YoungStar

Frequently Asked Questions

February 13, 2017

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

Question Topics

Overview of the YoungStar Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

Application and Participation

Incentives, Technical Assistance & Consultation, and Micro-Grants

Families:

- **Family Engagement**
- **Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program**

School-Age Programs

Day Camps

YoungStar Evaluation Criteria:

- **Educational Qualifications**
- **Learning Environment and Curriculum**
- **Business and Professional Practices**
- **Child Health and Well-Being**

On-Site Services (Technical Consultation and Technical & Formal Ratings)

Regulatory Compliance

Four-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K)

Head Start and Early Head Start

Accreditation

Questions: Overview of the YoungStar Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

OVR-1. What is quality in an early childhood setting, and why does quality matter?
OVR-2. What is a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), and what does it accomplish?
OVR-3. What was the legislative process to pass YoungStar?
OVR-4. How does YoungStar work?
OVR-5. Who can participate in YoungStar, and who must participate in YoungStar?
OVR-6. How do programs accumulate points?
OVR-7. What areas of a program are rated?
OVR-8. How do years of experience get counted in the YoungStar system?
OVR-9. Do part-day programs receive YoungStar points in the same way points are calculated for full-day programs?
OVR-10. If I am a Director/Site Supervisor of more than one center/program, is each center/program rated separately?
OVR-11. Does being licensed vs. certified increase your score?
OVR-12. How are programs notified of points earned and star level awarded?
OVR-13. How do I get YoungStar updates?
OVR-14. What do I do if I have a question, idea, or suggestion?

Questions: Application and Participation

APP&PCN-1. Is participation in YoungStar required of all child care and school-age providers?
APP&PCN-2. Is there a cost to the program for participating in YoungStar?
APP&PCN-3. What is the responsibility of the program/provider/organization regarding the accuracy of The Registry Program Profile?
APP&PCN-4. What is the definition of a Lead Teacher/Group Leader and a Director/Site Supervisor in YoungStar?
APP&PCN-5. Who can be listed as a YoungStar Lead Teacher/Group Leader and a Director/Site Supervisor in The Registry Program Profile?
APP&PCN-6. What happens to The Registry Program Profile when a staff member leaves?
APP&PCN-7. When a privately funded preschool is part of a licensed group program, how is the site rated?
APP&PCN-8. How does YoungStar renewal/reapplication work?
APP&PCN-9. Where and when will I get a YoungStar Contract Renewal?
APP&PCN-10. What if I lose my YoungStar Contract Renewal or never receive one?
APP&PCN-11. If I turn in a YoungStar Contract Renewal early and am rated before the first day of my anniversary month, when does my rating show up on the public search site?
APP&PCN-12. Do programs that participate in YoungStar have to complete fingerprint-based background checks?

Questions: Incentives, Technical Assistance & Consultation, and Micro-Grants

INCTV-1. What are the incentives for participation in YoungStar?
INCTV-2. What supports are available to help a child care, school-age, or day camp program move from one star level to the next?
INCTV-3. How can I find high-quality consulting services?
INCTV-4. How do programs access YoungStar technical assistance, consultation, and rating? Is there a cost for these YoungStar services?
INCTV-5. When do I have access to technical assistance? Before or after being rated?
INCTV-6. Is there a "minimum number of children served" eligibility requirement for a program to request technical consultation and a micro-grant from YoungStar?
INCTV-7. Who is eligible for micro-grants, and what is the application process?

INCTV-8. What are some examples of how micro-grants could be used?

Questions Involving Families: Family Engagement and Wisconsin Shares

Family Engagement

FAM-1. How are families informed about YoungStar?

FAM-2. What is posted about child care programs on the DCF child care search website, and how does this help families select child care?

Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program

SHARES-1. What is Wisconsin Shares, and how is it related to YoungStar?

SHARES-2. Do programs serving children from families who receive Wisconsin Shares have a choice about participating in YoungStar? Do programs participating in YoungStar have a choice about serving children from families who receive Wisconsin Shares?

SHARES-3. How do programs receive their YoungStar Quality Adjustments?

SHARES-4. Do YoungStar Quality Adjustments affect the amount a program charges parents?

SHARES-5. When a program receives a YoungStar Quality Adjustment, are there specifications on how that money can be used?

Questions: School-Age Programs

SCH_AGE-1. Are school-age programs included in YoungStar?

SCH_AGE-2. My program is exempt from licensing oversight. What do I need to do to participate in YoungStar?

SCH_AGE-3. Do programs receive multiple ratings, one for early childhood and one for school-age?

SCH_AGE-4. If a school district contracts with my organization to provide community-based before- and after-school programming, can my program participate in YoungStar and receive Wisconsin Shares funding from families?

SCH_AGE-5. What job titles are equivalent to a Lead Teacher and a Director in a school-age program?

SCH_AGE-6. Is the person designated as the Site Supervisor someone who has to be on-site at all times?

SCH_AGE-7. Can a person be counted as BOTH a Site Supervisor AND a Group Leader in a program?

SCH_AGE-8. Who is the Group Leader when two people share a group?

SCH_AGE-9. How is the education of a Group Leader counted if s/he works in more than one program?

SCH_AGE-10. What happens if a Group Leader leaves a program and begins working at a new program?

SCH_AGE-11. If I am a Site Supervisor of more than one site, is each site rated separately?

SCH_AGE-12. For school-age staff, do Group Leader/Site Supervisor qualifications need to be in early childhood?

SCH_AGE-13. How is curriculum planned and delivered in programs serving school-age children, and how does assessment occur?

SCH_AGE-14. Which Environment Rating Scale is used for Formal Ratings with Observation in school-age programs?

SCH_AGE-15. Which Environment Rating Scale should a program use if that program has a classroom used by 4-year-olds during the day, with "school-agers" integrated into the room before and after school?

SCH_AGE-16. Do part-day school-age programs receive points in the same way points are calculated for full-day programs?

SCH_AGE-17. What does "regular attendance" in school-age programs mean?

Questions: Day Camps

CAMP-1. Is participation in YoungStar required of licensed day camps?

CAMP-2. My day camp program is operated by a public school district and is therefore exempt from licensing requirements. Can my program participate in YoungStar and receive Wisconsin Shares funding?

CAMP-3. How do day camps earn star ratings?

CAMP-4. If my organization runs more than one day camp, is each camp rated separately?

CAMP-5. What happens if a Counselor leaves a program and begins working at a new program?

CAMP-6. What job titles are equivalent to a Lead Teacher and a Director in a day camp program?

CAMP-7. Is the person designated as the Camp Director someone who has to be on-site at all times?

CAMP-8. Can a person be counted as BOTH a Camp Director AND a Counselor in a program?

CAMP-9. Who is the Counselor when two people share a group?

CAMP-10. How is the education of a Counselor counted if s/he works in more than one program or with more than one group?

CAMP-11. For day camp staff, do Counselor/Camp Director qualifications need to be in early childhood?

CAMP-12. How is curriculum planned and delivered in day camps, and how does assessment occur?

CAMP-13. Do day camp programs that operate for only part of the day receive points in the same way points are calculated for full-day programs?

CAMP-14. What does "regular attendance" in day camp programs mean?

Questions on YoungStar Evaluation Criteria: Educational Qualifications

EDU-1. How important is education in our profession?

EDU-2. How can I further my education?

EDU-3. What is the relationship between YoungStar and The Registry?

EDU-4. Is it a requirement to renew The Registry Certificate each year?

EDU-5. Do qualifications for the Lead Teacher/Group Leader and the Director/Site Supervisor have to be in early childhood education?

EDU-6. I am currently completing a credit-based educational program. Does this count toward YoungStar points?

EDU-7. I have a DPI license and was told by licensing that I was not required to have a current Registry certificate. Do I have to get a current certificate for YoungStar?

EDU-8. Who is considered the "Lead Teacher/Group Leader" when calculating YoungStar education points?

EDU-9. Who is the Lead Teacher/Group Leader when two staff members share a classroom/group?

EDU-10. How is the education of a teacher counted if s/he works in more than one classroom or with more than one group? Can this teacher's educational qualifications be attached to every classroom/group in which s/he teaches?

EDU-11. Can one person serve as both Director (or Site Supervisor or Camp Director) and Lead Teacher (or Group Leader or Counselor)?

EDU-12. How does YoungStar calculate education points for programs that operate more than one shift?

EDU-13. How do changes in the educational qualifications of staff affect YoungStar ratings?

EDU-14. How will YoungStar support my professional development, to help my program move from 2 Stars to 3 Stars?

Questions on 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?

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

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

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

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?

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

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

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?

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

Child Health and Well-Being

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

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?

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?

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

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

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

Questions: On-Site Services (Technical Consultation and Technical & Formal Ratings)

ONSITE-1. What are the different types of YoungStar ratings? Can programs decide which type of rating they get?

ONSITE-2. If a program has not been in business for a full year, can it receive a Formal Rating with Observation?

ONSITE-3. What is the process for on-site ratings (Technical Ratings and Formal Ratings with Observation)?

ONSITE-4. What observation tools are used for on-site ratings (Technical Ratings and Formal Ratings with Observation)?

ONSITE-5. How does YoungStar ensure consistency between my Technical Consultant and my ERS Observer?

ONSITE-6. What happens when a program moves?

ONSITE-7. What is the process for programs/providers to receive technical consultation or on-site ratings (Technical Ratings or Formal Ratings with Observation) when a program is moving? Is there a cut-off date for these on-site services?

ONSITE-8. When a program closes, is a withdrawal of application needed?

ONSITE-9. How does YoungStar ensure that star ratings are based on a program's quality?

Questions: Regulatory Compliance

REG-1. What is regulated child care?

REG-2. Is there a relationship between YoungStar and regulation?

REG-3. Do regulations require that child care staff have training in order to work with children?

REG-4. How is a program's "regulatory history" established?

REG-5. What should families consider when reviewing a program's regulatory history?

REG-6. What is a violation, and what violations are considered the most serious?

REG-7. Is there a relationship between YoungStar ratings and the number of violations?

REG-8. How is "regulatory compliance" defined, and what happens with YoungStar and Wisconsin Shares if a provider is out of compliance?

REG-9. If there is a complaint regarding a regulated child care program, where should it be directed?

REG-10. Why doesn't DCF's Child Care Search[1] display positive observations made by the regulators?

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

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

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

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

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

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?

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

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)?

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

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?

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?

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

Questions: Head Start and Early Head Start

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

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

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?

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

Questions: Accreditation

ACC-1. How do accredited programs earn YoungStar ratings?

ACC-2. How do we know that the accreditations mentioned in the previous question are equivalent to a 4 or 5 Star rating?

ACC-3. Do accredited programs need to supply a person who is trained in the Wisconsin Pyramid Model, PBIS, Tribes® TLC, or Guiding Children's Behavior in School-Age Programs?

Answers

[1] DCF's *Regulated Child Care and YoungStar Public Search* website helps families search for safe, quality child care in Wisconsin: *http://childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov/Search/BasicSearch.aspx*

Answers: Overview of the YoungStar Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

OVR-1. What is quality in an early childhood setting, and why does quality matter?

There is much research that defines quality in early childhood settings and tells us that quality matters a great deal. Here are just two excerpts from this research, but you can find many others:

> Research typically points to two dimensions of quality: structural features and process features. The structural elements of a child care environment establish the foundation for optimal process conditions. Structural features refer to the way in which the program is organized such as staff-to-child ratio and teacher qualifications. Process quality refers to the experiences children have in child care and include such aspects as adult–child interactions, children's exposure to and involvement with learning materials, and parent– caregiver relationships. These are critical components that directly affect children's behavior and learning experiences in the child-care setting. The most important process element in quality child care is the human relationships between the teaching staff and children and their families (Uttal, 2002).
>
> > *Excerpt from Families, Schools, and Communities: Building Partnerships for Educating Children, by C. Barbour & N. H. Barbour & P.A. Scully, 2008 edition, pp. 130-134.*
>
> Research confirms that improving quality is the right thing to do to improve child outcomes. Children who participate in higher quality early childhood education programs demonstrate higher school readiness, lower subsequent participation in special education, less criminal activity, higher high school graduation rates, and higher lifetime wages.
>
> In terms of children's everyday experiences, children appear happier and more cognitively engaged in settings in which caregivers are interacting with them positively and in settings in which child:adult ratios are lower. There also is evidence of concurrent relations between child care quality and children's performance in other settings. Children who attend higher-quality child care settings (measured by caregiver behaviors, by physical facilities, by age-appropriate activities, and by structural and caregiver characteristics) display better cognitive, language, and social competencies on standardized tests and according to parents, teachers, and observers. Finally, there is evidence that child care quality is related to children's subsequent competencies. The relationship is more evident when cumulative measures of child care quality are analyzed, rather than one-time assessments....
>
> > *Excerpt from Child Care Quality: Does It Matter and Does It Need to be Improved? Deborah Lowe Vandell and Barbara Wolfe, Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 5/24/00,*

OVR-2. What is a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), and what does it accomplish?

A QRIS is a method to observe, assess, rate, and improve the quality of child care programming and to communicate the level of child care quality to parents and families as they choose early care and education settings. A QRIS defines quality indicators and provides a framework of accountability for child care programming. Networks and collaborations are made available to child care providers to provide support and technical assistance, including mentoring and coaching, to help programs increase and sustain quality efforts.

YoungStar is a QRIS that includes four key components:

- Training and technical assistance
- Child care observation and rating
- YoungStar Adjustments based on ratings
- Communication to parents regarding the rating system and the importance of quality early education

YoungStar drives quality improvement in child care throughout the state of Wisconsin by supporting providers who want to improve the quality of their care, by creating financial incentives to deliver better services to children, and by giving parents meaningful information to select child care for their children. YoungStar supports ongoing child care quality improvement by linking higher quality care to higher YoungStar Adjustments, and it helps prevent fraud in the Wisconsin Shares program.

Examples of other states that have achieved enhanced program quality, and thus improved outcomes for children as a result of QRIS, include the states of Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Missouri, and North Carolina. Specifically, Oklahoma demonstrated improvements in the quality of their subsidized child care program, and Missouri's 2009 study showed

improvement in children's social-emotional and early literacy skills. The QRIS National Learning Network has catalogued more detail on the success of QRIS efforts at http://qrisnetwork.org.

In Wisconsin, we have heard from numerous providers who want to share the benefits they have found in YoungStar:

- A cohesive, evidence-based structure for quality improvement
- Support, excitement, and encouragement from Technical Consultants and YoungStar staff
- A vehicle to talk with staff, families, and community members about the importance of our work and the quality improvement process
- Financial support
- Pride in our work
- Affirmation of program quality
- And, most important of all—positive child outcomes!

OVR-3. What was the legislative process to pass YoungStar?

YoungStar was approved by the Joint Committee on Finance on June 23, 2010. Motion 38 details how YoungStar was to be implemented, including immediate training and technical assistance opportunities that the Department of Children and Families (DCF or Department) offered in Fall 2010. The department submitted a five year plan on November 22, 2010, that formally requested transfer of resources for full operation of the YoungStar Program, and on December 14, 2010, the Joint Committee on Finance approved this plan.

A consortium (the YoungStar Consortium) comprised of Supporting Families Together Association, Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, and Celebrate Children Foundation was selected to administer the YoungStar contract in the eleven local YoungStar offices. Information on local YoungStar offices can be found at http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/program/localoffice. A contract was signed on November 1, 2010.

On June 30th, 2011 the 2011-2013 State Biennial Budget went into effect. This Act modified timelines for implementation of YoungStar to the following:

- Spring 2012: School-age programs are included in YoungStar.
- July 2012: Wisconsin Shares tiered reimbursement begins.

Detailed information about the state's financial support of YoungStar is provided in the YoungStar Proposal DCF submitted to the Joint Finance Committee of the legislature.

OVR-4. How does YoungStar work?

Step A: Providers Apply. Providers who want to participate in YoungStar do so by filling out a YoungStar Contract. Providers who have never participated in YoungStar before complete the YoungStar Contract available on the **Providers** section of the YoungStar web site:

https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers

A program that has previously participated in YoungStar will be mailed a YoungStar Contract Renewal every two years, approximately 4 months before the program's Anniversary month. For more information on YoungStar renewal, see:

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/renewal

Step-by-step instructions for filling out the YoungStar Contract are also available on the **Providers** web page. These instructions will help providers decide if they want someone to come into their programs to work on quality initiatives. If a provider wants personal help in deciding which rating to choose, the local YoungStar offices can help.

