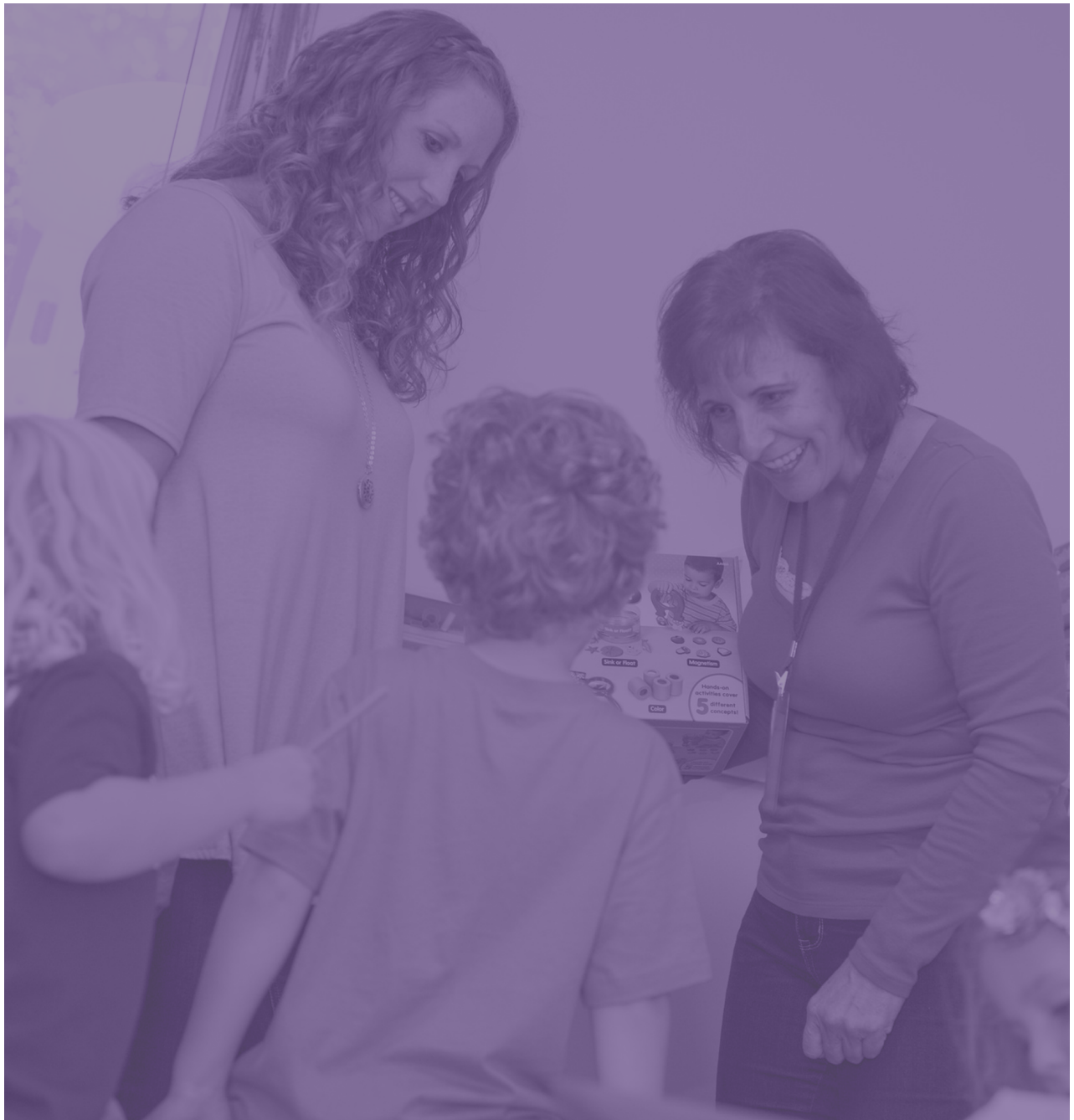




Rating Guide

For the Full-Rating Pathway
Quality Documentation Portfolio

July 2026 Update



Let Your Stars Shine!

Join us in our mission to help children thrive!

Thank you for choosing to seek a Star Rating from Parent Aware, Minnesota’s Quality Rating and Improvement System. We applaud your decision to participate and your commitment to quality improvement. When you volunteer to participate in Parent Aware, you go above and beyond licensing requirements by demonstrating your training in and use of quality practices. Each Star Rating builds on the next, helping you take your quality to the next level.

There is a team available to help enhance your program quality, support you with tools and resources, and celebrate your commitment to using quality practices. As you prepare for your Rating, you will work with a Quality Coach and Professional Development Advisor with years of early education experience. They will work closely with you throughout the entire Rating process.

Effective July 1, 2026, all licensed child care providers that are in good standing with the state or their Tribe will receive a One-Star Parent Aware Rating unless they are already Rated or choose to opt out (Minnesota Statutes, section [142D.13](#), subdivision 2). Programs will not be required to submit an application or Quality Documentation Portfolio for a One-Star Rating.

You must submit a Quality Documentation Portfolio (QDP) to earn a Two-, Three-, or Four-Star Rating. The purpose of the QDP is to help you organize examples of your work as evidence that your program is implementing best practices for early learners’ success. You will complete the QDP and assemble your documentation with the help of a Quality Coach from your local Child Care Aware of Minnesota agency.

More information about Parent Aware Ratings is available on the [Parent Aware website](#).

**Yog xav tau kev pab txhais lus Hmoob, hu rau 888.291.9811.
Si aad u hesho caawimaad Af Soomaali ah, wac 888.291.9811.
Para obtener ayuda en español, llame al 888.291.9811.**



Four Steps to Submitting Your QDP

There are four steps to submit your required Quality Documentation Portfolio:

1. Connect with the Parent Aware Quality Coach and Professional Development Advisor (PDA) assigned to you from your local Child Care Aware of Minnesota agency.
2. Review your program’s strengths and set a Star-Level goal with your Parent Aware Quality Coach and Professional Development Advisor.
3. Organize samples that highlight your best practices for early learners’ success.
4. Submit evidence to receive your Star Rating.

Important!

You will use [Develop](#), an online data system, to send and receive email and submit some or all your Evidence online. To succeed in Parent Aware, we recommend that you access Develop using a computer.

Help is available! Contact your Parent Aware Quality Coach for assistance accessing a computer or internet access during your Parent Aware experience.



Step 1. Connect with the Parent Aware Quality Coach and Professional Development Advisor (PDA) assigned to you from your local Child Care Aware of Minnesota agency.

As a participating program, you will work with a **Quality Coach** to discuss your program's strengths and needs, set goals, create plans for improvement, and reflect on your progress. The focus of the coaching relationship is to support participants in building the quality of their program through research-based best practices and agreed-upon activities and strategies. As you choose your Star-Level goal, you and your Quality Coach will discuss additional coaching opportunities, such as CLASS® coaching.

You will work with a **Professional Development Advisor (PDA)** to review your Learning Record, identify training needed to meet your Star-Level goal, and create professional development plans. Your PDA will also advise you along your professional development path. You should contact your PDA for any questions about training and professional development.

Current Individual Membership in Develop and Organization registration is required for higher Star Ratings.

To receive a Two-, Three-, or Four-Star Rating, every Lead Provider, Program Director, Education Coordinator, and one Lead Teacher per classroom **must have a current Individual Membership in Develop** and a Career Lattice Step by your QDP submission deadline.

An Individual Membership in Develop provides early childhood professionals a way to document educational achievements and professional development activities. This includes the Knowledge and Competency Framework (KCF) Learning Record, which lists training, coaching, consulting, mentoring, and coursework activities that have been approved through Achieve - The Minnesota Center for Professional Development (Achieve MNCPD).

The Minnesota Career Lattice recognizes the hours of credit and non-credit-based training, degrees, and credentials of professionals in the field of early childhood.

[Apply for and renew Individual Memberships](#) online in Develop. You can view helpful information and current Achieve MNCPD policies and procedures for individuals in the Individual Membership Guide.

It can take up to six weeks after all supporting documents are received by Achieve MNCPD to process your Membership and issue a Career Lattice Step. You can view the current processing time on the [Achieve MNCPD homepage](#) or in your Individual Profile in Develop.

