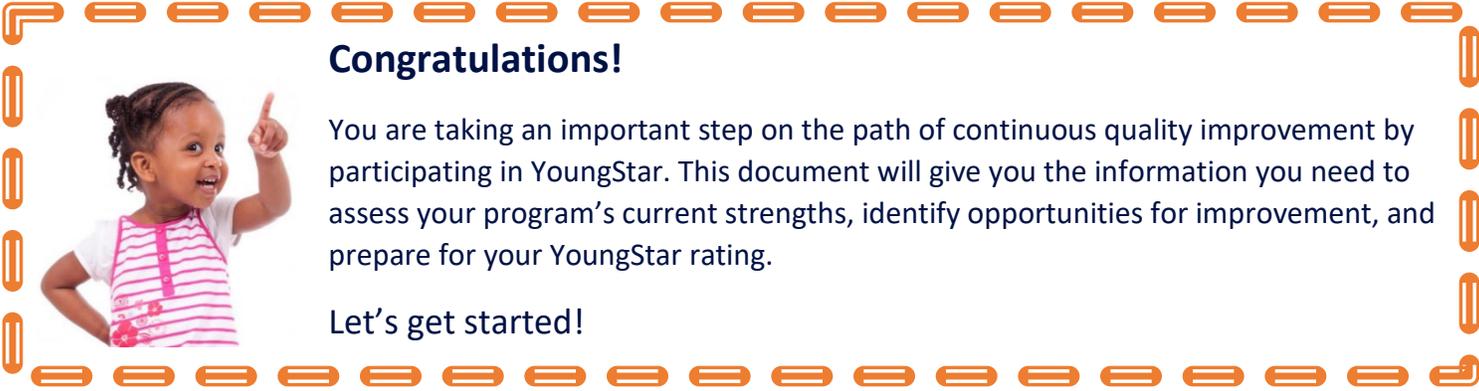




Wisconsin's Child Care Quality Rating & Improvement System

# *YoungStar Evaluation Criteria: Family Child Care 2021/2022*





# Congratulations!

You are taking an important step on the path of continuous quality improvement by participating in YoungStar. This document will give you the information you need to assess your program’s current strengths, identify opportunities for improvement, and prepare for your YoungStar rating.

Let’s get started!

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## **General Information**

The care children receive both at home and away from home couldn't be more important. Studies show that children who experience engaging, one-on-one activities in safe, healthy, and nurturing learning environments have a better chance at lifelong success. They're more likely to graduate from high school, less likely to engage in criminal activity and often earn higher wages throughout their lifetime.

The Department of Children and Families is committed to improving the quality of care for all young children. YoungStar, Wisconsin's Child Care Quality Rating and Improvement System, is helping to make it happen by:

- Helping programs improve in quality
- Offering financial incentives that support both programs and families
- Giving families meaningful information at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/parents/resources> to make informed care decisions

This work is done in partnership with multiple stakeholders, or partners, who also support high-quality early care and education in Wisconsin:

### **YoungStar Connect**

YoungStar Connect provides all YoungStar services in Wisconsin. Led by Shine Early Learning, YoungStar Connect is a collaborative of partners offering services that consist of individualized and group-based coaching, on-demand resources and live training, ratings, and a help desk.

<https://www.youngstarconnect.com>

### **Erikson Institute**

Erikson Institute is a leading graduate school in early childhood development and education. As a YoungStar Connect partner, Erikson created a Wisconsin version of their Town Square website, which is an online learning community created for and with family child care professionals. The Wisconsin Town Square site has been specifically designed for Wisconsin and includes online learning modules tailored to the unique context of home-based care.

[www.townsquarewi.org](http://www.townsquarewi.org)

### **Satellite Family Child Care System**

The Satellite Family Child Care System offers ongoing intensive and customized support services to family child care programs as well as the opportunity to earn family child care accreditation. Family child care programs achieving accreditation through Satellite earn a 4 or 5 Star rating by YoungStar. As a YoungStar Connect partner, Satellite has expanded their supports and now provide accreditation coaching to family child care programs across the state. Satellite also provides resources and specialty knowledge to YoungStar participants on a variety of family child care topics.

<https://www.reachdane.org/programs/satellite.cfm>

### **Wisconsin Registry**

The Wisconsin Registry provides a listing of training opportunities throughout the state and assigns career levels to the early education workforce according to each individual's education and training background. YoungStar accesses information from the Wisconsin Registry to verify the education and training of lead program staff. As a YoungStar Connect partner, the Wisconsin Registry houses all YoungStar Connect on-demand training options and provides one on one support to programs and individuals who are trying to complete their individual membership or program profile.

<https://wregistry.org/>

### **Wisconsin Out-of-School Time Alliance (WOSTA)/Wisconsin Afterschool Network**

WOSTA/WAN is the state-affiliate of the national 50 State Afterschool Networks. WOSTA/WAN is a partnership with the Marshfield Clinic Health System's (MCHS) Center for Community Health Advancement. As a YoungStar Connect partner, WOSTA/WAN oversees the local YoungStar staff that deliver training and coaching for school-age and day camp programs throughout the state. They also provide resources and specialty knowledge on a variety of Out-of-School Time program topics.

### **Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA)**

WECA is a statewide agency offering professional development, advocacy, and support to early childhood providers. WECA administers the T.E.A.C.H. and REWARD programs, making scholarships and salary stipends available to child care providers. As a YoungStar Connect partner, WECA provides academic, non-academic, and career counseling through Career Development Counselors in addition to support and resources around family, group, and school-age care business practices through Business Practices Specialists.

<https://wisconsinearlychildhood.org>

### **Child Care Regulation**

Wisconsin's Bureau of Early Care Regulation sets health and safety requirements for child care. To be eligible to receive YoungStar services, programs must be regulated and maintain regulatory compliance. YoungStar builds upon these basic requirements, layering a progression of quality standards and practices on the foundation of regulation. YoungStar can also support training and coaching requirements as set by licensors and certifiers. You can find three years of regulation history and YoungStar rating information on the Child Care Finder website.

<https://childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov>

### **Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Agencies**

CCR&R agencies are located throughout the state, helping parents and caregivers find quality child care, and offering training and support to families, child care programs, and communities.

<https://supportingfamielstogether.org/child-care-providers-3/find-ccrr/>

## Participation

Participation in YoungStar is voluntary. However, programs that wish to accept Wisconsin Shares payments from families are required to participate.

There is no cost for programs to participate in YoungStar. In fact, YoungStar provides low-cost training and free consultation and coaching to support a program's quality improvement efforts.

Programs choose the type of rating they would like. To achieve a 3 Star rating or higher, a program must either receive an onsite rating or be accredited by a YoungStar approved accrediting body or Head Start grantee.



### Contract and Renewal

Programs interested in participating in YoungStar for the first time must submit an initial **contract** via mail to their Local YoungStar Office or via email to the YoungStar Connect help desk at [help@youngstarconnect.com](mailto:help@youngstarconnect.com). An initial YoungStar contract can be found on the Department of Children and Families website.

- <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/contract>

To continue participating in YoungStar, you must renew your contract every two years. Renewal and off-year service contracts are mailed directly to programs and are also available in the Provider Portal.

- <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/provider-portal/info>

Programs are eligible to receive coaching every year, whether it is a required rating year or not.

Before submitting a contract, programs should review all YoungStar policies.

