

## Wisconsin Child Care Advisory and Recommendation Exchange (WI-CARE)

January 10, 2025

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

### Attendees

Attended	First and Last Name	Location	Attended	First and Last Name	Location
	Amanda Kight	Kenosha	X	Kishaunda Ransaw	Milwaukee
X	Annette Willburn	Milwaukee	X	Leighton Cooper	Milwaukee
	Bianca Hill	Milwaukee	X	Liz Tittle	Little Chute
X	Carol Jackomino	Rhineland		Lynda Nelson	Middleton
X	Cassie Koch	Madison	X	Margarita Ugalde	Madison
X	Christine Larson Salerno	Milwaukee	X	Rose Catlett	Middleton
X	Corrine Hendrickson	New Glarus	X	Ryann Counce Barnes	Milwaukee
X	Courtney Zwick	New Glarus	X	Sarah Smith	Racine
X	Cynthia Reineking	La Crosse	X	Sheri Bishop	Pulaski
	Jay Martinez	Green Bay	X	Suzette Mayotte	Ashland
X	Joahna Shelton	Spooner	X	Thanh Bui-Duquette	Eau Claire
	Jolynn Wendt	Arcadia	X	Tricia Peterson	Juneau
X	Kahlila Fennel	Milwaukee			

**DCF Staff:** Andrea Cammilleri (tech), Sarah Dillinger (facilitator), Kassidy Farrey (facilitator), Daria Hall (facilitator), Danielle Karnopp (notes), Terra Klein (facilitator), Cassidy Peterson (tech)

**Public Observer:** Katie Stieber

### Meeting Notes

#### 11:00 – 11:10 **Welcome, Reminder of Meeting Norms, Recap of last meeting**

*Daria Hall, Policy Initiatives Advisor*

*DCF Division of Early Care and Education*

**Notes:** Daria read through the meeting norms, meeting agenda, and shared a recap of ideas that members shared about the Wisconsin Shares Subsidy Estimator and Tuesday Talks topics. She also let members know that they will receive a document soon that shows how some of the feedback from Oct, Nov, and Dec WI-CARE meetings was resolved by DCF. Members were invited to share something about their program.

**11:10 - 11:55**      **YoungStar Staff Qualifications  
Presentation & Discussion**

*Terra Klein and Sarah Dillinger, Bureau of YoungStar  
DCF Division of Early Care and Education*

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*All WI-CARE Members*

**Notes**

- The current YoungStar Analysis and Update project is charged with identifying ways to improve YoungStar by listening to and learning from those who are most impacted, and by researching topics and understanding other states' practices.
- Through surveys, in-person and virtual listening sessions, and partner meetings\* held in 2024, we heard from:
  - 805+ child care providers and community members
  - 680+ parents/caregivers
  - 15 legislators/staff
- \* Surveys and sessions were offered in both English and Spanish.
- We heard feedback on many themes, such as the definition of quality child care, need for support and investment in programs, benefits and challenges of participating in YoungStar, relevance of star ratings, pros and cons of accreditation, parents/caregivers' desire for assurance of safety and quality, etc.
- Survey/session participants made it clear that staff quality and staff qualifications are important, so we are diving deeper into this topic, keeping in mind the related barriers and challenges they shared with us.

**Question 1: We heard that many providers want to be recognized for their experience, knowledge, and skills developed on the job.**

**Parents/caregivers reported that they care about providers' years of experience.**

**Should YoungStar ratings recognize years of experience? If so, how could this be implemented?**

**Breakout Room 1 Notes**

- Agree we should recognize years of service. Could we implement a tiered recognition system for being in the field a certain number of years (0-5 years, 6-10, etc.) that feeds into your YoungStar rating? It could help boost your YoungStar rating. If you have 15 years experience, it should contribute to a 4-5 star rating.
- I totally agree. We're in our YoungStar rating window. We can't get a 5 star because of a staff member's education and she has over 30 years of experience. She's a level 10 in

the Registry but she needs 8 more classes and she's in her 50s. I've hired many college educated, 4-year degree workers and other people with experience outdo them in no time. There are differences between people, but it's a hands on field and you have to have experience. This is a very important key. So many things need to change in YoungStar and this is one of them.

