

Staff Categories

One important part of quality is the education and qualifications of the individuals primarily responsible for caring for the young children in a program. As a program enters Level 2 information on “Directors”, “Lead Teachers”, or “Family Child Care Providers”, please keep the following information in mind. If the program is a classroom based setting, they will enter information for “Directors” and “Lead Teachers”. If the program is a family child care home, they will enter information for “Family Child Care Providers”. It is extremely important to use the following definitions to decide which staff members to include when filling out the online Level 2 Education and Qualifications information. This will ensure that the terms are being used as consistently as possible across programs, which vary widely with regard to how they are staffed and organized.

“Director”

These are individuals in educational leadership positions in *classroom-based settings* (they make decisions about instruction, etc.). Programs vary widely in the terminology they use for staff in leadership positions, and “Director” was selected for this purpose, although educational leaders within programs may hold different titles. There must be at least one director listed per program.*

“Lead Teacher”

These are individuals who are primarily responsible for a group of children in a *classroom-based setting*. There must be at least one Lead Teacher for each classroom in the program* (infants through prekindergarten). There may be many individuals in the program that are considered part of the “teaching staff”, but a program should only list “Lead Teachers” in their Level 2 Education and Qualifications information.

“Family Child Care Provider”

Family child care homes vary greatly in how they are organized to provide care for young children. For the purpose of Level 2 Education and Qualifications information, this would be the main individual who is responsible for a group of children in care at the family child care home. If the children are cared for in more than one group, then the provider would need to enter information for more than one “Family Child Care Provider”. There may be many individuals in the family home program that are considered part of the staff, but the program only needs to list “Family Child Care Providers” in the Level 2 Education and Qualifications information.

*For staff that serve as both a director/administrator and a lead classroom teacher, they may list themselves under both categories.



Child Related Credits

A teacher's formal education in child development or early childhood education has an impact on children's school readiness. When teachers have some formal education, such as child related college credits, a Child Development Associate (CDA), or another professional certificate or credential, they are more prepared to intentionally support children's learning through high quality interactions.

“Child-related” includes fields such as, but not limited to, child development, early childhood education, early childhood special education, and elementary education and should support one or more of Virginia’s Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals. All college credits must be from a regionally accredited college or university.

To articulate the skills and competencies desired in the early childhood workforce, Virginia’s Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals outline standards for competent practice, identifying what early childhood professionals must know, be able to do, and care about to provide quality early care and education. The eight core areas of competency used to organize Virginia’s Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals are:

- Health, Safety, and Nutritional Practices
- Understanding Child Growth and Development
- Appropriate Classroom Observation and Assessment
- Partnering with Families and Communities
- Learning Environment
- Effective Interactions
- Program Management
- Teacher Qualifications and Professional Development

Child related college level courses that cover at least one or more of these core areas of competency would count towards the Level 2 criteria.

For additional information about Virginia’s Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals: <http://www.earlychildhood.virginia.gov/documents/Competencies.pdf>

Alternative Pathways

*If a program does not meet the threshold for Level 2 Education criteria, the program has **two alternative pathway options** to continue improving quality in the area of Education and Qualifications, in order to achieve Level 2 status.*

1. **The program may consider the Professional Development Plan Alternative Pathway.** This alternative pathway is designed for programs who want to begin working on quality improvement in the area of Curriculum and Assessment *at the same time* as they work on quality improvement in Education and Qualifications. By selecting this option, programs will develop and submit a Professional Development Plan that outlines how the program’s staff will improve their Education and Qualifications to bring them up to Level 2 requirements. The Professional Development Plan will include information about goals and timeframes, and will be monitored every 6 months for progress toward these goals.



Submitting a satisfactory Professional Development Plan will satisfy the criteria of Level 2, and the program will be awarded Level 2 status. This will allow the program to implement the Professional Development Plan, while *simultaneously* working ahead on some of the criteria for Level 3.

Progress toward Professional Development Plan goals will be monitored 6 and 12 months after submission, and programs are expected to submit proof of enrollment or other progress towards meeting the Level 2 requirements at these checkpoints (for example: goals achieved, staff enrolled in courses, progress toward CDA or other certificates/credentials). All Virginia Quality programs are required to re-submit Education and Qualification data annually, and if progress toward Professional Development Plan goals has not been demonstrated (for example: no goals have been achieved, no staff have enrolled in courses, no progress toward CDA or other certificates/credentials), the program will not be permitted to utilize the Professional Development Plan Alternative Pathway a second time, meaning that Level 1 status will be awarded at the time of their annual review.

