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Four-Star Child Care Providers Receive Rate Increase

MADISON - The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) today announced a substantial increase to the Wisconsin Shares reimbursement rate for four-star child care providers. Effective December 29, 2013 child care providers who have attained a four-star rating under the YoungStar quality rating and improvement system will be awarded a 10% bonus above the maximum reimbursement rate set by DCF, up from the previous 5% bonus.

This is second of three planned targeted increases to the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy following Governor Scott Walker's lifting of the rate freeze that was implemented in 2006. In keeping with his vision of having every Wisconsin child start kindergarten ready to succeed in school, the Governor fully funded a 25% increase for five-star providers and this 10% increase to four-star providers in his 2013-15 budget.

"This rate increase for four-star providers reaffirms Governor Walker's commitment to raise the quality of early childhood education in Wisconsin," said DCF Secretary Eloise Anderson. "By rewarding providers who have put in the work needed to achieve a four-star rating, we are moving one step closer to ensuring that all children have access to the important educational foundation needed to succeed in life and closing the state's educational gap."

The YoungStar rating system, which was launched in 2010, sets a rating for child care providers based on education, learning environment, business practices and the well-being of children. In conjunction with the YoungStar website, the system provides parents with the information needed to make an informed choice when picking a child care provider.

In 2012, the YoungStar program introduced a tiered payment system for providers who accepted children receiving the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy. Under the tiered system providers with five-star or four-star ratings receive bonuses on top of the maximum Wisconsin Shares reimbursement rate. The tiered system was implemented to further encourage providers to attain a higher YoungStar rating.

"It is really about trying to get a better return on investment for the taxpayers," Anderson said. "Children exposed to a high-quality early childhood education are more likely to be successful in school, stay out of the criminal justice system and be able to support a family. We believe that the providers who offer the highest quality education deserve to be rewarded for their role in improving Wisconsin's future."

For more information about the YoungStar rating system go to <http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/>