For Individuals Participating in Parent Aware to earn a Two-, Three-, or Four-Star Rating:

Every Lead Provider, Program Director, Education Coordinator, and one Lead Teacher per classroom must have a current Individual Membership in Develop, a Career Lattice Step, and verified, accurate employment records. This connects each individual to the program's Organization Profile in Develop, which is required to earn a Star Rating.

For Organizations Participating in Parent Aware:

To receive a Two-, Three-, or Four-Star Rating, program leaders must register their Organization Profile in Develop and verify the employment of the Lead Provider, Program Director, Education Coordinator, and each Lead Teacher on the Employees tab. You must also complete and update all fields in the Classrooms tab, ensuring that:

- the number of classrooms identified in program enrollment matches the number of classrooms created,
- the classrooms entered represent all age groups served, as indicated in the program enrollment section, and
- one Lead Provider or one Lead Teacher has been assigned per classroom

You will receive Parent Aware email updates from Develop. You can access helpful guides for these processes on the Develop website [How Do I?](#) page.



Step 2. Review your program's strengths and set a Star-Level goal with the help of your Quality Coach and PDA.

Programs can receive a Two-, Three-, or Four-Star Rating. Your Professional Development Advisor will review the Learning Records of the educators in your program, and your Quality Coach will review your program practices to help you choose a Star-Level goal for your Rating.

To receive a One-Star Rating, you must be licensed by DCYF or a Tribe, and in good standing. There are no additional training or other requirements to receive a One-Star Rating. For more information about the One-Star Rating, [contact your local Parent Aware Recruiter](#).

To receive a Two-Star Rating, you must meet the basic requirements for all Star Ratings and all training requirements and Indicators at the Two-Star level.

To receive a Three-Star Rating, you must:

- Meet the basic requirements for all Star Ratings
- Meet all training requirements and all required Indicators at the Two- and Three-Star levels
- Earn at least two points in each of the five Categories
- Family child care programs must earn 25-34 points, and child care centers must earn 33-48 points in the Three- and Four-Star Indicators
- For child care centers serving preschool-aged children, a CLASS® observation is required. The scores from CLASS® observations will not be used to calculate the program's Parent Aware Rating
- **All Lead Providers or Lead Teachers must be at Foundational Awareness on the Minnesota Career Lattice.**

To receive a Four-Star Rating, you must:

- Meet the basic requirements for all Star Ratings
- Meet all training requirements and all required Indicators at the Two-, Three-, and Four-Star levels
- Earn at least two points in each of the five Categories
- Family child care programs must earn 35-50 points, and child care centers must earn 49-65 points in the Three- and Four-Star Indicators.
- For child care centers serving preschool-aged children, a CLASS® observation is required. The scores from CLASS® observations will not be used to calculate the program's Parent Aware Rating.
- All Lead Providers or Lead Teachers must be at Foundational Awareness on the Minnesota Career Lattice.

NOTE: Starting July 1, 2028, points for T2.3/T2.4 will be awarded based on the number of hours of CLASS coaching received by lead teachers.

Star Ratings are divided into four areas: Categories, Standards, Indicators, and Evidence.

Categories are a grouping of program Standards that logically fit together.

Standards are features of care and education programs that, based on research, have been shown to make a difference for children.

Indicators, also known as “quality practices for early learner’s success”, are specific characteristics of a care and education program that can be observed or measured and used to show that a standard has been met.

Evidence is the documentation that shows your program implements the quality practices for early learners’ success.

The following table provides a summary of the relationship between the categories, standards and indicators.

Category	Standards	Indicators
Category #1. Teaching and relationships with children (T)	T1. Curriculum	T1.1 Routines T1.2 Lesson plans T1.3a Curriculum use; T1.3b Classroom transitions
	T2. Play and interactions	T2.3/T2.4 Child/adult interactions
	T3. Learning and belonging	T3.2 Learning environment T3.3 Cultural responsiveness
	T4. Kindergarten transition support	T4.2 Kindergarten transition plan T4.3 Kindergarten transition activities
Category #2. Relationships with families (R)	R1. Respect and ongoing two-way communication	R1.1 Asks and listens to families R1.2 Shares information with families R1.3a Family involvement; R1.3b Family input
	R2. Links families to services	R2.1 Family support services
Category #3. Assessment and planning for each individual child (A)	A1. Observation and assessment	A1.1 Child observation A1.3a Child assessment; A1.3b Providing assessment to families; A1.3c Asks for parent input; A1.3d Kindergarten Entry Profile tool; A1.3e Planning for children with special needs A1.4 Child assessment
	A2. Assessment-based instruction	A2.3a Assessment-based individualized instruction A2.3b Assessment-based group instruction
Category #4. Professionalism (P)	P1. Program leadership	P1.1 Professional ethics P1.3a Specialized credential; P1.3b Education for leadership; P1.3c Program development
	P2. Qualifications and development	P2.2 Intentional ongoing learning P2.3a Career Lattice achievements; P2.3b Highly qualified
Category #5. Health and well-being (H)	H1. Health and safety	H1.2 Health and safety practices
	H2. Nutrition and play	H2.3a Healthy food; H2.3b Sharing information about healthy food; H2.3c Nutrition and active play



Step 3. Organize samples that highlight your program’s best practices.

You will submit a Quality Documentation Portfolio (QDP) that includes examples of your work as evidence that your program is currently using best practices for early learners’ success. This includes Evidence for each Indicator that is required for the Star Rating you are seeking. Evidence requirements are listed for each Indicator.

Guidelines for Submitting Evidence

- All Evidence must follow the requirements outlined in the Participation Agreement, which includes that **Evidence must have occurred within the 12 months immediately preceding the QDP due date for the Star Level the program is seeking.**
- Do not submit photos of children. Blackout ALL identifying information, such as names and birthdates of parents and children. You are responsible for protecting the privacy of the children and families you serve.
- If you would like to provide additional information or clarification about the Evidence you submit for an Indicator, you can use the Evidence Note box online in Develop or include an Evidence note labeled for that Indicator with your paper submission. **Important: An Evidence Note alone will not be accepted as Indicator Evidence.** For example, if a program is using a Written Description as Indicator evidence for an online submission, it cannot be entered into the Evidence Note box.
- Before you submit your QDP, review it with your Quality Coach. Make a copy of your completed QDP for your records. The Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) will not return any original materials submitted.

Following the guidelines above will ensure timely processing of your QDP evidence.



Step 4. Submit the Evidence to receive your Star Rating.

The Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) reviews, scores, and awards Parent Aware Star Ratings. Ratings are awarded to participating programs that submit a complete Quality Documentation Portfolio (QDP) and meet the requirements for a Star Rating. It is your responsibility to submit your QDP by the deadline in the chart below.

Cohort Start Date	Quality Documentation Portfolio Deadline		*Rating Issued By
	Three- or Four-Star Rating	Two-Star Rating	
January	March 31	April 30	June 30
July	September 30	October 31	December 31

**If you submit a QDP on time, you will receive your Rating Packet within 15 business days after June 30 or December 31. If you submit a late QDP, your Rating may be delayed.*

Options for submitting your QDP

You can choose to submit your QDP online or by mail; however, **all programs are required to submit some Evidence online**. If you need help accessing a computer, consult your Quality Coach. Remember to have your Quality Coach review your Quality Documentation Portfolio with you prior to submission.

Submit online: Your Quality Documentation Portfolio may be submitted online via your program’s Organization Profile in [Develop](#).

- For online-only submission, use the Indicator checkboxes in Develop to identify which Indicators you are seeking credit for. If you are not seeking credit for an Indicator, you will select the “Opt Out” checkbox.
 - Upload all evidence online.
 - Guides for the online submission process are available on the Develop website [How Do I?](#) page.
- For online/paper combination submission, use the Indicator checkboxes in Develop to identify which Indicators you are seeking credit for online. Upload Evidence online for those Indicators. If you need to send any paper documentation along with your online submission, select the “I will provide this evidence by mail” checkbox.
 - Submit a completed Program Information Form, Indicator Checklist, and paper Indicator Evidence by mail immediately following your online submission.
 - Send paper Evidence only for Indicators where evidence was not submitted online. Label evidence with the Indicator number as described in the paper submission guidance below.

