-age.

ERS Observation: A 3-hour observation conducted by a valid and reliable ERS assessor. GSQ Administrator will assign an assessor to observe a random selection of classrooms/groups.

ERS Self-Assessment: A self-assessment using the scale (see ERS definition above) appropriate for each classroom/group. The ERS Self-Assessment should be conducted by an administrator or staff member who has completed an approved ERS training.

Family Child Care: Child care program located in a provider's home for children/youth from infancy through school-age.

Family Child Care Provider: An individual who provides child care in their home for children/youth from infancy through school-age.

Glossary of Terms (Continued)

Group-School Age: A school age group may be defined as any of the following:

- An Out-of-School Time program of school age children who are supervised in one space.
- School age children who are grouped by age or enrollment and are supervised in one space.
- School age children who are grouped by who is supervising them in a shared space with other school age groups.
- When assessing one school age group in one space using the SACERS-U tool, an assessor may assess the whole group, sub focus on a defined sub group (by age, enrollment, or supervision) for the purpose of observation of interactions.

Licensing Requirements: Rules set by NH Child Care Licensing Unit (CCLU) that determine health and safety standards.

Professional Learning Community: or *PLC*, is a group of educators that meets regularly, shares expertise, and works collaboratively to improve teaching skills and can serve as a form of professional development.

Practice-Based Coaching (PBC): A professional development strategy that uses a cyclical process. This process supports teachers' use of effective teaching practices that lead to positive outcomes for children. PBC occurs in the context of collaborative partnerships.

NH Early Childhood (EC) Credential: Issued through NH DHHS (Department of Health and Human Services). The EC Credential is a demonstration of early childhood professionals' education and experience in early childhood. More information can be found at: [New Hampshire Early Childhood Professional Development System Guidebook \(nh-connections.org\)](https://www.nhconnections.org/new-hampshire-early-childhood-professional-development-system-guidebook)

NH Out-of-School Time (formerly "Afterschool") Credential: Issued through NH DHHS (Department of Health and Human Services). The Out-of-School Time Credential is a demonstration of Out-of-School Time professionals' education and experience in afterschool. More information can be found at: [New Hampshire Afterschool Professional Development System Guidebook](https://www.nhconnections.org/new-hampshire-afterschool-professional-development-system-guidebook)

Out-of-School Time Program (Formerly "Afterschool Program"): Programs that serve youth ages 5 to 12 during their Out-of-School Time including before and after school care, school vacations, and summer programs.

Quality Early Childhood and Out-of-School Time (Formerly "Afterschool") Programs: Quality early childhood and Out-of-School Time programs provide experiences that optimize every child's development, learning, and health; engage all families and communities in partnerships; and cultivate life-long learners and contributing members of society.

Quality Standards: The components of quality will be assessed and assigned a GSQ Step, thereby defining quality within the system. The two Quality Standards in the GSQ system are Staff Qualifications and Learning Environments.

Readiness Series (Pyramid Model): An e-module series in conjunction with peer learning communities which provides child care programs with information, tools and resources regarding program-wide commitment and implementation of the Pyramid Model Framework.

Rubric: An evaluation tool or set of guidelines used to promote the consistent application of learning expectations, learning objectives, or learning standards, or to measure their attainment against a consistent set of criteria.

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Project Directors

- Jaime Calcagni Salagaj (2017 – 2019) NH DHHS, DCYF
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- Andrea Foster (2021-current), NH DHHS, DEHS, BCDHSC

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
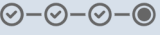






Appendices



Appendix A:

NH's Evolving System:

What Changed and What Stayed the Same?