- <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/policy>

### Coaching

If you request free YoungStar supports, you will be assigned a **Coach** that will:

- Assist you with completing a self-assessment and developing a quality improvement plan
- Review the YoungStar Evaluation Criteria with you and provide resources and assistance to help you achieve your quality improvement goals
- Help you identify and access additional services, such as career counseling, support with your business practices, and training opportunities

### Onsite Rating

**Onsite rating** is required for 3, 4, or 5 stars and may occur in one of two ways:

1. For a **3 Star rating**, your program will be assessed by your Coach using the YoungStar Evaluation Criteria.

You may also have additional opportunities to be observed and receive training with the Environment Rating Scales (ERS).

2. For a **4 or 5 Star rating**, your program must meet the minimum requirements in the Evaluation Criteria and will be assessed by a Rater using ERS.

Following the completion of the ERS observation, the Rater and your Coach will meet with you to review the results of your rating and provide meaningful feedback to support your future quality improvement efforts.

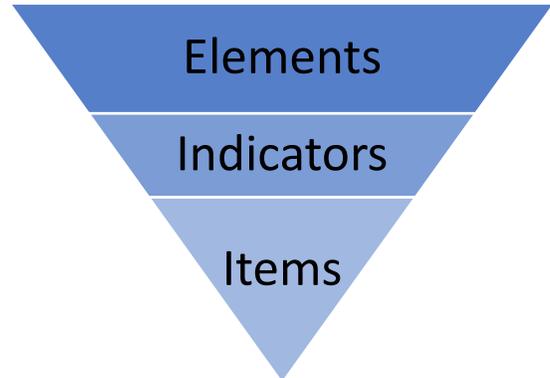
## **How to Use This Document**

The *YoungStar Evaluation Criteria* document outlines what will be observed and/or verified for a YoungStar rating. This document should be used to prepare for a rating and to learn more about high-quality early education practices.

The document is organized into four elements of program quality. These elements are further broken down into indicators and items that provide additional details.

The four **Elements** that will be evaluated are:

- A.** Lead Staff Education
- B.** Learning Environment and Curriculum
- C.** Business and Professional Practices
- D.** Health and Well-Being



## **High-Quality Practices**

Following the 3 Star requirements are additional High-Quality Practices that programs must demonstrate to achieve a 4 or 5 Star rating.

To earn a 4 Star rating, programs must demonstrate at least 4 of the 7 High-Quality Practices.

To earn a 5 Star rating, programs must demonstrate at least 5 of the 7 High-Quality Practices.

1. Curriculum Aligned with *Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards/School-Age Curricular Framework*
2. Individual Child Portfolios
3. Intentional Planning to Improve Individual Child Outcomes
4. Developmental Screening
5. Tracking Child Outcomes
6. Social Emotional/Inclusion Training
7. *Strengthening Families Through Early Care and Education with Mandated Reporter Training*

## **Verification**

Throughout the document you will find verification sections explaining how the YoungStar Coach will verify whether a program meets the requirements or not.

## **Rating Verification Form**

The rating verification form provides an overview of the YoungStar rating requirements each program will be assessed on. At the time of the rating, the YoungStar Coach will complete the verification form indicating whether each requirement has been met or not. The Provider and Coach will initial each indicator, sign, and date the document representing understanding of the rating.

## YoungStar Changes 2021/2022

### The YoungStar rating system has moved from a point system to a block structure

Programs no longer earn points for indicators, instead they will be rated on the required items for each star level, with the addition of seven High-Quality Practices for programs hoping to earn 4 or 5 Stars. These High-Quality Practices, previously optional points, were chosen because of their strong connection to improved child outcomes.

Programs will be rated as follows:

- 3 Star rating – Programs must meet the required criteria only
- 4 Star rating – Programs must meet the required criteria + 4 of 7 High-Quality Practices + average ERS program score of 3.25
- 5 Star rating – Programs must meet the required criteria + 5 of 7 High-Quality Practices + average ERS program score of 4.25

### Family Child Care Rating Overview – Block System

<b>High-Quality Practices</b> 1. Curriculum Aligned with WMELS/SACF 2. Individual Child Portfolios 3. Intentional Planning to Improve Child Outcomes 4. Developmental Screening 5. Tracking Child Outcomes 6. Social Emotional/Inclusion of Children with Special Needs Training 7. <i>Strengthening Families Through Early Care and Education Training</i>	★★★★★		
		★★★★	Program demonstrates 5 of 7 additional areas* of high-quality practices
			Program demonstrates 4 of 7 additional areas* of high-quality practices
			Program progresses on healthy nutrition and/or physical activity policy and practice
		★★★	Program progresses on healthy nutrition and/or physical activity policy and practice
<b>Health and Well-Being</b>	Program progresses on healthy nutrition and/or physical activity policy and practice	Ongoing yearly budget, budget review, payment agreement, and record-keeping	Ongoing yearly budget, budget review, payment agreement, and record-keeping
<b>Business and Professional Practices</b>	Ongoing yearly budget, budget review, payment agreement, and record-keeping	Many family engagement items	Many family engagement items
<b>Environment and Curriculum</b>	Some family engagement items	High-quality family handbook	High-quality family handbook
<b>Education and Training</b>	Developmentally appropriate interactions, materials, and environment, incorporating WI Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) or School-Age Curricular Framework (SACF)	Developmentally appropriate interactions, materials, and environment, incorporating WMELS/SACF	Developmentally appropriate interactions, materials, and environment, incorporating WMELS/SACF
<b>Regulatory Compliance</b>	ERS Avg Score of 3.25	ERS Avg Score of 3.25	ERS Avg Score of 4.25
	Provider with Wisconsin Registry Level 7 or higher	Provider with Wisconsin Registry Level 10 or higher	Provider with Wisconsin Registry Level 12 or higher
★★	In Regulatory Compliance	In Regulatory Compliance	In Regulatory Compliance

### **Updated Environment Rating Scale (ERS)**

Starting in 2021, YoungStar will begin using a newly updated ERS tool for family child care programs. It has been updated from the Revised edition to the new 3rd edition:

- Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R) to Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-3 (FCCERS-3)

### **Updated Developmentally Appropriate Environments (DAE) Requirements**

- Nature/Science materials are required for programs where all children are 24 months or older
- Art materials are required for programs where all children are 24 months or older
- The number and type of required organized areas for play has been modified based on program type:
  - Family Child Care Program – Programs must have accessible materials provided within at least two *play areas*. A **play area** is a space that is large enough for children to play with accessible, organized materials.
    - An interest center can be used and is considered a type of play area

### **Updated Budget/Record Keeping Criteria**

- Parent payment agreements must be on file between the program and families that have a Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy authorization
- For YoungStar purposes, Consultants will no longer review tax records
- For YoungStar purposes, Consultants will no longer review menus and meal counts

### **Updated Healthy Nutrition and Physical Activity Criteria**

- After a program initially earns the Healthy Nutrition and Physical Activity indicator, they must demonstrate progress on at least one healthy nutrition and/or physical activity policy and/or practice goal from their previous QIP in order to continue to earn this indicator
- For YoungStar purposes, Consultants will no longer verify the program's allergy policy

### **Updated Layout**

- Both rating requirements and support information are included in this document
- The rating verification sections after each indicator have been moved to a separate document

## Requirements for Onsite Rating

To be eligible for an onsite rating, programs must complete a Self-Assessment and develop a Quality Improvement Plan.

### Indicator: Program Self-Assessment

Self-assessments help programs become aware of their strengths and areas for improvement. Before a program can receive a rating, they must complete a YoungStar-approved, program-wide, self-assessment tool. The self-assessment must have been completed within the past 12 months, and not used for a previous rating. Self-assessments should match the age of the majority of children in care.

Programs must choose from the following self-assessments:

- YoungStar Self-Assessment for Family Child Care
  - English - <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/ys-self-assessment/2018-ys-fcc-selfassess.docx>
  - Spanish - <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/ys-self-assessment/2018-ys-fcc-selfassess-s.docx>
- HighScope Family Child Care Program Quality Assessment
  - <https://highscope.org/our-practice/child-assessment/pqa/>

Note: ERS tools cannot be used as a self-assessment.

