



2024

Accredited Professional Preschool Learning Environment Accreditation Standards

Beginning with all accreditation applications received January 2024.
Approved by the APPLE Commission and FACCM Board of Directors.

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Introduction

A program considering APPLE Accreditation should establish and share a clearly defined mission and timeframe for the accreditation process with all interested parties, including the dedicated work team, families, and community that will all be an integral part of the collaborative work needed for a successful accreditation process. The early learning program should prepare for the accreditation journey by becoming familiar with and integrating the necessary resources to make enhancements to achieve and maintain accreditation.

APPLE Accreditation is devoted to helping programs reach their full potential through providing streamlined resources, a dedicated support team, continuous professional development, and a respectful partnership to promote success. We realize that each early care and education program is unique and serves an equally distinctive community. APPLE Accreditation celebrates these differences and believes that the process of achieving accreditation should be an opportunity for a program to highlight those aspects of the business that make it special. The 2024 APPLE Accreditation Standards were designed with that in mind.

On behalf of the entire team, thank you for considering APPLE Accreditation. We are honored to be a partner with you in achieving the goals you set for your program and look forward to working with you during the accreditation journey and beyond.

Sincerely,

Dr. Glen R. Mort

Executive Director
Florida Association for Child Care Management

APPLE Accreditation Structure

The path to accreditation can look different for each early care and education program because no two programs start in the exact same place. This is intentional and encouraged. It is a good thing. The APPLE Accreditation process is meant to support a program through discovering ways to improve and enhance the experiences offered to the children and families served. This path may be completely different in each environment, depending on the unique characteristics of a program. APPLE Accreditation is not designed to stifle or change that uniqueness, but rather guide the way for that individuality to be recognized and appreciated by the early learning community.

Below is the basic overview of steps through the process of APPLE Accreditation. For more detailed information, resources on the FACCM Membership Hub should be reviewed carefully. Programs can ensure pace with the selected timeline by logging into the FACCM Membership Hub to check the status, due dates, pay invoices, and access all available resources. It is highly recommended after review to share any follow-up questions with our support team so that they can be answered clearly and directly. The APPLE Accreditation team offers support and guidance at every step of the way. A virtual meeting or on-site technical assistance is also available for an additional fee.

The Florida Association for Child Care Management (FACCM) Membership:

APPLE Accreditation is a resource available to all current FACCM members in good standing. FACCM Membership is the minimum requirement to achieve APPLE Accreditation. FACCM Membership is an annual fee based on licensing capacity and provides 24-hour access to all APPLE Accreditation resources to guide and assist through the APPLE Accreditation process.

APPLE Accreditation Application:

There are two paths available to APPLE Accreditation. One of the two needs to be selected when applying. An APPLE Accreditation application is valid for 18 months. The fee associated with each path is due upon application.

- ✓ The standard application path is the most cost effective. It is designed for programs that are new to APPLE Accreditation and those engaged in reaccreditation that are at least 12 months away from accreditation expiration.
- ✓ The expedited application path provides an accelerated timeframe at an increased cost. It is designed for new and reaccrediting programs that prefer a shorter portfolio and verification visit timeframe, undergo a Change of Ownership at an existing APPLE accredited program, a current APPLE accredited program who undergoes a Change of Location, or are a Change of Accreditation operating under another accrediting association.

APPLE Accreditation Portfolio:

The self-study APPLE Accreditation Portfolio process is the building and submission of specific documentation, such as program policies and procedures, that show the APPLE Accreditation Standards are utilized in the program. The portfolio indicators are clearly marked and defined in the APPLE Standards Evidence Guide after each standard within the APPLE Accreditation Manual. The evidence to meet each indicator will be compiled and uploaded electronically. There is a fee associated with the portfolio submission that is required before team review and advancement to verification. Please refer to the APPLE Accreditation Portfolio Guidance in the Membership Hub for details.

APPLE Accreditation Verification Visit:

The APPLE Accreditation Verification Visit is

an on-site observation by a certified APPLE Accreditation Verifier to authenticate that the APPLE Accreditation Standards are implemented in the program. The verification visit indicators are clearly marked and defined in the APPLE Standards Evidence Guide after each standard within the APPLE Accreditation Manual. The verification visit occurs once the self-study APPLE Accreditation Portfolio has been successfully submitted and reviewed by the APPLE team. Notification will be sent to the program indicating that it has been moved to the verification stage. Please refer to the APPLE Accreditation Verification Visit Guidance in the Membership Hub for details.

APPLE Accreditation Program of Distinction

APPLE Accreditation recognizes outstanding dedication to early care and education within the APPLE accredited programs through an opportunity to become a Program of Distinction. This recognition of excellence is determined by demonstrating consistent high standards exhibiting the characteristics essential to serving as an exemplary early care and education program. Please contact the APPLE team for more information on how to apply and the benefits of becoming a Program of Distinction.

APPLE Accreditation Guidelines

It is important to be informed and prepared for the APPLE Accreditation process. Please consider the following APPLE Accreditation Guidelines:

- ✓ APPLE Accreditation is available to all early care and education programs in the United States of America that meet the APPLE Accreditation criteria.
- ✓ All FACCM Membership and APPLE Accreditation fees are non-refundable.
- ✓ APPLE Accreditation is not transferable.
- ✓ The program candidate must be located on a site that is operational and is

attended by children to begin the APPLE Accreditation process.

- ✓ The program candidate must serve children between the ages of 0-12. This may include infants, toddlers, two-year-olds, preschool, kindergarten and/or before and after school care.
- ✓ The program candidate must be regulated by licensing or civil authorities or voluntarily comply with jurisdictional public health and safety governing requirements.
- ✓ An initial APPLE Accreditation is valid for 3 years.
- ✓ An APPLE Accreditation reaccreditation is valid for 5 years to a program candidate that remains in good standing.
- ✓ Program candidates considering reaccreditation must follow the suggested timelines provided by the APPLE team. Inability to adhere to suggested timelines may result in a lapse in accreditation.
- ✓ There is no guarantee that a lapse will be avoided. A successful reaccreditation that lapses will be awarded a 3-year accreditation and become ineligible for Program of Distinction until next reaccreditation.
- ✓ A FACCM Membership fee is required to remain in good standing with APPLE Accreditation. This is an early care and education business association membership that is renewed annually. It is due each year in the membership anniversary month. If the renewal is not received within the anniversary month, a late fee will be assessed on the first day of the next month. Negligence of membership renewal after sixty (60) days from the first day of the FACCM Membership renewal month may result in a revocation of the APPLE Accreditation.

- ✓ An APPLE Accreditation extension request is considered on a case-by-case basis.
- ✓ An APPLE Accreditation Annual Report, updated license, and fee submission is required annually to remain in good standing with APPLE Accreditation. The Annual Report provides an update of the program for the APPLE office. It is due each year in the accreditation anniversary month. If the submission is not received within the anniversary month, a late fee will be assessed on the first day of the next month. Negligence of submission after sixty (60) days from the first day of the accreditation anniversary month may result in a revocation of the APPLE Accreditation. Please refer to the APPLE Accreditation Annual Report located in the Membership Hub.
- ✓ An APPLE Accreditation Change of Owner (COO), Change of Location (COL), or Change of Accrediting Body (COAB) has specific requirements and guidelines to adhere to ensure a provisional accreditation for 12 months is issued from the license effective date. Please refer to the APPLE Accreditation COO/ COL/COAB Process information located in the Membership Hub.
- ✓ All program candidates that present opportunities for growth during the verification visit will be issued a program action plan to complete. The Program Action Plan will be provided at the same time as the verification visit results report. The program will have 15 days from notification to submit the response(s) to the programs action plan.
- ✓ Upon completion of the APPLE Accreditation process, final determination for each program candidate accreditation designation, deferral, probation, or denial of APPLE Accreditation is made by the APPLE Commission.

APPLE Commission Review

The APPLE Commission meets once a month to evaluate the portfolio submission results report, verification visit results report, and program action plan (if applicable) of each accreditation program candidate. The members of the APPLE Commission will determine the status of a program's accreditation by vote. The APPLE Commission consists of 3 or 5 FACCM Board of Directors Members. Each APPLE Commission member has one (1) vote. The majority of the Commission votes determine the outcome. The APPLE Commission vote one of the following options for each program:

- ✓ Accreditation in Good Standing: Program is awarded a 3-year new accreditation or 5-year reaccreditation.
- ✓ Accreditation Deferral: Program accreditation is deferred and an unannounced second verification visit at the expense of the program is recommended.
- ✓ Accreditation with Probation: Program is awarded a 3-year accreditation upon successful completion of a Program Action Plan and unannounced second verification visit at the expense of the program.
- ✓ Denied Accreditation: Rejection of accreditation after failed attempt at the completion of the Accreditation Deferral process.

A program candidate will be presented to the APPLE Commission with a portfolio submission results report and a verification visit results report. These reports are exclusive of each other and are not combined for an average result. Standard indicators that are required to earn accreditation must be met for a successful accreditation. These required indicators are clearly marked within the standards. If it is determined that a required indicator is not met or a program environment poses a potential threat to the health and/or safety of the children, the program may be issued an Accreditation Deferral.

Automatic Accreditation Deferral:

- Failure to produce valid employee background screening in accordance with state requirements.
- Repeated severe licensing violations.
- Submission of inaccurate or fraudulent information.
- Observed a child left unattended or without supervision.
- Observed failure to properly account for the children in care.
- Observed physical punishment, psychological or emotional abuse, or coercion of a child.

The determination of an Accreditation Deferral requires a program to decide to engage in the process of making the recommended improvements and committing to an unannounced second verification visit at the expense of the program within four (4) months of the second visit assessed invoice due date. It is recommended that the program consider technical assistance and/or training that is offered directly from the APPLE Team for an additional fee to assist the program in achieving accreditation. If an Accreditation Deferral is issued a second time to a program, it is a Denied Accreditation.

The program candidate will be notified of the decision by the APPLE Commission within ten (10) days of the APPLE Commission meeting adjournment. The hard copy of the APPLE Accreditation certificate will be processed and mailed within thirty (30) days of the APPLE Commission meeting.

APPLE Accreditation Appeals Process

If an APPLE Accreditation program candidate wishes to appeal an APPLE Commission Accreditation decision, a detailed written request to the FACCM Board of Directors is required to be submitted to the Executive Director by the program candidate within ten (10) days from receipt of the decision. The FACCM Executive Director will present the appeal request to the FACCM Board of Directors within ten (10) days of receipt. The FACCM Board of Directors reserves the right to request additional information and evidence from the Executive Director, APPLE Commission, APPLE

team, or program candidate before deciding. The FACCM Board of Directors will review the written evidence and will have thirty (30) days from the date of appeal to provide the program with a decision.

APPLE Accreditation Disclaimer

It is understood that an early care and education program that is pursuing an APPLE Accreditation is committed to the process to earn the accreditation in a professional manner. It is the expectation that all communications, documentation, and observations of and by the program are done to the best of ability in a truthful, accurate, and transparent representation of the program.

The APPLE Accreditation office reserves the right to make unannounced visits to APPLE accredited programs for the purpose of ensuring compliance with the APPLE Accreditation Standards throughout the duration of the accreditation. The APPLE Accreditation office will take necessary action if the program does not maintain the same policies, procedures, and daily operations that were confirmed during the accreditation process.

The APPLE Accreditation office will cooperate with all government entities that have a vested interest in ensuring that a program maintains a commitment to ensuring APPLE Accreditation Standards. The APPLE Accreditation office will provide requested information to these entities as a result of an inquiry or investigation.

The APPLE Accreditation office reserves the right to suspend or revoke accreditation if a program fails to remain in good standing with APPLE Accreditation, fails to maintain APPLE Accreditation Standards, exhibits unprofessional conduct, has a state or local license removed, neglects Annual Report obligations, and/or presents FACCM membership delinquency. The APPLE Accreditation office will notify the appropriate state agencies if there is a revocation of APPLE Accreditation.



