



YoungStar

Frequently Asked Questions: Head Start and Early Head Start

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

Questions: Head Start and Early Head Start

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Answers: Head Start and Early Head Start

HS/EHS-1. What types of Head Start programs are there?

Head Start may be delivered through several approved program options, including center-based, licensed family child care homes, and home-based options. Descriptions of these models are available on the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center (ECLKC) website:

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc>

Early Head Start

The reauthorization of the Head Start Act in 1994 established Early Head Start as a program to serve low-income pregnant women and families with children from birth to age 3 with family-centered services that facilitate child development, support parental roles, and promote self-sufficiency.

All Early Head Start programs serve families through full-day, full-year programs that best meet the needs of families. Program options for EHS include center-based services, home-based services, family child care services, and services that combine both home- and center-based services.

In this document, the term “Head Start” will also include Early Head Start.

Grantees, Delegates, and Partners

A Head Start **grantee** is the organization or agency that has been awarded a Head Start grant to provide comprehensive Head Start services to a specific community. A grantee may choose to delegate responsibility for operating a Head Start program to another organization or agency, called a **delegate** agency.

Head Start Program Performance Standards call for grantee and delegate agencies to take affirmative steps to establish ongoing collaborative relationships with community organizations to promote the access of children and families to community services that are responsive to their needs and to ensure that Head Start programs respond to community needs. These community organizations, or **partners**, include:

- Health care providers, such as clinics, physicians, dentists, and other health professionals;
- Mental health providers;
- Nutritional service providers;
- Individuals and agencies that provide services to children with disabilities and their families, including local education agencies (LEAs) and other agencies within the grantee and delegate agency's service area;
- Family preservation and support services;
- Child protective services and any other agency to which child abuse must be reported under State or Tribal law;
- Local elementary schools and other educational and cultural institutions, such as libraries and museums, for both children and families;
- Providers of child care services; and
- Any other organizations or businesses that may provide support and resources to families.

Unlike Head Start grantees and delegates, Head Start partner sites are not eligible for the 5 Star automatic rating because they do not receive the same oversight and review by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) as Head Start grantees and delegates.

HS/EHS-2. Are Head Start programs included in YoungStar?

Yes. The specifics of YoungStar participation vary according to the number of hours of child care provided by the site as follows:

Stand-Alone Head Start Sites with *No Child Care* (Grantees and Delegates, *not Partners*)

YoungStar Participation: A stand-alone Head Start program that is in compliance with Head Start Program Performance Standards and other regulations MAY participate in YoungStar.

Star Rating: If this **stand-alone** Head Start program chooses to participate, it receives a 5 Star rating through an automated process.

Application Process: To participate, the program must submit a YoungStar Contract to to: DCF YoungStar Program at 201 East Washington Ave, E200, Madison WI, 53708

Technical Assistance and Micro-Grants: The program IS NOT eligible for technical assistance services or micro-grant funds.

Head Start Sites That Provide or are Paid by Wisconsin Shares for an Average of Three or Fewer Hours of Child Care per Day (Grantees and Delegates, not Partners)

YoungStar Participation: A Head Start in which three or fewer hours of child care programming are provided daily is *REQUIRED* to participate in YoungStar if it accepts *Wisconsin Shares* funding. If the program does not accept Wisconsin Shares funding, it MAY participate in YoungStar voluntarily.

Star Rating: If this type of Head Start program (with **three or fewer** hours of child care per day) participates in YoungStar, it receives a 5 Star rating through an automated process.

Application Process: To participate, these programs must submit a YoungStar Contract to the local YoungStar office (<http://dcf.wi.gov/youngstar/program/localoffice>).

Technical Assistance and Micro-Grants: These programs are NOT eligible for technical assistance services or micro-grant funds.

Note: Head Start sites that provide more than three hours of child care *in the summer or on school breaks* **may** be eligible for the automatic 5 Star rating if, *at all other times* of the year, they provide an average of three or fewer hours of child care per day.

Head Start Sites That Provide or are Paid by Wisconsin Shares for an Average of More Than Three Hours of Child Care Per Day (Grantees and Delegates, not Partners)

YoungStar Participation: A Head Start in which more than three hours of child care programming are provided daily is *REQUIRED* to participate in YoungStar if it accepts *Wisconsin Shares* funding. If the program does not accept Wisconsin Shares funding, it MAY participate in YoungStar voluntarily.

Star Rating: If this type of Head Start program (with **more than three** hours of child care per day) participates in YoungStar, it receives a rating through the normal YoungStar process, using the *YoungStar Evaluation Criteria*, or through accreditation.