For accredited programs or those in the process of accreditation, the YoungStar approved accrediting body's self-study/self-assessment/self-observation tool may be used to meet the self-assessment requirement. The full tool must be completed in its entirety each year. The self-assessment must have been completed within the past 12 months. YoungStar-approved accreditation self-studies:

- National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)
- Satellite Family Child Care Accreditation (in the greater Madison area)

### Indicator: Quality Improvement Plan

Programs must create a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) based on the most recent program-wide self-assessment that identifies areas of strength and at least three areas for improvement. The QIP must also include an action plan for each area of improvement.

## VERIFICATION

Self-Assessment:

The YoungStar Coach will verify that a program-wide self-assessment has been completed within the past 12 months, document the type of self-assessment tool used, and the date the self-assessment was completed.

Quality Improvement Plan:

The YoungStar Coach will verify that a QIP has been completed. The QIP should identify areas of strength and three areas of improvement, with a completed action plan for each area of improvement.

## **Requirements for 3 Star Rating or Higher**

To be eligible for a 3 Star rating or higher, programs must create and maintain an accurate Wisconsin Registry Program Profile.

### **The Wisconsin Registry Program Profile**

Program Profiles are used to verify the training and education of all family child care providers.

The following steps MUST be completed by the program:

1. Create a Wisconsin Registry Program Profile.  
Visit: <https://wiregistry.org/wp-content/uploads/Creating-a-Program-Profile.pdf> to learn more about creating a Program Profile.
2. Enter the name of the program "Licensee/Owner," and add one "classroom" in the "Classroom Tab" within the Program Profile. You will enter the number of children the "classroom" (program) can have, and the "Primary Family Provider" assigned to work the most peak hours with children. In most cases, the role of the "Primary Family Provider" and the "Licensee/Owner" is filled by the same person. If that is the case, then that person should be listed in both roles in the profile. Any changes in staffing must be updated in the Program Profile as they occur. The information you enter in your Program Profile is automatically used to verify the YoungStar education and training requirements that help determine your program's YoungStar rating. Your rating is then used to determine the YoungStar Adjustment (if applicable) your program receives through the Wisconsin Shares Subsidy Program. Beginning February 1, 2024, new staff will not be able to be added to the Classroom Tab of a Program Profile if they do not meet preliminary licensing qualifications for age, work history, education, training, and verification of High-School completion.

When creating your Wisconsin Registry Program Profile remember:

- You will need to have an individual Wisconsin Registry membership - designating your program as your employer - and Career Level (determined by Wisconsin Registry) before being assigned to a position on the Program Profile
- A person can only be associated with one program's Wisconsin Registry Program Profile at a time. This means a person working at more than one program must choose one Program Profile to be listed on.

Note: Programs can refer to the Maintaining Your Wisconsin Registry Program Profile policy (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/policies/ys-maintain-profile.pdf>) for more information and/or contact the Child Care Information Center (CCIC) at 1-800-362-7353 for assistance.

## Element A: Primary Provider Education

Research indicates that educators with higher levels of education are linked to improved outcomes for children. YoungStar verifies Provider educational qualifications through the Wisconsin Registry. This requires that Providers have completed a Registry Program Profile, entering both the “Primary Family Provider” and the “Licensee/Owner” (<https://wregistry.org/programs-organizations/resource-center/>).

### Indicator: Primary Family Provider Qualifications

Provider with Wisconsin Registry **Level 7** or higher – *Required for 3 Stars*

Provider with Wisconsin Registry **Level 10** or higher – *Required for 4 Stars*

Provider with Wisconsin Registry **Level 12** or higher – *Required for 5 Stars*

\* For YoungStar purposes, 60 credits beyond high school with at least 30 of those credits related to early childhood or school-age care is accepted as equivalent to Wisconsin Registry Level 12.

Note: Wisconsin Registry levels **do not** reflect licensing requirements. The individual serving in a position must minimally meet licensing requirements for that position. All questions regarding whether a staff person meets the minimum requirements for their position should be directed to a licensing or certification specialist.

### Each Primary Family Provider Assigned to the Wisconsin Registry Program Profile will:

- Have their educational qualifications counted toward the program’s YoungStar rating
- Plan, implement, and supervise the daily activities for a group of children
- Communicate with families
- Spend the greatest number of hours between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. with children in care each week

Note: If a family child care program has a person, other than the Licensee or Owner, teaching for the greatest number of hours between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., that person should be listed as the “Primary Family Provider” on the Wisconsin Registry Program Profile.

Example:

- If a program is open from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and the owner, Judy, works with children from 6:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. and then again from 3:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. (a total of 25 hours per week) and an employee or volunteer, Beth, works with children from 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. (a total of 32.5 hours), then Beth should be listed as the Primary Family Provider

### VERIFICATION

All educational requirements will be verified using the Wisconsin Registry Program Profile. The YoungStar Coach will verify that the Primary Family Provider present in the program is the individual listed as the Primary Family Provider on the Wisconsin Registry Program Profile. If the Coach cannot verify this, the rating will not be completed. For further verification, time sheets or pay stubs may be required.

## Element B: Learning Environment and Curriculum

Providing a safe, nurturing, and responsive environment is the foundation for supporting the learning and development of young children.

### Indicator: Developmentally Appropriate Environments (DAE)

Providers create developmentally appropriate environments by intentionally creating a physical and social environment - including the materials, room arrangement, interactions, schedules, and routines that make up each day - that supports the development of the whole child, focusing on the individual needs and interests of each child, and guided by the *Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS)* or *School-Age Curricular Framework (SACF)*.

#### Programs must demonstrate the following:

**Item 1:** Staff provide developmentally appropriate interactions and promote positive relationships

All the following must be observed:

- All staff/staff and staff/child interactions must be positive or at least neutral
- Staff and children demonstrate enjoyment in being with each other
- Staff respond to children's needs promptly and appropriately
- Staff have developmentally appropriate expectations for children's behavior

At least two of these additional practices must be observed:

- Staff are near children when promoting positive interactions and learning opportunities
- Staff initiate language and literacy activities to support language development (e.g., storytelling, reading books, nursery rhymes, sign language, allowing children time to respond, expanding on children's vocabulary)
- Staff have turn-taking conversations with most children and ask follow-up questions with a pleasant tone of voice
- Staff intentionally create opportunities for all children to engage in peer interaction in ways that are appropriate for each child
- Staff provide children with descriptive feedback for their efforts or accomplishments (e.g., instead of simply saying "good job," staff are more descriptive by saying, "You picked up those blocks; that helps to keep our program safe")

**Item 2:** The environment is organized into interest centers or play areas to support children's meaningful play. Materials in all required interest centers and/or play areas must be accessible for children to use for the entire uninterrupted free choice time period.

- Family Child Care Program – Programs must have accessible materials provided within at least two *play areas*. A **play area** is a space that is large enough for children to play with accessible, organized materials.
  - An interest center can be used and is considered a type of play area

Note: The Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale tool includes requirements for block and dramatic play interest centers at the excellent level.

**Item 3:** The following types of materials must be developmentally appropriate and accessible to children in each program. At minimum there must be:

- One book for each child present at any given time
- Six different examples of fine motor materials
- Six different examples of art materials (when all children 24 months or older)
- Two sets of 10 to 20 blocks (when all children are 12 months or older)
- Five different examples of dramatic play materials
- Five different examples of nature/science materials (when all children 24 months or older)
- Six different examples of math materials

**Item 4:** Accessible materials are reflective of the WMELS five domains and/or the SACF nine content areas, different learning styles, and varied levels of difficulty.