- I pulled my certificate off the wall. I got a 5 star rating, but nowhere on here does it acknowledge experience or education. Parents will see a 5 star and that's it and they don't know what that means.
- I'm a small in home provider and one of the reasons I stayed away from YoungStar was because of my apartment. That scared me away. 4 or 5 stars doesn't mean anything to parents. I've been a certified provider for 5 years and a mom of 3. Now I'm in a house but I want to keep things minimal that don't affect their care, but YoungStar requires them. So years of experience is important to add as a part of the rating.
- To piggy back, in my first years. I could only receive a max rating of 3 stars because it was my first year, even though I scored at a 5 star rating.
- When I started I was a 3 star and working with YoungStar rep to become a 4 star, we had a handful of room teachers who needed to increase their education to meet the requirement. If you were to implement years of experience, you could do in lieu of a level 9, X years of experience would suffice. So if you have a person who's older and has 29 years of experience and is burnt out from the same training, this would be an option. So a clause, for some of the rooms in lieu of a high Registry level they could have so many years experience.
- What a great idea above. Maybe you could even add if you have other trainings that are tiered trainings and continuing education. So years of experience plus like Pyramid model, diversity training, etc.
- There are many ways to recognizing years of experience: for instance interactions with children and adults, environment, program management, among others!
- Supportive of all the comments. I think it's important for consumers to look at and understand the rating. It's confusing right now what the rating means and I do agree that there's staff we have with years of experience that need recognizing. If they're still there, there's a reason they're still there and should be celebrated for that.
- There should also be recognition of continued education. I just completed hours in addition to my degree and I have no way to show that to families in my YoungStar rating.

### Breakout Room 2 Notes

- The Registry tracks years of experience and could be used for this.
- My concern is volatility of staff in the field.
- Would programs that often serve as staff development "feeders" for other programs be negatively impacted?

- Through the Registry, working in a school doesn't get you credit for previous work, such as paraprofessional roles, child-speech pathologist, counselor—all experience working with children should count.
- Years of experience could be exciting if it's additive, not penalizing.
- Great idea to have it additive, not penalizing; there's no motivation to get degrees for no more pay, especially in family child care.
- Accreditation standards don't require degree, so why in YoungStar? We're required to take continuing ed every year.
- We have a few staff who have been with us for 15+ years and bring so much to our program, longevity, relationships, however these teachers are not able to be lead teacher on paper.
- Years of experience doing what? There's a big difference between monitoring an overnight program (watching kids sleep) versus being a lead classroom teacher.
- College education about developmental milestones and developmental appropriateness matters. It can't be an either education/or experience situation.
- When we hire, we look at experience, but corresponding training or professional development also matters.
- How would you validate and substantiate years of experience?
- We have so many 4 year degree grads who think they want to work with kids in this setting and quickly get burnt out and realize it's not for them.

### Breakout Room 3 Notes

- I've been in childcare over 25 years, I know every few years I advance in leaps in bounds through my thinking about things, my philosophies. Absolutely education AND experience both matter and should count. I do know that other providers often go for accreditation instead of YoungStar rating because their staff don't have all the experience needed to earn a high rating in YoungStar. Anybody has been in childcare over 5 years, you're a different teacher than you were as you gain years dealing with children. We could start with years of licensure to measure that. We could also break down the years working with children vs. serving as a program director. I don't know for sure if you need to count those differently.
- You could be a director or administrator, but there are very few who are not directly involved in day-to-day operations. Others may have taught 1<sup>st</sup> grade or been in a summer camp for many years, so we'd want to be sure to capture all the years in a caregiving role with kids, as long as its related. We've had some fantastic tenured teachers without the level of education. They bring love, caring, nurturing and best practices into the program, but that's not everyone. You could have a lot of educated individuals without base knowledge on classroom management, guidance, nurturing and responsiveness that education only misses out on. I agree about recognizing both, but how to do that is

something I am going to think on more, it can't assume that many years make you an amazing instructor, but you can't assume that of education, either.