When a provider has completed the YoungStar Contract, s/he sends the YoungStar Contract to the local YoungStar office. You may find your local YoungStar office at:

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/program/localoffice

A Note about Rating: Providers can accumulate points in a number of different categories to earn a YoungStar rating. There are minimum amounts of points that providers must earn in one star level before moving to the next. Providers can

use the following documents to help learn about which points are available to them and what minimum point requirements must be met before moving from one star level to the next:

YoungStar Point Details:

https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/point-detail

YoungStar Minimum Point Requirements:

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/minimum-points-required.pdf

Step B: Local YoungStar Offices Process Applications. When the local YoungStar office receives the YoungStar Contract, the office will contact the provider to let the provider know that the forms have been received.

If a provider requested to have an Automated Rating (s/he does not want someone to come into her/his program) the local YoungStar office will enter this information into the YoungStar case management system, and a rating will be generated.

If the provider requested Technical Assistance to help prepare for a Technical or Formal Rating, the local YoungStar office will contact the provider to set up her or his first Technical Assistance visit as outlined in Step C below.

The YoungStar Evaluation Criteria used to rate providers can be found at:

https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/point-detail

Step C: Technical Assistance Is Given to Providers. If a provider has requested Technical Assistance, then within four (4) weeks of receiving the completed application forms, staff from the local YoungStar office will contact the provider and set up the first Technical Assistance visit with the provider.

At that first visit, the Technical Consultant will come to the program and, in partnership with the program Director/Site Supervisor/Family Provider, identify opportunities for quality improvement. The Technical Consultant will then work with the provider to make a plan for using the time they have together and follow through on these plans over the course of twenty (20) weeks. During this time, the provider, in partnership with the Technical Consultant, will decide what the provider's micro-grant will be used for based on the goals identified in the Quality Improvement Plan. After the provider has received the desired Technical Assistance, the program will then complete a Technical Rating or a Formal Rating with Observation.

Step D: Provider Is Rated. The rating will happen in one of two ways:

1. If the provider has chosen a **Technical Rating**, after any requested Technical Assistance has been provided, the Technical Consultant will verify and/or observe information within the Evaluation Criteria from the provider and enter that information into the YoungStar automated system. Then, a Technical Rating will be generated for the provider based upon the information the Technical Consultant entered, along with the provider's verified education and training information received from The Registry.

   The Technical Consultant will then review the Technical Rating results with the provider, and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) will post the Technical Rating on the YoungStar web site.

OR

2. If a provider is eligible for, and has chosen a **Formal Rating with Observation,** after any requested Technical Assistance has been provided, the provider will complete a Formal Rating with Observation Request form and send it to the local YoungStar office. The Technical Consultant will then verify and/or observe information within the Evaluation Criteria from the provider and enter that information into the YoungStar automated system. Within eight (8) weeks of the completion of the Evaluation Criteria review, an ERS Observer will make unannounced visits to the program to complete ERS observations.

   The ERS Observer and Technical Consultant will then review the Formal Rating results with the provider, and DCF will post the Formal Rating on the YoungStar web site.

OVR-5. Who can participate in YoungStar, and who must participate in YoungStar?

Mandatory Participation: Programs that currently serve children who receive Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy *must* participate in YoungStar.

Voluntary Participation: Sometimes a program happens to have no children enrolled who receive Wisconsin Shares. These programs may *volunteer* to be rated through YoungStar, as long as they agree to accept any children utilizing Wisconsin Shares in the future.

OVR-6. How do programs accumulate points?

The *YoungStar Quality Indicator Points Detail* documents describe the multiple ways programs can accumulate points. YoungStar has established minimum point requirements in each of four areas (educational qualifications of the Lead Teacher/Group Leader and the Director/Site Supervisor/Family Provider, learning environment and curriculum, business and professional practices, and child health and well-being) to ensure that programs have a balanced approach to quality and are making improvements in all areas of programming, not just in one or two areas.

There are two types of points:

- Those that are *required* to earn certain star levels
- Those that are *optional* and add to the overall point total

The *Points Detail* documents give the *required* minimum points for 3, 4, and 5 Star ratings in each of the four categories. The *Points Detail* also lists many *optional* quality indicators programs can choose from to earn additional points in those areas.

Points Detail documents are available here:

https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/point-detail

OVR-7. What areas of a program are rated?

The criteria that programs must meet to earn certain star levels are research-based indicators linked to quality and include:

- Lead Teacher/Group Leader and Director/Site Supervisor/Family Provider Educational Qualifications
- Learning Environment & Curriculum
- Business & Professional Practices – including business practices, staff benefits, and family involvement
- Child Health and Well-Being

Learn more about these criteria in the Points Detail documents listed above or in the comprehensive *Evaluation Criteria* documents:

https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/point-detail

OVR-8. How do years of experience get counted in the YoungStar system?

Credit for Prior Learning (CPL). Providers may earn YoungStar points by contacting the technical college, university, or private college system to determine if their personal life experiences can equate to college credit through the completion of a process called *Credit for Prior Learning* (*CPL*) that demonstrates competencies already met. Most Wisconsin child care providers have several years of relevant experience and many hours of noncredit-based training that can often address competencies developed in college courses. This means that, even if you have not completed college credits, you may have learned and mastered many of the skills and concepts as those who have. Sometimes this learning-through-experience can be "counted" towards college credit through the CPL process.

For more information on CPL, check out the following resources:

Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA) *Credit for Prior Learning* webpage:

http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach/CPL/

A description of the CPL course offered within the Wisconsin Technical College System:

http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/assets/Documents/CPL-Course-Description.pdf

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin scholarships can help finance CPL and can help individuals complete further professional credit-based training:

http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach/

The free WECA Professional Development Counseling Service can help you explore CPL and other professional development options:

http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/PDcounseling/

(Or call WECA at 1.800.783.9322, and select Option 3 when prompted.)

Pathways to Early Childhood Higher Education: Credit for Prior Learning describes how CPL can document experience and noncredit-based training and can be a pathway to higher education:

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/pathwaysbrief.pdf

Child Development Associate Credential (CDA). YoungStar awards points to providers with a CDA, which is an experience- and competency- based credential in child development. Years of experience and training received in a non-credit and/or informal format are also valuable to child care teachers, directors, and family child care providers as they establish their learning environments and professional practices. The ability of a child care professional to put into practice the competencies gained through direct teaching experiences and informal training received can result in points earned in the quality indicator areas of early learning environment and professional practices. You can learn more about the CDA at:

http://www.cdacouncil.org/

OVR-9. Do part-day programs receive YoungStar points in the same way points are calculated for full-day programs?

Yes. Activities and benchmarks outlined in YoungStar, such as 60 minutes of physical activity, can be prorated to fit a shorter day schedule.

If providers choose a Technical Rating or a Formal Rating with Observation, on-site observations are completed at all child care and school-age programs, including programs that have part-day preschool programs. However, any classrooms or times of the day that are paid for with public school 3K, 4K, or 5K funds are *not* observed, and the education of the teachers who teach *solely* in those classrooms/hours (and in no other classrooms/hours in the child care/school-age program) *cannot* be counted for YoungStar points.

OVR-10. If I am a Director/Site Supervisor of more than one center/program, is each center/program rated separately?

Yes, multi-sites programs with individual licenses receive independent ratings. However, if you are the Director/Site Supervisor for more than one site, your educational qualifications can only count toward points for one center/program.

OVR-11. Does being licensed vs. certified increase your score?

No. You receive at least a 2 Star rating if you are in full compliance with licensing and/or certification rules. That is the floor. Being licensed does not increase your points.

However, current Wisconsin Shares reimbursement levels are different for certified providers and licensed programs. YoungStar micro-grants are also different for certified providers and licensed programs.

OVR-12. How are programs notified of points earned and star level awarded?

If a provider chooses an Automated Rating (and is in regulatory compliance), s/he is awarded a 2 Star rating, and s/he is sent the rating certificate and star level window cling in the mail.

If a provider chooses to have a Technical Rating or a Formal Rating with Observation, a Technical Consultant or Rating Observer contacts the provider to explain the rating awarded. The provider also receives a certificate and window cling in the mail six-eight weeks after s/he is awarded the star rating.

All ratings are published on the Regulated Child Care and YoungStar Public Search website at:

http://childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov/Search/BasicSearch.aspx

For providers who choose a Technical Rating or a Formal Rating with Observation, the star rating is not published until the Technical Consultant or Rating Observer contacts the provider and explains the final rating.

OVR-13. How do I get YoungStar updates?

YoungStar now has an e-mail subscription list to communicate to child care and school-age providers on topics related to YoungStar and quality improvement. If you would like to subscribe to this list, please provide your e-mail address at:

https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/program/mailing-list

Of course, you may continue to check out the YoungStar homepage (http://dcf.wi.gov/youngstar/) and the YoungStar page for providers (http://dcf.wi.gov/youngstar/providers).

OVR-14. What do I do if I have a question, idea, or suggestion?

You may contact YoungStar staff at 800.362.7353 or youngstar@wisconsin.gov.

Answers: Application and Participation

APP&PCN-1. Is participation in YoungStar required of all child care and school-age providers?

Participation in YoungStar is voluntary for programs that do *not* accept Wisconsin Shares payments from families. However, child care, school-age, and licensed day camp programs that accept Wisconsin Shares payments from families *are* required to participate.

APP&PCN-2. Is there a cost to the program for participating in YoungStar?

There is no cost for child care, school-age, and day camp programs to participate in YoungStar. In fact, YoungStar helps programs by providing training, technical assistance, and small, targeted micro-grants to help them get the things they need to improve and help kids learn even more effectively.

However, quality improvement does cost money, such as when a program chooses to invest in higher education for its staff or purchase additional learning materials for children. Providers can contact Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA) to request an application for T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin Scholarship Program:

http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach/

(Or contact a WECA Professional Development Counselor at 1.800.783.9322, selecting Option 3 when prompted.)

Programs may make the decision to target additional resources to increase and maintain the quality of their programming.

APP&PCN-3. What is the responsibility of the program/provider/organization regarding the accuracy of The Registry Program Profile?

The Registry Program Profile (also known as an Organizational Profile) is a collection of information entered by child care and school-age programs about the staffing, benefits, and policies of the program. The Program Profile lets programs set

up classrooms/groups and assign Lead Teachers/Group Leaders to these classrooms/groups. It also allows programs to assign a Director/Site Supervisor or a Family Child Care Provider to the program.

A program that wants to earn a star rating higher than a 2 Star *must* participate in The Registry and create and maintain an accurate Program Profile. Each employee will need to have a Registry Career Level Certificate (one that has been processed in 2009 or later) in order to be assigned to a position and have her or his qualifications recognized in YoungStar.

To update YoungStar information within the Program Profile, programs need to complete the "Classrooms" tab after signing in to the Program Profile sign-in area on The Registry's website (www.the-registry.org). If a program is participating in YoungStar, the information on the "Classrooms" tab is used to determine points awarded in YoungStar for education and training. The education level(s) of the program's Lead Teacher(s)/Group Leader(s), Primary Family Provider, and/or Director/Site Supervisor are used to determine the points and star levels earned in YoungStar. The maximum size of each classroom/group (the "capacity") is entered here as well to make sure Staff-to-Child Ratios and Maximum Group Sizes for the classrooms/groups in the Program Profile do not exceed regulatory rules.

In the Program Profile's "Classrooms" tab, the program:

- Identifies each classroom/group
- Assigns *one* Lead Teacher/Group Leader/Primary Family Provider to *each* classroom/group and can also assign co-teachers/assistant teachers/support staff
- Lists the number of children in each age range served in each classroom/group
- States the number of adults in each classroom/group
- Specifies the capacity/maximum group size of each classroom/group

If the program is participating in YoungStar, the information on Career Levels of staff members, classrooms/groups, and the program is transferred electronically from The Registry to DCF. This electronic transfer of information to DCF happens *daily*, and programs are rated based upon this information *monthly*. If a change is made in a Program Profile, this can affect the program's star rating, point calculations, and YoungStar Quality Adjustment level.

It is the responsibility of the provider to maintain an accurate Program Profile **at all times** to ensure accurate YoungStar ratings. YoungStar Quality Adjustment levels are linked to YoungStar ratings, and inaccuracies will be investigated. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) takes fraud very seriously and expects referrals to be made to the Fraud Hotline when inaccuracies regarding a Program Profile are discovered:

1-877-302-FRAUD (3728) or dcfmbchildcarefraud@wisconsin.gov

For more information on The Registry Program Profile or for help in creating or updating the Program Profile, see:

- *Maintaining Your Registry Program Profile*:

  http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/keep-program-profile-updated.pdf

- The Registry has streamlined processes and developed a wealth of resource materials to support programs and staff in completing their applications for Career Levels, establishing Registry Program Profiles, and linking classrooms/groups to Lead Teachers/Group Leaders. Tip sheets, PowerPoints, and video resources have become available to walk individuals through applying for Career Levels and updating Program Profiles—these support materials are available at:

  http://www.the-registry.org/ProgramProfile/Overview.aspx

- YoungStar Technical Consultants have also assisted many programs through these processes, and Bridget Benson at the Child Care Information Center (CCIC) has been a wonderful support to the child care and school-age workforce as they complete The Registry Career Level application process. Bridget also provides technical consultation on creating or updating Program Profiles and linking classrooms/groups to Lead Teachers/Group Leaders. Contact the CCIC at:

  Phone: 800.362.7353 or 608.224.5388
  Fax: 608 224-6178 (fax)
  Email: ccic@dpi.wi.gov or youngstar@wisconsin.gov
  Website: https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccic

APP&PCN-4. What is the definition of a Lead Teacher/Group Leader and a Director/Site Supervisor in YoungStar?

The titles and responsibilities of staff depend on the type of program, as shown in this table:

Type of Program	Title	Responsibilities
Group	Lead Teacher	A Lead Teacher plans, implements, and supervises the daily activities for a designated group of children.
School-Age	Group Leader	A Group Leader supervises and guides a group of children in the program under the direction of a Site Supervisor and assists in daily planning and implementing of activities, communication with families, and relations with the community.
Day Camp	Counselor	A Counselor supervises and guides a group of children in the program under the direction of a Camp Director and assists in daily planning and implementing of activities, communication with families, and relations with the community.
Group	Director	This person is responsible for the recruitment, hiring, and guidance of teaching staff and – when necessary – for firing or dismissal of staff. Research shows that programs with well-qualified Directors/Site Supervisors/Camp Directors demonstrate higher quality. This person might also be known as a Coordinator or an Administrator.
School-Age	Site Supervisor	
Day Camp	Camp Director	

APP&PCN-5. Who can be listed as a YoungStar Lead Teacher/Group Leader and a Director/Site Supervisor/Family Provider in The Registry Program Profile?

Lead Teachers/Group Leaders

To determine the Lead Teachers/Group Leaders in The Registry Program Profile, follow these rules and examples:

A. The person who is teaching for the greatest number of hours **between the hours of 6 am and 6 pm** in a given classroom/group must be listed as the Lead Teacher or Group Leader on the Registry Program Profile. For example, if the program is open 7 am to 6 pm, and Barbie works 25 hours per week and Ken works 35 hours per week in a given classroom, Ken must be listed as the Lead Teacher for the classroom.

B. If two or more people work an equal number of hours between the hours of 6 am and 6 pm, either person can be listed as the Lead Teacher or Group Leader on the Registry Program Profile. For example, if Jenny and Kate both work eight hours per day in a school-age program (from 7 am to 3 pm), either could be listed as the Group Leader in the Program Profile for that group.

C. To calculate the number of hours a staff person works (for Program Profile/YoungStar purposes), only hours between 6 am and 6 pm are considered. For example, a program is open 24 hours per day. In the Bumblebee classroom, Callie works from 7 am to 3 pm, and Sarah works from 3 pm to 11 pm. Callie has to be listed as the Lead Teacher in the Program Profile, because even though both she and Sarah work eight hours per day, only three of Sarah's hours are before 6 pm. Therefore, Callie has more hours between 6 am and 6 pm.

Verification of Staffing: Before approving a rating, the Technical Consultant will visit each classroom or group at least once and must see the person who is listed as the Lead Teacher or Group Leader in the Program Profile teaching in that classroom or group. If a Technical Consultant does not see each Lead Teacher/Group Leader in the classroom/group in which s/he is listed in the Registry Program Profile, a Technical Rating will not be completed, and the program will be ineligible for a Formal Rating until the information can be verified. Further proof may be required in the form of time sheets or pay stubs.

Additional Teaching Staff: If a program has more than one individual listed in their Program Profile for a classroom, the training (but not the education) of either individual will be counted when awarding YoungStar points for the following indicators: Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards Training/School Age Curricular Framework (B.2.1), Social Emotional/WI Pyramid Model/Inclusion Training/Guiding Children's Behaviors in School-Age Program (D.1.3), and Strengthening Families/Darkness to Light Training (D.1.4).

To be qualified to be listed in the Program Profile, the individual needs to be in the assigned classroom for at least 50% of the time that the classroom is open (up to 40 hours per week). The individual could be listed as any of the following in the Program Profile: Other Teacher, Teacher, Assistant Teacher or Assistant School-Age Teacher. The educational level of these individuals that are listed as something other than the Lead Teacher will not be counted for component A of YoungStar. The method of awarding points for component A will remain the same.