- The WMELS five domains and/or the SACF nine content areas must be reflected in the materials offered. Programs serving only school-age children may be using WMELS and/or SACF.
  - The “Approaches to Learning” domain recognizes that children approach learning in different ways. It addresses the importance of how children learn, as well as what children learn. This is demonstrated by offering materials and/or experiences that address children’s different learning styles (e.g., visual, kinesthetic/active, auditory).
- At least three types of materials and/or experiences offer children varied levels of difficulty. Materials should be from different learning activities, for example, one from books, one from fine motor, and one from dramatic play.
- Materials in the interest centers/play areas must be considered easily accessible, allowing children to independently reach furnishings, equipment, and materials

**Item 5:** The daily schedule must include a minimum of 50 consecutive minutes of uninterrupted free choice. Materials in all required interest centers and/or play areas must be accessible for children to use for the entire uninterrupted free choice time period.

Clarifications:

- For programs open more than eight hours, the 50 consecutive minutes cannot be during the first or last two hours of program operation
- For programs open more than four hours per day, 50 consecutive minutes is required
- For programs open less than 4 hours per day, 30 consecutive minutes is required
- For programs with split schedules, the 50 consecutive minutes can be split into two segments of consecutive, uninterrupted time
  - For example, if a program is open for two hours before school and three hours in the afternoon, the program can split the minutes by having 25 minutes in the morning and 25 minutes in the afternoon

Note: When 50 minutes of free choice occurs outdoors, DAE can be earned if items 2 through 4 are met in the outdoor space where children are playing.

## **VERIFICATION**

The YoungStar Coach will verify all items within this indicator through observation. If more information is needed, lesson plans, schedules, and/or interviews may be used.

## Element C: Business and Professional Practices

Early education programs that use effective business and professional practices are more likely to provide a high-quality learning environment, stay in business, and interact more sensitively with children and families.

### Indicator: Budgeting/Record-Keeping/Payment Agreement

Good planning for any organization, including child care, includes budgeting and record-keeping. Budgeting provides a road map for implementing program goals and objectives. Thoughtful planning, accurate record-keeping, and continuous review is essential to effectively manage an early education program.

#### Programs must demonstrate the following:

**Item 1:** The program develops an annual line-item budget including the following:

- Projected and actual income and expenses for the current fiscal year, divided into line-items
  - A program budget must be in place for the current 12-month period, using whatever fiscal year the program has chosen (e.g., if the program is using a fiscal year from July to June, and it is October 2023, the YoungStar Coach will verify the budget from July 2023 to June 2024).
  - The budget can be shown in one page covering a 12-month period or can be separated into months or quarters.
- At least one item from the program's QIP must be identified in the budget (e.g., training is identified in the program's QIP and is also an expense in the line-item "continuing education" on the program budget)

**Item 2:** The program reviews the budget annually and adjusts future annual budgets as necessary. A report of actual income and expenses divided into line-items for the previous fiscal year is available and was used to inform the current year's annual budget.

**Item 3:** The program demonstrates record-keeping practices that track income and expenses and hours worked

- The program tracks actual income and expenses on a monthly basis
- The program has written documentation of hours worked caring for children in the home (e.g., daily sign-in/out record – license hours alone are not acceptable)
- The program has written documentation of additional business hours worked in the home when children are not there (e.g., menu planning, lesson planning, cleaning, writing newsletters), including the date(s), activities done, and length of time spent on each activity

Note: If the Provider does not live in the place where they provide care for children, hours worked in the home do not need to be tracked.

Note: It is not an acceptable business practice to determine actual income received for the year based on one month's worth of budget information.

**Item 4:** A parent payment agreement must be signed and on file for all families that have a Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy authorization with the program. The agreement must be present at the location where the child is receiving care. All parent payment agreements must be kept on file for three years after the child's last day of attendance. Programs can use DCF form 5224-E (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/doc/5224.docx>) or create one of their own.

Forms must include:

- The price the program charges for monthly or weekly care
- The days and hours the program operates
- Any discounts or scholarships that are available to parents
- Any discounts or scholarships that the parent is receiving
- The parent's payment schedule
- The program's anticipated closure dates
- Payment expectations for the child's anticipated and unanticipated absences
- Payment expectations for the program's closure dates
- Parent procedures for termination of a child's enrollment
- Program procedures for termination of a child's enrollment

## VERIFICATION

The YoungStar Coach will verify the following:

- The current 12-month line-item budget
- The QIP, to ensure that at least one item is also noted in the budget
- The previous 12-month budget with actual income/expenses noted
- Notation of when the budget was annually reviewed to inform the current budget
- Evidence of one month of tracking income and expenses
- Documentation of hours worked in the home caring for children
- Documentation of hours worked in the home when children are not present

The program must provide physical copies of the necessary documents or have access to a digital copy of the budget for rating. Documents provided must be updated and completed for each rating year.

If the program has a child enrolled whose family is receiving a subsidy through the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy program, the Coach will verify all required elements from one parent payment agreement. If there are no families in the program receiving subsidy, the Coach does not have to verify a parent payment agreement.

## Indicator: Family Engagement

Family engagement is an ongoing process that occurs through respectful and responsive relationship building between early childhood staff and families. Quality family engagement occurs when programs offer opportunities for all families to be partners in their child's education. Family engagement is different from, but builds on, family involvement. Family involvement occurs when families participate in activities and take advantage of opportunities at their child's early learning setting. This usually means that families attend meetings or special events a program offers. On the other hand, family engagement focuses on listening, welcoming ideas, and encouraging shared decision making. The goal of family engagement is to create partnerships, leading to stronger outcomes for children.

- 3 Star requirement: Programs must demonstrate how they meet **at least one practice** from each of the four items.
- 4 and 5 Star requirement: Programs must demonstrate how they meet **at least two practices** from each of the four items.

# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN QRIS

## Key Features of Family Engagement

<h3>Communication</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Respectful two-way exchange of information</li><li>• Multiple ways to communicate are offered</li><li>• Time is made to engage families meaningfully in conversations</li></ul> 	<h3>Family Needs and Feedback</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Family input guides program planning and policies</li><li>• Program is adapted to meet the needs of children and families</li><li>• Hiring practices of staff and volunteers reflect family's diverse backgrounds</li></ul> 
<h3>Collaborative Activities with Families</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fathers are encouraged to participate in activities</li><li>• Opportunities exist for staff and families to learn from one another</li><li>• Volunteer opportunities match families' strengths, interests, and skills</li></ul> 	<h3>Community Resources and Family Support</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Families are connected to community resources</li><li>• Support and planning around transitions is provided</li><li>• Educational &amp; developmental resources are offered for families to use at home</li></ul> 

## **Item 1: Communication**

Quality family engagement includes a variety of practices that encourage communication between Providers and families. Quality practices take into consideration each family's communication needs and preferences, building mutual respect and understanding.

### **Practice 1: Respectful two-way exchange of information**

Examples:

- a. Efforts are made to communicate with children and families in their preferred language. Program can access linguistic supports as necessary
- b. A written philosophy supports communication as a way to develop program and family relationships
- c. Parent handbooks are provided to families
- d. Families are invited to share what they know about their children

### **Practice 2: Multiple ways to communicate are offered**

Examples:

- a. Regular written communication using multiple formats is available to families (e.g., social media, email, newsletters, calendar)
- b. Families' preferred methods of communication are used (e.g., face-to-face, email, phone, letter)
- c. Bulletin boards are maintained and updated with program information and events

### **Practice 3: Time is made to engage families in meaningful conversation**

Examples:

- a. Staff schedules allow time for meaningful communication with families
- b. Initial intake or orientation meetings introduce families to the program
- c. Families are notified in advance when changes or transitions will occur (e.g., substitute Providers, other events)

## **Item 2: Family Needs and Feedback**

It is important that programs understand the needs and goals of the children and families they serve. Asking for, and using, family feedback allows the program to gather family perspectives and continuously improve. Feedback can be collected in a variety of ways (surveys, intake forms, comments, complaint submission

processes, exit interviews, child and family strengths, and needs assessments) and must be used to inform program decisions, making the program more reflective of the children and families it serves.

