The National Association for the Education of Young Children has identified 10 standards for Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) programmes that parents should be aware of when selecting a preschool/child care programme for their child. The standards are based on what research tells us about the development of children and what they need at an early age to be successful. These standards are good for child care, preschools and reception programmes.

1. **RELATIONSHIPS:** Do children and adults feel welcome when they visit? Are there warm and friendly conversations taking place? Are children encouraged to work and play together? Do teachers help children resolve conflicts and describe feelings?

2. **CURRICULUM:** Does the curriculum address all areas of a child’s development: physical, emotional, social, intellectual and aesthetic? Is it consistent with the goals they identify for children? Do children get opportunities to problem solve, use lots of language and do teachers work with them individually on specific skills?

3. **TEACHING METHODOLOGY:** Does the programme use developmentally appropriate teaching approaches that encourage children’s efforts? Are children’s recent work displayed in the classroom? Are children being supervised by teachers and do they go outdoors everyday?

4. **ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN’S PROGRESS:** Do teachers keep observations, checklists and notes to share children’s progress with their parents and to show progress over time? Do families receive regular information about the learning that is taking place through meetings and conferences?

5. **HEALTH:** Do staff have First Aid Training and CPR? Does the programme have policies about regular hand washing for children and staff? Is the programme clean? Do children have medical records on file indicating special conditions and allergies? Are snacks and meals nutritious?

6. **TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS:** Do teaching staff have educational qualifications and knowledge about how children grow and develop? Are there opportunities for continuous growth and learning of staff through in-service training and conferences? Do staff work well as a team?

7. **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT:** Are families welcomed and invited to be involved in all aspects of the programme? Are they aware of programme policies, expectations and general operations? Are they given a chance to have input and are they written for them to understand?

8. **COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS:** Are community resources used in the programme? E.g. the Zoo, Museum, Library, Parks, etc.

9. **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT:** Is the environment organised and clean? Are materials easily accessible to the children? Are shelves labelled to help children maintain an orderly environment? Are furnishings of the right size? Are there a variety of materials in good repair and therefore inviting to the children?

10. **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT:** Does the programme effectively implement its policies? Does the administrator/leader have the necessary educational qualifications? Is the programme licensed? Are there written policies and are group sizes in keeping with the law for adult-child ratios?

Courtesy of the Ministry of Education, Training, & Employment and the Early Years Task Force 2010