For example, if the Other Teacher in a classroom has taken the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) but the Lead Teacher has not, the program would be given credit for that classroom having met the requirement for WMELS training.

Directors/Site Supervisors

According to *typical* YoungStar staffing requirements, the person who is designated as the Director/Site Supervisor shall be on-site for at least 25% of the total number of hours s/he works for the program and shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Supervision of the planning and implementation of the programming for children
2. Supervision of staff
3. Staff meetings and orientation
4. Continuing education for staff

It is up to the program to determine who is charged with completing these responsibilities and to identify that person as Director/Site Supervisor in its Registry Program Profile. If a program does not have a Director/Site Supervisor position dedicated solely to the performance of these four responsibilities, the program *may ask for a variation* from the typical YoungStar staffing requirements, as described in the answer to "*EDU-11. Can one person serve as both Director (or Site Supervisor or Camp Director) and Lead Teacher (or Group Leader or Counselor)?*"

Note on Verification: YoungStar staff (Technical Consultants and Formal Raters) are *not* responsible for verifying that the person listed as the Director/Site Supervisor is on-site for a set number of hours per week/month/year.

Family Child Care Providers

In most cases, the role of Lead Teacher and Administrator is filled by the same person in Family Child Care. If that is the case, then that person should be listed in both roles (Licensee/Owner and Primary Family Provider) in the Program Profile.

If these two roles are filled by two different people, each person should be listed only in her or his role. The person who is with the children the majority of the time the program is open is to be listed as the Primary Family Provider. YoungStar will consider the educational qualification of only the Primary Family Provider.

If in the case of a family child care program that has a person, other than the Licensee or Owner, teaching for the greatest number of hours between the hours of 6 AM and 6 PM, that person should be listed as the Primary Family Provider on the Registry Program Profile. For example, if the program is open 6 AM to 6 PM and Judy works from 6 AM – 8 AM and then again from 3:30 PM – 6 PM, a total of 25 hours per week and Beth works 32.5 hours per week (8:00 AM – 3:30 PM) with the group of children, Beth should be listed as the Primary Family Provider for the program.

APP&PCN-6. What happens to The Registry Program Profile when a staff member leaves?

The Program Profile should be updated any time a staffing change occurs. Updating the Profile is the responsibility of the Director/Site Supervisor/Family Provider. Also, be aware that individual staff members can remove themselves from the Program Profile without notice, and these changes can trigger a change in star rating.

The *Maintaining Your Registry Program Profile* document (http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/keep-program-profile-updated.pdf) explains that DCF allows one 90-day "grace period" *per calendar year* for providers whose ratings drop due to staff turnover. During this time, it is expected that the provider will actively be pursuing new staff at the same or higher educational level to replace the departed staff member.

If *during the 90-day grace period* a staff member of *equal or higher* educational level is hired *and* The Registry application, *full* payment, and all the necessary verification materials have been ***received*** at The Registry, the pending lesser rating will *not* be activated. Rather, the program can remain in the grace period until The Registry completes processing of the application, issues the new staff member's Career Level, and updates the Program Profile information, at which point the previous or higher rating will be approved.

However, if *after the 90-day grace period* the position has not been filled, or has been filled by a staff member with an education level that does not meet the educational requirements of the higher rating, the lower rating will be activated by the local YoungStar office.

Note: Keep in mind there is the possibility of The Registry issuing a Career Level that is not in line with the expectations of the program — a Career Level that does not support the higher star rating. If this happens due to program staff error, the *lower* rating will be activated (*after* up to eight weeks of processing time at The Registry ***and*** whatever recruiting and hiring time was used from the grace period), which can come as an unpleasant surprise to a program expecting to maintain its higher star rating.

> ***Example:*** An application arrives at The Registry with *unofficial* transcripts for a new staff member, instead of the required official transcripts (which can happen in situations where the college won't release official transcripts until all tuition is paid). The application materials containing the unofficial transcripts *will be* processed, but because the transcripts are *unofficial*, the credits will *not* be "verified." Therefore, in this example, the new staff member ends up with a Career Level Two, instead of the Career Level Ten that s/he was expecting.
>
> The program was relying on this individual's credentials to maintain its rating, but because The Registry's instructions were not followed, the program ends up with the educational minimums to meet a 3 Star rating, rather than the 4 Star rating it had before the staffing change. The program's rating will change to a 3 Star rating and the YoungStar Quality Adjustment amount will change accordingly.

APP&PCN-7. When a privately funded preschool is part of a licensed group program, how is the site rated?

There is no difference between a child care center and a preschool or nursery school as defined by child care licensing. Many "preschool" programs operate for only 2 ½ to 3 ½ hours per session, and therefore some licensing rules would not apply (such as those related to serving meals, providing naps, and programming for the beginning and end of the day if only older children are present). **Check with your licensor to ask about these specific licensing rules as they relate to your program.**

When one license covers *both* a privately funded preschool and a licensed group program, the preschool program is considered part of the whole licensed program for YoungStar, and the program is given one rating. The only exception to this rule is if the preschool is a Department of Public Instruction- (DPI-) or public school board-funded 3K, 4K, or 5K program; in this case, the DPI- or public school board-funded portion of the program is not rated by YoungStar.

> *Example 1:* A child care program offers "preschool" in a classroom for a portion of the day for three- and four-year-olds, and the parents pay for the preschool. In this case, the preschool classroom is considered part of the whole licensed program for YoungStar participation, and therefore one rating encompasses the whole program.
>
> *Example 2:* DPI- or public school board-funded 3K, 4K, or 5K programs that operate stand-alone programs with no wrap-around child care are *not* able to participate in YoungStar. This is because DCF has no authority to regulate these programs, and no Wisconsin Shares funding is being used to pay for the care.
>
> *Example 3:* When a licensed preschool and a licensed group child care operate with *two* different licenses in the same building, the licensed preschool program is considered separate from the licensed child care program for YoungStar, and each program is given a separate rating.

APP&PCN-8. How does YoungStar renewal/reapplication work?

Providers who are already participating in YoungStar need to reapply every other year by the first day of their anniversary month. This is the anniversary of the month you were given your first rating in YoungStar. So, if you were received your first YoungStar rating on October 15, 2011, your anniversary month is October. The ability to receive

Wisconsin Shares payments from families is tied to the YoungStar rating, so it is crucial that providers submit the YoungStar Contract Renewal **every other year by the first day of their anniversary month** to avoid interruption in Wisconsin Shares payments from families.

The program is encouraged to turn in the Contract Renewal as soon as it is received, because parents receiving Wisconsin Shares subsidy payments will be notified if the program has not submitted the renewal ***30 days prior*** to its anniversary month. This is to give parents a chance to find other care arrangements if the program decides to discontinue participation in YoungStar.

Local YoungStar offices can assist you in completing your renewal application, providing you with a duplicate application, or providing you with information about your anniversary date.

More information and a Reapplication Tip Sheet can be found at:

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/renewal

APP&PCN-9. Where and when will I get a YoungStar Contract Renewal?

Every other year, approximately 4 months before the first day of your anniversary month, you will automatically be mailed a YoungStar Contract Renewal. Some of the information on the form is filled in by DCF—even so, it is very important that you check this information for accuracy. After you complete and sign the form, it must be submitted to the local YoungStar office listed on the YoungStar Contract Renewal.

APP&PCN-10. What if I lose my YoungStar Contract Renewal or never receive one?

Every other year, a YoungStar Contract Renewal will be mailed to you approximately 4 months before your anniversary month, so allow a week to account for postal delays. If after that time you have still not received a YoungStar Contract Renewal, you are encouraged to contact your local YoungStar office for the form.

YoungStar Contract Renewals are not available online.

APP&PCN-11. If I turn in a YoungStar Contract Renewal early and am rated before the first day of my anniversary month, when does my rating show up on the public search site?

An update in a program's rating can be activated as early as the first day of your anniversary month (but never before), so in the scenario above, the new renewal rating will appear ***on the first day of*** your anniversary month.

APP&PCN-12. Do programs that participate in YoungStar have to complete fingerprint-based background checks?

Wisconsin Act 20, which was signed into law in 2013, required all regulated child care and day camp providers eligible to accept Wisconsin Shares reimbursements from families to complete a one-time fingerprint-based caregiver background check by December 31, 2015. As all programs that participate in YoungStar are eligible to receive Wisconsin Shares reimbursements from families, the background check law applies to all YoungStar participating programs.

All licensees, adults that reside at the child care address, volunteers that count in staff-child ratios, and all employees (18 years and older) required to have a caregiver background check were required to complete the one time fingerprint-based check by that date. This requirement was communicated through various memos and reminders, and was included in DCF Child Care Provider Newsletters between 2013 and 2015. The Department has a contract with Fieldprint to collect digital fingerprints to meet this requirement.

During regulatory monitoring checks in 2016 and beyond, any program that is not in compliance with required fingerprint-based caregiver background checks will receive written notification that they have not complied with this law. The program will be allowed a reasonable amount of time to comply at that point. **If, after that time, they are still not compliant, all current Wisconsin Shares Child Care authorizations will be ended and the program will be moved to a non-participation status in YoungStar.**

Programs, whose participation in YoungStar is withdrawn, will have an opportunity to be reinstated in YoungStar at their former star rating level if they comply with all fingerprint-based background check requirements within 30 days of the date they were withdrawn from YoungStar participation. Programs that comply with the fingerprint-based background check requirements after 30 days of being withdrawn from YoungStar participation will need to reapply to YoungStar as a new program that has never received an initial rating.

Any questions regarding compliance with the one-time fingerprint-based caregiver background check should be directed towards:

- Licensed providers should contact the Caregiver Background Unit at 608-266-8001 or DCFPlicBECRCBU@wisconsin.gov
- Certified providers should contact their certification agency. Details at: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ccregulation/cccertification/certifiers.pdf

Information on scheduling an appointment with Fieldprint can be found at http://fieldprintwisconsin.com. Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy questions should be directed to local county or tribal agencies.

Answers: Incentives, Technical Assistance & Consultation, and Micro-Grants

INCTV-1. What are the incentives for participation in YoungStar?

Of course, the most important incentive for participation in YoungStar is the opportunity to improve program quality and thus improve the outcomes for the children enrolled in your program.

Other benefits available to programs participating in YoungStar are:

- On-site training and technical assistance, upon request
- Local training opportunities
- Micro-grants to support the goals outlined in programs' Quality Improvement Plans
- Professional development counseling and supports for credit- and noncredit-based growth opportunities, through Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA) Professional Development Consultants and YoungStar Technical Consultants:
    - T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin scholarships are available to support program staff in accessing credit-based instruction:

      http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach/
    - Colleges throughout the state offer Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) opportunities that recognize your current knowledge and skills:

      http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach/CPL/
    - WECA Professional Development Counselors will help you explore your options free of charge and can be reached at:

      http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/PDcounseling/, or 1.800.783.9322 (When prompted, select Option 3.)

INCTV-2. What supports are available to help a child care, school-age, or day camp program move from one star level to the next?

YoungStar uses a regional and community-wide support emphasis to provide free technical assistance and consultation to programs actively participating in YoungStar.

Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) and School-Age Curricular Framework (SACF) trainings are YoungStar-supported and made widely available and accessible for providers. Additional training emphasis has been placed on the Wisconsin Pyramid Model and other models for social-emotional competence, as well as training for the establishment and delivery of developmentally appropriate curriculum and assessment practices.

These training opportunities are made available through collaboration among the local YoungStar offices and other key partners representing different disciplines. To find training information on the WMELS, SACF, the Wisconsin Pyramid Model, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Tribes® TLC, and Guiding Children's Behavior in School-Age Programs, check out the following websites:

Local Child Care Resource and Referral: http://supportingfamiliestogether.org/member-directory/

WMELS: http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wmels-about.php

Wisconsin Pyramid Model: http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wi-pyramid-model-about.php

The YoungStar training webpage: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/training

The Registry Statewide Training Calendar/Trainer and Consultant Directory: https://www.the-registry.org/myregistry/

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin Scholarships for those interested in credit-based education are available to many workers in the early care and education workforce:

http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach/

Programs that demonstrate quality improvement efforts may also be eligible for a YoungStar micro-grant to support their established Quality Improvement Plans.

INCTV-3. How can I find high-quality consulting services?

To find training and consulting that meets YoungStar quality criteria, it is necessary to find trainers and consultants who are approved by The Registry.

- Go to http://www.the-registry.org/
- Click "Search For Training."
- Click "Trainers/Consultants."
- Click on either the "Trainer" or the "Consultant" button to highlight it.
- You may use any of the Search Criteria to narrow your search:
    - For Trainers, the Search Criteria are:
        - Trainer Name/ID
        - Trainer Type
        - Core Knowledge Area
        - Approved to Teach
        - Additional Endorsements
        - Training Language
        - Region
    - For Consultants, the Search Criteria are:
        - Consultant Name/ID
        - Assessments
        - Endorsements
        - Region
- You may add Keywords if you are searching for services in a particular topic area. Some *examples* of keywords you can use are "autism," "music," "environment," "taxes," "personnel," "poverty," etc.
- Click "Search Trainers" or "Search Consultants."
- Based on the Search Criteria and/or Keywords you use, the results will be posted, and you can click on the name(s) to see contact information.
- If your search yields no results, you have the opportunity to revise your criteria and try again.

INCTV-4. How do programs access YoungStar technical assistance, consultation, and rating? Is there a cost for these YoungStar services?

Accessing Services

To access YoungStar technical assistance and consultation, programs must complete and submit a YoungStar Contract, available on the DCF website at:

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/training.

After completing your YoungStar Contract, you would then submit your contract to your local YoungStar office. To find the local YoungStar office in your area, go to the YoungStar website at:

http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/program/localoffice.

The local YoungStar office will process your application and assign a Technical Consultant to your program. The Technical Consultant will guide your program through the process of getting training and technical assistance and then the program will complete a YoungStar rating.

Cost Considerations

There is ***no*** cost for YoungStar participation, including YoungStar technical assistance, consultation, or rating services. In fact, YoungStar helps programs by providing training, technical assistance, and small, targeted micro-grants to help programs get the things they need to improve and help children learn even more effectively.

Programs may choose to request additional training and technical assistance beyond the current scope of YoungStar, and technical assistance providers may charge for services above and beyond those supported directly through YoungStar. If you do hire a technical assistance provider, make sure you hire a YoungStar-approved Trainer or Technical Consultant who has had her or his education and experience evaluated and approved by The Registry's Professional Development Approval System (PDAS). You may search for approved Trainers and Technical Consultants at:

https://www.the-registry.org/PDAS/Consultants.aspx

https://www.the-registry.org/myregistry/

Programs choosing to invest in higher education for their staff can access the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA) for financial support through the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin Scholarship Program (http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach/).

INCTV-5. When do I have access to technical assistance? Before or after being rated?

Programs can choose to have their technical assistance ***before and/or after*** being rated. Before your program is rated, a Technical Consultant can work with you to help you decide what areas you could focus on for your technical assistance.

Additionally, you can help your Technical Consultant by completing a self-assessment of your program prior to receiving technical assistance. Some examples of self-assessments are available on the YoungStar website:

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/resources

INCTV-6. Is there a "minimum number of children served" eligibility requirement for a program to request technical consultation and a micro-grant from YoungStar?

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

INCTV-7. Who is eligible for micro-grants, and what is the application process?

Every program that actively participates in technical consultation and creates a Quality Improvement Plan based on a self-assessment can apply to receive a YoungStar micro-grant. Family and group centers, school-age and day camp sites, and non-profit and for-profit agencies are eligible.

YoungStar requires that all micro-grant purchases are directly linked to the program's Quality Improvement Plan. Micro-grant purchase plans are submitted with the Quality Improvement Plan and are approved and submitted by the Technical Consultant during the technical consultation process.

To receive a micro-grant, a program agrees to:

- Participate actively in Technical Consultation. Active participation goes beyond allowing a Technical Consultant to visit the program. The program must take part in reflection, work to identify strengths and goals, and then take actions to implement the identified solutions. As long as the Technical Consultant is satisfied that this is occurring, the program will have access to a micro-grant.
- Prepare a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), and make micro-grant purchase choices to support the implementation of that QIP. Programs should review the *YoungStar Micro-Grant Program Handbook* to learn how the YoungStar micro-grant may be used. There are specific rules and limitations for use of the micro-grant.
- Submit all micro-grant related requests to the Technical Consultant in a timely matter. For more information on timelines, review the *YoungStar Technical Consultation and Micro-Grant Participation Agreement*.

Micro-grant eligibility will be affected if the participation guidelines cannot be met.