### **Practice 1: Family input guides program planning and policies**

Examples:

- a. Program has a written family feedback procedure explaining how feedback will be collected and used
- b. Program has a family advisory group with active family participation and/or families participate in program decision making
- c. Program completes the Strengthening Families Self-Assessment Checklist and findings are incorporated into program planning
- d. Families are invited to share concerns and collaborate with the Provider to find solutions
- e. Families are encouraged to participate in program evaluations/surveys AND programs demonstrate how the results impact their program decision making

### **Practice 2: Program is adapted to meet the needs of children and families**

Examples:

- a. Family strengths and needs assessments are completed, and a plan for utilizing information gathered is established
- b. Program conducts child assessments and shares results with families in a manner that invites and considers the parent's perspective
- c. Meetings and events are determined by family schedules and needs
- d. Program collaborates with parents to create and incorporate individual written educational and developmental goals for the child and family
- e. Family choice and decision making are promoted

### **Practice 3: Hiring practices of staff and volunteers reflect families' diverse backgrounds**

Examples:

- a. Program can demonstrate that there are racial, ethnic, and cultural similarities between program staff/volunteers and the children/families enrolled
- b. Program uses positive images of diversity on its social media/website and diversity-related cues (equal opportunity employer statement, link to program's diversity policy) in job postings

### **Item 3: Collaborative Activities with Families**

Families feel engaged when they are provided with multiple opportunities to meaningfully participate in their child's care and education. Programs can offer activities that help to create partnerships with parents to promote healthy child development and family connections.

#### **Practice 1: Families are encouraged to participate in activities**

Examples:

- a. Participation of fathers or male role models for a child is encouraged and the program acknowledges that fathers/males can be equally knowledgeable caretakers
- b. Extended family members are invited to participate in program activities acknowledging the various family members that support and care for children

#### **Practice 2: Opportunities exist for staff and families to learn from one another**

Examples:

- a. Program offers opportunities for families to share knowledge about their child (e.g., interests, approaches to learning, the child's developmental needs, and the family's concerns and goals for their children)
- b. Regular parent/Provider conferences encourage sharing between the Provider and the family
- c. Activities encourage the development of parent confidence and competence
- d. Family traditions are shared in programs and family photos are displayed
- e. Diversity is reflected in images and languages included on posters, signs, and other program materials
- f. Frequent family participation in the program is encouraged. To ensure that all enrolled families are able to participate in some opportunities, they are flexibly scheduled in consideration of families' employment/education schedules, language preferences, cultural practices, and holiday and religious commitments.
- g. Program facilitates social networking and collaborative opportunities between families

#### **Practice 3: Volunteer opportunities match families' strengths, interests, and skills**

Examples:

- a. Program encourages parent volunteer opportunities reflective of the strengths, interests, and skills of each family (with attention given to family capacity and time)
- b. Program facilitates family activities that demonstrate consideration for their needs and interests

## Item 4: Community Resources and Family Support

Early education staff can be a critical link between families and community resources. Program staff can fully support families by providing information around community resources that meet their unique needs.

### Practice 1: Families are connected to community resources

Examples:

- a. Community resource list is developed and shared
- b. Program identifies and engages community partners
- c. Relationships with public and community-based services are developed (e.g., health, school districts, social service agencies)
- d. Program has a family resource center area and/or staff provides consultations that include parenting and community service information
- e. Program navigates resources for families, links them to family supports, and provides direct advocacy (e.g., helps make initial phone calls for families, attends IEP's)

### Practice 2: Support and planning around transitions is provided

Examples:

- a. Program plans field trips to future 4K classrooms
- b. Provider has a parent meeting to discuss the transition plan for the child to move to a new program
- c. Families are offered direct support resources such as transportation

### Practice 3: Educational and developmental resources are available to families

Examples:

- a. Educational workshops and trainings are offered to families (e.g., information workshops, career workshops, education meetings, parent training)
- b. Training, education, and/or support is provided to families to prepare them to advocate and exercise their rights and responsibilities concerning the education of their children
- c. Program shares child development information across all Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) domains
- d. Program provides resources for extending learning experiences into the home
- e. Program includes home visitation services that include family caregivers and the child

## VERIFICATION

YoungStar Coaches may observe the practices being implemented or the program may show evidence of how they are meeting (or met within the past 12 months) the intent of a practice under an item. Examples of evidence could include:

- Program policies or philosophy
- Meeting agendas
- Parent handbook
- Job descriptions
- Documentation of referrals
- Partnership agreements
- Event flyers
- Schedules, emails, newsletters, text messages
- Introduction and exit surveys
- Communication logs
- Translation services
- Materials for diverse family structures
- Written communications

## Element D: Health and Well-Being

Children need access to daily physical activity and nutritious meals and snacks to help them develop lifelong healthy habits. Early education settings are a key place to start building these habits.

### Indicator: Healthy Nutrition and Physical Activity

Early education programs can learn more about how to improve their nutrition and physical activity practices by using a self-assessment tool and developing a quality improvement plan specific to nutrition and physical activity.

#### Programs must demonstrate all the following:

**Item 1:** Complete a YoungStar-approved nutrition and/or physical activity self-assessment tool(s). The self-assessment must have been completed within the past 12 months, and not used for a previous rating. Self-assessments should match the age of the majority of children in care. Multiple self-assessments can be used if desired. Self-assessments help programs become aware of their strengths and areas for improvement.

#### Self-Assessment Options:

- Birth - 60 Months
  - Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessments for Child Care (Go NAPSACC<sup>1</sup>)  
- <https://gonapsacc.org/self-assessment-materials>
    - Child Nutrition
    - Breastfeeding & Infant Feeding
    - Infant & Child Physical Activity **and** Outdoor Play & Learning
    - Farm to ECE
- School-Age
  - Active OST (Out of School Time) Healthy Bites Assessment  
(Link to Assessment available from YoungStar Coach)
  - Farm to OST Program Self-Assessment  
(Assessment available from YoungStar Coach)

**Item 2:** Develop a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) based on the results of the completed nutrition and/or physical activity self-assessment. The nutrition and/or physical activity QIP can be added to the program's overall QIP, rather than creating an additional form. The QIP must have been developed within the past 12 months and include:

- At least three specific goals that strengthen the program's nutrition and/or physical activity policies and/or practices

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<sup>1</sup>Ward D, Morris E, McWilliams C, Vaughn A, Erinosh T, Mazzuca S, Hanson P, Ammerman A, Neelon S, Sommers J, Ball S. (2014). Go NAPSACC: Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care, 2nd Edition. Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention and Department of Nutrition, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

- Action steps to meet the identified goals
- Timeline for completion of the goals
- Persons responsible for accomplishing the goals

**Item 3:** If the program allows meals, snacks or beverages to be brought from home, the program has a policy which states the program will supplement the meals, snacks and beverages if they do not meet the guidelines established by the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

**Item 4:** Programs having met this requirement in the past must also demonstrate progress on at least one nutrition and/or physical activity goal from the previous quality improvement plan.

## **VERIFICATION**

The YoungStar Coach will verify that an approved nutrition and/or physical activity self-assessment has been completed within the past 12 months with reviews/contributions from the Site Supervisor/Director and at least 75% of Group Leaders, demonstrated by a document signed by all staff who have reviewed or contributed.

