



Determining the Quality Standards that Drive Cost Projections

An important assumption of the CPQ&R is that costs are derived based on high quality standards. The CPQ&R uses the NIEER Preschool Quality Standards as the default assumptions. In 2017, NIEER introduced a revised set of 10 quality standards to capture policies that affect classroom experiences that support children’s learning and development. These were used as default indicators for the CPQ&R¹.

CPQ&R users will need to decide if all or some of the prepopulated quality indicators will be used to drive costs. Users may want to crosswalk QRIS or State program quality standards with the default NIEER benchmarks to determine which components will be included in cost calculations. The [Data Checklist](#) is a tool that may help facilitate this process. It is also recommended to review the state’s preschool profile in the [NIEER State of Preschool Yearbook](#).

Updated 2016 NIEER Quality Standards Benchmarks	
Early learning & development standards	Comprehensive, aligned with state infant & toddler and K-3 or college & career ready standards, aligned with child assessments, culturally sensitive, and supported
Curriculum supports	Approval process for selecting curricula and supports in place for curriculum implementation
Teacher degree	Lead teacher has a BA at a minimum
Teacher specialized training	Lead teacher has specialized training in early childhood content
Assistant teacher degree	Assistant teacher has a CDA or equivalent, at a minimum

¹ For information about the reasons for updating the benchmarks and policies that should be in place to meet new benchmarks, view the [Behind the New Benchmarks Webinar](#). NIEER Founder and Senior Co-Director W. Steven Barnett Ph.D. and yearbook co-author Allison Friedman-Krauss Ph.D., along with representatives from Michigan, Alabama, and New Mexico discuss how they have integrated or plan to integrate new benchmark criteria into state policy/practice (October 2017).

	Staff professional development
Professional development	Teacher and assistant teacher receive at least 15 hours/year of in-service professional development and training, individualized professional development plans, and coaching
Maximum class size	Maximum number of children per classroom is 20 or fewer
Staff-child ratio	Lowest acceptable ratio of staff to children in classroom (e.g., maximum number of students per teacher) is 1:10 or better
Screening & referral	Screenings and referrals for vision, hearing, and health is required
Monitoring/Continuous quality	Annual structured observations of classroom quality and information collected is used for classroom/program improvement