To learn more about micro-grants:

Email SFTA micro-grants: microgrants@supportingfamiliestogether.org

Call SFTA: 608-443-4310

Read the *YoungStar Micro-Grant Program Handbook*:
http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/microgrant-handbook.pdf

INCTV-8. What are some examples of how micro-grants could be used?

YoungStar micro-grants are tied to the provider's Quality Improvement Plan. Programs may choose to use micro-grant funding toward; accreditation cost reimbursement, training and education for professional development, staff or substitute time to support quality improvement work, services such as contractors/builders or additional technical consultation hours, the purchase of equipment and/or materials that strengthen the learning environment and curriculum in key areas identified as needing improvement in a program's Quality Improvement Plan, and more.

Registry Fees

At this point, there is *no* specific funding pool to support Registry application fees *before* a program applies to YoungStar. To receive a rating above a 2 Star, the Lead Teacher/Group Leader for each classroom/group must be on The Registry in order to have his or her educational qualifications counted for that classroom/group.

However, YoungStar programs that actively participate in technical assistance can have access to micro-grants to support Registry fees. A child care program might use a portion of its micro-grant for Registry application fees if professional development is a focus of the Quality Improvement Plan.

Free Registry Memberships: Limited Offer

Beginning October 1, 2015, DCF provided funding for free Registry membership and renewal. Individuals employed by a program that is participating in YoungStar and has a Registry Program Profile may use this opportunity to join The Registry or renew their membership for free. For more information visit http://www.the-registry.org/free-membership.aspx

Answers Involving Families: Family Engagement and Wisconsin Shares

Family Engagement

FAM-1. How are families informed about YoungStar?

DCF works closely with partners to publicize YoungStar ratings using a variety of media in which families can learn about their child care options. The Department has also designed a website to assist those searching for child care or looking for

more information on a specific child care program. The **Regulated Child Care and YoungStar Public Search** website provides detailed information about YoungStar ratings as well as compliance records for licensing and certification: http://childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov

To serve families, DCF collaborates with a broad range of partners to ensure that families are equipped with concrete, objective information regarding quality child care. Some of these partners are:

- Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies: http://supportingfamiliestogether.org/child-care-resource-referral-agencies/
- Family Resource Centers: http://supportingfamiliestogether.org/family-resource-centers/
- Parents Plus: http://parentspluswi.org/
- W-2 Programs: https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/w2/parents/w2
- Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics: https://www.wiaap.org/
- Job Centers: http://www.wisconsinjobcenter.org/directory/

The YoungStar marketing campaign also provides families with clear and consistent information about quality indicators in child care settings and about family involvement opportunities.

FAM-2. What is posted about child care programs on the DCF child care search website, and how does this help families select child care?

All regulated child care programs are listed on the website regardless of their participation in YoungStar. YoungStar participants also have detailed information provided about their star levels and the points they have earned in each of the four quality indicator areas during the YoungStar rating process. (In addition, families who receive Wisconsin Shares are notified periodically of their providers' ratings in YoungStar.)

Families selecting a YoungStar provider benefit from having objective ratings of licensed and certified child care programs, based on quality criteria that have been proven by research to indicate higher-quality programming and better outcomes for children.

Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program

SHARES-1. What is Wisconsin Shares, and how is it related to YoungStar?

Wisconsin Shares is Wisconsin's child care subsidy program that helps families pay for child care. To receive Wisconsin Shares payments from families, providers must participate in YoungStar.

To promote quality in child care, Wisconsin includes a YoungStar quality adjustment to be paid directly to 4 Star and 5 Star child care providers who have current Wisconsin Shares authorizations:

- 5 Stars = A separate YoungStar quality adjustment, for up to 25% of current Wisconsin Shares authorization amounts, will be made directly to the selected child care program
- 4 Stars = A separate YoungStar quality adjustment, for up to 10% of current Wisconsin Shares authorization amounts, will be made directly to the selected child care program

Additionally, Wisconsin Shares subsidy amounts are impacted by the child care providers star rating in the following manner:

- 3, 4 or 5 Star Provider - Programs will receive Wisconsin Shares payments directly from parents utilizing the new MyWIChildCare EBT card. Each parent's subsidy amount will be calculated by first taking the county maximum or the provider's price (whichever is lower), and then the parent's copayment will be subtracted from the total. Finally, that amount will be loaded onto the card.
- 2 Star Provider - Programs will receive Wisconsin Shares payments directly from parents utilizing the new MyWIChildCare EBT card. The authorized Wisconsin Shares subsidy amount will be reduced by 5% before being placed on the new MyWIChildCare EBT card.
- 1 Star Provider - Families are not eligible for Wisconsin Shares subsidy amounts if they attend a 1 Star rated program. These providers' child care licenses or certifications have been revoked, denied or suspended, or their Wisconsin Shares payments have been ended due to fraud or suspected fraud.

Wisconsin Shares information and resources for parents and providers are provided at:

- My WIChildCare Program: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/mywichildcare
- Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares

SHARES-2. Do programs that receive Wisconsin Shares payments from families have a choice about participating in YoungStar? Do programs participating in YoungStar have a choice about serving children from families who receive Wisconsin Shares?

In order to be eligible to receive Wisconsin Shares payments from families, child care programs ***must*** be in regulatory compliance and ***must*** participate in YoungStar. YoungStar ratings are thus ***required*** for all programs receiving Wisconsin Shares payments from families. If a program is in regulatory compliance, the program may choose to have a YoungStar Automated Rating. With an Automated Rating, a program would not receive an on-site observation, and the highest star level they could attain would be 2 Star.

Also, in order to participate in YoungStar, the program ***must*** agree to accept children from families who utilize Wisconsin Shares subsidy payments. Programs that sign a YoungStar Contract must be willing to:

- Accept children from families receiving Wisconsin Shares
- Comply with the contract they have signed with DCF and with Licensing/Certification
- Have a YoungStar rating every other year

The YoungStar Contract lasts two years. During the contract period, the rating is published on the YoungStar public child care search website:

http://childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov

Sometimes a program happens to have no children enrolled who are from families utilizing the Wisconsin Shares program. These programs may *volunteer* to be rated through YoungStar, as long as they agree to accept any children from families utilizing Wisconsin Shares in the future.

A program may withdraw from YoungStar only if the program has not received any Wisconsin Shares payments from any family within 6 months of its withdrawal request. If the program has received Wisconsin Shares payments from a family within the last 6 months, the program cannot withdraw and must remain on the YoungStar public child care search website through their two-year contract period.

SHARES-3. How do programs receive their YoungStar Quality Adjustments?

YoungStar quality adjustments are paid directly to 4 Star and 5 Star child care providers who have current Wisconsin Shares authorizations.

SHARES-4. Do YoungStar Quality Adjustments affect the amount a program charges parents?

YoungStar does not regulate or direct provider prices or parent payments (whether a parent is making a private payment or a payment through a MyWIChildCare EBT card), regardless of program ratings and corresponding YoungStar quality adjustments. Programs are expected to continue to collect full family co-payments and can use their own discretion when choosing how to manage the increase or decrease in payments based on their YoungStar ratings. Quality adjustments for 4 and 5 Star providers are intended to support higher quality programming.

As for prices, child care programs are owner-operated and determine their own fee structure. Programs should determine the actual business costs of providing the quality of care delivered. Funding sources should be reviewed, and costs should be prorated over the number of children being served. Marketing, business climate, eligibility for private funding sources, eligibility for public funding sources, and strategic planning are all things to consider in setting prices.

The YoungStar rating can be an important marketing tool for child care programs that have earned higher ratings, as parents are encouraged to choose programs that have demonstrated quality practices by earning points within YoungStar.

SHARES-5. When a program receives a YoungStar Quality Adjustment, are there specifications on how that money can be used?

No. The program may use the quality adjustment payments as it sees fit.

Answers: School-Age Programs

SCH_AGE-1. Are school-age programs included in YoungStar?

Certified school-age programs, and public school programs that accept Wisconsin Shares payments from families must participate in YoungStar. DCF has developed specific criteria and a scale of points that use the same broad categories already established for YoungStar, but with customization for school-age care's unique characteristics. The Department has collaborated with the Wisconsin Afterschool Network and a number of other school-age providers that have provided input into the design and implementation of the school-age version of YoungStar.

SCH_AGE-2. My program is exempt from licensing oversight. What do I need to do to participate in YoungStar?

If your program is operated by a public school district, that means your program is considered exempt from DCF licensing oversight (but not exempt for licensing requirements) and does not have a license ID/number.

However, in order to participate in YoungStar and be eligible for Wisconsin Shares payments from families you must obtain a license number. Follow the below steps to participate:

1. Complete the Information Required to Monitor School-Operated License Exempt Child Care Programs form DCF-F- 5155-E . You may search for this form on the forms page. The completed form should be sent to the appropriate Regional Licensing office.

2. Then, to apply for YoungStar, your program must submit a YoungStar Contract to your local YoungStar office.

The regional licensing office will enter the information provided into the DCF child care licensing data system and will forward this information to the YoungStar program. Once the YoungStar contract is returned to the appropriate YoungStar office, FIS, the agency administering the child care payment program will send the program a contract to receive the child care subsidy payments. At this time, an authorization for child care subsidy payments can be made.

Note: Meeting Standards for Licensed Day Care Centers. In s.120.13 (14), *Wis. Stats.*[2], it states that public school boards may "establish and provide or contract for the provision of child care programs for children…." Although it is true that childcare programs operated by school boards are considered exempt from licensing oversight, s.120.13 (14), *Wis. Stats.*, goes on to say, "Child care programs established under this subsection shall meet the standards for licensed day care centers established by The Department of Children and Families."

Note: Private Schools. Under the DCF 201 child care subsidy administrative code, child care programs operated by private schools must be regulated in order to be eligible to receive Wisconsin Shares payments from families. If there are four or more children under age 7 in care, these child care programs may choose to be licensed. Otherwise, the programs may choose to be certified by the county.

SCH_AGE-3. Do programs receive multiple ratings, one for early childhood and one for school-age?

No. Programs are issued one rating for each Location Number (issued by licensing or certification staff). If there are different age groups present and a Formal Rating with Observation has been requested, the ERS Observer will use the Environment Rating Scale appropriate for the groups present.

SCH_AGE-4. If a school district contracts with my organization to provide community-based before- and after-school programming, can my program participate in YoungStar and receive Wisconsin Shares funding from families?

If an organization has a contract with a public school district and is not licensed, you must first obtain a license number before participating in YoungStar. Follow the below steps to participate:

[2] Chapter 120 School District Government: http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/120.pdf

1. Complete the Information Required to Monitor School-Operated License Exempt Child Care Programs form DCF-F- 5155-E . You may search for this form on the forms page. The completed form should be sent to the appropriate Regional Licensing office.

2. Then, to apply for YoungStar, your program must submit a YoungStar Contract to your local YoungStar office.

The regional licensing office will enter the information provided into the DCF child care licensing data system and will forward this information to the YoungStar program. Once the YoungStar contract is returned to the appropriate YoungStar office, FIS, the agency administering the child care payment program will send the program a contract to receive the child care subsidy payments. At this time, an authorization for child care subsidy payments can be made.

SCH_AGE-5. What job titles are equivalent to a Lead Teacher and a Director in a school-age program?

Group Leader and Site Supervisor are equivalent titles, respectively.

The responsibilities assumed by the personnel determine the qualifications required:

- Group Leader – responsibilities include supervision and guidance of a group of children in the program, under the direction of a Site Supervisor/Coordinator/Director/Administrator. Group Leaders assist in daily planning and implementation of activities, communicating with families, and relating to the community.

- Site Supervisor (who may also be called the Director, Site Coordinator, or Administrator) – responsibilities include the overall direction and daily operation of the program. This position develops the mission, philosophy, goals, and policies, and is held responsible for program planning and evaluation, administration (including fiscal management), and organizational development (including management of human resources).

SCH_AGE-6. Is the person designated as the Site Supervisor someone who has to be on-site at all times?

According to *typical* YoungStar staffing requirements, the person who is designated as the Site Supervisor in a school-age program shall be on-site for at least 25% of the total number of hours s/he works for the program and shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Supervision of the planning and implementation of the programming for children
2. Supervision of the staff at the site
3. Staff meetings and orientation
4. Continuing education for the staff

It is up to the school-age program to determine who is charged with completing these responsibilities and to identify that person as Director/Site Supervisor in its Registry Program Profile. YoungStar staff (Technical Consultants and Formal Raters) are *not* responsible for verifying that the person listed as the Director/Site Supervisor is on-site for a set number of hours per week/month/year.

If a school-age site does not have a Site Supervisor position dedicated solely to the performance of these four responsibilities, the program *may ask for a variation* from the typical YoungStar staffing requirements as follows:

Centralized Administration

If the school-age program is administered outside the site, supervision of the site can be performed by a person within a *Centralized Administration*. In this case:

- *Responsibilities 1 and 2* (listed above) ***must*** be performed by a person who is on-site at the school-age program for *at least 25%* of the total number of hours s/he works for the program.
- *Responsibilities 3 and 4* (listed above) ***may*** be performed by a person or persons who are located *off-site*.

In the case of a Centralized Administration, the program has two options:

Option 1: List a person from the administrative office who is responsible for #3 and/or #4 (above) as the Site Supervisor.

Option 2: List the person who is on-site performing responsibilities #1 and #2 (above) as the Site Supervisor. **If the program wants to choose this option and the person listed as the Site Supervisor is also a Group Leader, the rules for Dual-Role (see below) must be followed.**

Dual Role

School-age sites licensed for *50 or fewer* children, or license-exempt sites with *50 or fewer* children enrolled, may, in the following limited circumstances, have a Site Supervisor who also is listed as a Group Leader in the Program Profile:

To be eligible to earn 3 Stars: The person in the dual-role has 25% of the time the program is open devoted to the responsibilities of the Site Supervisor, **AND** child-to-staff ratios must follow licensing requirements for licensed group centers. The dual-role Site Supervisor must also meet the educational qualifications for a 3 Star rating.

To be eligible to earn 4 Stars: The person in the dual-role has 37.5% of the time the program is open devoted to the responsibilities of the Site Supervisor, **AND** child-to-staff ratios must follow licensing requirements for licensed group centers. The dual-role Site Supervisor must also meet the educational qualifications for a 4 Star rating.

Note on 5 Star ineligibility: Programs with a *dual-role* Site Supervisor *cannot* earn 5 Star ratings. To be eligible to earn 5 Stars, a full-time dedicated Site Supervisor must be in place and must meet the educational qualifications for a 5 Star rating.

If a program is interested in asking for a Dual-Role variation from typical YoungStar staffing requirements, program staff should remember:

- Programs licensed for more than 50 children *cannot* have a Site Supervisor listed as both the Site Supervisor and a Group Leader in The Registry Program Profile.
- If a person is serving in a dual role as both Group Leader and Site Supervisor in one program, YoungStar staff are responsible for verifying that the person serving in the dual-role has the appropriate allocation of teaching vs. administrative time as prescribed in the *YoungStar Evaluation Criteria for School-Age Programs*, available at:

FYI: Staff can only be assigned to *one school-age program at a time* as a Group Leader and/or a Site Supervisor.

SCH_AGE-7. Can a person be counted as BOTH a Site Supervisor AND a Group Leader in a program?

As stated in the answer to the previous question, a site licensed for *51 children and over,* or a license-exempt site with *51 or more* children enrolled, must have a Site Supervisor who does *not* have additional Group Leader responsibilities. In programs licensed for *50 children or fewer*, a Site Supervisor may act as a Group Leader for *one group*, ONLY if the following conditions are met:

- **For 3 Star Level ONLY –**
  - The ratio of children to staff does not exceed 15:1 **AND**
  - The person acting as the Site Supervisor has 10 additional hours of paid time per week for administration of program.
- **For 4 Star Level ONLY –**
  - The ratio of children to staff does not exceed 15:1 **AND**
  - The person acting as the Site Supervisor has 15 additional hours of paid time per week for administration of program.

Note on 5 Star Programs: To be eligible to earn 5 Stars, a full-time dedicated Site Supervisor must be in place and must meet the educational qualifications for a 5 Star rating. Programs with a *dual-role* Site Supervisor *cannot* earn 5 Star ratings.

SCH_AGE-8. Who is the Group Leader when two people share a group?

The Group Leader with the most work time at the program should be listed on the Program Profile as the Group Leader for YoungStar educational qualifications. If the Group Leaders work exactly the same amount of hours per week, the program can decide which individual to choose as the YoungStar Group Leader.

It is in the best interests of the program to consider not only the individuals' educational qualifications (reflected through a Registry Career Level), but also the additional training in regard to possible points in YoungStar (training in Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards, the School-Age Curricular Framework, WI Pyramid Model, Strengthening Families, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, Guiding Children's Behavior in School-Age Care, Tribes® TLC, etc.) when making this choice.

