

A photograph of a classroom setting. In the foreground, a young child with curly hair and a blue shirt is smiling at the camera. In the background, other children are seated at a table, and an adult is standing and interacting with them. The scene is brightly lit and has a warm, positive atmosphere.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



The Staff Qualifications and Professional Development domain includes standards for education and ongoing training of early childhood teachers and administrators. These factors are important because the skills and knowledge of teachers and administrators have a direct impact on how young children learn and develop. Research shows that teachers with higher levels of education and training are better able to support children's language, social, and academic development (Manning et al., 2019; Soliday Hong et al., 2019). Ongoing professional development, such as workshops, coaching, or training programs, helps teachers stay up to date with best practices and new research. Studies also show that when professional development is ongoing and connected to real classroom needs, it improves teaching quality and children's learning (Markussen-Brown et al., 2017; Egert, Fukkink, & Eckhardt, 2018).

This domain has two parts: Staff Qualifications, which focus on staff education and credentials, and Professional Development, which focuses on the continued learning that helps teachers and administrators grow in their work. Together, these areas make sure that program staff are well-prepared and supported to give children the best start in life.

KEY TERMS

- **Assistant Teacher:** A staff member who works under the direction of a lead teacher. Assistant teachers may work independently in the lead teacher's absence. (OAC 5180:2-17-01 (A)(3))
- **Career Pathways Level (CPL):** A measure of an individual's formal education, credentials, certificates, experiences, and ongoing professional development, based on data entered in the Ohio Professional Registry.
- **Child Development Associate Credential (CDA):** The Council for Professional Recognition issues this nationally recognized credential based on a core set of competency standards to guide early care and education professionals toward becoming qualified teachers of young children.
- **Instructional Time:** The time the group spends with the lead teacher each day, excluding nap or rest time. (OAC 5180:2-17-01 (A)(6))
- **Lead Teacher:** The adult who has primary responsibility for the group of children. For programs that operate for more than 3.5 hours in a day, the lead teacher must provide a minimum of 3.5 hours of instruction daily, not including nap or rest, for more than half of the days in operation each week. The lead teacher is responsible for activity planning and implementing the applicable SUTQ standards related to the current rating. (OAC 5180:2-17-01 (A)(7))
- **Ohio Approved:** Professional development designation determined for eligible courses/events submitted through the Ohio Professional Registry signifying acceptance for SUTQ.
- **Ohio Professional Registry (OPR):** A workforce registry system that collects data on professionals in various roles and settings and houses a training registration and learning management system, hosted by the [Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Agency](#).

Note: As with all Step Up To Quality Standards, the information presented in this document does not replace licensing requirements or operating standards that may apply to a program.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS STANDARDS

At all rating levels, early care and education professionals serving children in child care centers, school-based programs, and family child care homes must meet minimum staff qualifications beyond the program licensing requirements.

	Standard	Verification (All Levels)	Tips (All Levels)	FAQs (All Levels)
Bronze	<p>Child Care Center/School-Based Lead Teachers: 50% have CDA or CPL 2 OR one lead teacher has minimum AA*, CPL 3 or SA Lead Teacher Professional Endorsement (if school-age only children in group)</p> <p>Family Child Care Provider: Has CDA or CPL 1, or SA Administrator Professional Endorsement (if only serving school-age children)</p> <p>Family Child Care Lead Teacher (if not provider): Has CDA, CPL 1 or SA Lead Teacher Professional Endorsement (if only serving school-age children)</p> <p>*In an approved related field</p>	<p>DCY specialists will review documentation verified in the OPR for the lead teacher, family childcare provider or administrator who meets the on-site hour requirement per licensing rule.</p> <p>All family child care providers, administrators, lead teachers, and assistant teachers must create and maintain a profile in the Ohio Professional Registry (OPR).</p> <p>Individual roles, schedules, and hire dates must be accurate in the OPR.</p> <p>Staff schedules are required to show that the minimum instructional time requirement is met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lead teacher must be with the group for a minimum of three and one- 	<p>Administrators may want to review staff information (the SUTQ program report, detailed or summary, and the current employees page) in the OPR regularly to ensure it is up to date and accurate.</p> <p>Approved related fields</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> child and family community studies child development early childhood education early intervention (ECE or special education) elementary education elementary intervention elementary, middle, or secondary education family studies human development human ecology 	<p>Is there a minimum qualification for administrators at the Bronze level?</p> <p>Administrators in Bronze rated programs must meet the minimum qualifications established in the program licensing rule that apply to the specific program type (for example, child care centers 5180:2-12-07, family child care 5180:2-13-07, school-based preschools 51820-37-04).</p> <p>Can a Lead teacher serve in a dual role (e.g., teacher and administrator)?</p> <p>Yes, provided they meet the qualifications and requirements of both roles.</p>

