



YoungStar

Frequently Asked Questions: Four-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K)

February 5, 2016

Note: Almost all questions have been revised since June 10, 2013; questions that have been substantially revised or added since the last update are highlighted.

YoungStar is a 5 Star quality rating and improvement system that supports child care and school-age care providers in the areas of education, learning environment & curriculum, business & professional practices and the health & well-being of children. Through this rating system the state addresses several key issues in Wisconsin's child care system. YoungStar:

- Focuses on improving outcomes for children by improving the overall quality of care
- Creates multiple pathways to professional development opportunities and better quality for child care and school-age programs
- Creates a clear, understandable tool for parents to choose quality child care
- Creates incentives and provides support for programs to improve services, particularly for low-income children
- Improves accountability for the Wisconsin Shares system

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Answers: Four-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K)

4K-1. What are the different models public school districts use to provide 4-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K) programs?

Public school districts across Wisconsin may offer four-year-old kindergarten (4K). If a public school district offers 4K, state statutes require that 437 hours of instruction be provided to age eligible four year olds. Districts use a wide variety of approaches when they provide 4K programming: Many districts, especially rural programs, offer 4K in a local public school district building (commonly called Model 1). Other public school districts use community models that bring the school district kindergarten program into child care classrooms. In these models, the school may hire the teacher (Model 2) or the district may fund the community site to hire the teacher (Model 3). With each site model, classroom set up varies between stand-alone classrooms to integrated and comprehensive scheduling in one classroom.

4K-2. Does it matter for YoungStar if the 4K teacher is a public school employee or child care employee?

No, YoungStar is looking at the educational qualifications of the Lead Teacher who is in the classroom during the non-4K hours. If the teacher is both the child care teacher and the 4K teacher, the teacher must hold an appropriate Wisconsin DPI 4K teacher license.

4K-3. When the public school district provides 4K in the school district building, are there requirements for YoungStar?

Stand-alone 4K programs in public school buildings, with no wrap-around child care, are not eligible to participate in YoungStar.

4K-4. Can a child care program in a 4K community approach model participate in YoungStar?

Child care/4K collaborations may participate in YoungStar if at least one (1) hour of child care service is provided per day outside of/beyond the 4K service delivery timeframe. If the program accepts Wisconsin Shares subsidy, it **must** participate in YoungStar. However, the educational qualifications of the 4K teacher may only be counted for YoungStar purposes if the teacher is in the classroom beyond the public school district-funded hours, and is providing child care teaching responsibility during the alternate hours of the day.

When the 4K program is in a classroom, *and* the classroom remains open (for example, as the 4 year classroom) before/after the 4K instruction, *and* the same teacher remains in the classroom throughout the day, this teacher should be listed on the Registry Program Profile as the Lead Teacher for the classroom so that his/her educational qualifications can be counted for YoungStar.

The classroom teacher, during non-4K hours, can receive technical consultation services if the child care program has requested technical consultation.

4K-5. How does YoungStar apply when the 4K is arranged as a stand-alone 4K classroom and is separate from child care classes within a community site?

When the district 4K classroom is in a separate room at a child care site, that portion/classroom of the child care site will not receive YoungStar technical consultation services and will not be rated in YoungStar. This classroom should not be listed on the Registry Program Profile. Only the classrooms providing child care may participate in YoungStar, and only these classrooms will be used to calculate the program's rating through the Registry Program Profile, observations, portfolio use, etc. If the child care

program has a YoungStar Formal Rating with Observation performed, only these non-4K child care classrooms would be eligible for observation and considered for teacher qualifications.

For example, the 4K program is in Classroom A between 8:00 and 11:30 a.m., and the children leave the Classroom A to return to their child care Classroom B with a different teacher for the remainder of the day: Classroom A would not be reviewed for YoungStar but Classroom B would.