- Could you collect statements or validation of the strengths of caregivers?
- The information on the Registry is only as smart as the info you put into it and get verified. I didn't know at the start to track all the trainings and experiences I had, but learned later how important that is and shared it with my team.
- I did child care for over 35 years. I was accredited and taught all the entry level courses, but because I am not at a certain level on the Registry, I'm now unable to teach those courses. Experience should be the best teacher. Our association is moving toward helping our member programs become accredited. For me, I've followed the Registry and moved up the ladder. I went the accreditation way, but there should be a choice for providers.

**Question 2: We heard that many providers want to be recognized for learning that happens outside of 2- and 4-year degree programs.**

**Parents/families reported that they care about providers' formal training.**

**Should YoungStar recognize non-credit learning experiences? Why or why not?**

### Breakout Room 1 Notes

- Question: does that mean level of rating would go up with more training?
  - DCF response: That's another layer to this question... if we should recognize it, then how do we assign value to that and incorporate it into the rating?
- Question: does Registry level impact YoungStar? That has a lot of training built into it. But I agree [with recognizing non-credit learning]... unless you're doing the exact credentials, you can't get there in the Registry. I have thousands of hours of trainings from all the positions I hold, but all that I can do to move up is get my Masters and that doesn't seem worth it to me. When you get YoungStar, it asks you how many years of experience you have, but maybe you want to ask how many hours of training you have and what Registry level. To keep endorsements, you need to put in so many hours of training. Can we add that for YoungStar? So many hours of training and make sure it's registered.
  - DCF answer: Yes, YoungStar looks at Registry levels currently.
- We spend a lot of time as owners and centers providing hours. We get back experiences but the staff want to be recognized AND compensated for that. So every level they go up, it will become more expensive. So training is a requirement and expectation. But I'm not going to pay for a 2 hour class because it's fun. We have to be thoughtful of what we're doing and what our purpose is, and ask where that next level will actually take us.

Thousands of hours doesn't mean you'll actually be a better teacher. Only 5 minutes of the actual training will impact your actual implementation of it.

- We were a 3 star program and just achieved a 4 star rating. The non-credit training is already somewhat included in YoungStar because you have to fill out the center evaluation packet and your goals. So my goals are tied to center wide trainings to overall improve our staff education. So to tie that into levels...I don't think we'll ever get to a 5 star because of turnover. We're hitting our goals for two years straight but not get to a 5 star. And pay. More training means more pay and they can get more in the county 10 miles up the road. Then there's turnover and I have to get the next person to that level. But how to achieve a higher level is the only thing that counts currently, I think... if you're doing those trainings for 4 years...who will actually be there for 4 years?
- Yes I think it is important to recognize non-credit learning experience, because it has been time and commitment to accomplish that goal. It is also hard to complete those classes.

### Breakout Room 2 Notes

- Confirm if this means Registry tiered training hours.
  - Answer from DCF: That could be one source of training records.
- Absolutely – Pyramid Model is a huge investment of time/energy but not recognized. There are so many applicable trainings beyond intro, skills.
- Agree - We provide larger scale professional development opportunities taught by certified teachers: working with kids with special needs, math strategies, differentiated learning. They are not recognized by the Registry but are super important for our school-age programs.
- Agree but with a caveat – credit should be given for a few trainings approved through the Registry such as the Pyramid model, but don't open it up to any training. There needs to be oversight on what trainings are accepted. Large centers have resources to create their own content, what about smaller programs?
- Lower Registry levels allow tiers 2 and 3 to help move up but that levels off. That could also be used into that "years of experience" and credit for prior learning.
- I support this idea but make it as easy as possible. The Registry can add complexity.
- To make this work, there would need to be improvement to infrastructure for T-TAP (Training and Technical Assistant Professional) classes. It can be difficult for people who don't work for SFTA/CCR&Rs to become Registry-approved trainers.
- I steer away from trainings not counted by the Registry.
- There are amazing trainings out there that add value but they don't count – I don't spend money on those.
- The new format and revision of intro classes is more comprehensive – I appreciate in-person delivery.

- Classes like WMELS, Pyramid Model should be recognized. Another thought would be to count hours that go above and beyond the required hours as long as they are a higher tier.

