



YoungStar Review and Appeal Process

Effective July 1, 2019

The YoungStar review and appeal process requires that:

- YoungStar staff explain a child care rating before it is published on the public database;
- A provider clearly documents, in writing, their objections to the rating; and
- A set timeline, as outlined below, be followed for progressive review of each case.

Guidelines for best practices and other state experiences in establishing appeals processes were considered in developing the YoungStar Appeals Process. YoungStar includes:

- Clear guidelines for what provider quality criteria are rated;
- Objective criteria that are tied to research (e.g.: education and training verified by The Registry; valid and reliable observers conduct observations on learning environment, using nationally-accepted, research-based Environment Rating Scales);
- An automated process to calculate a rating that combines all of the quality measures leading to a child care rating;
- Transparent and consistent methods for evaluating providers, including consistent rater reliability; and
- Clear documentation and justification of rationale for a provider's rating.

Process Overview

YoungStar's rating process ensures that no one individual is responsible for assigning a score – each rating is the compilation of several criteria, with items verified by multiple entities/individuals (i.e. Technical Consultant, The Registry, Environment Rating Scale Observer). YoungStar requires that a Technical Consultant and (when applicable) Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Observer meet with the provider before the provider's rating is approved and posted to the public website, in order to answer questions and address concerns about the rating outcome.

For formal ratings, the ERS Observer or his/her supervisor will call the provider to summarize the results of the formal rating prior to meeting with the program for a final onsite feedback meeting. The onsite feedback meeting generally occurs within six weeks of the date that the provider's observation window begins. For technical ratings, this onsite feedback meeting likely occurs immediately following the rating, during the final technical rating meeting with the program.

Providers have the opportunity to request an annual rating of all evaluation criteria associated with the type of rating selected, with the exception of training and education criteria, which is evaluated monthly through an automated process between The Registry and Department of Children and Families. If a program's staff training or education increases or decreases at any time throughout the year, a change to the provider's YoungStar rating may be made. **It is not a provider's right to have his or her YoungStar rating changed outside of an annual rating, even if education or training levels change.** Beginning July 1, 2012, Wisconsin Shares payments became tied to YoungStar ratings. Once a rating is accepted by an ERS observer or Technical

Consultant, the Wisconsin Shares subsidy amount is adjusted correspondingly beginning the first of the following month.

Steps in the Appeals Process

Onsite Feedback after Rating

The YoungStar Technical Consultant and/or ERS Observer explains the rating earned by each provider, while offering clear documentation as to why a rating was assigned and what specific points led to that rating, prior to approving and posting the rating on the public website. The provider and Technical Consultant and/or ERS Observer sign a document to confirm that all areas of their YoungStar rating were reviewed and explained. Signing the document does not mean that that provider agrees with the rating, nor does it prevent the provider from appealing the rating.

If, during this consultation, a provider tells the Technical Consultant and/or ERS Observer that they intend to appeal the rating, the Technical Consultant or ERS Observer will wait 30 calendar days before making the rating active, which publishes the rating on the public child care search website. If the appeal in writing is not received by the appropriate office (identified in the first step below) within 30 calendar days, the rating will be made active, be immediately published to the public child care search website, and impact corresponding Wisconsin Shares subsidy amounts beginning the first of the following month. If the provider does not indicate an intention to appeal during the consultation, the Technical Consultant or ERS Observer will make the rating active immediately following the onsite feedback meeting, which will immediately publish the rating on the public child care search website and impact corresponding Wisconsin Shares subsidy amounts beginning the first of the following month. The publication of the rating does not preclude the provider from appealing the rating, as long as the timelines below are followed.

If a provider declines an onsite review after rating, the Technical Consultant or ERS Observer will document the date of the decline. That date will be used in lieu of a date for onsite rating feedback session in the appeals process timeline.

If a provider is unable to complete an onsite feedback meeting within six weeks of the start of the designated observation window, the provider will have 30 days from the date the rating results are emailed or mailed to the program to complete the first step in the appeals process below.

Providers may request a review of their rating. For each step of the appeal process, the request must be in writing and provide a clear, concise explanation (including specific, relevant information) about what quality indicator(s) the provider believes was inaccurately assessed and why. The request for review must be received by the appropriate office within the designated timeframe or the request for review will not be considered.