SCH_AGE-9. How is the education of a Group Leader counted if s/he works in more than one program?

A Group Leader cannot use educational qualifications for more than one group, or for more than one program. The group that the Group Leader spends the most time in is the group that should be attached to that Group Leader in The Registry Program Profile.

If Group Leaders are in charge of individual activity stations in the program and the children rotate among the stations and Group Leaders, the licensing ratios must be met, and each group of children would constitute one "Group" in The Registry.

SCH_AGE-10. What happens if a Group Leader leaves a program and begins working at a new program?

Any staff member who leaves a program and begins working at a new program can make employment changes in her or his *Individual Profile*. The staff member must indicate an end date for the initial program and then can add the new employer to her or his Individual Profile. This allows the new program to assign the staff member to its *Program Profile*.

Program Profiles must be updated anytime a staff change occurs in order to reflect the absence of staff from a position, as well as to reflect newly hired staff.

SCH_AGE-11. If I am a Site Supervisor of more than one site, is each site rated separately?

Yes. Multi-site programs with separate license and/or Location Numbers receive independent ratings. ***If you are the Site Supervisor for more than one site, your educational qualifications can only count toward points for one site.***

SCH_AGE-12. For school-age staff, do Group Leader/Site Supervisor qualifications need to be in early childhood?

No. Credit, credentials, and degrees for Group Leaders and Site Supervisors must be related to the age group served as determined by The Registry.

SCH_AGE-13. How is curriculum planned and delivered in programs serving school-age children, and how does assessment occur?

Specific training has been created by the Wisconsin Afterschool Network, covering the School-Age Curricular Framework. This training covers developmentally appropriate practice and standards for serving children in school-age programs. The training also includes information about selecting curriculum as well as program and child assessment resources specifically developed for school-age children.

Information about the School-Age Curricular Framework, as well as other school-age resources, can be found at:

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/resources

http://www.wiafterschoolnetwork.org/

SCH_AGE-14. Which Environment Rating Scale is used for Formal Ratings with Observation in school-age programs?

The School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale, Update Edition (SACERS-U) is used because it reflects the unique characteristics of school-age programs. More information about SACERS-U can be found at:

http://www.ersi.info/sacers-u.html

Indicators that examine the business and professional practices of the school-age program are also examined and can be found in the *YoungStar Evaluation Criteria*, at:

https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/point-detail

SCH_AGE-15. Which Environment Rating Scale should a center use if that center has a classroom used by 4-year-olds during the day, with "school-agers" integrated into the room before and after school?

If the center were to have a Formal Rating with Observation performed, the age of the majority of the children in the classroom at the time the rating is performed would determine the tool used.

Programs should consider the developmental needs of all children in the group.

SCH_AGE-16. Do part-day school-age programs receive points in the same way points are calculated for full-day programs?

Yes. When a provider chooses a Technical Rating or a Formal Rating with Observation, on-site observations are completed at each individual school-age program, including programs that are part-day. Activities and indicators outlined in YoungStar (such as 60 minutes of physical activity) are prorated to fit a shorter-day schedule.

Note: A program must have two or more consecutive hours of care in order to be eligible for a Formal Rating with Observation.

SCH_AGE-17. What does "regular attendance" in school-age programs mean?

The definition of "regular attendance" depends on the number of hours a week a program is open, as follows:

- If the program is open 40 hours per week or fewer, to be in "regular attendance" means that the child attends the program 50% or more of the hours the program is open for that child's age group. For example, if a program is open 25 hours per week, the "child in regular attendance" would attend 12.5 hours or more per week.
- If the program is open more than 40 hours per week, to be "in regular attendance" means a child attends 20 hours per week or more. For example, if the program is open for 45 hours per week, the "child in regular attendance" definition would be 20 hours or more per week.

YoungStar recognizes that some school-age programs have different operating schedules based on the time of year, and when operating schedules change, these same rules apply. For example, if the program were to adjust its hours to being open for 40 hours per week in the summer, children considered to be in regular attendance in the summer would be those attending 20 hours or more per week.

In most cases, YoungStar quality indicators apply to the entire program and hence to all the children in the program. However, some YoungStar quality indicators may have exceptions for children who are not in regular attendance. If the quality indicator has an exception for children who are not in regular attendance, this is clearly stated.

Answers: Day Camps

CAMP-1. Is participation in YoungStar required of licensed day camps?

Licensed Day Camps enrolling children for 14 weeks or fewer are now included in YoungStar! DCF worked with stakeholders[3] to develop evaluation criteria that address the unique service delivery of day camps. These evaluation criteria include a scale of points that use the same broad categories already established for YoungStar, but with customization for a day camp's unique characteristics. Find the *YoungStar Evaluation Criteria for Day Camps* at:

https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/point-detail

Licensed day camp programs that accept Wisconsin Shares payments *are required* to participate. Participation in YoungStar is voluntary for programs that do *not* currently serve families receiving Wisconsin Shares. However, programs voluntarily participating in YoungStar are required to sign an agreement indicating they are willing to accept families receiving Wisconsin Shares as openings become available in the future.

[*Note.* Licensed Day Camps that have children enrolled for *more than 14 weeks per year* will be rated under the existing *School-Age* rating track.]

To apply to YoungStar, your day camp program must complete and submit a YoungStar Contract. This application is available on the DCF website at:

https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/contract

After completing your YoungStar Contract, you would then submit your contract to your local YoungStar office. To find the local YoungStar office in your area, go to the YoungStar website at:

http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/program/localoffice.

The local YoungStar office will process your application and assign a Technical Consultant to your program, if requested. The Technical Consultant will guide your program through the process of getting training and technical assistance and then the program will complete a YoungStar rating.

CAMP-2. My day camp program is operated by a public school district and is therefore exempt from licensing requirements. Can my program participate in YoungStar and receive Wisconsin Shares funding?

Programs that are operated by public school boards are not eligible to be rated as day camps. Only Licensed Day Camps enrolling children for 14 weeks or fewer are eligible for this type of rating. Programs operated by public school boards are eligible to be rated in Track 2 (group programs) or Track 3 (school-age programs).

CAMP-3. How do day camps earn star ratings?

Because the *YoungStar Evaluation Criteria for Day Camps* are for licensed day camps with an operating timeframe of 14 weeks or fewer, a Formal Rating with Observation cannot be completed. Therefore, programs going through the YoungStar rating in the Day Camp track can earn up to 3 Stars. See the *YoungStar Evaluation Criteria for Day Camps* at:

https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/point-detail

If a licensed day camp wants to earn a star level higher than 3 Stars, the camp would need to be accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA, at http://www.acacamps.org/accreditation). The ACA's standards are linked to quality day camp programming similar to the standards required in YoungStar. Licensed day camps are encouraged to contact their local YoungStar office (http://dcf.wi.gov/youngstar/program/localoffice) for more information.

CAMP-4. If my organization runs more than one day camp, is each camp rated separately?

Yes. Multi-site programs with separate licenses and/or Location Numbers receive independent ratings. If you are the Camp Director for more than one site, your educational qualifications can only count toward points for one site.

---

[3] The stakeholders DCF worked with to develop the *YoungStar Evaluation Criteria for Day Camps* include YMCAs, Wisconsin Youth Company, Treehouse Summer Day Camp, Supporting Families Together Association, Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, and DCF's Child Care Licensing Program.

CAMP-5. What happens if a Counselor leaves a program and begins working at a new program?

Any staff member who leaves a program and begins working at a new program can make employment changes in her or his *Individual Profile* on The Registry. The staff member must indicate an end date for the initial program and then can add the new employer to her or his Individual Profile. This allows the new program to assign the staff member to its *Program Profile*.

Program Profiles must be updated ***immediately*** anytime a staff change occurs in order to reflect the absence of staff from a position, as well as to reflect newly hired staff.

CAMP-6. What job titles are equivalent to a Lead Teacher and a Director in a day camp program?

Counselor and Camp Director are equivalent titles, respectively. The Camp Director may also be called the Coordinator, Administrator, or simply Director.

The responsibilities assumed by the personnel determine the qualifications required:

- Counselor – responsibilities include supervision and guidance of a group of children in the program, under the direction of a Camp Director. Counselors assist in daily planning and implementation of activities, communicating with families, and relating to the community.

- Camp Director – responsibilities include the overall direction and daily operation of the program. This position develops the mission, philosophy, goals, and policies, and is held responsible for program planning and evaluation, administration (including fiscal management), and organizational development (including management of human resources).

CAMP-7. Is the person designated as the Camp Director someone who has to be on-site at all times?

For the purposes of YoungStar, the person who is designated as the Camp Director shall be on-site for at least 50% of the total number of hours s/he works for the program and shall have the following responsibilities:

- Supervision of the planning and implementation of the programming for children;
- Supervision of the staff at the site;
- Staff meetings and orientation; and
- Continuing education for the staff.

It is up to the day camp program to determine who is charged with completing these responsibilities and to identify that person as "Director" in its Registry Program Profile. YoungStar Technical Consultants are *not* responsible for verifying that the person listed as the Director is on-site for a set number of hours per week/month/year.

Staff can only be assigned to *one* day camp program at a time as a Counselor, as a Camp Director, or in a dual role as both Counselor and Camp Director. For more information about staff members serving dual roles, see the next question.

CAMP-8. Can a person be counted as BOTH a Camp Director AND a Counselor in a program?

Day camp sites licensed for *50 children or fewer* may, in the following limited circumstances, have a Camp Director who also is listed as a Counselor in the Program Profile:

> *To be eligible to earn 3 Stars:* The person in the dual role has 50% of the time the program is open devoted to the responsibilities of the Camp Director, AND child-to-staff ratios must follow licensing requirements for licensed group centers. For example, if the program is open 40 hours per week, the person in the dual-role would have to be in the Camp Director role for 20 hours per week. The dual-role Camp Director must also meet the educational qualifications for a 3 Star rating.
>
> *Note:* To be eligible to earn 4 or 5 Stars, day camp programs must be accredited by the American Camp Association (http://www.acacamps.org/accreditation).

If a person is serving in a dual role as both Counselor and Camp Director in one program, YoungStar Technical Consultants are responsible for verifying that the person serving in the dual role has the appropriate allocation of teaching vs. administrative time as prescribed in the *YoungStar Evaluation Criteria for Day Camps* at:

https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/point-detail

CAMP-9. Who is the Counselor when two people share a group?

If two Counselors work with the same group within a program, the Counselor with the greatest number of work hours per week at the program should be listed on the Program Profile as the Counselor for YoungStar educational qualifications.

If the Counselors work exactly the same number of hours per week, the program can choose which individual will be the YoungStar Counselor. When making this choice, it is in the best interests of the program to consider not only the individuals' educational qualifications (reflected through a Registry Career Level), but also the additional training in regard to possible points in YoungStar (training in the School-Age Curricular Framework, WI Pyramid Model, Strengthening Families, etc.).

CAMP-10. How is the education of a Counselor counted if s/he works in more than one program or with more than one group?

A Counselor cannot use educational qualifications for more than one program or more than one group at a time. If a Counselor works with more than one group within a single program, the group with whom the Counselor spends the most time is the group that should be attached to that Counselor in The Registry Program Profile.

Note: "Groups" are different from "activity stations." One group of children can participate in multiple activity stations, as long as licensing ratios and maximum group size requirements are satisfied. For children 6 years of age and older, the staff-to-child ratio must be at least 1 staff member for every 18 children, with a maximum group size of 36 children. As an example, if five Counselors are in charge of five activity stations, and if 20 ten-year-old children rotate among the stations and Counselors, the day camp's Program Profile would consider these 20 children as *one group*. This is because the number of groups listed by the day camp should be in keeping with required licensing ratios, and in this example 20 children is less than the maximum size of 36, and the staff-to-child ratio is greater than 1:18. Then, out of the five Counselors, the Counselor who is attached to this group in The Registry Program Profile is the Counselor who spends the most time with this group.

CAMP-11. For day camp staff, do Counselor/Camp Director qualifications need to be in early childhood?

No. Credit, credentials, and degrees for Counselors and Camp Directors must be related to the age group served as determined by The Registry.

CAMP-12. How is curriculum planned and delivered in day camps, and how does assessment occur?

Day camp programs use a curriculum aligned with the School-Age Curricular Framework (SACF) or the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS). This means the SACF or WMELS is implemented for the curriculum/programming for all children in all groups.

Specific training has been created by the Wisconsin Afterschool Network for the School-Age Curricular Framework. This training covers developmentally appropriate practice and standards for serving children in school-age programs and will therefore most likely be useful for day camp programs. The training also includes information about selecting curriculum as well as program and child assessment resources specifically developed for school-age children.

Information about the School-Age Curricular Framework, as well as other useful resources, can be found at:

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/resources

http://www.wiafterschoolnetwork.org/

CAMP-13. Do day camp programs that operate for only part of the day receive points in the same way points are calculated for full-day programs?

Yes. When a provider chooses a Technical Rating (day camps are NOT eligible for Formal Ratings with Observation), on-site observations are completed at each individual program, including programs that are part-day. Activities and indicators outlined in YoungStar (such as 60 minutes of physical activity) are prorated to fit a shorter-day schedule.

If the operating hours vary during the week, a Consultant will use the average number of hours per day to award points for items like this.

CAMP-14. What does "regular attendance" in day camp programs mean?

The definition of "regular attendance" depends on the number of hours a week a program is open, as follows:

- If the program is *open 40 hours per week or fewer*, to be in "regular attendance" means that the child attends the program 50% or more of the hours the program is open for that child's age group. For example, if a program is open 25 hours per week, the "child in regular attendance" would attend 12.5 hours or more per week.
- If the program is *open more than 40 hours per week*, to be "in regular attendance" means a child attends 20 hours per week or more. For example, if the program is open for 45 hours per week, the "child in regular attendance" definition would be 20 hours or more per week.

YoungStar recognizes that some day camp programs have different operating schedules based on the time of year, and when operating schedules change, these same rules apply. For example, if the program were to adjust its hours to being open for 40 hours per week in the summer, children considered to be in regular attendance in the summer would be those attending 20 hours or more per week.

In most cases, YoungStar quality indicators apply to the entire program and hence to all the children in the program. However, some YoungStar quality indicators may have exceptions for children who are not in regular attendance. If the quality indicator has an exception for children who are not in regular attendance, this is clearly stated.

Answers about YoungStar Evaluation Criteria: Educational Qualifications

EDU-1. How important is education in our profession?

Research indicates that providers with higher levels of education are associated with higher quality care. Many studies can be found that testify to this association, including:

- *The Carolina Abecederian Project,* Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (1999)
- National Center for Early Development and Learning, 1995, NIEER Working Paper - *The Impact of Teacher Education on Outcomes in Center-Based Early Childhood Education Programs: A Meta-analysis*, by Pamela Kelley and Gregory Camilli (2007)
- *Child Care & Early Education Research-to-Policy Connections, No. 3: Impact of Training and Education for Caregivers of Infants and Toddlers,* by J. Lee Kreader, Daniel Ferguson, Sharmila Lawrence, 2005
- Adams, D.B., Roach, M.A., Riley, D.A., and Edie, D. (2002). *Wisconsin Child Care Research Partnership Issue Brief No. 9: What is the relationship between child care directors and quality?* University of Wisconsin-Extension: Madison, Wisconsin

Research demonstrates the value of credit-based instruction, and other states with quality rating and improvement systems confirm that education is linked to higher quality early care and education settings, which lead to improved outcomes for children.

EDU-2. How can I further my education?

YoungStar continues to collaborate with institutions of higher learning to make it as convenient as possible to take credit-based coursework, including fully online courses. If you have not yet completed any credit-based instruction, you may begin professional development planning that supports completion of credits and over time build into credentials and/or degrees. The Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA) offers free Professional Development Counseling to help

child care and school-age providers create customized plans for professional development. WECA Professional Development Counselors understand the strengths you bring to your profession and the challenges you face and will work with you to design a professional development plan that fits your needs.

For more information on WECA's free Professional Development Counseling service:

- Go to http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/PDcounseling/, or
- Call 1-800-783-9322, and select option 3 when prompted.

WECA can also help you:

- Learn about *T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin Scholarships* to help you pay for credit-based coursework: http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach/
- Explore *credit for prior learning* (*CPL*) opportunities to determine if your experience and previously completed, non-credit, specialized training can translate into credits: http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach/CPL/
- Learn more about the Early Childhood Education program in the Wisconsin Technical College System

Wisconsin's institutions of higher education (IHEs) want to support your success and have created innovative methods of coursework delivery to support the early care and education workforce, including evening, accelerated, hybrid, and on-line classes, in addition to credit for prior learning opportunities and community-based delivery of coursework. WECA offers an interactive map to help you discover early childhood continuing education and degree opportunities across Wisconsin, offered by technical colleges, private colleges, and public universities:

http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach/wisconsin-universities-colleges/

The Registry Credentials can be stepping stones to advancement in the early care and education field. These credit-based programs are focused on job-specific skills so students can apply the practical knowledge they've learned to their current positions. Plus, for providers interested in obtaining associate's or bachelor's degrees, credentials can be the foundation for future credit-based instruction. Accredited technical colleges and universities located throughout the state of Wisconsin offer credential coursework. To learn more about the following Registry Credentials, go to:

https://www.the-registry.org/Credentials/Overview.aspx

The Registry Credentials

Administrator	Infant Toddler
Afterschool & Youth Development	Leadership
Family Child Care	Preschool
Inclusion	Program Development

EDU-3. What is the relationship between YoungStar and The Registry?

