

Memorandum

TO: NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES
AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

FROM: Jill Bourne

**SUBJECT: EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM
QUALITY STANDARDS**

DATE: January 28, 2019

Approved



Date

2-6-2019

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee take the following actions:

1. Accept the staff report on the development of quality standards for City programs that serve young children, as specified by the Education and Digital Literacy Strategy and recommend this item for full Council consideration at the March 5, 2019 Council meeting;
2. Refer the proposed Early Education Program Quality Standards to the City Council for adoption; and
3. Direct staff to return to the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee in September 2019 with a report on progress implementing the Early Program Quality Standards.

OUTCOME

The Neighborhood Services and Education Committee will be fully informed about the proposed Early Education Quality Standards that have been developed by staff for City programs serving children (ages 0-5). The Committee will have provided feedback and adopted a set of Standards for staff to implement, measure, and report back.

BACKGROUND

On June 9, 2016, Mayor Liccardo issued a memorandum to the Rules and Open Government Committee, recommending that the City Manager be directed to “develop a citywide strategy for supporting education and digital literacy, in consultation with our schools, non-profit afterschool and summer service providers, foundations, the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE), and the community. On June 15, 2016, the Rules and Open Government Committee

“green lighted” this recommendation, which directed the City Manager to designate lead City staff to coordinate a strategy consistent with stated priorities. On September 1, 2016, the City Manager issued a memorandum designating the City Librarian as lead staff in coordinating the Education and Digital Literacy Initiative.

Education and Digital Literacy Strategy

On May 7, 2018, the City Council held a special meeting regarding the Education and Digital Literacy (EDL) Strategy. The San José Public Library (Library, SJPL), as lead department, partnered with other City departments [Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services (PRNS), Work2Future), school districts and SCCOE, collaborative organizations (First 5, Region 5), and established programs (SJ Learns, SJ Promise, SJ Works)] to devise and present recommendations for a comprehensive citywide EDL Strategy in three educational development areas:

- Early Education – Entering School Ready to Learn and Succeed;
- Learning by Grade Level Proficiency – Expanding Education Beyond the School Day; and
- Pathways to Post-Academic Success – Graduating Ready for College and Career.

City Council provided feedback and gave direction regarding future policy, roles and governance, quality standards, and reporting expectations. In addition to giving unanimous approval of all recommendations, City Council directed staff, in partnership with appropriate networks and leading agencies, to “establish evidence-based quality standards for all programs that are City-funded, sponsored, or endorsed; align program standards with existing standards and program assessments whenever possible.”

Since that time, City staff and partners have advanced the implementation of the EDL Strategy actions, including many pilot efforts, formalization of key partnerships, and development of evidence-based quality standards and assessment requirements for all programs.

Early Education – Entering School Ready to Learn and Succeed

During the first five years of life, children are developing rapidly physically, cognitively, and emotionally. This period provides the foundation for a child’s future success in school and, ultimately, in life. A child’s readiness for school depends on meeting her/his comprehensive needs, which include: physical motor development, language and literacy, social and emotional development, and cognitive development.

Significant work has already been done in San José and Santa Clara County to create a coordinated approach for improving the availability and measurement of quality childcare and preschool experiences. The City has been engaged in the development of the 2017 Early Learning Master Plan (ELMP) and the related advocacy collaborative known as Strong Start of Santa Clara County, recognizing that the long-term goal of increasing the number of licensed preschool seats requires significant funding for facilities.

The EDL Strategy identified the need to continue to engage with SCCOE and the ELMP to identify areas of opportunity to address the lack of affordable, quality preschool sites in San José and return to Council with recommendations for action, as appropriate. However, the high cost and potential timeline associated with expanding licensed facilities suggests that other compatible solutions are also necessary. Until all families are able to access affordable full-time licensed preschool, there will be a need for high-quality license-exempt care options, including family/neighbor home-based care and City-sponsored programs for young children.

City Programs for Young Children

The City – primarily through the PRNS and Library Departments – provides several programs designed to meet the needs of children ages 0-5 and their caregivers. On an annual basis, PRNS serves more than 1,500 children ages 3-5 through programs such as the San José Recreation Preschool, The Hatchery at Emma Prusch Park, Camp San José Junior, and vendor-led sports and performing arts activities. Similarly, the Library offers more than 4,500 free programs and activities targeted at children 0-5 years of age and their caregivers at 24 library locations throughout San José, with a total attendance of more than 167,000 in program participation, each year.