The Coach will verify that the program has a nutrition and/or physical activity focused QIP, including areas of strength, three areas of improvement, and action plans for each area of improvement. (This does not have to be an additional QIP and can be added to the program's overall QIP.)

For programs that have not met this requirement in previous years, the Coach will verify that the QIP was developed based on the results of the self-assessment that was completed within the last 12 months.

For programs that have met this requirement in previous years, the Coach will verify the program has made progress on at least one nutrition and/or physical activity goal from the previous quality improvement plan.

## Congratulations!

Now that you've taken steps to improve your program's quality, let's think about what comes next.

1. Celebrate the accomplishments you've made so far!
2. Consider additional high-quality practices you could implement along your path of continuous quality improvement.
3. Introduce your staff to the Environment Rating Scale tool(s) that fits your program.
4. Your Coach is a valuable early childhood resource – Stay in Touch!
5. Visit <https://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers>



## Additional Requirements for 4 and 5 Star Ratings

### Indicator: Environment Rating Scales (ERS)

- 4 Star requirement: ERS program average score of 3.25
- 5 Star requirement: ERS program average score of 4.25

### VERIFICATION

A YoungStar Rater will observe the program during an identified 4-week period.

### Indicator: Family Handbook and Contract - Required for 4 and 5 Stars

A family handbook provides the foundation for common understanding between both the Provider and families. The handbook clearly states program expectations, policies, and procedures letting families know what they should and/or should not expect.

#### Programs must demonstrate the following:

**Item 1:** A written family handbook must include policies and/or procedures addressing the following topics:

- Vacation policy
- Holiday policy
- Provider time off policy and procedures, including how families are notified
- Provider sick day policy and procedures, including how families are notified
- Child absence policy and procedures including:
  - How and when a family should notify the program if their child will not be attending
  - Circumstances that will require the family to pick up an ill child
  - The timeframe that a family will be expected to arrive to pick up an ill child
- Procedures for families to follow if they have questions, concerns, or grievances
- A signature page acknowledging the receipt of the family handbook, signed by the Parent/Guardian

**Item 2:** The written family handbook must include a program philosophy, explaining the Provider's values, beliefs, and/or approach to caring for and teaching children (e.g., I believe children learn through play and provide a play-based curriculum. I encourage children to explore and be curious by providing many hands-on activities and experiences).

**Item 3:** The program has a contract with families that includes at least 5 days of Provider paid time off. A copy of the signed contract is given to the Parent/Guardian and a copy is kept on file at the program. The contract for paid time off includes the following:

- Number of paid days off (at least 5) the Provider receives per year
- Reference to the location or page number of the paid time off policy in the handbook if the policy is not included on the contract itself
- Dated signature of the Parent/Guardian, or person financially responsible
- Dated signature of the Provider

Note: The contract can be a separate document from the family handbook, or it can be a page that is pulled out of the handbook.

## **VERIFICATION**

The YoungStar Coach will review the written family handbook to verify that the required policies, procedures, and written philosophy is included. The Coach will verify at least one current, randomly selected family contract, ensuring it meets the above requirements.

## **Indicator: Policies to Reduce Risk and Financial Planning - Required for 5 Stars**

Policies to reduce risk and sound financial planning are not only good business practices, but also contribute to the overall quality of family child care.

### **Programs must demonstrate the following:**

**Item 1:** At least 3 of the 4 following practices and/or policies to reduce risk are in place:

- The family handbook includes a procedure to protect against children being released to anyone under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- The family handbook includes a procedure to protect against children being released to any person who does not have an appropriate car seat or seat belt to transport children
- All staff who care for children have annual child abuse and neglect (CAN) training and a written procedure explaining the actions to be taken if the Provider suspects child abuse or neglect
- The program has liability insurance to provide coverage for accidents and lawsuits

**Item 2:** The Provider creates budgets and financial plans that align with its written goals and philosophies. The Provider's identified priorities are financially supported in budget (e.g., the Provider states they serve organic food and the budget shows additional money for organic food, the Provider is improving the outdoor learning space and budgets additional money for outdoor equipment).

**Item 3:** The Provider has procedures for a review of the budget every six months. The review process is defined as comparing actual income and expenses to budgeted projections. The Provider should note, on their budget, each date a review took place.

**Item 4:** Long term fiscal records are maintained. The Provider must have access to records from the current year and the previous two years. At least three of the following must be available for verification from the current and previous two years:

- Receipts for business purchases
- Bank statements
- Calendar notations
- Attendance records
- Mileage records

**Item 5:** The Provider demonstrates sound financial planning by meeting at least two of five practices below:

- The Provider can show a profit from three of the last five years (if in business for at least five years). Profit or loss is shown on tax form 1040, line 12 or Schedule C (Profit or Loss Form), line 31).

- The Provider claimed at least three business expenses on tax form 1040 Schedule C, lines 8-27
- At least one business fee has increased within the past three years (e.g., tuition, registration, late payments, materials, or creating a new fee)
- The Provider consults with a qualified tax preparer annually

Note: This item does not require that the Provider’s taxes are prepared by, or filed by, a qualified tax preparer

- The Provider can show that at least two of the below written policies (or documented practices) are in place to ensure adequate income is earned:
  - The Provider has an “Insufficient Funds” fee for returned checks
  - The Provider requires families to pay in cash after a check is returned
  - The Provider has a policy requiring cash-only payments after a defined number of returned checks are received
  - The Provider charges a late payment fee
  - The Provider requires payment before care is provided
  - There is a policy which links lack of timely payment with refusal of care for child until payment made
  - There is a policy which links lack of timely payment with termination
  - The Provider provides families with invoices for tuition or fees owed in a specified timeframe
  - The Provider has policies that clearly explain what each fee covers (e.g., weekly tuition covers child care for a specified period, registration fee covers an annual paperwork fee)
  - There is a policy explaining options for repayment plans, if applicable
  - Direct deposit options are provided to families
  - The Provider has clear policies and procedures on good accounting and record-keeping practices, which include but are not limited to:
    - Timely notification to parents when payment for service is due
    - Invoices to families indicate paid amount and outstanding balance
    - The Provider provides itemized receipts of payment associated with the period of care for the child(ren) and any out of pocket payment, if applicable

## VERIFICATION

The YoungStar Coach will review the following, as applicable:

- Tax documents
- Program and Family handbook
- Liability Insurance policy
- Current and previous program budgets
- Fiscal records (current and previous two years)

Additional documents may be required as requested by the Coach.

## High-Quality Practices

Using research completed by the University of Wisconsin – Madison, Institute for Research on Poverty, seven High-Quality Practices have been identified that are most closely linked to improved child outcomes:

1. Curriculum Aligned with WMELS/SACF
2. Individual Child Portfolios
3. Intentional Planning to Improve Child Outcomes
4. Developmental Screening
5. Tracking Child Outcomes
6. Social Emotional/Inclusion Training
7. *Strengthening Families Through Early Care and Education with Mandated Reporter Training*

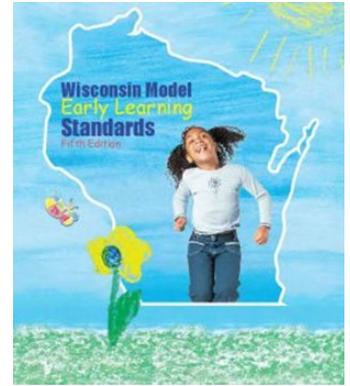
To earn a **4 Star rating**, programs must demonstrate at least **4 of the 7** High-Quality Practices.