Standard 1: Foundation and Philosophy

Rationale A successful and flourishing early care and education program must have a sound foundation to provide high-quality experiences to the children and families served. The purpose of the program's rudimentary philosophy is to build an inclusive environment of trust, transparency, and accountability necessary for fostering long-term relationships within the community, financial stability, and business integrity. A solidly developed mission established by program leadership provides the path to grow the business and provide the work team confidence in the shared commitment. Establishing and cultivating effective policies and procedures that support the organization's mission fosters a collaborative atmosphere that advances the goal of healthy, deep, meaningful relationships between children, families, work team, and management.

Standard 1 Indicators:

- 1.1 Mission and Vision
- 1.2 Core Values
- 1.3 Strategic Plan
- 1.4 Organizational Structure
- 1.5 Financial Accountability
- 1.6 Operational Practices
- 1.7 Risk Management Plan

1.1 Indicator: Mission and Vision

A clear mission statement sets the stage for preferred program growth. The purpose for this vision is to align interested parties to always consider how actions will impact the future success of the program and its culture.

1.2 Indicator: Core Values

Core Organizational Values are the principles that define the identity of the program within the community; driving the program's goals, establishing necessary actions and behaviors with clearly stated principles to support the mission and vision. Written Core Organizational Values ensure all parties are aligned around a guiding philosophy uniting the fundamental program identity to best serve the employees and community.

1.3 Indicator: Strategic Plan

Continuous improvement is realized with strategic program planning. In turn, this written strategy allows for implementation that assures high-quality services to children and families through setting priorities, focusing energy, identifying resources, to solidify short and long-term goals that all interested parties are working collectively toward to achieve.

1.4 Indicator: Organizational Structure

An organizational structure should be in place that develops a framework of systems and processes to manage programmatic aspects of the program. Business practices are ethical and provide the foundation on which standard operating procedures and routines are built on. The organizational structure provides the system by which roles, responsibilities and rules are established and associated activities are executed.

1.5 Indicator: Financial Accountability

Steady fiscal conditions are essential to successfully serve children and families, therefore protecting the mission of the program. Sufficient revenue needs to be generated to sustain successful operational choices and realization of program aspirations.

Expenses should be reconciled at least quarterly, with a system in place to review and adjust the budget periodically.

1.6 Indicator: Operational Practices

Fundamentally sound and consistent operational practices are necessary for successful classroom and program experiences. These core practices must be written in policy and practiced daily by the entire work team as a cornerstone to promote a stable culture. Clearly defined and consistently implemented program operations provides a comprehensive team-wide approach to a cohesive infrastructure.

Class sizes and teaching staff ratios are developmentally appropriate by age:

AGE	RATIO	GROUP SIZE MAX
Infants	1:3-4	6-8
Toddlers	1:3-5	6-10
Two Years	1:6-7	12-14
Three Years	1:7-9	14-18
Four Years	1:9-11	18-20
Five Years or Older	1:9-11	18-20

***If jurisdictional regulatory agencies have more restrictive requirements, those rules will prevail.*

1.7 Indicator: Risk Management Plan

A Risk Management Plan identifies potential hazards and allows a program to best prepare for emergencies and plan the most appropriate responses. A Risk Management Plan ensures that various and individual emergencies are managed properly. The plan should include proactive steps familiar to the entire program team, reflecting regular and clear activation practices that will prove crucial if an actual emergency were to occur.

Standard 1 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
1.1A	Mission and Vision Evidence of a mission statement that outlines the vision for the future that guides the achievement of goals. Show that the mission and vision is consistently provided to the work team and families.	Portfolio
1.2A	Core Values Evidence of at least five (5) Core Values that define the program's identity.	Portfolio
1.2B	Core Values Evidence of program definition of quality early care and education including a description of population served and unique characteristics of the program.	Portfolio
1.3A	Strategic Plan Evidence of a statement of strengths and improvement opportunities for the program including specific timelines for each objective, including short-term and long-term growth and improvement goals.	Portfolio
1.3B	Strategic Plan Evidence of an evidence-based tool, such as Strengthening Families Protective Factor Framework, is completed to assess the engagement with families and results are used for continuous program growth.	Portfolio
1.4A	Organizational Structure Evidence of organizational chart showing responsibilities of each work team member and others involved with the program. (Board Members, etc.)	Portfolio
1.4B	Organizational Structure Evidence of a job description for each position within the program.	Portfolio
1.5A	Financial Accountability Evidence of Financial Control Policies that are consistent with accepted business practices and show current income and expenses are balanced with the annual operational budget and quarterly expense reconciliation.	Portfolio
1.5B	Financial Accountability Evidence identifying the person(s) responsible for the financial aspects of the organization including any specialized consultants. Show that there is periodic examination of the budget to ensure steady fiscal conditions.	Portfolio
1.6A	Operational Practices Evidence of any technology-based management systems used for accounting, child information, and/or attendance tracking.	Portfolio

Standard 1 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
1.6B	Operational Practices Evidence of written procedures that address how to maintain developmentally and age appropriate educator-child ratios and group sizes during all hours of operation in indoor and outdoor environments.	Portfolio
1.6C	Operational Practices Evidence of a schedule including classroom name, number of children (group size), age of children, classroom ratio, educator(s) name, educator(s) hours.	Portfolio
1.6D	Operational Practices Evidence at least one (1) educator that is currently certified in First Aid and pediatric CPR is always scheduled to be present with each group of children by providing daily classroom staffing patterns for all classes.	Portfolio
1.6E	Operational Practices Evidence of plan for access to substitute educators to ensure developmentally and age appropriate ratios are always met.	Portfolio
1.6F	Operational Practices Evidence class remains within APPLE Accreditation educator-child ratio and group sizes without continual shifting or regrouping, during all hours of operation in indoor and outdoor environments.	On-Site Classroom
1.7A	Risk Management Plan Evidence of person(s) designated responsible for health, safety, and emergencies.	Portfolio
1.7B	Risk Management Plan Evidence of a program-wide plan that prepares response, management, and reporting for emergencies and evacuations. ***see APPLE Tips for Indicator Success	Portfolio
1.7C	Risk Management Plan Evidence of posted emergency plan and exit map showing escape routes from each classroom and exit area.	On-Site Program
1.7D	Risk Management Plan Evidence of monthly evacuation procedures, fire drills, lockdown drills logs.	On-Site Program



Standard 2: Governance and Organization

Rationale Providing exceptional early learning experiences for children and their families begins with a strong governance structure, which is the organizational framework that defines relationships and roles of a team working toward a collective goal. A solid plan is needed to maintain compliance with relevant regulations and guidelines ensuring good standing with all governing entities. A positive, healthy relationship with governing entities and the community facilitates a workplace that is rich in a culture of teamwork and collaboration. Efforts to establish and maintain a clear, fair, and transparent governance system promote a constructive work atmosphere and reduce work team turnover.

Standard 2 Indicators:

- 2.1 Regulation
- 2.2 Ownership
- 2.3 Insurance Coverage
- 2.4 Work Team Handbook
- 2.5 Work Team Orientation
- 2.6 Annual Evaluation
- 2.7 Workplace Collaboration

2.1 Indicator: Regulation

A current license or authorization by the appropriate civil authorities regulates operation and proves good standing status to ensure basic health and safety. License-exempt programs must complete the APPLE License Exempt Acknowledgment Waiver.

2.2 Indicator: Ownership

There are no legal or proprietary ambiguities in ownership or responsibility. Stable and engaged ownership is paramount in an early learning and care business.

2.3 Indicator: Insurance Coverage

Adequate insurance coverage, including liability, accident, worker's compensation, and, if applicable, vehicle coverage is in place for protecting the interests and operations of the program and in compliance with the civil jurisdiction. Consultation and periodic review of insurance needs is recommended to ensure proper coverage is maintained.

2.4 Indicator: Work Team Handbook

A Work Team Handbook is an essential tool to provide an initial introduction and remind a work team of the program's purpose. The Work Team Handbook should serve as the blueprint for any written guidance a team member may seek during their tenure with the program. It sets clear expectations for the work team while also stating legal obligations and defining work team member rights. The Work Team Handbook introduces employees to the culture, mission, and values, communicates what is expected of employees, educates employees about what they can expect from leadership, helps ensure key program policies are clear and consistent, and ensures compliance with federal and state laws.

2.5 Indicator: Work Team Orientation

A well-organized, thoughtfully planned initial orientation for all incoming work team members provides the onboarding opportunity to understand central pieces of program operations. Policies and practices are targeted to recruit and maintain qualified individuals that are not only legally eligible by local, state, and national early care and education requirements and standards, but are poised to grow and advance with the

program. Time is well spent on a thorough review of the Work Team Handbook to compliment the established Work Team Orientation procedures. New educators should all experience a similar orientation process that is targeted to ensure the new work team member and the program are a good fit for each other. These important orientation topics should be reviewed more than once after the initial orientation.

2.6 Indicator: Annual Evaluation

Fair and consistent performance review procedure to measure professional growth, support continual development, and revisit commitment in the program philosophy and mission should be a routine part of the workplace culture. All records for each work team member should be maintained and updated to ensure that essential information and professional development progress is tracked for each employee. Periodically, employees should be asked to provide feedback on the performance of program leadership to assure continuous quality improvement in all aspects of the program. The work team member performance review, self-evaluation and the feedback regarding program leadership should all be compiled, reviewed, and used annually to develop a program-wide action plan that benefits leadership, employees, and the families served.

2.7 Indicator: Workplace Collaboration

Work environments that provide educators ample opportunities to plan and work as a team support the probability that a program will operate at an optimal level. Successful teams champion the achievement of common goals for improving the quality of the early learning environment. When the team is dedicated, takes pride in their work, and has a common understanding of the shared vision, it ensures a work environment where educators have a positive work life. When respectful, supportive work team collaborations happen, the children are positively influenced. This creates a safe, secure, and happy early learning environment where it is evident that everyone truly enjoys working with each other as an empowered team.

Standard 2 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
2.1A <small>*Required to earn accreditation</small>	Regulation Evidence of documentation that indicates good standing with regulatory body. A license or approved APPLE License Exempt Waiver.	Portfolio
2.1B	Regulation Evidence of one (1) year of licensing reports or web link to public reports or Two (2) years of self-inspections with identified and corrected issues recorded.	Portfolio
2.2A	Ownership Evidence of Corporate Annual Report.	Portfolio
2.3A	Insurance Coverage Evidence of certificate of coverage for adequate liability, accident, worker's compensation, and if applicable, vehicle coverage.	Portfolio
2.4A	Work Team Handbook Evidence the Work Team Handbook includes the Mission and Vision Statement and program policies regarding employee rights and responsibilities, benefits, performance expectations, and staff meetings.	Portfolio
2.4B	Work Team Handbook Evidence the Work Team Handbook includes policies for operational rules and regulations, smoke/drug-free workplace, health and safety, and personal hygiene.	Portfolio
2.4C	Work Team Handbook Evidence the Work Team Handbook includes policies for background screening requirements, child abuse and neglect reporting, and medication administration.	Portfolio
2.4D	Work Team Handbook Evidence the Work Team Handbook includes all new employees are required to complete an employment application and provide personal references.	Portfolio
2.4E	Work Team Handbook Evidence the Work Team Handbook includes the Risk Management Plan, containing emergency preparedness procedures.	Portfolio
2.4F	Work Team Handbook Evidence the Work Team Handbook includes the educator will be provided with classroom instructional duties specific to the age group assigned and that they will be given the opportunity to observe experienced educators.	Portfolio