### Breakout Room 3 Notes

- I would add to previous comments that each provider in each group is uniquely designed. Sometimes non-credit learning experiences aren't for credit but they're very close to the provider's heart, such as gardening with children as a learning experience that they want to incorporate into their program. They may find a non-credit local training to take and I think there should be some acknowledgement of that as well.
- Coaching components allow you to instill great habits or correct challenging responses. That reflective opportunity to focus on how to do better and learn from others, is a HUGE training enhancement that should also be recognized for how it supports positive growth in educators.
- I agree.

**Question 3: We heard that providers' knowledge of child development--and the ability to apply it while working with children and families--is essential to quality.**

**How could YoungStar value what providers know about child development and how they apply that knowledge?**

### Breakout Room 1 Notes

- I work with the Head Start program for accreditation. We also recognize CDA credentials for staff qualifications. It's not as easy as a training with a certification... it's quite time consuming evaluating teacher interactions and the intentionality of their interactions. We use the CLASS tool. It's observation based and observers come in and give a rating based on their observation of the interaction. It's high stakes because if we don't meet the standard we lose our funding. It's a wonderful way to look at the quality of interactions in the classroom, but I don't like it the way it's used in our system because it's punitive in the way we use it.
- We use the Pyramid model, the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) and TPITOS to focus on developing responsive, nurturing relationships and promoting social-emotional development. Relationships bring the quality to us. This is what makes us so successful and what gives us the 4 star (since we can't get the 5 star). So we do this every six months. It's not linked to our evaluations but it lets us recognize what we need more attention on. We have people coming in and out of our center all the time. It is just one more person coming in. The expectations are high and they know what they are looking for. When teachers put it into practice, they'll see success and behaviors change

in the classroom. We should get a point just for even using those assessments because it's another step in quality.

- I think YoungStar could value what providers know by doing observations and verify the quality conversations with children, also how they intentionally plan the environment and activities they do with parent coaching! Thank you.

### Breakout Room 2 Notes

- It can be acknowledged through the formal rating – but a 2.5 hour snapshot isn't truly reflective of our quality compared to accreditation with multiple visits.
- Increase the opportunity for raters to develop stronger relationships with programs, visit more.
- Does YoungStar have parent/staff surveys to gain a broader picture?
  - DCF response: Not at this time.
- There has been a big change in YoungStar since Shine took over. Under the CCR&R, we had "a person", an outside resource for help. We haven't had that from Shine and feel very alone and overwhelmed. Need more help for owners and directors.
- It's tough when you're onboarding new staff, in and out of classrooms, I'm only one person, resources aren't available, every 2 years a rater comes in. Based on a tiny snapshot that will be your rating for 2 years, which is completely unfair.
- I don't know how you show knowledge of child development and application? How would you prove this is happening?
- Could be individual planning, documentation, portfolios, classroom observation.

### Breakout Room 3 Notes

- In YoungStar, consultants are working with you on each step you need to complete. If the levels could be based on child development and how we apply it in our program, that would address it. They could look at documentation. If you have events like Dads and Donuts but you also have child development activities to include families, they should look at that. If you're coming to a training session, that should be documented and they will be able to see that you are learning and applying it within your curriculum.
- I'd like to add to that. Part of the reason I decided to become accredited is because I'm very disappointed in the YoungStar system. Even though I've been doing this so long, I still had questions. She would say she was too busy with others and didn't have time for me because I already knew what I was doing. Very unhelpful. Then the rater comes and they don't get to see all of what we do in one 3-hour session. I am trying to cram too much into that session because I know what they want to see and I call their attention to it. It's a lot to do in 3 hours when you might typically spread those things out throughout the day and week. I feel that it's more helpful to have visits more frequently at different times of the day. I like to improve myself so if there was anything that wasn't a perfect

score, I noted it and brought it up in the next visit and wanted to hear an explanation. Honestly, I think each rater has a different opinion interpreting the book. I got a top score from one rater and did the same thing with the next person and got a 4. It's very confusing to me as a provider and I'm just trying to improve myself. I'm really very upset with YoungStar lately. She was a newer rater and she admitted she didn't notice the things I reminded her I had done, and there were three different instances of her saying she was probably at fault for not noticing, but wasn't willing to change any of the scores. I was very frustrated with the entire process.

