Policy Guide
## Table of Contents

- Quality Rating and Improvement System Overall Model ........................................... 6
- Purpose of YoungStar Policy Guide ........................................................................ 6
- Purpose of YoungStar ............................................................................................... 6
- YoungStar Organizational Structure ....................................................................... 7
  - Administrative Agencies ....................................................................................... 7
  - Distribution of Regulatory Functions .................................................................... 7
    - Licensing ........................................................................................................... 7
    - Certification ...................................................................................................... 7
    - Public Schools ................................................................................................. 7
- Creation of YoungStar ............................................................................................... 8
- Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) ..................................................... 10
  - Definition ............................................................................................................. 10
  - Components ......................................................................................................... 10
  - Research ............................................................................................................... 10
  - Validity of measurement criteria ......................................................................... 11
  - The Rand Corporation QRIS Research ................................................................ 11
- Quality in Early Childhood Environments ............................................................... 11
  - Definition ............................................................................................................. 11
  - Components ......................................................................................................... 11
- YoungStar Participant Categories .......................................................................... 12
  - Optional Participation: ......................................................................................... 12
  - Mandatory Participation: ..................................................................................... 12
  - Head Start Program Participation ......................................................................... 12
    - Head Start 5 Star automatic rating eligibility .................................................. 12
  - ACF Deficiencies .................................................................................................. 12
- Public School Board Managed Program Participation ............................................ 14
- School-Age Program Participation .......................................................................... 14
- Out-of-State Provider Participation ........................................................................ 14
- In-Home Provider Participation ............................................................................. 14
- YoungStar Quality Indicators ................................................................................. 15
  - Provider Training and Educational Qualifications ............................................... 15
Regulatory Compliance and Location Changes ........................................................... 31
YoungStar rating process and location changes ....................................................... 31
YoungStar technical consultation services and location changes ....................... 32
Accredited providers and location changes ............................................................ 32
Rating changes for providers whose education level has changed enough to affect their star level: ................................................................. 32

Providers requesting a change to the type of rating they receive. ...................... 33
Rating changes for providers who attain Accreditation ....................................... 34
Rating changes for suspended and/or revoked providers .................................. 34
YoungStar Providers’ Leave-of-Absence Process .................................................. 34

GROUP/SCHOOL-AGE PROVIDER ................................................................. 34

Director /Site Supervisor Absence ................................................................. 34
FAMILY PROVIDER ......................................................................................... 35
Maternity Leave Absence .................................................................................. 35
Other Leave Absences ....................................................................................... 35
Star rating Appeals Process .............................................................................. 36
Rationale ........................................................................................................... 36
Design ............................................................................................................... 36
Steps in the YoungStar Appeals Process .......................................................... 36
Withdrawal from YoungStar ............................................................................. 39
Voluntary YoungStar Participant ....................................................................... 39
Wisconsin Shares Recipient Withdrawal ......................................................... 39
Administration of YoungStar: The Consortium .................................................. 39
YoungStar Consortium Partners ....................................................................... 39
YoungStar Consortium Responsibilities .............................................................. 40
YoungStar Administration .................................................................................. 40
Delivery of technical consultation services ...................................................... 40
Micro-Grant Administration ................................................................................ 41
Formal Rating with Observation Services ......................................................... 43
Early Care and Education Partnerships ............................................................ 43
Public Outreach and Communication ............................................................... 44
Local YoungStar office Administration - timeline management ...................... 44
Technical Consultant and/or Formal Rating Observer Communications: ......... 44
Quality Rating and Improvement System Overall Model

Programs out of regulatory compliance are not able to participate until coming into compliance with regulation.

Purpose of YoungStar Policy Guide

The purpose of the YoungStar Policy Guide is to provide a central document for use in understanding, disseminating, and applying YoungStar policies to all early childhood and school-age professionals involved in delivering YoungStar services. Additionally, this document is a resource to which Department of Children and Families (DCF) professionals will direct other Early Childhood Education (ECE) professionals for reliable information related to application procedures, eligibility policies regarding participation in YoungStar, and information in regard to technical consultation and formal rating services. **PLEASE NOTE:** All documents developed to communicate YoungStar policy with a revision date subsequent to the date of this Guide (see bottom of page) are to be recognized as current policy.

DCF has developed a continuously-updated quick-reference tool for ECE professionals to turn to for answers to frequently asked questions. The *YoungStar Frequently Asked Questions* tool can be accessed here: def.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/faq.htm.

Purpose of YoungStar

DCF created YoungStar [youngstar.wisconsin.gov](http://youngstar.wisconsin.gov) to assist ECE and school-age providers in the assessment and improvement of the level of quality in services they offer. YoungStar is a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) built on the foundation of regulatory compliance with State of Wisconsin licensing and certification statutes and rules. YoungStar offers incentives to participants to encourage awareness of, and increase focus on, levels of quality exceeding the minimum requirements set by regulatory compliance standards. The program has been developed based on research and other states’ experiences to establish criteria that are: research-based, objective, and verifiable on a regular basis.
YoungStar improves child care in Wisconsin by providing more targeted information about child care programs to parents, helping them to choose higher quality child care. YoungStar rewards quality child care providers by awarding financial incentives for demonstrating a commitment to continuous quality improvement. It ensures that providers that are operating within state regulations, and exceeding the minimum health and safety standards required by law, are recognized and rewarded for their efforts and benefit from a higher star rating.

Rating providers in YoungStar:

- Improves the overall quality of child care and promotes the health and development of children in early care and education programs;
- Empowers parents by providing an easily understandable tool to assist them in choosing higher-quality child care for their children;
- Creates incentives and provides supportive resources for providers to improve quality of services, particularly for low-income children;
- Establishes a connection between level of quality offered in a child care program and the reimbursement rates provided through the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program - def.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/wi SHARES.htm

**YoungStar Organizational Structure**

**Administrative Agencies**
YoungStar is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, Bureau of Quality Improvement (BQI), within the Division of Early Care and Education (DECE). YoungStar is built on the foundation of regulatory compliance dcf.wi.gov/youngstar/pdf/regulatory_compliance.pdf, with licensing and certification statutes and rules.

**Distribution of Regulatory Functions**

**Licensing**
As a function of DECE, licensing is administered at the state level by DCF. Licensing specialists are located throughout the state to provide regulatory oversight at the local level.

- General information about licensing can be found at: dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/licensed
- DCF Chapters 250, 251 and 252 Licensing Rules can be found at: dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/licensed/rules.htm

**Certification**
Certification is a county-administered regulatory service that has state-level oversight. For the majority of counties, certifiers are located in each county.

- General information on certification can be found at: dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/certification

**Public Schools**
Public schools may operate and receive Wisconsin Share child care subsidy funding for child care facility under Wisconsin State Statute 120.13 (14). The operation of the child care facility is overseen by the public school board. The public school board may also contract with another entity to operate the child care facility under the supervision of the public school board.
Creation of YoungStar

The QRIS model approved by the Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) [legis.wisconsin.gov/lfb/jfc.html] is a hybrid point system. It is based on both the 2005 proposal developed by the public/private KidsFirst: Quality Counts for Kids Task Force and the building-block model contained in 2009-11 biennial budget. It has been enhanced to reflect feedback from the child care community and the Legislature. Significant effort went into the development of the current YoungStar model:

2004
- The KidsFirst: Quality Counts for Kids Task Force, composed of representatives from 21 public and private organizations and agencies, met seven times to examine a wide range of quality rating and tiered-reimbursement options, and was guided by national research and the experiences of other states when developing quality rating systems.
- Three public hearings were held in October 2004 to receive comments on the Task Force recommendations. Comments were also received directly by the Department of Workforce Development.

2008
- DCF collected further feedback from meetings with stakeholders beginning in late 2008. The feedback the Department received consistently reaffirmed the need to support quality child care and to reward providers who strive for greater quality. Feedback from the meetings also showed programs providing higher-quality care should receive higher reimbursement than those adhering only to the minimum health and safety standards.

2009

2010
- March 24: Then-DCF Secretary Reggie Bicha submitted to the Joint Committee on Finance a letter and plan for the implementation of YoungStar.
  - Secretary Reggie Bicha’s letter on YoungStar implementation - [dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/032410_ifc_letter.pdf]
  - The YoungStar Proposal (March 2010) - [dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/implementation_plan.pdf]
- June 23: YoungStar was unanimously passed by the Joint Committee on Finance in Motion 38 [dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/motion38.pdf] which detailed how YoungStar would be implemented, including immediate training and technical consultation opportunities in twelve counties. The Motion also required DCF to return to the Committee in November with a five-year plan for the implementation of YoungStar.
- June 30: A Request for Proposal - [dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/ys_rfp.pdf] was issued to select the YoungStar regional entities to be responsible for training, technical consultation and rating in the six YoungStar regions of Wisconsin.
- August-December: Training and technical consultation was provided to over 5,000 participants through over 200 trainings in twelve Wisconsin counties. Topics: YoungStar Overview, Environment and Curriculum, Health and Wellness, and Professional Practices.
November: A contract was issued to the YoungStar Consortium, an organization made up of the Celebrate Children Foundation [celebrate-children.org](http://celebrate-children.org), the Supporting Families Together Association, and the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association to administer YoungStar in all six regions of Wisconsin.

November 22: DCF submitted its Five-Year Plan for YoungStar.

- Secretary Reggie Bicha’s overview letter to co-chairs [pdf](http://dfc.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/101122_youngstar_5_year_plan_letter.pdf)
- Financial request letter to co-chairs [pdf](http://dfc.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/101122_youngstar_qris_letter.pdf)
- YoungStar Five Year Plan [pdf](http://dfc.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/101122_youngstar_5_year_plan.pdf)
- YoungStar Five Year Plan Appendices and Glossary [pdf](http://dfc.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/101122_youngstar_5_year_plan_appendices.pdf)

December 14: The Joint Committee on Finance approved DCF’s YoungStar Five Year Plan.

December: Providers began to apply to participate in YoungStar and were rated; parents were able to search for YoungStar rated providers on the [YoungStar Provider Search](https://childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov/Search/BasicSearch.aspx) page.
YoungStar Implementation Period - (Jan. 2011 – July 1, 2013)
During the YoungStar Implementation Period, a provider’s YoungStar Contract was used to determine Wisconsin Shares payments by tying it to the providers YoungStar anniversary date (the date the program received their first YoungStar rating). If the YoungStar renewal resulted in a rating increase or decrease, the provider received an adjusted reimbursement at the new rating level dating back to the YoungStar anniversary date.

After the YoungStar Implementation Period ended, Wisconsin Shares payments were adjusted and became directly tied to the date a child care program received their annual YoungStar rating or the program’s anniversary date, whichever is later. If an annual rating is completed prior to the program’s YoungStar anniversary date, the rating is not activated until the anniversary date. If the rating is completed after the program’s YoungStar anniversary date, the tiered reimbursement payment is not adjusted until the rating process is complete.

Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

Definition
A quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) is a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early and school-age care and education programs. Similar to rating systems for restaurants and hotels, QRIS award quality ratings to early and school-age care and education programs that meet a set of defined program standards.¹

Components
- **Standards:** (known as “quality indicators” in Wisconsin) vary by state but are built on state licensing and certification regulations, and generally include two or more levels of quality.
- **Accountability:** determines how all programs are meeting standards (quality indicators). A symbol (identified by “stars” in Wisconsin) is awarded to each participating program, which represents the program’s level of quality.
- **Program and practitioner outreach and support:** help programs meet higher standards and promote participation. Training, mentoring, and technical consultation are the supports provided in most cases.
- **Financial incentives linked to quality levels:** help to increase program participation and promote provider support.
- **Parent and consumer education efforts:** help parents learn about quality, as well as program ratings, so they can make more informed choices on behalf of their children.²

Research
“Child care quality and outcomes for children have improved substantially in states that have implemented Quality Rating and Improvement Systems. For example, when Oklahoma’s *Reaching for the Stars* QRIS was implemented in 2003, less than 46% of children who received child care subsidies similar to Wisconsin Shares were receiving child care in a higher-quality center. After only two years, that percentage moved up significantly to over 76% receiving child care in a high-quality center. Additionally, we know that when QRIS programs are implemented correctly, they are valid and reliable

---
sources of information for parents who are choosing care for their children.”

