

Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards

Every day, throughout New York City, we work to ensure all our students will be ready for the next stage of their education, and ultimately, prepared to succeed and engage as citizens in the 21st century. As part of this mission, and for the first time in New York City's history, every four-year-old will have the opportunity to begin their path to success in free, full-day, high-quality pre-K through NYC's Pre-K for All.

The NYC Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards define the New York City Department of Education's (NYCDOE) vision for high-quality for Pre-K for All programs in NYC. They describe the key practices of family engagement, rigorous and developmentally appropriate instruction, professional collaborations, and leadership that support children in gaining the knowledge and skills outlined in the [New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core](#) (PKFCC). Grounded in the NYCDOE's vision for school improvement across the pre-K to 12 continuum, the [DOE Framework for Great Schools](#), the Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards establish a shared set of expectations for pre-K programs across all settings. The NYCDOE Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) staff, pre-K program leaders and teachers, and pre-K families will use the Program Quality Standards to understand and advance program quality and positive outcomes for children.

Pre-K is a critical and irreplaceable foundation for our city's young learners, and is the beginning of their educational relationship with the NYCDOE. As such, the Program Quality Standards provide a new opportunity for collaboration between the NYCDOE, Pre-K for All educators and leaders in New York City Early Education Centers (NYCEECs) and elementary schools. Pre-K children and their families will benefit from smooth transitions between pre-K and Kindergarten, and the NYCDOE can continue to build on the quality foundations for learning and development established in the pre-K year. Beginning in the 2015-2016 school year, the DECE's tailored supports and professional learning opportunities will be aligned to the Program Quality Standards and the DECE will engage with programs and school communities to deepen a shared understanding. The Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards will drive a unified effort to improve quality in our practice, preparing all children for success in Kindergarten and beyond.

Aligning the Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards to the Framework for Great Schools

Strong Family-Community Ties

NYC Pre-K for All begins with strong relationships and is a unique opportunity to establish partnerships with families at the beginning of a child's P-12 experience. Pre-K programs create trust and respect in their community by communicating with families in ways the families can understand and by valuing what families know about their child and their needs. Families are supported in building their capacity to act as their child's first teacher and advocate, and programs partner with families and community organizations to help each child and family succeed.

Effective School Leadership

NYC Pre-K for All leaders play a key role in shaping a vision for *how* the program will help each child learn and grow in the context of the community each program serves. They create a positive culture in the program to support that vision and work with teachers and families to set goals. They gather and use many types of information to manage their resources to improve outcomes for children. Leaders work together with their staff and families to improve the quality of the program.

Supportive Environment

NYC Pre-K for All programs provide a safe and healthy environment as the foundation for children as they learn and grow. Programs respect and value the differences for individual children, and make changes to the ways they teach so each child can succeed. Each and every child will be supported in meeting high expectations for their holistic learning and growth.

Rigorous Instruction

Pre-K for All children are active learners who learn through play, exploration, and from their relationships with teachers and peers. Teachers are role models and work together and with children to create a classroom culture where children learn to think critically, are motivated to solve problems and think creatively, and can work independently and interact with others in positive ways. When teachers have rich interactions with children, make materials and books available to embrace the diversity in the classroom, and arrange the physical environment in a thoughtful and responsive way, *all* children are supported in their learning and growth.

In NYC Pre-K for All, teachers learn about the children in their class through assessments that are appropriate for young children, observing and listening to children, and two-way communications with families. Teachers use that knowledge along with learning goals for pre-k children in all the domains of the Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core in order to plan the curriculum. This cycle is ongoing and allows teachers to respond to what children know and can do throughout the year. Rigor in these actions of assessment and planning, as well as through instruction that honors the ways young children learn, ensures that Pre-K for All programs are supporting all children in developing the foundations of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Collaborative Teachers

NYC Pre-K for All teachers, leaders, and other teaching staff are committed to improving their professional practice and outcomes for children and families. They work together to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the Pre-K classroom. Program leaders work with teachers and other staff to learn from student work and provide professional feedback. Teachers take ownership of their own learning, and are supported in developing their own leadership skills.