	Standard	Verification (All Levels)	Tips (All Levels)	FAQs (All Levels)
Silver	<p>Child Care Centers/School Based Programs Onsite Administrator: Has an AA*, CPL 3, Administrator Credential 2, or SA Administrator Professional Endorsement (if only serving school-age children)</p> <p>Lead Teacher: 25% have a minimum AA*, CPL 3 or SA Lead Teacher Professional Endorsement (if only school-age children in group)</p> <p>Family Child Care Provider: Has CDA, AA*, CPL 2, Administrator Credential 2, or SA Administrator Professional Endorsement (if only serving school-age children)</p> <p>Family Child Care Lead Teacher (if not provider): Has CDA, CPL 2, or SA Lead Teacher Professional Endorsement (if only serving school-age children)</p> <p>*In an approved related field</p>	<p>half hours daily (excluding nap or rest time) at least half the days of each week the program operates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a program or group that operates less than three and one-half hours daily, the lead teacher must be present for the entire time the group is in session. • School-age programs must have a lead teacher for one of the following: a total of three and one-half hours, the complete before school session, or the complete after school session. On non-school days, the program must have a lead teacher present for at least three-and one-half-hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical education • school counselor • other degrees as approved by DCY. 	

	Standard	Verification (All Levels)	Tips (All Levels)	FAQs (All Levels)
Gold	<p>Child Care Centers/School Based Programs Onsite Administrator: Has an AA*, CPL 3, Administrator Credential 2, or SA Administrator Professional Endorsement (if only serving school-age children)</p> <p>Lead Teachers: 50% have a minimum AA*, CPL 3 or SA Lead Teacher Professional Endorsement (if only school-age children in group)</p> <p>Family Child Care Provider: Has CDA, AA*, CPL 2, Administrator Credential 2, or SA Administrator Professional Endorsement (if only serving school-age children)</p> <p>Family Child Care Lead Teacher (if not the provider): Has an AA*, CPL 2 or SA Lead Teacher Professional Endorsement (if only serving school-age children)</p> <p>*In an approved related field</p>			

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

At all levels, all administrators, lead teachers, assistant teachers, and family child care providers must obtain Ohio Approved training annually. The program standards require additional hours of professional development for administrators and family child care providers who are highly rated.

Verification (All Levels): All training will be verified through the Ohio Professional Registry (OPR).

	Standard	Tips (All Levels)	FAQs
Bronze	<p>Administrators, Lead Teachers, Assistant Teachers, and FCC Providers obtain 10 hours of Ohio Approved training annually including a minimum of one hour in each of two selected topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavior/Classroom Management • Critical Conversations • Curriculum and Assessment • Developmental Milestone • Family Engagement • Inclusion • Science of Reading • Trauma 	<p>The training requirement is prorated for new hires based on their date of hire. (See table below.)</p> <p>A substitute may be counted in place of an individual on leave for up to 90 days. During the 90-day period, the qualifications of the individual on leave may be counted to meet the SUTQ requirement. After 90 days the individual that is fulfilling that position must meet the requirements for the program's rating level.</p> <p>Assistant teachers who are primarily assigned to work with the entire group of children and/or have an instructional role are required to complete the SUTQ professional development. Staff who support medical or behavioral needs of one or two specific children, regardless of their title, are not required to complete the SUTQ professional development. (Assistant teachers may have different titles including paraprofessionals, teaching assistant, aide.)</p>	<p>If a professional completes more than their required hours in a year, can the hours beyond the requirement roll over to the next year?</p> <p>No, hours do not roll over. Professional development hours reset annually on July 1.</p> <p>Do related service providers (e.g., occupational therapists, physical therapist, speech therapists, behavior specialists) need SUTQ professional development?</p> <p>It depends on their role. Examples of individuals who are exempt from the SUTQ professional development requirement include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related service providers who provide direct services only to specific children

Verification (All Levels): All training will be verified through the Ohio Professional Registry (OPR).

	Standard	Tips (All Levels)	FAQs
Bronze	<p>Administrators, Lead Teachers, Assistant Teachers, and FCC Providers obtain 10 hours of Ohio Approved training annually including a minimum of 1 hour in each of two selected topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavior/Classroom Management • Critical Conversations • Curriculum and Assessment • Developmental Milestone • Family Engagement • Inclusion • Science of Reading • Trauma 	<p>A training must cover the topic area for at least one hour to meet the training topic requirement. One training could cover two topic areas if each topic is at least one hour long.</p> <p>A completed college course in a related field may count towards meeting the ongoing professional development requirement, as long as the final grade is a C or higher, the course was completed during the previous 12 months, and it is verified through the OPR.</p> <p>The full Pathway G Science of Reading series (20.5 hours) contains information on additional topic areas related to reading and meets the requirement for professional development in two topic areas.</p> <p>Additional information about professional development topic areas is available online.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substitute teachers who are in a position for 90 days or less • Attendant assigned to one or two specific students • A 1:1 aide • A nurse <p>If I use college course work to meet the professional development hours, do I need to take two additional required topic areas? No, individuals who use completed college course work to meet the professional development hours are not required to complete two additional topic areas.</p> <p>Is the SUTQ professional development requirement prorated for a staff person on extended leave? No. The professional's hire date determines the number of hours required, and any leave taken during employment does not change the requirement.</p>

Verification (All Levels): All training will be verified through the Ohio Professional Registry (OPR).

