

# NIEER STANDARDS

We invite district leaders and administrators to use this document to identify effective practices that support quality teaching and maximize young children’s learning and development. This document is based on competencies identified by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER).

Enabling Environment	
Creates the conditions for the development of high-quality programs	
NIEER Standard	Benchmark Description
<b>Political will</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school’s Board of Directors and Superintendent provide the supports to create, scale up, and adequately fund high-quality early education.</li> <li>• <i>Ex. Increases in funding, quality standards and enrollment are the strongest indicators.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Strong vision and leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The district and/or school has a strong early learning vision and exerts effective leadership to make the vision a reality.</li> <li>• <i>Ex. The early learning vision is included in the district’s/school’s strategic plan and components include a well-designed early learning system with high expectations and district-level supports.</i></li> </ul>
Program Policies	
Rigorous, articulated early learning policies	
<b>Well-educated and well-compensated teachers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All lead pre-k teachers have at least a BA degree plus suitable credentials in early learning and are paid at the same level as K-12 teachers.</li> <li>• All instructional assistants have a minimum of a child development associate (CDA) credential.</li> </ul>
<b>Maximum adult-child ratio of 1:10</b>  <b>Two + teaching staff in each classroom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All pre-k classrooms have a maximum of 20 children in each classroom and is maintained in policy and practice.</li> <li>• All pre-k classrooms have a maximum of 10 children per teaching staff person and is maintained in policy and practice</li> </ul>
<b>At least a full school day</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are served a full school day (minimum 6 hours of instructional time) prekindergarten program.</li> </ul>

<b>Appropriate early learning standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district has comprehensive learning standards that are age and developmentally appropriate.</li> </ul>
<b>Effective curriculum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school adopts and implements an evidence-based curriculum aligned with early learning standards, connected to a system of professional learning and supports.</li> </ul>
<b>Strong supports for children with special needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools provide strong supports for children with special needs including an emphasis on inclusion.</li> </ul>
<b>Dual language learning support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School has a well-developed strategy for educating multilingual learners that recognizes their unique needs and the importance of home language and culture.</li> <li>The school strongly supports the implementation of this strategy with guidance, materials, and professional learning.</li> <li><i>Ex. Bilingual teachers lead classrooms where there is a dominant language other than English. Bilingual paraprofessionals also may be part of strong system of supports.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Strong Program Practices</b>	
Integrated continuous improvement system	
<b>High quality teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers consistently plan and execute developmentally appropriate instruction that supports high levels of child learning and development, as well as a love of learning, persistence, and strong sense of self-efficacy.</li> </ul>
<b>Useful child assessments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessments are developmentally appropriate and aligned to early learning standards.</li> <li>Assessments are used to inform teaching and learning.</li> <li>Assessments are used to inform teachers, leaders, and others who support child learning.</li> <li><i>Ex. The district provides professional learning and other supports to ensure teachers and program leaders can use assessments to inform instructional practices.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Data driven decision-making</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data are collected and regularly used to inform practice and school improvement.</li> </ul>
<b>Professional learning (PL)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal and informal (e.g., peer mentoring) professional learning is sustained as part of a continuous improvement cycle with high expectations for early learning teachers.</li> </ul>
<b>Integrated systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy and practice align standards, curriculum, professional learning, and assessment.</li> </ul>