Previous Quality Designation	Change	Revised QRIS (GSQ)
Quality Rating and Improvement System	 Name	Quality Recognition and Improvement System: Granite Steps for Quality
Three tiered rating system: licensed, licensed plus, accredited	 Steps	Four Steps of recognition: 1, 2, 3, 4
Incentive funding is a percentage of NH Child Care Scholarship Program enrollment, based on quality rating	 Incentives	Increased funding percentages for Child Care Scholarship Program participation AND Tiered quarterly and annual quality incentives
Head Start/Early Head Start not eligible for incentive funding	 Eligibility	Head Start/Center Based Early Head Start eligible for incentive funding
Quality rating identified by tier	 Quality Identification	Quality recognition identified through two standards, Staff Qualifications and Learning Environments, and four Steps
One-size-fits-all programs	 Criteria	Four identified program types with specific criteria rubrics
"Afterschool program"	 Wording	"Out-of-School Time" program
Prerequisites for all programs	 Prerequisites	Expanded prerequisites for all programs

Appendix B:

Environment Rating Scale Score Sheet Requirements

Total and Average Scores Example

This is an example of the score sheet an ERS Assessor will submit to The Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration once the program observation is complete. The image below shows a Step 3 application score sheet and the required minimum scores. Please note that all Subscales will be observed. Subscale titles may differ depending upon which tool is being used in your program.

Total and Average Scores			
	Subscale Total Score	# of Items Scored	Average Score
Space and Furnishings			
Personal Care Routines			
Language and Books			
→ Activities			> or = 2.5
→ Interaction			> or = 2.5
Program Structure			
TOTAL			> or = 3.5

As stated in the Standard 2 Rubric (applicable to all Family Child Care, Center Based, and Out-of-School Time programs selecting ERS Pathway):

- Step 3: Total Average Scores must be 3.5 with no group scoring less than 2.5 on the subscales: Activities and Interactions.
- Step 4: Total Average Scores must be 4.5 with no group scoring less than 3.5 on the subscales: Activities and Interactions.

Appendix C:

Environment Rating Scale Pathway

Review Process and Timeline

Days 1-30

- BCDHSC receives completed GSQ application
- BCDHSC reviews Prerequisites and Standard 1: Staff Qualifications
- Program will be notified if any components are missing

Days 31-60

- BCDHSC reviews for Standard 2: Learning Environments
- Program will be notified if any components are missing

Days 61-90

- If Step 1 or 2: BCDHSC awards GSQ Step! Congratulations, program is now in the GSQ system and can submit a GSQ Quarterly Quality Invoice!

Days 61-90

- If Step 3 or 4: Assessor schedules program visit
- Program assessment occurs
- Assessment results provided to the BCDHSC
- BCDHSC notifies program of Step Awarded. Congratulations, program is now in the GSQ system and can submit a GSQ Quarterly Quality Invoice!
- Optional ERS 6-month targeting Coaching begins

Support is available to programs during all parts of the GSQ application and review processes. Please see page 26 for detailed information about resources and supports available for programs.

Appendix D: Pyramid Model Pathway Review Process and Timeline

Days 1-30

- BCDHSC receives completed GSQ application
- BCDHSC reviews Prerequisites and Standard 1: Staff Qualifications
- Program will be notified if any components are missing

Days 31-60

- BCDHSC reviews for Standard 2: Learning Environments
- Program will be notified if any components are missing

Days 61-90

- Step 1: BCDHSC notifies program of Step 1 Awarded. Congratulations, program is now in the GSQ system and can submit a GSQ Quarterly Quality Invoice!
- Readiness Materials sent to provider to complete within 1 year of award date
- After the completion of the Readiness Series, program is invited to commit to Pyramid Model pathway and will be assigned a Program Coach

Days 91-120

- Step 2, 3 & 4: Program Coach provides BCDHSC TPOT/TPITOS dates conducted in program, along with required Step documents
- BCDHSC notifies program of Step Awarded. Congratulations, program is now in the GSQ system and can submit a GSQ Quarterly Quality Invoice!

Support is available to programs during all parts of the GSQ application and review processes. Please see page 26 for detailed information about resources and supports available for programs.

Appendix E: Works Cited

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Granite Steps for Quality New Hampshire's Quality Recognition and Improvement System