Submit by mail: Use the mailing address below to submit paper materials that do not require online submission. Use adequate postage when mailing your QDP. DCYF is not permitted to pay postage.

QDPs submitted by mail must be postmarked by the QDP due date, submitted in a single envelope, and mailed to:

Child Care Aware of Minnesota
Attn: Parent Aware Rating Team
10 River Park Plaza, Suite 820
St. Paul, MN 55107

- For paper submission, use the Indicator Checklist to identify which Indicators you are seeking credit for. Mark the check box next to each Indicator you are trying to meet. Only the Indicators that are checked on the Indicator Checklist will be reviewed and scored.
- Use the Indicator Checklist to organize your Evidence. Write the Indicator number, such as “T1.1” in the upper right-hand corner of all documents submitted for that Indicator. If the same document is being submitted as Evidence for more than one Indicator, write each Indicator number on the Evidence. Place Evidence in Category order behind the Indicator Checklist.
 - Submit only 8.5 x 11-inch copies (letter size paper) of loose-leaf evidence, which may include flyers, booklets, brochures, notebook paper, or on-the-fly records such as sticky notes.
 - Do not use any presentation materials, such as sheet protectors, folders, or binders.
- For paper submissions, your QDP will not be scored if you do not submit the completed **Indicator Checklist** and **Program Information page**.
 - Only the Program Information page and the Indicator Checklist need to be mailed with your QDP Evidence. **All other pages are for your reference.**

Program Information

Every program must provide the following program information to receive a Two-, Three-, or Four-Star Rating. **Programs submitting their QDP by mail should complete and include the Program Information and Indicator Checklist pages with their submission.** Programs submitting their QDP online will complete this information in Develop.

Program Name	
Program License Number	
Star-Level Goal	<input type="checkbox"/> Two-Star <input type="checkbox"/> Three-Star <input type="checkbox"/> Four-Star

Basic Requirements for All Star Ratings

Every program must complete the following requirements to receive a Star Rating. These requirements are the baseline for all Star Ratings. Parent Aware is a voluntary program, and all eligible programs are invited to participate.

REQUIREMENT	EVIDENCE
Licensed program in good standing	<input type="checkbox"/> Program is currently licensed with the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Families and does not have any of the following: <u>revocation, suspension, temporary immediate suspension, or decertification, or is operating under a conditional license, regardless of whether the action is under appeal.</u> The program also may not be the subject of a finding of fraud, prohibited from receiving public funds, or the subject of suspended, denied, or terminated payments. <i>OR</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Program is currently licensed and in good standing with a Tribal Government.
Actively serves children	<input type="checkbox"/> Program actively provides child care and early education to children ranging in age from birth to kindergarten entry.
Current Individual Membership in Develop	<input type="checkbox"/> Every Lead Provider, Program Director, Education Coordinator, and one Lead Teacher per classroom must have a current Individual Membership in Develop, a Career Lattice Step, and verified, accurate employment records. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete the Classrooms tab in the Organization Profile in Develop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Confirm number of classrooms identified in program enrollment matches number of classrooms created ● Confirm the classrooms entered represent all age groups served, as indicated in the program enrollment section ● Assign One Lead Provider or one Lead Teacher per classroom <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure the Employees tab in the Organization Profile has verified information and is up to date.
Ongoing professional learning	<input type="checkbox"/> All Lead Providers or Lead Teachers must successfully complete the required number of hours of approved training, coaching, consultation, or mentoring every five years for the desired Star Rating (see Training Requirements section). <input type="checkbox"/> The Knowledge and Competency Framework (KCF) Learning Record of the Lead Provider or one Lead Teacher listed per classroom will be used to determine if this requirement has been met. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete the Classrooms tab in the Organization Profile in Develop, identifying one Lead Provider or one Lead Teacher per classroom. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure the Employees tab in the Organization Profile is accurate and up to date. <input type="checkbox"/> Completed Verifying and Documenting Coaching, Consulting, and Mentoring in Parent Aware forms that you are using to meet professional development requirements (if applicable).

Indicator Checklist

Program Name: _____ License Number: _____

Complete and include this checklist if your program submits the QDP by mail. Check the box next to each Indicator you want to meet. Only the Indicators that you check below will be reviewed by the Parent Aware Rating Team.

Category	Two-Star (required)	Three- and Four-Star (required)	Three- and Four- Star (for points)
Star Level Requirements		All Two-Star Indicators	
Teaching and Relationships	<input type="checkbox"/> T1.1 Routines <input type="checkbox"/> T1.2 Lesson plans <input type="checkbox"/> T3.2 Learning environment <input type="checkbox"/> T4.2 Kindergarten transition plan	<input type="checkbox"/> T1.3a Curriculum use List curricula below: <u>Infant Curriculum:</u> <u>Toddler Curriculum:</u> <u>Preschool Curriculum:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> T1.3b Classroom transitions (met/not met) <input type="checkbox"/> T2.3/T2.4 Child/adult interactions (15 points)	<input type="checkbox"/> T3.3 Cultural responsiveness (2 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> T4.3 Kindergarten transition activities (4 pts)
Relationships with Families	<input type="checkbox"/> R1.1 Asks and listens to families <input type="checkbox"/> R1.2 Shares information with families <input type="checkbox"/> R2.1 Family support services		<input type="checkbox"/> R1.3a Family involvement (2 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> R1.3b Family input (2 pts)
Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> A1.1 Child observation	<input type="checkbox"/> A1.3a Child assessment List assessment tools below: <u>Infant Assessment:</u> <u>Toddler Assessment:</u> <u>Preschool Assessment:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> A1.4 Child Assessment (required for a Four-Star)	<input type="checkbox"/> A1.3b Providing assessment to families (2 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> A1.3c Asks for parent input (2 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> A1.3d KEP Tool (3 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> A1.3e Planning for children with special needs (2 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> A2.3a Assessment-based individualized instruction (2 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> A2.3b Assessment-based group instruction (2 pts)

Professionalism	<input type="checkbox"/> P1.1 Professional ethics <input type="checkbox"/> P2.2 Intentional ongoing learning	<input type="checkbox"/> P2.3a Career Lattice achievements (up to 10 pts)	<input type="checkbox"/> P1.3a Specialized credential (3 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> P1.3b Education for leadership (3 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> P1.3c Program development (3 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> P2.3b Highly qualified (2 pts)
Health and Wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/> H1.2 Health and safety practices		<input type="checkbox"/> H2.3a Healthy food (2 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> H2.3b Sharing information about healthy food (2 pts) <input type="checkbox"/> H2.3c Nutrition and active play (3 pts)

Point Requirements for Star-Level

To receive a Three-Star Rating, family child care programs must earn 25-34 points and child care centers must earn 33-48 points.

To receive a Four-Star Rating, family child care programs must earn 35-50 points and child care centers must earn 49-65 points.

At least two points must come from each of the five Categories to receive a Three- or Four-Star Rating.

Total points are a combination of Indicator points and CLASS® observation requirement (CLASS® observation is only required for child care centers with preschool classrooms that are seeking a Three- or Four-Star Rating).

Training Requirements for Two-, Three-, and Four-Star Ratings

Children do better when their early educators have professional preparation that includes higher education coursework, combined with on-going training and support. In addition to completing the requirements outlined in the Professionalism category, ongoing learning is required in each of the following Knowledge and Competency Framework Content Areas. Lead Providers and Lead Teachers with a current initial Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential™ within the last 3 years or an AMI/AMS Montessori diploma within the last 5 years on their Learning Record have met all training requirements for all KCF areas. Lead Providers and Lead Teachers with a current age-appropriate Minnesota teaching license on their Learning Record have met all the training requirements except those with an asterisk (*) and will need to complete those hours to receive a Rating.