Wisconsin child care and school-age providers, teachers, and directors/supervisors have their educational qualifications verified by The Registry, Wisconsin's Recognition System for the Childhood Care and Education Profession:

http://www.the-registry.org

Career Level Certificate

The Registry awards a certificate verifying that entry-level and continuing education requirements defined by the Department of Children and Families have been met. The certificates list each recipient's unique education and training background and provide a tool for demonstrating her or his qualities, strengths, and professionalism. Training and education are represented by 17 Registry Career Levels. Each of the staff qualifications identified in YoungStar is equivalent to a Registry Career Level. See The Registry Career Levels at:

http://www.the-registry.org/Portals/0/Career%20Levels%209-2014.pdf

In order to earn more than a 2 Star rating, and in order to be assigned as a YoungStar Lead Teacher/Group Leader or Director/Site Supervisor on The Registry Program Profile, lead staff must have a Career Level Certificate.

Program Profile

Programs that want to earn higher than a 2 Star will be required to complete a Registry Program Profile. Instructions for doing this are available at http://www.the-registry.org/ProgramProfile/Overview.aspx and in the "Application and Participation" section of this FAQ. If additional help is needed, providers can call Bridget Benson at the Child Care Information Center (1-800-362-7353).

Verification

The Registry verifies individual staff educational qualifications and training accomplishments using credit-based instruction transcripts and other training verification materials. All training is quantified by core knowledge areas (CKAs) as defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, at http://www.naeyc.org/) or Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential ™ content areas as defined by the Council for Professional Recognition (http://www.cdacouncil.org/).

In order to earn points within the YoungStar educational qualifications indicator, the educational qualifications of Lead Teachers/Group Leaders and the Director/Site Supervisor must be verified by The Registry. This process requires a Registry Career Level for each Lead Teacher/Group Leader and the assignment of each Lead Teacher/Group Leader to a classroom/group within the Program Profile. The same process applies for licensed and certified family child care providers wishing to receive points in the Provider Qualifications category.

Licensing staff, technical assistance providers, and observation raters:

- Verify that each reported child care and school-age staff member is currently employed at an individual program
- Identify a Lead Teacher/Group Leader for each classroom/group

EDU-4. Is it a requirement to renew The Registry Certificate each year?

No, it is not a requirement to renew a Registry Certificate each year ***if***:

- The staff education and training have *not* changed, and
- The staff who are in the Program Profile have been awarded a Registry Career Level based on the 2009 Career Levels.

However, if a staff member obtains further education or training, s/he needs to renew her/his Registry Certificate to have it count for YoungStar points. So, if a staff member advances her/his education to a level that would change her/his Career Level or has taken training for which YoungStar points are awarded, it is necessary for that individual to renew the Career Level Certificate to include the new training and education.

A program must ensure that The Registry Program Profile is continuously accurate to ensure the program's YoungStar rating – and by association the Wisconsin Shares payment level to families – is accurate. The Registry Program Profile is used for the determination of education and training quality indicator points for a program, so it is important the Program Profile is based on current staffing. When staffing changes occur, it is the program's responsibility to update The Registry Program Profile in an accurate and timely fashion, to avoid incorrect Wisconsin Shares payments to families.

EDU-5. Do qualifications for the Lead Teacher/Group Leader and the Director/Site Supervisor have to be in early childhood education?

For child care programs, the credits, credentials, and degrees identified for Lead Teachers and Directors must be related to early childhood education as determined by The Registry. For school-age programs, the credits, credentials, and degrees of Group Leaders and Site Supervisors could also be related to school-age care.

Note: YoungStar materials will mention "an Associate's Degree in a related area." For YoungStar, the **equivalent** to a "**related Associate's Degree**" is **60 credits beyond high school** with at least **30 of those credits related** to early childhood or school-age care.

EDU-6. I am currently completing a credit-based educational program. Does this count toward YoungStar points?

Credits that have been *completed and verified* by The Registry are used when determining educational qualification points. Credits that are in progress do not count for YoungStar points *until* they are completed and verified by The Registry.

EDU-7. I have a DPI license and was told by licensing that I was not required to have a current Registry certificate. Do I have to get a current certificate for YoungStar?

Yes, if you would like your education to count within a program's YoungStar rating. An example of this would be a 4K collaborative program (a program where 4K is offered in a child care setting), with the 4K program taking place in the morning and a four-year-old center-based program taking place in the afternoon. The teacher who provides both 4K and alternate hours of child care must have a Registry Career Level Certificate processed after Jan. 1, 2009, if the program intends to have the teacher's educational qualifications count toward points in YoungStar.

EDU-8. Who is considered the "Lead Teacher/Group Leader" when calculating YoungStar education points?

For each classroom/group listed in The Registry Program Profile, *only one* individual's educational qualifications are considered, according to *Maintaining Your Registry Program Profile*:

Lead Teachers or Group Leaders

A. The person who is teaching for the greatest number of hours **between the hours of 6 AM and 6 PM** in a given classroom (or with a given group) should be listed as the Lead Teacher or Group Leader on the Registry Program Profile.
B. If two or more people work an equal number of hours between the hours of 6 AM and 6 PM, either person can be listed as the Lead Teacher or Group Leader on The Registry Program Profile.

http://dcf.wi.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/keep-program-profile-updated.pdf

Therefore, the teacher who spends the most number of hours in the classroom (or with the group) would be the individual associated with that classroom/group in The Registry Program Profile.

EDU-9. Who is the Lead Teacher/Group Leader when two staff members share a classroom/group?

When looking at Lead Teacher/Group Leader qualifications for classrooms/groups within a program, the Lead Teacher/Group Leader who spends the greatest number of hours each week in the classroom (or with the group) should be identified on The Registry Program Profile as the YoungStar Lead Teacher/Group Leader. If two teachers spend equal amounts of time in a classroom (or in a group), the Director/Site Supervisor may choose which teacher to assign as the Lead Teacher/Group Leader for YoungStar education points. This choice must be reflected in the program's Registry Program Profile.

EDU-10. How is the education of a teacher counted if s/he works in more than one classroom or with more than one group? Can this teacher's educational qualifications be attached to every classroom/group in which s/he teaches?

A teacher's educational qualifications can only be attached to a *single* classroom/group, within a *single* program. The total number of classrooms/groups is used in determining the overall educational qualifications of teaching staff.

A percentage formula of Lead Teachers/Group Leaders and classrooms/groups determines the number of points awarded to the program, as shown in the *YoungStar Evaluation Criteria*:

https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/point-detail

For example, Lead Teachers/Group Leaders with 6 credits in 50% of the classrooms/groups = two YoungStar points awarded.

EDU-11. Can one person serve as both Director (or Site Supervisor or Camp Director) and Lead Teacher (or Group Leader or Counselor)?

The following rule applies:

For YoungStar, the person who is designated as the Director/Site Supervisor shall be on-site for at least *25%* (for *Group and School-Age* programs) or *50%* (for *Day Camp* programs) of the total number of hours s/he works for the program and shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Supervision of the planning and implementation of the programming for children
2. Supervision of the staff at the program/site
3. Staff meetings and orientation
4. Continuing education for the staff

The following variations will be allowed to the rule above:

- **Centralized administration:** if the program is administrated outside the center/site, the program may ask for a variation from the typical YoungStar staffing requirements. Responsibilities 1 and 2 (listed above) must be performed by a person who is on-site at the center/site for at least *25%* (for *Group* and *School-Age* programs) or *50%* (for *Day Camp* programs) of the total number of hours s/he works for the program. Responsibilities 3 and 4 may be performed by a person or persons who are located off-site.

  In these cases of centralized administration, the program has two options:

  - Option 1: List a person from the administrative office who fulfills responsibilities 3 and/or 4 as the Director/Site Supervisor.
  - Option 2: List the person who is on-site performing responsibilities 1 and 2 as the Director/Site Supervisor. **If the program wants to choose this option and the person listed as the Director/Site Supervisor is also a Lead Teacher/Group Leader, the rules for Dual-Role (below) must be followed.**

- **Dual-role:** ***group*** *programs that are licensed for* ***30 or fewer*** *children* or ***school-age/day camp sites*** *that are licensed for* ***50 or fewer*** *children* may, in the following limited circumstances, have a Director/Site Supervisor who also is listed as a Lead Teacher/Group Leader in the Program Profile:

  - **To be eligible to earn 3 Stars:** The person in the dual-role has *25%* (for *Group* and *School-Age* programs) or *50%* (for *Day Camp* programs) of the time the program is open devoted to the responsibilities of the Director/Site Supervisor **AND** child-to-staff ratios must follow licensing requirements for licensed group centers. For example, if a *group* program is open 40 hours per week, the person in the dual-role would have to be in the Director role for 10 hours per week. The dual-role Director/Site Supervisor must also meet the educational qualifications for a 3 Star rating.

    Note on Day Camps: Day camp sites are eligible to earn up to 3 Stars through rating by YoungStar; to earn 4 or 5 Stars, day camps would need to be accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA, at http://www.acacamps.org/accreditation).

  - **To be eligible to earn 4 Stars:** The person in the dual-role has *37.5%* of the time the *Group* or *School-Age* program is open devoted to the responsibilities of the Director/Site Supervisor **AND** child-to-staff ratios must follow licensing requirements for licensed group centers. For example, if a *group* or *school-age* program is open 40 hours per week, the person in the dual-role would have to be in the Director role for 15 hours per week. The dual-role Director/Site Supervisor must also meet the educational qualifications for a 4 Star rating.

  - **To be eligible to earn 5 Stars:** A full-time dedicated Director/Site Supervisor must be in place, who meets the educational qualifications for a 5 Star rating.

For more information, see the "Education and Training" section of the *YoungStar Evaluation Criteria*:

https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/point-detail

Note: The person serving as the Director/Site Supervisor/Camp Director may step in to help with Lead Teacher/Group Leader/Counselor responsibilities if a staff member is ill, during staff break/meal times, when special programming or activities require more adults to be in the room or area used by children, or for emergencies.

EDU-12. How does YoungStar calculate education points for programs that operate more than one shift?

When looking at Lead Teacher/Group Leader/Family provider qualifications for a program, the Lead Teacher/Group Leader/Family provider who spends the greatest number of hours each week **between the hours of 6 AM and 6 PM** in the classroom/group/program should be identified on The Registry Program Profile as the YoungStar Lead Teacher/Group Leader/Family Provider. If two teachers spend equal amounts of time in a classroom/group, the Director/Site Supervisor may choose which teacher to assign as the Lead Teacher/Group Leader for YoungStar education points. This choice must be reflected in the program's Registry Program Profile.

In group centers, YoungStar bases these calculations on the number of *physical classrooms* (*not* shifts) that are available within a program, and programs should identify the teachers who spend the most time in those *physical classrooms* as the Lead Teachers. For example, if a program has the "Blue Group" in Classroom A from 8 AM to 2 PM and the "Red Group" in Classroom A from 2 PM to 7 PM, only one teacher will have to be identified as the Lead Teacher for Classroom A, even if there are two different teachers who teach in that physical space.

EDU-13. How do changes in the educational qualifications of staff affect YoungStar ratings?

Programs are given a YoungStar rating based upon staffing levels *at the time of the rating*.

Decrease in Educational Qualifications

In YoungStar, if a staff member leaves and the departure negatively affects the YoungStar rating because of a decrease in educational points, a program has 90 calendar days as a grace period to find a replacement with comparable educational qualifications and assign them to the Program Profile, before the lower rating is activated at the local YoungStar office. YoungStar provides this courtesy to each program ***once*** per calendar year, even if a program continually experiences staffing changes.

Increase in Educational Qualifications

If a staff member's education level increases enough to move the program up a star rating, the YoungStar rating will change once the *individual's* Registry Career Level Certificate is updated and the required documentation has been provided to the local YoungStar office. If the individual is not due to renew her or his Registry Membership, they can choose to wait until renewal is due (which will also mean waiting for the YoungStar rating to change) or submit the earned credits/degree to be processed separately at The Registry.

The Registry Program Profile

Programs are expected to update staffing changes (among lead staff) in their Registry Program Profiles (http://www.the-registry.org/ProgramProfile/Overview.aspx) as soon as they happen. Staffing information needs to be up-to-date and accurate, as this information is used to determine a portion of the program's YoungStar rating, which in turn ensures accurate Wisconsin Shares payments to families. As local YoungStar office staff (both Technical Consultants and Rating Observers) visit a program, they verify the number of active classrooms/groups and the YoungStar Lead Teacher/Group Leader attached to each classroom/group, and compare that to the details of the Program Profile.

If the educational qualifications of a program change enough to affect the star rating (either from staff turnover or changes in Career Levels), the new rating does not become public (in other words, is not published on the website) until the program's Technical Consultant approves the rating in the Case Management System.

EDU-14. How will YoungStar support my professional development, to help my program move from 2 Stars to 3 Stars?

You know how important a high-quality child care program is for children's development and learning. And YoungStar recognizes that YOUR development and learning is vital to the quality of your program. The following table lists the statewide agencies that provide YoungStar professional development support, to help you build a 3 Star program:

Agency Name	Website for Professional Development Support	Phone Number
Child Care Information Center (CCIC)	http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccic	800.362.7353
The Registry	https://www.the-registry.org/myregistry/	608.222.1123
Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA)	http://supportingfamiliestogether.org/early-care-education-professionals/sharpen-your-professional-skills/	888.713.KIDS
Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA)	http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/PDcounseling/	800.783.9322
YoungStar	http://dcf.wi.gov/youngstar/providers	800.362.7353

The following list demonstrates the multitude of supports available to you on your professional development journey. You may skim this list to find options that interest you, or contact one of the agencies listed above for help in navigating your options:

- Use YoungStar Tip Sheets to learn how your program can progress from 2 Stars to 3 Stars:
    - Group Child Care: http://dcf.wi.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/starprogressiongroup.pdf
    - Family Child Care: http://dcf.wi.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/starprogressionfamily.pdf
- Reflect on your goals for learning—where you are, where you want to go, and how you want to get there:
    - WECA's *Professional Development Support Questionnaire*: http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/youngstar/professional-development-questionnaire/
    - YoungStar's *Creating a Professional Development Plan*:
        - Instructions: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/pdpgroupfamily.pdf
        - Family Child Care Provider: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdpfamily.pdf
        - Group Child Care – Lead Teacher: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/pdpgrouplead.pdf
        - Group Child Care – Director: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/pdpgroupdirector.pdf
        - Getting started: http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/assets/Documents/Developing-a-Professional-Development-Plan-handout.pdf
        - Worksheet: http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/assets/Documents/PD-plan-handout-for-workshop.pdf
- Discuss your ideas with other child care professionals:
    - Talk with a WECA Professional Development Counselor, who can offer you free, over-the-phone support in your search for further learning options and possible financial resources: http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/PDcounseling/
    - Request Technical Assistance from a YoungStar Technical Consultant, who can help you develop a Quality Improvement Plan and receive a micro-grant:
        - Your Local YoungStar Office: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/program/localoffice
        - Information on micro-grants:
            - http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/micrograntsdf
    - Explore free services provided by the staff of the CCIC: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccic
        - Get navigation support for The Registry and YoungStar websites.

        - Borrow books, videos, posters, and other resources.
        - Obtain learning packets customized for your needs, as well as materials for staff or parents.