- With YoungStar, you're getting all of these visits. Through accreditation, you get to assess your program at your own pace. There's many reasons why I really prefer accreditation. It's much more relaxed.
- Agreed, she [accreditor] is coming next week and I don't feel the stress, I can be myself and be the provider I know I am every day. When YoungStar comes, I prepare myself for the entire month. I always talk to the child while I'm changing a diaper but when the person is there, I'm using that changing time to ponder what else I need to do before they leave and I'm stressing, and I forget to talk to the child, which I always do! I'm not the provider I should be when YoungStar is here, I'm stressed because of all the things I know they need to see.
- We need to be more responsive to the environments we are going into. My rater knows me and encourages me because she knows I can do it, but most don't have that benefit. You've got YoungStar, a licenser, the food program, it's overwhelming for these providers!
  - 100% agree.
- There's no way I can do all ~15 things they want to see in 3 hours and if I have a baby crying, I can't get it all in. There need to be more opportunities like accreditation where they come more times. Maybe other providers wouldn't all want them coming more often, but for me, it's not enough and would be less stressful that way for people to see more of what I do.
- Almost similar to a coaching to success model, where it's not one snapshot, it's a series of snapshots.
- I feel you on YoungStar. I've had great experiences with all my coaches but the process is overwhelming. The new coach I have now under the new [Shine] process came several times, gave me feedback, did zoom meetings with me. It all depends on what coach you have—I haven't had a bad experience with a coach yet, and I am going through 4-C accreditation and trying to do both at the same time. I agree accreditation is less stressful. YoungStar is stressful because we are anticipating and questioning if things will be ok.

**Action Items:**

- Acknowledge staff years of experience as part of YoungStar ratings, in addition to their education.
  - Consider the Registry as one way to measure this.
  - Years of licensure are another way to measure experience.
  - Make sure this acknowledgement is additive and doesn't penalize programs for having less experienced staff.
  - Continue to incentivize formal learning on child development and other essential topics from coursework.
  - Consider how roles in related work outside of regulated child care could count toward experience, but also keep in mind they may not all carry the same value or relevance of experience. Some roles within regulated child care may also be more valuable experience than others.
  - Providers should have choices around how they earn credentials.
- Acknowledge staff non-credit training as part of YoungStar ratings.
  - Ensure that non-credit trainings included are relevant and impact practice, while also allowing providers some freedom of choice to pursue their interests.
  - Consider awarding "credit" in the Registry and/or to help providers earn a 3-star rating (or higher) in YoungStar for completing relevant trainings such as Pyramid Model and WMELS.
  - Consider awarding "credit" for participating in coaching and working to improve practice that way.
- Pursue more holistic evaluation of provider experience, education, skills, and how they apply their knowledge of child development.
  - Whether it's experience or education being measured, look for multiple ways to validate it/gather evidence of strong practices. For example, records, statements, planning documents, observation, reviews, documentation of activities and skills, portfolios...
  - Consider the CLASS tool as a good way to evaluate interactions but avoid using it punitively.
  - Increase the opportunity for raters to develop stronger relationships with providers, visit more often, and award the rating after spending more time in the program.
  - Look at how accreditors acknowledge provider experience, skills, and their process for observing, consider incorporating into YoungStar the aspects that are positively received by providers.
- Look for ways that YoungStar can reduce isolation and stress of providers, not add to it.
- Enhance the consistency and quality of YoungStar coaching and rating services.
- Reduce the overwhelming complexity of the overall state early childhood system and the many different visitors, tasks, and requirements providers must attend to.

**11:55– 12:00**      **Wrap-Up, Public Comment and Next Steps**  
*Daria Hall, Policy Initiatives Advisor*  
*DCF Division of Early Care and Education*

**Public comment:** I would add that providing a list of eligible non-credit training classes would be very helpful to allow some of our staff to move up on the Registry. I think a lot more centers would be willing to contribute funds to supporting those trainings. I echo the support for that.

**Notes**

- Andrea Cammilleri will be reaching out to invite members to sign up for a short one-on-one call to give feedback on the WI-CARE experience to date. This is completely optional and DCF is not able to compensate for this time.
- Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 11 at 12:00 p.m. to discuss “Addressing Challenging Behaviors in Wisconsin’s Child Care Programs”

**English**

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**Spanish**

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