Standard 2 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
2.4G	Work Team Handbook Evidence the Work Team Handbook includes guidelines on how to accurately use the assessment for child progress and the program quality evaluation to continuously improve early learning experiences for children.	Portfolio
2.4H	Work Team Handbook Evidence the Work Team Handbook includes professional development requirements regarding completion of local, state, and national training within specified timeframes, annual training, and any additional parameters.	Portfolio
2.4I	Work Team Handbook Evidence the Work Team Handbook includes an educator retention plan. Must provide a minimum of two (2) educator retention strategies. ***see APPLE Tips for Indicator Success	Portfolio
2.4J	Work Team Handbook Evidence the Work Team Handbook includes a nondiscrimination policy that accommodations are made for children, families, and work team with differing abilities as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.	Portfolio
2.4K	Work Team Handbook Evidence the Work Team Handbook includes that personnel records are kept on-site and confidential.	Portfolio
2.4L	Work Team Handbook Evidence the Work Team Handbook includes proof a Family Handbook was provided and reviewed with new educators to identify family policies.	Portfolio
2.4M	Work Team Handbook Evidence the Work Team Handbook includes the expectation of how educators track daily attendance for each child to ensure accurate classroom/group rosters are maintained throughout the day.	Portfolio
2.4N <small>*Required to earn accreditation</small>	Work Team Handbook Evidence the Work Team Handbook includes acceptable and unacceptable guidance, discipline, and classroom management practices that will be developmentally appropriate by age and respectful. Educators may never use physical punishment, psychological or emotional abuse, withholding food or drink, rest, toileting, or coercion when disciplining a child.	Portfolio
2.4O	Work Team Handbook Evidence the Work Team Handbook includes a written description of how challenging behaviors are handled in an age-appropriate manner, keeping the nature and frequency of the incidents in perspective.	Portfolio

Standard 2 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
2.4P	Work Team Handbook Evidence the Work Team Handbook includes expectations to work cooperatively with families, coworkers, program leadership, and community to support the common goal of providing a high functioning environment.	Portfolio
2.4Q	Work Team Handbook Evidence the Work Team Handbook includes expectations regarding communications with families, program leadership, co-workers, and community members.	Portfolio
2.4R	Work Team Handbook Evidence the Work Team Handbook was reviewed at onset of employment and annually with all educators. It includes date, educator signature, and program leadership signature.	Portfolio
2.5A	Work Team Orientation Evidence of the program leader's review for each new work team member after the probationary period including evaluation of mental (temperament) health, physical health, and ability to work effectively with young children.	Portfolio
2.5B	Work Team Orientation Evidence of at least five (5) interview questions to assess the candidate's understanding of early childhood principles.	Portfolio
2.5C	Work Team Orientation Evidence that orientation for new educators includes information about the individual children they will be caring for and cultural background of families.	Portfolio
2.6A	Annual Evaluation Evidence program leadership reviews and ensures all personnel records are updated at least annually and notifies a team member if updates are needed.	Portfolio
2.6B	Annual Evaluation Evidence of a minimum of 2 separate educator performance evaluations completed at least annually by program leadership or a qualified professional. It includes classroom observation notes, individualized professional development goals for the upcoming year, date, educator feedback/signature, and program leadership feedback/signature.	Portfolio
2.6C	Annual Evaluation Evidence of a minimum of 2 separate educator self-evaluations completed at least annually by each educator. It includes date, educator signature, and program leadership signature.	Portfolio
2.6D	Annual Evaluation Evidence of a minimum of 2 supervisor performance and employment satisfaction evaluations completed by separate educators.	Portfolio

Standard 2 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
2.6E	Annual Evaluation Evidence of a completed program action plan developed in response to educator recommendations used in the decision process for improvements.	Portfolio
2.7A	Workplace Collaboration Evidence educators have opportunities to plan together; to share ideas, resources, schedules, memos, and policy statements.	Portfolio
2.7B	Workplace Collaboration Evidence of agendas and sign-in sheets for 6 monthly staff meetings within one (1) year prior to the portfolio submission.	Portfolio
2.7C	Workplace Collaboration Evidence there is an adult-friendly space provided where educators can take breaks away from children, meet with each other, and/or plan and prepare classroom materials. There are adult-sized bathrooms on the premises.	On-Site Program
2.7D	Workplace Collaboration Evidence educators have a secure and accessible place to store personal belongings in a location near them.	On-Site Program
2.7E	Workplace Collaboration Evidence educators and program leadership are working together in a cooperative manner throughout the day.	On-Site Program



Standard 3: Child Well-Being and Physical Environment

Rationale The physical environment in an early learning setting is the space that provides a child with the opportunity to grow; ultimately shaping the child's health, learning, and behavior. A well-maintained, safe, and intentionally designed physical environment fosters positive attitudes and motivations related to a child's prosocial actions and opens the doors to learning. Developmentally and age appropriate early learning environments with meaningful spaces, materials, furnishings, equipment, and displays foster independence and feelings of competency in young children, encourage educator proficiency, promote engagement, and facilitate appropriate social interactions among children. Every aspect of the physical environment design should reflect the program's priorities and philosophy.

Standard 3 Indicators:

- 3.1 Building Design
- 3.2 Safety Culture
- 3.3 Healthy Environment
- 3.4 Indoor Environment Design
- 3.5 Outdoor Environment Design
- 3.6 Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment
- 3.7 Nutritional Well-Being

3.1 Indicator: Building Design

A building that is designed for an early learning program needs to specifically meet the needs of young children and the educators that are caring for them. All classrooms and common areas should be comfortable, clean, and in good repair. Careful planning of the space will help create an environment where educators can provide the best possible care and education for young children and provides a stimulating environment that offers choices to children, invites engagement in several different activities, and encourages exploration of a wide range of materials.

3.2 Indicator: Safety Culture

Implementing consistent and clear health and safety practices is paramount to ensure that the children, families, and work team members feel safe in the early learning environment. Written procedures that address planned precautionary systems must be shared to properly prepare for keeping everyone healthy and safe. In a safety culture, all who work within the program are actively involved in identifying and resolving safety concerns and are empowered to take initiative to improve the environment in the best interest of health and safety.

3.3 Indicator: Healthy Environment

Policies and procedures for cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing the classrooms and other areas of the building must be regularly updated and reviewed with all work team members to protect health and control infectious disease. There is a standard procedure for keeping the environment healthy that the entire work team understands and works cooperatively to maintain. Clear expectations for daily, weekly, and monthly cleaning tasks to ensure classroom cleanliness are specified, documented, and completed.

3.4 Indicator: Indoor Environment Design

All possible measures should be exercised to create a well-designed indoor space that is intended for children to interact and learn in a welcoming, comfortable setting. Specific consideration should be given to ensure that the indoor early learning environment is organized in a way to provide the children using the space optimal opportunities for individual, small group, and large group

engagement. The needs and learning goals of all the children should be considered when designing or redesigning an indoor early learning environment.

3.5 Indicator: Outdoor Environment Design

The outdoor area provides the children with an opportunity to play, learn, and explore in the natural environment. Well-planned outdoor spaces stimulate children's imaginations and engage their sense of curiosity as they explore their physical surroundings and learn in ways beyond indoor experiences. Children of all ages should have daily opportunities to play outside in both structured and unstructured environments that support development and exploration in learning.

3.6 Indicator: Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment

Furniture, fixtures, or other equipment (FFE) are moveable items that have no permanent connection to the structure of the early care and education building. They are removable from their respective locations if needed for more meaningful types, amounts, and/or placement. The furniture, fixtures, and equipment in an early learning setting should be in good working order, clean, adaptable, comfortable, stable, and developmentally appropriate by age for the children using it to ensure a welcoming environment that supports the desired outcomes.

3.7 Indicator: Nutritional Well-Being

Good nutrition and a healthy lifestyle are fundamental to a child's development and can impact a child throughout the rest of their life. When embedded in the policies and practices of an early learning environment and classroom materials, information about food safety and healthy foods should help children learn about nutrition and increase awareness of the importance of healthy choices. Children can learn to recognize, prepare, eat, and value healthy foods when educators intentionally incorporate this into conversations and practices. Each child has specific individual nutritional needs during each developmental stage. Exposure to safely eating foods and healthy habits in an early learning environment will encourage children to foster continued interest in the importance of healthy choices for a lifetime.

Standard 3 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
3.1A	Building Design Evidence the building has been assessed for lead, radon, radiation, asbestos, fiberglass, or any other hazard. If warranted by the inspection reports, evidence of steps to remediate the exposure to children and adults.	Portfolio
3.1B	Building Design Evidence indoor and outdoor premises are kept free from harmful animals, insects, pests, and poisonous plants, procedures used for pest control when children are not present, and use of Integrated Pest Management (the least hazardous means to control pests and unwanted plants).	Portfolio
3.1C	Building Design The exterior front of the premises is clean, in good repair, and welcoming. Signage is clear and engaging, landscaping is kept.	On-Site Program
3.1D	Building Design Evidence premises are free of clutter and dirt debris.	On-Site Program
3.1E	Building Design Evidence surfaces, floors, and carpets are clean without trip hazard.	On-Site Program
3.1F	Building Design Evidence vents are clean, the temperature is appropriate, and there is adequate ventilation and lighting.	On-Site Program
3.1G	Building Design Evidence No Smoking sign(s) are posted. Indoor and outdoor premises are observed as smoke-free.	On-Site Program
3.1H	Building Design Evidence of current service of fire alarms, tagged extinguishers, tested smoke detectors, fire alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors.	On-Site Program
3.2A	Safety Culture Evidence local health authorities are contacted at least annually to keep current on relevant health information and to obtain advice when there are outbreaks of communicable disease.	Portfolio
3.2B	Safety Culture Evidence of access to a health consultant who observes, reviews, and recommends best health policies related to the care and exclusion of ill children to ensure the promotion of good health and the prevention of infection and injury. The health consultant reviews the environmental, physical, social-emotional, nutritional, and oral health of the children served.	Portfolio

Standard 3 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
3.2C	Safety Culture Evidence of policy for administering medication includes it is only administered when written permission is provided by family, is consistently administered by a designated work team member, and a log is kept of all medication administered. ***Medication is considered a toxin and should be stored accordingly.	Portfolio
3.2D	Safety Culture Evidence of requirements for drivers including supervision of transported children and the proper use of restraint system for each child. Address specific procedures for children with differing abilities if applicable.	Portfolio
3.2E	Safety Culture Evidence of a policy that a fully stocked First Aid Kit is in each vehicle.	Portfolio
3.2F	Safety Culture Evidence of current alarm installation, maintenance schedule, and maintenance log for each vehicle.	Portfolio
3.2G	Safety Culture Evidence of a policy accounting for arrival, departure, and transportation of children. A completed transportation log including pick-up/drop-off routine, emergency information, and procedure to account for each child.	Portfolio
3.2H	Safety Culture Evidence of daily sign-in and out system for children's arrival and departure.	Portfolio
3.2I	Safety Culture Evidence a building security and access procedure is in place and children are only dismissed to authorized individuals.	On-Site Program
3.2J	Safety Culture Evidence educator has accurate and current attendance records for children in care, attendance is tracked throughout day using face to name recognition.	On-Site Classroom
3.3A	Healthy Environment Evidence of procedures for cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing, using non-toxic supplies on a daily or weekly basis, or when visibly soiled. ***see APPLE Tips for Success	Portfolio
3.3B	Healthy Environment Evidence of completed cleaning logs that capture self-inspections of classrooms, bathrooms, and other areas. or A copy of executed cleaning contract.	Portfolio

Standard 3 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
3.3C	Healthy Environment Evidence of policy regarding use of Universal Precautions.	Portfolio
3.3D	Healthy Environment Evidence of policy that both children and adults wash their hands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ before and after diapering or using/assisting with the toilet ✓ after handling bodily fluids ✓ after playing in shared water areas ✓ before and after meals and snacks/feeding a child 	Portfolio
3.3E	Healthy Environment Evidence of policy that adults wash their hands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ before and after administering medication ✓ after handling garbage ✓ after cleaning 	Portfolio
3.3F	Healthy Environment Evidence that both children and adults wash their hands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ before and after diapering or using/assisting with the toilet ✓ after handling bodily fluids ✓ after playing in fluid play areas ✓ before and after meals and snacks or feeding a child 	On-Site Program
3.3G	Healthy Environment Evidence that adults wash their hands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ before and after administering medication ✓ after handling garbage ✓ after cleaning 	On-Site Program
3.3H	Healthy Environment Evidence there is a well-marked, fully stocked First Aid kit always available and accessible during indoor/outdoor gross motor play.	On-Site Program
3.3I	Healthy Environment Evidence proper hand washing sequence, in accordance with CDC guidelines is posted at all sinks in a developmentally and age appropriate manner.	On-Site Program
3.3J	Healthy Environment Evidence bathrooms are cleaned and sanitized daily and are odor free.	On-Site Program
3.3K	Healthy Environment Evidence sinks are used appropriately per policies and procedures.	On-Site Program
3.3L	Healthy Environment Evidence children wash hands either independently, with periodic monitoring or with staff assistance, as needed.	On-Site Classroom