Validity of measurement criteria
YoungStar was established using objective and research-based criteria. It is critical that criteria measured to demonstrate quality are objective, reliable, regularly available and efficient to administer. Valid and objective criteria reduce the risks of subjective judgments of raters. It is also critical the criteria used to measure quality are reliable and regularly available to ensure the system operates efficiently. The criteria established for measurement in YoungStar were selected because they meet these characteristics.

The Rand Corporation QRIS Research
The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world. In their 2008 study, Child-Care Quality Rating and Improvement Systems in Five Pioneer States; Implementation Issues and Lessons Learned, the RAND Corporation looked at 5 states to determine successful common elements of a quality rating improvement system. They identified several common themes among successful state systems. All of these elements are incorporated in the fundamental design of YoungStar.

1. Clear goals and expectations
2. Incentives for participating
3. Monitoring performance
4. Evaluation of expectations
5. Encouraging of improved performance through quality improvement support.

Full Rand Study details can be found here: rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG795.pdf

Quality in Early Childhood Environments

Definition
“Quality child care commonly refers to early childhood settings in which children are safe, healthy, and receive appropriately stimulation. Care settings are responsive, allowing children to form secure attachments to nurturing adults. Quality programs or providers offer engaging, appropriate activities in settings that facilitate healthy growth and development, and prepare children for or promote their success in school.”

Components
“Research typically points to two dimensions of quality: structural features and process features. The structural elements of a child care environment establish the foundation for optimal process conditions. Structural features refer to the way in which the program is organized such as staff-to-child ratio and teacher qualifications. Process quality refers to the experiences children have in child care and include such aspects as adult–child interactions, children’s exposure to and involvement with learning materials, and parent–caregiver relationships. These are critical components that directly affect children’s behavior and learning experiences in the child-care setting. The most important process element in quality child care is the human relationships between the
teaching staff and children and their families.” (Uttal, 2002)

**YoungStar Participant Categories**

**Optional Participation:**
Licensed family, certified family, and licensed group providers who are not receiving Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy payments, are eligible to participate in YoungStar on a voluntary basis.

**Mandatory Participation:**
Licensed family, certified family, licensed group and public school programs who receive Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy reimbursement, must participate in YoungStar to receive subsidy payments.

**Head Start Program Participation**
Head Start programs that accept Wisconsin Shares child care subsidies must participate in YoungStar. Head Start programs that do not accept Wisconsin Shares child care subsidies may participate in YoungStar voluntarily, and are encouraged to do so. The guidelines for Head Start program participation in YoungStar are outlined here: [Head Start Participation in YoungStar](http://df.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/head_start.pdf)

**Head Start 5 Star automatic rating eligibility**
Participating Head Start programs will be awarded a 5 Star automatic rating if the program delivers 3 or fewer hours of child care per day and if all criteria outlined in YoungStar policies are met. Participating Head Start programs that deliver more than 3 hours of child care per day will be rated using the typical YoungStar rating process (Technical or Formal Rating).

*Head Start programs receiving the YoungStar automatic 5 Star rating are not eligible for YoungStar Technical Assistance or micro-grants.*

DCF compared Head Start Performance Standards to the National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation standards (NAEYC) and found the standards within Head Start to be equivalent to a 5 Star rating for the following reasons:

- Observations are taking place already in a child care/Head Start program through the accreditation/validation process.
- Verification of a high set of standards is reached with the requirements of the Head Start Performance Standards: [eekc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hclc/Head%20Start%20Program/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Head%20Start%20Requirements/Head%20Start%20Requirements](http://eekc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hclc/Head%20Start%20Program/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Head%20Start%20Requirements/Head%20Start%20Requirements)

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) will have regular and ongoing communication as necessary to facilitate the process of determining which Head Start programs are eligible for the 5 Star automatic rating.

**ACF Deficiencies**
If the granting agency of a Head Start program that is receiving the YoungStar automatic 5 Star rating receives a deficiency on their Administration of Children and Families (ACF) triennial review, the grantee, delegates and partnering agencies that have received the automatic 5 Star rating will no longer be eligible for the automatic 5 Star rating in YoungStar. The program is allowed 45 days from the date of the deficiency to decide if
they would like to go through the typical YoungStar rating process or be rated at an automated 2 Star. A Change Form is required for either action, and will be sent to the program upon receipt of the deficiency. If the ACF deficiency is lifted and DCF is provided written notification by ACF of this, the Head Start program(s) affected by the deficiency can immediately move back to the automated 5 Star rating as long as they still deliver 3 or fewer hours of child care per day and still meet all other criteria outlined in the Head Start participation in YoungStar policies.

If a Head Start program’s licensed group center is found to be out of regulatory compliance with DCF child care licensing that center would be rated 1 Star. If the provider subsequently becomes reinstated, the provider will be changed to a 2 Star. The rating will be confirmed by the local YoungStar office, which will then contact the provider and explain next steps available for their program.

### Head Start YoungStar Participation Procedures

#### Head Start programs with no child care (“stand-alone Head Starts”)

1. Program turns in YoungStar Contract to local YoungStar office. The local office will send the YoungStar Contract to DCF.

2. Program is rated a 5 Star automatically in YoungStar.

3. If a program receives a deficiency in their ACF triennial review, they are removed from YoungStar.

4. If the Department of Children and Families (DCF) receives written verification that the deficiency is lifted, the program(s) previously impacted by the deficiency can be reinstated to a 5 Star as of the date the deficiency is lifted by ACF.

#### Head Start programs that deliver 3 or fewer hours of child care per day

1. Program turns in YoungStar Contract to local YoungStar office. The local YoungStar office will send the YoungStar Contract to DCF.

2. Program is rated a 5 Star automatically in YoungStar.

3. If DCF receives a deficiency notice from ACF related to a Head Start grantee, delegate or child care partner that had previously received the automatic 5 Star rating, the program will be dropped immediately to a 2 Star. Their Wisconsin Shares subsidies will be paid at -5%.

4. A letter and a YoungStar Change Request form will be sent to the impacted program(s), indicating that the deficiency has been received. The program will have 45 days to return the Change Request back to DCF.  
   a. If the Change Request is not received within the specified time frame, the program will remain a 2 Star for the remainder of their YoungStar Contract or until DCF is provided written verification that the deficiency has been lifted by ACF.
   
   b. If the Change Request is received within that time frame, the program can be rated through the typical YoungStar rating process of either a Technical Rating or Formal Rating. If the program is the rated higher than a 2 Star, they will receive back-payment to the date the YoungStar Change Request was entered into automation.

5. If DCF receives written notification from ACF that the ACF deficiency is subsequently corrected, the Head Start program may move back up to the automatic 5 Star rating, if they choose, by submitting a new YoungStar Change Request to DCF.
Public School Board Managed Program Participation

Programs in which the child attends a regulated child care facility in a.m. or p.m.– family or group center - and transitions to a wrap-around program at a 3/4K in a school district building or in a 3/4K collaboration partner site – must participate in YoungStar if the program receives Wisconsin Shares for any of the children in care. YoungStar will not provide assessment or technical consultation services for publicly funded 3/4K classrooms, however assessments and technical consultation services will be provided for the child care portion of these programs.

School-Age Program Participation

For YoungStar purposes, school-age child care programs are defined as programs that provide care primarily to children ages 5-12, usually during the hours before and after school or during holiday and vacation breaks. In some limited circumstances, younger children may be enrolled. School-age providers are required to participate in YoungStar. School-age applications are to be returned to the local YoungStar office.

Out-of-State Provider Participation

Out-of-state providers are defined by DCF Administrative Rule 201 as “Providers who are located outside Wisconsin (MN, IL, IA, MI).” These providers serve children who reside in Wisconsin, but receive child care in a bordering state.

Out-of-state providers who care for children, at either a full-time or part-time level, and receive Wisconsin Shares subsidy payments are NOT eligible to receive YoungStar services, and will not be listed in the YoungStar public website as YoungStar was designed and funded to provide assistance for Wisconsin licensed and certified child care providers. However, out-of-state providers are still eligible to receive Wisconsin Shares payments for the Wisconsin children in their care.

In order to maintain their subsidies, out-of-state providers must submit to DCF a signed Wisconsin Shares contract. Information from this contract is entered into the Child Care Statewide Administration on Web (CSAW) program. Once entered, the out-of-state provider will be eligible for Wisconsin Shares payments. However, their program will not be visible on the YoungStar public website.

In-Home Provider Participation

An “in-home provider” is defined by DCF Administrative Rule 201 as “a regulated child care provider caring for the child in the child’s own home.” In-home providers do not serve children from the general public, and therefore are not eligible to receive YoungStar services, as YoungStar was designed and funded to provide assistance for Wisconsin licensed and certified child care providers serving children outside of the child’s home.

While not eligible receive YoungStar services, in-home providers who accept Wisconsin Shares payments must maintain their eligibility to receive Wisconsin Shares payments for children in their care. In order to receive Wisconsin Shares subsidies, in-home providers must submit to DCF a signed Wisconsin Shares Contract. Information from this contract is entered into the Child Care Statewide Administration on Web (CSAW) program. Once entered, the in-home provider will be eligible to receive Wisconsin Shares payments. Wisconsin Shares reimbursement rates for in-home providers will be
provided at DCF pre-determined levels, and their program will not be visible on the YoungStar public website.


**The Wisconsin Shares contract must be mailed to:**
Wisconsin Department of Children and Families
Bureau of Quality Improvement - YoungStar
201 E. Washington Ave, Room E200
Madison, WI 53708

---

**YoungStar Quality Indicators**

**Provider Training and Educational Qualifications**

In Wisconsin, early childhood and school-age educators and the organizations that serve them have long supported the principle that training, experience, and professionalism are the hallmarks of quality care. In YoungStar, these components are verified using a career-level recognition system called The Registry [the-registry.org](http://the-registry.org).

**The Registry**

The Registry recognizes the professional achievements of early childhood and school age educators in Wisconsin by issuing a certificate with a Registry career-level, from one to seventeen, acknowledging and highlighting the recipient’s unique training, background, and experiences in the field.

**The Registry Certificate details**

- Formal and/or credit based education
- Number of years in the child care and education field
- All child care positions the recipient is qualified to fill in the state of Wisconsin
- CPR, First Aid, and Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) Training

To fully participate in YoungStar, a program must:

1. Ensure that each staff member that will be identified for YoungStar educational and training purposes registers for an Individual Registry Profile and receives a Registry Career-Level Certificate processed on the current 17-level system. **Certificates processed prior to January 1, 2009 will not be accepted.**

2. Register their program to receive an Organizational ID and Password. After receiving the ID/Password, the program must:
   - Create an Program Profile
   - Assign a Director of Record or Licensee/Owner
   - Create a classroom or classrooms
   - Assign a YoungStar Lead Teacher to every classroom.

**Individual staff can be assigned as the YoungStar Lead Teacher in only one classroom at a time.**

What this means is that if a person is working as a Lead Teacher in two different child care centers, he/she can only be designated as the YoungStar Lead Teacher in one of those centers. In most cases, family child care programs will assign the Licensee as the YoungStar Lead Teacher. If an individual changes roles within the program they must first be removed from their prior position/classroom before they can be assigned into the new classroom/position.
3. **Update their Program Profile to reflect staff changes immediately.** The provider must maintain accurate and current information in the Program Profile to consistently reflect staffing changes and classroom assignments.

**Dual-role Director Eligibility**

For YoungStar applications received after 2012, the following rules will apply in regard to persons designated as serving as the Director for licensed group programs:

- Programs licensed for 31 or more children (regardless of the full or part-time nature of the program) must have a Director who does not additionally have Lead Teaching responsibilities to have that Director’s educational qualifications count for YoungStar points.
- Programs licensed for 30 or fewer children may, in the following limited circumstances, have a Director who also serves in a Lead Teaching role:

**To earn 3 Stars:** In addition to teaching time not to exceed 25 hours per week, the dual-role Director receives compensation for a minimum of 15 hours per week or .375 FTE (if program operates fewer than 40 hours per week) to perform Director responsibilities. YoungStar Technical Consultants and Formal Rating Observers will confirm that the dual-role matches the program’s budget, job descriptions, and timesheets or schedule. The dual-role Director must also meet the educational qualifications for a 3 Star rating.

**To earn 4 Stars:** In addition to teaching time not to exceed 20 hours per week, the dual-role Director receives compensation for a minimum of 20 hours per week or .5 FTE (if program operates fewer than 40 hours per week) to perform Director responsibilities. YoungStar Technical Consultants and Formal Rating Observers will confirm that the dual-role matches the program’s budget, job descriptions, and timesheets or schedule. The dual-role Director must also meet the educational qualifications for a 4 Star rating.

