

Reading the Stars: Choosing Child Care with YoungStar

A YoungStar Guide for Families

Looking for a child care provider, preschool, day camp or after-school program?

Every year, YoungStar rates thousands of providers—from 1 Star (for programs that do not meet health and safety standards) to 5 Stars (for the highest quality of care). These stars help families find the right place for their children to learn and grow.

But before you can use the stars, you need to know how to read them.

What the Stars Measure

YoungStar-rated child care providers go through a 40-point evaluation process based on program size and structure. (For example, a large day camp goes through a different evaluation process than a small family child care provider.) The number of stars a program receives depends on a lot of things, including how many points it earns across four key areas of care:

The Provider's Education & Training

Children benefit when their teachers and caregivers have a solid foundation in early childhood or youth development. YoungStar recognizes the education and training of a program's teachers, administrators and caregivers.

The Learning Environment & Curriculum

Young minds need activity and engaging, meaningful experiences to grow. It's important for healthy brain development. YoungStar reviews each program's learning materials, activities, lesson plans and more.

The Program's Professional & Business Practices

When a program runs smoothly, it's better able to focus on the needs of children and their families. YoungStar values programs that treat their employees fairly, involve parents fully and manage obligations responsibly.

The Children's Health & Well-Being

Children develop best in nurturing environments that provide well-rounded care—from physical activity and nutrition to playtime with others. YoungStar rates how programs address all the needs of a child.

1-888-713-5437 (Toll-free) 711 (TTY)

youngstar.wi.gov

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Using YoungStar Is Easy

Visit youngstar.wi.gov to compare child care providers and find helpful parenting advice.

Look for the **YoungStar rating window sticker or certificate** when you're interviewing providers.

Call **1-888-713-KIDS (5437)** to get personalized help from a local child care resource and referral specialist.

Want to Learn More?

At youngstar.wi.gov, parents can watch videos, download articles and find useful information on early childhood education, nutrition and more. You can even discover activities that encourage healthy brain development.

Compare Your Options

Want to find local child care programs that match your family's lifestyle, budget and special needs? We give families the in-depth information they need to make informed choices, including each program's evaluation history and any violations it has received. Visit youngstar.wi.gov to search thousands of YoungStar-rated programs by:

- Location
- Star rating
- Type of care
- Hours of operation
- Your child's age

Look Beyond the Stars

YoungStar-rated providers earn points across four categories of care. This means a program with excellent teachers may still earn fewer stars if its bookkeeping habits need improvement. That's important information that might change how you look at a program.

Check the YoungStar Rating Details (available online and printed on most YoungStar certificates) to see how many points a program earns in each category. It's a simple way to make sure the child care provider you choose has the qualities you value most.



Look for the YoungStar Rating Details.

The Department of Children and Families is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need to access services, receive information in an alternate format, or need information translated to another language, please call the Division of Early Care and Education at 608-422-6002. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or speech disabled can use the free Wisconsin Relay Service (WRS) – 711 to contact the department.