Two-Stars	Three- and Four-Stars
Hours by Minnesota Knowledge and Competency Area	Hours by Minnesota Knowledge and Competency Area
<p>8 hours in Content Area I: Child Development and Learning.</p> <p>2 hours in Content Area IIc: Promoting Social and Emotional Development and/or IX: Trauma-Informed Care and Practice. (Training hours can be a combination of KCF areas IIc or IX.)</p> <p>6 hours in Content Area III: Relationships with Families and/or X: Working with Multilingual Children and Families. (Training hours can be a combination of KCF areas III or X.)</p> <p>2* hours in Content Area IV: Assessment, Evaluation, and Individualization</p>	<p>10 hours in Content Area I: Child Development and Learning.</p> <p>10 hours in Content Area II: Developmentally Appropriate Learning Experiences.</p> <p>10 hours in Content Area IIc: Promoting Social and Emotional Development and/or IX: Trauma-Informed Care and Practice. (Training hours can be a combination of KCF areas IIc or IX.)</p> <p>10 hours in Content Area III: Relationships with Families and/or X: Working with Multilingual Children and Families. (Training hours can be a combination of KCF areas III or X.)</p> <p>10* hours in Content Area IV: Assessment, Evaluation, and Individualization.</p>

Age-Appropriate Minnesota Teaching Licenses for Parent Aware	
Function Code	MDE TEACHING LICENSE TITLE
180102	PRE-KINDERGARTEN
180103	PRE-KINDERGARTEN AND KINDERGARTEN
180105	PRE-PRIMARY
180150	EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
180402	FAMILY EDUCATION/EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR
190500	EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION
090000	HOME ECONOMICS
090100	FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES
090101	CONSUMER AND HOMEMAKING OCCUPATIONS
090112	CONSUMER AND HOMEMAKING/FAMILY LIFE
	MDE License on Learning Records must have exact title from TEACHING LICENSE (from MDE License Lookup) and Function Code on Learning Record.

Documenting Professional Development for Parent Aware

All training must appear on an individual's KCF Learning Record as Achieve MNCPD-approved clock hours, Continuing Education Credit (CEU), or college credit. The KCF Learning Record is the source for training verification. DCYF has electronic versions of all KCF Learning Records; you do not need to submit copies of KCF Learning Records.

Official, unopened college transcripts must be submitted to Achieve MNCPD as part of the Individual Membership application process. College coursework must appear on a KCF Learning Record to be counted toward meeting the training requirements.

Coaching, consulting, and mentoring hours can be tracked through approved RBPD Events on an individual's KCF Learning Record or by submitting a completed Verifying and Documenting Coaching, Consulting, and Mentoring in Parent Aware form. If you are using the form, each instance needs to be labeled with the appropriate KCF Content Area. This form may only be completed by coaches, consultants and mentors that are not approved RBPD Specialists. Coaching, consulting, and mentoring provided by an approved RBPD Specialist must appear on an individual's KCF Learning Record. Contact your PDA for more information.

If you believe there is an error on your individual KCF Learning Record or your Career Lattice Step, you must email Achieve MNCPD at support@mncpd.org. Errors must be resolved by the QDP submission due date. The appeals process could take several weeks, and your Individual Membership may need to be renewed.

All training, coaching, consulting, mentoring, and coursework must have been completed five years prior to the first day of the Full-Rating Cohort (either January 1 for the January Cohort or July 1 for the July Cohort) and up until the Quality Documentation Portfolio deadline.

Note: training, coaching, consulting, mentoring, and coursework completed and verified on the KCF Learning Record by the QDP submission due date will be accepted.

Category #1. Teaching and Relationships with Children (T)

Children do better when early educators are caring and engaging, have quality learning environments, use a research-based curriculum, and support children’s transitions to kindergarten. Early educators make a big difference in children’s lives. These practices help build relationships and give children what they need to learn and grow.



There are four Standards in Category #1:

- T1. Curriculum
- T2. Play and interactions
- T3. Learning and belonging
- T4. Kindergarten transition support

Note: Three- and Four-Star Ratings are based on points unless specified.

Category #1. Teaching and Relationships with Children (T)

T1. Curriculum. Program plans and implements developmentally appropriate learning experiences using a curriculum or bundle of curricula that cover all the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIP) child development domains.

Why is this Standard important? A curriculum is a roadmap for planning and implementing a program, which includes learning objectives for children, as well as the experiences and materials provided by the program to help children achieve them. Alignment of the curriculum to the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIP) helps ensure that all children across age groups and settings receive developmentally appropriate instruction. Curricula are more likely to help children achieve school readiness if they are research-based.

STAR-LEVEL	INDICATOR	EVIDENCE
Two-Star	T1.1 – Routines. Uses consistent routines to support children.	<p>Submit: One daily routine for each age group served. Each daily routine must identify age group. A separate daily routine must be submitted for each age group served.</p> <p>Age groups: For Child Care Centers: Infant (6 weeks to 15 months), Toddler (16 to 32 months), Preschool (33 months to first day of kindergarten) For Family Child Care Programs: Infant/Toddler (6 weeks to 23 months), Preschool (24 months to first day of kindergarten)</p>
	T1.2 – Lesson plans. Uses lesson plans aligned with Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIP) domains.	<p>Submit: One lesson plan for each age group served. A lesson plan may include multiple age groups served, but must show intentional planning that includes specific, age-appropriate activities for each age group served.</p> <p><i>Option A:</i> A lesson plan template created by the publisher of an aligned curriculum tool that includes the printed name of the tool.</p> <p><i>Option B:</i> Each lesson plan must be labeled with at least three age-appropriate/specific ECIP domains. One of the three ECIP domains must be Physical and Movement Development.</p>

Three-Star (Required)	T1.3a – Curriculum use. Uses a curriculum aligned with Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIP) domains across all age groups.	<p>Submit: Choose one of the following options.</p> <p><i>Option A:</i> For programs submitting a paper QDP - On the Indicator Checklist page, write the name of the curriculum used for each age group served from the list of Parent Aware Aligned Curricula.</p> <p>For programs submitting online - Select the checkboxes and/or enter the names of the aligned curriculum used for each age group served in the Evidence Text Box.</p> <p><i>Option B:</i> Submit the curriculum approval notification for a site-designed curriculum that has been approved.</p> <p><i>Option C:</i> If one or more of the curriculum tools that your program uses are not on the aligned curricula list, consult with your coach and follow the Parent Aware Curriculum Nomination process.</p>
Three- or Four-Star (met/not met)	T1.3b – Classroom transitions. Keeps classroom transitions brief and uses them to extend learning experiences.	<p>Submit: The CLASS® observation that is completed for Indicator T2.3/T2.4 will be used to determine if this Indicator is met.</p> <p><i>This Indicator is only for child care centers serving preschool aged children. Family child care programs, tribally licensed programs, infant classrooms and toddler classrooms do not receive a CLASS® observation.</i></p>

Category #1. Teaching and Relationships with Children (T)

T2. Play and interactions. Program implements learning experiences that provide purposeful play, peer and adult interaction, exploration, and skill development.

Why is this Standard important? Children learn more in early learning settings with early educators who thoughtfully plan play and use it to help children learn skills they will need in school and in life. Early educators also use exploration to extend children’s learning, problem-solving abilities, and build conversational skills.

The emotional climate and classroom organization play a role by establishing a learning environment where skill development happens. Use of the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS®) – a reliable, valid observation tool – helps teachers and administrators understand and plan for these key processes that are fundamental to children’s learning. This Indicator is only for child care centers serving preschool aged children. Family child care programs, infant classrooms, and toddler classrooms do not receive a CLASS® score.

STAR-LEVEL	INDICATOR	EVIDENCE
Two-Star	N/A	No evidence required
Three- and Four- Star (Required for points)	T2.3/T2.4 – Child-adult interactions. Provides instruction that is organized, challenging, and warm (15 points).	<p>Submit: Preschool and preschool/toddler classrooms in child care centers are observed in one-third to one-half of classrooms using the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS®).</p> <p>The CLASS® observation will be used to determine if this Indicator is met.</p> <p><i>This Indicator is only for child care centers serving preschool aged children. Family child care programs, tribally licensed programs, infant classrooms, and toddler classrooms do not receive a CLASS® observation.</i></p> <p>* NOTE: Starting July 1, 2028, points will be awarded based on the number of hours of CLASS coaching received by lead teachers.</p>

Category #1. Teaching and Relationships with Children (T)

T3. Learning and belonging. Program creates environment that supports a sense of belonging for each child and family.

Why is this Standard important? The learning environment sets the stage for everything else that happens in early care and education programs. The best environments have engaging materials and equipment, are welcoming to families, provide for the safety and comfort of all who use it, and are affirming and respectful of the children’s cultures, abilities, and languages.

