

★ What is the Virginia Star Quality Initiative?

The Virginia Star Quality Initiative (VSQI), is a voluntary program that provides a consistent way to distinguish the level of quality of childcare centers & preschools; allowing parents to make more informed choices and allowing child care providers a way to improve the quality of their services.

All programs that participate in the VSQI are going beyond what is required to achieve a higher level of care and learning for children. A Star Quality Rating is based on achievements in four standards:

- 1) Education, qualifications, and training of program directors, teachers and assistants.
- 2) Interactions between staff and children (measured using CLASS evaluation tool).
- 3) Staff to child ratios (class size)
- 4) Learning environment and Instructional Practices (measured using ITERS/ECERS evaluation tool).

Programs are assessed and then work with a highly trained mentor on a Quality Improvement Plan. Programs are then re-assessed every two years by trained and experienced raters. Programs demonstrate their commitment to continuous quality enhancement by participating in the program for several years.

Look for programs who display their certificates proudly—as they are showing their commitment to high quality early care and education!

2011-2012 Star Quality Initiative Sites

- * Bonsack Baptist Weekday Early Education Center
- * Childcare Network
- * Community School
- * Craig County Child Care Center
- * Grandin Court Baptist Preschool
- * Greenvale School
- * Northwest Child Development Center
- * One Step Further Childcare Center
- * Raleigh Court Presbyterian Preschool
- * Small Steps Learning Academy
- * South Roanoke United Methodist Preschool
- * Thrasher Preschool
- * TAP Head Start Betty Lou Brown CDC
- * TAP Head Start Jefferson Street CDC
- * TAP Head Start Raleigh Court CDC
- * TAP Head Start St. John's CDC



More sites will be added in 2012, so please visit our website often for an updated list and map of participating programs.

www.smartbeginningsroanoke.org

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What to Look For in High Quality Childcare and Preschool Facilities



Ready for School. Ready for Life.



What does quality early education look like?



Child-Staff Ratios

- There are enough adults in the room to allow for individual student attention.

Teacher -Child Interactions

- Staff are welcoming to parents and children.
- Teachers and children talk with each other often, including having conversations during snack and meal times.
- Teachers get down low and make eye contact when talking to children
- Teachers and children show warmth & enthusiasm, including laughing & smiling together.
- Teachers respect children's ideas, ask their advice and listen with genuine interest to what children say.
- Teachers encourage children to learn concepts through real world experiences, instead of worksheets and memorization.
- Behavior problems and conflicts between children are handled in positive ways.

The Learning Environment

- The furniture and equipment in indoor and outdoor play areas are age appropriate & child-sized.
- The classroom is set up with a variety of interest areas such as dramatic play, science and nature, math, writing, blocks, art, puzzles and music.
- Materials are well organized and labeled with pictures for independent use by children.
- There is a daily schedule displayed that provides lots of time for children to learn through active play experiences, both indoors and outdoors.
- There is a cozy spot where children may go to relax and have quiet time.
- The environment is literacy rich: it has a variety of interesting books and examples of ABCs & words throughout the classroom.
- There are a variety of math materials for counting, measuring sorting, and learning about shapes and sizes.
- There are current photographs of children and their families displayed in the classroom.
- There are examples of diversity throughout the classroom, highlighting people of different cultures, genders, races, ages and abilities.
- Art & photos are displayed at child eye level.
- Artwork looks like children were encouraged to explore & be creative. It should not all look the same or look as if the teacher did most of the work.



Staff Education,

Qualifications and Training

- Directors and teachers regularly participate in professional development workshops & trainings
- Teachers are members of professional associations, like NAEYC.
- Staff are certified in CPR and first aid.
- Directors and/or teachers have taken college-level courses in early childhood development
- Teachers use the VA Milestones of Child Development and/or VA Foundation Blocks to plan instructional activities.
- Program staff regularly reflect on what is working in their classrooms and what they can do to improve.



Learn more about the importance of high quality early care and education by visiting ...

www.smartbeginningsroanoke.org

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