



Star Rating System

WHAT is the Star Rating System?

- All child care businesses must meet basic health and safety standards for state licensure.
- Star Ratings allow these businesses to voluntarily demonstrate higher levels of quality and give parents the information they need to make informed child care choices.
- Star Ratings are measured on a 1 to 5 scale, with 5 stars ensuring the highest level of quality.
- The Star Rating System provides a consumer scorecard to demonstrate effectiveness, while ensuring the needs of children, families, businesses and investors are met.
- North Carolina's Star Rating System is the 1st market based approach of its kind in the country to assess the quality of child care and is now being replicated across the country.

WHY is the Star Rating System so important?

- The Star Rating System not only assists child care businesses in improving and demonstrating their quality but also affects both the short and long-term outcomes for children.
- Research has shown that as child care quality improves so does the return on investment for both public and private funds.
- Quality child care consists of many components. The Star Rating System provides simplified information necessary for parents to make informed child care decisions.

HOW does the Star Rating System work?

- Providers meet the basic health and safety standards required to obtain a state license at the 1-star level. They can then voluntarily elect to apply for an improved Star Rating.
- Child care businesses are assessed through the use of a flexible point system on 2 major factors of child care quality: staff education and program standards. This allows child care businesses to make choices about how they want to improve quality and which star level they wish to be based on the market they are serving. This simple system of points provides a common set of agreed upon quality standards, reducing confusion and misunderstanding.
- By informing consumers about the importance of high-quality child care through the use of the Star Rating System, market demand creates an incentive to improve quality, thus increasing the returns on public and private investments, and ensuring better outcomes for children, parents, employers, the military, and our state.

WHAT DIFFERENCE is the Star Rating System making?

- Informed consumers are seeking high quality child care to meet the needs of their families and the market continues to respond. This is demonstrated by the 6,513 (out of 8,376) licensed child care businesses voluntarily improving the quality of their programs by having 2 to 5 stars.
- Since its inception, the Star Rating System has played a significant role in improving high-quality child care choices for consumers.
 - In 2010, 63% of children in early care and education attended 4- and 5-star programs as compared to 33% in 2001.



North Carolina is a leader in early childhood education initiatives.



The N.C. Child Care Coalition: working to improve the quality and affordability of early childhood services in North Carolina:

Kaplan Early Learning Company • NC Early Childhood Assn • NC Assn for the Education of Young Children • NC Partnership for Children
NC Head Start Assn • Child Care Services Assn • Ctr for Community Self-Help • Covenant With NC's Children • NC Justice Ctr • United Way of NC
Easter Seals/UCP NC • NC Pediatric Society • NC-ADD • NC Institute for Child Development Professionals • NC Licensed Child Care Association
NC Interagency Coordinating Council and many regional and local child care agencies, child care providers and individuals.

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“To begin with I am a single mother with children, 11 months apart! After my second child was born their father decided that he no longer could handle the responsibility of parenthood with two babies so close together. He left from the hospital and never returned. ... I was skeptical about putting my children in day care and I knew I had to find a place where I felt my children would be safe and secure. I got on the computer and googled information about day cares. I was delighted to find the information about the NC Star Rated Licensing. I actually visited a couple of centers but was most comfortable with my current center Director’s tour of the center and her description of her staff and their education levels. I just couldn’t believe the staff were all either enrolled in a higher educational system or had already completed their degrees. Also, each classroom had an information board outside of each classroom as a small introduction of the staff with their picture and many of them had their own family photos. I also liked the ratio’s that this 5 star center provides for my children. I have built strong relationships with both of my children’s teachers. They have helped me with ideas and suggestions to manage my son’s impulsive behaviors at times. I like the fact too that materials are developmentally right for my children and are available throughout the day. I have dropped in their classrooms at different times of the day and they are always surrounded with staff that show their love and caring for the children. My kids have learned a lot from attending a five-star center and I am so happy that the state of North Carolina has this system in place.” — Working parent, Haywood County



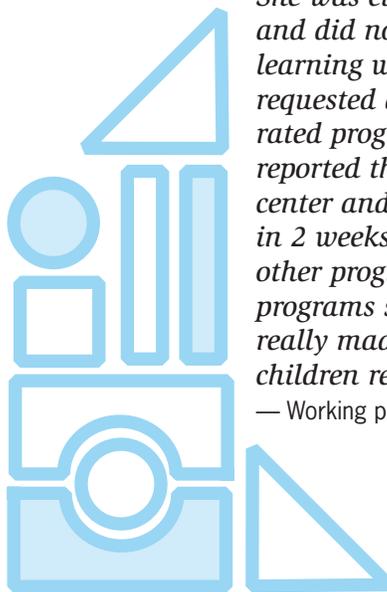
“The Star License was extremely helpful for us in choosing the right place for Andrew. It’s like going into a restaurant... I don’t eat there if it’s a B-level restaurant or has a low sanitation score. I wouldn’t send my child to a child care with a lower star rating. With a higher license, you just know with certainty that they are following the right

guidelines—you know they are following ratios, what the children are eating, that they are following sanitation and nutritional guidelines, following play guidelines, etc. It gives you assurance that you know what is going to happen there. ... And if it weren’t for the Star Rating, I wouldn’t have been able to seek out a better facility as easily—I might not have been able to learn about the difference.” — Working Parents, Orange County



“Jill” called in December because she did not think her child was getting proper child care. She was currently using a 2 star program and did not feel like her 3 year old was learning what she should be. The parent requested and received a list of 4 and 5 star rated programs. On a follow up the parent reported that she has chosen a four star center and she feels her child learned more in 2 weeks than she had in 3 months at the other program. She said when looking at programs she could tell how that star rating really made a difference on the care the children received.

— Working parent, Mecklenburg County



“I am a military wife and mother of two. I had to move across the country and put my education and dreams on hold for seven years because of limited income. With the help of the child care resource and referral service in explaining the importance of high-quality child care, and how to find a provider of my choice to fit the needs of my family, I am now able to go back to school full-time without worry about the care my children receive. Because of the Star Rating System my children are now able to get the high-quality care they deserve, while I get peace of mind. These resources enable me to succeed and empower my children through the excellent levels of curriculum at their highly-rated facility.”

— Student parent, Cumberland County