Trust

Everyone works toward the shared goal of improving child and family outcomes, preparing children for success in school and beyond. Program administrators, teaching staff, children, and families value and respect each other. Relationships between all members of the program and school community are based on mutual respect, personal regard, and integrity.

Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards

Strong Family-Community Ties

1. [Strong Relationships](#): Programs foster mutual respect, trust, and connection with and among families and the community in order to build strong relationships.
2. [Two-Way Communication](#): Programs promote two-way sharing of information between program staff and families, in a culturally and linguistically responsive manner, to support children’s well-being, academic success, and developmental progress.
3. [Capacity-Building](#): Programs recognize families’ essential contribution to their child’s development and support families in enacting their role as their child’s:
 - 3.1. [Primary Teacher](#): Programs partner with families to develop their capacity to enrich their child’s academic, social, emotional, and behavioral skills that are foundational to learning.
 - 3.2. [Primary Advocate](#): Programs partner with families to develop their capacity to advocate for their child’s holistic needs and drive program improvement.

Supportive Environment

4. [Health, Safety & Well-being](#): Program leaders ensure a safe and healthy learning environment that supports positive experiences for children, families, and program staff.
5. [Equity & Individualization in Education](#): Leaders and teaching staff tailor the practices of teaching and learning and family engagement to each child, so that all children are successfully supported in achieving high expectations for their learning and developmental progress.

Rigorous Instruction

6. [Developmental Screening & Authentic Assessment](#): Teaching staff deepen their shared understanding of children’s development and learning across domains to inform instruction.
7. [Curriculum Planning Cycle](#): Teaching staff integrate and respond to knowledge of children, child-development, and content across the domains of learning to plan and adapt the curriculum, aligned to the Pre-K Foundation for the Common Core.
8. [Engaging Children in Meaningful Activity](#): Teaching staff engage children as active learners and interact with children using a range of effective, developmentally appropriate strategies to create connections and extend children’s learning across domains and in a variety of contexts and experiences.
9. [Creating A Positive Classroom Culture](#): Programs empower and support children to develop a positive self-concept and intentionally guide children to interact respectfully and constructively with the peers and adults of their community, and their environment.
10. [Physical Resources for Learning](#): Program staff cultivate the physical space and resources in the classroom and outside to facilitate children’s learning and development through purposeful play.

Collaborative Teachers

11. [Cultivating Professional Practice and Leadership](#): Leaders and teaching staff improve the quality of the classroom and program experience as partners in continual professional learning, collaboration, and leadership development.

Effective School Leadership

12. [Shaping a Vision](#): Leaders foster a shared vision and theory of action with and among their staff and families, and build a positive organizational culture and community to support that vision.
13. [Resource Management](#): Leaders manage the organizational and human resources in a sustainable and strategic manner to advance the goals of the program.
14. [Program Quality Improvement](#): Leaders collaborate with their staff and families to evaluate and improve classroom and program quality, relying on well-managed data to set instructional, family engagement, and organizational goals, increasing the coherence of policies and practices.

The following NYC Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards describe the key practices essential for providing a high quality Pre-K experience for children, their families, and educational community.

Strong Family-Community Ties

1. Strong Relationships

Programs foster mutual respect, trust, and connection with and among families and the community in order to build strong relationships.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

- a. Prior to the beginning of the school year, the program welcomes all families individually (e.g. through welcome letters, phone-calls, in-person meetings), conducts informal welcome events in which families can begin developing connections with each other and program staff, and develops a clear plan for supporting families and their children with the upcoming transition into pre-k.
- b. Teachers and program staff make a continuous effort to get to know families through conversations and thoughtful needs assessments and use this information to develop clear processes for engaging with families that are sensitive to families' schedules and cultural and linguistic needs.
- c. The program connects and collaborates with organizations in the community to assist program staff in meeting the needs of families and their children.
- d. Program staff greet families and children warmly and respectfully in everyday interactions throughout the building, over the phone, and through formal communications.
- e. The program expresses value for families in the physical environment of the site by displaying signs that welcome and honor families and by designating a physical space in which families can access meaningful resources and develop relationships with each other and site staff.
- f. Teachers regularly incorporate families' cultures, talents, and skills into lessons, activities, and school events in a culturally competent manner and create multiple opportunities throughout the year for families to come to the site in order to celebrate their children's accomplishments, volunteer where appropriate, and to connect with each other.