**To earn 5 Stars:** A full time dedicated director must be in place, who meets the educational qualifications for a 5 Star rating.

---

**“Grace Period” for staffing changes:**

DCF allows one two month (60 day) “grace period” each calendar year for providers whose star rating drops due to staff turnover per year. During this time, it is expected that the provider will actively be pursuing staff to replace the departed staff member at the same or higher educational level. If during the two month grace period a staff of equal or higher educational level is hired and a complete application is submitted to The Registry, the pending lesser rating will not be acted upon. Rather, the previous or higher rating will be approved.

If after sixty days the position has not been filled or a completed application has not been submitted to The Registry, then the lower rating will be approved by local YoungStar staff, and Wisconsin Shares payments will be set at the lower star rating dating back to the date the staffing changes occurred.
# Career Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
<th>Level 5</th>
<th>Level 6</th>
<th>Level 7</th>
<th>Level 8</th>
<th>Level 9</th>
<th>Level 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registry Membership</td>
<td>Verified high school diploma or GED</td>
<td>30 hours training (any test)</td>
<td>120 hours training (any test)</td>
<td>160 hours training (40 hours must be in 2 or 3 credits)</td>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>Montessori Credential*</td>
<td>Family Services Credential</td>
<td>Registry Credential*</td>
<td>Registry Credential*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved Training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Credit Credentials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit Based Credentials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This includes entry level course hours (effective after January 1, 2009)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit Based Increments</td>
<td>6 related credits</td>
<td>12 related credits</td>
<td>18 related credits</td>
<td>24 related credits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Early Childhood and Youth Development Degrees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Year Diploma</th>
<th>Associate’s Degree</th>
<th>Associate’s Degree + Registry Credential</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree + Registry Credential</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree + DPI License</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree + DPI License + Registry Credential</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree + DPI License</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree + DPI License + Registry Credential</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree + Registry Credential</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree + DPI License + Registry Credential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any 2 Registry Credentials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Credit Based Increments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree + Registry Credential</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree + 30 related credits</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree + 36 related credits</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree + Registry Credential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## Degrees in Another Field

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Master’s Degree + 36 related credits</th>
<th>Master’s Degree + 36 related credits</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree + 30 related credits</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree + 30 related credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Footnotes

*Approved training is training awarded a specific task or procedure by The Registry and taught by a Registry approved trainer.

*Montessori Credential is awarded by Montessori. Other school sites do not offer this credential.

*Must be taken at the site of Mercer.

*Represented in the 0-12 multitechnical programs from Southeast Wisconsin Technical College.

*Each individual Registry Credential is awarded to Level 10 for completion of a specific course (12 total credits per Credential).

*Each year diploma is comprised of 6 specific courses totaling 34 or more credits.

*WIF license recognized by the Professional Education Commission. All other teacher/educator certifications are not recognized.
The child care environment affects the way children behave, develop, and learn. It also affects the quantity and quality of interactions between adults and children. It includes tangible aspects, such as appropriate curriculum, materials and equipment, and intangible aspects, such as the physical and human qualities that together create an atmosphere that promotes self-esteem, social interaction, rich language, and the joy of learning.

YoungStar utilizes a variety of assessment tools to evaluate and measure quality within the child care setting. Providers interested in attaining the highest star ratings available in YoungStar will have several aspects of their learning environment and curriculum observed and rated. Focus will be centered on:

- Program alignment with Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) - [collaboratingpartners.com/wmels-about.php](http://collaboratingpartners.com/wmels-about.php). WMELS has been nationally recognized as a useful tool to improve practices in early childhood settings. WMELS establishes a connection between developmentally appropriate practice and early care settings in key areas.
- Use of a valid self-assessment tool which leads to a Quality Improvement Plan
- Verified tool used for assessment, and independent verification of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) - [dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/ys_sample_qip.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/ys_sample_qip.pdf)
- Targeted lesson plans and tracking of individual child outcomes

**YoungStar-developed self-assessment tools**

Programs can demonstrate efforts made to self-assess the elements of their program that are linked to higher quality care by utilizing a *YoungStar Self-Assessment tool*. The YoungStar Self-Assessment tools are designed to assist the provider in identifying which areas they could focus on when developing their written Quality Improvement Plans.

The YoungStar Self-Assessment Tool assists child care providers in identifying and measuring important indicators of quality. This instrument (provided for free on the YoungStar website) is designed to help providers assess space and furnishings, personal care routines, literacy and language components, indoor and outdoor activities, interactions of staff, children and adults, program structure and provision for children with disabilities and promotion of acceptance of diversity. The instrument also helps the provider assess contract and program policies, program practices, professional development, and community supports.

### YoungStar Optional Self-Assessment Tools


**School-Age:** [dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/ys_self_assessment_schoolage.pdf](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/ys_self_assessment_schoolage.pdf)
Other Optional Self-Assessment Tools

YoungStar has compiled a list of additional Self-Assessment tools that Wisconsin child care providers can preview for free on two-week loan from the Wisconsin Child Care Information Center. To borrow materials, email CCIC at ccic@dpi.wi.gov or phone them toll-free at 1-800-362-7353.

1. Grow in Quality Self-Assessment Tool
A two-part tool designed to assist providers with the development of meaningful plans for program improvement.

   Part 1
   Materials and Practices Assessment Tool:
   M = Materials - the number of materials accessible to the children, the quality of the space available in which to use the materials, and the adequacy of the amount of time that the materials are accessible to children
   A = Age-appropriateness - developmentally appropriate materials in a range of complexity to meet the needs of all children
   P = Plan - observation of the classroom, examination of the lesson plans, and a teacher self-assessment of whether there is evidence of alignment between classroom materials and daily activities.

   Part 2
   Professional Practices Assessment Tool:
   Measures considerations of global practices in staff development, business management, and family involvement.

GROUP PROVIDER
- Materials and Practice Self-Assessment Tool for Group Providers - dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/growinquality/pdf/mapscoresheet.pdf

FAMILY PROVIDER

2. The Creative Curriculum Tools
A. Implementation Checklist, The Creative Curriculum for Preschool
This tool has been designed for use by teachers, administrators and supervisors. Teachers can use the checklist in an ongoing manner to inform their work, help set up the classroom environment, and assess their work with children.

Administrators can gain information as part of the program’s ongoing self-assessment and continuous improvement process. The tool covers physical environment, structure, teacher-child interactions, assessment and family involvement.

B. Self-Assessment for Infants, Toddlers and Twos for Group Providers
This tool is designed to guide the individual professional development of teachers who work with children under age three. Teachers can use it to reflect on their teaching practices and make suggestions about the design and delivery of professional development services. The tool can help administrators identify each teacher’s level of curriculum implementation, areas of strength, and areas where professional development is recommended. It can be used as part of the program’s ongoing self-assessment and continuous improvement process. Sections of the tool cover overall physical environment, materials and equipment, how to build partnerships with each family, and help teachers reflect on how they are guiding children’s learning and behavior, how they observe, the experiences they provide and the routines that are conducted.


3. HighScope Preschool Program Quality Assessment (PQA) for Group Providers
The Preschool Program Quality Assessment (PQA) is a rating instrument designed to evaluate the quality of early childhood programs and identify staff training needs. The Preschool PQA is reliable and valid and is appropriate for use in all center-based early childhood settings, including but not limited to those using the HighScope educational approach.

- Preschool Program Quality Assessment (PQA) for Group Providers - [highscope.org/Content.asp?ContentId=116](http://highscope.org/Content.asp?ContentId=116)

4. Environment Rating Scales
The scales define environment in a broad sense and guide the program to assess the arrangement of space both indoors and outdoors, the materials and activities offered to the children, the supervision and interactions (including language) that occur in the classroom or family child care home, and the schedule of the day, including routines and activities. The support offered to parents and staff is also included. 8

- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) - [ers.fpg.unc.edu/node/82](http://ers.fpg.unc.edu/node/82)
- Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R) - [ers.fpg.unc.edu/node/111](http://ers.fpg.unc.edu/node/111)
- School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS) - [ers.fpg.unc.edu/node/151](http://ers.fpg.unc.edu/node/151)

**NOTE:**
Wisconsin providers may preview many of these tools for free by borrowing them on two-week loan from the Child Care Information Center. Email CCIC at ccic@dpi.wi.gov or phone them toll-free at 1-800-362-7353.

---

5. Other Self-Assessment tools for School-Age Programs

- California After School Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool
- City of Madison Self-Assessment
- Council on Accreditation Afterschool Self-Assessment
- National Afterschool Association Standards for Quality School Age Care Self-Assessment
- National Accreditation Commission (NAC) Self-Assessment
- National Institute on Out-of-School Time: Afterschool Program Assessment System (APAS)
- New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN) Quality Self-Assessment Tool
- School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS)
- YMCA School-Age Care Program Guidelines (available for YMCAs only)
- Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) – Youth Program Quality Assessment

Business and Professional Practices

YoungStar considers the administration and management of early childhood and school-age programs as an integral factor that impacts the quality of children’s experiences in an indirect way by ensuring that the infrastructure and supports are in place to promote optimal experiences and interactions.

To evaluate the business and professional practices within Wisconsin’s child care environments, YoungStar draws from the Program Administration Scale (PAS), the Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care (BAS), and the Model Work Standards. These tools help evaluate the child care environment through data collection from many sources including interviews, financial document review and observation. Additionally, the tools help measure the overall quality of business practices of early care and education programs and serve as useful guides to evaluate and improve programs by providing a focused look at best practices at the classroom level as well as a broad view of program quality from an organizational perspective.

NOTE: These tools are not used in their original formats. YoungStar uses them as a guide for evaluating business practices.

1. Program Administration Scale (PAS) (for Group Providers)
The PAS is designed to measure and improve the overall quality of business practices in center-based programs. Administrators can set goals for incrementally improving administrative practices of early care and education programs. This instrument provides a focused look at best practice in the broad view of program quality from an organizational perspective.

   • Program Administration Scale (PAS) - cecl.nl.edu/evaluation/pas.htm

2. Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care (BAS)
The BAS is designed to measure and improve the overall quality of business practices in family child care settings. Providers can easily set goals to improve business practices for their family child care business. This instrument provides a picture of the quality of business practices that support the program.

   • Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care (BAS) cecl.nl.edu/evaluation/bas.htm
3. Model Work Standards
Model Work Standards are designed to be used as an effective tool for assessing what currently exists and developing a plan of action for making improvements one step at a time. Model Work Standards provide an opportunity for child care programs to engage in an in-depth examination of their child care work environment - both the interpersonal climate of the workplace, as well as policies and practices that define good working conditions. The Model Work Standards were developed by the Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW) for center-based teaching staff and family child care providers and can be used as a stand-alone tool for programs to achieve their goals.  

- Model Work Standards -
cw.org/email/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=17&Itemid=76

**NOTE:**
Wisconsin providers may preview all of these tools for free by borrowing them on two-week loan from the Child Care Information Center.
Email CCIC at ccic@dpi.wi.gov or phone them toll-free at 1-800-362-7353.

### Health and Well-being

Early childhood and school-age providers play a crucial role in promoting early learning about the health, safety and nutrition of every child in their care as well as ensuring the development of young children’s self-esteem, social competence, and pro-social behaviors. When children have caregivers who model healthy choices and behaviors, and teach children to take an active role in caring for their bodies, making appropriate food choices, and participating in physical activity, they naturally acquire a sense of pride and accomplishment in their independence and develop a sound foundation for healthy growth in all other areas of development.

YoungStar will measure health and well-being by evaluating nutrition, health, safety, and physical activity levels in addition to educational training levels in the topics of social and emotional foundations, inclusion practices, and child abuse and neglect awareness.

### Nutritional Practices

YoungStar promotes sound nutritional practices in early childhood, giving recognition to the importance of establishing healthy eating patterns early.

YoungStar will measure nutritional practices by verifying:

a) Program participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) [dpi.wi.gov/fns/cacfp1.html](http://dpi.wi.gov/fns/cacfp1.html) (confirmed by DPI) including mandatory participation in CACFP-related training opportunities, or program can demonstrate that it provides well-balanced meals and snacks daily by providing three months of menus.

b) The program must have policies and procedures to address children’s allergies and accommodate dietary restrictions. This requirement applies even if there are no children in care with allergies or dietary restrictions.

