Quality Care and Education for Lifelong Success

Smart Start
San José

Program Quality Standards Guidelines

For Smart Start Sites

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SSSJ Program Quality Standards Guidelines

The SSSJ Program Quality Standards Guidelines are designed to serve as an internal continuous quality improvement tool to support child care centers and family child care homes alike in identifying strategies that improve the quality of early education offered through their programs. From licensing standards & regulatory compliance to inclusive environments meeting the needs of children at risk or with identified special needs, each SSSJ program quality standard area is equally important to promoting program quality and positive child outcomes.

The SSSJ Program Quality Standards Guidelines are organized into three areas: (1) *Basic Quality; (2) Intermediate Quality;* and (3) *Advanced Quality*. While *Advanced Quality* represents the level of quality to which SSSJ hopes early education programs will aspire, there is an expectation that all SSSJ sites will meet, at a minimum, strategies contained within *Basic Quality*. *Intermediate* and *Advanced Quality* strategies reflect a set of voluntary, progressive continuous quality improvement strategies that programs may adopt depending on their level of readiness and as resources allow. Under each quality area, strategies are included to assist sites in transforming their programs over time from *Basic Quality* to *Advanced Quality*.

Although the SSSJ Program Quality Standards Guidelines will not be used by the City of San José to rate program quality, SSSJ providers will be requested to report annually on their success in meeting *Basic Quality* strategies in addition to providing a summary of their efforts to implement *Intermediate* and *Advanced Quality* strategies.

For additional information or assistance with the Program Quality Standards Guidelines, please call (408) 808-2617

1 Licensing Standards & Regulatory Compliance

2 Program Environmental Rating Scales

3 Developmentally Appropriate Care

4 Curriculum that Meets Kindergarten Readiness Criteria & Use of A Recognized Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Tool

5 Regular Communication with Local Elementary Schools

6 Ongoing Parent Participation in Programs

7 Access to Computers and Technology for Children

8 Cultural Competency, Diversity and Equity

9 Inclusive Environment Meetings Needs of Children at Risk or with Identified Special Needs

Background

The City of San José has received a federal grant to support a culture of continuous quality improvement in Smart Start San José (SSSJ) early education facilities by providing sites with the tools and resources needed to assess and improve the quality of programs serving young children, age 0-5. During the planning phase of the grant, the Project Advisory Team (PAT) was formed to develop recommendations that provide greater clarity to current SSSJ program quality standard areas. Although not as broad in scope, the SSSJ Program Quality Standards Guidelines will assist SSSJ early education sites in better aligning their programs with future State requirements under the California Early Learning Quality Improvement System.

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Smart Start San José Program Quality Standards Guidelines

SSSJ Program Quality Areas	SSSJ Program Quality Standards Guidelines Overview
Licensing Standards & Regulatory Compliance	Requires compliance with State licensing standards and promotes lower adult-child ratios.
Program Rating Scales	Requires administration of the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised, the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised, and the Infant-Toddler Environments Rating Scale-Revised and the development and implementation of action plans to raise program average ratings across scale domains.
Developmentally Appropriate Care	Ensures programs are using generally accepted measures of developmentally appropriate care that are integrated within curriculum.
Curriculum that Meets Kindergarten Readiness Criteria & Use of A Recognized Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Tool	Ensures young children are prepared for the transition to kindergarten and guides program development and continuous quality improvement activities.
Regular Communication with Local Elementary Schools	Encourages collaborative partnerships between early education programs and local elementary schools to support successful transitions.
Ongoing Parent Participation in Programs	Empowers families to engage in program activities, planning, development, evaluation and governance and to become their child's first teacher.
Access to Computers and Technology for Children	Supports young children's developmentally appropriate use of technology to support and extend learning and development under the guidance of adults who understand how to use it appropriately.
Cultural Competency, Diversity and Equity	Encourages program environments that promote equity, learning, growth and development for children, families, and teaching staff, as well as opportunities for children and staff to gain an understanding and appreciation of diversity.
Inclusive Environment Meetings Needs of Children at Risk or with Identified Special Needs	Promotes inclusive, welcoming environments and screening, information, referrals, and supports for children with special needs.

