



## YoungStar

### **Frequently Asked Questions: YoungStar Evaluation Criteria: Learning Environment & Curriculum, Business & Professional Practices, Health & Well-Being**

**September 30, 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 on YoungStar Evaluation Criteria:**

#### **Learning Environment & Curriculum, Business & Professional Practices, Health & Well-Being**

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### Answers about YoungStar Evaluation Criteria: Learning Environment & Curriculum, Business & Professional Practices, Health & Well-Being

#### Learning Environment and Curriculum

***LRN-1. Are we required to use a certain curriculum?***

No. One optional point is available for aligning a program's curriculum with the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) or School-Age Curricular Framework (SACF) but *neither is considered a curriculum*. This can be confusing (especially since the SACF is a "curricular" framework), so perhaps the following distinction will help:

- WMELS and SACF *define expectations* for what children should *know and be able to do*.
- On the other hand, a curriculum *describes what children need to learn* to meet these expectations and *reflects the practices* that support children's learning and development.

Additional optional points are available for demonstrating the use of individual child portfolios and for using intentional planning and tracking to improve individual child outcomes. These items can be aligned with *many* different curricula.

***LRN-2. I heard that the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards training has been updated. Will I have to receive new training?***

If you participated in the full 15- to 18-hour training in the past, and that training was delivered through an approved WMELS trainer, this training will continue to be recognized by YoungStar. You will therefore not have to receive new training.

***LRN-3. Is the purpose of YoungStar to get children ready for the public school system?***

One goal of the public school system is to socialize children into mainstream society, which requires some standardization of practice. But in their very early years, young children need consistency between in-home and out-of-home care in order to thrive. Parents need a wide range of child care choices to find one that fits well with their child's individual personality and their own values. YoungStar builds on the goal of child care licensing and certification to set quality standards but *not* to aim for standardization. It promotes research-based best practices while offering *many* alternative ways to earn points for quality.

**LRN-4. What are some good resources to help my program take advantage of the outdoors?**

Not surprisingly, you can find such resources right here in Wisconsin:

- Although some parents are concerned about their children being outside in cold weather, the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center in Milwaukee (<http://www.sanc.org/>) says, “There is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing choices.”
- The Merrimac Community Charter School in Sauk City has a wonderful garden, with students being involved in gardening *and* artwork (FYI: A lot of micro-grant dollars are being used by programs for gardening.)
- Pam Boulton at UW-Milwaukee (<http://www4.uwm.edu/sce/instructor.cfm?id=15385>) is a trailblazer in the field of early childhood environmental education.
- Another good person to talk with would be Carrie Morgan at the DNR (Environmental Education for Kids website: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/ce/eek/>).

**Business and Professional Practices**

**BUS-1. How will I know when I have met the criteria for each of the Business and Professional Practices indicators?**

YoungStar specifics for each quality indicator used to evaluate programs can be found in the *Evaluation Criteria*:

<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/point-detail>

Questions about these documents should be directed to your YoungStar Technical Consultant.

**BUS-2. Where can I find support to help me develop my Business and Professional Practices?**

Your YoungStar Technical Consultant will be able to help you or refer you to someone who can. In addition, there are trainings available throughout the state—check out the Incentives, Training & Technical Assistance, and Micro-Grants section of this FAQ to find trainings.

If you are interested in exploring this topic on your own, YoungStar provides several resources:

- In the “Business and Professional Practices” section of the YoungStar Providers’ “Resources for Providers” webpage, you can find policy checklists, small business resources, sample contracts, and more:

<http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/resources>

Policy Checklists:

Group, School-Age, and Day Camp Programs:

<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/groupsapolicychecklist.pdf>

Family Child Care Programs: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/fcc-policychecklist.pdf>

- The Resources for Providers webpage also provides a link to Tom Copeland’s blog about running a family child care business, including information on record-keeping, taxes, contracts, legal issues, insurance, money management, and retirement planning: <http://tomcopelandblog.com/>

- Also, there is a special YoungStar webpage for budget, tax, and record-keeping support materials: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/budget>
- The Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA) has a free, self-paced, online training on business practices: <http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/free-online-child-care-training-business-practices-tutorial/>

***BUS-3. How do part-time programs meet the same quality criteria as full-time programs, in terms of staff benefits, etc.?***

Part-time programs need to meet a *prorated* level of benefit, based on the amount of time the program is available compared to full-day programs.

***BUS-4. If my program is part of a larger organization and I don't have an individual program site budget, can I still earn the point for having a budget?***

Yes. If your program is part of a larger organization like a corporation or large non-profit, you may still earn the point for having a budget if you can show the YoungStar rater the required elements of the point within the organization's larger budget. All information that is irrelevant to YoungStar can be blacked out in the budget.