Programs using the Professional Development Alternative Pathway may begin work on the criteria and activities required to achieve Level 3 status; however, Level 3 status will not be awarded until the program is meeting Level 2 Education and Qualifications in full (without an Alternative Pathway).

- 2. The Program can consider a Level 2 Education Waiver.** The Level 2 Education Waiver is an option for programs who are able to meet Level 3 Curriculum and Assessment requirements AND have Level 4 or higher scores on the Classroom Assessment Scoring System and Environment Rating Scales. Level 2 Education Waivers are considered only in rare instances where the staff in a program has received high scores and extensive training on the CLASS and ERS observation tools, but the staff do not meet Level 2 Education and Qualifications requirements. If such a program also has an intentional teaching framework or curriculum in place that is aligned to Virginia's Milestones of Child Development, they may be eligible for this waiver.

The steps to receiving a waiver are: a) submit a Request for Level 2 Education Waiver form; if approved to move forward, b) complete all Level 3 criteria and required activities, including the Curriculum Checklist and CLASS/ERS Self-Studies; c) have an on-site observation from a Virginia Quality Rater using the CLASS and ERS tools, in which the program earns Level 4 or higher scores.

If the on-site observation demonstrates that the program is providing children with interactions and environments that score at Level 4 or higher, then the Level 2 Education Waiver will be granted, and the program will be awarded Level 4 or 5 status, depending on the scores. However, programs that fail to demonstrate scores at Level 4 or higher will be denied the Level 2 Education Waiver, meaning that they will remain at Level 1 status. In that case, programs may wish to consider the Professional Development Plan Alternative Pathway (*see #2 above*).

Before requesting a waiver, programs should review the scores required for Level 4 and 5, and discuss this option with their Quality Coordinator to discuss prior observation score and training history, to determine if the program is likely to score in this range.



Module Completion

The Level 2 modules available through the Online Professional Development Series are made available at no cost to Virginia Quality programs for the purpose of professional development. The goal of the online modules is to ensure that there is a consistent baseline of quality information and training available statewide for all programs participating in Virginia Quality.

As a part of the required improvement activities for achieving Level 2 status, programs will need to utilize each online module in some way to enhance staff's knowledge of several key areas of providing quality preschool and child care services. However, programs have choices about how to use these modules. Virginia Quality recognizes the variety in the ways that preschools and child care programs organize their staff and professional development opportunities, and the modules are presented in a flexible format so there are choices about how they are used. All modules are presented through Virginia Quality's Learn Point system, and at least one administrator at your program will need to create an account to access the modules. (Access codes will be provided to participating programs by the Regional Quality Coordinators)

Virginia Quality Learn Point Log In Page - <http://virginiaquality.learnpointlms.com/>

Following completion of the Level 2 Professional Development series, programs will enter information about how their program has used the modules as part of ongoing professional development, using one of the three following options:

Option 1. Group training. Programs may wish to view and participate in the modules together with their staff as a group. This may mean that viewing a module is incorporated into regular staff meetings, or a planned in-service day for professional development. The director or other educational leader facilitating the group training should review the module beforehand and consider opportunities for questions or discussions following the module. Programs can also request to have a TA Specialist facilitate the group staff module training by contacting their Quality Coordinator

NOTE: If a program uses this option to complete a module, they'll be able to print a completion certificate for the individual's account which was used to show the module. Completion certificates are not required for Virginia Quality participation, but providers may wish to print these to track training hours for licensing or other purposes. If the program wishes to give credit to individual staff members trained in this way, they would need to keep track of attendance logs and hours during these group training sessions.

Option 2. Individual training (Online or view via CD-ROM). A director or educational leader at the program can watch the modules on their own and track progress within the online system. Programs that wish to have individual staff member watch the modules on their own, may either share their user access account with individual staff members, request a copy of the modules on CD to share with staff members, or request user account access for individual teachers. (Requests for CDs or additional user account access must include an explanation of why this request is needed and how the program director intends to monitor individual teacher usage. Requests should be submitted to Regional Coordinators). This option allows for individual teachers to view the modules on their own schedule, and track their own progress. And, since modules can be viewed as many times as needed, this option is ideal for orienting new staff, or providing refreshers as part of individual staff professional development plans.