As a license-exempt care provider, the City could significantly raise early learning quality and options for families by adopting a quality rating and assessment system. An approved set of quality expectations for City programs would create common definitions and standards, utilize ratings and assessments to provide opportunities for programs to demonstrate quality, and coordinate supports to help providers with compliance. The following specific action items were recommended and approved in the EDL Strategy:

- Staff will develop quality standards for license-exempt early care and education programs, in partnership with City departments and community/government agencies, reflecting differences in program type and intent.
- Staff will assess and align programs with the quality standards for their type of program; collect data on performance; and report out annually through the Library and Early Education Commission, through the appropriate City Council Committee, and to the full City Council.

Advisory Committee and Project Advisory Team

At its meeting on June 20, 2018, the Library and Early Education (LEE) Commission formed an ad-hoc Advisory Committee that would lead the process of identifying quality standards and assessment tools for City departments and agencies providing informal and/or license-exempt child care to children ages 0-5. The ad-hoc Advisory Committee included Commissioners Mahaney-Gurahoo, Jolly, and Magaña, who worked closely with City staff to identify membership and develop the workplan for an Early Education Quality Standards Project Advisory Team, which would engage as experts in the local early education field to develop broad quality standard options based on California State competency standards.

The Project Advisory Team was co-chaired by Commissioners Mahaney-Gurahoo and Jolly and was comprised of representatives from City departments (Library, PRNS), partner agencies (SCCOE, Alum Rock School District), and other leading organizations in the field (First 5, Somos Mayfair, WestEd, YMCA). Please see *Attachment A* for a full list of Project Advisory Team membership. The Project Advisory Team convened throughout Fall 2018. City staff utilized input and expertise from the Project Advisory Team to draft the proposed Early Education Quality Standards, which were subsequently revised and finalized by the Project Advisory Team.

ANALYSIS

The **Early Education Quality Standards** are designed to serve as an internal continuous quality improvement tool to support the City's Early Education programming across all departments by defining standards and identifying strategies that improve the quality offered through City programs. In developing the proposed Early Education Quality Standards, the Project Advisory Team identified a number of important reference resources, as well as a list of common acronyms, both of which are detailed in *Attachment B*.

The Early Education Quality Standards are comprised of eight **Program Quality Standard Areas** (Standard Area) that are proven to promote positive child outcomes. Within each Standard Area are a number of essential **Focus Areas**, as described in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1

Early Education Program Quality Standard Areas and Focus Areas	
Standard Areas	Focus Areas
Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child Supervision ▪ Facility Safety ▪ Staff Training and Certification
Child Learning and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation with Children ▪ Adult/Education/Child Interactions ▪ Developmentally Appropriate Practices
Curriculum and Teaching Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence-based Curriculum ▪ Adaptive Teaching Strategies ▪ Outcome-based Program Evaluation
Learning Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical Environment
Staffing and Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Qualifications and Expertise ▪ Training and Professional Development
Program Leadership and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ethical Standards ▪ Practices, Policies, and Procedures ▪ Vision, Mission, and Values ▪ Community Stakeholder Connections ▪ Partnership Engagement

Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parent/Caregiver Voice/Decision-Making ▪ Balanced Communication ▪ Strengthening Families
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inclusive and Supportive Practices ▪ Physical, Behavioral, and Developmental Screenings and Referrals ▪ Promoting Racial Equity

Each Standard Area is equally important in providing the framework for building strong early education programming. The Early Education Quality Standards in each Standard Area are organized into four categories that make up a **Quality Continuum**, measuring progressive levels of program quality, as follows:

- Basic Quality Not Met
- Basic Standard
- Proficient Quality
- Advanced Quality

Within each Standard Area, the quality expectations are detailed for each more specific Focus Area, defining a “Basic Standard” of quality to which all City programs for young children must adhere. Upon assessment, if a program does not reach the Basic Standard, then it is categorized as “Basic Quality Not Met,” necessitating immediate corrective action. Strategies that achieve “Proficient Quality” and “Advanced Quality” reflect a pathway for progressive continuous quality improvement for City programs to adopt, depending on their level of readiness and allocation of internal and external resources.