---

**Physical Activity**
YoungStar asserts that physical activity is a daily routine necessary to promote wellness and prevent obesity in children. To earn the point in this category, a program must provide at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day for children 2 and older. Documented and verifiable daily schedule, and lesson plans must exist demonstrating a familiar pattern of regular physical activity to promote physical well-being. The program must also provide physical activities for children up to 24 months of age, allowing opportunity for infants to explore and one year olds to have active free play.

**WI Pyramid Model/Social and Emotional Foundations/Inclusion Training**
YoungStar maintains that strong social and emotional foundations in early childhood are determinant in a child’s future success and readiness for school. Programs that provide inclusive child care settings, offer trained social emotional support, and that support children’s optimal development can receive optional points in this category when Lead Teachers have training verified through their Registry Career Level.

YoungStar will verify a program lead teaching staff has one or more of the following:

a) Three credits of inclusion and/or social-emotional training
b) Completion of the Wisconsin Pyramid Model Training
c) Registry-verified equivalency of 15 or more hours of YoungStar-approved non-credit training on inclusive practices, serving children with disabilities, and children with special health needs.
d) Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) Training
e) Guiding Children’s Behavior Training
f) Tribes TLC Training

**Child Abuse and Neglect Awareness**
Child care providers have a critical role in ensuring that children are safe in their child care setting. Providers can be an important resource for families in detecting early signs of stress, neglect and abuse.

YoungStar verification of accepted training includes documentation of training in one or more of the following:

a) *Strengthening Families Protective Factors Training* -
   [wctf.state.wi.us/home/StrengtheningFamilies.htm](http://wctf.state.wi.us/home/StrengtheningFamilies.htm)
b) *Suspected Child Abuse & Neglect Mandatory Reporter Training (SCAN-MRT)*
c) *Darkness to Light Training*
   [darkness2light.org](http://darkness2light.org)
d) *Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS)*
Accreditation and YoungStar

Definition
Accreditation is a voluntary process designed to improve the quality of early and school-age care programs. Accreditation systems require programs to meet standards that exceed minimum state regulatory requirements. Achieving accreditation involves extensive self-study and validation by professionals outside the program to verify that quality standards are met. 10

YoungStar-recognized Accrediting Agencies
As of March 1, 2013, YoungStar accepts the following accreditations as equivalent to a 5 Star rating:
• National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
• Early Learning Leaders
• City of Madison Group and School-Age Accreditation

YoungStar accepts the following accreditations as equivalent to a 4 Star rating:1
• Council on Accreditation (COA)
• National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)
• Satellite Family Child Care Accreditation (in the City of Madison)

YoungStar accepts the following accreditations as equivalent to a 4 Star or a 5 Star rating:2
• National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)

When a program becomes accredited or extends/renews their accreditation, it is the responsibility of the program to send their certificate of accreditation/re-accreditation to the Department of Children and Families via:

Fax: 608-224-6178 or Email: youngstar@wisconsin.gov
YoungStar cannot recognize a program as accredited until the certificate of accreditation/re-accreditation is received.

The valid dates of the accreditation will be entered into the YoungStar system and the YoungStar rating and Wisconsin Shares payments will reflect the accredited status during that time period.

Contact Information for the Accrediting Bodies
• National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC): www.naeyc.org/accreditation
• City of Madison Group and School-Age Accreditation: www.cityofmadison.com/commserv/CommunityCenters.html
• Council on Accreditation (COA): www.coastandards.org/p_guidelines.php
• National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC): nafcc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=70&Itemid=89
• Satellite Family Child Care Accreditation (in the City of Madison): www.satellitefcc.com/joining.html
• National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA): www.necpa.net/index.php

# Lapses in Accreditation and YoungStar

## Voluntary lapse

If a program is accredited and the accreditation lapses or expires, upon notification from the provider or the accrediting body that the accreditation has lapsed or expired, the provider's rating will drop to a 2 Star rating effective the date the accreditation expires. If the program accepts Wisconsin Shares payments, the drop in star rating will negatively affect the program's reimbursement rate.

In anticipation of an accreditation expiring, a program may complete a YoungStar Change Form and request a technical or formal rating to replace a rating based upon accreditation. Programs are eligible for Technical Assistance if they have not used their annual allotment of Technical Assistance already that rating year. The program will be placed into the normal queue for YoungStar services with other programs who are applying for YoungStar for the first time and renewing programs.³

YoungStar services for these programs have the same timeframe as new applicants:

- **Technical Assistance = 20 weeks**
- **Formal Rating with Technical Assistance = within 4 weeks of the conclusion of Technical Assistance**
- **Formal Rating without Technical Assistance = 8 weeks**

It is in the best interest of the program to allow plenty of time for a replacement rating to be given in order to avoid the negative effect on Wisconsin Shares payments. If a program knows they will be allowing their accreditation to lapse or expire, we recommend programs submit a YoungStar Change Form at least six months in advance of the accreditation expiring if possible. If the accreditation lapses before a program has been given a Technical or Formal rating, the program’s rating will move to a 2 Star until the Technical or Formal rating is performed.

## Involuntary lapse

If a program is accredited and the accreditation is revoked by the accrediting body for any reason, upon notification from the program or the accrediting body that the accreditation has been revoked, the program’s rating will drop to a 2 Star rating effective the date the accreditation was revoked. If tiered-reimbursement payments for Wisconsin Shares are in place at the time of the rating change, the drop in star rating will negatively affect the program’s reimbursement rate.

A program may complete a YoungStar Change Form and request a technical or formal rating at any time to replace a rating based upon accreditation. Programs are eligible for Technical Assistance if they have not used their annual allotment of Technical Assistance already that rating year. The program will be placed into the normal queue for YoungStar services with other programs that are applying for YoungStar for the first time and renewing programs.⁴ Timeframes for YoungStar services for these programs are the same as for new applicants (see timeframes above).

³ If a program is accredited by COA, NAFCC or Satellite AND the program meets the educational requirements of a 5 Star program in their respective YoungStar rating track, that program would be eligible for a 5 Star rating.

⁴ If a program is accredited by NECPA AND the program meets the educational requirements of a 4 Star program in their respective YoungStar rating track, that program would be eligible for a 4 Star rating. If a program is accredited by NECPA AND the program meets the educational requirements of a 5 Star program in their respective YoungStar rating track, that program would be eligible for a 5 Star rating.

¹ Programs will be placed at the end of the queue but before 1 Star rated providers.

² Providers will be placed at the end of the queue but before 1 Star rated providers.

NOTE: DCF will consider accepting additional accreditations in the future through a process of reviewing and comparing the accreditations’ demonstrated competencies to those of the NAEYC standards. Policies have been established that provide the opportunity for additional accreditation bodies to submit an alignment of their quality standards to the NAEYC standards for review by DCF. Contact DCF for materials to begin this alignment process.
YoungStar Application Process

Step 1 - Complete a YoungStar Contract
Providers who want to participate in YoungStar must agree to accept children enrolled in the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program. Providers must complete a YoungStar Contract for each individual child care site, even if they are owned or operated by the same person or organization. The YoungStar Contract is available on the For Providers webpage of the YoungStar website [def.wi.gov/youngstar/providers.htm].

YoungStar applicants decide which YoungStar Contract to complete by first determining which “track” their program belongs to.

- Track 1: Licensed and/or Certified Family Child Care Provider
- Track 2: Licensed Group Center
- Track 3: School-Age Program – a program that cares for school-age children before and/or after-school as well as school breaks and/or summer break

Step-by-step instructions for filling out the form are also available on the For Providers webpage. These instructions will help providers decide if they want to participate in the technical consultation process or receive an Automated Rating. If a provider would like assistance in choosing the type of rating to request, the Child Care Information Center (CCIC) or their local YoungStar office can help.

Once the provider has completed the YoungStar Contract, they will need to send the form to their local YoungStar office. To find a local YoungStar office, go to the local YoungStar offices webpage [def.wi.gov/youngstar/map].

Step 2 - YoungStar Contracts are processed at local YoungStar offices
To ensure efficiency, all YoungStar services are expected to be delivered within a predetermined time frame. When a local YoungStar office receives a completed YoungStar Contract, the date is entered into the YoungStar case management system and the YoungStar timeline begins for that program. Local YoungStar office staff will contact the provider to let the provider know that the form has been received within two business days of receipt of the form.

Step 3 - YoungStar Ratings Assigned

YoungStar Automated Rating
A provider that is in regulatory compliance or managed by a public school board and does not want to participate in training or technical consultation services can receive an Automated Rating. Providers that choose this option cannot be rated above a 2 Star, and will not be eligible to receive a micro-grant.

If a provider requests an Automated Rating, upon receipt of the completed YoungStar Contract, the local YoungStar office will enter the required information into YoungStar case management and a 2 Star automated rating is generated. Providers electing to receive an Automated Rating are not required to be on The Registry.

YoungStar ratings without technical consultation
Technical Rating without technical consultation
If the provider is in regulatory compliance, and has chosen a Technical Rating but is not interested in technical consultation services, the rating will be done using the information supplied by the provider, and that data will be entered into YoungStar case management. A rating will be generated based upon the documentation provided by the
local YoungStar office and the Registry-verified education and training level. YoungStar case management will post the rating on the YoungStar public search. This choice allows the provider a star rating up to a 3 Star.

**Formal Rating with Observation without technical consultation**

If the provider is in regulatory compliance or managed by a public school board, and has requested a Formal Rating with Observation (FRO) without technical consultation, the local YoungStar office will send a staff member to the program to verify that the program meets all minimum requirements for becoming a 3 Star provider. The TC will also verify that the program meets the 4 Star minimum requirements in education. If the program qualifies, it will be given a Formal Rating with Observation Request Form. This form is designed to help providers ensure they are ready for the FRO.

The provider must complete the form and return it to their local YoungStar office. Once received, the local YoungStar office will send out a letter or email to the provider outlining specific items that will be reviewed during the FRO encouraging the provider to prepare/gather these items for verification.

The provider is then given the opportunity to identify any dates (up to five) on which a Formal Rating with Observation cannot take place. The local YoungStar office will assign a Formal Rating Observer to the program and within eight weeks of the request date, a Formal Rating Observer will make an unannounced visit to the program to do a Formal Rating with Observation using the Environment Rating Scales (ERS).

Formal Rating with Observation will be based upon interviews and selected classroom observations using the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute materials, developed by Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford and Debby Cryer, including but not limited to the following:

- **Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R)**
- **Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R)**
- **Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R)**
- **School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS)**

Results of the FRO are reviewed in a face-to-face meeting with the child care provider within two weeks of the conclusion of the onsite observation by the Formal Rating Observer. Information will be shared with the Director (or family child care provider) and whenever possible with the lead teaching staff from all rooms observed.

In general, the maximum time frame from the date of the Formal Rating with Observation to the date of sharing the score findings with a child care program is two weeks. Up to four weeks are allowed for the largest programs to accommodate the increased number of classrooms needing to be observed.

Once the Formal Rating Observer reviews the results of the FRO with the provider, DCF will post the rating on the YoungStar public search website. Providers choosing this option can earn a 3, 4, or 5 Star rating.

The local YoungStar office is responsible for entering into case management all Environment Rating Scale (ERS) scores and information, copies of the score sheets, ERS report, and all other verified point information within one week of the conclusion of the Formal Rating with Observation.
**YoungStar ratings with technical consultation**

**Technical Rating with technical consultation**

If a provider is in regulatory compliance and has requested a Technical Rating with technical consultation, staff from the local YoungStar office will contact the provider within two business days of receipt of the YoungStar contract to let the provider know that their form has been received. Local YoungStar office staff will then enter the form completion dates into YoungStar case management in order to establish a timeline and assign a Technical Consultant to the child care program.

*Technical consultation services are not available to providers with no children enrolled.*

---

**Technical Consultation for 1 Star rated providers**

If a provider is out of regulatory compliance, their request for technical consultation or other YoungStar services is added to a DCF waiting list. These providers are not eligible for YoungStar services until support has been provided to all other programs that requested services and are in regulatory compliance.

YoungStar concentrates on providing services to providers rated at the 2 Star level, or higher, who express an interest in improving the quality of their program. Funds and efforts are first made available to providers who meet regulatory compliance standards. If all providers who are operating within regulatory compliance have been served, DCF will then allow the 1 Star providers to be served.

Once a Technical Consultant has been assigned to a program, they will verify education and training through The Registry, and the program will be given the choice to have a Technical Rating done before or after technical consultation services are delivered.