Application Process: To participate, these programs must submit a YoungStar Contract to the local YoungStar office (<http://dcf.wi.gov/youngstar/program/localoffice>).

Technical Assistance and Micro-Grants: These programs WILL be eligible for technical assistance and CAN receive micro-grant funding to support their Quality Improvement Plans.

In addition to the specific policies listed above, all other YoungStar policies must be followed.

To read more about the connections between YoungStar and Head Start, see the *Policy on Head Start Participation in YoungStar*:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/policies/head-start-policy.pdf>

HS/EHS-3. What happens when a site had been a Head Start site under a previous Head Start grantee? What about if the site is brand new?

Previous Head Start Grantee

When Head Start grants are redetermined by the ACF, DCF requests a list of Head Start sites (grantees, delegates and/or partners) from the grantees and/or ACF. DCF reviews the programming at each site and determines whether YoungStar participation is necessary and if any of the sites are eligible for a 5 Star automated rating. If a site was allowed to have an automated 5 Star rating under a previous grantee or under previous Head Start policy, they are not automatically eligible for the automated 5 Star rating under a new grantee. The DCF staff review of individual sites will make this determination.

New Site

If a current Head Start grantee opens a new site, the new location will be treated as all other existing locations and must follow all rules laid out above. For example, if the site is a stand-alone Head Start, it would immediately be eligible for the automated 5 Star rating. If a site had more than three hours of child care programming, it would be eligible for an automated or technical rating the first year in that physical location and then a formal rating after the first year.

If the Head Start grantee does not change, but the site changes service delivery model (for example: from offering child care wrap-around to offering zero hours of child care), the program should notify the local YoungStar office and the eligibility for the automated 5 Star rating will be re-evaluated.

HS/EHS-4. What happens to the YoungStar rating if a Head Start site receives a deficiency on its ACF Aligned Monitoring System review? What happens when the deficiency is subsequently lifted?

The effects of deficiencies vary according to the number of hours of child care provided by the site:

Stand-Alone Head Start with No Child Care (Grantees and Delegates)

Deficiency is Received: The site is no longer eligible for participation in YoungStar and is removed from the program.

Deficiency is Lifted: If DCF receives written verification by ACF that the deficiency is lifted, the site can be reinstated to a 5 Star rating as of the week the deficiency is lifted by ACF.

Head Start with Three or Fewer Hours of Child Care Programming/Wisconsin Shares Reimbursement Per Day (Grantees and Delegates)

Deficiency is Received: The automated 5 Star rating is dropped immediately to a 2 Star rating, and any Wisconsin Shares subsidies are paid at the -5% level. A letter and a *YoungStar Change Request* form are sent to the site, indicating that the deficiency has been received. The site can *either*:

- Complete and sign the Change Request form and return it to the local YoungStar office, requesting to go through the typical YoungStar rating process and be eligible to earn a rating higher than a 2 Star. The site can elect either a Technical Rating or a Formal Rating with Observation.¹ If the site is then rated higher than

¹ Programs are only eligible for a Formal Rating with Observation if they have been in business at their *current physical location* for *one calendar year* and meet other minimum requirements as outlined in the *YoungStar*

a 2 Star, it will receive higher Wisconsin Shares payments beginning the week the Technical or Formal Rating is activated.

-or-

- *Not* return the Change Request, and choose to remain at 2 Stars until its YoungStar Contract expires or ACF notifies DCF that the deficiency is lifted.

Deficiency is Lifted: If DCF receives notification from ACF that the ACF deficiency is subsequently lifted, the Head Start site will move back up to the automatic 5 Star rating, effective the week the ACF deficiency is lifted.

Note: These sites include those Head Start sites that provide more than three hours of child care *in the summer or on school breaks* **if, at all other times** of the year, they provide an average of three or fewer hours of child care per day.

Head Start with More Than Three Hours of Child Care Programming/Wisconsin Shares Reimbursement Per Day (Head Start Partner Sites)

For these sites, there are no YoungStar effects related to ACF deficiencies because they are rated through the normal YoungStar process without any automatic 5 Star ratings.

Evaluation Criteria for Group Programs (<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/point-detail>).

Also, be aware that Formal Ratings with Observation require at least two consecutive hours of child care to be provided in order to complete the observation. Head Start sites that do not provide more than two consecutive hours of child care are not eligible for a Formal Rating with Observation. These sites would be eligible for an Automated or Technical Rating to earn up to 3 Stars.