- Outline your personal professional development plan with help from WECA:

    - *Journey to Quality*: http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/assets/Documents/JTQ.pdf

    - *Developing a Professional Development Plan*: http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/assets/Documents/Developing-a-Professional-Development-Plan-handout.pdf

    - *My Professional Development Plan*: http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/assets/Documents/PD-plan-handout-for-workshop.pdf

- Search for professional development opportunities in your area, often at low or no cost:

    - YoungStar Regional Training Calendar: http://supportingfamiliestogether.org/wp-content/uploads/Annual-Training-Calendar.pdf

    - Your Local YoungStar Office: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/program/localoffice

    - The Registry's Statewide Training Calendar (T-NET Training Network): https://www.the-registry.org/myregistry/default.aspx

    - CCIC Education and Training Opportunities: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccic/index-education

    - Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) Training Opportunities: http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wmels-training-opportunities.php

    - Wisconsin Pyramid Model Training Opportunities: http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/social-emotional-competence-sefel-training-opportunities.php

    - WECA Child Care Training (including free online trainings—Child Care Business Practices Tutorial and Cultivating Childhood Wellness Through Gardening): http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/training/

    - SFTA:
        - Training, Professional Development, Conferences, On-Site Consultation, and Networking: http://supportingfamiliestogether.org/early-care-education-professionals/sharpen-your-professional-skills/
        - Your Local Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Agency: http://supportingfamiliestogether.org/member-directory/

    - Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Mandated Reporter Training (SCAN-MRT) (free and online): http://wcwpds.wisc.edu/related-training/mandated-reporter/Default.aspx

    - Darkness to Light (Stewards of Children) Training (online training is $10 per person): http://www.d2l.org/site/c.4dICIJOkGcISE/b.6242551/

- Find the universities and colleges closest to you that offer early childhood continuing education and degree opportunities:

    - Public Universities, Private Colleges, and Technical Colleges in Wisconsin: http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach/wisconsin-universities-colleges

- Put your on-the-job training and experiences towards college credit in the Credit for Prior Learning system: http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach/CPL

- Obtain a scholarship through T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin: http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach/

- Find out if you're eligible for a REWARD Wisconsin Stipend: http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/reward/

As you learn and grow—and help the children in your care learn and grow—please know that YoungStar staff throughout the state stand ready to assist you in taking advantage of these opportunities!

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: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Merrimac-Community-Garden/144422082250422. (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*:

https://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*:

https://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 on the 2016 version of the YoungStar Evaluation Criteria. 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?

For any program with a current rating based on 2015 or 2016 YoungStar Evaluation Criteria
When a program is terminated from CACFP, the Department of Children and Families will take the following actions:

- As soon as DCF is notified, we will amend the rating so that the program loses the point for CACFP participation beginning the date the program's CACFP participation is ended. This means that the program will drop to 2 Stars because this point is required for 3 Star ratings.
- DCF will send a letter informing the program of the change.
- DCF will notify the local YoungStar office of the change.

For any program with a current rating based on 2017 Evaluation Criteria
If a program is terminated from CACFP, it will have no impact on YoungStar rating points or star level.

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.

Questions about On-Site Services: Technical Consultation and Technical & Formal Ratings

ONSITE-1. What are the different types of YoungStar ratings? Can programs decide which type of rating they get?

When a program/provider applies to participate in YoungStar, and/or renews their YoungStar participation, the program/provider chooses one of the types of ratings described below:

- **Automated Rating:** A provider who does not wish to have any visits from a Technical Consultant, and does not wish to be rated on-site by a YoungStar rater, can choose to receive an Automated Rating based upon regulatory compliance. Programs that choose this option are *not* eligible to receive micro-grants and are *not* required to create a Program Profile in The Registry. The Automated Rating results in a program being rated a 2 Star. (FYI: Programs choosing a rating based on accreditation or Head Start standing also receive an Automated Rating, but this process is described below.)

- **On-site Rating:** If a provider chooses an on-site rating, a Technical Consultant will be assigned to the program, and the program can choose to have its rating done before *or* after receiving technical consultation services. While working with the program, the Technical Consultant will verify staff education and training through The Registry and will work with the program to determine if it should complete a **Technical Rating** or a **Formal Rating with Observation**.

    - A YoungStar **Technical Rating** is performed by the Technical Consultant and can result in the program being rated either a 2 Star or 3 Star. If a Technical Consultant determines that staff education levels qualify the program for a Formal Rating with Observation, the Technical Consultant will encourage the program to consider this option and will provide guidance in regard to the next steps.

    - A YoungStar **Formal Rating with Observation** is performed by a Technical Consultant with an ERS Observer and can result in the program being awarded a 3 Star, 4 Star, or 5 Star rating. A Formal Rating with Observation utilizes all of the following:

        Environment Rating Scales. Information about the ECERS-R, ITERS-R, FCCERS-R, and SACERS-U can be found at http://ers.fpg.unc.edu/.

        Indicators of business and professional practices. Indicators in this category were informed by the Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care (BAS) and the Program Administration Scale (PAS) in the area of Business & Professional Practices (including business practices, professional development, staff benefits, and parent/family involvement). Information about the BAS and PAS can be found at http://mccormickcenter.nl.edu/program-evaluation/.

        Indicators of health and well-being.

- **Rating Based on Accreditation or Head Start Standing:** Programs that are accredited by one of the accepted accrediting agencies can earn 4 Star or 5 Star ratings and are not required to go through the typical YoungStar rating processes explained above. See the "Accreditation" section of these FAQs for more information on accreditation.

  Programs that provide Head Start services may be eligible to receive 5 Star ratings, without going through the typical YoungStar rating process. For more details, see the "Head Start and Early Head Start" section of these FAQS or the Head Start policy document:

  http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/policies/head-start-policy.pdf

Every Other Year Ratings. Programs participating in YoungStar receive one rating every other year. However, there are two ways a program's star level might change before its next required rating:

- The educational qualifications of staff might change, and when these changes are updated in The Registry Program Profile, the program's star level might change. See the "Application and Participation" section of these FAQs for more information.
- Achievement of accreditation during the year will also allow for a new rating. See the "Accreditation" section for more information.
- A program can choose to be rated annually by indicating that preference on a Request for Off-Year Services application. The new off-year rating may or may not change a program's star level.
- Programs may request to change the type of rating they selected on their contract or renewal form in the following cases (which may or may not result in a change to their star rating):
    - A program received a 2 Star rating through the Automated Rating Process, and decide that they would like to try an onsite rating before their next required rating.
    - A program received a 3 Star rating through a Technical Rating process. At some point before their next required rating, the program decides they would like to receive a Formal Rating (and they are eligible to receive one at that point).

ONSITE-2. If a program has not been in business for a full year, can it receive a Formal Rating with Observation?

No. A program must be in its physical location for one full year before a Formal Rating with Observation can be performed. The program would be eligible for a Technical or Automated Rating and is eligible for technical assistance as soon as the program applies to be in YoungStar.

If a provider moves locations, this rule applies, too. Any program must be at its current physical location for a full year before receiving a Formal Rating with Observation.

Once a program has been in business for one full year at the same location, the program may be eligible for a Formal Rating with Observation. However, the program would not receive any new Technical Assistance until after its next YoungStar anniversary month. The program would be eligible for the next round of Technical Assistance when it receives its next YoungStar Renewal Contract or Request for Off-Year Services application.

If a provider is rated a 3 Star and then, after being in business for a year, the provider requests a Formal Rating with Observation and earns a higher rating, the provider does *not* receive back payments resulting from a YoungStar Quality Adjustment for time between the Technical Rating and the Formal Rating.

> *Example:* Provider Sue started her business in October 2010. She signed up for YoungStar in March 2011 and was given a Technical Rating of 3 Stars in May 2011. In October 2011, she could request a Formal Rating with Observation if she meets all other formal rating requirements. If, as a result of the Formal Rating with Observation, she receives a 4 or 5 Star rating, she would be eligible for a YoungStar quality adjustment starting the month after her 4 or 5 Star rating becomes official.

ONSITE-3. What is the process for on-site ratings (Technical Ratings and Formal Ratings with Observation)?

On-site rating visits occur every other year. However, a rating change may occur between biennial on-site visits if:

- A program earns accreditation through one of the YoungStar-approved accrediting bodies.
- The educational qualifications of staff increase or decrease enough to change the YoungStar rating.
- The program requests to receive an optional rating on their Request for Off-Year Services application.

Technical Ratings

For Technical Ratings (and for technical consultation), the program and the program's Technical Consultant work together to schedule rating appointments.

Formal Ratings with Observation

To request a Formal Rating with Observation, child care programs must:

- Have completed a YoungStar Contract;
- Meet Business & Professional Practices, Learning Environment & Curriculum, and Child Health & Well-Being minimum requirements for at least a 4 Star rating (verified by a Technical Consultant);
- Meet educational requirements for at least 4 Stars (verified by The Registry);
- Have been in business in the current physical location for one full year; ***and***
- Believe they meet sufficient quality standards to receive 4 Stars or 5 Stars.

For Formal Ratings ERS observations, visits are unannounced and occur within a known eight (4) week window of time. Before receiving any ERS observation, a provider will speak with her/his assigned ERS Observer, specifying the dates or times of day that the program will not be available, such as planned holidays or professional development days.

Programs do *not* choose the classrooms/groups to be observed. Instead, they are selected at random from a pool of all eligible classrooms/groups. Because of the length of time it takes to conduct ERS observations, this type of rating is only available to programs that provide child care/school-age care for two or more consecutive hours on the days that they are open.

In addition to the observation of the classroom/group environment, multi-source data collection methods are used including interviews, observations, and document review to provide an overall quality rating of the child care program. ERS Observers complete the observation using a state-approved process. All ERS Observers have completed specialized training and must consistently demonstrate reliability on the use of the observation tools. Observations will be fair, efficient, and reliable, and programs can be confident they have received a valid star rating.

Before a rating is published on the public database, local YoungStar office staff will offer to explain the rating. If a program would like its rating reviewed, there is an appeals process, described at:

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/ys-appeals.pdf

ONSITE-4. What observation tools are used for on-site ratings (Technical Ratings and Formal Ratings with Observation)?

Observation tools that are used for YoungStar ratings (**Technical and Formal**) include the *Evaluation Criteria* documents:

https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/point-detail

As stated in the first question in this section, the Program Administration Scale (PAS)[4] and Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care (BAS) were used to *inform* the creation of the YoungStar evaluation criteria in Business and Professional Practices. However, the PAS and BAS are *not* used in their entirety during an on-site rating. Find the PAS and the BAS at http://mccormickcenter.nl.edu/program-evaluation/.

Additional tools that will be used for YoungStar **Formal Ratings with Observation** include the Environment Rating Scales (http://ers.fpg.unc.edu/):

- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (ECERS-R)
- Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (ITERS-R)
- Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (FCCERS-R)
- School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS-U)

For family child care programs, ERS Observers use the FCCERS-R. For group child care programs, ERS Observers find the selected classroom/group on the day of the observation, look at the ages of the children served in that classroom/group on that day, and choose the appropriate rating scale (ECERS-R, ITERS-R, or SACERS-U) based on the ages of the majority of children in the classroom/group at the time.

If you would like to learn more about the specific items that ERS Observers are looking for, check out the Environment Rating Scale(s) relevant to your program:

- The WI Child Care Information Center (CCIC, at 1-800-362-7353 or http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccic) provides a free lending library of resource materials related to early care and education and will be able to loan you copies of the Environment Rating Scales.
- You can also learn more about each of the scales by going to http://www.ersi.info/scales.html and clicking on the scale(s) of interest.

If a program has already been evaluated with one of the Environment Rating Scales by someone outside of YoungStar, the program still needs to be evaluated by a YoungStar ERS Observer to earn a star rating. This is because YoungStar ERS Observers attend group training, reliability, and practice sessions to ensure that all YoungStar ratings are consistent from rater-to-rater and from program-to-program. The program can consider the original, non-YoungStar evaluation as additional information that can be used to support its Quality Improvement Plan.

ONSITE-5. How does YoungStar ensure consistency between my Technical Consultant and my ERS Observer?

Technical Consultant and ERS Observer oversight staff at Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA) conducts trainings to increase the consistency between the consultation offered by a Technical Consultant and the observation performed by an ERS Observer.

Even so, slight inconsistencies might be noted because:

- ERS Observers go through extensive training to learn how to assign ratings consistently and are continually monitored to ensure this consistency. Of course, Technical Consultants thoroughly understand the YoungStar *Evaluation Criteria*, but do not go through the extensive training required to complete ERS observations.

[4] Talan, Teri N., and Jorde Bloom, Paula. *Program Administration Scale: Measuring Early Childhood Leadership and Management*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2004.

- There are always changes in your program from day to day, and an ERS Observer might have had the chance to observe something that a Technical Consultant did not.
- The *Evaluation Criteria* might have changed slightly from one year to the next, especially when YoungStar was in its beginning stages.

ONSITE-6. What happens when a program moves?

Regulation

First of all, when a child care program moves its location, the program is obligated to inform its regulatory agency (certification or licensing). DCF has created guidance to help providers when they move:

http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/program-relocation.pdf

Wisconsin Shares

To ensure continuity of Wisconsin Shares payments from families, programs must complete these steps when moving:

1. Request the *Program Relocation, Type of Care or Ownership Change Form* from your local YoungStar office (http://dcf.wi.gov/youngstar/program/localoffice).
2. Complete this form and send it to your local YoungStar office.
3. Your local YoungStar office will contact you to acknowledge the receipt of the *Program Relocation, Type of Care or Ownership Change Form*.
4. As soon as you are in the new location, contact your local YoungStar office again to let them know the move is complete. If the program just changes its address and nothing else changes about the program, the Provider, Location, and Facility numbers should not change. If the Location and/or Facility numbers do change, the program must notify their local YoungStar office as soon as possible.

YoungStar

A YoungStar rating of a 2 Star or 3 Star **is transferable** as long as the staff remain the same.

A YoungStar rating of 4 or 5 attained through Formal Rating with Observation **is not transferable** to a new address. If the program had a Formal Rating at the old address and earned 3 or more Stars, the program will be rated a 3 Star at the new location. Before the program can request a new Formal Rating, the program has to be in the new physical location for one year prior to the request.

The one exception to this rule for 4 and 5 Star ratings is if a program is accredited through a YoungStar-recognized accrediting body *and* the accreditation transfers to the new location:

- If the accrediting body allows the accreditation to move with the provider, YoungStar will honor the accreditation and the corresponding star rating (4 or 5 Stars). The provider/program is responsible for submitting verification from the accrediting agency that includes program name, *new address location*, and accreditation begin and end dates.

- If the accreditation does *not* transfer with the program/provider, a YoungStar rating is required, and the program can request technical consultation. Because the program will be at the new location less than one year, the program may only request a Technical Rating to earn up to a 3 Star rating or an Automated Rating to receive a 2 Star rating. A program must be in existence at its current location for at least one year to become eligible for a Formal Rating with Observation.

ONSITE-7. What is the process for programs/providers to receive technical consultation or on-site ratings (Technical Ratings or Formal Ratings with Observation) when a program is moving? Is there a cut-off date for these on-site services?

There is not a specific cut-off date identified. Instead it is up to the Technical Consultant, Formal Rater, and Supporting Families Together Association to determine how best to use staff time to serve the interests of the program.

YoungStar-participating programs are eligible for an average of 10 hours of technical assistance per year, so these hours should be used where they will have the biggest impact. YoungStar staff will make the final determination based upon the needs of the individual program and the timeframe for the move, considering the following:

- If the program has applied for YoungStar technical assistance, but will be moving ***within the targeted technical assistance timeframe*** (a 20-week window), the YoungStar staff will consider the *reason* for the technical assistance:
    - If the technical consultation is for a specific building/environment problem that may not exist after the move, it may be in the best interest of the program to wait until the move is complete.
    - If the technical assistance requested is related to professional development or business practices, the issue will likely remain the same at the new site, which makes it possible to proceed with the technical assistance even though the program will move.
- If there is ***no definite date*** for the move, technical consultation could proceed for general professional development and staff education/training needs.
- If the move is planned but is ***not expected for a year or more***, any technical consultation and on-site ratings should occur at the current site.

Once at the new location, the program can request to have their former rating- up to 3 stars- transferred to the new site. A program must be in existence at its current location for at least one year to become eligible for a Formal Rating with Observation and thus a possible 4 or 5 Star rating.

ONSITE-8. When a program closes, is a withdrawal of application needed?

No, a withdrawal of application is not needed. When a program closes (after the program has notified certification or licensing of the intent to close), DCF's automated system (the Case Management System, or CMS) removes the program from the public search site.

However, it is important for the provider to alert the local YoungStar office as soon as possible that the program will be closing. To ensure efficient use of resources and time, YoungStar needs to discontinue any technical consultation or formal rating assignment in CMS so the Technical Consultant or ERS Observer does not visit a site that is closing.

In addition, programs that are closing must alert regulation.

ONSITE-9. How does YoungStar ensure that star ratings are based on a program's quality?

Technical Consultants and ERS Observers have extensive education and experience in the field of early childhood care and education and meet all Registry Professional Development Approval System (PDAS, at http://www.the-registry.org/PDAS/Overview.aspx) eligibility requirements. *YoungStar Evaluation Criteria* are research-based, and DCF requires that all assessments and services be culturally and linguistically responsive.

ERS Observers must complete training and demonstrate reliability in the use of the observation tool protocols. The Environment Rating Scales themselves have been validated in many different settings to assure that they measure child care quality fairly, objectively, and consistently.

Answers: Regulatory Compliance

REG-1. What is regulated child care?