Smart Start San José Program Quality Standards Guidelines

SSSJ Program Quality Area #1: Licensing Standards & Regulatory Compliance			
Focus Areas	**Basic Quality Strategies**	**Intermediate Quality Strategies**	**Advanced Quality Strategies**
Child Care License	1. Program has secured and holds a child care license which is not probationary, and program is not involved in a compliance plan. 2. Program has not been fined by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD), for failing to correct a deficiency in a timely manner or for repeated offenses.	1. Program conducts annual self-assessment using CCLD Family Child Care Home Self Evaluation (www.ccld.ca.gov/res/pdf/SelfEvaluationForFCCH.pdf) and Child Care Center Self Evaluation (www.ccld.ca.gov/res/pdf/SelfEvaluationForCCCenters.pdf). 2. Program develops and implements an action plan based on self-assessment findings, if any.	1. Program participates in an annual licensing review by an external organization or peer reviewer. 2. Program develops and implements an action plan based on review findings, if any.

	Age of Child	**Basic Quality Ratios**	**Intermediate Quality Ratios**	**Advanced Quality Ratios**
Child Care Center Child: Adult Ratios[1]	**Infant**	4:1 for group of 12	3:1 for group of 12 or 4:1 for group of 8	3:1 for group of 9
	Toddler	4:1 for group of 20	4:1 for group of 12	4:1 for group of 12
	Preschool	12:1 for group of 24	8:1 for group of 24 or 10:1 for group of 20	8:1 for group of 24 or 10:1 for group of 20
Family Child Care Home Child-Adult Ratios	1. Program meets Title 22 licensing criteria.		1. Program meets Title 22 licensing criteria.	1. Program meets Title 22 licensing criteria.

[1] These ratios are in alignment with the California Early Learning Quality Improvement System and may differ from State licensing criteria.

Smart Start San José Program Quality Standards Guidelines

SSSJ Program Quality Area #2: Program Rating Scales			
Focus Area	**Basic Quality Strategies**	**Intermediate Quality Strategies**	**Advanced Quality Strategies**
Environment/ Program Rating Scales	1. Program annually administers either the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R) or the Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale - Revised (FCCERS-R). 2. Program annually administers the Infant-Toddler Environmental Rating Scale – Revised (ITERS-R) when serving children, birth through 30 months (if applicable). 3. Program develops and implements an annual plan to raise its ECERS-R FCCERS-R, and ITERS-R average ratings.	1. Program participates in an internal peer review of ECERS-R, FCCERS-R or ITERS-R ratings annually.[2] 2. Program achieves an average rating of 4 to 5 across all ECERS-R, FCCERS-R or ITERS-R domains and develops and implements an annual plan to raise its average ratings.	1. Program participates in an external review by a peer or outside organization trained in ECERS-R, FCCERS-R or ITERS-R observation.[3] 2. Program achieves an average rating of greater than 5 across all ECERS-R, FCCERS-R or ITERS-R domains and develops and implements an annual plan to raise its average ratings as part of its continuous quality improvement process.

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[2] The individual or organization conducting the internal peer review may represent a program affiliate as long as the peer reviewer is not involved in providing care within the classroom or program under review.

[3] It is the intention of SSSJ to identify a pool of certified, reliable peer reviewers to partner with certified programs committed to implementing *Advanced Quality* program rating scale strategies.

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SSSJ Program Quality Area #3: Developmentally Appropriate Care			
Focus Area	**Basic Quality Strategies**	**Intermediate Quality Strategies**	**Advanced Quality Strategies**
Developmentally Appropriate Care Measures	1. Program conducts annual self-assessment to ensure that at least one of the following generally accepted measures of developmentally appropriate care are being met: • Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8 (NAEYC) • Head Start Program Performance Standards • Child Development Associates Competency Standards for Family Day Care (Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition) • The Accreditation for Family Day Care (National Association for Family Day Care) • The Child Care Center and Family Day Care Rating Scale (Harmes & Clifford) • California Department of Education (CDE)/Child Care Division standards for child care and preschool programs • California Early Learning Foundations and Frameworks 2. Program develops and implements action plan to address any areas in need of improvement identified through the self-assessment. 3. Program begins orienting program and staff on a developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate programming that reflects the chosen measure.	1. Program conducts annual peer review of how the program aligns with the chosen developmentally appropriate care measure. 2. Program develops and implements an action plan addressing areas in need of improvement. 3. Program develops and builds competency in integrating its chosen developmental measure into program activities, such as preparing developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate lessons plans for children which include social, emotional, cognitive and physical domains.	1. Program conducts external review of how program has integrated developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate curriculum into the program. 2. Program develops and implements an action plan addressing any review findings. 3. Program prepares lesson plans that are based on input from families and staff to meet the needs and interests of each individual child. 4. Program regularly assesses individual child progress. 5. Program supports professional development of staff. 6. Program works one-on-one with families on strategies for creating consistency between the home and program relating to developmentally appropriate child practices.