2. Two-Way Communication

Programs promote two-way sharing of information between program staff and families, in a culturally and linguistically responsive manner, to support children’s well-being, academic success, and developmental progress.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

- a. Teachers collect information from families beginning *early in the year* about their child’s interests, talents, unique health, safety, and learning needs, and create ongoing, culturally and linguistically responsive methods for families to share their observations, insights, and concerns regarding their child’s development.
- b. Teachers collaborate with families to set goals for their child based on a *shared* understanding of their child’s strengths and needs, utilize this data in curricular and instructional planning, and create specific opportunities for families to review their child’s work and to discuss their child’s progress toward achieving identified goals.
- c. The program establishes and communicates clear processes for *how* families and staff collaborate when concerns about their child’s academic, social, emotional, and behavioral development arise, building on communication channels established at the start of the school year.
- d. Teachers and staff frequently provide families with positive and constructive feedback on their child’s progress through conversations at drop-off and pick-up, as well as through other means of communication specific to families’ preferences.

3. Capacity Building

Programs recognize families' essential contribution to their child's development and support families in enacting their role as their child's:

3.1 Primary Teacher

Programs partner with families to develop their capacity to enrich their child's academic, social, emotional, and behavioral skills that are foundational to learning.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

- a. The program conveys a strong belief in the essential role that families play in their child's academic, social, emotional, and behavioral development and emphasizes the value of actively communicating high expectations to children and encouraging their development as learners.
- b. Starting at the beginning of the school year, teachers and staff orient families to program policies, goals, and content so that families understand *what* their child is learning and *how* this learning aligns to program goals.
- c. Teachers invite families to visit their child's classroom, observe teaching, and learn about classroom routines, expectations, and practices.
- d. Teachers and families discuss the ways in which specific, everyday activities influence children's brain development and capacity for learning and work together to share, practice, and refine strategies that seek to enrich children's learning in and out of the classroom.

3.2 Primary Advocate

Programs create opportunities for families to develop their capacity to advocate for their child's needs and drive program improvement.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

- a. The program creates effective opportunities for families to provide feedback on various aspects of program quality and shares with families how their feedback can be used for program improvement.
- b. The program provides opportunities for families to contribute directly to program governance and exercise leadership such as through participating on the School Leadership Team, the Parent Teachers Association, or other parent/family leadership councils.
- c. The program creates multiple opportunities throughout the year for families to connect, learn, and support each other around shared affinities and challenges.
- d. The program connects families to available resources and organizations in the community that can assist families in meeting their child's needs.
- e. The program provides necessary supports for families throughout the year regarding the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) process, including special education referral and evaluation, as well as the "Gifted and Talented" process.
- f. The program has a clear plan to support families' transition of their child from pre-K to kindergarten that includes procedural support for kindergarten enrollment as well as clear information on how to select the appropriate kindergarten setting for their child.

Supportive Environment

4. Health, Safety & Well-being

Program leaders ensure a safe and healthy learning environment that supports positive experiences for children, families, and program staff.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

- a. Programs successfully monitor and manage children’s health requirements and prevent or respond appropriately to safety hazards in children’s learning environments.
- b. Programs ensure that any medical practices or modifications to the program that promote a child’s physical health are also responsive to that child’s social, emotional, and mental well-being.
- c. Programs provide sufficient amounts of healthy food for children, which meet all nutritional guidelines and whenever possible are sourced locally and/or sustainably.
- d. Programs communicate with the appropriate agencies and families regarding information relative to children’s health and safety, medical needs, and changes to their routines (such as toileting and nutrition), in a timely and respectful manner to promote positive collaborations.
- e. Program staff manage the physical environment to create spaces that are comfortable and practically appropriate for teaching staff and families, and that promote positive, intentional and respectful verbal and written communications.