1 – Initial Request to Review Rating	<p><i>The initial request to review must be received within 30 calendar days from the date of the onsite rating feedback session, the date that the provider declined an onsite rating feedback session, or the date that the rating results are emailed or mailed (if the provider cannot complete the session within six weeks of the start of the designated observation window).</i></p> <p>The initial request to review a technical or formal rating must be submitted to Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA). The SFTA Quality</p>
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	<p>Improvement Manager will review the rating and make a determination whether or not the initial rating was accurate.</p> <p>The SFTA Quality Improvement Manager will review documentation from the provider and the Technical Consultant and/or ERS Observer(s). They may speak to individuals involved in the rating or experts in the field to make a determination if the rating was accurate or if a new rating is warranted. If the original rating is determined accurate, the Quality Improvement Manager will provide a written explanation of this determination to the program and will offer to meet with the provider to explain this decision. The Quality Improvement Manager will also make the original rating active when the notification to the program is made, which will immediately publish the rating on the public child care search website. Corresponding Wisconsin Shares subsidy amounts will be impacted beginning the first of the following month.</p> <p>If the rating is determined inaccurate, the Quality Improvement Manager may update the rating accordingly OR may offer a second rating to the program. In either case, a written explanation will be given to the provider. If the Quality Improvement Manager determines a new rating is warranted, he or she can assign a different Technical Consultant or ERS Observer to complete the new rating. The new rating that is provided must be the same type of rating that was originally completed. For example, a provider that is appealing a technical rating would complete a second technical rating and could not request a formal rating.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the second rating is found to be the same as the first rating, the Quality Improvement Manager and key staff will offer to meet with the provider to explain why the rating is not adjusted. • If the second rating results in a different rating than the first, the Quality Improvement Manager and key staff will offer to meet with the provider to explain. <p>If a provider disagrees with the determination made by the SFTA Quality Improvement Manager, the process moves to Step 2.</p> <p><i>The initial rating review must be completed by Supporting Families Together Association within 30 calendar days of the date that the initial request for review is received.</i></p>
<p>2 – Second Request to Review Rating</p>	<p><i>The second request to review must be received within 15 calendar days from the date the decision in Step 1 was emailed and/or mailed to the provider.</i></p> <p>The second request to review a rating must be submitted to the Department of Children and Families, Bureau of Early Learning Policy. The Director of the Bureau will review all relevant information and if, in the review of the appeals process or decision, the Bureau Director identifies misinterpretations of DCF policy or YoungStar evaluation criteria, he/she can request additional</p>

information from the provider, the local YoungStar office, or Supporting Families Together Association, and can intervene in the rating decision. If the rating is determined accurate, a written response will be provided to explain the decision. If the rating is determined inaccurate, the Bureau Director may update the rating accordingly OR may offer a second rating to the program. In either case, a written explanation will be given to the provider. If the rating is determined to be inaccurate, and a higher rating is earned by the program, the higher rating will be backdated to the date that the original, lower rating was accepted by the SFTA Quality Improvement Manager.

Additionally, the Bureau Director reserves the right to intervene at any time during the appeals process if he or she identifies misinterpretations of DCF policy or YoungStar evaluation criteria.

The second step of the review must be completed within 30 calendar days from the date that the second request for review is received.

Providers have a right to appeal the outcome of the second review process. Pursuant to § DCF 201.07(3), Wis. Admin Code, a written request must be sent directly to, and received by, the Division of Hearings and Appeals no later than fifteen (15) days from the date of the response from the Department of Children and Families, Bureau of Early Learning Policy’s Director. Please attach a copy of this notice to your request for a hearing.

To submit your request for an administrative hearing under s. 227.44, Wis. Stats.:

<p>Send your request via U.S. MAIL:</p> <p>Division of Hearings and Appeals P.O. Box 7875 Madison, WI 53707-7875</p>	<p>Send your request via FACSIMILE:</p> <p>Division of Hearings and Appeals 608-264-9885</p>	<p>HAND-DELIVER your appeal to:</p> <p>Division of Hearings and Appeals 4822 Madison Yards Way Madison, WI</p>
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