



MTT Quality Recognition System Step-by-Step Guide

Quality Recognition: Quality child care in Montana is recognized through *pathways*, represented in the system as *stages*, that honor the unique strengths of child care programs, staff, children, and families. These pathways reflect a commitment to maintaining a child care license/registration, growing in quality, and demonstrating excellence.



STAGE 1 – FOUNDATIONS IN QUALITY-LICENSED/REGISTERED FACILITY

Goal: Maintain a CURRENT Child Care License/Registration

How to Achieve: Complete renewal application is to be submitted on time per ARM 37.96.112. This means that a complete renewal must be submitted at least **60 days** before expiration, automatically earn Quality Recognition Stage 1

CELEBRATE your consistency and quality!

OPTION 1: STAGE 2A – COMMITTED TO QUALITY - EARLY CHILDHOOD CAREER PATH & BADGES (*ARM 37.96.112 MUST BE MET)

Goal: Help programs build a strong, qualified team with clear professional pathways.

How to Achieve: Confirm Staff Meet Career Path Levels

STAGE 2A	Family Providers: Center/Groups:	Center/Groups:
	Director/Owner must be Career Path Level 3+	Director must be Career Path Level 3+
	Must have two ECP badges	At least 50% of teachers* must be Career Path Level 2+
	Verify your requirements in the ECP Professional Development Record and CELEBRATE your growing, qualified workforce!	

OPTION 2: STAGE 2B – COMMITTED TO QUALITY – SPECIALIZED TRAININGS (*ARM 37.96.112 MUST BE MET)

Goal: Strengthen your program with deeper, focused early childhood training.

Step 1: Meet Career Level Requirement: Director/Owner must be Career Path Level 3+

Step 2: Choose One Specialized Training Path based on facility type

STAGE 2B	Family:	Centers/Groups:
	Complete Relationship-Based Care (RBC) trainings	A. Centers/Groups: A. 75% Teaching staff** with 1 ECP badge
	Hold a CDA – Infant/Toddler	B. 50% with 2 ECP badges
	Completed MT Infant/Toddler Caregiver Course prior to 12.31.2023 or Infant/Toddler Development Group college course	C. Infant/Toddler Option: At least 50% of IT teachers** have completed one of: • RBC trainings • CDA-Infant/Toddler



- MT Infant/Toddler Caregiver Course prior to 12.31.2023, or Infant/Toddler Development Group college course

Verify your requirements in ECP records and CELEBRATE the specialized preparation that supports quality!

OPTION 3: STAGE 2C – COMMITTED TO QUALITY-CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

(*ARM 37.96.112 MUST BE MET)

Goal: Recognize programs actively learning and improving.

How to Achieve: MUST meet TWO of the below CQI Opportunities OR meet the ERS Assessment option

STAGE 2C

- Program Growth Tool (PGT) with SPARK
- CQI-Business Support Cohort(s) with Zero to Five
- CDA Registered Apprenticeship Program engaged in sponsorship/mentorship within the last year
OR
- 1 teaching staff member completed Apprenticeship program
- Practice-Based Coaching: Two staff** have completed 16 hours of practice-based coaching cycles
- New Provider CoP (12-month series)

OR achieve this stage by meeting the ERS Option:

- ERS Assessment(s)* including director participation in the partial assessment process and completed CQI plan containing a minimum of 3 SMART goals.

*Assessment(s) must have been completed within the last 12 months prior to submitting MTT application.

With verification based on your chosen options and quality-partner documentation, celebrate the ongoing improvement and responsive care you provide!

STAGE 3 – EXCELLING IN QUALITY- ACCREDITATION OR HEAD START

(*ARM 37.96.112 MUST BE MET)

Goal: Show your program meets nationally recognized high-quality standards.

How to Achieve: Choose one Benchmark (choose one of the below):

STAGE 3

- NAEYC Accredited
- NAFCC Accredited
- AMS (Montessori)
- Licensed Head Start/Early Head Start in good standing.

Upload your accreditation certificate or approved Head Start documentation and CELEBRATE meeting national benchmarks of excellence!

A Program's Quality Recognition stage is displayed in the MAQCS system and on the public portal.

****Teaching staff refers to individuals who have the CCL approved role type of Teacher or Lead Teacher.**