

YoungStar in Wisconsin

An Initial Progress Report as of July 2011

A Report Prepared by

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families





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Summary of YoungStar

YoungStar is a program of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) created to improve the quality of child care for Wisconsin children. YoungStar is designed to:

- Evaluate and rate the quality of care given by child care providers;
- Help parents choose the best child care for their kids;
- Support providers with tools and training to deliver high-quality early care; and
- Set a consistent standard for child care quality.

(Source: YoungStar website, Department of Children and Families)



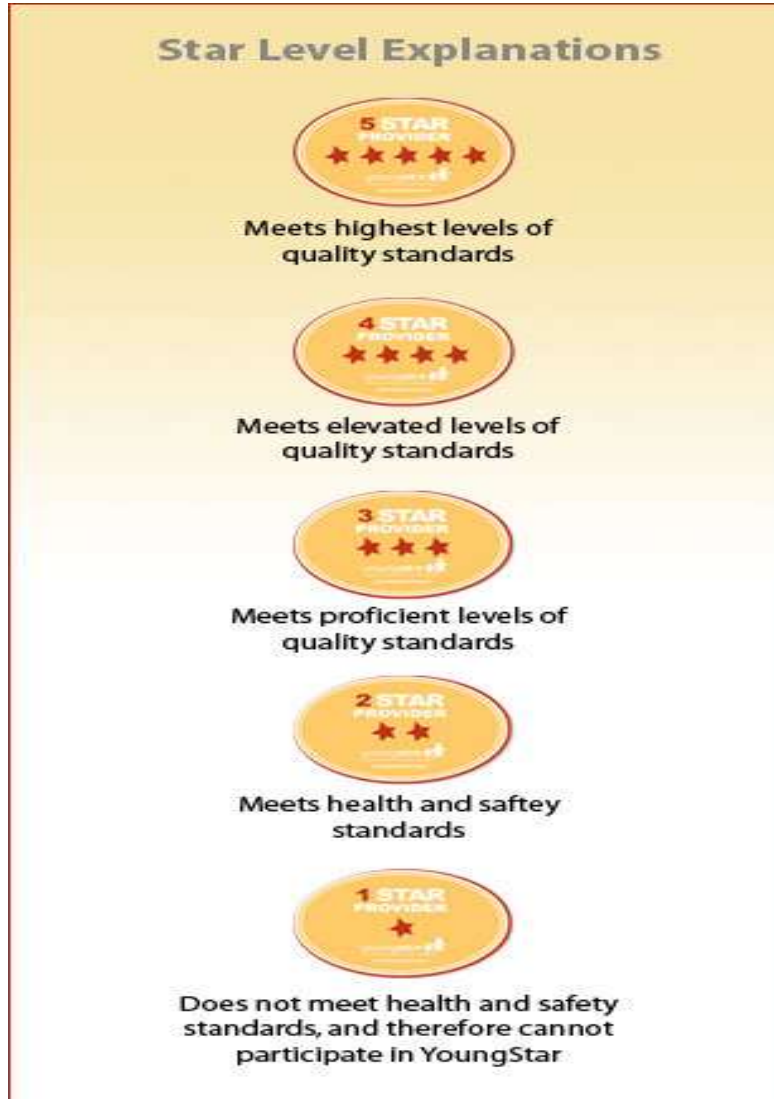
Purpose of this Report Summary



This report is intended to give a snapshot of the Youngstar child care quality rating and improvement system as of July 1, 2011, setting a baseline for measuring future progress. Some preliminary work on Youngstar was done in the fall of 2010, through the first half of 2011, but final legislative decisions about the program were not made until June 2011.



Five-Star Ratings



YoungStar evaluates the quality of care given by regulated child care providers and rates them from 1 to 5 stars, with 5 stars being the highest rating, similar to ratings for hotels, restaurants, etc.

A provider's star rating is based on:

- Education Qualifications and Training;
- Learning Environment and Curriculum;
- Professional and Business Practices; and
- Child Health and Well-Being Practices.

(Source: YoungStar website, Department of Children and Families)



Implementation Background

In November 2010, the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families contracted with a consortium to deliver specified YoungStar services in six regions in the state. The Consortium is made up of three agencies: Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, Supporting Families Together Association, and Celebrate Children Foundation.

In the meantime, significant work had been done to provide information and technical assistance to child care providers statewide, and a website to include rating and other key information on child care programs had been established.

