

YOUNGSTAR REGIONAL ENTITY “THE CONSORTIUM” RESPONSIBILITY

YoungStar, Wisconsin's Child Care Quality Rating Improvement System has four intended purposes:

1. YoungStar will help child care providers improve the quality of child care statewide through the provision of meaningful training, Technical Assistance and micro-grants.
2. YoungStar will help parents make informed choices about child care by rating child care providers at 1 to 5 stars, using clear quality indicators.
3. YoungStar will create incentives for child care programs to improve services to low-income children by linking higher child care subsidies to higher quality of care.
4. YoungStar will decrease fraud in the Wisconsin Shares program by strengthening accountability and creating opportunities for training and Technical Assistance for business practices in the operation of child care programs.

YoungStar Regional Offices administered through “The Consortium” will provide the following:

YoungStar Administration – including availability and support of staffing to help child care programs/providers navigate the YoungStar application process, and management of the application process, including determination of completion of application materials, review of quality improvement plans, and administration of Technical Assistance support and/or rating observation, tracking of timelines, management of the micro-grant resources, narrative and contracting reporting requirements and tracking of child care program progress within the YoungStar program.

Technical Assistance – including delivery and facilitation of meaningful and culturally competent training and Technical Assistance to early care and education providers.

Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals and enable that system, agency or those professions to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

The word **culture** is used because it implies the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group. The word **competence** is used because it implies having the capacity to function effectively.

Five essential elements contribute to a system's, institution's, or agency's ability to become more culturally competent which include:

1. Valuing diversity
2. Having the capacity for cultural self-assessment
3. Being conscious of the dynamics inherent when cultures interact
4. Having institutionalized culture knowledge
5. Having developed adaptations to service delivery reflecting an understanding of cultural diversity.

As Technical Assistance is delivered, this definition may be enhanced to most effectively reflect appropriate delivery of services. Additionally, how to measure this competence will be discussed over time.

Technical assistance/and or coaching sessions will be provided to child care programs (when requested) to work on collaborative quality improvement change plans and support defined steps for program enhancement. Requested Technical Assistance support will be provided on-site to programs for an average of 10 hours per program. YoungStar Regional Offices are responsible for ensuring the following:

1. Technical Consultants are Registry, Professional Development Approval System Technical Consultants
2. Technical Consultants have access to research-informed materials and evidence-based practices that support strategies and processes to enhance program quality and increase child outcomes.
3. YoungStar Regional Office sub-contracted vendors meet this requirement also when delivering technical consultation

Formal Rating with Observation – including assessment and formal rating with observation of early care and education providers/programming. Formal Rating with Observation (when requested) will be based upon interviews & selected classroom observations utilizing the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute materials including, but not limited to the following:

- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R),
- Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R), and the
- Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale Revised (FCCERS-R), developed by Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford and Debby Cryer,

Formal Rating Observers will also utilize the Program Administration Scale and Business Administration Scale tools developed by The McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership scholars, Teri Talan and Paula Jorde Bloom in the areas of Business and Professional Practices (including business practices, professional development, staff benefits and parent/family involvement).

Health and Wellness quality indicators such as participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program will also be reviewed.

YoungStar Regional Offices are responsible to ensure that Formal Rating Observers are Registry, Professional Development Approval System Technical Consultants, with content based training on the environment rating scale and Program Administration/Business Administration Scale tools and that they have access to research-informed materials and evidence-based practices, that support strategies and processes to enhance program quality and increase child outcomes. YoungStar Regional Office sub-contracted vendors must meet this requirement also. Formal Rating Observers must continue to demonstrate valid and reliable scoring when utilizing the Environment Rating Scale tools.

Micro-Grant Administration – administration tracking, eligibility determination and distribution of quality improvement micro-grants to child care programs receiving Technical Assistance with active quality improvement plans. Financial micro-grant resources will be used by child care programs to purchase materials, resources, and professional development opportunities that have been identified to achieve quality improvement goals. YoungStar Regional Offices will be responsible for administering micro-grants in denominations of \$250, \$500, and \$1,000. These micro-grants will be

applied for by child care providers, and each child care program/provider must demonstrate how the funds will align with the program's individualized quality improvement plan. YoungStar Regional Offices must have financial and programmatic controls in place to ensure that these funds are used for legitimate purposes that drive quality improvement.

Partnerships – develop and sustain partnerships with other training and Technical Assistance partners within the region, utilizing the strengths and skills of other partners including those organizations that have the role of promoting and supporting positive relationships across community partners including:

- Cooperative Educational Service Agencies
- Child Care Licensing and Certification
- Family Resource Centers
- Institutions of Higher Education
- Parent Advocacy Organizations
- County Human Service/Social Service Agencies
- County and private Wisconsin Works (W-2 Agencies)
- School Districts
- Birth to 3 Programs
- Early Childhood Special Education
- Local Health Agencies
- Local Child Welfare Agencies
- Child Care Advocacy Organizations; and,
- Organizations and services to support infant mental health needs

YoungStar Regional Offices are encouraged to create partnerships with the business and philanthropic community to leverage and access additional resources for early care and education providers and families. Partnerships must support collaborative training and Technical Assistance opportunities, and integrate the work of multiple service partners in early care and education to support outreach to programs participating in YoungStar to achieve increased quality improvement.