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SSSJ Program Quality Area #4: Curriculum that Meets Kindergarten Readiness Criteria & Use of a Recognized Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Tool			
Focus Area	**Basic Quality Strategies**	**Intermediate Quality Strategies**	**Advanced Quality Strategies**
Standardized Evidence-Based Developmental Profile Tool	1. Program provides staff access to training in the administration of an age appropriate, evidence-based developmental profile tool. 2. Program staff administer the chosen developmental profile tool to each enrolled child. 3. Program staff administer the chosen developmental profile tool in a manner that all children can understand.	1. Program staff are knowledgeable about the California Department of Education Pre-Kindergarten Learning and Development Guidelines and the California Preschool Learning Foundations. 2. Program conducts an annual self-assessment to strengthen program kindergarten readiness practices, activities, and staff development. 3. Program develops and implements an action plan to address any self-assessment findings. 4. Program staff regularly document and monitor individual child progress toward kindergarten readiness and integrate this information into lessons plans and program curriculum. 5. Program creates developmental portfolios for children including child progress reports and other documentation such as work examples or children's art. 6. For dual language learners, program has developmental goals available in a manner understandable to families in their home language, as well as English. 7. Program supports families in using kindergarten readiness strategies at home.	1. Program staff use strategies consistent with the California Department of Education Pre-Kindergarten Learning and Development Guidelines and the California Preschool Learning Foundations. 2. Program is aware of the California Preschool Learning Foundations/Pre-Kindergarten Learning and Development Guidelines to identify continuous quality improvement activities to strengthen program kindergarten readiness practices, activities, and staff development.

Smart Start San José Program Quality Standards Guidelines

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<td colspan="4">SSSJ Program Quality Area #4: Curriculum that Meets Kindergarten Readiness Criteria
& Use of a Recognized Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Tool Continued</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus Area</td>
<td>Basic Quality Strategies</td>
<td>Intermediate Quality Strategies</td>
<td>Advanced Quality Strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Transition</td>
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1. Program shares general information with families about kindergarten registration.

2. Program meets with parents about the transition to kindergarten.

3. Program provides families with information about services to support child development.

4. Program provides staff access to training on kindergarten readiness requirements.

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1. Program provides reports on a consistent basis to families about their child's developmental progress.

2. Program shares information with families and provides assistance if needed in preparing kindergarten enrollment materials.

3. Program shares information with families on kindergarten readiness and develops/monitors individualized transition plans that contain home- and program-based activities to support readiness.

4. Program provides referrals to community-based services to support children in meeting kindergarten readiness requirements (As needed).

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1. Program provides regularly scheduled reports to families about their child's developmental progress.

2. Program supports families in implementing kindergarten readiness activities at home and supports family progress toward engaging their children in readiness activities.

3. Program actively solicits family feedback about the transition of their children to kindergarten and child progress through grade 3 and uses family feedback to inform continuous quality improvement activities.

4. Program facilitates face-to-face meetings between parents and preschools and kindergartens such as organizing field trips and school tours.

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SSSJ Program Quality Area #5: Regular Communication with Local Elementary Schools			
Focus Area	**Basic Quality Strategies**	**Intermediate Quality Strategies**	**Advanced Quality Strategies**
School Collaboration	1. Program informs parents about kindergarten registration at least one year before their children are eligible to attend. 2. Program has regular communication with elementary schools where the majority of their children are expected to transition. 3. Program provides families with copies of child progress reports to share with elementary schools that their children may attend.	1. Program prepares child transitional plans with input from families. 2. Program monitors local elementary school expectations for kindergarten enrollment requirements.	1. Program staff and local elementary school staff participate in joint meetings, site visits and trainings to improve kindergarten readiness and transitions. 2. Program engages families in transition to school activities in partnership with established school/center liaisons such as hosting information sessions with parents, offering field trips/school visits, or providing onsite enrollment support. 3. Program has process for obtaining regular feedback from parents, kindergarten teachers, and/or school principals about former children in their program and uses this information to adapt lesson plans and/or curriculum to support kindergarten readiness and success.

