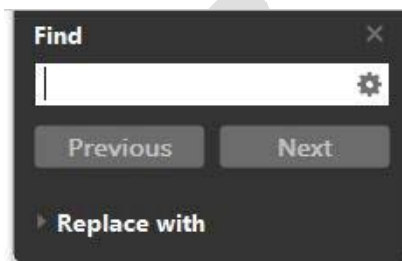


Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Center Standards of Quality

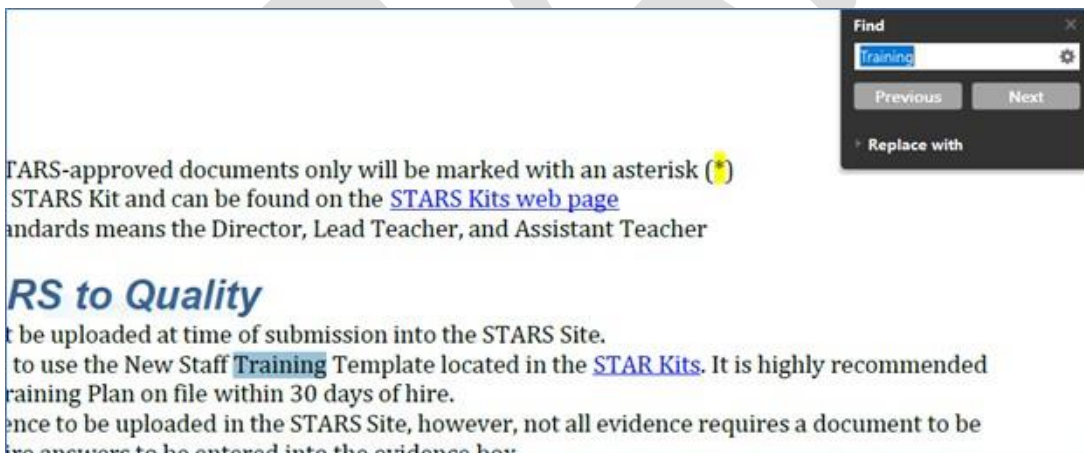
Welcome to the Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Center Standards. This document will guide licensed centers, serving children from birth-12 years of age, through STARS to Quality. Additional information can be found by visiting [STARS to Quality](#). For more detailed information, please refer to the [STARS Guidance & Procedures](#).

Document Navigation

In order to navigate this document more easily, you may click "Ctrl F" and type something in the navigation bar.



Type in the keywords of what you are looking for and hit enter.



The keyword you entered will be highlighted in the document. To see the next occurrence of the word, click "Next."

Instructions & Key

- ★ Criterion which require STARS-approved documents only will be marked with an asterisk (*)
- ★ Required forms are in the STARS Kit and can be found on the [STARS Kits web page](#)
- ★ All teaching staff in the standards means the Director, Lead Teacher, and Assistant Teacher

Submitting for STARS to Quality


- ★ Required documents must be uploaded at time of submission into the STARS Site.
- ★ Programs are encouraged to use the New Staff Training Template located in the [STAR Kits](#). It is highly recommended that all new staff have a Training Plan on file within 30 days of hire.
- ★ Criteria may require evidence to be uploaded in the STARS Site, however, not all evidence requires a document to be uploaded; many just require answers to be entered into the evidence box.
- ★ To see what is required for evidence, use your mouse to hover over the green question mark in each evidence box. The green question mark looks like this: 

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STAR 1

Cost of Care

Program must determine Cost of Care by completing the Cost of Care tab in the STARS Budget document.

Quality Improvement Action Plan (QIAP)

Program must complete the QIAP, utilizing scores from the required self-assessments and specifically addressing any subscale scores below a 3.0.

Education, Qualifications & Training (EQT)

STAR 1 Professional Development

STARS to Quality Essentials (2 hours)

EQT 1: The Director (DIR) and all teaching staff (ECLT, ECAT) must complete this course. It is available through ChildCareTraining.org.

What's the Fuss: Assessments for Quality Improvement for Centers (3 hours)

EQT 2 The Director (DIR) must complete this course or they must have completed both the ERS and PAS trainings. It is available through the local CCR&R.

Pyramid Model (2 hours)

EQT 3: Introduction to the Pyramid Model (2 hours): Director (DIR) and all teaching staff (ECLT, ECAT) must complete this course. It is available online at ChildCareTraining.org.

Food Safety Course (minimum 3 hours)

EQT 4: Direct food service staff attend(s) an approved Food Safety Training (offered through the County Health Dept., Sanitarian, Extension Agency if it is not a ServSafe approved course), or online at ChildCareTraining.org. Training must be in addition to the training required by CACFP.