If a provider chooses to have the Technical Rating before technical consultation, a Technical Consultant will arrange to visit the program to complete a rating within eight weeks of receiving the completed YoungStar Contract. The Technical Consultant is responsible for sharing the results of the Technical Rating with the Director (or family provider) within one week of the conclusion of the Technical Rating. Once findings have been shared, DCF will post the rating on the YoungStar public child care search website.

If a provider chooses to have the Technical Rating after technical consultation services have been administered, the Technical Consultant assigned to the program will coordinate with the child care program to establish on-site technical consultation appointments to begin within four weeks of receiving the YoungStar Contract. *Technical consultation will be available throughout a 20 week window beginning from the date the completed YoungStar Contract was entered into case management.* The Technical Rating may take an additional 4 weeks. The total time allotted for a Technical Rating with technical consultation should not exceed 24 weeks.

Following the administration of the requested technical consultation, the Technical Consultant will verify information and/or observe the environment and subsequently enter the data gathered into the YoungStar case management system. The Technical Consultant will review the Technical Rating with the provider, and DCF will post the Technical Rating on the YoungStar public child care search website. A Technical Rating of 2 or 3 Stars will be generated for the provider.
Formal Rating with Observation with technical consultation

If a provider is in regulatory compliance or managed by a public school board and qualifies for a Formal Rating with Observation, a Technical Consultant from the local YoungStar office will provide technical consultation services to the program and then verify that the program meets all minimum requirements for being a 3 Star provider. The TC will also verify that the program meets the 4 Star requirements in education.

The TC will then give the provider a Formal Rating with Observation Request. This form is designed to assist providers in preparing for the Formal Rating with Observation. The provider needs to complete the form and send it back to their local YoungStar office before the last TC visit. Next, the program is given the opportunity to identify any dates (up to five) on which a Formal Rating with Observation cannot take place. With this information, local YoungStar offices can establish a timeline and assign a Formal Rating Observer to this program that meets the time-frame requirement.

Providers will be contacted within two days of receipt of the Formal Rating with Observation Request by staff in the Formal Rating with Observation area to set up the four week time frame for delivery of the FRO. Within the four-week time frame, a Formal Rating Observer will make an unannounced visit to the program to do a Formal Rating with Observation.

Findings from the Formal Rating with Observation must be shared in a face-to-face meeting with the child care provider within two weeks of the conclusion of the onsite observation by the Formal Rating Observer. Information should be shared with the Program Director and whenever possible with the lead teaching staff from rooms observed or with the family child care provider.

In general, the maximum time frame from the date of the Formal Rating with Observation to the date of sharing the score findings with a child care program is two weeks. Up to four weeks are allowed for the largest programs to accommodate the increased number of classrooms needing to be observed.

Once the Formal Rating Observer reviews the Formal Rating with the provider, DCF will post the rating on the YoungStar public child care search website. Providers choosing this option can earn 3, 4, or 5 Stars.

The local YoungStar office is responsible for entering into case management all ERS scores and information, copies of the score sheets, the ERS report, and all other verified point information within one week of the completed Formal Rating with Observation. The total time allotted for a Formal Rating with technical consultation should not exceed 28 weeks.

YoungStar Technical Consultation process details

YoungStar technical consultation is a process in which a YoungStar Technical Consultant meets with a provider at their site to support development or refinement of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The Technical Consultant also provides support with implementation of the plan. While the movement forward in any QIP plan is ultimately the choice of a program, YoungStar Technical Consultants can bring many strategies and resources to assist with achieving program goals.

YoungStar services are available 6 AM to 6 PM. If a program only has children enrolled after 6 PM and before 6 AM, they would be eligible for an Automated Rating or Technical Rating with consultation. If the program requests consultation, the consultation and
rating would be delivered between the hours of 6 AM and 6 PM and the program would need to make appropriate staff available to receive the consultation during those hours.

The YoungStar quality indicator around physical activity (D.1.2) requires observation of children. Thus, if a Rater never observes children present, the program cannot earn that point. Programs with children only enrolled after 6 PM or before 6 AM are not eligible for a Formal Rating because the Environment Rating Scale, which is used for a Formal Rating, is not meant to be used for night time care.

During on-site technical consultation visits, a YoungStar Technical Consultant and the Program Director/provider will identify opportunities for growth. The technical consulting activities will be based on the program’s Self-Assessment, Quality Improvement Plan, ideas, and visions for enhancing the quality of the program.

The Technical Consultant will then work with the provider to make a plan for using the time they have together and follow through on these plans over the course of 20 weeks. During this time, the provider and Technical Consultant will decide what the provider’s micro-grant will be used for based on the goals identified in the Quality Improvement Plan. The Technical Consultant will also bring skills, knowledge of early care and education, experience supporting change, and resources based on research and best practice. Together the program and Technical Consultant will monitor progress toward the quality improvement goals.

Failure to respond to YoungStar communications, and cancellation of or habitual absenteeism from scheduled YoungStar appointments prevents quality improvements, assessment, and ratings from being completed in a timely manner. Poor follow-through on application or re-application timelines and agreed upon quality improvement efforts has the same affect.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) and YoungStar Staff want to maintain a consistent, ethical way to set professional boundaries and expectations related to following expectations and following through with scheduled visits. These positive behaviors allow consulting and assessment time to be spent on consultation and coaching rather than follow-up and re-scheduling. The more time spent on-site focused on quality improvement efforts, the greater the program’s success is in their quality improvement efforts.

To accomplish this, every participant in YoungStar who would like any form of onsite technical assistance (technical assistance, Technical Rating or Formal Rating with Observation) is required to complete a YoungStar Contract and sign a Technical Consultation Participation Agreement before beginning on-site services. The Technical Consultation Participation Agreement, (outlined in Appendix A of this document), explains the rules around positive participation in YoungStar services.

After the provider has received the desired technical consultation, the program will then be ready for a Technical Rating or a Formal Rating with Observation. Following the rating, the Rater/Observer will discuss the results with the provider to present 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 YoungStar rating, and provide clear direction for ongoing Quality Improvement Planning.
YoungStar resources for Technical Consultation
Wisconsin child care providers and programs requesting technical consultation services can prepare for their first TC visit by:

1. Completing the activities found on the YoungStar Child Care Provider Tip Sheet - dcf.wi.gov/youngstar/pdf/provider_tip_sheet.pdf
2. Accessing and reviewing materials designed to help providers prepare for YoungStar, such as the optional Quality Improvement Plan and Self-Assessment, both of which can also be found on the YoungStar website at the Tips and Tools for Providers page - dcf.wi.gov/youngstar/provider_tips.htm

Step 4 - Maintenance and/or changes to a star rating
When a provider receives their initial YoungStar rating, this date establishes their YoungStar Anniversary date. Providers will subsequently receive an automated YoungStar Renewal from DCF a minimum of 120 days prior to their anniversary date.

Basic maintenance of a rating (no significant changes to program details):
- Once per year, the provider will be responsible for submitting a YoungStar Contract Renewal Form.

Circumstances in which a new rating is required before annual observation:
- Program is determined to be out of regulatory compliance
- Program has its Accreditation revoked
- Licensee or Owner changes
- Program is moved to a different location (see below)

Provider Location Change
Regulatory Compliance and Location Changes
For the purposes of State of Wisconsin regulation requirements, a program may not move a center to a new location or change ownership of the center without first initiating contact with DCF. Specific language detailing the process of location changes within regulatory compliance can be found here:

Licensed Group Program
Amending a License DCF 251.11(5)
dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/licensed/CommManuals/GCC/dcf_p_pfs4024.pdf

Licensed Family Program
Amending a License DCF 250.11(6)
dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/licensed/CommManuals/FCC/dcf_p_pfs4069.pdf

Certified Program
Reporting Changes DCF 202.08 (1) (C) 8
dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/certification/pdf/commentarymanual.pdf

YoungStar rating process and location changes
A YoungStar rating is not transferable from one location to another. The program must apply for separate YoungStar services each time they receive a new license or certification.

The program receiving Wisconsin Shares subsidies must participate in YoungStar by receiving, at a minimum, an automated rating. This would rate the program at a 2 Star level. Providers interested in a higher star rating can request a Technical Rating for consideration to receive up to a 3 Star rating.
In order to earn a 4 or 5 Star rating, providers must have a Formal Rating with Observation (FRO) performed. Providers cannot receive a FRO until they have been in business at their current location for one year.

If a program was accredited prior to the move to a new location, and if the accreditation is transferred to the new site, as verified by the approved accrediting body, the program can receive a 4 or 5 Star rating once the new YoungStar Contract is submitted, and verification of the accreditation to DCF is complete.

**YoungStar technical consultation services and location changes**

If a program is planning on changing locations in the near future, technical consultation should be delayed until the provider is at the new site. However, the Technical Consultant, in collaboration with the program Director or provider, may determine that the quality improvement planning may be beneficial regardless of the location of the site (e.g. if the Quality Improvement Plan is related to staff professional development.)

If the Quality Improvement Plan is instead related to a specific environment issue, such as a specific learning center, this type of technical consultation should be postponed until the program moves to the new location. If the move is planned but is not expected for a year or more, the technical consultation and rating should occur at the current site.

**Accredited providers and location changes**

A YoungStar star rating is not necessarily transferable from one location to another. Providers who have received a 4 Star or 5 Star rating in relation to a Certificate of Accreditation will have three options:

1. If the accrediting body allows the accreditation to move with the provider, YoungStar will honor the accreditation and corresponding star rating (4 or 5 Stars). The provider is responsible for submitting verification from the accrediting body that includes program name, new address location, and accreditation begin and end dates.

2. If accreditation does not transfer with the program, the provider can request a Technical Rating for consideration to receive up to a 3 Star rating. In order to receive the Formal Rating with Observation necessary to reach a 4 Star or 5 Star level, a program must be in existence at their current location for at least one year.

3. Centers can receive recognition of accreditation through the National Accreditation Commission (NAC) after 6 months. YoungStar does not impact NAC accreditation criteria, therefore if a program becomes NAC accredited prior to becoming eligible for a YoungStar Formal Rating with Observation, the NAC accreditation would be accepted, and the program would be given a 5 Star rating.

**Rating changes for providers whose education level has changed enough to affect their star level:**

Providers are responsible for immediately updating their Program Profile to reflect any new education or training levels of their staff and also anytime they acquire new staff members or when staff members leave. Every Thursday night, a data-transfer will automatically occur in YoungStar case management and, if the education/training details of a provider has changed enough to move the provider up or down a star level, the provider’s new rating will show up as "pending" in case management. The local YoungStar office will follow up with the provider and let the provider know that their rating is changing.
Rating Changes Timeline:
The TC is responsible for making contact with the provider within two weeks of the date the rating appears as pending. If the provider does not respond to the contact, the TC will attempt to contact the provider three additional times (for a total of four attempts) over the next two weeks by varied means, documenting each attempt in the case notes.

The fourth attempt to contact is a registered letter to the provider explaining the educational qualifications of the program have decreased enough to affect the program’s star rating. The program’s rating will be automatically changed in one week. The provider can contact the local YoungStar office if they want to discuss this or believe there has been an error. If the provider does not respond, DCF and the YoungStar Consortium hold no responsibility for loss of Wisconsin Shares payments due to a decrease in YoungStar rating.

Providers requesting a change to the type of rating they receive.
Providers who have chosen one type of rating (Automated, Technical or Formal) and would like to change the type of rating they receive (from Automated to Technical, Technical to Automated, Formal to Automated or Formal to Technical) must fill out a YoungStar Change Request.

All providers are entitled to one rating per year. If a provider’s training or education increases between annual YoungStar ratings, a change to the provider’s YoungStar rating may be made as a courtesy to providers. It is not a right of the provider to have his or her YoungStar rating changed outside of the annual rating, even if education or training levels change.

Wisconsin Shares payments are tied to reimbursement beginning the day the rating is published on the public website. Ratings are published once per week on Fridays.

If a provider’s educational qualifications increase to a level that now qualifies them for a Formal Rating with Observation but it is not time for their annual rating, the provider may submit a Formal Rating Request to their local YoungStar office. These requests are placed at the end of the queue of providers who are waiting for Formal Ratings and the provider would only be re-rated if staffing allows for this. They are not entitled to this additional rating, providers are only granted one assured rating per year.