Standard 3 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
3.3M	Healthy Environment Evidence items that note “keep out of reach of children”, including cleaning materials, paint, detergents, aerosol cans, health and beauty aids, and other toxic materials are stored in their original labeled containers, used according to manufacturer’s instructions and inaccessible to children.	On-Site Classroom
3.3N	Healthy Environment Evidence all art supplies and materials are non-toxic.	On-Site Classroom
3.3O	Healthy Environment Evidence diaper changing areas are cleaned and sanitized after each use.	On-Site Classroom
3.3P	Healthy Environment Evidence proper diapering sequence, in accordance with CDC guidelines is posted at all diaper changing stations.	On-Site Classroom
3.3Q	Healthy Environment Evidence diapers are checked regularly, and soiled/wet diapers and clothing are changed immediately.	On-Site Classroom
3.3R	Healthy Environment Evidence disposable gloves are used when diapering, handling blood, or other potential contaminants and needed supplies are available when diapering and disposed of properly. ***see APPLE Tips for Indicator Success	On-Site Classroom
3.3S	Healthy Environment Evidence children do not share mats or cots unless bedding is changed. Bedding is identified with names/numbers and washed at least once a week.	On-Site Classroom
3.3T	Healthy Environment Evidence trash receptacles used for diaper disposal are closable, hands free, and plastic lined. All other trash receptacles prevent accessibility to trash. All trash receptacles are emptied, cleaned, and sanitized daily.	On-Site Classroom
3.3U	Healthy Environment Evidence that before walking on surfaces that infants use specifically for play, adults and children remove, replace, or cover with clean foot coverings any shoes worn outside the play area. If children or staff are barefoot in such areas, their feet are visibly clean.	On-Site Classroom
3.4A	Indoor Environment Design Evidence of a floor plan labeled with name and ages of the group using the space. Dimensions show each classroom includes at least 35 square feet of usable space per child.	Portfolio
3.4B	Indoor Environment Design Evidence all common areas are clean and welcoming with good traffic flow.	On-Site Program

Standard 3 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
3.4C	Indoor Environment Design Evidence natural light is available in some of the indoor areas occupied by children during the course of the day.	On-Site Program
3.4D	Indoor Environment Design Evidence of unobstructed and visible paths maintained for entering and exiting, as well as clearly marked regular and emergency exits.	On-Site Program
3.4E	Indoor Environment Design Evidence all indoor areas and classrooms are free from trash, sharp or hazardous items, and are in clean condition.	On-Site Program
3.4F	Indoor Environment Design Evidence walls, floors, and all permanent components are in good repair with no sharp edges, splinters, protruding or rusty nails, or missing parts.	On-Site Program
3.4G	Indoor Environment Design Evidence electrical outlets are covered or GFI outlets are installed, and electrical cords are secured in a safe manner.	On-Site Program
3.4H	Indoor Environment Design Evidence bathrooms have barriers to prevent entry by infants, toddlers, or 2-year-olds.	On-Site Program
3.4I	Indoor Environment Design Evidence stairways, if applicable, are well-lit and equipped with handrails.	On-Site Program
3.4J	Indoor Environment Design Evidence there is no mold or mildew in the building.	On-Site Program
3.4K	Indoor Environment Design Evidence the classroom setting is inviting and organized. It is not cluttered, and items hung from the ceiling are secured so there is no falling hazard.	On-Site Classroom
3.4L	Indoor Environment Design Evidence physical layout locates diaper changing areas and toilets near sinks to facilitate handwashing and are located away from food preparation areas.	On-Site Classroom
3.4M	Indoor Environment Design Evidence toilets, drinking water, and handwashing facilities are within 40 feet of the indoor areas children use. The handwashing sinks are accessible to adults and children.	On-Site Classroom
3.4N	Indoor Environment Design Evidence that the space and floor plan within each classroom or group area provides for ease of movement within and between areas.	On-Site Classroom

Standard 3 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
3.4O	Indoor Environment Design Evidence there are spaces with sufficient room for both large and small group activities, without crowding, as well as spaces where children can retreat individually yet still be within sound and sight of an adult.	On-Site Classroom
3.4P	Indoor Environment Design Evidence the classroom environment is soothing and not overly loud for the activity or lesson.	On-Site Classroom
3.4Q	Indoor Environment Design Evidence each child has a designated space to safely keep their personal belongings, artwork, and other items organized.	On-Site Classroom
3.5A	Outdoor Environment Design Evidence of playground sketch including equipment and measurements with at least 75 square feet for each child using the space at any one time.	Portfolio
3.5B	Outdoor Environment Design Evidence of a daily safety checklist indicating the individual responsible for outdoor equipment inspection. The checklist includes inspection of all pieces of equipment as well as fall zones and any other potentially hazardous areas. ***see APPLE Tips for Indicator Success	Portfolio
3.5C	Outdoor Environment Design Evidence sandboxes are covered when not in use and maintained in a sanitary manner, including regular drainage, cleaning, and sand replacement.	On-Site Program
3.5D	Outdoor Environment Design Evidence there is shade over a minimum of 25% of the playground area while in use by children.	On-Site Program
3.5E	Outdoor Environment Design Evidence there is an area is provided where children can run and have opportunities to play.	On-Site Program
3.5F	Outdoor Environment Design Evidence outdoor play equipment is of safe design and in good repair, free of sharp edges, protruding parts, weaknesses, and flaws in construction. ***see APPLE Tips for Indicator Success	On-Site Program
3.5G	Outdoor Environment Design Evidence anchored equipment is more than 6 feet away from hard surfaces, fence or other pieces of equipment and elevated equipment is surrounded by resilient safety surfaces of acceptable depth in the fall zone and there are barriers to prevent children from falling.	On-Site Program

Standard 3 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
3.5H	Outdoor Environment Design Evidence a 4 feet or higher fence surrounds the playground, preventing access to streets and other dangers. Fence gates are child proof and secure.	On-Site Program
3.5I	Outdoor Environment Design Evidence pools or any body of water on the premises are enclosed by a fence 4 feet or higher and secured by child proof gates.	On-Site Program
3.5J	Outdoor Environment Design Evidence the outdoor area provides space and equipment for a variety of gross motor activities including climbing, riding, swinging, balancing, sliding, rolling, jumping, crawling, scooting, throwing, catching, etc.	On-Site Program
3.5K	Outdoor Environment Design Evidence the outdoor area provides opportunities for quiet play, books, blocks, manipulatives, and dramatic play. It is a natural place for science activities, art, sand, and water exploration.	On-Site Program
3.5L	Outdoor Environment Design Evidence the outdoor area provides spaces for exploration of the natural environment, including natural and manufactured surfaces and materials.	On-Site Program
3.5M	Outdoor Environment Design Evidence of physically, developmentally, and age appropriate variety of outdoor equipment, toys, and activities is available for different age groups.	On-Site Program
3.6A	Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment Evidence of plan for rotating classroom materials by adding new items to spark children's interest and curiosity for each age group.	Portfolio
3.6B	Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment Evidence indoor and outdoor gross motor equipment meets national safety standards to eliminate injury hazards and supervision is equal on both.	On-Site Program
3.6C	Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment Evidence bedding and linens are not stored in the bathroom unless in closing cabinets or lidded bins.	On-Site Program
3.6D	Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment Evidence all furniture, fixtures, and equipment are safe, clean, and in good repair with no sharp edges, splinters, protruding/rusty nails, or missing parts.	On-Site Classroom
3.6E	Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment Evidence materials, equipment, and supplies are developmentally appropriate by age, attractively displayed, accessible, and in good condition. ***see APPLE Tips for Indicator Success	On-Site Classroom

Standard 3 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
3.6F	Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment Evidence materials and supplies include opportunities for developmentally and age appropriate fine and gross motor development, cause and effect discovery, and problem-solving.	On-Site Classroom
3.6G	Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment Evidence of developmentally and age appropriate sized tables and chairs with backs. Children's feet touch the floor, can rest elbows on the tabletop, and infant and toddler feet are supported when in a highchair.	On-Site Classroom
3.6H	Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment Evidence shelving and storage allow children to independently access materials and tall shelves are securely anchored to the wall or ground.	On-Site Classroom
3.6I	Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment Evidence sinks and toilets are sized for independent child use or there are stable steps for access.	On-Site Classroom
3.6J	Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment Evidence developmentally and age appropriate soft furnishing is provided	On-Site Classroom
3.6K	Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment Evidence adults have a comfortable place to sit, hold, and feed a child. Adult seating is placed safely to avoid injury to children on the floor.	On-Site Classroom
3.7A	Nutritional Well-Being Evidence of latest compliance with USDA food service monitoring report within the 12-month period prior to portfolio submission or evidence at least twice a year a dietician or nutrition consultant evaluates menus for nutritional content, portion sizes, nationally recommended limits on juice, sugar, sodium, and saturated fats, food service operations, special feeding needs to be met, and procedures for food brought from home. Items are identified and corrected according to the consultant's recommendations.	Portfolio
3.7B	Nutritional Well-Being Evidence of schedule showing meals and snacks are served at regularly established times and at least 2 hours apart but not more than 3 hours apart.	Portfolio
3.7C	Nutritional Well-Being Evidence health authorities determine the water is safe for consumption if well water is used.	Portfolio

Standard 3 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
3.7D	Nutritional Well-Being Evidence a policy that educators must ensure food safety when providing drinks, meals, and snacks. It includes that children younger than 4 years are not offered these foods: hot dogs (whole or sliced into rounds), whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, spoonful of peanut butter, chunks of raw carrots, or meat larger than can be swallowed whole. Educators cut food into pieces no larger than 1/4-inch square for infants and 1/2-inch square for toddlers and 2s. Whether prepared by the program or brought from home, it must be served according to each child's chewing and swallowing capability.	Portfolio
3.7E	Nutritional Well-Being Evidence of a policy provided to families regarding the storage of food brought from outside/home, partially used food, and procedure to check for freshness before serving according to USDA guidelines. The policy states the right to refuse to serve inappropriate items that lack freshness, fail to meet nutritional food safety guidelines, and/or are not age-appropriate.	Portfolio
3.7F	Nutritional Well-Being Evidence the program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Does not serve cow's milk to infants younger than 12 months ✓ Serves children 12-24 months whole or reduced fat milk only ✓ Coordinates to meet developmental nutritional needs ✓ Does not serve solid foods in bottles without family's health care provider guidance ✓ Does not serve solid foods or fruit juices to infants without written medical instruction and approval of family ✓ Serves only 100% fruit juices; limited to 4 ounces a day ✓ Offers young children fluids from a cup when families and educators decide together that the child is developmentally ready 	Portfolio
3.7G	Nutritional Well-Being Evidence of encouraging and supporting breastfeeding by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Accepting, storing, and serving expressed milk for feedings according to food safety standards. ✓ Accepting milk in ready-to-feed sanitary containers labeled with the infant's first and last name and date and storing it in a refrigerator for no longer than 24 hours (or no more than 24 hours if the breast milk was previously frozen) or in a freezer at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below for no longer than 3 months. ✓ Ensuring that breast milk is gently mixed, not shaken, to preserve its special infection-fighting and nutritional components. ✓ Providing a place for mothers to come to the facility to breastfeed and coordinate feedings with the mother. 	Portfolio