5. Equity & Individualization in Education

Leaders and teaching staff tailor the practices of teaching and learning to each child, so that all children are successfully supported in achieving high expectations for their learning and developmental progress.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

- a. The guiding philosophy of all Pre-K for All programs aligns to the Program Quality Standards and Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (PKFCC) guiding principles and outcomes for children, and communicates high expectations for *all* children, including children of diverse abilities, cultures, languages, and learning styles.
- b. The program embraces and supports the cultural and linguistic diversity of all children and families, working with families to appropriately tailor practices and resources at both the classroom and program level.
- c. Teaching staff ensure all children have multiple ways to demonstrate their learning in an inclusive, and socially and emotionally supportive environment.
- d. Teaching staff differentiate instructional strategies, activities, and resources to meet the unique needs of children and their families.
- e. The program works effectively with outside agencies such as Special Education Itinerant Teachers (SEIT) and related service providers, and the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) in the development and implementation of individual education programs (IEPs), including regular communication and monitoring of progress.

Rigorous Instruction

6. Developmental Screening & Authentic Assessment

Teaching staff deepen their shared understanding of children’s development and learning across domains to inform instruction.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

- a. Programs ensure teaching staff are appropriately trained and supported to implement screening and assessment tools used by the program and that these practices are culturally, linguistically, and developmentally responsive.
- b. Teachers screen all children upon entry to the program using a valid and reliable developmental screening tool and, along with ongoing authentic assessments, determine additional supports that children may need to successfully engage in the curriculum.
- c. Teachers incorporate an approved, research-based authentic assessment system to monitor the developmental progression and learning of each child over the course of the school year, which includes:
 - i. Documentation of children’s actions and communications through observational notes and photographs;
 - ii. Collecting and analyzing authentic student work products;
 - iii. Assessment across all domains of the Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core, which are:
 1. Approaches to Learning;
 2. Physical Development and Health;
 3. Social and Emotional Development;
 4. Communication, Language and Literacy;
 5. Cognition and Knowledge of the World.
- d. Teaching staff actively solicit children’s understandings and ideas of their own learning to be incorporated into instructional practices by:
 - i. Asking children about their work products and discussing plans or next steps;
 - ii. Asking children to explain their understanding of a concept or process for acquiring a new skill and engaging in feedback loops;
- e. Teachers communicate with families about their child’s screening and regularly share data from authentic assessment as part of the program’s collaboration with families in creating shared understandings and goals for their children.

7. Curriculum Planning Cycle

Teaching staff integrate and respond to knowledge of children, child-development, and content across the domains of learning to plan and adapt the curriculum, aligned to the Pre-K Foundation for the Common Core.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

- a. Teaching staff are knowledgeable of the sequences and strategies through which children learn and develop, within and across the domains of learning and development of the Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core.
- b. Programs ensure teachers are effectively trained to use information from the authentic assessment system to differentiate instructional practices for individual children and small groups, and plan the lessons and activities for the class as a whole.
- c. Teaching staff meet regularly to plan and adjust curricular activities and the learning environment, based on:
 - i. Assessment data of children’s learning and developmental progress;
 - ii. Knowledge of children’s interests, backgrounds, and ideas for learning;
 - iii. Knowledge of curricular content, sequences for learning and development, and opportunities for connections within and across domains;
 - iv. Knowledge of any other educational or developmental consideration gathered from effective family engagement practices;
 - v. A child’s IEP goals, as well as strategies shared by SEIT and/or related service providers, as applicable.
- d. Teaching staff plan deep content explorations and experiences that incorporate learning objectives across domains and embed multiple entry points into engaging and meaningful activities.
- e. Teaching staff are respectful of children’s ways of learning by establishing routines while remaining flexible, allowing for student choice, and taking advantage of spontaneous “teachable moments”.
- f. Teaching staff provide families with ongoing opportunities to share their cultures, talents, or skills, and use regular communication with families to ensure the curriculum is responsive and relevant to children’s lived experiences.