Example 1
Sue is a family child care provider in Dane County and she has 9 credits and is working toward an Infant/Toddler Credential but is not there yet. She worked with Gina from 4-C in Madison to do a self-assessment with a QIP; she has a budget and is on CACFP for 4 points in YS. She also earned 4 other optional points. She receives her 2 Star rating in June with a total of 11 points.

In December, she finishes her Infant/Toddler Credential and updates her Program Profile in The Registry. Case management pulls information from The Registry on the Thursday after Sue’s information is verified by The Registry. The case management system sees Sue has the Infant/Toddler Credential. So, she has met the minimum education level for 3 Star plus she has earned 12 total points in YS. Case management generates a new "pending" rating for Sue.

The following Monday, Kirsten at 4-C Madison reviews and sees that Sue has a pending rating and that Gina was Sue’s original TC. Kirsten assigns the case to Gina, who activates the new rating and then contacts Sue to explain that her rating is changing in YoungStar and that her Wisconsin Shares will now be at the 3 Star rate.
Example 2
Tina is a group child care center Director with four Lead Teachers. They were assigned a 2 Star rating in August 2012 because they met all the education and training qualifications to be a 3 Star, they participate in CACFP and they have a budget but they only earned 9 total points—not enough to move to the 3 Star level. Then, in December 2011, they integrate 60 minutes of physical activity and all classrooms aligned their curriculum and programming with the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards. This would earn them the two additional points they needed to become a 3 Star provider. However, the center’s rating WILL NOT change until their next annual rating in August 2013 because the Technical Consultant will only come back out to the program to verify these points on an annual basis. At the August 2013 annual rating, the Technical Consultant will verify the new points and the center would likely move to a 3 Star rating.

Rating changes for providers who attain Accreditation
If a provider completes the Accreditation process, but they are not yet due for an annual rating, the provider may submit the Certificate of Accreditation to DCF directly, and their YoungStar rating will be updated accordingly. The provider is also responsible for submitting their accreditation certificate each time the accreditation is renewed. The provider can email or fax their Accreditation Certification to:

Fax: 608-224-6178
Email: youngstar@wisconsin.gov

Rating changes for suspended and/or revoked providers
If a provider has been suspended by Wisconsin Shares, or has had their regulatory agency revoke their license or certification, once this information has been made available to DCF YoungStar staff, the child care program will immediately be downgraded to 1 Star. If the provider subsequently becomes reinstated, the provider will be changed to 2 Star. The rating will be confirmed by YoungStar Consortium staff, who will then contact the provider and explain next steps available for their program.

YoungStar Providers’ Leave-of-Absence Process

GROUP/SCHOOL-AGE PROVIDER

Director /Site Supervisor Absence
If a center wants to have a Technical or Formal rating completed and their Director/Site Supervisor will be out on leave (maternity, extended sick leave, FMLA, etc.) during the window of time normally used for rating, the center should try to have their rating completed before or after the Director/Site Supervisor is out. If this is not possible, the center will be given the rating based upon the substitute Director/Site Supervisor’s qualifications. The center must assign this person in their Registry profile.

Exception: If the rating cannot be performed before the Director/Site Supervisor goes on leave that lasts 20 weeks or fewer AND it is the first time a program will be rated, the program’s rating can remain in a pending status until the Director/Site Supervisor returns from leave and a rating can be established. If the leave extends beyond 20 weeks, the program will need to enter the acting director's education into their Registry Program Profile and the program will be rated on the acting director's education. This option should only be used on RARE occasions.
**Lead Teacher/Group Leader**
If a center wants to have any type of rating completed and one of their Lead Teachers/Group Leaders will be out on leave (maternity, extended sick leave, FMLA, etc.) during the window of time normally used for observation, the center should try to have their rating completed before or after the teacher is out. If this is not possible, the center will be given the rating based upon the substitute teacher's qualifications. The center must have this person on their Registry profile. We cannot make an exception to allow the center to put off its rating outside the YoungStar time frames because some centers always have someone on leave.

It is allowable for the Director/Site Supervisor to fill in for the Lead Teacher/Group Leader during the maternity or extended leave so long as the leave does not extend beyond 12 weeks. The program does not need to change their Registry Program Profile to list the Director/Site Supervisor as the Lead Teacher/Group Leader in this case. If the leave extends beyond 12 weeks, the Lead Teacher/Group Leader who is on leave must be removed from the Program Profile. If a Formal Rating with Observation is performed during the time the Director/Site Supervisor is substituting for the Lead Teacher/Group Leader who is on maternity or extended leave, and the classroom in question is randomly selected as a classroom to observe for the rating, the classroom will be observed with the Director/Site Supervisor acting in the substitute role as the Lead Teacher.

**FAMILY PROVIDER**

**Maternity Leave Absence**
If a family provider is on maternity leave (lasting 12 weeks or fewer) during the time that they would receive a rating and their program will stay open with a substitute provider while the provider is on maternity leave, the provider should make arrangements to have the rating performed before going on maternity leave. No technical consultation should occur while the family provider is on maternity leave. Technical consultation may resume when the provider returns from maternity leave.

The total window of time that technical consultation will be provided is 20 weeks. It is up to the discretion of the Technical Consultant to work with the provider to decide if this time is to be divided (some before maternity leave and some after maternity leave) or not. At the conclusion of the technical consultation, if the provider would like a Formal Rating with Observation (FRO), this will be completed within 4 weeks.

If the rating cannot be performed before the provider goes on maternity leave and it is the first time a provider will be rated, the provider’s rating can remain in a pending status until the provider returns from maternity leave and a rating can be established.

**Other Leave Absences**
If a family provider is on leave other than maternity leave (extended sick leave, FMLA, etc.) during the time that they would receive a rating and their program will stay open with a substitute provider while the provider is on leave, the provider should make arrangements to have the rating performed before going on leave. No technical consultation should occur while the family provider is on leave.

**Exception:** If the rating cannot be performed before the provider goes on leave that spans 20 weeks or fewer AND it is the first time a provider will be rated, the provider’s rating can remain in a pending status until the provider returns from leave and a rating can be established. If the leave extends beyond 20 weeks, the provider will need to enter the substitute provider’s education into their Registry Program Profile and the program will be rated on the substitute provider’s education. This option should only be used on RARE occasions.

---

YoungStar Policy
Revised 09/2013
Star rating Appeals Process

Rationale
YoungStar assessment procedures are designed to ensure that rating scores incorporate all required program criteria in an automated process. The process is designed to assure that multiple individuals are held responsible for the assignment of a score. Additionally, the YoungStar appeals process has incorporated measures to ensure that providers who disagree with their rating have a means by which to seek reconsideration of the assigned rating.

The full Review and Appeals Policy is available on the YoungStar website at:

Design
DCF has conferred with other states that have successfully incorporated an appeals process into their Quality Rating and Improvement Systems. Drawing from the experiences and practices of these states, the YoungStar review process requires that:

- The local YoungStar office discuss the rating with the provider before it is published on the YoungStar Public Search website
- A provider/program clearly document in writing their objections to any rating
- A set timeline be established for progressive review of each case

In addition, to ensure that the system minimizes the number of reconsiderations, YoungStar has established:

- Clear guidelines for which program quality criteria are rated
- Objective criteria that are tied to research (e.g., education and training verified by The Registry, valid and reliable observers conduct observations on learning environment using nationally accepted and research-based Environment Rating Scales)
- Transparent and consistent methods for evaluating programs, including consistent rater-reliability
- Clear documentation and justification of the rationale for a program’s rating

Steps in the YoungStar Appeals Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Rating review request</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The initial request to review a technical rating must be submitted to the local YoungStar office that completed the technical rating process or the formal rating process with the provider/program. The lead Technical Consultant or YoungStar supervisor at that local YoungStar office reviews the rating and makes a determination if the initial rating was accurate. The initial request to review a formal rating must be submitted to the WECA Madison office. The YoungStar Director at the WECA office reviews the rating and makes a determination if the initial rating was accurate. If the lead Technical Consultant, YoungStar Director or YoungStar supervisor believes the rating was accurate, he or she contacts the provider to explain the rating. If the lead Technical Consultant, YoungStar Director or YoungStar supervisor believes the rating was inaccurate, he or she can change the rating or forward the request to review to the Executive Director of the local YoungStar office for review.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If a provider/program disagrees with the new rating or disagrees with the decision of the lead Technical Consultant or YoungStar supervisor to maintain the initial rating, the process moves to Step 2.

*The request to review must be submitted within 30 calendar days from the date that the provider/program signed off that their rating was reviewed with them. The initial rating review must be completed within 30 days of the date that the request for review.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 Immediate supervisor at regional office reviews rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The request to review a rating then must be submitted to the Executive Director of the local YoungStar office that completed the technical rating process or to the Executive Director at the WECA Madison office if a formal rating was performed.

The Executive Director of the local YoungStar office or the Madison WECA office reviews documentation from provider/program and the rating and makes a determination if a new rating is warranted. If the Executive Director of the local YoungStar office or the Madison WECA office believes a new rating is warranted, he or she can assign a different Technical Consultant to do the new rating.

That rating that is provided must be the same type of rating that was originally completed. For example, a provider that is appealing a technical rating would complete a second technical rating and could not request a formal rating observation.

If the second rating results in an amended rating, and the Executive Director has agreed to the amended rating, the Executive Director would meet with the provider/program to explain.

If the second rating is found to be the same as the first rating, the Executive Director meets with the provider/program to explain why the rating is not adjusted.

If the second rating is appealed by the provider/program, additional documentation is requested to identify what quality standard was inappropriately assessed and why.

If a provider/program disagrees with the new rating or disagrees with the decision of the Executive Director of the local YoungStar office or the WECA Madison office, the process moves to Step 3.

The second step of the review should be completed within 60 calendar days from the date of the second request for review.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>YoungStar Consortium Staff reviews rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The request to review a rating then must be submitted to the YoungStar Consortium staff, who review the documentation and rating and either approves one of the ratings or requests additional information from the supervisor or the provider/program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The YoungStar Consortium staff will meet with the provider/program to show clear documentation submitted by the provider/program. If, at this stage, the YoungStar Consortium staff questions the results or the process as a result of the documentation submitted by the provider/program, he/she may assign a third rater to perform a new rating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After deliberating, the YoungStar Project Manager will meet with the provider/program to show clear documentation as to whether a new rating was assigned and what specific points led to that decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If the provider/program disagrees with the new rating or disagrees with the decision of the YoungStar Consortium, the process moves to Step 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The third step of the review should be completed within 30 calendar days from the date of the third request for review.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>DCF Bureau of Quality Improvement Director reviews rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The request to review a rating then must be submitted to the Department of Children and Families Bureau of Quality Improvement Director. He or she will review all relevant information and if, in the review of the outcome of final appeals process or decision, the Bureau Director identifies misinterpretations of DCF policy or YoungStar point criteria, he/she can request additional information from the provider/program or the local YoungStar office and can intervene in the rating decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Bureau Director reserves the right to intervene at any time during the appeals process if he or she identifies misinterpretations of DCF policy or YoungStar point criteria.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Withdrawal from YoungStar

Voluntary YoungStar Participant
If a provider no longer wishes to participate in YoungStar, they can voluntarily be removed only if they have not received a Wisconsin Shares Subsidy payment within 6 months of their withdrawal request. This request must be made to their local YoungStar office. Local YoungStar office staff will then inform DCF, who will confirm their Wisconsin Shares payment information. DCF will make the necessary changes, if provider qualifies to withdraw. Withdrawn providers will remain on the Child Search website as not participating.

Wisconsin Shares Recipient Withdrawal
If a YoungStar-rated provider has accepted a Wisconsin Shares payment at any time in the 6 months prior to the date of their withdrawal request, the local YoungStar office will deny the request until a full 6 months has passed since the last WI Shares payment.

If a YoungStar-participating provider has received Wisconsin Shares within the six month time frame and is in pending status at the time of their decision to withdraw participation (for example while receiving technical consultation services or while waiting for their rating), the provider will have two options. They can either continue with their Technical Rating, or change to an Automated Rating. If the provider signed an original 2 year Wisconsin Shares Contract, and after the first year they do not submit a renewal application, they will be shown as “not participating” on the website.

Example
ABC Child Care Center signed a YoungStar Contract on January 1, 2012. They accepted WI Shares payments from January-March 2012. In July 2012, they contact their local YoungStar office and ask to be removed from YoungStar. Because they accepted WI Shares payments for a portion of the 6 months prior, they must continue to participate in YoungStar until 6 months after the final Wisconsin Shares issuance.