High-quality environments empower early educators to offer the kind of early educational experiences that prepare children for school and beyond.

STAR-LEVEL	INDICATOR	EVIDENCE
Two-Star	<p>T3.2 – Learning environment. Evaluates the learning environment and sets goals using the Parent Aware Environment Self-Assessment (ESA) Checklist.</p>	<p>Submit: After completing the Parent Aware ESA, create a minimum of two goals per classroom that are related to the classroom learning environment. The same goal cannot be reused for T3.2 if it has already been used to meet the requirements for H1.2.</p> <p>There are three options to submit ESA goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete the goals section of the online ESA ● Enter goals in EQUIP and assign to this Indicator ● Upload goals as Indicator Evidence <p>Goals must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Goal statement ● At least one strategy/activity to accomplish goal ● Intended outcome - Description of how this action will improve your program quality ● Timeline for completion for each strategy/activity <p><i>Refer to Glossary for more details about goals.</i></p>
Three- or Four-Star (for points)	<p>T3.3 – Cultural responsiveness. Evaluates cultural responsiveness and sets goals using an approved self-assessment tool (2 points).</p> <p>Program must choose to use one of the following tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promoting Cultural and Linguistic Competency Self-Assessment <p>Family and Community Engagement Tool (FaCET)</p>	<p>Submit: Evidence must be submitted online in Develop using EQUIP and assigned to this Indicator.</p> <p>After completing one of the cultural responsiveness tools, the program sets a minimum of two goals.</p> <p>Goals must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Goal statement ● At least one strategy/activity to accomplish goal ● Intended outcome - Description of how this action will improve your program quality ● Timeline for completion for each strategy/activity <p><i>Refer to Glossary for more details about the assessment tools.</i></p>

Category #1. Teaching and Relationships with Children (T)

T4. Kindergarten transition support. Program supports children and families as children transition to kindergarten.

Why is this Standard important? Preschool children transition into kindergarten more successfully when their schools and families prepare for it together, and when their preschool and kindergarten teachers connect. Also, by coordinating transition efforts, preschool and elementary school programs can help children maintain and maximize the gains they made in preschool.

STAR-LEVEL	INDICATOR	EVIDENCE
Two-Star	T4.2 – Kindergarten transition plan. Provides written guidance to families for planning their child’s kindergarten transition.	Submit: At least one piece of documentation that shows you provide families with information to help them plan for their child’s kindergarten transition. Some examples of topics include, but are not limited to: information on early childhood screening, information on school open house, school contact information, information on how parents can help children prepare for kindergarten, etc.
Three-Star (Required)	N/A	No evidence required
Three- or Four-Star (for points)	T4.3 – Kindergarten transition activities. Offers a variety of activities that transition children to kindergarten (4 points).	Submit: Written descriptions of and/or examples of at least two activities or events that your program has offered to support children in their transition to kindergarten. Some examples of activities or events include but are not limited to: visit/tour of kindergarten classroom or a visit from kindergarten teacher, family information night at your program, and planned classroom experiences, such as practicing self-help skills.
Four-Star (Required)	N/A	No evidence required

Category #2. Relationships with Families (R)

Children do better when families are engaged in their children’s education and development. Building two-way relationships with families helps strengthen a sense of belonging among all children in the program as they experience respect and support for their home cultures and languages.

There are two Standards in Category #2:

- R1. Respect and ongoing two-way communication
- R2. Links families to services



Note: Three- and Four-Star Ratings are based on points unless specified.

Category #2. Relationships with Families (R)

R1. Respect and ongoing two-way communication. Program respects each families’ strengths, choices, and goals for their children. Information about children’s progress and curriculum is shared between the program and family.

Why is this Standard important? Effective early learning programs form relationships with families that foster respect, support, and collaboration. Developing partnerships with families that include on-going, two-way communication allow teachers and providers to learn about the child’s interests and routines; family traditions, religion, language, and expectations; gather information that can be used to create a program that is sensitive to the child’s culture; and provide a curriculum that meets the child’s individual needs. Strong relationships with families are associated with positive child and parent outcomes, and more sensitive caregiving.

STAR-LEVEL	INDICATOR	EVIDENCE
Two-Star	<p>R1.1 – Asks and listens to families. Program has conversations to learn about each child and their family’s:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Routines ● Ways they prefer to communicate with the program ● Backgrounds and interests ● Languages spoken in the home ● Cultures that family members consider most important to their identities 	<p>Submit: Both of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) At least one example that demonstrates an intentional conversation between the program and the family that includes at least two of the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Family Routines ● Ways the family prefers to communicate with the program ● Backgrounds and interests of the child and family ● Languages spoken in the home ● Cultures that family members consider most important to their identities 2) A written description that explains how this example is used and how it shows you have intentional conversations with families.
	<p>R1.2 – Shares information with families. Shares information in a way that meets the needs of all families, including those who speak languages other than English.</p>	<p>Submit: All of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) At least one example of how the program currently shares information with families. 2) A written description of how the example is used. 3) A second written description of how the program currently shares or plans to share information with families who speak a language other than the primary language used by the program.
Three-Star (Required)	N/A	No evidence required
Three- or Four-Star (for points)	<p>R1.3a – Family involvement. Offers a variety of activities, based on families’ interests, with at least one focused on helping families extend children’s learning at home (2 points).</p>	<p>Submit: Written descriptions and/or examples of at least two activities or events that the program offers to encourage families to be involved in the program. At least one activity or event must include an example of how you help families extend classroom topics at home.</p>
	<p>R1.3b – Family input. Offers families opportunities to provide input into decisions that impact the program (2 points).</p>	<p>Submit: At least two examples, or written descriptions of two examples, that show that families have opportunities to provide input into decisions about the program.</p>

Four-Star (Required)	N/A	No evidence required
-----------------------------	-----	----------------------

Category #2. Relationships with Families (R)

R2. Links families to services. Program provides families with links to services based on family’s strengths, resources, priorities, and concerns.

Why is this Standard important? Early educators in early care and education programs see families regularly and know the families well. Research has shown that when early care and education programs connect families to services in their community, we see far-reaching, positive outcomes for children and families.

STAR-LEVEL	INDICATOR	EVIDENCE
Two-Star	R2.1 – Family support services. Provides families with list of community services available on the Parent Aware website.	Submit: Documentation that shows how you share the ParentAware.org website with families, with the purpose of directing them to information about family support services available. <i>See Glossary for more details about family support services.</i>
Three-Star (Required)	N/A	No evidence required
Three- or Four-Star (for points)	N/A	No evidence required
Four-Star (Required)	N/A	No evidence required

Category #3. Assessment & Planning for Each Individual Child (A)

Children do better when their early educators know them well, understand their levels of development, and use the information to plan instruction. Assessment information is accurate and fair when it is gathered in a way that includes observation in natural settings, and a child assessment tool that is valid and reliable.

There are two Standards in Category #3:

- A1. Observation and assessment
- A2. Assessment-based instruction

Note: Three- and Four-Star Ratings are based on points unless specified.



Category #3. Assessment and Planning for Each Individual Child (A)

A1. Observation and assessment. Program learns more about each child through regular observation and formal assessment.

Why is this Standard important? Offering individualized instruction requires knowing and understanding children’s unique needs, temperaments, and levels of development. Gathering assessment information is one important part of getting to know children and helps early educators monitor their progress – both for individual children and for the program as a whole. Assessment information best informs instruction when it is gathered using a valid, reliable child assessment tool and involves families.