For example, the 4K teacher is in the classroom between 8:00 and 11:30 a.m. for the 4K part of the day, and the remainder of the day the program is considered the 4 year old child care classroom with a different teacher: this classroom would be reviewed for YoungStar after 11:30 am, and the child care teacher for the hours that the classroom is a child care classroom should be listed on The Registry Program Profile.

4K-6. When can the 4K classroom teacher participate in YoungStar, and when can the classroom receive a Formal Rating with Observation in YoungStar?

In a community approach service delivery when all of the following qualifications are met:

- The 4K program is integrated into the child care programming throughout the day;
- The 4K teacher is providing the 4K curriculum AND additionally, providing child care teacher responsibility during the alternate hours of the child care day; and
- Private pay and/or Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy funding is used to fund hours of care outside of public school district-funded 4K time.

This DPI-licensed teacher should be linked to a classroom on The Registry Program Profile only if s/he is providing child care outside the 4K time. This classroom is eligible to have a YoungStar Formal Rating with Observation if there are at least two hours of consecutive child care programming (and if the entire child care program meets the other minimum requirements for a Formal Rating with Observation).

When the 4K teacher is only available during the portion of the day that is funded solely by public school district funding, the teacher cannot participate in YoungStar. During this portion of the day, the classroom is not eligible to have a YoungStar Formal Rating with Observation nor should the stand-alone 4K teacher be linked to the classroom on The Registry Program Profile.

4K-7. Can the 4K collaborative classroom receive a Formal Rating with Observation for the child care programming hours (beyond the 4K public school district-funded hours)?

Yes, if the classroom is utilized for two (2) or more consecutive hours of child care (beyond the 4K public school district-funded hours), then the classroom is eligible for a Formal Rating with Observation as long as the entire child care program meets the other minimum requirements for a Formal Rating with Observation.

For example, if the 4K program is in the classroom between 8:00 and 11:15 a.m., the remainder of the day the program is considered the 4 year old child care classroom and if the rest of the minimum requirements are met, that child care classroom could have a Formal Rating with Observation performed.

4K-8. How many hours does a classroom have to operate outside of 4K hours to be counted for YoungStar purposes?

One (1) or more hours of child care service delivery that is *not* funded by the public school district.

4K-9. What if a 4K program has already had a public school district-funded Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) done on the classroom?

The public school district-funded observation (when completed by a PDAS-approved technical consultant) may help the child care program plan quality improvement goals. However, Formal Environment Rating Scale (ERS) observations completed as a minimum requirement to reach a 4 or 5 Star YoungStar rating must be completed by a YoungStar Formal Rater assigned to the program, to ensure that the rating is valid and reliable across all classrooms and programs statewide.

4K-10. Is there a “minimum number of children served” eligibility requirement for a program to request Technical Consultation and a micro-grant for YoungStar?

In order for a child care program to request technical consultation (and to receive a micro-grant), the program must be serving at least one child.

4K-11. Where can I find information and resources related to 4K and 4K Community Collaborations?

For additional information related to 4K programming, see:

- DPI’s webpage on 4K in Wisconsin: <http://dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood/4k>

For further resources and information related to 4K Community Collaborations, please refer to:

- The Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP’s) 4KCA webpages:
 - <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/4k-community-approaches-about.php>
 - <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/4k-community-approaches-resources.php>
- DPI’s 4KCA Home Page, highlighting the benefits and impact of 4KCA: <http://dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood/kind/4k/4kca>
- *4K and YoungStar Decision Tree*: http://www.dcf.wi.gov/youngstar/pdf/4k_decision_tree.pdf
- *Comparison of DCF YoungStar Quality Indicators and DPI 4K Requirements and Optional Areas of Focus*: http://www.dcf.wi.gov/rttt/dcf_project_3.htm

For more information on 4K community models (Models 2 and 3), child care licensing laws, and Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy payment regulations, see *Collaborative Child Care Programs – Frequently Asked Questions* at:

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/publications/pdf/dcf_p_pfs4085.pdf