***BUS-5. If I use parent satisfaction surveys, can I receive a YoungStar point for Family Involvement?***

Family surveys *alone* (with no follow-up) would *not* earn you a point. Using the results of a family survey and developing family involvement opportunities that reflect the needs of children and their families can help you earn points within the Business and Professional Practices indicator area. Specific policies and practices that reflect parental input into the program's operations play a key role in the determination of points awarded. You can learn about these specific policies and practices (and the number that need to be in place to earn 1 or 2 points) in the *YoungStar Evaluation Criteria*:

<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/point-detail>

## **Child Health and Well-Being**

***H&W-1. Are there any requirements for staff training in special education?***

There are no requirements; however, YoungStar gives one to two optional points to programs if a percentage of staff has either The Registry Inclusion Credential or Wisconsin Pyramid Model training. Each program's detailed point rating is available on the YoungStar search site, and families can access these details to see if those optional points have been earned. Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies can now refer parents to child care, school-age programs, and day camps appropriate for their children with special needs.

For more resources on Early Childhood Inclusion, visit <http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci>

***H&W-2. Are programs that are trained to serve children with physical, developmental, or social and emotional special needs eligible to receive increased points?***

Programs that complete training in inclusive child care and supporting children's optimal development can receive points. Points may be earned if staff complete specialized training including the Inclusion

Credential, inclusion training with documentation of competencies targeted, and/or training on the Wisconsin Pyramid Model, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Guiding Children's Behavior in School-Age Programs, or Tribes® TLC.

***Note on the Wisconsin Pyramid Model and PBIS:*** The Wisconsin Pyramid Model is aligned with the PBIS model. Both models provide a multi-level system of support and a developmentally appropriate, evidence-based framework to promote social and emotional competence in children. Both models offer guidance for all children at the universal level with more intensive interventions for children needing targeted and individualized support. However, the Wisconsin Pyramid Model focuses on young children ages birth to 5, while PBIS is often used in public schools.

Wisconsin Pyramid Model: <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/social-emotional-competence-sefel-pyramid.php>

PBIS: <http://www.wisconsinpbisnetwork.org/>

For more resources on Early Childhood Inclusion, visit <http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci>

***H&W-3. Are programs that serve healthy meals and snacks, but do not participate or are not eligible to participate in the CACFP, eligible to receive a YoungStar point in 2016?***

Yes, programs demonstrating that daily nutritional meals and snacks are served to children can receive this point. The program can demonstrate that it provides well-balanced meals and snacks daily through three months of menus. Further proof may be required in some instances.

The program must also have policies and procedures to address children's allergies and accommodate dietary restrictions. This requirement applies even if there are no children in care with allergies or dietary restrictions.

***H&W-4. What happens to programs that have their CACFP participation revoked or suspended?***

If a program was most recently rated with 2016 Evaluation Criteria and has its CACFP participation revoked or suspended, the program will lose this point for the rest of the program's current YoungStar rating cycle. The program will be eligible to earn the point again upon receiving their next YoungStar Contract Renewal or Request for Off-Year Services application.

However, programs will *not* automatically lose this point if they move in and out of CACFP simply because of changes in the enrollment of eligible children.

If a program was most recently rated with 2017 Evaluation Criteria or later, a CACFP suspension or revocation will have no impact on the program's YoungStar rating.

***H&W-5. Does my program need both an internal coach and an external coach for implementation of the Wisconsin Pyramid Model?***

Ideally a program would have:

- An internal coach – someone within a program who is competent with the Pyramid Model and available to support its program-wide leadership team and teachers, and
- Access to an external coach.

To find a Wisconsin Pyramid Model external coach in your area, please visit the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP) webpage on the Wisconsin Pyramid Model, and go to the “Find a Trainer” tab:

<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/social-emotional-competence-sefel-pyramid.php>

***H&W-6. What courses count for the Strengthening Families/Darkness to Light Training indicator (D.1.4)?***

Below is a list of courses that are accepted for this YoungStar point:

50% of the staff and the Director have one of the Registry-verified trainings/equivalencies listed below

- Strengthening Families Through Early Care and Education: Building Protective Factors with Families
- Family Service Credential
- Touchpoints Birth to Three: Your Child’s Emotional and Behavioral Development
- Development-approved equivalent that demonstrates knowledge of protective factors

Director and an individual from every classroom must have one of the Registry-verified trainings listed below

- Darkness to Light (administered by a *PDAS-approved trainer*—a trainer approved by the Professional Development Approval System)
- Completion of course 10-307-167 ECE: Health, Safety, and Nutrition at a WI Technical College

**For ratings occurring on or after January 1, 2016, YoungStar will no longer accept Department-approved Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention (CANP) training to meet the requirements of indicator D.1.4. Programs that earned a point for D.1.4 due to having 100% of Lead Teachers/Director with CANP training will no longer earn that point when they are rated in the 2016 rating year unless the program has staff with qualifications to meet the other training options in indicator D.1.4.**