The YoungStar Regional Office will provide DCF with evidence of partnerships/subcontracts developed that are reflective of the diversity of the respective geographic area served. YoungStar Regional Offices must demonstrate documentation of efforts to engage Minority Owned Businesses as contractors and the methods by which trainings are made available in languages other than English in communities with large English as a Second-Language populations.

Public Outreach and Communication - A strong goal of YoungStar is that parents will have concrete and understandable information on how to choose child care programming. Elements of quality will be transmitted to parents and other community members, via phone and e-mail availability to answer questions and respond to concerns – to parents, child care providers, regional training and Technical Assistance partners, and community stakeholders. YoungStar Regional Offices will utilize Department of Children and Families designated media and marketing outreach with YoungStar branded materials developed.

YoungStar Regional Office Administration - Timeline

Participation Agreement Request Form and Timeline – as child care programs complete YoungStar Participation Request form and Wisconsin Shares contract, a YoungStar timeline begins for the program. A completed Participant Request Form received date is entered into the YoungStar automated system by the YoungStar Regional Office.

The child care program will self-select one of the following levels of YoungStar support on the YoungStar Participation Request form:

- *YoungStar Technical Rating based on educational qualifications of Lead Teacher/Director – no Technical Assistance requested.* Data from the Career Levels of Lead Teacher and the Program Director will be transferred from The Registry to the YoungStar computer system . YoungStar Regional Offices will have access to the information. (Programs will earn one or two stars).
- *YoungStar Technical Rating based on educational qualifications and requesting Technical Assistance.* Data from the Career Levels of Lead Teacher and the Program Director will be transferred from The Registry to the YoungStar computer system. YoungStar Regional Offices will have access to the information. (Programs will earn one, two, or three stars).
- *Technical Assistance, and Formal Rating with Observation* for programs that meet educational qualifications of Lead Teacher/Director (programs will earn one, two, three, four or five stars).

Any program that has been determined to be out of regulatory compliance will receive one star, regardless of accreditation status or option chosen.

Once the level of Technical Assistance support is identified in the YoungStar computer system, a timeline is established for the determination of a YoungStar quality rating.

Technical Assistance Request Timeline:

YoungStar Regional Office staff must enter the form completion date in the YoungStar computer system in order to establish a timeline and assign a Technical Consultant to the child care program. The staff will contact the provider to acknowledge receipt of completed forms and to let the provider know that a Technical Consultant will be contacting him or her within four weeks to set up the initial Technical Assistance visit.

Within four weeks, the Technical Consultant assigned to the program will coordinate with the child care program to establish on-site Technical Assistance appointments to begin. *Technical assistance will be available throughout a 20 week window beginning from the date the completed forms were received.*

At the conclusion of the 20 week window, a program may have a Formal Rating with Observation if the program believes that it is ready to be observed for a four or five star rating and if the Lead Teacher/Director or family provider educational qualifications meet the four or five star requirements. Otherwise, a star rating (for levels one, two and three) will be awarded based upon:

- The educational qualifications of the lead teaching staff and director or family provider; and
- The results of the Technical Consultant's site visit related to
 - Verification of the program's self-assessment and Quality Improvement Plan; and
 - Determination of an operating budget that ensures that all financial requirements are complete, accurate accounting practices are in place, and that tax records and payments are complete.

Technical Assistance Communication Policy

Technical Consultants are responsible for transmitting to the child care program in a timely manner (upon conclusion of the Technical Assistance provided), the quality indicators observed within the child care program to achieve the current YoungStar rating. This may be accomplished in a variety of formats including face to face, via phone or email, or through written documentation. The intent of this communication is to provide accurate and timely clarification of how the YoungStar quality

indicators were assessed. The goal of this communication is to enhance the child care programs' understanding of their current YoungStar rating, and provide clear direction for ongoing quality improvement planning.

Rating Observation Request Timeline:

YoungStar child care programs that are ready for a Formal Rating with Observation, must request and complete a **Formal Rating with Observation Request Form** – this form will help a provider make the decision of if they are ready for the Formal Rating with Observation.

Questions asked on this form include:

- Has the Program completed the DCF Wisconsin Shares Contract?
- Has the program completed a quality self assessment tool?
- Has a quality improvement plan been developed?
- Do current lead teaching staff and the program director or family provider meet the educational qualifications of 4 Star Programs?
- Does the Program participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), if eligible, or does the program demonstrate daily nutritional meals and snacks are served to children?
- Is the program director and lead teaching staffing or family provider familiar with the Environmental Rating Scale and the Program Administration/Business Administration Scale tools? Have internal/informal rating observations been completed in this program using the YoungStar tools?