Standard 3 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
3.7H	Nutritional Well-Being Show procedures used to track children's food allergies with family consent.	Portfolio
3.7I	Nutritional Well-Being Evidence a daily record of information documenting the types and quantity of food consumed is provided to families of children with differing abilities including special feeding needs.	Portfolio
3.7J	Nutritional Well-Being Evidence current menus are posted where families can see them, families have copies available, and are kept on file for review.	On-Site Program
3.7K	Nutritional Well-Being Evidence areas where food is prepared and/or served are clean and organized.	On-Site Program
3.7L	Nutritional Well-Being Evidence clean, sanitary drinking water is available to children throughout the day, including indoor and outdoor learning environments.	On-Site Program
3.7M	Nutritional Well-Being Evidence all infant foods and infant formula are only accepted if in factory-sealed containers, prepared according to manufacturer's instructions, and stored and served at appropriate temperatures.	On-Site Program
3.7N	Nutritional Well-Being Evidence all food brought from outside/home is labeled with first/last name and date, stored in a safe, sanitary manner according to USDA guidelines, supplemented by program if necessary, and if intended to be shared must be either whole fruit or commercially prepared.	On-Site Program
3.7O	Nutritional Well-Being Evidence of lists detailing the allergies of each individual child are prominently posted, with family consent, in the classrooms and kitchen along with instructions regarding the treatment of any allergic reaction.	On-Site Program
3.7P	Nutritional Well-Being Educators sit with children, model good table manners, demonstrate good nutrition choices.	On-Site Classroom
3.7Q	Nutritional Well-Being Evidence meals are a pleasant time and children are not rushed, including infants. Educators attend to those children that need assistance, and converse naturally while they are eating.	On-Site Classroom
3.7R	Nutritional Well-Being Evidence infant formula, breast milk, or infant food is not warmed in a microwave but warmed in 120-degree hot water for a maximum of 5 minutes.	On-Site Classroom

Standard 3 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
3.7S	Nutritional Well-Being Evidence educators are familiar with an infant and offer food whenever the infant seems hungry. Feeding is not used in lieu of other forms of comfort.	On-Site Classroom
3.7T	Nutritional Well-Being Evidence formula or breast milk not consumed is discarded 1 hour after feeding commences.	On-Site Classroom
3.7U	Nutritional Well-Being Evidence liquids and foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of reach of children.	On-Site Classroom



Standard 4: Resources and Relationships

Rationale Relationships are at the heart of the childcare environment. Building and maintaining healthy relationships involves honesty, trust, respect, and open communication. This is true of all the different relationships that are found within the early care and education environment. A firm understanding of the roles and responsibilities should be transparently shared from the beginning to avoid future confusion and foster the best possible scenario for children to thrive. From this, a partnership between the family and the program team can grow into a mutually respectful and dynamic collaboration with a common goal targeting optimal outcomes for children.

Standard 4 Indicators:

- 4.1 Family Handbook
- 4.2 Family Partnership
- 4.3 Shared Communications
- 4.4 Work Team Development
- 4.5 Child Progress
- 4.6 Community Collaboration
- 4.7 Cultivating Relationships

4.1 Indicator: Family Handbook

A Family Handbook is the written reference guide to families that serves as insurance that the foundation is set for the partnership in co-caring for a child. It is the opportunity to clearly communicate philosophy, policies, and expectations. The Family Handbook serves as a constant resource when the need for clarification is present. It is important that the Family Handbook is reviewed with each newly enrolled family, as well as annually with existing enrolled families to review and remind of the importance of the expectations as they align to the program mission and goals.

4.2 Indicator: Family Partnership

Children thrive and learn in the context of a collaborative, trusting, strong partnership between families and caregivers. Families need to feel welcomed and respected. Educators need to fully understand the family to best support the child. With a strong relationship in place between educators and family, educators are well positioned to share knowledge and skills with families about how children learn and develop. In turn, the family is comfortable in sharing input about the child's needs, their culture, and family structure at home. Consistent and meaningful two-way communication nurtures family partnerships that provide opportunities for families to engage with the program.

4.3 Indicator: Shared Communication

Ensuring consistent, constructive, and shared communications between all parties involved in caring for and educating a child provides the infrastructure necessary to maintain reciprocal relationships. The opportunity for continuous interaction and communication between families and the work team is essential to maintain positive relationships to benefit the child. Families provide the program with information to

better understand the child and their family structure to best prepare the child for success. The program educators provide families with specific information regarding a child's progress and development and the program leadership provide families with general child development, current research or best practices, early care and education, and community matters.

4.4 Indicator: Work Team Development

Supporting leaders and educators in professional development advancement promotes the work team to enhance early care and education skills, as well as deepen relationships within the program by growing an understanding of child development. Continuous professional development for the work team maximizes ways to support opportunities for all staff to enrich skills, grow understanding of child development, strengthen cooperation with families, and access the latest early childhood research through intentional planning, access to resources, and workplace learning opportunities. Supporting and preparing educators will reduce turnover and grow a unified work team, allowing an educator pride in being part of the early education field and keeps the educator well-informed and equipped for their career journey.

4.5 Indicator: Child Progress

A child is in the best position for a successful developmental journey when all those caring for the child are communicating regularly and clearly about incremental and long-term progress, providing the framework for discussions about meeting goals. Formal and informal child progress assessments are an opportunity for educators to communicate with families to share updates about a child's development and learning. The individual progress may also be used by the educator to make informed decisions about children in their care and to tweak classroom practices

to suit the learning styles of the children. Best practice methods to observe and assess developmental milestones of a child will assist in creating a learning environment that meets both individual and group needs. This is particularly essential to ensure children with differing abilities are included with appropriate accommodations and supports, optimizing individualized inclusion plans to support success. Families should expect ongoing communication, as well as be informed on what formal and informal assessment tools are consistently used by the educator, creating a cumulative portfolio for a child's progress as the child grows. A shared plan between the educator and family to meet the needs and goals of an individual child should be established so that the program and family become strong advocates for a child's needs.

4.6 Indicator: Community Collaboration

Strong ties and collaborative relationships within the local community and early care and education program brings appreciation to how integrated the early care and education system is in society. Community engagement sets a positive example for children, highlighting the value of giving back through bringing people together to work toward a common cause. By developing a local presence and building collaborative partnerships, awareness of the vital role early care and education plays in our community grows locally and beyond. Participation in community activities provides a sense of responsibility and provides an identity within the community. Program leaders and educators should be rooted in the universal early learning professional community, as well as the local community.

4.7 Indicator: Cultivating Relationships

Classroom relationships are cultivated through consistent and continuous positive trust and supportive care connections.

When an educator builds relationships with children, there is a positive impact on each child's development. As a child learns in the context of caring relationships with adults, they will become more skilled at building positive relationships with other children. Positive interactions initiated by an educator encourage appropriate social interactions with young children by communicating in a calm voice, protecting them from harm, speaking with them at eye level, and smiling often. For a young child to flourish in grasping learning experiences, there must be clear, concise, age-appropriate behavior expectations that are shared by the educator consistently and in a positive manner. Educators should use proactive measures to guide positive behavior, such as modeling appropriate ways to express and manage emotions. Positive guidance helps a child resolve conflict on their own by guiding them in identifying a feeling, communicating possible solutions, and making appropriate choices.

Standard 4 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
4.1A	Family Handbook Evidence in the Family Handbook includes information regarding the new child and family orientation process.	Portfolio
4.1B	Family Handbook Evidence the enrollment documentation includes, at a minimum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Child name and date of birth ✓ Family/caregiver contact information ✓ Emergency contact names and numbers ✓ Child health history, including current immunization records ✓ Physical exam within 2 years ✓ Allergies and/or health issues, ✓ Home/family practices ✓ Developmental needs 	Portfolio
4.1C	Family Handbook Evidence the Family Handbook includes building security and access procedure is in place and children are only dismissed to authorized individuals. Show security measures in place to ensure a child is signed in and out with time and date by an authorized adult.	Portfolio
4.1D	Family Handbook Evidence in the Family Handbook includes information on hours and days of operation, holidays, closings, tuition fees, billing, attendance, and vacation.	Portfolio
4.1E	Family Handbook Evidence the Family Handbook includes the Mission and Vision Statement and open-door policy.	Portfolio
4.1F	Family Handbook Evidence the Family Handbook includes acceptable and unacceptable guidance, discipline, and classroom management practices that will be developmentally appropriate by age and respectful. Educators may never use physical punishment, psychological or emotional abuse, withholding food or drink, rest, toileting, or coercion when disciplining a child.	Portfolio
4.1G	Family Handbook Evidence the Family Handbook includes a written description of how challenging behaviors are handled in an age-appropriate manner, keeping the nature and frequency of the incidents in perspective.	Portfolio
4.1H	Family Handbook Evidence the Family Handbook includes protocol to ensure the safety of all children in the event of dangerous behaviors.	Portfolio
4.1I	Family Handbook Evidence the Family Handbook includes guidelines to limit suspension or expulsion and steps before the decision to suspend or exclude is considered.	Portfolio

Standard 4 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
4.1J	Family Handbook Evidence the Family Handbook includes a policy that accommodations are made for a child with differing abilities as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Show the nondiscrimination policy for children and families.	Portfolio
4.1K	Family Handbook Evidence the Family Handbook includes a policy that child/family records are kept confidential and updated annually including names, addresses, parent/guardian phone numbers. The Family Handbook also includes the policy for emergency contact information, medical treatment authorization, medical administration logs and history, developmental history, immunization records, progress reports, conference reports, transportation permissions, injury, and illness logs.	Portfolio
4.1L	Family Handbook Evidence the Family Handbook includes family communication methods about child development, health, behavior, or other issues while respecting home languages whenever possible in the form of family/educator conference documentation, phone call notes, or anecdotal records.	Portfolio
4.1M	Family Handbook Evidence the Family Handbook includes guidelines for classroom curriculum and lesson planning, individual child screening, assessment, or other measurements of child progress including permission from family, frequency of use, identify who performs the assessments, scoring process, using results to inform classroom instruction to meet a child's needs.	Portfolio
4.1N	Family Handbook Evidence the Family Handbook includes guidelines and suggestions for family involvement and volunteering, including that family conferences will be held a minimum of 2 times a year.	Portfolio
4.1O	Family Handbook Evidence the Family Handbook includes that in advance of a field trip families are notified of the destination, time of departure, time of arrival, and time of return. Signed permission is kept on file for each child participating.	Portfolio
4.1P	Family Handbook Evidence the Family Handbook includes procedures for sick child attendance limitations including a statement on how families are notified when a child appears ill and how that is documented.	Portfolio
4.1Q	Family Handbook Evidence the Family Handbook includes procedures for building security and access and emergency response plans.	Portfolio

Standard 4 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
4.1R	Family Handbook Evidence the Family Handbook includes an explanation of the requirement to report suspected abuse and neglect.	Portfolio
4.1S	Family Handbook Evidence the Family Handbook includes the requirement for families to provide a child with at least 1 change of clothing suitable for outdoor play to protect against heat, cold, sun injury, and insect-borne disease.	Portfolio
4.1T	Family Handbook Evidence the Family Handbook includes a policy to protect children and adults from environmental health concerns including air pollution such as smog or automobile, lead, and asbestos, per public health requirements.	Portfolio
4.1U	Family Handbook Evidence the Family Handbook includes a policy on authorization of prescription and over-the counter medication to children including reserving the right to decline to administer medication that appears to pose a potential harm to the child, reserving the right to decline to administer non-traditional medications, and families must replace expiring or depleted medications in a timely manner. or provide a statement to families that medication is not provided on premises.	Portfolio
4.1V	Family Handbook Evidence the Family Handbook includes a policy for classroom pets or visiting animals that documents animals are fully immunized (if applicable) and that the animals are suitable for contact with children. Direct supervision is required for all interactions between children and animals, instruction on safe behaviors in proximity to animals is provided, child pet allergies are considered, and reptiles are not permitted or a statement if classroom pets and visiting animals are not permitted.	Portfolio
4.1W	Family Handbook Evidence the Family Handbook was reviewed with new families and annually with all families, including family signature, management signature, and date.	Portfolio
4.2A	Family Partnership Evidence of 6 separate photos within 1 year prior to portfolio submission that illustrate family engagement, including recorded dates/times and relationship of family members involved. ***see APPLE Tips for Indicator Success	Portfolio