8. Engaging Children in Meaningful Activity

Teaching staff engage children as active learners and interact with children using a range of effective, developmentally appropriate strategies to create connections and extend children’s learning across domains and in a variety of contexts and experiences.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

- a. Teaching staff provide daily opportunities for individual-, small and whole group-learning through a balance of child- and adult-initiated activities.
- b. Teaching staff effectively facilitate children’s involvement in the program, increasing children’s levels of participation and focus in a variety of activities for learning and development across the domains of the PKFCC.
 - i. During child- initiated portions of the day, children are empowered and encouraged to intentionally self-select a wide variety of activities, companions, and learning materials, as well as to return to previous projects.
- c. Teaching staff actively encourage and incorporate student perspectives throughout the program, and provide children with ample time and opportunity to explore, revisit, apply and communicate about new knowledge, skills, and ideas for learning.
- d. Teaching staff intentionally use and model language to develop children’s communication and thinking skills by:
 - i. Initiating, joining, or extending conversations with children and between peers;
 - ii. Extending children’s vocabulary and complexity of their language;
 - iii. Using self- and parallel talk to connect language to children’s experiences and actions;
 - iv. Asking children open-ended questions that are relevant to children’s experiences or actions;
 - v. Engaging frequently and meaningfully with children to encourage analysis, reasoning, creative thinking, and problem-solving.
- e. Teaching staff use scaffolding, discussion, and intentionally select and combine materials in children’s activities to help children make connections and link the concepts of the curriculum to children’s experience, interests, and previous learning across the PKFCC domains.
- f. Teaching staff utilize daily events, such as mealtimes and transitions, as meaningful learning experiences.

9. Creating a Positive Classroom Culture

Programs empower and support children to develop a positive self-concept and intentionally guide children to interact respectfully and constructively with the peers and adults of their community, and their environment.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

- a. Teaching and program staff model and communicate a positive attitude towards learning and promote children’s development of a positive self-concept by supporting children’s playfulness, curiosity, persistence, experimentation by trial & error, and opportunities for autonomy and leadership.
- b. Teaching and program staff role-model and promote respectful and compassionate interactions throughout the day, act as a source of comfort and support for children, and use language, discussion, and other instructional strategies to develop children’s empathy and consideration of others.
- c. Teaching and program staff establish routines yet remain flexible and responsive to student perspectives and challenges, keeping children engaged in their learning and creating smooth transitions between portions of the day.
- d. Teaching staff establish clear and consistent expectations with children’s input, proactively supporting children in developing positive behaviors and understanding the impacts of their choices, and providing children with the opportunity to practice conflict resolution strategies.
- e. Teaching staff provide encouragement and guidance during daily events, such as toileting and rest, to develop children’s personal-care and self-regulation skills.
- f. Teaching and program staff model and promote children’s care and respect for program resources and sustainable practices for the environment, such as returning permanent resources after their use and recycling waste materials.

10. Physical Resources for Learning

Program staff cultivate the physical space and resources in the classroom and outside to facilitate children’s learning and development through purposeful play.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

- a. Teaching staff support children’s interdisciplinary learning and higher-order thinking through play and project-based learning opportunities that incorporate various experiences and materials to meet children’s needs, such as:
 - i. Creative artistic expression with various artistic media and representations;
 - ii. Dramatic play that incorporates a variety of props and costumes that represent a diversity of backgrounds, interests and experiences;
 - iii. Early literacy resources such as a library, developmentally appropriate writing resources, and resources promoting print awareness throughout the program;
 - iv. Science/discovery experiences that include sand, water, and other sensory resources;
 - v. Math manipulatives, blocks and puzzles;
 - vi. Music and movement experiences with instruments and a variety of music types;
 - vii. Gross-motor equipment and resources that are appropriately challenging for all children;
 - viii. Community trips that are educational and fun;
 - ix. Appropriate exposure and use of technology in education;
 - x. Health and well-being practices such as cooking or other self-care tasks.
- b. The program provides a learning environment that is child-centered, with the appropriate quantity and quality of self-care resources, furniture and equipment for children’s daily engagement with the program, to support children’s learning and development across domains.
- c. Teaching staff arrange the physical environment so that all children can successfully and independently access resources in response to their natural curiosity, to engage with group activity or find space for privacy and relaxation, and with enough space to work independently and collaboratively throughout the classroom and outdoor areas.
- d. The program provides culturally and linguistically diverse resources throughout the program that promote diversity and represent the children and families of the program and New York City as a whole.