Administration of YoungStar: The Consortium

YoungStar Consortium Partners
YoungStar is overseen by DCF and administered by the YoungStar Consortium which consists of three supporting organizations:

- **Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA)** - [supportingfamiliestogether.org/Home_Page.html](http://supportingfamiliestogether.org/Home_Page.html)
- **Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA)** – [wecanaeyc.org](http://wecanaeyc.org)
- **Celebrate Children Foundation (CCF)** – [celebrate-children.org](http://celebrate-children.org)

The YoungStar Consortium was selected to administer YoungStar in six geographic regions, utilizing the strength of Local YoungStar Offices [def.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/map](http://def.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/map) across Wisconsin. The Consortium is responsible for administering the YoungStar application process, on-site technical consultation services, Formal Rating with Observation services, and micro-grant delivery as well as regional and community training delivery. They are also responsible for working with DCF and other key state, regional, and local partners to support child care programming. The Consortium leadership team and their designated personnel will meet, at a minimum, quarterly with DCF. Appropriate technical consultation staff and Formal
Rating Observation staff will participate as needed in monthly conference calls to ensure that YoungStar administration of technical consultation, Formal Rating Observation, micro-grants and public outreach is completed with a culturally sensitive, meaningful and comprehensive approach.

Administration of YoungStar will require technical consultation and Formal Rating Observations to be delivered in a valid, reliable and efficient manner that follows the protocols designed by DCF. Local YoungStar offices will be required to complete accurate quarterly reports that ensure valid and reliable services are provided by identifying services delivered and timelines for delivery of these services.

**YoungStar Consortium Responsibilities**

**YoungStar Administration**
The Consortium will provide adequate staff to help child care programs/providers navigate the YoungStar process. Management of this process entails:

- determination of completion of application materials
- review of Quality Improvement Plans
- administration of technical consultation support
- Formal Rating with Observation delivery
- tracking of timelines
- management of micro-grant resources
- status reporting on milestones and child care program progress within YoungStar
- professional development counseling
- training facilitation and delivery

**Delivery of technical consultation services**
Technical consultation is provided to child care programs (when requested) to work on collaborative Quality Improvement Plans and support defined steps for program enhancement. Technical consultation support is provided on-site to programs for an average of ten hours per program per year.

Local YoungStar offices are responsible for ensuring the following:

1. Technical Consultants are Registry acknowledged, Professional Development Approval System (PDAS) 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 improve child outcomes; and
3. Local YoungStar office sub-contracted vendors meet these requirements also when delivering technical consultation.

**Cultural Competence**
All training and technical consultation delivered by The Consortium must be delivered in a meaningful and *culturally competent* manner.

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 professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

- The word *culture* 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 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:

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

**Micro-Grant Administration**

Micro-grants are funds that have been made available to support program quality improvement. The Consortium will administer the tracking, eligibility determination and distribution of micro-grants to child care programs/providers. Any provider operating within regulatory compliance, caring for a child for at least 10 hours each week, is eligible for a micro-grant with technical assistance. Child care provider must not be related to the child, and any program that does not actively participate in technical consultation will lose their eligibility for a micro grant.

The Technical Consultant assigned to the provider will assist the program in the quality improvement process, including working in partnership with the child care provider/program Director in developing and approving a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), and purchase order. Micro-grant funds are to be used to assist the provider in achieving goals specifically detailed in the program’s QIP.

There are two ways that a program can access YoungStar micro-grants.

1. **If a program chooses to receive technical consultation:** A program is not eligible for a micro-grant if they have not actively participated in the TC process for at least 75% of the consultation hours (6.75 hours for group centers, and 6 hours for family child care and school-age programs.) The program must have a Self-Assessment (SA) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) completed. All micro-grant purchases must match a goal on the program’s QIP.

2. **If a program is accredited and chooses not to have technical consultation:** Program must submit a SA and QIP to their local YoungStar office to have it reviewed by a Technical Consultant. A Technical Consultant will then approve a micro-grant. All micro-grant purchases must match a goal on the program’s QIP.

A QIP and a Purchase Plan must be submitted simultaneously for the Micro-Grant Program to take action. When a provider is awarded a micro-grant, an account is opened on behalf of the program, and purchases will be made and charged against the program’s account until the program’s account balance reaches $0. Purchases can include materials, resources and/or professional development opportunities directly related to the program’s QIP. The purchase plans are submitted to micro-grant staff, who are held responsible for coordinating purchases on behalf of the program.
YoungStar micro-grants are provided in the following amounts:

- Licensed Group Child Care and School-Age Care Programs: $1,000
- Licensed Family Child Care Programs: $500
- Certified Family Child Care Programs: $250

By accepting the Micro-Grant, the program agrees to remain in operation, in regulatory compliance, and participating in YoungStar until their rating expires; also known as the program’s YoungStar Anniversary Date.

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families and YoungStar Micro-Grant Program uphold a requirement to recover any micro-grant expenditures if any of the following occur before the rating expiration date:

- Program closure
- Surrender, revocation, suspension, or denial of license or certification
- Program integrity violation (suspension from receiving Wisconsin Shares payments)
- Withdrawal from YoungStar participation
- Program receives a 1 Star rating for any period of time

When the Micro-Grant Program is notified that one of these situations has occurred, the child care program will be contacted by mail to outline the procedure to resolve the previously received Micro-Grant. The Micro-Grant Program will require the program to follow the instructions for repayment or, if allowed, repurposing of materials as defined by the terms of the individual Micro Grant contract. A payment plan may be established if the program cannot repay the grant immediately.

**Failure to choose one of these options within 60 days will result in the program being referred to a collection agency.**

Grants awarded in previous YoungStar years will not need to be repaid.

Programs that are within regulatory compliance and have no children enrolled can participate in YoungStar at an automated 2 Star level only, but will not be eligible to receive YoungStar technical consultation services or micro-grant funds.

Licensed family programs that are also certified for a portion of their regulated hours will receive a micro-grant at the licensed family child care program level, which is $500. These programs will be required to fill out application materials only once and will receive technical consultation services from the same Technical Consultant for both segments of their program.

### Examples of acceptable micro-grant purchases

- Continuing education for staff
- Credit-based education for staff – costs to support staff in pursuing credit-based education, either directly or through a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin Scholarship
- Staff or substitute time to support quality improvement work
- Child equipment and materials (books, toys, classroom furniture, etc)
- Adult equipment and materials (books, computer hardware/software, etc)
- Curriculum materials
- Accreditation materials or fees
- Services (additional technical consultation, contractors/builders for upgrades to physical environment, etc)
- Other - providers can work with their Technical Consultant to determine how micro-grant funds can best support a program’s Quality Improvement Plan

The YoungStar Micro-Grant Handbook is available at local YoungStar offices.
**Formal Rating with Observation Services**
Local YoungStar offices are responsible for ensuring that Formal Rating Observers are Registry-recognized Professional Development Approval System Technical Consultants, with content-based training on the administration of the Environment Rating Scales. Formal Rating Observers will be given access to research-informed materials and evidence-based practices that support strategies and processes to enhance program quality and improve child outcomes. Formal Rating Observers must continually demonstrate valid and reliable scoring when administering the Environment Rating Scales.

**Early Care and Education Partnerships**
The Consortium must develop and sustain partnerships with other training and technical consultation partners within each region, utilizing the strengths and skills of other partners including those organizations that have the role of promoting and supporting positive relationships across communities partners include:

- Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESA)
- 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 that support infant mental health needs.

Local YoungStar offices are expected to create partnerships with the business and philanthropic communities to leverage and access additional resources for early care and education providers and families. Efforts to reach out to local philanthropy are coordinated with statewide efforts of the Celebrate Children Foundation that works on behalf of The Consortium to identify additional resources. Partnerships must support collaborative training and technical consultation 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 local YoungStar offices are expected to provide DCF with evidence of partnerships/subcontracts that are reflective of the diversity of the geographic area served. Local YoungStar offices must document efforts to engage minority-owned businesses as contractors and methods by which trainings are made available in languages other than English in communities with large English-as-a-second-language (ESL) populations.
Public Outreach and Communication
A fundamental objective of YoungStar is to provide parents with concrete, easily-understood and easily-accessed information on how to choose quality child care. Key indicators of quality will become easily-recognized by parents and other community members. Questions and concerns related to YoungStar will be efficiently managed by a centralized informational source via phone and/or email in order to better serve the community, child care providers, and regional training and technical consultation partners. Local YoungStar offices will utilize DCF’s designated media and marketing outreach with YoungStar-branded materials.

Local YoungStar office Administration - timeline management
To ensure efficiency, all YoungStar services are expected to be delivered within a timeframe predetermined by DCF.

The local YoungStar offices are responsible for the management of the following timelines:

a) Forms process timeline  
b) Technical consultation timeline  
c) Formal Rating with Observation timeline  
d) Rating changes timeline  
e) Rating appeals process timeline  
f) Micro-grant administration timeline

Technical Consultant and/or Formal Rating Observer Communications: timeline management
The local YoungStar office is responsible for updating the YoungStar case management system with the communication details pertinent to each provider’s situation in a timely manner. This information should be documented and available in the local agency case file to be readily available to Technical Consultants for ongoing coordination and communication with individual child care programs on current quality improvement efforts.

Example Timeline Scenarios
NOTE: These are only examples of possible scenarios, these are not actual deadlines for providers to complete these actions.

Automated Rating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Date Completed (no later than)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed YoungStar Contract received and date-stamped</td>
<td>December 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(entered within 2 working days by local YoungStar office)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automated Rating published on the YoungStar search site the Friday</td>
<td>December 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after the date it is entered into automation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Technical Rating with technical consultation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Date completed (no later than)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed YoungStar Contract requesting a YoungStar Technical Rating</td>
<td>January 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with technical consultation received and date-stamped</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(entered within 2 working days by local YoungStar office)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider is contacted by local YoungStar office to acknowledge receipt</td>
<td>January 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of YoungStar Contract (within 2 days)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Consultant calls to schedule first visit</td>
<td>February 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
First visit occurs | February 14
---|---
Technical consultation end date | May 30
YoungStar Technical Rating published on search website (data-transfer occurs each Thursday night, reviewable Friday) | June 6

**Formal Rating with Observation with technical consultation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Date completed (no later than)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed YoungStar Contract received and date-stamped: YoungStar Formal Rating with Observation requested with technical consultation</td>
<td>December 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider is contacted by staff of local YoungStar office to acknowledge receipt of forms (within 2 days)</td>
<td>January 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC confirms program meets minimum requirements for a 3 Star and meets educational requirements for at least a 4 Star.</td>
<td>December 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical consultation occurs and Formal Rating with Observation request paperwork is completed at conclusion</td>
<td>April 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Rating Observation occurs</td>
<td>July 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Rating is entered into case management but not published</td>
<td>July 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Rating is shared with provider</td>
<td>July 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rating published in YoungStar – batch run occurs each Thursday – available Friday morning</td>
<td>August 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**YoungStar Conflict of Interest Procedures**

**Conduct Statement**

DCF is committed to maintaining the highest standards of conduct and ethical behavior and to promoting services that value respect, fairness and integrity. All YoungStar Consortium members shall act with honesty, integrity and openness in all their dealings as representatives of the organization.

**Definition**

A conflict of interest arises when an employee, contractor, or board member involved in making a decision or delivering a service is in the position to benefit, directly or indirectly, from his/her dealings with the organization or person conducting business with the YoungStar Consortium. Conflicting interests can be financial, personal relationships, status, or power.

**Examples**

Examples of conflict of interest include, but are not limited to, situations in which an employee, contractor, or board member:

- Provides technical consulting, Technical Rating or Formal Rating with Observation to a contractor or employee of the organization delivering the services;
- Provides technical consulting, Technical Rating or Formal Rating with Observation to a close personal friend or business associate of the staff, contractor, or organization delivering the services;
- Serves in a regulatory function as well as a quality improvement function for regulated child care programs;
• Negotiates or approves a contract, purchase, or lease on behalf of YoungStar and
  has a direct or indirect interest in, or receives personal benefit from, the entity or
  individual providing the goods or services;
• Negotiates or approves a contract, sale, or lease on behalf of YoungStar and has a
  direct or indirect interest in, or receives personal benefit from, the entity or
  individual receiving the goods or services;
• Employs or approves the employment of, or supervises a person who is an
  immediate family member of the Director or employee;
• Sells products or services in competition with YoungStar;
• Uses the YoungStar resources, facilities, other assets, employees, or other
  resources for personal gain;
• Receives a substantial gift from a vendor, if the Director or employee is
  responsible for initiating or approving purchases from that vendor.