Family/Community Partnerships (FCP)

High Needs

FCP 1: Programs must serve a minimum 10% of high needs children, as defined in [STARS Guidance & Procedures](#). This information must be updated in the Classrooms tab within 3 months of STAR level submission.

High Quality Supportive Environments (HQSE)

Daily Health Checks

HQSE 1: The program must describe how Daily Health Checks occur and how they are documented.

Self-Assessment

HQSE 2: The Director will complete a self-assessment using the appropriate Environment Rating Scale(s) (ECERS-3; ITERS-3).

- A QIAP * is written to address the findings of the self-assessments, specifically addressing any subscale scores below a 3.0.

Leadership & Program Management (LPM)

Program Management

LPM 1: Programs must complete and update the Program Profile (Program Info and Classrooms Tabs) in the STARS Application Site. High Needs information must be accurate and current. This must be updated within 3 months of STAR level submission.

Self-Assessment

LPM 2: The Director will complete a self-assessment using the Program Administration Scale (PAS).

- A QIAP* is written to identify program-wide goals, and address the findings of the self-assessments, specifically addressing any subscale scores below a 3.0.

STAR 2

- **Must meet all criteria for STAR 1 along with the following:**

Education, Qualifications & Training (EQT)

Practitioner Registry

EQT 1: Director (DIR) current on the [Practitioner Registry](#) at Level 2 or higher.

Individualized Professional Development Plan

EQT 2: Director (DIR) and all teaching staff (ECLT, ECAT) have an individualized written Professional Development Plan linked to the current Knowledge Base. Individualized Professional Development Plans must be updated annually.

STAR 2 Professional Development

Pyramid Model (6 hours)

EQT 3: E-Pyramid Birth-5 Module 1 (6 hours): (Prerequisite Introduction to the Pyramid Module) (DIR) and all teaching staff (ECLT, ECAT) must complete this course. It is available through the Montana Early Childhood Project, [Statewide Training Calendar](#).

Oral Health Training (2 hours)

EQT 4: Lead Teachers (ECLT) must complete this course. It is available online at [ChildCareTraining.org](#).

MT Medication Administration II (3 hours)

EQT 5: This course must be completed by the Director (DIR), Lead Teachers (ECLT), and any other staff person that administers medication. The Director and/or Lead Teachers are responsible for documentation of the licensing-required form, medication being stored properly, and implementation of all other course requirements and regulations. If an employee of the program is the parent of an enrolled child and has not taken the course, they are allowed to administer medication to their own child only, following all licensing rules and regulations. It is available online at [ChildCareTraining.org](#).

Introduction to the Montana Early Learning Standards (3 hours)

EQT 6: Director (DIR), Lead Teachers (ECLT) must complete the Introduction to the MT Early Learning Standards Course. It is available online at [ChildCareTraining.org](#).

Family/Community Partnerships (FCP)

Enrollment Process

FCP 1: A written enrollment process is in place that facilitates an exchange of information between the program and families, which works to assure strong partnerships. This process should include the following: description of the program and policies; family culture; and wishes around topics such as eating, sleeping, toileting, and discipline.

High Quality Supportive Environments (HQSE)

Food Service/Meal Coordination

HQSE 1: All programs must be currently participating in the Montana Child and Adult Care Food Program, as eligible.

HQSE 1: Program must re-apply for CACFP at time of annual renewal, or submission to move up from STAR 2, *if the program was previously ineligible due to income eligibility requirements.*

*** HQSE 1:** *If a program is not eligible for MT CACFP, the following indicators must be met:*

- At least 1 person is designated “in-charge” of food service/meal coordination. Other staff can assist in this role.
- Menus Posted

- Written menus must be posted for the current and future week at the entrance to the facility and visible to the public.
- Adults, including program staff and visitors, participate in family style meal service with the children that is developmentally appropriate for the children in care.
- 'Division of Responsibility' In Feeding
 - Ellyn Satter Institute 'Division of Responsibility' is followed in meal services to children.
- Special Dietary Needs Statement for Children and Protected Health Information form is completed for all children who require this.

Internal Transition Plan

HQSE 2: The program has an appropriate plan for moving children within the program, when applicable. This plan must be documented, and will include the process to assist children, families, and caregivers in moving from one room to another.

Staffing Plan

RGS 1: A written staffing plan is in place assuring continuity of care (including a plan for substitute staff situations), appropriate adult to child ratios, appropriate group size, and that children are benefitting from having primary caregivers.