However, implementation of tiered reimbursement policies within Wisconsin Shares, was delayed until July 2012 by legislative action. Tiered reimbursement provides child care payments based on the star level in YoungStar of child care programs receiving Wisconsin Shares payments, providing incentives for higher quality. Below is the tiered reimbursement schedule passed by the state legislature:

Program Rating	Impact on WI Shares Payments
One star	Prohibited from receiving Wisconsin Shares payments
Two star	Minus 5 percent, effective July 2012
Three star	No change
Four star	Plus 5 percent, effective July 2012
Five star	Plus 10 percent, effective July 2012 ; Increasing to 25 percent, effective January 2013

The tiered reimbursement schedule, passed in the 2011-2013 budget, provides more modest financial incentives than the original plan proposed in 2010. The reduction in fiscal incentives is likely to slow down quality improvement efforts and affect how many programs are able to reach the higher star levels.



Report Content

This report is intended to provide data and analysis on the statewide rollout of YoungStar, in the following areas:

Applications received;

Child care programs that have ratings on a 5-star scale;

Programs that have been scheduled for technical ratings;

YoungStar technical consultation delivered;

Pre-YoungStar technical assistance provided;

Baseline data child care workforce qualifications;

Pre-YoungStar training provided;

Micro-grants awarded;

Media and public information;

Fund Raising; and

Flow chart for implementation.

The source of the data in this report is from the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families unless otherwise indicated.



**Applications for YoungStar received statewide:
3,429 programs applied (92 percent) by July 15, 2011.**

As of mid-July, the vast majority of programs required to participate in YoungStar – those that serve children partially funded by the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program – had completed YoungStar applications. The initial process called for child care programs to officially submit a YoungStar Participation Request form and to sign a Wisconsin Shares contract.

Statewide, 3,429 child care programs had submitted YoungStar applications, or 92 percent of the 3,733 child care programs participating in Wisconsin Shares. About two-thirds of programs applying were family child care programs, and one-third was group child care centers. Nearly 700 child care programs statewide who were not required to participate in YoungStar also applied. Wisconsin has one of the most ambitious rollout plans in the nation, and is one of very few states requiring all child care programs receiving public subsidies to participate in a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Most states have voluntary participation.

Statewide child care programs that had been rated on a 5-star scale as of July 2011:

1,516 programs (37 percent) of those required to participate had been rated statewide.

These programs have been rated on a scale of 1 to 5 stars, based either on an assessment of quality or on a provider’s decision not to be rated above a 2-star level. Here is the July 2011 statewide breakdown:

Star rating	1-star	2-star	3-star	4-star	5-star	TOTAL
Family child care (licensed or certified)	10	1153	0	47	2	1,212
Group child care centers	0	124	0	0	180	304
Total	10	1,277	0	47	182	1,516

Clearly the vast majority of programs rated initially either requested an automatic 2-star rating or were already accredited, thus earning a 5-star rating. Ratings are expected to increase rapidly now that most child care programs have applied for YoungStar and many have requested ratings and technical assistance.



Child care programs scheduled statewide for technical consultations as of July 2011:

1,844 visits were scheduled; no formal ratings had been scheduled by July.

Of the 1,844 programs scheduled for technical consultations statewide, 1070 were group child care centers, and 774 were family child care providers.

Background on Ratings

Technical ratings are assessments that can be made using available administrative data and on-site visits but do not require more formal assessments of classrooms. To achieve 4 or 5 stars, programs must receive a **formal rating with Observation** based upon interviews and selected classroom observations, utilizing scales or guidelines from:

- Environment Rating Scales;
- Business/Program Administration Scales (BAS/PAS) in the areas of Learning; Environment and Curriculum, Business and Professional Practices (including business practices, professional development, staff benefits and parent /family involvement); and
- Health and Wellness.

(See flow chart on implementation in the last section of this report.)

YoungStar technical consultation delivered statewide to child care providers as of July 1, 2011:

1,014 programs — 27 percent of programs receiving Wisconsin Shares — received technical consultation.

Of the 1,014 programs receiving technical consultations, 550 were group child care centers, and 464 were family child care providers. Technical consultations help child care providers assess their strengths and weaknesses in meeting quality indicators for the 5-star ratings.

Pre-YoungStar Technical assistance provided statewide— prior to YoungStar (July 2010 through February 2011):

At least 1,497 programs received technical assistance

There was a flurry of technical assistance to get ready for YoungStar, from July 2010 through February 2011, prior to the start of YoungStar. Technical assistance was provided to at least 1,497 programs to help them prepare for YoungStar, Technical assistance was delivered by the consortium and the Child and Adult Food Care Program.



Pre-YoungStar training provided statewide – prior to YoungStar (July 2010-June 2011):

7,325 participants received training statewide.

While there is not currently a regional breakdown for those activities, statewide data shows that 7,325 individuals participated in credit- and non-credit-based instruction, delivered by technical colleges, the University of Wisconsin system, Supporting Families Together Association, and Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, provided under contract with DCF.

DCF’s YoungStar website includes The Registry’s Statewide Training Event Calendar (<https://www.the-registry.org/myregistry/default.aspx>) to help child care programs identify training opportunities across the state.

T.E.A.C.H. scholarships: 937 awarded statewide.

The use of T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin scholarships by the early childhood community increased in state fiscal year 2010-11 (July 2010 through June 2011) as YoungStar and its emphasis on credit-based education began to be a reality. The tables below show a steady demand for scholarships throughout the year. (Source of data for this section: Wisconsin Early Childhood Association)

A total of 937 T.E.A.C.H. scholarships were awarded in the last year. Below is TEACH data for fiscal year 2011 (July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011).

T.E.A.C.H. Applicants and Scholarship Awards		
Month	Applications	Awards
July	73	80
August	62	62
September	71	122
October	58	90
November	83	37
December	117	103
January	82	99
February	53	127
March	60	65
April	105	62
May	97	53
June	80	37
TOTALS	941	937

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The table below shows the types of scholarships that were awarded. The scholarship for three to eight credits in core curriculum Early Childhood Education courses was the most popular with 332 scholarships, partly because of its versatility, and because of the emphasis on credit-based education in YoungStar. Credentials, which are featured prominently in YoungStar, accounted for the second most-used scholarships, with 284 scholarship awards; the Administrator credential and the Infant-Toddler credential were the most used.

Month	Award Type				Credential Breakout				
	AA	BA	3-8 credits	Credential	AC	PS	IT	IN	LS
July	21	8	23	28	16	6	5		1
August	23	16	7	16	7	3	5	1	
September	32	9	35	46	20	2	20	2	2
October	23	7	21	39	19	5	10	4	1
November	4	4	18	11	4	2	4		1
December	46	16	21	20	17		2		1
January	21	13	14	51	24	7	15	4	1
February	27	16	24	60	32	10	15	3	
March	8	7	37	13	6	3	4		
April	6	5	51						
May	2	3	48						
June	1	3	33						
TOTALS	214	107	332	284	145	38	80	14	7

Key: AA=Associate's Degree; BA= Bachelor's Degree; 3-8 credits= scholarships for credits; Credential= scholarships for credentials. The credentials types include: AC=Child Care Administrator; PS=Preschool; IT=Infant/toddler; IN= Inclusion; LS- Early Childhood Leadership.

Accumulated T.E.A.C.H. recipients (new and ongoing scholarship recipients) during the period July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011 increased particularly in the last two quarters, with new programs coming on in each quarter.

	Quarter 1 July-Sept 2010	Quarter 2 Oct-Dec 2010	Quarter 3 Jan-Mar 2011	Quarter 4 April-June 2011
Active Recipients	879	957	1066	1003
Active Programs*	572	589	649	620
Av. Recip/Prog.	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.6
New Programs*	16	14	17	16

(Note: Data includes both Centers and family child care providers)

Baseline Data on Qualifications of the Child Care Workforce

One way to measure change in the qualifications of the child care workforce is to use data from the Registry: Wisconsin's Recognition System for the Childhood Care and Education Profession. The graph below depicts numbers and percentages of child care practitioners as of July 2011, grouped by the levels of the Registry, somewhat simplified below. (For more details on Registry career levels, go to:

<http://www.the-registry.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=KaoPnCmeeHk%3d&tabid=55>)

Below are examples of educational qualifications for each range of Registry career levels:

- **Levels 1-5:** basically entry-level training without credentials or with less than 6 related credits.
- **Levels 6-8:** Child Development Credential (CDA), a School-Age Credential, or Family Services Credential, with credits ranging up to 12 related credits.
- **Levels 9-11:** Registry credentials for 12-18 credits (for Infant Toddler, Preschool, Inclusion, Administrator), Apprenticeship (18 credits), or a 1 Year diploma in early childhood.
- **Level 12-13:** Associate Degree in early childhood or youth development or equivalent (a combination of a Bachelor's Degree in another field combined with a Registry credential or combined with 30 related credits).
- **Level 14 and higher:** A Bachelor's Degree or higher in early childhood or youth development, or equivalent.





The chart below shows the distribution of Wisconsin’s child care workforce, based on data in The Registry, according to groupings of Registry levels.

Qualifications of Wisconsin’s Child Care Workforce Based on data from The Registry							
		Less than level 6	Level 6-8	Level 9-11	Level 12-13	Level 14 and higher	TOTAL
Group child care center teachers	Number	2,089	542	635	1,088	883	5,237
	Percentage	40%	10%	12%	21%	17%	100%
Group child care center directors	Number	116	71	125	207	232	751
	Percentage	15%	9%	17%	28%	31%	100%
Licensed family child care	Number	317	53	68	114	53	605
	Percentage	52%	9%	11%	19%	9%	100%

Half of group child care teachers are below level 9 on the Registry, and slightly over half of the licensed family child care providers have education qualifications below level 6 on the Registry. These data give us a baseline for measuring the changes in the child care workforce qualifications over time.

As expected, child care center directors have dramatically higher educational qualifications than center-based teachers and licensed family child care providers, with 59 percent at level 12 (Associate Degree or equivalent) or higher. Group child care teachers have 38 percent at level 12 or higher, and licensed family child care providers had 28 percent at that level. Because certified family child care providers are not required to enter their qualifications into the Registry, only 69 certified providers were in the database, so we didn’t include certified family child care providers in the chart. Data showed most certified providers were below level 6 on the Registry.

Directors and teachers in group child care centers and licensed family child care providers are required by licensing rules to enter staff qualifications in the Registry. We expect many programs to update their data in the Registry due to YoungStar requirements, and for many programs not fully meeting the licensing requirements to enter staff data in the Registry. So, we anticipate a significant increase in child care programs with up-to-date staff qualifications data over the next several months. While Registry data provide a good estimation of the education levels of child care providers, there still remains a significant percentage of child care staff/providers whose current educational qualifications are not in the Registry database—so we need to use the current data with caution.

Micro-grants awarded statewide as of July 2011: 100 micro-grants.

YoungStar includes micro-grants that can be awarded to help family and group centers improve quality related to YoungStar. Both non-profit and for-profit centers are eligible. Programs can use grants for efforts toward their accreditation process or for buying equipment or materials that will help strengthen the learning environment and curriculum in key areas identified as needing improvement in a program's quality improvement plan. As of July, 100 micro-grants had been awarded statewide for a total of \$80,250. Of the micro-grants awarded, two went to certified family child care providers, 32 to licensed family child care centers, and 63 to group child care centers. Because of the delay of YoungStar implementation, only a few micro-grant awards had been awarded by July 2011.

Media and public education as of July 2011:

By July 2011, DCF had completed several components to inform the public about YoungStar across the state.

- 1. Regulated child care and YoungStar public search website:** DCF completed a website for parents and the public which includes detailed information on regulated child care programs and their YoungStar status. Individuals can do a public search of regulated child care and YoungStar rated programs. As more programs get their ratings, the 5-star rating will be added to the program information. The website also includes information on licensing status and violations. For more information go to: <http://childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov/Search/BasicSearch.aspx?YoungStarProviders=true>
- 2. Rising Stars:** DCF is sharing information on the website on child care programs that have improved the quality of their programs. These Rising Star providers are examples of how providers can improve their care and give children the best start in life. Go to: http://dcf.wi.gov/youngstar/rising_stars/default.htm
- 3. Media:** Initially, the DCF developed a logo:



The media campaign, developed in 2011, has also placed YoungStar billboards across the state, including on the side of public transit buses; run radio spots; and contributed to articles and news coverage across the state. To get a sense of the media efforts, go to: <http://dcf.wi.gov/youngstar/media.htm>



Fund Raising: Celebrate Children Foundation

The Celebrate Children Foundation (CCF) is part of the three-agency consortium that is implementing YoungStar in six regions. CCF's primary role is to help secure funds to help sustain YoungStar quality improvement efforts. As of July 2011, the Foundation was in the initial phase of fund-raising.

The Foundation's goal is to raise \$600,000 by the end of 2012 to supplement YoungStar micro-grants. In its start-up activities, CCF has raised \$138,000. CCF staff have written 40 proposals, with 30 of those proposals still under consideration, with a total ask of \$1.26 million. CCF is pursuing fund raising in all six YoungStar regions. Longer term, CCF anticipates an effort to obtain local matching funds as well.

See Next Page for a Flow Chart of YoungStar Process for Providers