Programs that request a Formal Rating with Observation without Technical Assistance will have a YoungStar Formal Rating with Observation *completed within eight weeks of the request date*. If a program requests a Formal Rating with Observation with Technical Assistance *the Formal Rating with Observation will be scheduled within 12 weeks of the conclusion of the TA*.

The YoungStar Regional Office must include the Formal Rating with Observation request date in the YoungStar computer system, along with any dates identified by the child care program (up to five) that are not available for the formal rating observation, to establish a timeline and assign a Formal Rating Observer to this program that meets time frame requirement.

Formal Rating Observer YoungStar Indicator Scoring and Communication Policy

The YoungStar Regional Office is responsible to update the YoungStar computer system with the Environment Rating Scale Average Score and Subscale Scores, Program Administration/Business Administration Scale professional practices quality indicator findings and other YoungStar quality indicators within one week of the conclusion of the Rating with Observation. This information should be documented and available in the local agency case file to be readily available to Technical Assistance providers for ongoing coordination and communication with individual child care programs on current quality improvement efforts.

Findings from the Formal Rating with Observation must be transmitted to the child care program in a timely manner (within two weeks of conclusion of the onsite observation) by the Formal Rating Observer, this may be accomplished in a variety formats including face to face, via phone or email, or through written documentation. Information should be shared with the program director, and whenever possible with the lead teaching staff from rooms observed or family child care provider.

In general, the maximum time frame from Formal Rating with Observation to sharing of score findings with a child care program would be complete within a two week cycle. Up to four weeks would be

allowed for the very largest programs to accommodate the increased numbers of classrooms observed.

The intent of this communication is to provide accurate and timely clarification of how the environmental rating scale and professional practices quality indicators were assessed. The goal of this communication is to enhance the child care programs' understanding of their current YoungStar rating, and provide clear direction for ongoing quality improvement planning.

Timeline Scenarios

Technical Rating

Action	Date completed (no later than)
Completed Application Received Date (Entered within 2 working days by Regional Office)	December 8 ¹
Automated Rating published in YoungStar – Batch Run Occurs over each Weekend – Available Monday morning	December 13

Technical Assistance Only

Action	Date completed (no later than)
Complete Participation Request Form Received: YoungStar Technical Rating Requested (Educational Qualifications) with Technical Assistance	January 10 ¹
Provider is contacted by staff of YoungStar Regional Office to acknowledge receipt of forms	January 12
Technical Consultant calls to schedule first visit	February 7
First visit occurs	February 14 ¹
TA End Date	May 30
Rating published in YoungStar – Batch Run Occurs over each Weekend – Available Monday morning	6

Formal Rating with Observation and Technical Assistance

Action	Date completed (no later than)
Complete Participation Request Form Received: YoungStar Formal Rating with Observation Requested and Technical Assistance	December 1 ¹
Provider is contacted by staff of YoungStar Regional Office to acknowledge receipt of forms	January 3
Technical Consultant calls to schedule first visit	December 29
TA Ends and Formal Rating with Observation request form is complete	April 20
Formal Rating with Observation occurs	July 13
Formal Rating is entered into electronic system but not published	July 20
Formal Rating is shared with provider	July 27

¹ These dates were chosen as an example. The “no later than” in the column heading does not apply to these dates.

Rating published in YoungStar – Batch Run Occurs over each Weekend – Available Monday morning

August 1

Wisconsin Shares Contract:

YoungStar child care participants are also required to complete a ***Wisconsin Shares Contract*** – this contract is signed by the child care program/provider and indicates that the program/provider will serve Wisconsin Shares children and will accurately complete all attendance reporting policy requirements of Wisconsin Shares, including accurate and timely attendance reporting requirements.

Annual YoungStar Rating:

Once a YoungStar rating is assigned to a program the YoungStar Regional Office is responsible to ensure that YoungStar quality ratings are then determined annually. YoungStar automation will identify a listing of programs that will be required to have an annual rating established, and if requested a Formal Rating with Observation completed. It will be a requirement that a child care program completes a Renewal Application to continue as a YoungStar program.

Department of Children and Families Over-Site – The Consortium Leadership team and their designated staffing will meet, at a minimum quarterly with staffing from DCF. Appropriate Technical Assistance staffing and formal rating observation staffing will participate as needed in monthly conference calls to ensure that YoungStar administration of Technical Assistance, formal rating observation, micro-grant administration and public outreach is completed with a culturally sensitive, meaningful and comprehensive approach to delivery. Administration of YoungStar will require that Technical Assistance and formal rating with observation are delivered in a valid, reliable and efficient format that follows the protocols designed by DCF. YoungStar Regional Offices will be required to complete accurate quarterly reporting that identifies services delivered, timelines that are delivered, and ensure that valid and reliable services are provided.