STAR 3

- Professional Development and Practitioner Registry status requirements at this level are required for employees working more than 1040 hours annually or working a minimum of 20 hours per week.
- An Assessor will be visiting the facility at this level.
- **Must meet all criteria for STAR 1 and STAR 2, along with the following:**

Education, Qualifications & Training (EQT)

Practitioner Registry

EQT 1: Director (DIR) current on the [Practitioner Registry](#) at Level 3 or higher.

EQT 1: 50% of teaching staff (ECLT, ECAT) are current at Level 2 or higher on the [Practitioner Registry](#)

STAR 3 Professional Development

Certified Infant Toddler Caregiver Course (CITC) (60 hours)

EQT 2: Lead Teachers (ECLT) caring for infants and/or toddlers must be enrolled in (which is defined as currently taking the course or beginning the course in the quarter following application for STAR 3) or have completed the 60-hour course or its equivalent. It is available through the [CCR&R](#), UM-Western, Dawson Community College, Salish Kootenai College, or Flathead Valley Community College.

Certified Preschool Teacher Course (CPTC) (60 hours)

EQT 3: Lead Teachers (ECLT) caring for ages 2 and up must be enrolled in (which is defined as currently taking the course or beginning the course in the quarter following application for STAR 3) or have completed the 60-hour course or its equivalent. It is available through the [CCR&R](#).

- This course can be waived if an individual is a Level 4 or higher on the Practitioner Registry. If an individual is enrolled in college courses or the MT Apprenticeship program that will result in becoming a Level 4 on the Practitioner Registry within 2 years of application for STAR 3, this course can be waived.
- This course can be waived if the Introduction to Early Childhood college-level course has been successfully completed with the grade of a C or higher.
- If a program only serves ages 2 and up, they need to consider the developmental levels of the children in their care. As a result, a program may want to consider sending some staff to the Infant Toddler course, and some staff to the Preschool course. Documentation that includes rationale for this decision must be submitted for approval prior to application for STAR 3.

Pyramid Model Trainings (6 hours)

EQT 4: E-Pyramid Birth-5 Module 2 (6 hours): (Prerequisite Introduction and Montana Blended Module 1 or E-Pyramid Birth-5 Module 1) Director (DIR) and all teaching staff (ECLT, ECAT) must complete this course. It is available through the Montana Early Childhood Project, Statewide Training Calendar.

Developmental Screening: Develop a process to identify & support individual child development, promote family engagement, & enhance program quality (4 hours)

EQT 5: Developmental Screening Course: Director (DIR) and all lead teaching staff (ECLT) must complete this course. It is available online at [ChildCareTraining.org](#).

Family/Community Partnerships (FCP)

Community Resources

FCP 1: The program provides families with information regarding community resources. Examples of community resources may include: Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies, public library, city recreation department, housing authority, parent resource center, public health clinic, hospital, public schools, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Office of Public Assistance, county health department, family support agency, early intervention organizations such as: Hi-Line Home Programs, Inc., Developmental Educational Assistance Program (DEAP), Quality Life Concepts (QLC), Support & Techniques for Empowering

People (STEP), Early Childhood Intervention (ECI), Family Outreach, Child Development Center (CDC).

Transitions

FCP 2: The program supports children and families while transitioning children into child care and out of child care into another educational setting.

Family Engagement

FCP 3: The program provides families with multiple opportunities for involvement such as: open house, opportunities to volunteer, social events, potluck meals, parent/family surveys, parent resource center.

High Quality Supportive Environments (HQSE)

Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Assessment

HQSE 1: The program will receive a formal assessment with the appropriate ERS (ECERS-3 and/or ITERS-3).

- The average facility score must be at least 3.0 overall.
- The finalized report(s) will inform the QIAP *. Any subscale scores below a 3.0 must be addressed in the QIAP *.

Pyramid Model: Promoting Social Emotional Competence and School Readiness in Young Children

HQSE 2: Director will communicate with families about the Pyramid Model using the brochure *Positive Solutions for Families* *.

Curriculum

HQSE 3: The program has a written curriculum plan that is aligned with the MT Early Learning Standards and Developmentally Appropriate Practice (2009, 3rd Ed. by Carol Copple & Sue Bredekamp, eds).

Observations

HQSE 4: The program demonstrates that observations of the children are used to inform curriculum and environment to support the individual needs of children.

Leadership & Program Management (LPM)

Program Administration Scale (PAS) Assessment

LPM 1: Programs will receive a formal assessment and must receive at least a 3.0 overall.

- Any subscales below a 3.0 must be addressed on the QIAP *.