Standard 4 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
4.2B	Family Partnership Evidence of regularly planned family meetings and/or events, including recent methods of invitation, description of event, and sign-in forms.	Portfolio
4.2C	Family Partnership Evidence of procedures for family problem solving and conflict resolution.	Portfolio
4.2D	Family Partnership Evidence of designated areas for family information and resources throughout the program that are easily accessible.	On-Site Program
4.2E	Family Partnership Evidence of an area to hold either formal or informal meetings with families that provides privacy from the business operations.	On-Site Program
4.3A	Shared Communication Evidence of varied formal and informal strategies to become acquainted with and learn about a family, including parenting style preferences and information families would like to share about their structure, socioeconomic, primary language, racial, religious, or cultural background. ***see APPLE Tips for Indicator Success	Portfolio
4.3B	Shared Communication Evidence, such as completed surveys, of how feedback from families is used to consider improvements that better meet the child and family needs.	Portfolio
4.3C	Shared Communication Evidence of 2 daily communications with families of infants, toddlers, or 2s about a child's developmental milestones, individual activities, and shared caregiving. ***see APPLE Tips for Indicator Success	Portfolio
4.3D	Shared Communication Evidence of 2 communications occurring at least weekly, with families of preschoolers, kindergartners, or school-agers about a child's developmental milestones, individual activities, and shared caregiving. ***see APPLE Tips for Indicator Success	Portfolio
4.3E	Shared Communication Evidence the educator interactions with families are friendly, professional, and appropriate.	On-Site Program
4.3F	Shared Communication Evidence of a presence of notices, flyers, brochures, etc. for families.	On-Site Program
4.4A	Work Team Development Evidence of local, state, and national professional resources, which may include website links, that are available and currently shared with educators to encourage joining a professional early learning organization.	Portfolio

Standard 4 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
4.4B	Work Team Development Evidence educators have access to professional resources including books, curriculum guides, videos, trainings, and online resources that are appropriate for the educational level of the educators, suitable for use with ages and development of children, based on current research and best practices, pertain to all early childhood developmental domains.	On-Site Program
4.5A	Child Progress Evidence of the name and edition of assessment instruments and 2 completed observation or assessment tools currently in use.	Portfolio
4.5B	Child Progress Evidence of plans that guide how individual child needs and goals are met, including individual goals set by outside agencies if applicable.	Portfolio
4.5C	Child Progress Evidence of a plan for steps to make a child referral for diagnostic services.	Portfolio
4.5D	Child Progress Evidence of community resources provided to families in need of access to local agencies, local organizations, annual health and developmental screenings, early intervention diagnostic services, counseling, etc.	Portfolio
4.5E	Child Progress Evidence of the plan and procedure to prepare a child for transitioning to another classroom, learning program, or school including an agreed upon shared summary of the child's specific needs and the family's needs.	Portfolio
4.5F	Child Progress Evidence of a system for daily health checks that includes observations for each child.	On-Site Classroom
4.6A	Community Collaboration Evidence of participation in 2 separate community benefit activities, dated and labeled, within the 12-month period prior to portfolio submission. ***see APPLE Tips for Indicator Success	Portfolio
4.6B	Community Collaboration Evidence of a professional membership for program leaders and educators.	Portfolio
4.6C	Community Collaboration Evidence a program representative spoke at a local, state, or national business or community group about an early care and education topic within the 12-month period prior to portfolio submission.	Portfolio

Number	Evidence	Source
4.6D	Community Collaboration Evidence that program leadership and educators participate in advocacy or professional learning activities that connect with other early learning professionals in the local, state, or national early learning community. ***see APPLE Tips for Indicator Success	Portfolio
4.7A	Cultivating Relationships Evidence reasonable efforts are made to keep children with the same educator throughout the day and school year to promote healthy levels of bonding.	Portfolio
4.7B	Cultivating Relationships Evidence the educator has primary responsibility for a group of children, which facilitates bonding and developing trust.	On-Site Classroom
4.7C	Cultivating Relationships Evidence the educator uses appropriate tone and volume of voice to gain children's attention.	On-Site Classroom
4.7D	Cultivating Relationships Evidence the educator has clear behavior expectations.	On-Site Classroom
4.7E	Cultivating Relationships Evidence the educator provides clarity for all developmentally and age appropriate classroom and playground rules and routines in a meaningful way that are clearly understood by children.	On-Site Classroom
4.7F	Cultivating Relationships Evidence the educator proactively encourages positive behavior by anticipating and taking preventive, consistent steps to manage potential behavior challenges.	On-Site Classroom
4.7G	Cultivating Relationships Evidence the children have varied opportunities to develop prosocial behavior and skills for participating in social groups by interacting positively, respectfully, and cooperatively with others.	On-Site Classroom
4.7H	Cultivating Relationships Evidence the educator handles disruption quickly, appropriately, and efficiently to refocus and resume activities and is watchful of the entire class to stop hurtful behaviors.	On-Site Classroom
4.7I	Cultivating Relationships Evidence the educator guides children, including infants and toddlers, gently when mistaken behaviors occur and gives children opportunities to calm themselves while assisting them in making appropriate choices to return to activities.	On-Site Classroom
4.7J	Cultivating Relationships Evidence the children have opportunities to develop healthy friendships, learn to help others, learn from each other, and resolve conflict in constructive ways.	On-Site Classroom



Standard 5: Experiences and Learning

Rationale Early learning experiences provided by educators impact future learning and behavior; essentially developing the brain's architecture. Educators and program leadership embody the culture and climate of an early learning program. It is imperative to the success of a program that these individuals have the qualifications and professional dedication to support the mission and best serve the children and families. Prioritization of continuously supporting optimal learning experiences for both individual and groups of children builds on the framework for educators to provide a rich and significant development of daily plans. Young children learn through meaningful, developmental and age appropriate experiences shared with caregivers. When educators and program leadership are flexible and intentional in the use of materials, equipment and resources for the individual child and whole classroom, these experiences cultivate learning opportunities that influence each young child in the way they approach learning as they grow.

Standard 5 Indicators:

- 5.1 Educator Qualifications
- 5.2 Supervision and Safety
- 5.3 Curriculum and Planning
- 5.4 Classroom Community
- 5.5 Scaffolding Learning
- 5.6 Executive Function
- 5.7 Language and Literacy

5.1 Indicator: Educator Qualifications

Program leadership and educators should focus on early childcare and education professional preparation and development. This guarantees that leadership and educators hold the appropriate competencies to serve in assigned capacities and satisfy all required criteria of eligibility to work with children. All program leadership and educators must be aware of and responsible for the local, state, and national standard requirements. These standards should not only be met but pursued continuously. Sustained and on-going education and professional development in the early care and education of children should be desired and actively sought after.

5.2 Indicator: Supervision and Safety

Active supervision requires continuous and focused attention with intentional observation. Educators should use active supervision strategies to ensure young children explore their environments safely. Constantly observing and relating to individual children and groups of children to contribute to their safety, health and wellbeing is essential to the foundation of a high-quality early learning experience for children and families. Written policy on appropriate active supervision is essential as a cornerstone of a proper environment for early learning.

5.3 Indicator: Curriculum and Planning

A robust, research-based curriculum reflects the values and mission of the program and describes the intentional age-appropriate development and learning plan for the young children in care. Interwoven in the curriculum are the early care and education areas: social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive. The curriculum is the core of classroom planning for educators when considering effective methods to implement daily, weekly, and monthly learning opportunities for the children. It allows educators to define the goals for learning and development for the age group and determine what resources, modalities, time, and strategies to use to maximize the impact of the planned activity or play time.

5.4 Indicator: Classroom Community

A positive early learning classroom community is a welcoming space where young children feel safe and supported in their journey to explore, learn, and take risks. Children need to trust their caregivers and know their needs will be met. Children need

adults to establish relationships by being consistent and responding to social and emotional cues. A successful classroom community is a nurturing and pleasant space that supports the development of all young children to foster high-quality experiences and strong outcomes for children.

5.5 Indicator: Scaffolding Learning

Using instruction and interactions to scaffold a child's understanding builds skills and expands learning experiences, allowing a child to be independent in developing a new skill or practicing existing skills with the confidence of support from a caregiver. Scaffolding is an educator adjusting support techniques to best suit an individual child at a developmentally appropriate level by age. Scaffolding is a bridge to new skill levels using 3 key ingredients; modeling the skill, giving clues, and asking questions while the child is trying out a new skill, and then as the child approaches mastery, relaxing the support.

5.6 Indicator: Executive Function

Intentionally supporting children in an early learning environment to create and cultivate positive social relationships and self-regulating behaviors sharpens Executive Function skills. It is important to guide young children to identify their feelings, understand and communicate with others, build strong relationships, work toward goals, and make good, empathetic decisions. Caring, responsive, and attentive educators will foster children's social-emotional growth by providing consistent and predictable opportunities to learn and practice age-appropriate self-regulation and social skills.

5.7 Indicator: Language and Literacy

Exposure to language and literacy begins at birth and is closely linked to developing the skills children need to become successful readers and lifelong learners. Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers develop oral language and pre-literacy skills every day that will develop a rich vocabulary, self-expression, and reading comprehension. These skills allow children to enter primary school with a love of books and a readiness to learn. Children should be provided with multiple and varied opportunities to integrate listening, speaking, early reading, and writing into their life through intentional planning to include early literacy in different daily activities throughout the day.

Standard 5 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
5.1A	Educator Qualifications Evidence for Program Leadership (Director, Assistant Director, Administration) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Must be 21 years of age ✓ Current required background clearance from licensing jurisdiction ✓ Sexual predator clearance ✓ Associate degree or higher including at least 12 college credits in Early Childhood/Child Development OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Current national CDA or state equivalent ✓ Proof of High School graduation, GED or higher ✓ Experience: 2 years working with young children in a professional setting ✓ Current certification in Infant/Child CPR and First Aid ✓ All national, state, and local training requirements (Director's Credential) ✓ At least 24 hours of professional development annually 	Portfolio
5.1B	Educator Qualifications Evidence for Lead Educator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Must be 21 years of age ✓ Current required background clearance from licensing jurisdiction ✓ Sexual predator clearance ✓ Associate degree or higher including at least 9 college credits in Early Childhood/Child Development OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Current national CDA or state equivalent ✓ Proof of High School graduation, GED or higher ✓ Experience: 2 years working with young children in a professional setting with a degree or ECE credential described above: 3 years of experience if requirement is met with a combination of coursework and experience ✓ Current certification in Infant/Child CPR and First Aid ✓ All national, state, and local training requirements ✓ At least 24 hours of professional development annually 	Portfolio
5.1C	Educator Qualifications Evidence for Assistant Educator/Floater <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Must be 18 years of age ✓ Current required background clearance from licensing jurisdiction ✓ Sexual predator clearance ✓ Proof of High School graduation, GED or higher ✓ Current certification in Infant/Child CPR and First Aid ✓ All national, state, and local training requirements ✓ At least 24 hours of professional development annually 	Portfolio