Employees, contractors, and Directors are prohibited from knowingly disclosing
information about YoungStar operational issues to those who do not have a need to
know or whose interest may be adverse to YoungStar implementation, either inside or
outside of the YoungStar Consortium. Employees, contractors, and Directors may not in
any way use such information to the detriment of YoungStar.

**Evaluation of YoungStar**

To ensure the effectiveness of YoungStar, researchers from the University of Wisconsin–
Madison, as well as personnel from DCF, regularly perform evaluations on YoungStar to
measure the impacts of the program, focusing on indicators such as retention rates,
provider response and parent feedback, among other items.

**DCF Internal Review**

DCF utilizes an internal evaluation process aimed at comprehensive and constant
monitoring of YoungStar activities and development. The internal review process allows
DCF and The Consortium to review the effectiveness of the YoungStar QRIS Quality
Indicator Point Detail and review policies in the YoungStar program. This data also helps
DCF determine participation in YoungStar, the extent and benefits of technical
consultation, how and to what end micro-grants are used, and to measure additional
resources identified to support quality improvement efforts throughout Wisconsin.

YoungStar’s internal review process includes:

1. Regional activity data tracking determines access to and effectiveness of services
   in YoungStar. Case management system monthly reports are collected and
   reviewed monitoring YoungStar Regional activities such as:
   • The number of YoungStar applications received;
   • The number of hours and type of technical consultation provided, and the
     number of programs that benefit;
   • The number of Formal Ratings with Observation conducted;
   • The number and use of micro-grants by region;
2. DCF staff meets quarterly to review The Consortium’s work; and
3. DCF provides on-site quality assurance monitoring of the local YoungStar offices.
External State-Level Review
In addition to DCF monitoring YoungStar internally, an independent external evaluation will be provided on YoungStar by the UW-Madison, Institute for Research on Poverty. This evaluation measures individualized child outcomes in programs of different star-levels using a standardized and research-backed tool. The evaluation will also track improvement in star levels for programs and child care quality improvements.

Over time, it is anticipated that improving child care quality will lead to improvement of child outcomes in Wisconsin. The proposed study will determine the impact of higher quality settings on child outcomes. Specifically this program will look at how the star level of care affects child school readiness outcomes. It is anticipated that children who participate in higher star-level programs will perform better on school readiness assessments than children who participate in lower star-level programs.

External National-Level Alignment
Lastly, YoungStar has aligned itself with the benchmarks set forth by the Office of Child Care - [acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ](http://acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ) using a QRIS framework created by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) - [hhs.gov](http://hhs.gov). Within this framework, each individual state’s QRIS’s effectiveness can be determined recognizing that each state may be at a different stage of development. The five benchmarks used by the Office of Child Care QRIS include:

1. Program Standards
2. Supports For Programs and Practitioners
3. Financial Incentives
4. Quality Assurance and Monitoring
5. Consumer Education

YoungStar Websites

There are two YoungStar websites containing distinct information:

Public DCF Child Care Finder website
Allows parents to view provider/center rating information and regulatory details such as licensing violations: [childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov](http://childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov)

This website gives parents and providers the ability to:

- Search for a provider based on location
- Search for a provider based on type of care
- Search for a provider based on YoungStar quality of care
- Receive contact information regarding all regulated providers in Wisconsin
- View regulation information, including violations, about a specific provider
- View specific details about the YoungStar rating obtained by individual providers including star level and points earned.
Secure YoungStar Case Management website
Intended for use by state and regional office staff to enter/view provider information pertaining to YoungStar: defyoungstar.wisconsin.gov/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fDefault.aspx

The secure site has the following modules:

- **Provider Information**: This information comes from the licensing and certification databases automatically. The information cannot be modified in the case management system.

- **Forms and Documents**: Includes information on, as well as copies of, forms and documents that the provider has submitted to the regional office.

- **Regulatory Compliance**: This screen includes information indicating whether the provider is in or out of regulatory compliance. NOTE: This information can only be updated by certain licensing and certification staff and BQI staff.

- **Rating**: Includes information on the YoungStar rating. The rating details module will include information received from various sources:
  
  a) **Accreditation Information**: YoungStar system uses accreditation information kept up to date by DCF staff in coordination with accrediting agencies and providers.

  b) **Educational Information**: YoungStar system automatically receives verified educational information from The Registry.

  c) **Case Management**: Information from YoungStar staff that includes the ability to assign technical consultation, Technical Rating, and Formal Rating with Observation to providers manually. Case Management also includes the ability to record specific activities related to service requests.
References

jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/docs/SUTQ-Guidance.pdf

ers.fpg.unc.edu/about-environment-rating-scales

nccic.acf.hhs.gov/poptopics/qrs-impactqualitycc.html

nccic.acf.hhs.gov/resource/qris-definition-and-statewide-systems


rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG795.pdf

Child Care & Early Education Glossary, Child Care & Early Education Research Connections, accessed 21 November 2011.
researchconnections.org/childcare/childcare-glossary
YoungStar Participation Policy
Effective 5/1/2013

Programs experience the greatest success in YoungStar in pursuit of quality improvement efforts when they are engaged, informed, and responsive. This policy addresses some of the barriers to productive participation and the process and consequences of poor participation.

Failure to respond to YoungStar communications, and cancellation of or habitual absenteeism from scheduled YoungStar appointments prevents quality improvements, assessment, and ratings from being completed in a timely manner. Poor follow-through on application or re-application timelines and agreed upon quality improvement efforts has the same affect.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) and YoungStar Staff want to maintain a consistent, ethical way to set professional boundaries and expectations related to following expectations and following through with scheduled visits. These positive behaviors allow consulting and assessment time to be spent on consultation and coaching rather than follow-up and re-scheduling. The more time spent on-site focused on quality improvement efforts, the greater the program’s success is in their quality improvement efforts.

To accomplish this, every participant in YoungStar who would like any form of onsite technical assistance (technical assistance, Technical Rating or Formal Rating with Observation) is required to complete a YoungStar Contract and sign a Technical Consultation Participation Agreement before beginning on-site services. The Technical Consultation Participation Agreement, outlined in this document, explains the rules around positive participation in YoungStar services.

Participation Policies
On-site services participation policies shall be communicated to participating child care programs in the YoungStar Technical Consultation Participation Agreement which states the following:

• **Prior Notification**
  - A child care program must provide notice of at least one business day if a visit needs to be rescheduled for non-emergency reasons.
  - A provider must give a two hours’ notice in the case of documentable emergency.
  - The child care program must contact their technical consultant within 24 hours to reschedule the visit.

• **Cancellations/No Access**
  - If a child care program fails to give notice of one business day to cancel a visit, they will lose a technical consulting visit.
  - If a program fails to give notice within a two hour timeframe for a documentable emergency, they will lose a technical consulting visit.
  - If the child care program fails to re-schedule a cancelled visit within two working days, they will be sent a certified letter letting them know that if they do not schedule their visit within two working days, they will experience the following consequences:
    - no longer be eligible for on-site consulting services for one calendar year
    - no longer be eligible for micro-grants for one calendar year
    - a YoungStar Change Form will be submitted and the program will receive an automated rating
  - If a program does not accept receipt of a certified letter regarding missed visits after two attempts in a two week period, the program will be moved
to an automated rating and will not be eligible for on-site services, micro-grants, and a new rating until their next anniversary date.

- A program is allowed to re-schedule two times within the guidelines. If the program re-schedules three times, they will lose a visit.
- If there is a pattern of cancellation or no access, consultants and/or raters should contact local certifiers and licensors for possible follow-up. If no children are present and the Technical Consultant is suspicious of this, the fraud hot line should be called (1-877-302-FRAUD) and the program will be moved to an automated rating and will not be eligible for on-site services, micro-grants, and a new rating until their next anniversary date.

**Micro-Grant Eligibility**
- In most cases, programs that receive technical consultation (or programs that are accredited) are eligible to receive a micro-grant if they complete a Quality Improvement Plan, a Self-Assessment, and a Purchase Plan, and have their purchases approved by a technical consultant.
- A program receiving technical consultation will **no longer be eligible** for a micro-grant if the program:
  - Cancels more than ONE technical consultation visit without appropriate prior notification (as stated above). This includes “no-show” visits.
  - Cancels more than THREE technical consultation visits total (this includes cancellations with or without appropriate prior notification, and no-show visits).

If a program becomes ineligible for a micro-grant due to circumstances noted above, the program is responsible for repaying any portion of the micro-grant that has already been expended.

**YoungStar Staff Cancellation or Re-scheduling**
- YoungStar staff will make every effort to keep every appointment scheduled with a program.
- If, for a medical or health emergency, the YoungStar staff member needs to cancel an appointment, he/she will call the program at least two hours prior to the scheduled visit to notify the program and reschedule at that time.
- If a YoungStar staff member needs to reschedule an appointment for any other non-emergency reason, he/she will make every effort to reschedule the appointment as soon as he/she is aware of the conflict and at the program’s earliest convenience. The notification of the need to reschedule will happen at least two working days before the scheduled appointment.

1.) YoungStar Application or Re-application policies require all programs receiving Wisconsin Shares to complete a YoungStar Contract. While there are choices about the level of participation a program takes, Wisconsin Shares authorizations can be jeopardized by failure to apply or reapply to YoungStar within timelines.
   a. For new Wisconsin Shares programs, completing the YoungStar Contract should happen as soon as a program applies to serve families using Wisconsin Shares. For tips on participating in YoungStar, please go to [http://dfw.wi.gov/youngstar/pdf/provider_tip_sheet.pdf](http://dfw.wi.gov/youngstar/pdf/provider_tip_sheet.pdf)
b. For programs that are currently participating in YoungStar and will continue to participate in 2012 and beyond, contact will be made by the Department of Children and Families in writing at approximately 120 days prior to the anniversary dates of the initial rating. For tips on the reapplication process, please go to http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/pdf/reapplication_tips.pdf

2.) Programs that are eligible, and apply for a YoungStar formal rating, must abide by an additional set of participation polices. These policies are only in effect during the window of time that they could potentially receive a formal rating observation.

a. If a Rating Observer arrives at the program on a non-blackout date, and the provider refuses a Formal Rating with Observation, the provider/program will be ineligible for a Formal Rating with Observation until the next rating cycle. The provider will be eligible for a Technical Rating at this point.

b. If a Rating Observer arrives at the program and the provider is not at home, the center is closed, or the program is leaving for a field trip on a non-blackout date, the provider/program will be ineligible for a Formal Rating with Observation until the next rating cycle. The provider would be eligible for a Technical Rating at this point.

c. If a program experiences an emergency on a non-blackout date, the provider/director should notify the assigned YoungStar Formal Rater as soon as possible when the emergency situation is under control. YoungStar Regional Offices and DCF will determine what qualifies as an emergency situation. In this situation, the formal rater will return on another non-blackout date to complete the rating. After one allowance for an emergency, the provider or program will be ineligible for a Formal Rating with Observation. The provider would be eligible for a Technical Rating at this point.

d. If a Rating Observer arrives and the Director/provider indicates that there will not be more than 50% of the children in attendance for the selected classroom or family program, the Formal Rating with Observation cannot occur in that classroom or program on that day. If possible, the Rating Observer will then observe another selected classroom in a group program. If this is not possible, or if it occurs in a family program, the Formal Rating will occur on another non-blackout day. After one allowance for absence, the provider or program will be ineligible for a Formal Rating with Observation. The provider would be eligible for a Technical Rating at this point.

**Participation Policy Definitions**

**Anniversary Date** means the annual anniversary of the date the program was given their initial rating in YoungStar.

**Cancellation** means the YoungStar visit does not occur for one or more reasons, such as program staffing levels and absenteeism, lack of readiness for visit, lack of progress on QIP, illness or medical emergencies, or inclement weather or weather emergencies.

**No-shows** occur when a YoungStar staff member (Technical Consultant (TC), Technical Rater (TR), or Formal Rating Observer (FRO)) arrives for a scheduled visit and is not let into the program (for any reason), the program is closed, or programming is occurring at another location due to a field trip.

**Poor participation** is characterized by lack of engagement or follow-through on YoungStar quality improvement efforts by the provider.