STAR 4

- Professional Development and Practitioner Registry status requirements at this level are required for employees working more than 1040 hours annually or working a minimum of 20 hours per week.
- An Assessor will be visiting the facility at this level.
- **Must meet all criteria for STAR 1, STAR 2, and STAR 3, along with the following:**

Education, Qualifications & Training (EQT)

Practitioner Registry

EQT 1: Director (DIR) current on the [Practitioner Registry](#) at Level 4 or higher.

EQT 1: 50% of teaching staff (ECLT, ECAT) are current at Level 2 or higher AND 25% of teaching staff (ECLT, ECAT) are current at Level 3 or higher on the [Practitioner Registry](#).

STAR 4 Professional Development

Inclusion Course (15 hours)

EQT 2: Lead Teachers (ECLT) must be enrolled in or have completed Inclusion 1: Foundations for Inclusion (15 hours) or its equivalent. It is available at [ChildCareTraining.org](#).

- This course can be waived for individuals at Level 6 or higher on the Practitioner Registry
- EDEC 340: Practicing Inclusion in Preschool Programs is a 3-credit course (45 hours) and is an acceptable equivalent for Inclusion I and Inclusion II. This course is available through UM-Western. Transcripts must be provided for this course.

Family/Community Partnerships (FCP)

High Needs

FCP 1: Programs must serve a minimum 15% of high needs children, as defined in [STARS Guidance & Procedures](#). Information must be updated in the Classrooms tab within 3 months of STAR level submission.

Conferences

FCP 2: The program offers, in addition to ongoing conversations, a meeting/conference with each child's family at least once per year. Together, the child's progress and needs are reviewed, and goals for the child are set.

Home/School Communication

FCP 3: Opportunities are available to facilitate exchange of information between the program and families, such as home/school journals or notebooks, bulletin boards, newsletters, parent/family advisory councils, parent/family volunteers, parent/family participation.

Developmental Screening

FCP 4: The program has a process in place and is offering developmental screening at the chosen tool's recommended intervals for all children enrolled.

High Quality Supportive Environments (HQSE)

Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Assessment

HQSE 1: The program will receive a formal assessment with the appropriate ERS (ECERS-3 and/or ITERS-3).

- The average facility score must be at least 4.0 overall.
- The finalized report(s) will inform the QIAP. Any subscale scores below a 4.0 must be addressed in the QIAP *.

Pyramid Model: Promoting Social Emotional Competence and School Readiness in Young Children

HQSE 2: A 30-minute Introduction to the Pyramid Model: Promoting Social Emotional Competence and School Readiness in Young Children will be offered to families by the program.

Leadership & Program Management (LPM)

Program Administration Scale (PAS) Assessment

LPM 1: The program will have a formal assessment. The average score must be at least 4.0

- Any subscale scores below a 4.0 must be addressed in the QIAP *.

STAR 5

- Professional Development and Practitioner Registry status requirements at this level are required for employees working more than 1040 hours annually or working a minimum of 20 hours per week.
- An Assessor will be visiting the facility at this level.
- **Must meet all criteria for STAR 1, STAR 2, and STAR 3, and STAR 4 along with the following:**

NAEYC Accreditation

Programs must be NAFCC Accredited and maintaining criteria for accreditation.

Education, Qualifications & Training (EQT)

Practitioner Registry

EQT 1: Director (DIR) current on the [Practitioner Registry](#) at Level 5 or higher.

STAR 5 Professional Development

Inclusion Course (30 hours)

EQT 2: Lead Teachers (ECLT) must be enrolled in or have completed Inclusion II: Strategies for Inclusion (30 hours) or an equivalent. It is available through [ChildCareTraining.org](#).

- This course can be waived for individuals at Level 6 or higher on the Practitioner Registry
- EDEC 340: Practicing Inclusion in Preschool Programs is a 3-credit course (45 hours) and is an acceptable equivalent for Inclusion I and Inclusion II. This course is available through UM-Western. Transcripts must be provided for this course.

Building Skills and Safe Places for Childcare Providers (6 hours)

EQT 3: Director (DIR) and Lead Teachers (ECLT) must complete this course. It is available online at [ChildCareTraining.org](#).

High Quality Supportive Environments (HQSE)

Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Assessment

HQSE 1: The program will receive a formal assessment with the appropriate ERS (ECERS-3 and/or ITERS-3)

- The average facility score must be at least 5.0 overall.
- The finalized report will inform the QIAP. Any subscale scores below a 5.0 must be addressed in the QIAP *.

Leadership & Program Management (LPM)

Program Administration Scale (PAS) Assessment

LPM 1: The program will have a formal assessment. The average score must be at least 5.0.

- Any subscale scores below a 5.0 must be addressed in the QIAP *.