Standard 5 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
5.1D	Educator Qualifications Evidence for Early Childhood Specialist/Mentor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Must be 18 years of age ✓ Current required background clearance from licensing jurisdiction ✓ Sexual predator clearance ✓ BA in Early Childhood Education/Child Development, Leadership Development, or related field and 3 years of full-time leadership experience with young children ✓ Proof of High School graduation, GED or higher ✓ Experience: 2 years working with young children in a professional setting ✓ Current certification in Infant/Child CPR and First Aid ✓ All national, state, and local training requirements ✓ At least 24 hours of professional development annually 	Portfolio
5.1E	Educator Qualifications Evidence for Food Specialist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Must be 18 years of age ✓ Current required background clearance from licensing jurisdiction ✓ Sexual predator clearance ✓ Proof of High School graduation, GED or higher ✓ Certificate/documented training in food preparation safety or completion of Food Handlers course ✓ Current certification in Infant/Child CPR and First Aid ✓ All national, state, and local training requirements ✓ At least 24 hours of professional development annually 	Portfolio
5.1F	Educator Qualifications Evidence for Driver <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Must be 21 years of age ✓ Current required background clearance from licensing jurisdiction ✓ Sexual predator clearance ✓ Proof of High School graduation, GED or higher ✓ Completed training in transporting children safely ✓ Valid Driver's License ✓ Driving record demonstrating qualified to transport children safely ✓ Physically able to transport children (annual physical exam) ✓ Current certification in Infant/Child CPR and First Aid ✓ All national, state, and local training requirements ✓ At least 24 hours of professional development annually 	Portfolio

Standard 5 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
5.1G	Educator Qualifications Evidence for Volunteer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Must be 16 years of age. Volunteers under the age of 18 must be under direct supervision and are not included in the educator-to-child ratio. ✓ Current required background clearance from licensing jurisdiction ✓ Sexual predator clearance ✓ At least 24 hours of professional development annually 	Portfolio
5.1H	Educator Qualifications Evidence program leadership and lead educators are at least 21 years of age; all other educators are at least 18 years of age. Volunteers must be 16 years of age, directly supervised, and not included in the educator-to-child ratio.	On-Site Program
5.1I	Educator Qualifications Evidence program leadership, educators, and volunteers responsible for supervision of children meet jurisdiction background screening, educational credentials, and experience as indicated in the APPLE portfolio submission.	On-Site Program
5.2A <small>*Required to earn accreditation</small>	Supervision and Safety Evidence policy for supervision requires educators to always see and hear all the children in indoor and outdoor environments.	Portfolio
5.2B	Supervision and Safety Evidence the educator monitors and documents the appropriate supervision of children through the day.	Portfolio
5.2C	Supervision and Safety Evidence policy for supervision requires educators to position themselves to always hear and see sleeping children including when the educator is engaged with other children who are awake.	Portfolio
5.2D <small>*Required to earn accreditation</small>	Supervision and Safety Evidence the educator must be in position to always see and hear all children in indoor and outdoor environments. All children are always under direct supervision in the indoor and outdoor environments, including access to water in tubs, pails and water tables.	On-Site Program
5.2E <small>*Required to earn accreditation</small>	Supervision and Safety Evidence educator never uses physical punishment, psychological or emotional abuse, or coercion with a child.	On-Site Classroom
5.2F <small>*Required to earn accreditation</small>	Supervision and Safety Evidence children are always within sight and hearing of educators and movement within the building is monitored appropriately.	On-Site Classroom
5.2G <small>*Required to earn accreditation</small>	Supervision and Safety Evidence that if a child is out of direct sight supervision, it is for no more than one (1) minute, the child is in a safe environment, and can be heard.	On-Site Classroom

Standard 5 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
5.2H	Supervision and Safety Evidence that educators take steps to correct or avoid unsafe conditions.	On-Site Classroom
5.2I	Supervision and Safety Evidence the educator guards against choke hazards, removing them from reach, especially when children are engaged in activities using small objects.	On-Site Classroom
5.2J	Supervision and Safety Evidence the educator is extremely vigilant when children are engaged in activities which are inherently riskier.	On-Site Classroom
5.2K	Supervision and Safety Evidence infants only sleep in cribs with head uncovered, not in car seats, bouncy seats, swings, etc. There are no pillows, toys, bumpers, or other items with the infant in the crib.	On-Site Classroom
5.2L	Supervision and Safety Evidence infants are placed on their backs to sleep on firm sleeping equipment that meets the US Consumer Product Safety Commission, without the use of infant sleep positioners, unless ordered by a physician. Infants able to turn over may assume a comfortable sleep position once placed on back.	On-Site Classroom
5.2M	Supervision and Safety Evidence children do not have bottles while in a crib or bed and do not drink from propped bottles at any time. Infants and toddlers do not carry bottles, sippy cups, or regular cups with them while crawling or walking.	On-Site Classroom
5.2N	Supervision and Safety Evidence educators check on children while asleep in cribs in no longer than 15-minute increments.	On-Site Classroom
5.2O	Supervision and Safety Evidence cribs in the infant area with nothing hanging over them. Cribs meet regulations and are inspected to ensure security. No drop-side cribs are used.	On-Site Classroom
5.2P	Supervision and Safety Evidence of at least 3 feet spacing between cribs or mats unless there is a solid divider between them when children are sleeping.	On-Site Classroom
5.3A	Curriculum and Planning Evidence developmentally appropriate curriculum is used for each age group that promotes learning in social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development.	Portfolio
5.3B	Curriculum and Planning Evidence the curriculum and lesson plans are research-based, reflecting new theories and best practices, and is developed according to local, state, and national early care and education standards.	Portfolio

Standard 5 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
5.3C	Curriculum and Planning Evidence of developmentally and age appropriate positive peer interaction and prosocial skills development incorporated into the curriculum with sensitivity to children that are socially reserved, bullied, or excluded.	Portfolio
5.3D	Curriculum and Planning Evidence of a completed and labeled lesson plan for 1 week in English for each age group. They are dated and written in ink or typed. They include developmentally and age appropriate activities that encompass literacy, mathematics, science, technology, creative expression and the arts, health and safety, social studies in the indoor and outdoor environments.	Portfolio
5.3E	Curriculum and Planning Evidence lesson plan links books to the current theme, topic, or activity.	Portfolio
5.3F	Curriculum and Planning Evidence of 2 connected lesson plans that promote children to revisit experiences and materials over a period of days or weeks.	Portfolio
5.3G	Curriculum and Planning Evidence educator lesson plans are reviewed weekly by program leadership.	Portfolio
5.3H	Curriculum and Planning Evidence of a daily schedule developmentally and age appropriate for the children in each class that offers a varied balance of experiences in activities. These activities include opportunities for a combination of educator and child-directed activities, indoor and outdoor activities, active and quiet play, fine and gross motor activities, large and small group activities. independent activities, activities that offer choices and allow for spontaneity.	Portfolio
5.3I	Curriculum and Planning Evidence passive media (TV, videos, audio) is limited to occasional developmentally and age appropriate programming. It is not used at all for children under 2 years old.	On-Site Classroom
5.3J	Curriculum and Planning Evidence daily schedules, lesson plans, and other notices in each classroom are in language(s) families can understand, current, and available to families.	On-Site Classroom
5.3K	Curriculum and Planning Evidence schedules and routines, including infants, are flexible and based on the child's individual needs and interests.	On-Site Classroom
5.3L	Curriculum and Planning Evidence schedules and routines account for ample time for positive child-educator interactions in large group, small group, and individual settings to scaffold learning.	On-Site Classroom

Standard 5 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
5.3M	Curriculum and Planning Evidence of intentional planning and implementation of daily activities to ensure effective use of time and foster minimal transitions/regrouping throughout the day.	On-Site Classroom
5.3N	Curriculum and Planning Evidence children smoothly transition from one activity to the next in a developmentally and age appropriate manner. Effective transitions are supported through flexibility, predictability, and engaging activities.	On-Site Classroom
5.3O	Curriculum and Planning Evidence the educator is prepared in advance with books, materials, supplies and activities that are connected to the curriculum.	On-Site Classroom
5.4A	Classroom Community Evidence the educator ensures there are enough appropriate materials and supplies in sufficient quantities that provide choices for the children.	On-Site Classroom
5.4B	Classroom Community Evidence classroom materials and displays reflect real people with varied ethnicities, cultures, genders, ages, and abilities engaged in activities that counter stereotypes.	On-Site Classroom
5.4C	Classroom Community Evidence of children's work is displayed throughout the classroom at eye level wherever possible.	On-Site Classroom
5.4D	Classroom Community Evidence displays reflect current learning topics, seasonal displays, and/or children's recent interests.	On-Site Classroom
5.4E	Classroom Community Evidence most classroom items are labeled with words and/or pictures, as appropriate to the age of the children.	On-Site Classroom
5.4F	Classroom Community Evidence the educator arranges the environment to facilitate positive interactions, collaboration, and the opportunity to build relationships with and among children.	On-Site Classroom
5.4G	Classroom Community Evidence the educator provides opportunities and actively encourages children to develop the classroom community through participation in decision making about classroom rules, plans, and activities.	On-Site Classroom
5.4H	Classroom Community Evidence the educator allows children freedom of movement through the day.	On-Site Classroom
5.4I	Classroom Community Evidence classroom is filled with the sound of children engaged in playful exploration using positive social skills.	On-Site Classroom

Standard 5 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
5.4J	Classroom Community Evidence the educator and children use appropriate tone and volume of voice to interact with each other.	On-Site Classroom
5.4K	Classroom Community Evidence the educator practices active listening and their voice does not dominate the classroom.	On-Site Classroom
5.4L	Classroom Community Evidence the educator demonstrates knowledge of the children, their families, and the social, linguistic, and cultural context in which the children live.	On-Site Classroom
5.4M	Classroom Community Evidence that culturally diverse visual arts, dramatic play, music, and dance materials and experiences are presented in the learning environment.	On-Site Classroom
5.4N	Classroom Community Evidence children receive individual attention and are not always addressed as a group. Educator responds appropriately to verbal and non-verbal cues.	On-Site Classroom
5.5A	Scaffolding Learning Evidence that the needs and interests of the children, including infants, are used to influence schedules, routines, and learning experiences.	On-Site Classroom
5.5B	Scaffolding Learning Evidence children, including infants, who show an interest in an activity are encouraged and supported in extending that activity.	On-Site Classroom
5.5C	Scaffolding Learning Evidence children's interest in and curiosity about the community and world are identified to plan new content and appropriate experiences.	On-Site Classroom
5.5D	Scaffolding Learning Evidence the educator modifies strategies and materials to enhance individual children's learning.	On-Site Classroom
5.5E	Scaffolding Learning Evidence the educator understands the intended purpose of all items and how they are used to enhance and scaffold children's individual and peer learning offering experiences in key principles in cognitive development. ***see APPLE Tips for Indicator Success	On-Site Classroom
5.5F	Scaffolding Learning Evidence the educator asks questions and poses problems to engage, stimulate, and challenge children's thinking.	On-Site Classroom

Standard 5 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
5.6A	Executive Function Evidence the educator is sensitive to the social, emotional, cognitive, and developmental needs of each individual child, and adjust their interactions based on the differing abilities, age-levels, temperaments, and activity/arousal levels of the children, including infants and toddlers.	On-Site Classroom
5.6B	Executive Function Evidence the educator is sensitive to the degree to which each child wishes to participate and encourages self-regulation.	On-Site Classroom
5.6C	Executive Function Evidence the educator encourages and recognizes children's work and accomplishments.	On-Site Classroom
5.6D	Executive Function Evidence the educator is responsive to each child's needs, makes eye contact, and uses caregiving routines to positively interact with individual children.	On-Site Classroom
5.6E	Executive Function Evidence the educators and children are respectful of each other.	On-Site Classroom
5.6F	Executive Function Evidence the educator addresses children using their names.	On-Site Classroom
5.6G	Executive Function Evidence the educator listens and encourages children to talk about feelings, getting along, and practice good citizenship.	On-Site Classroom
5.6H	Executive Function Evidence the educator comforts and helps children who are distressed by providing physical care and comfort. Educator is sensitive to/reads individual signs of distress and facilitate social interaction when a child is interested.	On-Site Classroom
5.6I	Executive Function Evidence children are treated respectfully during diapering and toileting.	On-Site Classroom
5.6J	Executive Function Evidence the educator encourages and assists children, but do not complete tasks for them. Educator promotes competency and mastery by providing self-help activities to children for opportunities to take responsibility and feel a sense of self-reliance.	On-Site Classroom
5.7A	Language and Literacy Evidence that the lesson plan includes developmentally and age appropriate exposure to planned literacy experiences that foster language development, print connection to spoken word, phonological awareness, learning letters, written expression, and motivation to read.	Portfolio
5.7B	Language and Literacy Evidence of procedures for rotating books to maintain children's interest in reading, replacing old and damaged books, and procuring new books.	Portfolio