Collaborative Teachers

11. Cultivating Professional Practice and Leadership

Leaders and teaching staff improve the quality of the classroom and program experience as partners in continual professional learning, collaboration, and leadership development.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

- a. Leaders and teaching staff (including teams of lead teachers and assistant teachers / paraprofessionals) create, support, and engage with systems for:
 - i. Regular collaborative analysis of child-, classroom-, and program level data through inquiry and reflection, fostering the responsiveness of professional practice within each program's context.
 - ii. Teacher observation, inter-visitation, and professional development that is timely, consistent, transparent, equitable, and relevant for each staff member's professional improvement and the goals of the program.
 - iii. Developing staff capacity to support the needs of all children and families, including children with IEPs, children whose native language is not English, or children with any other specific considerations for their learning and development.
- b. Leaders provide staff with evidence-based feedback on strengths and challenges, with actionable next steps for professional learning, staff ownership and clarity about objectives, and the measurements used to determine progress.
- c. Leaders retain and develop their staff by providing a socially, emotionally, and professionally supportive environment, by valuing the skills and knowledge of their staff and offering leadership opportunities, and by modelling reflection and professionalism.
- d. Leaders and administrators effectively communicate with all program staff regarding the requirements and policies relevant to their work, and there are procedures in place to keep staff aware of any updates or challenges and involve staff in making changes as needed.

Effective School Leadership

12. Shaping a Vision

Leaders foster a shared vision and theory of action among their staff, and build a positive organizational culture and community to support that vision.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

- a. Leaders foster a shared vision with and among program staff and families that supports all children in achieving high expectations, and build an invested community by consistently communicating with staff and families about the program’s vision and goals.
- b. Leaders inform and align their vision, theory of action, and goals for the program with the Pre-K for All vision of program quality and the PKFCC guiding principles and outcomes for children to meaningfully advance positive outcomes for children and families.
- c. Leaders shape the organizational culture by establishing values and norms for interaction and respectful, responsible, and professional behavior.
- d. Leaders use effective communication strategies with families in their community to respond to their needs, resulting in high levels of enrollment and family engagement with Pre-K for All.
- e. Leaders develop and maintain effective relationships with the NYCDOE, city agencies, and other organizations, and collaborate with organizations and individuals in the community to advance the program’s vision and progress towards goals.

13. Resource Management

Leaders manage the organizational and human resources in a sustainable and strategic manner to advance the goals of the program.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

- a. Program leaders use sound budgeting and financial management techniques to strategically plan and align resources to instructional and family engagement goals throughout the year, including the provision of culturally and linguistically appropriate resources and developmental modifications.
- b. Program leaders make strategic scheduling decisions to ensure teaching staff are able to effectively engage in teaching practices, including time to plan and prepare, assess and evaluate children’s learning and development, and communicate with families regularly and on an as-needed basis.
- c. Program leaders strategically recruit and hire the best possible teachers and program staff, with the necessary talent (e.g. skills, mindset, and knowledge) to meet the needs of children and families.
- d. Leaders make human resource decisions that value program staff as professionals in their field and enable staff to engage in professional learning, collaborations, and leadership development.
- e. Program leaders ensure that professional resources and technology are available and used appropriately by all program staff to ensure high quality instructional, family engagement, and organizational practices.

14. Program Quality Improvement

Leaders collaborate with their staff and families to evaluate and improve classroom and program quality, relying on well-managed data to set instructional, family engagement, and organizational goals, increasing the coherence of policies and practices.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

- a. Leaders ensure that plans for improvement are evidence-based through the effective collection and management of various types and sources of data at the child, teacher, classroom and program levels (for example: attendance, authentic assessments, surveys, ECERS-R, CLASS, etc.).
- b. Leaders collaborate with program staff to regularly analyze data, providing the program with an accurate representation of the program's strengths and challenges and ensuring that conclusions are arrived at systematically and equitably.
- c. Leaders collaborate with teaching staff and families and include children's perspectives in developing goals and plans for improvement, promoting the empowerment of the community and a shared leadership structure.
- d. Leaders ensure the implementation of plans for improvement, monitor progress toward achieving the program's goals, and evaluate the outcomes of that implementation to inform a continuous cycle of classroom and program quality improvement.
 - i. In evaluating the outcomes of a program's improvement efforts, leaders evaluate the effectiveness of family and community engagement, any unintended outcomes for children, families or staff, and the extent to which programmatic goals are socially responsible and achieve equity in education.