	Standard	Tips (All Levels)	FAQs
Silver	<p>Administrators and FCC Providers Only:</p> <p>Must obtain two additional hours (beyond Bronze requirement) of Ohio Approved Professional development annually, for a total of 12 hours.</p> <p>The professional may choose the topic(s) for the additional two hours of Ohio Approved training.</p>		<p>Do administrators and family child care providers in Silver or Gold rated programs have to take the additional 2 or 5 hours in specific topic areas?</p> <p>No, administrators and family child care providers at the Silver and Gold rating levels completed training in two of the required topics as part of the first 10 hours, then they choose professional development that best meets their needs for the additional professional development hours, and it does not need to be from the required topic area list.</p>
Gold	<p>Administrators and FCC Providers Only:</p> <p>Must obtain 3 additional hours (beyond Silver requirement) of Ohio Approved Professional development annually, for a total of 15 hours.</p> <p>The professional may choose the topic(s) for the additional hours of Ohio Approved training.</p>		

PRORATED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

The following information applies to staff required to meet ongoing PD standards who are newly hired at a SUTQ rated program.

Hire Date	Annual Hours	Training topics
July 1 – December 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 for all staff • 12 for administrators and family child care providers at the Silver level • 15 for administrators and family child care providers at the Gold level 	Two for all staff
January 1 – May 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • five for all staff • six for administrators and family child care providers at the Silver level • seven for administrators and family child care providers at the Gold level 	Two for all staff
June 1 – June 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full training hour requirement begins July 1 of year of hire for all staff. 	Full training hour requirement begins July 1 of year of hire for all staff.

The following information applies to staff at SUTQ-rated programs who increase their rating.

Date of Rating Increase	Annual Hours	Training topics
July 1 – December 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 for all staff • 12 for administrators and family child care providers at the Silver level • 15 for administrators and family child care providers at the Gold level 	Two for all staff
January 1 – May 31	<p>All staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 for all staff hired prior to December 31 of year of increased rating • five for all staff hired between January 1 – May 31 of year of increased rating • full training requirement begins July 1 of year of hire for all staff hired June 1 – Jun 30 of year of increased rating <p>Administrators and family child care providers at Silver level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 for all staff hired prior to December 31 of year of increased rating • six for all staff hired between January 1 – May 31 of year of increased rating • full training requirement begins July 1 of year of hire for all staff hired June 1 – Jun 30 of year of increased rating 	Two for all staff

The following information applies to staff at SUTQ-rated programs who increase their rating. (Continued)

Hire Date	Annual Hours	Training topics
	<p>Administrators and family child care providers at Gold level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 for all staff hired prior to December 31 of year of increased rating • seven for all staff hired between January 1 – May 31 of year of increased rating • full training requirement begins July 1 of year of hire for all staff hired June 1 - June 30 of year of increased rating 	
June 1 – June 30	Full training hour requirement begins July 1 of year of hire for all staff.	Two for all staff

The following information applies to a professional working as a staff member who is required to meet the ongoing PD standard at a SUTQ rated program and who gets promoted to administrator.

Date of Initial Hire	Date of Promotion	Annual Hours	Training Topics
Prior to December 31	July 1 – December 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 for Bronze level • 12 at the Silver level • 15 at the Gold level 	Two for all staff
	January 1 – May 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 for Bronze level • 11 at the Silver level • 13 at the Gold level 	Two for all staff
January 1 – May 31	January 1 – May 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 for Bronze level • 11 at the Silver level • 13 at the Gold level 	Two for all staff
June 1 – June 30	Full training hour requirement begins July 1 of year of hire for all staff.		

Citations

Egert, F., Fukkink, R. G., & Eckhardt, A. G. (2018). Impact of In-Service Professional Development Programs for Early Childhood Teachers on Quality Ratings and Child Outcomes: A Meta-Analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 88(3), 401-433. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654317751918>

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Markussen-Brown, J., Juhl, C. B., Piasta, S. B., Bleses, D., Højen, A., & Justice, L. M. (2017). The effects of language- and literacy-focused professional development on early educators and children: A best-evidence meta-analysis. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 38, 97-115. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2016.07.002>

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