To earn a **5 Star rating**, programs must demonstrate at least **5 of the 7** High-Quality Practices.

## High-Quality Practice 1

### Curriculum Aligned with Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS)/ School-Age Curricular Framework (SACF)

The WMELS and SACF are frameworks that guide decisions about what and how to teach young children, and in what order skills and behaviors are built. The WMELS and SACF are supported by evidence-based practices and provide developmental expectations including what children should know and be able to do as they develop. Aligning curriculum with the WMELS and/or SACF ensures that programs are providing opportunities for children to grow in all areas of development. Neither the WMELS nor the SACF is a curriculum or an assessment tool.



**To meet the requirements of this High-Quality Practice, programs must demonstrate the following:**

1. Lesson plans reflect the WMELS five domains and/or SACF\* nine content areas
  - \* All SACF content areas do not have to be addressed each day. The program determines how many times per week each area will be addressed. These guidelines should be included in the family handbook, employment policies, and/or staff training materials.
2. Goals/learning objectives for the whole group or individual children are documented on, or as an attachment to, lesson plans, activity plans or individual child learning plans
3. Developmentally appropriate learning materials, activities, and experiences are selected and used to help individual children and/or the whole group of children reach their goals/learning objectives
4. Information about the WMELS/SACF is communicated to families using two or more of the following:
  - Posters
  - Family handbook
  - Family conferences
  - Newsletter
  - Family orientation materials

### VERIFICATION

The YoungStar Coach will review lesson plans and goals from the last consecutive four weeks, as well as parent communication.

## High-Quality Practice 2

### Individual Child Portfolios

A portfolio is a way to keep track of the ongoing development of an individual child. It is more than a collection of the child's work, but rather an intentionally planned process of collecting evidence of a child's learning and development. Documentation can include work samples, anecdotal notes, photographs with anecdotes, journaling, video clips, as well as goals for the child. Throughout this process, Providers can evaluate and record a child's growth by observing the child in naturally occurring daily activities.

**To meet the requirements of this High-Quality Practice, programs must demonstrate the following:**

1. At least one year of portfolio use in program.
2. Portfolios are used for all children attending at least 50% of the time (up to 40 hours per week) the program is open for the specific age group.
3. Each portfolio includes documentation from each of the following categories:
  - The child's interests (e.g., favorite activities, experiences, materials)
  - The child's friends (e.g., who the child interacts with or plays with)
  - The child's family (e.g., stories the family has shared, photos of siblings, pets, or other important people in the child's life)
  - Developmental information (e.g., matching the child's everyday work with developmental expectations, observing and collecting information for all domains of development)



Note: A single piece of documentation may represent more than one category.

4. For children birth – five years: At least one piece of documentation (e.g., work sample, anecdotal note, photograph with anecdote) added to each child's portfolio each month. All documentation entered in the portfolio must include the date, the child's name, and the observer's name.

Note: For children who are new to a program, the first month of attendance should be used to get to know the child. After the first month, follow the guidance above.

For school-age children: At least one piece of documentation added every three months. All documentation entered in the portfolio includes the date, the child's name, and the observer's name. If the program is only open for part of the year, pro-rate based on the number of months the program is open. For example, if the program is only open for three months, documentation must be added at least one time.

For summer-only school-age children: At least one piece of documentation must be added every six weeks.

Note: School-age children can take an active role in the portfolio process by choosing documentation they would like to have included in the portfolio.

Documentation for school-age children can include the enrollment inventory

- <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/enrollmentinventory.pdf>

5. Goals/learning objectives for each individual child must be updated and/or added to the portfolio each month. Each goal/learning objective needs to be dated with the month and year.

Note: For summer-only school-age children, goals/learning objectives must be updated and/or added to every six weeks.

6. When a child has mastered a goal/learning objective, the portfolio must contain supporting evidence.

## **VERIFICATION**

Verification of this indicator will include review of portfolios for 25% of randomly selected children who attend at least 50% of the time (up to 40 hours per week) the program is open. If portfolios are sent home, the YoungStar Coach will verify the procedure or practice for sending portfolios home in the family handbook.

## High-Quality Practice 3

### Intentional Planning to Improve Child Outcomes

Early childhood assessment practices help educators communicate important growth and development milestones to families. Additionally, with information from individual assessments, educators can intentionally plan how they will best support children as they grow. When educators use assessment data to make decisions about the materials, experiences, and activities they provide, the environment becomes more supportive of the developmental needs of each child. A program should use documentation, including work samples, anecdotal notes, developmental checklists, and photographs (items found in the child's portfolio) to inform their formal assessment.

#### To meet the requirements of this High-Quality Practice, programs must demonstrate the following:

1. Provider uses an ongoing child assessment tool to assess individual children. The following are required:
  - A formal assessment is completed for each child at least two times per year (or the frequency recommended for the tool)

Note: For summer-only school-age children: A formal assessment is completed for each child at least once every twelve weeks (or the frequency recommended for the tool)

- The specific date each assessment was completed for each child is noted
  - The assessment tool must include the use of a developmental continuum (showing the progression of development from birth to five or older)
  - The assessment tool is aligned with the WMELS and/or the SACF
  - Assessments that are designed by the program may be used if they are developmentally appropriate and meet the above requirements. The YoungStar Coach will determine if the assessment meets the requirement.
2. Provider is trained on the program's chosen assessment tool (e.g., attending a training, reading a book, watching a video, or training from within the program)
  3. Provider monitors individual child development through (at least) a monthly review of progress, documented in an assessment summary. An assessment summary is a brief written description of the child's progress after reviewing collected documentation, goals and developmental checklists. The summary is used to set the next goal/learning objective for the child.
  4. Children's daily activities, experiences, and material choices are individualized and linked to assessment data
  5. Assessment data is shared with families preferably during conferences. If families are unable to participate in conferences, a signed form on file acknowledges assessment data was shared and that the program attempted to contact the family.

## VERIFICATION

The YoungStar Coach will verify assessment documentation for 25% of randomly selected children who are in attendance at least 50% of the time (up to 40 hours per week) the program is open. Documentation required includes:

- Lesson plans: most recent consecutive four weeks of documentation
- Family meeting and/or refusal to meet form
- Completed assessments/developmental milestone checklists/portfolios – including dates for frequency of documentation
- YoungStar Coach interview with Provider to understand the following:
  - How the Provider was trained on the assessment tool
  - The process for conducting assessments
  - The frequency of child assessment
  - How the Provider uses assessment data to inform goal setting and planning

## High-Quality Practice 4

### Developmental Screening

The ongoing use of developmental screeners provides families and educators with a snapshot of a child's development. A screener provides point-in-time information about a child and is not a tool to measure progress over time. One purpose of a developmental screener is to identify children who may benefit from further assessment and may have a possible need for early intervention services.

**To meet the requirements of this High-Quality Practice, programs must demonstrate the following:**

1. A developmental screener that matches the ages of children served is used. Developmental screeners are intended to be completed by families. Developmental screening tools that can be used include:
  - Ages and Stages Questionnaires – 3 (ASQ-3) (2 months - 60 months)
    - If using the ASQ:SE, the program must also use the ASQ-3 to earn this practice
  - Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS) (birth – 7 years 11 months)
  - YoungStar School-Age Enrollment Inventory (School-Age)
    - <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/enrollmentinventory.pdf>
2. Provider, or identified staff is trained (e.g., read a book, watched a video, or attended a training) on the developmental screening tool used in the program.
3. A completed developmental screening, from the most recent 12 months, is on file for all regularly attending children that have been enrolled in the program for 45 days or longer. If any family chooses not to complete a screener, a signed waiver is on file for the child.