"Regulated" means child care is either:

- Certified by the County/Tribe or Milwaukee Early Care Administration (MECA),
- Licensed by the State, ***or***
- Operated by a public school board.

Note: ***To be eligible to receive Wisconsin Shares payments from families, providers must be regulated.***

Licensed Child Care

Under Wisconsin law, no person may provide care and supervision for four or more children under the age of 7 for less than 24 hours a day unless that person obtains a license to operate a child care program from DCF. This does ***not*** include:

- A relative or guardian of a child who provides care and supervision for the child
- A public or parochial school
- A person employed to come to the home of the child's parent or guardian for less than 24 hours a day
- A county, city, village, town, public school district, or library that provides programs primarily intended for recreational or social purposes

There are 3 different categories of state licensed child care:

- *Licensed Family Child Care Centers* provide care for up to eight children. This care is usually in the provider's home.
- *Licensed Group Child Care Centers* provide care for nine or more children. These centers are usually located somewhere other than a residence and may be small or large in size.
- *Licensed Day Camps* are seasonal programs that provide experiences for four or more children. These programs usually operate in an outdoor setting.

Find more information on DCF Child Care Licensing at:

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing

Certified Child Care

There is a *voluntary* form of regulation in Wisconsin for those child care programs that are not required to be licensed. This type of regulation is called certification. Counties/Tribes certify child care homes and some school-age child care programs. http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cccertification is available for those families who wish to receive a http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares, but who do not choose to use licensed care.

Find more information on DCF Child Care Certification at:

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cccertification

Exempt from Regulation

Public and private schools that operate early childhood programs are exempt from licensing oversight. These programs are regulated by public school boards and are required to meet the state child care licensing *standards*, even though they are not required to be officially licensed.

Care in the child's own home is also exempt.

Note: Programs operated by private or parochial schools must be licensed in order to receive payments from families utilizing the Wisconsin Shares Subsidy Program.

REG-2. Is there a relationship between YoungStar and regulation?

Local YoungStar offices and state staff will confirm regulatory compliance through an automated transfer of data from licensing, certification, and the Wisconsin Shares program. Programs out of regulatory compliance cannot move above 1 Star and are not eligible for Wisconsin Shares payments from families.

Beyond this confirmation of regulatory status, YoungStar functions are independent of regulation.

DCF's child care licensing program promotes the health, safety, and welfare of children in licensed child care. DCF licensing specialists continue to regularly visit child care programs to assure compliance with the child care rules and regulations in *DCF 251: Licensing Rules for Group Child Care Centers* and *DCF 250: Licensing Rules for Family Child Care Centers*, at:

http://dcf.wi.gov/cclicensing/rules

Once regulatory bodies are satisfied with a program's basic conditions of health, safety, and welfare, YoungStar goes above and beyond to support child care programs in offering *high quality* programming. To assist with this goal, DCF contracted with the YoungStar Consortium[5] to provide services through 11 local YoungStar offices. These offices adjust staffing to deliver technical assistance, coaching, mentoring, and training to child care programs, as well as conduct YoungStar Technical Ratings and YoungStar Formal Ratings with Observation.

Licensing staff do not determine YoungStar ratings, and simply remaining in regulatory compliance does not give a program any additional YoungStar points. Instead, programs earn YoungStar points by aligning their programs to the quality criteria described in the *Evaluation Criteria* documents:

https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/point-detail

REG-3. Do regulations require that child care staff have training in order to work with children?

Regulations

Regulations require all child care providers to have training in:

- Early childhood education
- Shaken baby syndrome (SBS) prevention
- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) risk reduction procedures
- Infant/child cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated electronic defibrillator (AED) procedures

Child care teachers in group child care centers need additional early childhood training, and group child care center directors and administrators and family child care providers need training in the business-related aspects of operating a business. Group child care teachers and center directors also need to have experience in a licensed program before beginning to work in a program.

YoungStar

YoungStar goes above and beyond licensing requirements to recognize that higher levels of education lead to higher quality care. Because staff education is one of the most consistent predictors of quality in an early childhood or school-age setting, a program earns more YoungStar points if staff have higher levels of education, as explained in the *YoungStar Quality Indicator Point Detail* documents:

https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/point-detail

REG-4. How is a program's "regulatory history" established?

Each program that is licensed by DCF or certified by the certifying agency agrees to comply with administrative rules intended to protect children in care. Licensing specialists from DCF and certification workers from local certifying agencies make periodic, announced and unannounced, on-site visits to licensed and certified programs, during which time the regulator observes the operation of the program and notes any areas in which the program is out of compliance with selected administrative rules. Observation of any violation of administrative rule is documented at the visit. Through this process, the program is alerted to existing violations and is required to take prompt, appropriate corrective action to safeguard children in care.

[5] The YoungStar Consortium is made up of Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA), Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA), and Celebrate Children Foundation (CCF). The Consortium was selected to administer YoungStar in six regions in Wisconsin. The YoungStar Consortium is responsible for the YoungStar application process, on-site technical consultation, regional and community training delivery, Formal Ratings with Observation, administration of micro-grants, assisting parents with locating child care programming, and working with DCF and other key state, regional, and local partners to support child care programming. More information can be found at http://dcf.wi.gov/youngstar/pdf/regional_entity_responsibility.pdf.

Regulatory history is also established through complaint investigations conducted by DCF staff and certification workers. Since licensing specialists and certification workers cannot visit and observe each program's operations daily, information from parents and others regarding what is happening at a program is critical.

Also included in a licensed program's regulatory history are enforcement actions. Enforcement actions, authorized in licensing statute, are sanctions or penalties that may be taken by DCF to address violations of administrative rules of licensed programs. Through the use of enforcement actions, such as orders and forfeitures, DCF can compel licensees to correct violations and come into compliance with minimum regulatory requirements. A licensee can dispute an enforcement action taken by the DCF by appealing the action through the Division of Hearings and Appeals.

REG-5. What should families consider when reviewing a program's regulatory history?

In reviewing the regulatory history of a program, families should keep in mind that the presence of violations and enforcement actions in the program's regulatory history is not the whole story. It is rare to find a regulated program that has never been cited for a rule violation. Many factors can influence a regulatory history, including the size of the program, the length of time the program has been operating, and the qualifications of the staff. Families should consider some of the following questions when they review the program's regulatory history:

a. What is the YoungStar rating?
b. What is the nature of the violation? Was the violation related to safety, record keeping, staff-to-child ratios? Every rule is important to the quality of the program, but some rules are more directly related to the safety of children.
c. Is the program being repeatedly cited for the same violation? What is the program doing to correct the violation? Is the program making timely efforts to correct the violation?
d. Is there an extensive history of multiple violations, or are the violations infrequent?
e. What enforcement actions (for licensed programs only) have been taken and for what reasons? How has the licensed program responded to these actions?
f. What do other families say about the program?
g. What is the program's plan of correction? What can the program tell families about the violations and plans to correct them?

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccregulation/choosing was developed by DCF to help families make the very important decision of locating a child care arrangement that is right for them. DCF encourages families to consider this guidance, in combination with the information available through YoungStar, when considering the program that best meets the needs of their children, as well as their own family needs.

- http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccregulation/choosing
- YoungStar Information: http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar

DCF also encourages families to talk with the programs they are considering. Families may also contact the local Child Care Resource and Referral office:

http://supportingfamiliestogether.org/member-directory/

REG-6. What is a violation, and what violations are considered the most serious?

A rule violation, also referred to as a noncompliance, is a formal, written statement that the licensee or certified operator is not in compliance with a specific administrative rule.

Every administrative rule is important to the quality of the program, but some administrative rules are more directly related to assuring that children are safe in child care settings. DCF has identified those rule requirements that, when violated, are likely to pose the most serious threat to the health, safety, and welfare of children in care.

When citing a rule violation, the licensing specialist pays particular attention to whether or not the rule requirement is included on the serious violation list. Depending on the number of serious violations cited on a single monitoring visit and whether the serious violations are also repeat violations, the licensing specialist may be required to initiate enforcement action.

DCF intends to eventually identify which violations are classified as serious violations for **licensed** child care programs shown on this public search website. Review the list of serious violations in **licensed** family and group child care at:

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/seriousviolations

REG-7. Is there a relationship between YoungStar ratings and the number of violations?

It is rare to find a regulated program that has never been cited for a rule violation, and not all violations represent the same threat to the health and safety of children in care. Many factors will influence the actions that must be taken to achieve compliance, including the program's record on correcting violations, the seriousness of the violations, the size of the program, the length of time the program has been operating, and the qualifications of the staff.

A program is considered to be out of regulatory compliance for YoungStar when it has had its license or certification revoked, denied, or suspended or it has been suspended from participating in the http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares program (http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares). This may happen if DCF or the certifying agency determines that a program has failed to correct previous violations or the program has put the health and safety of children in care at risk.

REG-8. How is "regulatory compliance" defined, and what happens with YoungStar and Wisconsin Shares if a provider is out of compliance?

The definition of regulatory compliance depends on whether a provider is licensed, certified, or exempt.

Licensed

Notification: Licensed providers are considered to be out of regulatory compliance upon receipt of notice from the Department of Children and Families that the program has 1) been revoked; 2) been denied a license; or 3) has had its license suspended.

YoungStar: For programs found to be out of regulatory compliance, the star rating is changed to 1 Star. If the provider subsequently becomes reinstated, the rating will be changed to 2 Star.

Wisconsin Shares Suspension: If a provider's Wisconsin Shares authorizations have been ended due to a suspension from the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program, the provider's rating is changed to 1 Star. The provider remains at 1 Star until the term of the YoungStar Contract expires. At that time the provider is removed from YoungStar.

Right to Appeal: All three regulatory actions (revocation, denial, and suspension) have an associated appeal right, as described in Ch. 227, *Wis. Stats.*[6] In the case of revocations, denials, and license suspensions, a program remains out of regulatory compliance and at 1 Star until the regulatory enforcement action is resolved. Any future participation in the Wisconsin Shares program depends upon the conditions articulated in the final ruling or the settlement of the revocation case.

Continued Operations During an Appeal: If the program continues to operate during an appeal, the provider is placed on a waiting list for YoungStar consultation services. These providers are not eligible to receive any services from YoungStar until services have been provided to all other providers who requested services and are currently in regulatory compliance.

Certified

Notification: Certified providers are considered to be out of regulatory compliance upon receipt of notice from the certifying agency that the program has been revoked, suspended, or denied re-certification.

YoungStar: If a certified provider has had certification revoked or suspended, the provider is automatically removed from YoungStar. If the provider appeals the decision, the provider's rating is changed to 1 Star. If the provider subsequently becomes reinstated, the rating will be changed to 2 Star.

Wisconsin Shares Suspension: If a provider's Wisconsin Shares authorizations have been ended due to a suspension from the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program, the provider's rating is changed to 1 Star. The provider remains at 1 Star until the term of the YoungStar Contract expires. At that time the provider is removed from YoungStar.

Right to Appeal: Programs have an associated appeal right, as described in Ch. 227, *Wis. Stats.*[6]

[6] Chapter 227 Administrative Procedure and Review: http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/227.pdf

Continued Operations During an Appeal: If the program continues to operate during an appeal, the provider is placed on a waiting list to receive YoungStar consultation services. These providers are not eligible to receive services from YoungStar until services have been provided to all other providers who requested services and are currently in regulatory compliance.

Exempt

A child care program run by a public school is exempt from DCF licensing oversight. Therefore, such a program could not be placed at a 1 Star due to revocation of regulation.

Child care programs run by public schools (or private schools) are required to meet the state child care licensing *standards*, even though these programs are exempt from DCF licensing oversight. A public school board would learn of instances where standards were not met if these instances were reported by parents or others.

Wisconsin Shares Suspension: If a program's Wisconsin Shares authorizations have been ended due to a suspension from the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program, the provider's rating is changed to 1 Star. The provider remains at 1 Star until the term of the YoungStar Contract expires. At that time the provider is removed from YoungStar.

REG-9. If there is a complaint regarding a regulated child care program, where should it be directed?

Anyone can report a complaint to http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccregulation/complaint concerning a *licensed or unlicensed program*. When, http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccregulation, licensing staff conduct a thorough investigation. If the complaint is substantiated, the violations are documented, and the program is expected to take prompt corrective action.

Complaints concerning *certified* child care programs shall be made to the http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ccregulation/cccertification/certifiers.pdf, at:

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccregulation/complaint

REG-10. Why doesn't DCF's Child Care Search[7] display positive observations made by the regulators?

The role of DCF is to protect the health, safety and welfare of Wisconsin's children in care through periodic monitoring of child care programs. DCF licensing specialists and certifying agencies conduct regular inspections of regulated programs to assure compliance with administrative rule requirements, the minimal standards established through statutory requirements. The expectation is that regulated programs meet these minimum standards at all times. The website shows the compliance information collected at these monitoring visits.

YoungStar ratings, however, provide the consumer with information on the *quality* of care being provided to children, based on an assessment of the program's education qualifications and training, learning environment and curriculum, business and professional practices, and child health and well-being practices.

DCF recognizes that many child care programs go well beyond the minimum standards required to maintain licensure or certification. We encourage child care programs to publicize their many extra efforts to provide quality early care in a safe and nurturing environment. Families looking for child care are encouraged to visit the programs they are considering to see firsthand what each program has to offer.

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

[7] DCF's *Regulated Child Care and YoungStar Public Search* website helps families search for safe, quality child care in Wisconsin: *http://childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov/Search/BasicSearch.aspx*

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 payments from families, 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 payments from families are 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 ERS Observer 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/files/youngstar/pdf/4kdecisiontree.pdf

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

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*:

http://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 Authorized Hours 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.[8] If the site is then rated higher than a 2 Star, it will receive higher Wisconsin Shares payments beginning the week the Technical or Formal Rating is activated.

[8] 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 Evaluation Criteria for Group Programs*

-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 Authorization Hours 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.

Answers: Accreditation

ACC-1. How do accredited programs earn YoungStar ratings?

Accredited programs are awarded ratings of 4 or 5 Stars, based on the type of accreditation the program holds (and on staff educational qualifications, in some cases). The accreditation process replaces the YoungStar rating process.

YoungStar accepts the following accreditations as equivalent to a ***5 Star*** rating:[9]

- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- Association for Early Learning Leaders (formerly the National Association of Child Care Professionals)
- City of Madison Group and School-Age Accreditation

YoungStar accepts the following accreditations as equivalent to a ***4 Star or a 5 Star*** rating, depending on the educational qualifications of staff:[10]

- American Camp Association (ACA)
- Council on Accreditation (COA)
- National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)
- National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)
- Satellite Family Child Care Accreditation (in the City of Madison)
- AdvancED
- American Montessori Society (AMS)

When a program becomes accredited or extends/renews its accreditation, it is the responsibility of the program to send its certificate of accreditation/re-accreditation to DCF at youngstar@wisconsin.gov, to ensure YoungStar ratings are correct.

A copy of the YoungStar Accreditation Policy may be found at:

(http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/evaluation-criteria/2016-eval-criteria/2016-ys-evaluation-criteria-group.pdf). 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.

[9] These accreditations require programs to meet the educational requirements of ***5 Star*** programs.

[10] If a program is accredited by COA, NAFCC or Satellite AND the program meets the educational requirements of a 5 Star program in their respective YoungStar rating track, that program would be eligible for a 5 Star rating. If a program is accredited by NECPA, AdvancED, or AMS AND the program meets the educational requirements of a 4 Star program in their respective YoungStar rating track, that program would be eligible for a 4 Star rating. If a program is accredited by NECPA, AdvancED, or AMS AND the program meets the educational requirements of a 5 Star program in their respective YoungStar rating track, that program would be eligible for a 5 Star rating.

http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/policies/accreditation-policy.pdf

Accredited School-Age Programs

If a school-age program is housed inside a group-licensed location that is accredited by the Association for Early Learning Leaders (ELL), the school-age program is recognized as accredited because only one YoungStar rating can be awarded per Location Number. School-age programs at these locations are considered part of the accredited status of the larger program.

ACC-2. How do we know that the accreditations mentioned in the previous question are equivalent to a 4 or 5 Star rating?

YoungStar staff communicate regularly with staff in these accrediting bodies and are satisfied that their accreditation criteria and monitoring practices are rigorous. Currently accepted accreditation bodies require programs to submit annual self-studies and have established unannounced on-site visits. Accreditation is accepted as an alternate pathway to 4 or 5 Stars based on the intensive practices that are necessary to earn accreditation.

ACC-3. Do accredited programs need to supply a person who is trained in the Wisconsin Pyramid Model, PBIS, Tribes® TLC, or Guiding Children's Behavior in School-Age Programs?

No. Ongoing social emotional training is certainly *recommended* for accredited programs, but it is *not* required, and it will *not* affect an accredited program's rating.