Smart Start San José Program Quality Standards Guidelines

SSSJ Program Quality Area #6: Ongoing Parent Participation in Programs			
Focus Area	**Basic Quality Strategies**	**Intermediate Quality Strategies**	**Advanced Quality Strategies**
Family Welcoming, Engagement, and Effective Communications Practices	1. Program provides a comprehensive family orientation that includes visiting rights and the program handbook. 2. Program acknowledges families at drop off and pick up and provides a communications board onsite for families to receive program and other information. 3. Program offers a variety of opportunities for families to contribute to the program that are convenient to the families. 4. Program facilitates two annual group activities for children and families such as family nights or potlucks. 5. Program gathers information from families on their needs, goals, and preferences. 6. Program communicates with families in a manner or method that meets the linguistic and literacy needs of the families served.[4] 7. Program makes daily routine and calendar of activities readily available to families.	1. Program has a communications system that utilizes families preferred communication methods including a group information dissemination system such as a newsletter. 2. Program solicits input from families to help shape curriculum and practices. 3. Program develops plans to support needs, goals and preferences of families. 4. Program surveys families annually about program services, staff relationships and child progress.	1. Program uses social or electronic media to communicate with families. 2. Program uses strategies to adapt program to meet individual family needs. 3. Program holds visits with families in neutral, mutually convenient locations to strengthen relationships between programs and families and support child development goals. 4. Program uses family survey information and feedback to develop and implement continuous quality improvement activities.

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[4] Programs should strive to communicate in the top predominant languages spoken by the families they serve to the maximum extent possible.

Smart Start San José Program Quality Standards Guidelines

SSSJ Program Quality Area #6: Ongoing Parent Participation in Programs *Continued*			
Focus Areas	**Basic Quality Strategies**	**Intermediate Quality Strategies**	**Advanced Quality Strategies**
Family Strengths and Empowerment **Meaningful Connections between Families and Community Resources**	1. Program provides information to parents about healthy child growth and development. 2. Program maintains and disseminates information to families about current community resources on a regular basis and as it is received. 3. Program informs families of relevant, local community events. 4. Program staff are knowledgeable about community resources.	1. Program provides guidance to parents about healthy child growth and development. 2. Program displays a list of current community resources that is readily accessible to families. 3. Program provides support and encouragement for parents to become better informed primary decision makers for their children. 4. Program links families to identified liaisons for public agencies and community-based resources when needed. 5. Program provides assistance to families in navigating community resources as needed.	1. Program provides access to a support person for families to address areas of need such as legal advocacy or early learning specialists. 2. Program provides training and support for parents to develop their advocacy, education, and family literacy skills. 3. Program offers opportunities for mutual support among families including parent networking events and a physical space where families can gather and meet. 4. Program provides opportunities for families to participate in positions of leadership and advocacy within the program. 5. Program informs families of policy changes at the national, state and local levels that affect early care and education services. 6. Program has working relationships with publicly-funded, community-based services such as health, education and mental health. 7. Program invites community programs to share their areas of expertise with staff, parents and children. 8. Program provides direct advocacy for families in accessing community resources as needed.

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SSSJ Program Quality Area #7: Access to Computers and Technology for Children			
Focus Area	**Basic Quality Strategies**	**Intermediate Quality Strategies**	**Advanced Quality Strategies**
Availability and Use of Computers and Technology	1. Preschool children have access to developmentally appropriate software that enriches curriculum content, classroom activities, and concepts and promotes positive social values. 2. Program ensures equipment is safe and comfortable for children's use. 3. Program has developed guidelines which govern the use of technology in support of a well-rounded, developmentally appropriate, and child-centered curriculum. 4. Program staff demonstrate to young children the responsible handling and use of technology equipment.	1. Program provides staff access to training on the use of multimedia, working with young children and multimedia, and ways to integrate computers and technology into the curriculum. 2. Program has access to resources to enrich the program's capacity to use technology in a developmentally appropriate manner. 3. Program staff foster the use of technology as an education resource and a tool for collaborative problem solving and cooperative play.	1. Program staff are able to support children in exploring the use of technology as an extension of the program curriculum or a research tool.

Smart Start San José Program Quality Standards Guidelines

SSSJ Program Quality Area #8: Cultural Competency, Diversity and Equity[5]			
Focus Area	**Basic Quality Strategies**	**Intermediate Quality Strategies**	**Advanced Quality Strategies**
Program Competency	1. Program has policies and practices that reflect the traditions of the children enrolled in the program. 2. Physical space, materials, curriculum and interactions reflect the value of diversity, as well as the children's and families' culture. 3. Program has ongoing opportunities in place for communication with families regarding child's progress and behavioral, social and physical needs. 4. Program invites families to develop and share material that is meaningful to their history and traditions.	1. Program solicits initial and ongoing information from each family on communications preferences, children's goals, language preferences, and feelings about staff cultural competence. 2. Program uses results of family input to evaluate staff progress in cultural competence and communication, goals for children toward which both staff and families should work, and ideas for enhancing family-staff communication. 3. Program ensures that bilingual or multilingual staff participate in family conferences or provide access to others available to translate as needed.	1. Communication methods to families such as the parent handbook, policy manual, and newsletters are translated into the languages of families enrolled in the program. 2. Program partners with families to develop a language acquisition plan for all children.

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<tr>
<td align="center">Focus Areas</td>
<td align="center">Basic Quality Strategies</td>
<td align="center">Intermediate Quality Strategies</td>
<td align="center">Advanced Quality Strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personnel, Staff Development & Program Administration</td>
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1. Program creates an environment that promotes equity, learning, growth and development for all children, families and teaching staff.

2. Program provides leadership and professional development opportunities for staff that support culturally competent policies and practices.

3. Program staff are aware of culture's influence on their own beliefs and practices.

4. Program implements a variety of formal and informal strategies to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family structure, their preferred childrearing practices and information families share about their socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, religious and cultural backgrounds.

5. Program provides staff access to and requires staff participation in professional development training on cultural competence and inclusive practices.

6. Program staff are able to use basic phrases in the languages spoken by the children.
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1. Program provides opportunities for all children to gain an understanding and appreciation for multiple cultures.

2. Program creates and monitors program staff professional development plans which include training on communication with diverse families and understanding the cultural practices relative to children served.
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1. Program creates a culture of intentionality around increasing their program's level of cultural competence to ensure that cultural competence is an integral part of providing quality early education.

2. Program staff is trained in and uses on a daily basis culturally competent strategies, practices and approaches to learning.

3. Program staff is trained in and uses on a daily basis culturally competent strategies, practices and approaches which create programs that support children's home language while also supporting second language acquisition.

4. Program regularly monitors staff to observe for cultural competence and sensitivity and coaches and trains staff where needed.
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[6] The SSSJ Quality Area #9, Cultural Competency, Diversity Equity, Quality Standards Guidelines, are based on the National Association for Education of Young Children Quality Benchmark for Cultural Competence Project. For more info, please visit *www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/policy/state/QBCC_Tool.pdf.*

Smart Start San José Program Quality Standards Guidelines

SSSJ Program Quality Area #9: Inclusive Environment Meeting Needs of Children at Risk or with Identified Special Needs			
Focus Areas	**Basic Quality Strategies**	**Intermediate Quality Strategies**	**Advanced Quality Strategies**
Welcoming Environments **Screening** **Information and Referrals** **Interventions, Services and Supports**	1. Program welcomes families of children with special needs and provides an environment that is accessible to all children. 2. Program ensures that children with special needs are treated with respect and caring and are not subject to bullying or isolation. 3. Program complies with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. 4. Program encourages families to share information about Individualized Family Service Plan or Individual Education Plans to enable staff to help meet the needs of their children. 5. Program provides information to families about their rights.	1. Program makes a high quality, culturally and developmentally appropriate, evidence-based screening tool available to all families enrolling their children in the program.[7] 2. Program works with families to screen their children. 3. Program engages families in the screening process and results are shared with the family in a confidential and supportive manner. 4. Program has provided staff access to training in recognizing behavioral and health needs of young children. 5. Program offers families information about appropriate agencies for further assessment based on screening results. 6. Program staff are knowledgeable about best practices that promote the social-emotional development of children such as the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Learning. 7. Program provides families with a resource list of supports available through basic early intervention services provided by the local Regional Center, county mental health services, the local school districts and other appropriate agencies as needed.	1. Program provides access to staff training on inclusive practices, accommodation strategies, and special needs specific to enrolled children. 2. Program refers families to appropriate agencies for further assessment and support based on screening results. 3. Program uses screening results to implement child specific intervention strategies, program adaptations/ modifications, and collaborates with service providers when appropriate. 4. Program offers support services for children with special needs in partnership with community agencies such as mental health consultation services. 5. Program has qualified staff participating in assessment and evaluation meetings with families such as Individualized Family Service Plan or Individualized Education Plan meetings. 6. Program provides advocacy for children with special needs. 7. Program teachers are knowledgeable about teacher-child class interaction and best practices.

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[7] The Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional and Desired Results Developmental Profile Access are example of screening tools.