A sample waiver can be found here:  
- <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/samplescreeningwaiver.pdf>
4. The family handbook includes a policy stating that developmental screening opportunities are offered annually to all families or more often if recommended by the tool.
5. Program provides referrals and resources to families as needed.
6. Developmental screenings are reviewed by the program staff and findings are discussed with families.
7. A developmental screener is completed at least annually

## **VERIFICATION**

A certificate of attendance for training will be verified or the YoungStar Coach can interview the Provider to verify understanding of the tool.

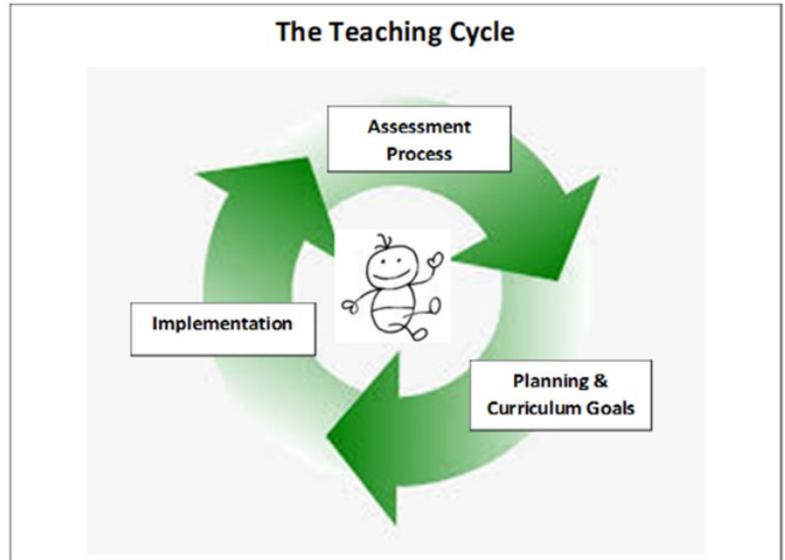
Screenings (or waivers) must be received for every child who attends at least 50% of the time (up to 40 hours per week) the program is open. This indicator will be verified for 25% of the children attending the program at least 50% of time (up to 40 hours per week) the program is open.

The Coach will interview the Provider for verification on how referrals and resources are provided and how information is shared with families. The Coach will review the developmental screening policy for frequency of use or verify that there are at least annual completed screeners/waivers on file for each child.

## High-Quality Practice 5

### Tracking Child Outcomes

The teaching cycle outlines the process educators use to help them determine the next steps in promoting a child's development. Using ongoing assessment data collected in a child's portfolio, along with formal assessment data, a Provider can establish individual child and program goals. With the goals in mind, materials and experiences are chosen for the learning environment (intentional planning) allowing the child opportunities to practice, or work on the goal within the playful, natural environment. The Provider repeats the cycle by observing what the child does when given the opportunity to use these materials and have these experiences. The Provider then documents or tracks the child's outcomes. An intentional tracking system allows the program to document the growth of each child, indicating the progress that has been made over time related to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that children demonstrate.



Note: This High-Quality Practice can only be earned if the program also meets the requirements for the Intentional Planning and Child Portfolios practices. This practice may not be earned if the program has not yet completed assessments for the first time.

### To meet the requirements of this High-Quality Practice, programs must demonstrate the following:

1. Provider can explain how child outcomes are tracked.

Examples of outcome tracking forms can be found here:

- <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/resources>

2. Program demonstrates that it has been tracking child outcomes for at least six months and has the following documentation:
  - A recent (completed within the last 12 months) assessment that has been completed for each child
  - Goals/learning objectives that are reflective of assessment data
  - Lesson plans that include activities/experiences/materials that relate to child goals
  - Portfolio observations that include documentation of child meeting or making efforts towards a goal
  - Outcomes tracked using a child outcomes form

## **VERIFICATION**

Provider must be able to document at least six months of tracking child outcomes for every child in regular attendance. Children in regular attendance are those attending at least 50% of the time (up to 40 hours per week) the program is open.

The YoungStar Coach will review of the most recent consecutive four weeks of documentation (lesson plans, activity plans, or individual child learning plans) for 25% of randomly selected, regularly attending children from the program. The Coach will also verify that the most recent four weeks of documentation reflect individual child assessments and portfolios for the children listed on the lesson plans, activity plans or individual child learning plans selected.

Summer-only school-age: To earn this indicator, programs must be able to demonstrate the tracking of at least six weeks of child outcomes. The program may demonstrate this by showing the previous year's information combined with the current year's information.

## High-Quality Practice 6

### Social Emotional/Inclusion of Children with Special Needs Training



The development of healthy social and emotional skills is critical to a child's success throughout their education and into adulthood. A child's ability to get along with others, use impulse control, identify emotions in themselves and others, follow directions, and solve problems begins at birth and continues throughout the early childhood years, when rapid brain development is occurring. Within the context of relationships with nurturing adults and peers, these skills are developed with intentional teaching of social and emotional competencies.

Including children with special needs in a program's activities and daily routines is important for the development and success of all children.

Inclusion helps to create a sense of belonging, creates positive social relationships, and helps children understand how differences make each child unique and important.

High-quality training focused on the use of evidence-based strategies in these two areas allows educators to enhance their practices.

#### To meet the requirement of this High-Quality Practice, programs must demonstrate the following:

- The Primary Family Provider listed on the Wisconsin Registry Program Profile has completed at least one of the Wisconsin Registry-verified social emotional/inclusion trainings listed below:
  - 3 or more college credits around inclusion
  - Wisconsin Pyramid Model for Social and Emotional Competence (24 hours)
  - Wisconsin Pyramid Model for Social and Emotional Competence Infant/Toddler (24 hours)
  - Wisconsin Pyramid Model e-Modules with Reflective Coaching (24 hours)
  - Wisconsin Pyramid Model e-Modules with Reflective Coaching – Preschool (24 hours)
  - 15 or more hours of training in Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)
  - 15 or more hours of training in Guiding Children's Behavior in School-Age Care
  - 12 or more hours of training in Tribes® TLC
  - 24 or more hours of YoungStar-approved, non-credit training on social emotional competencies, inclusive practices, serving children with disabilities, and children with special health needs

Note: More information on YoungStar-approved, non-credit training can be found at:

- <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/resources>

## VERIFICATION

Provider training is verified through the Wisconsin Registry Program Profile.

## High-Quality Practice 7

### Strengthening Families Through Early Care and Education with Mandated Reporter Training

Strengthening Families is a research-informed approach to increasing family strengths, enhancing child development, and reducing the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. The five protective factors guide educators in understanding how to engage programs, families, and communities in building supports for children and families.

#### To meet the requirement of this High-Quality Practice, programs must demonstrate the following:

- The Primary Family Provider listed on the Wisconsin Registry Program Profile has completed at least one of the Wisconsin Registry-verified trainings listed below:
  - *Strengthening Families Through Early Care and Education with Mandated Reporter*
  - *Strengthening Families Through Early Care and Education with Mandated Reporter Online (Wisconsin)*
  - Family Services Credential
  - *Touchpoints Birth to Three: Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development*

Note: More information on YoungStar-approved, non-credit training can be found at:

- <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/resources>

## VERIFICATION

Provider training is verified through the Wisconsin Registry Program Profile.

## Congratulations!

Now that you've taken steps to improve your program's quality, let's think about what comes next.

1. Celebrate the accomplishments you've made so far!
2. Utilize your Quality Improvement Plan and ERS report(s) to continue making progress toward your program goals!
3. Consider implementing additional High-Quality Practices.
4. Consider Practice-Based Coaching during your off-year.
5. Stay in touch with your YoungStar Coach! They are a valuable early childhood resource.



Visit: <https://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers>