

SUMMARY:
**Excerpts from the YoungStar Five Year Plan Submitted by the
Department of Children and Families to Wisconsin's Joint Committee
on Finance
November 22, 2010**

(to see the complete 38- page document, go to: <http://dcf.wi.gov/youngstar/details.htm>)

Some accomplishments:

Detected and investigated allegations of Wisconsin Shares fraud: Through the creation of a Fraud Detection and Investigation Unit, we embarked on an aggressive initiative to eliminate fraud within the Wisconsin Shares program. Thus far, our actions have resulted in over 200 providers being suspended from the Wisconsin Shares program and a savings of \$120 million in taxpayer funds. Our work has resulted in 15 criminal charges being brought against those who were defrauding the system.

Ensured licensing visits are timely and efficient: Last year, our licensors conducted more than 10,000 licensing visits across the state to ensure that children were in safe and healthy child care environments. We have significantly reduced the number of overdue licensing visits from 172 a year ago, to only four today. In southeastern Wisconsin, we launched a Quality Improvement Unit which is a specialized unit that focuses on child care centers where we have the highest number of concerns.

The Consortium

On November 1, the Department signed a contract to administer YoungStar in each of the six regions of the state. That vendor, called "The Consortium," is made up of three organizations: Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA), Celebrate Children Foundation (CCF) and Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA) (hereafter referred to as Consortium). The Department has confidence that YoungStar will be delivered in a thorough and culturally competent manner by The Consortium. The Consortium, with oversight from the Department, will be responsible for: (a) delivering training and technical assistance in all six YoungStar regions; (b) rating, observing and collecting data for child care providers; (c) administering micro-grants to providers for improvements; (d) acting as a resource for providers to contact with questions about YoungStar; and (e) facilitating partnerships and investment in early care and education by private funders.

Participation

All regulated child care centers, family child care providers and Head Start programs, including both certified and licensed providers, may participate in YoungStar. Providers who wish to participate in YoungStar will be required to sign a contract stating that they are willing to serve children who receive Wisconsin Shares subsidies. If a provider has no open slots available to accept children who receive Wisconsin Shares subsidies, the provider must agree to accept these children in the future. Every provider who wishes to be rated must also agree to:

- Collect co-payments from Wisconsin Shares recipients;
- Follow all Wisconsin Shares attendance reporting requirements;
- Acknowledge reading and agreeing with the Shares Subsidy Policy Guide for Child Care Providers;

- Provide accurate and up-to-date information to The Registry, Wisconsin's recognition system for the childhood care and education profession;
- Accurately represent the YoungStar rating a provider receives in advertisements, publications, or other public contexts;
- Provide accurate information for rating;
- Accept the star rating that is received and build a Quality Improvement Plan based upon coaching and consultation with a technical assistance provider; and
- Notify YoungStar regional office in the event of significant turnover of staff or director, the program is identified as out of regulatory compliance, or the program closes (within 30 days of closing).

Regulatory Compliance

Licensed providers will 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 their license suspended. For programs that are found to be out of regulatory compliance, the provider's rating will be changed to a one star. All three regulatory actions, the revocation, denial and suspension, have an associated appeal right, as described in Ch. 227, Wis. Stats. The Department of Children and Families Severity Index tool will be implemented with licensed programs on July 1, 2011. Until then, regulatory compliance status will be defined only by revocations, denials of licensure, or license suspension.

Shares Suspension

If a provider is suspended from the Wisconsin Shares program, their rating will be changed to one star. The provider will remain at one star until the term of the YoungStar/Shares Participation Contract expires. At that time the provider will be removed from the YoungStar program.

Rating System

One Star Rating

All providers who are out of regulatory compliance will receive **one star**.

Two Star Rating

Automated rating: A provider that does not want training or technical assistance and does not want a technical consultant to come visit their program could receive an automated rating based upon educational qualifications of lead teacher/director alone, verified by The Registry. Providers that choose this option cannot receive more than **two stars**.

Two or Three Star Rating

Technical Rating: A technical consultant from the regional office will verify education and training through The Registry. The program may then choose to have a technical rating done before or after training and technical assistance is administered. The process will allow providers to give technical consultants any desired information about the program before a technical rating is posted online.

After receiving the desired training and technical assistance programs, the provider may receive **two or three stars** from their technical consultant. If a technical consultant comes into a program and believes the program is ready to have a formal rating with observation, the technical consultant can encourage the program to have a formal rating with observation.

Four or Five Star Rating

Formal Rating with Observation: To achieve four or five stars, programs must receive a formal rating with observation based upon interviews and selected classroom observations utilizing the tools below.

- Environmental Rating Scales: Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS), the Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS) or the Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale (FCCERS);
- Program/Business Administration Scales to address: learning environment and curriculum, business practices, professional development, staff benefits and parent/family involvement; and
- Health and wellness to ensure children are receiving healthy meals and are getting enough physical activity.

Accredited Providers: Accredited providers will automatically be rated a four or five star, depending on the accreditation. Accreditation bodies that will be accepted as a direct proxy for a rating include: National Association for the Education of Young Children, City of Madison Accreditation for group centers and family child care programs, National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs, National Association for Family Child Care Accreditation, as well as full compliance with Head Start Performance Standards with no deficiencies.

Accredited family providers who have sent in a participation agreement and a Wisconsin Shares contract form will receive **five stars** if The Registry indicates adequate credit based training. If the provider does not have adequate credit-based training reflected in The Registry, they will receive **four stars**.

All accredited group providers who have sent in a YoungStar Participation Form and a Wisconsin Shares Contract form will receive **five stars**.

Head Start programs with no findings of deficiency will receive **five stars**.

Currently Accredited Child Care Programs in Wisconsin:

NAEYC Accredited group child care centers: 107 centers
NAC Accredited group child care centers: 19 centers
NAFCC Accredited family child care programs: 5 programs
Head Start Performance Standards with no deficiencies: 135 programs
City of Madison Accreditation Program: 106 programs

Star Rating Estimates

Star Level	Current Providers Star Level Estimates	Notes
1 Star *	252	Based upon the # of providers in WI who are out of regulatory compliance

2 Stars** OR 3 Stars***	7032	Based upon the # of providers that are in regulatory compliance but are not accredited. Technical Consultant or Rating Observers come into these programs to do rating and observation, providers will receive an actual rating.
4 Stars****	45	Based upon the # of family child care programs that are accredited by the City of Madison or by the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC)
5 Stars*****	324	Based upon the # of group child care programs that are accredited by NAEYC, National Accreditation Commission (NAC), City of Madison, or Head Start programs who meet Head Start Performance Standards with no findings of deficiency.

Future Projections for Star Level Progression 2011-2015

Proportion of Programs Participating

Star Level	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
1 Star	10%	8%	6%	5%
2 Star	40%	39%	37%	34%
3 Star	29%	31%	33%	35%
4 Star	8%	8%	9%	10%
5 Star	13%	14%	15%	16%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

Work Experience

DCF incorporated the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential as a means of accumulating points in YoungStar. The CDA is a largely experience-based credential and has historically been pursued by working child care providers. The Department also has collaborated closely with the Wisconsin Technical College System to identify opportunities for providers to earn credit by translating their personal life experiences into specified credit values through the completion of a portfolio that demonstrates competencies already met. T.E.A.C.H. scholarships can help finance this work.

Inclusion of Children with Disabilities

DCF has been working closely with leaders and experts in the area of serving young children with disabilities in inclusive settings in Wisconsin, including CESA 4 and Disability Rights Wisconsin. These efforts and coordination with the Department of Public Instruction and the Birth to 3 Early Intervention program have led to research-based recommendations for how to most effectively serve children with disabilities, prepare early care providers for caring for children with special needs and work with families.

Budget

YoungStar can be implemented fully including tiered reimbursement within existing resources available in the 2009-11 biennium, and within DCF's September 15, 2010 budget proposal for the 2011-13 biennium. The table below shows the projected expenditures for the next five years.

Tiered Reimbursement

FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015
N/A	\$3,412,700	\$4,724,100	\$6,036,200	\$7,087,900

External Evaluation

The Department is working with the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison) Waisman Center to analyze the results of the QRIS to ensure that YoungStar is being implemented and monitored in a way that is supportive of early care and education programs and parents.

Collaboration with the Department of Public Instruction

Staff at DCF are working with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to collaborate in the formation of a Longitudinal Data System (LDS) to track child outcome data over the child's school career. We will participate in committees and workgroups with DPI staff to build consensus around common data elements and to create a work plan for how, what and when data elements can be shared between Departments. Within three to five years from full implementation of YoungStar, participating children will be able to be tracked through the LDS and additional information will be gleaned about the effects of participating in YoungStar. The data from YoungStar internal and external evaluation could be linked to future efforts in the Department of Public Instruction's LDS.

Training & Outreach

Immediate YoungStar Training Participation through WECA and SFTA

YoungStar Overview: 1,665 participants through 46 trainings

Environment and Curriculum: 1,730 participants through 57 trainings

Professional Practices: 245 participants through 14 trainings

Health and Wellness: 828 participants through 39 trainings

TOTAL: 4,468 training participants reached through 156 trainings

DCF Outreach

In addition to training delivered by the contract agencies, the Department of Children and Family staff have presented YoungStar Overviews at 38 different events to 1,715 providers and community partners in 2010.

Professional Development Planning Tool and Counseling

The Professional Development Planning Tool, available now on the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association website, gives providers an online resource to help in planning their professional development through counseling and use of the Tool. The Tool is available online and free counseling services are focused on the individual needs of the child care program and/or child care director, teacher or provider. Sessions include topics such as:

- Choosing an educational pathway (credit, credential, degree)
- T.E.A.C.H. scholarship access, class format (traditional, online, accelerated)
- Previous coursework completions
- Credit for Prior Learning Experience
- Short term and long term goals
- YoungStar points

YOUNGSTAR IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- March 2010: DCF Proposal submitted to Joint Finance Committee
- June 23, 2010: Joint Finance Committee approves YoungStar unanimously
- June 30, 2010: Request for Proposal (RFP) is released
- September 2010: Training and Technical Assistance begins in 12 targeted counties
- Late October 2010: Vendor for regional offices is selected
- November 1, 2010: Contract for regional offices begins
- November 2010: Training and Technical Assistance is rolled out statewide
- November-December 2010: Regional offices begin to rate providers
- December 2010: Provider ratings available for parents on YoungStar website
- July 2011: Wisconsin Shares bonus payments linked to quality
- Fall 2011: First evaluation of children by UW
- Spring 2012: Follow up of evaluation of children by UW
- July 2012: Plan for inclusion of before- and afterschool in YoungStar is released
- July 2012: Before- and afterschool programs are included in YoungStar
- January 2014: External evaluation by UW results
- January 2015: Integration of YoungStar data into Department of Public Instruction Longitudinal Data Study

Note: Summary developed by WCCF, with key excerpts from the full YoungStar 5-year sustainability plan. November 23, 2010