NOTE: Using the individual online option, a staff member would be able to print a certificate from the modules that they completed on their own through the Virginia Quality Learn Point site. Completion certificates are not required for Virginia Quality participation, but providers may wish to print these to track training hours for licensing or other purposes. If verification of the “trainer” is needed, please include the Course Information sheet provided for each module. It is also recommended that providers check with their local licensing specialist for additional assistance.

Option 3. Attend in person regional training. Some of the Virginia Quality modules may be available as in-person training sessions, facilitated by local specialists. These in-person trainings are live versions of the Virginia Quality modules, and only the official Virginia Quality modules and topics will count towards a program’s Level 2 Education and Qualifications requirements. If a program attends an in-person version of a module, the program would enter this information when completing Level 2.

NOTE: Completion certificates would be provided by the organization delivering the training. Completion certificates are not required for Virginia Quality participation, but providers may wish to print these to track training hours for licensing or other purposes.

Documenting Module Completion – The following information will be required for Level 2 module completion

1. Name of Module and Date Completed (Level 2 module topics only)
2. Description of how the program completed each of the Level 2 modules (Program will chose one of the options above that best describes how their program completed each module)
3. Description of the types of individuals that completed each module (may select all that apply)
 - Director/Administrators
 - Family Child Care Provider
 - Lead Teachers
 - Assistant Teachers
 - Support staff
 - Owner
 - Board Members
 - Parents
4. Programs will need to answer the following questions about their experience with each Level 2 module on a scale of 1-5, with 1 representing “low” and 5 representing “high”:
 - a. On a scale of 1-5 rate your level of awareness about this topic before reviewing the module ____
 - b. On a scale of 1-5 rate your level of awareness about this topic after reviewing the module ____
 - c. On a scale of 1-5 rate the value of this information for your program_____

Level 2 Module Descriptions

Title	Description	Length / Training Hours
Resources for School Readiness	Participants will learn about Virginia’s <i>Milestones of Child Development</i> and Virginia’s <i>Foundation Blocks for Early Learning</i> and how to use these resources in their child care or preschool program to support children’s school readiness.	60 minutes / 1 clock hour of training
Introduction to Intentional Teaching	Participants will learn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The characteristics of responsive of intentional teachers • The elements of best practice in intentional teaching • How to implement intentional teaching in their child care or preschool program 	30 minutes / 0.5 clock hours of training
High Quality Interactions	Participants will learn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of teacher-child interactions on children’s learning • The different types of interactions in high quality child care or preschool programs • How interactions are rated in Virginia’s QRIS using the CLASS™ 	30 minutes / 0.5 clock hours of training
Play-Based Learning Environments	Participants will learn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why a play-based environment is important for children’s learning • Creative ways to incorporate play into their child care or preschool program • How play-based environments are rated in Virginia’s QRIS using the Environment Rating Scale 	45 minutes / 0.75 clock hours of training
Including Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs	Participants will learn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The definition of inclusion in early childhood settings • The benefits of inclusion • How attitude and philosophy impact inclusive practices • How to implement inclusive practices in their child care or preschool program 	45 minutes / 0.75 clock hours of training
Supporting Kindergarten Transition	Participants will learn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of Kindergarten transition to children’s future success • How to support children’s transition to Kindergarten • Creative transition activities they can put in place at their child care or preschool program 	15 minutes / 0.25 clock hours of training
Resources for Working with Families	Participants will learn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 5 protective factors that strengthen families • How to support and engage families in meaningful ways • How to access free resources through the Strengthening Families™ website 	30 minutes / 0.5 clock hours of training
Building Cultural Competence	Participants will learn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The definitions of culture and cultural competence • How to recognize different aspects of culture • Creative ways to include culturally responsive teaching practices in their child care or preschool program 	15 minutes / 0.25 clock hours of training
New Staff Orientation and Professional Development module (<i>for administrators</i>)	Participants will learn: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practices and strategies around staff orientation and on-going professional development • About resources for orienting and mentoring new and seasoned employees • About processes and outcomes of professional goal-setting and self-reflection • How to identify strategies for improving employee competencies through professional development planning 	60 minutes / 1 clock hour of training