STAR-LEVEL	INDICATOR	EVIDENCE
Two-Star	A1.1 – Child observation. Observes and documents children’s growth and development.	Submit: One observation for one child in each age group served. Observation(s) must identify child’s age group.
Three-Star (Required)	A1.3a – Child assessment. Assesses all children in at least one age group using an approved assessment tool at least once a year.	<p>Submit: Complete both parts of this Indicator.</p> <p>Part 1: Choose from the following options.</p> <p><i>Option A:</i> For programs submitting a paper QDP – On the Indicator Checklist page, write the name of the child assessment from the Parent Aware Approved list for each age group assessed.</p> <p>For programs submitting online –Select the checkboxes and/or enter the names of the approved assessments used for each age group in the Evidence Text Box.</p> <p><i>Option B:</i> Submit the assessment approval letter for a site-designed assessment that has been approved.</p> <p><i>Option C:</i> If one or more of the assessments that the program uses are not on the approved assessment list, consult with your coach and follow the Parent Aware Assessment Nomination Process.</p> <p>Part 2: Provide one completed assessment for one child in one age group. The assessment evidence must be from the assessment listed for this Indicator and must identify child’s age group.</p> <p><i>*Note: If the program is seeking credit for A1.4, an approved assessment for each age group the program serves must be listed. The Evidence for this Indicator may also be used for Indicator A1.4 as part of the required documentation.</i></p>
Three- or Four-Star (for points)	A1.3b – Providing assessment to families. Provides families with child assessment results (2 points).	Submit: One copy of completed child assessment results for one child in one age group, in the format the program provides to families.
	A1.3c – Asks for parent input. Asks families to share their own observations from home and provide input into goals (2 points).	Submit: A written description or at least one example that includes the ways the program asks families to share observations from home and how families can provide input into child development goals.

	A1.3d – Kindergarten Entry Profile tool. Assesses each child using a child assessment tool included in the Kindergarten Entry Profile menu (3 points).	Submit: If at least one of the assessments the program identified for Indicator A1.3a is an assessment from the Kindergarten Entry Profile (KEP) menu, this Indicator is met. <i>See Glossary for more details about the Kindergarten Entry Profile.</i>
	A1.3e – Planning for children with special needs. Has a plan to partner with families and service providers of children with special needs (2 points).	Submit: A written description of the program’s plan to partner with families and service providers to include children with special needs.
Four-Star (Required)	A1.4 – Child assessment. Assesses all children in all age groups using an approved assessment tool at least twice a year.	Submit: Two completed assessments for one child in each age group served. The assessment evidence must be from the assessment(s) listed for Indicator A1.3a and must identify child’s age group.

Category #3. Assessment and Planning for Each Individual Child (A)

A2. Assessment-based instruction. Program uses assessments to plan group and individualized instruction.

Why is this Standard important? Offering individualized and group instruction requires knowing and understanding children’s unique needs, temperaments, and levels of development.

Gathering assessment information is one important part of getting to know children, and helps early educators monitor their progress – both for individual children and for the program as a whole. Assessment information best informs instruction when it is gathered using a valid, reliable child assessment tool and involves families.

STAR-LEVEL	INDICATOR	EVIDENCE
Two-Star	N/A	No evidence required
Three-Star (Required)	N/A	No evidence required
Three- or Four-Star (for points)	A2.3a – Assessment-based individualized instruction. Uses child assessment information to design goals and guide instruction for each child (2 points).	Submit: At least one example that demonstrates instruction is informed by individual child assessment results, for one child in one age group.
	A2.3b – Assessment-based group instruction. Uses aggregated child assessment information to design group goals and guide instruction for the group (2 points). <i>*See the glossary for a definition of aggregated data and how it can be used.</i>	Submit: Minimum of one group instruction goal for one age group. Goals must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Goal statement ● At least one strategy/activity to accomplish goal ● Intended outcome - Description of how this action will improve your program quality ● Timeline for completion for each strategy/activity Goals may be submitted online in EQUIP and assigned to this Indicator, submitted with a paper QDP, or uploaded as Indicator evidence.
Four-Star (Required)	N/A	No evidence required

Category #4. Professionalism (P)

Children do better when their early educators have professional preparation that includes higher education coursework, combined with on-going training and support. These qualifications have been found to be consistent predictors of program quality, strong child-adult interactions, quality learning environments, and positive child outcomes.



There are two Standards in Category #4:

- P1. Program leadership
- P2. Qualifications and development

In addition to completing the requirements in Professionalism, ongoing learning is required in each of several Knowledge and Competency Framework Content Areas, as outlined in the training requirements section. Connect with your Professional Development Advisor for assistance with professional development plans and training needs.

Note: Three- and Four-Star Ratings are based on points unless specified.

Category #4. Professionalism (P)

P1. Program leadership. Program leaders have specialized knowledge and skills to effectively lead an early care and education program.

Why is this Standard important? Organizational leadership and support are needed to carry out individualized instruction for young children. When directors, lead providers, and education coordinators have training and education credentials specific to leadership in early childhood settings, they are better prepared to foster a climate of ongoing growth and learning.

STAR-LEVEL	INDICATOR	EVIDENCE
Two-Star	P1.1 Professional Ethics. Commits to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct.	Submit: Program Director or Lead Provider reviews the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and signs the NAEYC Statement of Commitment page.
Three-Star (Required)	N/A	No evidence required
Three- or Four-Star (for points)	P1.3a – Specialized credential. Program Director or Lead Provider earned a credential for leading and managing an early care and education program (3 points).	Submit: The qualifications that appear on the Learning Record of a Program Director or Lead Provider must include either an Administrator’s Credential recognized by NAEYC or the Business Leadership Credential offered by First Children’s Finance. Ensure the Employees tab in the Organization Profile in Develop is accurate and up to date.
	P1.3b – Education for leadership. Program Director, Lead Provider, or Education Coordinator has a four-year degree or higher with at least 24 early childhood-related, verified semester credits (3 points).	Submit: The qualifications and coursework that appear on the Learning Record of a Program Director, Lead Provider, or Education Coordinator will be used to determine if this Indicator is met. Ensure the Employees tab in the Organization Profile in Develop is accurate and up to date.

	P1.3c – Program development. Creates and uses a Program-Wide Professional Development Plan (3 points).	<p>Submit: A Program-Wide Professional Development Plan that includes, at minimum, all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One goal ● Action items labeled with related Knowledge & Competency Framework Content Areas <p>Goals must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Goal statement ● At least one strategy/activity to accomplish goal ● Description of how you know your goal is met (document, event, form, etc.) ● Timeline for completion for each strategy/activity
Four-Star (Required)	N/A	No evidence required

Category #4. Professionalism (P)

P2. Qualifications and development. Lead early educators pursue and document educational achievements.

Why is this Standard important? Adults are best able to learn new skills when professional development scaffolds to meet their individual learning needs. Professional development plans that respond to each learner’s personal and professional backgrounds – and include coaching, consultation, mentoring, and classroom-based training – improve teachers’ and providers’ ability to put knowledge into practice.

Remember: Professional development is part of the quality improvement process. There is required training for each Lead Provider and one Lead Teacher per classroom.

STAR-LEVEL	INDICATOR	EVIDENCE
Two-Star	P2.2 – Intentional ongoing learning. Each Lead Provider or Lead Teacher creates and uses an individual professional development plan.	<p>Submit: One individual professional development plan for each Lead Provider or Lead Teacher that includes, at minimum, all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One goal ● Action items labeled with related Knowledge & Competency Framework Content Areas <p>Goals must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Goal statement ● At least one strategy/activity to accomplish goal ● Description of how you know your goal is met (document, event, form, etc.) ● Timeline for completion for each strategy/activity
Three-Star (Required)	N/A	No evidence required
Three- or Four-Star (for points)	P2.3a – Career Lattice achievements. The Career Lattice Steps achieved by Lead Providers or Lead Teachers are recognized (Up to 10 points).	Submit: The Career Lattice Step levels of the Lead Provider or one Lead Teacher per classroom will be used to determine the points earned for this Indicator. Ensure the Classrooms tab and Employees tab of the Organization Profile in Develop are accurate and up to date.