An **Overview** describing the general expectations associated with each Standard Area, across the Quality Continuum, is provided in *Attachment C*, pages C.1-2. A **Rubric** for understanding the Early Education Quality Standards document is provided in *Attachment C*, page C.3. The detailed **Early Education Quality Standards** document is provided in full as *Attachment C*, pages C.4-20.

There are currently no Early Education Quality Standards in place to assess the quality of programs offered by the City. However, moving forward, program providers and implementers will be required to utilize the proposed Early Education Quality Standards to report annually on their success in meeting Basic, Proficient, and Advanced Quality strategies, as well as progress in achieving increasingly greater levels of quality, beyond the Basic Standard.

Implementation and Timeline

Once the Early Education Quality Standards are approved and adopted, City departments will begin (or continue) efforts to ensure that all City-provided, -funded, -sponsored, or -partnered programs for young children are in compliance with, at least, the Basic Standard level. This analysis will require the implementation of appropriate assessment tools to identify which

programs are currently operating at Basic Standard and which programs need additional improvements.

To initiate this work, each department will identify one high-impact City program and 2-3 quality Standard Areas on which to develop targeted assessment and improvement plans, as detailed in Table 2, below:

TABLE 2

Early Education Quality Standards – Initial Department Approach				
Phase	Department	Program	Standard Areas	Children Served
1	Library	Storytime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum & Teaching Practices (Area 3) Family Engagement (Area 7) Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (Area 8) 	28,400 ¹
	PRNS	Recreation Preschool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Development & Learning (Area 2) Curriculum & Teaching Practices (Area 3) Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (Area 8) 	650
2	Library	All Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Standard Areas – Assessments & Plans 	33,400 ²
	PRNS	All Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Standard Areas – Assessments & Plans 	1,500

A timeline of specific activities and deliverables is provided in *Attachment D – Implementation Plan*.

The City’s work to ensure that its programs for young children meet a set of approved, evidence-based Early Education Quality Standards aligns with another related effort to review the Recreation Preschool program. Results for America (“RfA”), a nationally recognized research and policy organization, has partnered with City staff to analyze the Recreation Preschool program goals and to develop outcome-based budgeting and service design tools. RfA has trained and coached staff in utilizing their “Turn the Curve” planning process to: 1) reframe program objectives through the development of new performance measures; and 2) identify partnerships and opportunities for continuous improvement.

As a result of these efforts, the City will have improved license-exempt early education options for approximately 34,900 children and their families.

¹ Total based on annual attendance at storytime programs (142,000), with standard duplication assumption of 80% applied.

² Total based on annual attendance at all programs for children ages 0 to 5 years (167,000), with standard duplication assumption of 80% applied.

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EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

As the lead for the EDL Strategy, the Library will work with PRNS to track the implementation of the Early Education Quality Standards and will report back to the LEE Commission and the NSE Committee on a regular basis. Staff proposes bringing a mid-term update to the Committee for review in September 2019 to report on the progress made by both departments in implementing the program quality standards.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City's website for the February 14, 2019 meeting of the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee.

COORDINATION

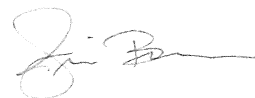
This report has been coordinated with the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services and City Attorney's Office.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT

The LEE Commission reviewed the proposed Early Education Quality Standards at its meeting on January 16, 2019. The LEE Commission endorsed the standards and recommends their approval to the NSE Committee and City Council.

CEQA

Not a Project: PP17-008 - General Procedure & Policy Making resulting in no changes to the physical environment.



JILL BOURNE
Director, Library Department

For questions, please contact Vidya Kilambi, Division Manager (Library), at (408) 808-2151 or Andrea-Flores Shelton, Division Manager (PRNS), at (408) 535-3571.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Early Education Quality Standards Project Advisory Team Membership
- B. Early Education Quality Standards Reference and Resource Guide; Common Acronyms
- C. Early Education Quality Standards
 - Summary of Quality Standard Areas
 - Rubric
 - Detailed Standards
- D. Early Education Quality Standards Implementation Plan