

Reading the Stars: Understanding the 5-Star Quality Rating and Improvement System

How Can YoungStar Help Parents and Families Choose Quality Child Care?

Making an informed choice about who will care for our children while we are working is one of the most difficult and important decisions a family can make. YoungStar is a five-star quality rating and improvement system that supports families in making this decision. The rating-scale recognizes practices that early learning settings have in place that are proven to be good for kids. YoungStar gives families a snapshot of a program's quality to compare with their own views on quality child care. Programs can be meeting quality standards to some degree at 2, 3, 4, and 5 stars. The address for the search is:

www.youngstar.wi.gov

In addition to this snapshot, families can get further support in understanding a rating and receive a customized referral through their local Child Care Resource and Referral agency. To learn about an agency in your area, please call 1-888-713-KIDS (5437) or visit: https://supportingfamiliesogether.org/CCR_R.html

What Does Each Star Rating Mean?

A provider's star rating is based on these four categories of quality:



Provider Education and Training

Children benefit when their teachers and caregivers have a solid foundation in early care and education principles and practices. YoungStar acknowledges the academic achievement of teachers/caregivers and administrators.



Learning Environment and Curriculum

When teachers and caregivers create meaningful experiences for infants and young children, they are more likely to have long-term school success.



Business and Professional Practices

How programs do business matters. Well-respected, fairly-compensated professionals, who are actively maintaining professional standards and business practices and engaging families, are better able to respond to meet the needs of children and their families.



Health and Wellness

Children grow up in the context of their families, communities, and culture. These standards look at the outcomes of the whole child from nutrition and physical activity to meeting special needs and being responsive to how kids form relationships.

How Did My Provider Earn Their Star Rating?

YoungStar program staff at the local level provide on-site technical consultation and independent review and assessment to programs. Consultants review programs for evidence of meeting quality indicators related to the four quality categories.

YoungStar uses compliance with existing child care regulations as a base. For the purposes of YoungStar, programs are considered to be in regulatory compliance unless they have had their license or certification revoked, denied or suspended. With compliance intact, programs can then achieve a star level. Star levels are earned on a point scale of 0-40 with each star level having minimum requirements that must be met.

2 Star Automated: ★★☆☆☆

Program has submitted required paperwork to meet minimum state mandated requirements but in most cases has decided to bypass YoungStar quality improvement technical consulting.

2 Star: ★★☆☆☆

Program has earned 0-10 points and is actively participating in quality improvement efforts with a quality improvement technical consultant.

3 Star: ★★★☆☆

Program has met the minimum requirements for the star level and earned 11-22 points.

4 Star: ★★★★☆

Program has met the minimum requirements for the star level and earned 23-32 points.

4 Star Automated: ★★★★★

Program is an accredited group or family child care that meets the 4-star educational requirements.

5 Star: ★★★★★

Program has met the minimum requirements for the star level and earned 33-40 points.

5 Star Automated: ★★★★★

Program is a group or family child care that meet national or state accreditation standards as recognized by DCF and meets the educational requirements for the 5-star level. Head Start, Early Head Start and Tribal Head Start programs that meet Head Start performance standards as verified through the triennial review process will be awarded a 5-star.

For more information about minimum requirements, visit:

http://dcf.wi.gov/youngstar/pdf/minimum_points_required.pdf

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The star level of this group child care program is noted here. They received three stars out of the maximum of 5 stars.

This shows the total number of points that the program earned toward their 3 star rating. Remember to be a 3 star, the program had to meet minimum requirements and earn a total of at least 11 points.



Star ratings are a tool for families to make informed choices. Ask programs what their stars mean for your child.

These numbers show how many of the total points were received for each category. This will allow you to compare these qualities with your family's priorities in the four quality areas.

Turn to the back for more examples of the different YoungStar certificates you might see in Wisconsin's child care programs.



(Automated Rating)



(Technical Rating)



Both of the programs above have received a 2-star rating. The one on the left chose the automated rating in which they bypassed technical assistance with a quality improvement consultant. The one on the right received a technical rating after their quality improvement efforts.



The certificate to the left is the 4-star rating of a family child care program. Note that the total possible points for Provider Education & Training and for Learning Environment & Curriculum differ for group versus family care programs. Group centers can earn up to 15 points for Education & Training while family providers can earn up to 14 points in the category. Group centers can earn up to 13 points for Learning Environment & Curriculum while family providers can earn up to 14 points in the category.

30/40 Points Total	
Provider Education & Training	10/14
Learning Environment & Curriculum	10/14
Business & Professional Practices	5/7
Health & Wellness	5/5

(Automated Rating)



(Formal Rating)



Both of the programs above are 5-star programs. The program on the left does not have a point breakdown because they are either an accredited child care program or a Head Start, Early Head Start or Tribal Head Start program. The one on the right has undergone Formal Rating with Observation to receive points in each of the four categories.