	<p><i>Refer to the Glossary for additional details about the Career Lattice.</i></p>	<p>All Lead Providers or Lead Teachers must be at Foundational Awareness on the Minnesota Career Lattice to achieve a Three- or Four-Star Rating.</p> <p>For each Lead Provider or Lead Teacher, points are awarded based on their Steps on the Minnesota Career Lattice as follows: 1 point for Foundational Awareness and Step 1, 2 points for Step 2, and so on through 12 points awarded for Step 12. The points are then averaged to determine the points earned for this Indicator. Using the Career Lattice Step average for Lead Teachers, or the Career Lattice Step for a single Lead Provider, Indicator points are earned as follows:</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>Average Career Lattice</th> <th>Points Earned for P2.3a</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1.99 or fewer</td> <td>1 point</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 2.00 and 2.99</td> <td>3 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 3.00 and 3.99</td> <td>4 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 4.00 and 4.99</td> <td>5 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 5.00 and 5.99</td> <td>6 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 6.00 and 7.99</td> <td>7 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 8.00 and 9.99</td> <td>8 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 10.00 and 10.99</td> <td>9 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11.00 or higher</td> <td>10 points</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Average Career Lattice	Points Earned for P2.3a	1.99 or fewer	1 point	Between 2.00 and 2.99	3 points	Between 3.00 and 3.99	4 points	Between 4.00 and 4.99	5 points	Between 5.00 and 5.99	6 points	Between 6.00 and 7.99	7 points	Between 8.00 and 9.99	8 points	Between 10.00 and 10.99	9 points	11.00 or higher	10 points
Average Career Lattice	Points Earned for P2.3a																					
1.99 or fewer	1 point																					
Between 2.00 and 2.99	3 points																					
Between 3.00 and 3.99	4 points																					
Between 4.00 and 4.99	5 points																					
Between 5.00 and 5.99	6 points																					
Between 6.00 and 7.99	7 points																					
Between 8.00 and 9.99	8 points																					
Between 10.00 and 10.99	9 points																					
11.00 or higher	10 points																					
	<p>P2.3b – Highly qualified. All Lead Providers or Lead Teachers in the program have at least one of the following: (2 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Associate’s degree related to early childhood education, child development, or closely related field ● Bachelor’s degree in early childhood education, child development, or closely related field ● Master’s degree or doctorate in early childhood education, child development, or closely related field ● Current, age-appropriate Minnesota Teaching License 	<p>Submit: The qualifications that appear on the Learning Record of the Lead Provider or one Lead Teacher per classroom will be used to determine if this Indicator is met. A Career Lattice Step of 9B-D, 10B-D, 11B-D, 12B-D indicates that a closely related field has been verified on the KCF Learning Record.</p> <p>Ensure the Classrooms tab and Employees tab of the Organization Profile in Develop are accurate and up to date.</p>																				
<p>Four-Star (Required)</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>No evidence required</p>																				

Category #5. Health and Well-being (H)

Children do better when early care and education programs are safe and healthy, provide nutritious meals and snacks, and offer many opportunities for active play. This foundation allows children to take full advantage of learning opportunities.



There are two Standards in Category #5:

- H1. Health and safety
- H2. Nutrition and play

Note: Three- and Four-Star Ratings are based on points unless specified.

Category #5. Health and Well-Being (H)

H1. Health and safety. Program establishes and maintains an environment that ensures each child’s health and safety.

Why is this Standard important? Ensuring compliance with licensing regulations is a critical step in building a quality care and education program. When programs carefully monitor the health and safety in their programs, using the licensing regulations and other practices provided in self-assessment tools, such as the Parent Aware Environmental Self-Assessment, they are able to build the foundational level of quality needed in order to successfully carry out the best practices included in Parent Aware.

STAR-LEVEL	INDICATOR	EVIDENCE
Two-Star	H1.2 Health and safety practices. Evaluates health and safety practices using the Parent Aware Environment Self-Assessment (ESA) Checklist and sets goals in areas of need.	<p>Submit: After completing the Parent Aware ESA, create one goal per classroom that relates to health and safety practices. The same goal cannot be used for H1.2 if it has already been used to meet the requirements for T3.2.</p> <p>There are three options to submit ESA goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete the goals section of the online ESA ● Enter goals in EQUIP and assign to this Indicator ● Upload documentation as Indicator Evidence <p>Goals must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Goal statement ● At least one strategy/activity to accomplish goal ● Intended outcome - Description of how this action will improve your program quality ● Timeline for completion for each strategy/activity
Three-Star (Required)	N/A	No evidence required
Three- or Four-Star (for points)	N/A	No evidence required
Four-Star (Required)	N/A	No evidence required

Category #5. Health and Well-Being (H)

H2. Nutrition and play. Program provides healthy meals and snacks that encourage healthy eating behaviors and offers daily opportunities for active play.

Why is this Standard important? Eating nutritious foods improves children’s ability to grow, develop, and achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Eating healthy foods helps children get the nutrients their bodies need to stay healthy, active, and strong. Children are physical learners and require physical movement to be at their best. Early learning programs that provide structured and unstructured physical activity will be more likely to keep children engaged and learning and can help prevent childhood obesity.

STAR-LEVEL	INDICATOR	EVIDENCE
Two-Star	N/A	No evidence required
Three-Star (Required)	N/A	No evidence required
Three- or Four-Star (for points)	H2.3a Healthy food. Offers healthy meals and snacks (2 points).	<p>Submit:</p> <p><i>Option A:</i> Documented participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Refer to Glossary for CACFP participation definitions and Evidence requirements.</p> <p><i>Option B:</i> The Evidence submitted for Indicator H2.3c will be used to determine if this Indicator is met.</p>
	H2.3b. Sharing information about healthy food. Provides families with written guidelines on importance of providing healthy meals and snacks (2 points).	<p>Submit: At least one example of documentation shared with families that provides information on child nutrition or explains why nutrition is important to children’s growth and development.</p>
	<p>H2.3c. Nutrition and active play. Evaluates nutrition and physical activity practices using a self-assessment tool and sets goals in need areas (3 points).</p> <p>Program must complete one Go NAPSACC Self-Assessment related to child nutrition and one related to physical activity.</p>	<p>Submit: Evidence must be submitted online in Develop using EQUIP and assigned to this Indicator.</p> <p>Minimum of two goals. One goal must be related to child nutrition and one related to physical activity.</p> <p>Goals must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Goal statement ● At least one strategy/activity to accomplish goal ● Intended outcome - Description of how this action will improve your program quality ● Timeline for completion for each strategy/activity <p><i>Refer to the Glossary for more information about the self-assessment tool.</i></p>
Four-Star (Required)	N/A	No evidence required

Appendix A: Glossary

Term	Definition										
Age Groups by Program Type	<p>For Child Care Centers: Infant (6 weeks to 15 months), Toddler (16 to 32 months), Preschool (33 months to first day of kindergarten).</p> <p>For Family Child Care Programs: Infant/Toddler (6 weeks to 23 months), Preschool (24 months to first day of kindergarten.)</p>										
Aggregated Data	<p>A collection of child assessment results that can be used to inform group instruction. The process for gathering aggregated data includes assessing individual children, reviewing the results, and looking for common themes. When themes are identified, goals and activities can be designed to meet the needs of the group.</p>										
Authentic Assessment	<p>Assessment practices that are based on everyday learning experiences, provide for actual child performance, and involve children in the evaluation process (McAfee, 2004).</p>										
Career Lattice	<p>A tool for child care and early education professionals to document professional achievements. Achieve (MNCPD) awards Career Lattice Steps based on a combination of approved training hours, credentials, college credits and degrees earned.</p> <p>*Please note that Career Lattice Steps may change upon renewing an individual membership. Achieve MNCPD includes approved clock hours within the last 5 years when calculating Career Lattice Steps 1-5; and a current CDA credential is required to maintain a Career Lattice Step 6. For more information, visit www.mncpd.org.</p> <p>Career Lattice Steps achieved by Lead Teachers are used to determine the program’s scoring for Indicator P2.3a. If there is more than one Lead Teacher, points will be averaged and awarded for Indicator P2.3a.</p> <p>Career Lattice Points and Scoring: For each Lead Provider or Lead Teacher, points are awarded based on their Steps on the Minnesota Career Lattice as follows: 1 point for Foundational Awareness and Step 1, 2 points for Step 2, and so on through 12 points awarded for Step 12, then averaged.</p> <p>Using the Career Lattice Step average for Lead Teachers, or the Career Lattice Step for a single Lead Provider is, Indicator points are earned as follows:</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="483 1230 1369 1388"> <tr> <td>1.99 or fewer = 1 points</td> <td>Between 6.00 and 7.99 = 7 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 2.00 and 2.99 = 3 points</td> <td>Between 8.00 and 9.99 = 8 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 3.00 and 3.99 = 4 points</td> <td>Between 10.00 and 10.99 = 9 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 4.00 and 4.99 = 5 points</td> <td>11.00 or higher = 10 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Between 5.00 and 5.99 = 6 points</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>All Lead Providers or Lead Teachers must be at Foundational Awareness on the Minnesota Career Lattice to achieve a Three- or Four-Star Rating.</p>	1.99 or fewer = 1 points	Between 6.00 and 7.99 = 7 points	Between 2.00 and 2.99 = 3 points	Between 8.00 and 9.99 = 8 points	Between 3.00 and 3.99 = 4 points	Between 10.00 and 10.99 = 9 points	Between 4.00 and 4.99 = 5 points	11.00 or higher = 10 points	Between 5.00 and 5.99 = 6 points	
1.99 or fewer = 1 points	Between 6.00 and 7.99 = 7 points										
Between 2.00 and 2.99 = 3 points	Between 8.00 and 9.99 = 8 points										
Between 3.00 and 3.99 = 4 points	Between 10.00 and 10.99 = 9 points										
Between 4.00 and 4.99 = 5 points	11.00 or higher = 10 points										
Between 5.00 and 5.99 = 6 points											
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Participation	<p>The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provides aid to child and adult care organizations for nutritious foods that contribute to wellness, healthy growth, and development of children and older adults.</p> <p>For programs in the January Cohort: You must be reimbursed between September 1 and your QDP due date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you have received a reimbursement between September 1 and February 28, no evidence is needed. We will receive evidence of your reimbursement from the Minnesota Department of Education. If you have not received a reimbursement between September 1 and February 28 but have received a reimbursement between February 28 and your QDP due date, please submit a cancelled check or direct deposit receipt. 										

	<p>For programs in the July Cohort: You must be reimbursed between March 1 and your QDP due date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have received a reimbursement between March 1 and August 31, no evidence is needed. We will receive evidence of your reimbursement from the Minnesota Department of Education. • If you have not received a reimbursement between March 1 and August 31 but have received a reimbursement between August 31 and your QDP due date, please submit a cancelled check or direct deposit receipt.
Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS®)	<p>A reliable, valid observation tool that measures child-adult interactions and helps providers, teachers, and directors understand and plan for key processes that are fundamental to children’s learning (Teachstone, 2015). For Parent Aware, CLASS® observations are only required for preschool classrooms in child care centers and the program’s Star-Level goal is a Three- or Four-Star Rating. CLASS® scores are used to score Indicators T2.3, T2.4, and T1.3b.</p> <p>NOTE: Starting July 1, 2028, points for T2.3/T2.4 will be awarded based on the number of hours of CLASS coaching received by lead teachers.</p>
Cultural Responsiveness	<p>A commitment to: 1) Learning about cultural beliefs and practices other than one’s own, 2) Affirming and respecting the cultures and languages of children and families served, and 3) Regularly reflecting on ways to carry out this commitment by setting goals for implementing culturally responsive practices, typically through use of a self-assessment. Adapted from a definition provided by the National Center for Cultural Competence.</p>
Curriculum	<p>A set of written materials that early educators use to create engaging learning experiences for young children that includes: 1) A research or philosophical basis that describes how children learn and teachers teach 2) Goals and objectives of children’s learning 3) Instructional approaches used to help children achieve the goals and objectives 4) Information about the setting and environment in which learning happens and 5) Examples of learning experiences for young children.</p>
Director	<p>Individuals who run licensed child care centers.</p>
Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs)	<p>Revised and expanded in 2016 and updated in 2025, the ECIPs are a framework for a common set of developmentally appropriate expectations for children ages birth to kindergarten, within a context of shared responsibility for helping children meet these expectations. The ECIPs are aligned to the Minnesota Kindergarten Academic Standards.</p>
Early educator	<p>Describes individuals working in all early care and education settings, regardless of program type.</p>
Education Coordinator	<p>Individuals who support implementation of the instruction and curriculum provided by a child care center.</p>
Environmental Self-Assessment	<p>The Environmental Self-Assessment (ESA) helps providers evaluate the resources, practices, and learning environment in their program. Providers and teachers are encouraged to use this self-assessment to learn about and celebrate their strengths, as well as identify areas for growth.</p> <p>You can access the Parent Aware ESA on the Parent Aware website or you can complete the online tool in your Develop Organization Profile.</p>
Ethics	<p>The study of right and wrong, duty, and obligation.</p>
Family Support Services	<p>Family support services are community-based services that assist and support parents in their role as caregivers. Family support services help keep children safe and provides families with supports to care for their children. Here is a comprehensive list of resources to support families.</p>
Family and Community Engagement Tools (FaCET)	<p>The Family and Community Engagement Tool for parents assesses healthy early childhood development from the perspective of family and community knowledge systems. The Family and Community Engagement Tool for providers and program staff assesses program quality from a family and community knowledge systems perspective. Together, the tools measure family and community engagement based upon valuing and respecting family and community connections and wisdom and including families as an integral part of program design and decisions. Your Quality Coach can provide more information about how to use this tool.</p>

Go NAPSACC	The Go NAP SACC self-assessments help early care and education programs compare their nutrition and physical activity practices to best practice standards. The assessments employ the most up-to-date research on how early care and education programs can help children ages 0 to 5 build healthy eating and activity habits. The Go NAPSACC website address.
Goal	A description of something a program would like to change or do differently, activities needed to make the change, a date by which the program hopes to make the change, and a description of how you will know when the goal is completed.
Individualization	Adapting or changing an activity to respond to the interests, abilities, and learning styles of a child.
Intentional instruction	Instruction that has an explicit purpose and considers the approach to promote children’s development (child-guided, adult-guided, or a combination of both).
Kindergarten Entry Profile (KEP) tools	The Kindergarten Entry Profile (KEP) tools are child assessment tools reviewed and approved by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to be used in Voluntary Pre-kindergarten programs. Associated KEP tools are also available for use with younger children. These tools have been tested for reliability and validity and have been found to closely align to the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress.
Knowledge and Competency Framework (KCF)	Minnesota’s Knowledge and Competency Framework for Early Childhood Educators provides what people working with, educating and caring for young children need to know and be able to do. There are three versions: Working with Infants and Toddlers, Working with Preschool Aged Children, and Working in Family Child Care.
Lead Provider	When a licensed family child care program has more than one early educator providing care and education with children, this is the person in the lead role. In family child care settings this is most often the same person as the license-holder(s), or business owner(s).
Lead Teacher	When a licensed child care center has more than one early educator working in a classroom, this is the person designated by the program as being in the lead role.
Lesson Plan	A lesson plan is an outline for teaching a lesson including the goal (what the teacher wants the children to learn), the procedures for reaching this goal (the format of the lesson), and how the teacher will measure that the goal has been reached (a demonstration of understanding).
Licensed in Good Standing	Be currently licensed and in good standing with the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families or Tribal government and not have one of the following licensing violations: <u>revocation, suspension, temporary immediate suspension, or decertification, or is operating under a conditional license, and regardless of whether the action is under appeal.</u> Participation in Parent Aware may end and the Parent Aware participation status may be revoked if a program has been excluded from participating in other state or federal programs under Limits on Receiving Public Funds, Minnesota Statutes, section 142A.12. If a program is excluded from eligibility for Parent Aware pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 142A.12, this could also limit the ability to participate in other state programs.
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC™)	The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is a professional membership organization that works to promote high-quality early learning for all young children, birth through age 8, by connecting early childhood practice, policy, and research. NAEYC’s Code of Ethical Conduct can be found on the NAEYC website.
Observation	A process used by early childhood educators to watch, listen to, and record children’s actions, facial expressions, body language, sounds, words, and gestures. Educators use the information to learn about a child and his/her skills and plan ways to support and strengthen the child’s skill development.
Promoting Cultural and Linguistic	The Promoting Cultural and Linguistic Competency Self-Assessment from the Georgetown University National Center for Cultural Competence, is intended to heighten the awareness and sensitivity of personnel to the importance of cultural and linguistic cultural competence in health, mental health,

Competency Self-Assessment	and human service settings. It provides concrete examples of the kinds of beliefs, attitudes, values, and practices that foster cultural and linguistic competence at the individual or practitioner level.
Routine	The daily activities and events that happen throughout the day in an early care and education setting. When routines are consistent and ordered in a predictable way, children can participate more successfully.
Written Description	Written statement, typically involving two to five sentences, that communicates an idea, program practice, or goal. For the purposes of Parent Aware, content must be related to the Indicator for which it is submitted.