Standard 5 APPLE Accreditation Evidence Guide

Number	Evidence	Source
5.7C	Language and Literacy Evidence of a wide variety of children's books are available, appropriate, accessible, and in good repair. Books may be made by educators and children. ***see APPLE Tips for Indicator Success	On-Site Classroom
5.7D	Language and Literacy Evidence that developmentally and age appropriate books and materials are attractively displayed on low shelves throughout the classroom and in at least 2 other areas other than the book area.	On-Site Classroom
5.7E	Language and Literacy Evidence children have the opportunity throughout the day to be read to individually, in small groups, and in whole group settings.	On-Site Classroom
5.7F	Language and Literacy Evidence the educator uses clear, correct language patterns and friendly, supportive words with children.	On-Site Classroom
5.7G	Language and Literacy Evidence the educator reads with expression, placing emphasis on the sounds of language. Educator encourages discussion while reading, taking breaks to ask the children questions to stimulate thinking and invite problem solving.	On-Site Classroom
5.7H	Language and Literacy Evidence the educator provides a developmentally and age appropriate print rich environment. ***see APPLE Tips for Indicator Success	On-Site Classroom
5.7I	Language and Literacy Evidence the educator shares information with families about activities children are engaged in at school and suggests ways to support language and literacy at home. ***see APPLE Tips for Indicator Success	On-Site Classroom
5.7J	Language and Literacy Evidence the educator provides individual attention, responds to infants' verbalizations, and values all children's attempts to express themselves through verbal and non-verbal communication.	On-Site Classroom
5.7K	Language and Literacy Evidence the educator encourages children to use expressive language through charts, graphs, and dictation that captures the children's experiences. ***see APPLE Tips for Indicator Success	On-Site Classroom
5.7L	Language and Literacy Evidence children have a variety of opportunities for emergent writing exploration, language expression, and inventive writing including accessible, safe, and ample developmentally and age appropriate materials and writing surfaces that are available in at a minimum of 2 areas of the classroom. ***see APPLE Tips for Indicator Success	On-Site Classroom



APPLE Tips for Indicator Success:

APPLE Accreditation is a self-guided process that is intentionally designed to give businesses the latitude to make decisions that are best for each individual program while providing guidelines and blueprints for best practices. The APPLE Accreditation process should not feel as a prescribed set of requirements, rather an experience of opportunity for a reflection and contemplation for areas of growth for the business. Having said that, it's not always easy to get started. Sometimes, we all need help! That's why we have created the suggestions and tips below for some of our indicators.

1.7B Risk Management Plan

Evidence of a program-wide plan that prepares response, management, and reporting for emergencies and evacuations.

- ✓ utility failure
- ✓ missing child
- ✓ severe weather
- ✓ emergency medical
- ✓ suspicious individual
- ✓ bomb threats
- ✓ civil disturbance
- ✓ armed intruders
- ✓ lockdowns and evacuations
- ✓ potential parental custody disputes/ abduction threats
- ✓ attempts by unauthorized individuals to pick up a child
- ✓ substance impairment of caregiver on premises

2.4I Work Team Handbook

Evidence the Work Team Handbook includes an educator retention plan.

- ✓ scholarship or education fee reimbursement
- ✓ access to online trainings
- ✓ onsite professional development opportunities specific to work team needs
- ✓ paid lesson planning time
- ✓ contributions to educator professional development
- ✓ health insurance/FSA program
- ✓ benefits package
- ✓ 401K/savings options
- ✓ working conditions
- ✓ opportunities for advancement
- ✓ opportunities for salary increases, incentives, or other non-monetary benefits

3.3A Healthy Environment

Evidence of procedures for cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing, using non-toxic supplies on a daily or weekly basis, or when visibly soiled.

- ✓ toys and shelves
- ✓ mouthed toys are washed or set aside immediately for proper cleaning
- ✓ bathrooms- including toilet training chairs after each use, toilet seats, handles, bowls, doorknobs or cubicle handles
- ✓ diaper changing tables after each use
- ✓ potty chairs (if used) after each use
- ✓ equipment
- ✓ dining areas
- ✓ general classroom areas
- ✓ floors and other surfaces
- ✓ more frequent sanitizing when children in care exhibit signs of illness
- ✓ cleaning sinks between uses if used for both food preparation and other purposes such as cleaning, bathing children

3.3S Healthy Environment

Evidence all supplies needed are at hand in the diapering area and disposed of properly after use.

- ✓ diaper
- ✓ wipes
- ✓ ointment or cream
- ✓ plastic bag for disposal of diaper
- ✓ change of clothes
- ✓ plastic bag for soiled clothes
- ✓ gloves

3.5B Outdoor Environment Design

Evidence of a daily safety checklist indicating the individual responsible for the outdoor equipment inspection. The checklist includes inspection of all pieces of equipment as well as fall zones and any other potentially hazardous areas.

- ✓ surface under fall zones: sufficient cushioning, surface is repaired, replaced, or replenished as needed (APPLE current 2.12-combined fall zone and checklist indicators)
- ✓ protruding, rusting or loose fastenings
- ✓ broken or unsafe components on toys or equipment
- ✓ biting or stinging insects or rodent infestation

- ✓ security and safety of fencing and gates
- ✓ accessibility of drinking water
- ✓ absence of any standing water
- ✓ absence of litter

3.5F Outdoor Environment Design

Evidence outdoor play equipment is of safe design and in good repair, free of sharp edges, protruding parts, weaknesses, and flaws in construction.

- ✓ all pieces of playground equipment are designed to match the body dimensions of children
- ✓ anchored equipment is more than 4 feet from hard surfaces, fence or pieces of equipment
- ✓ elevated equipment is surrounded by resilient safety surfaces of acceptable depth in the fall zone and there are barriers to prevent children from falling.
- ✓ equipment is free of sharp edges, protruding parts, weaknesses, and flaws in construction

3.6E Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment

Evidence materials, equipment, and supplies are developmentally appropriate by age, attractively displayed, accessible, and in good condition.

- ✓ mats/cots
- ✓ soft furniture
- ✓ books
- ✓ puzzles
- ✓ toys
- ✓ pillows/blankets

4.2A Family Partnership

Evidence of family engagement. 6 separate photos during the 12-month period prior to portfolio submission including recorded dates/times and relationship of family members involved.

- ✓ collecting materials
- ✓ facilitating or attending special events
- ✓ participating in career day
- ✓ assisting on field trips
- ✓ reading to the class
- ✓ sharing family cultures

4.3A Shared Communication

Evidence of varied formal and informal strategies to become acquainted with and learn about a family, including parenting style preferences and information families would like to share about their structure, socioeconomic, primary language, racial, religious, or cultural background.

- ✓ conversations
- ✓ questionnaires
- ✓ emails
- ✓ electronic apps

4.3C Shared Communication

Evidence of 2 daily communications with the families of infants, toddlers, or twos about each child's developmental milestones, individual activities, and shared caregiving.

- ✓ informal notes home with children/ electronic system messages
- ✓ posted notices
- ✓ flyers
- ✓ brochures
- ✓ emails, texts
- ✓ social media

4.3D Shared Communication

Evidence of 2 communications, occurring at least weekly, with the families of preschoolers, kindergartners, and school-agers about each child's developmental milestones, individual activities, and shared caregiving.

- ✓ informal notes home with children/ electronic system messages
- ✓ posted notices
- ✓ flyers
- ✓ brochures
- ✓ emails/texts
- ✓ social media

4.6A Community Collaboration

Evidence of participation in 2 separate community activities, dated and labeled, within the 12-month period prior to portfolio submission.

- ✓ food, clothing, gift drives
- ✓ fund raisers
- ✓ walk/run events
- ✓ team sponsorships

4.6D Community Collaboration

Evidence that program leadership and educators participate in advocacy or professional learning activities that connect with other early learning professionals in the local, state, or national early learning community.

- ✓ letters to legislators, regulators, funding agency and/or foundation
- ✓ letters to editor of local media or professional journal
- ✓ proof of research and engagement in the legislative process

5.5E Scaffolding Learning

Evidence educators understand the intended purpose of all items and how they are used to enhance and scaffold children's individual and peer learning offering experiences in key principles in cognitive development.

- ✓ math
- ✓ building understanding of numbers
- ✓ recognizing number names
- ✓ understanding the relationship of numbers to object quantities and to symbols
- ✓ using numerical symbols
- ✓ exploring operations on quantities, such as adding, subtraction, and dividing into equal and unequal subsets
- ✓ science
- ✓ exploring the natural world- animate and inanimate objects
- ✓ experimenting with objects, liquids, solids
- ✓ understanding the importance of protecting the local environment

5.7C Language and Literacy

Evidence of a wide variety of children's books are available, appropriate, accessible, and in good repair. Books may be made by educators and children.

Infants and Toddlers have durable books available. There are at least 2 of the following types of books for each group of children:

- ✓ picture books
- ✓ story books
- ✓ wordless books
- ✓ rhyming books

In addition to the variety listed above, Preschoolers have the following.

- ✓ books that support alphabetic and phonemic awareness
- ✓ books that support instructional activities and curricular themes
- ✓ selection of each of the following types of age-appropriate books in the classroom about
 - ✓ real people – including individuals who are multicultural, of varying abilities, and are non-stereotypical
 - ✓ real animals
 - ✓ nature
 - ✓ the arts
 - ✓ math
 - ✓ science
 - ✓ health and wellness
 - ✓ other genres: fact, fiction, poetry

5.7H Language and Literacy

Evidence the educator provides a developmentally and age appropriate print rich environment.

- ✓ using picture to convey ideas and concepts to infants
- ✓ showing toddlers pictures with names and labels to provide visual cues and to illustrate routines

Arranging multiple examples of meaningful print models throughout the classroom for children two and older

- ✓ books, magazines, and puzzles and other materials that support emergent alphabetic skills

Materials to give children the opportunity to write about their ideas and observations in a variety of learning centers – blocks, dramatic play, science

- ✓ props- menus, maps, directions, assembly instructions
- ✓ labels and documentation on children's projects
- ✓ signs
- ✓ word cards
- ✓ word walls
- ✓ Suge
- ✓ calendars

Setting up a welcoming reading corner with books on accessible shelves with picture books with simple words that preschoolers can identify by context

5.7I Language and Literacy

Evidence the educator shares information with families about the activities the children are engaged in while in school and suggests ways to support language and literacy at home.

- ✓ backpacks with books or writing supplies
- ✓ library books
- ✓ teddy Bear and journals

5.7K Language and Literacy

Evidence the educator encourages children to use expressive language through charts, graphs, and dictation that captures the children's expressive language.

- ✓ asking open-ended questions that require longer answers
- ✓ being patient with children as they struggle to find the right words
- ✓ broadening children's language by restating and expanding their vocabulary
- ✓ explaining their actions and describing them to the children
- ✓ creating opportunities throughout the day for children to use spoken language by engaging in conversations with other children and with the educator

5.7L Language and Literacy

Evidence of accessible, safe, ample, developmentally and age appropriate materials and writing surfaces that foster emergent writing skills appropriate to the age and ability level of the children.

- ✓ infants: Squeeze toys, rattles, picking up cheerios
- ✓ toddlers: Clay and play dough, basters, large tweezers
- ✓ two and older: markers, pencils, crayons, stubby crayons, chalk, magnetic letters, stamps, tweezers, tongs, paint brushes, finger paints, scissors, and hole punchers
- ✓ paper in various size, color, texture
- ✓ chalkboards
- ✓ dry erase boards
- ✓ windows and mirrors
- ✓ sensory materials – sand, grains, clay, mud