

Family Child Care Quality Framework

November 2013



BrightStars: Rhode Island's Quality Rating and Improvement System for Child Care and Early Learning Programs

The latest science tells us that the early years of life matter because early experiences affect the architecture of children's maturing brains. Like the construction of a house, brains are built from the bottom up, with early experiences setting the foundation for the rest of development. That is why high-quality child care and early learning programs are so important for Rhode Island.

Through BrightStars, Rhode Island is creating a sustainable infrastructure of diverse and high quality early care and school-age programs using research-based practices that promote positive outcomes for children and families.

BrightStars works to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early learning and school-age care settings. BrightStars meets programs and providers where they are, using a strengths-based approach that guides them to decisions about quality child care. A BrightStars rating is an objective tool to support program quality improvement and assist families in selecting care and education programs.

Quality rating and improvement systems exist in many states across the country to systematically improve program quality and support healthy growth and development of our youngest children. Quality rating and improvement systems measure program quality within a framework of research-based standards.

State regulations establish the foundation for operating child care and early learning programs. These regulations specify the minimum standards that must be met to operate legally and are the first step in a quality rating and improvement system. Higher levels in quality rating systems recognize programs for exceeding basic regulatory requirements and implementing practices that research shows are best for children.

BrightStars is a 5-level quality rating and improvement system. In order to participate in BrightStars, programs must have a child care license from the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families or program approval from the Rhode Island Department of Education. Programs that achieve higher levels of BrightStars recognition have demonstrated that they are implementing important research-based practices known to promote child development and learning. Each incremental BrightStars rating demonstrates an important step toward best practice.

BrightStars assesses programs in six quality domains:

- Health, Safety & Nutrition
- Enrollment & Staffing
- Staff Qualifications & Ongoing Professional Development
- Administration
- Early Learning & Development
- Family Engagement

Since 2005, BrightStars has received invaluable guidance and support from an Advisory Committee that includes representatives from all sectors of the early learning and child care field, state department leaders, early learning programs, and key local experts and advocates.

BrightStars is a public-private partnership managed by the Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children. Key partners include the United Way of Rhode Island, CVS Caremark Charitable Trust, Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families, Rhode Island Department of Education, Rhode Island Department of Health, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, and the hundreds of BrightStars-participating child care programs across Rhode Island.

For more information visit www.BrightStars.org

BrightStars Family Child Care Domains, Standards and Criteria

The following is a snapshot of the BrightStars Family Child Care Quality Framework. Standards and criteria are listed under each of the respective six BrightStars quality domains. Under "Level 1", "Level 2", etc., a check mark (✓) indicates that BrightStars will assess criteria at that level. For each criteria, an increase in check marks indicates an increase or difference in what is required to achieve a higher star rating.

STANDARD	CRITERIA	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
Domain 1: Health, Safety & Nutrition						
Learning Environment	Regulatory Compliance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Learning Environment			✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
Domain 2: Enrollment & Staffing						
Minimum Staff-Child Ratio	Staff-Child Ratio		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Staff-Child Ratio Posted		✓	✓	✓	✓
Domain 3: Staff Qualifications & Ongoing Professional Development						
Educator Qualifications	Professional Development Plan		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Formal Education			✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
	RI Early Learning and Development Training				✓	✓
Domain 4: Administration						
Continuous Quality Improvement	Program Self-Assessment		✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓
	Quality Improvement Plan	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Domain 5: Early Learning & Development						
Curriculum	Written Curriculum			✓	✓	✓✓
Child Assessment	Developmental Screening Info		✓	✓	✓	✓✓
	Child Assessment				✓	✓✓
Inclusive Classroom Practices	Written Program Philosophy			✓	✓	✓
	Educator Release Time					✓
Domain 6: Family Engagement						
Family Communication and Involvement	Family Communication		✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
	Family-Teacher Conference			✓	✓	✓

How to Use this Document

This framework is designed for use by licensed family child care and group family child care programs. It describes the domains, standards, and criteria BrightStars uses to assign programs a star rating.

Domain 1: Health, Safety & Nutrition

Standard 1: Learning Environment

Daily activities and interaction show that the program is providing a **safe, healthy, and stimulating environment**. The program provides for **indoor and outdoor space** to support varied and enriching experiences for children. Daily interactions demonstrate that the **educator respects, cares for and enjoys working with children**. The program supports the **inclusion of children with disabilities and developmental delays**, responds to the **cultural and linguistic diversity** of the population it serves, and promotes the acceptance of diversity among families and children.

Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
Compliance with DCYF Licensing Regulations	Compliance with DCYF Licensing Regulations + Learning Environment	Compliance with DCYF Licensing Regulations + Learning Environment FCCERS-R score of 3.0 or greater	Compliance with DCYF Licensing Regulations + Learning Environment FCCERS-R score of 4.0 or greater	Compliance with DCYF Licensing Regulations + Learning Environment FCCERS-R score of 5.0 or greater

OR represents one criteria or another needed to achieve a rating at that level

+ Plus represents additional criteria needed to achieve a rating at that level

Bold text represents a change from level to level

BrightStars Standard Name

Definition of Standard

Levels: five vertical columns show the criteria required to achieve a star rating

BrightStars Criteria

BrightStars Quality Domain

Family Child Care Standards and Criteria

Standard 1: Learning Environment

Daily activities and interaction show that the program is providing a **safe, healthy, and stimulating environment**. The program provides for **indoor and outdoor space** to support varied and enriching experiences for children. Daily interactions demonstrate that the **educator respects, cares for and enjoys**

working with children. The program supports the **inclusion of children with disabilities and developmental delays**, responds to the **cultural and linguistic diversity** of the population it serves, and promotes the acceptance of diversity among families and children.

Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
Compliance with DCYF Licensing Regulations	Compliance with DCYF Licensing Regulations + Learning Environment ¹	Compliance with DCYF Licensing Regulations + Learning Environment FCCERS-R score of 3.0 or greater	Compliance with DCYF Licensing Regulations + Learning Environment FCCERS-R score of 4.0 or greater	Compliance with DCYF Licensing Regulations + Learning Environment FCCERS-R score of 5.0 or greater

¹At Level Two, this criteria is under development and may be implemented at a later date.

Standard 2: Minimum Staff-Child Ratio

The program has enough staff members at all times to supervise the children and to support early learning and development. This standard reiterates what is expected of programs through compliance with state regulation.

Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
<p>Staff-Child Ratios¹ DCYF Family Child Child Care regulations require:</p> <p>1:6²</p> <p>2:8³</p> <p>2:12 (applies to group family child care homes only)⁴</p>	<p>Compliance with Staff-Child Ratios</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____ + _____</p> <p>Staff-Child Ratio Posted Minimum staff child ratio is clearly posted</p>	<p>Compliance with Staff-Child Ratios</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____ + _____</p> <p>Staff-Child Ratio Posted</p>	<p>Compliance with Staff-Child Ratios</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____ + _____</p> <p>Staff-Child Ratio Posted</p>	<p>Compliance with Staff-Child Ratios</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____ + _____</p> <p>Staff-Child Ratio Posted</p>

¹ Unless federal or state law requires more stringent ratios or when determined to be appropriate considering student behavioral, health, or educational needs.

² A provider, without an assistant, who cares for children less than 18 months old, can have no more than four children less than six years old, and of these four children, can have no more than two children less than 18 months old.

³ Of these children, no more than four children can be less than 18 months old.

⁴ The 2:12 ratio applies to children over 18 months old. For children less than 18 months old, the ratio is one staff for four children.

Domain 3: Staff Qualifications & Ongoing Professional Development

Standard 3: Educator Qualifications

The educator has the **formal education and professional preparation** to work with children in his/her care.

Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
Licensing Compliance	Professional Development Plan The educator has a written individual professional development plan aligned with RI's Workforce Knowledge and Competencies	Professional Development Plan _____ + _____ Formal Education A CDA and 9 college credits in ECE/related field _____ OR _____ 12 college credits in ECE/related field	Professional Development Plan _____ + _____ Formal Education 12 college credits in ECE/related field _____ + _____ RI Early Learning and Development Standards (RIELDS) Training RIELDS Certificate relevant to this position (if serving preschoolers)	Professional Development Plan _____ + _____ Formal Education Associate's Degree/higher (60 college credits is accepted) and 24 college credits in ECE/related field _____ + _____ RI Early Learning and Development Standards (RIELDS) Training

Standard 4: Continuous Quality Improvement

The program **conducts a comprehensive self-assessment**, at least once a year, to assess compliance with regulations and standards and to determine its effectiveness in meeting the needs of the children and families it serves. The

program then uses this information to **create program goals** to continually improve quality and documents progress towards achieving these goals.

Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
<p>Licensing Compliance</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Quality Improvement Plan The program develops and implements an annual quality improvement plan that includes all BrightStars domains</p>	<p>Program Self-Assessment¹ The program administers a comprehensive self-assessment which includes at least 2 sources of evidence such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>monitoring report</i> • <i>child assessment information</i> • <i>family survey</i> • <i>professional development plan</i> • <i>other</i> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Quality Improvement Plan The program develops and implements an annual quality improvement plan that includes all BrightStars domains and is informed by multiple sources of evidence used in the program self-assessment</p>	<p>Program Self-Assessment The program administers a comprehensive self-assessment which must include FCCERS-R findings (if available) and at least 2 other sources of evidence such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>monitoring report</i> • <i>child assessment information</i> • <i>family survey</i> • <i>professional development plan</i> • <i>other</i> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Quality Improvement Plan</p>	<p>Program Self-Assessment The program administers a comprehensive self-assessment which must include FCCERS-R findings (if available) and at least 3 other sources of evidence such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>monitoring report</i> • <i>child assessment information</i> • <i>family survey</i> • <i>professional development plan</i> • <i>other</i> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Quality Improvement Plan</p>	<p>Program Self-Assessment The program administers a comprehensive self-assessment which must include FCCERS-R findings (if available), family survey results, and at least 3 other sources of evidence such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>monitoring report</i> • <i>child assessment information</i> • <i>professional development plan</i> • <i>other</i> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Quality Improvement Plan</p>

¹ At levels Two this criteria is under development and may be implemented at a later date.

Standard 5: Curriculum

The program **uses a curriculum or curriculum framework**, aligned to the RI Early Learning and Development Standards (RIELDS), for all age groups served, including infants and toddlers. Educators have **emotional connections** with children and respond appropriately to individual early

learning and development needs. Classroom schedules and routines **maximize time spent in early learning and development** activities. The program provides many **opportunities for children to learn and practice skills** in all domains of the RI Early Learning and Development Standards.

Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
Licensing Compliance	Licensing Compliance + Learning Environment ¹	Written Curriculum Curriculum aligned with the RIELDS + Learning Environment ¹	Written Curriculum Curriculum aligned with the RIELDS + Learning Environment ¹ + RIELDS Training ²	Written Curriculum Curriculum and curriculum framework aligned with the RIELDS + Learning Environment ¹ + RIELDS Training ²

¹This criteria is measured in Standard 1: Learning Environment
²This criteria is measured in Standard 3: Educator Qualifications

Standard 6: Child Assessment

The program **connects families to developmental screenings** for their children, and systematically and routinely **gathers information about each child** in order to meet the individual needs of children and provide differentiated learning experiences.

Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
<p>Licensing Compliance</p>	<p>Developmental Screening Info The program provides written information to families about developmental screenings available through health care settings, Early Intervention, and Child Outreach</p>	<p>Developmental Screening Info The program provides written information to families about developmental screenings available through health care settings, Early Intervention, and Child Outreach</p>	<p>Developmental Screening Info The program provides written information to families about developmental screenings available through health care settings, Early Intervention, and Child Outreach</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Child Assessment The program gathers information about each child using 2 or more methods (e.g., child observation, checklist, family surveys/interviews) to inform classroom instruction</p>	<p>Developmental Screening Info The program provides written information to families about developmental screenings available through health care settings, Early Intervention, and Child Outreach and collaborates with Child Outreach to provide on-site developmental screenings or provides families with specific dates and locations</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Child Assessment The program gathers information about each child using 3 or more methods (e.g., child observation, checklist, family surveys/interviews) to inform classroom instruction</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>The program uses valid and reliable assessment tools to inform curriculum planning</p>

Standard 7: Inclusive Classroom Practices

The program **supports the inclusion** of children with disabilities and developmental delays.

Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
Licensing Compliance	Licensing Compliance	<p>Written Program Philosophy The program supports children and families of all abilities, modifies the program, makes reasonable accommodations, and collaborates with key partners to support children with developmental delays and disabilities in inclusive/integrate classroom settings</p>	Written Program Philosophy	<p>Written Program Philosophy</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <hr/> <p>Staff Release Time Educators are available to collaborate with IEP/IFSP teams by attending meetings, participating in relevant training, and/or sharing information (e.g., child assessment results) to support children with developmental delays or disabilities and their families</p>

Standard 8: Family Communication and Involvement

The program **communicates regularly with families** by engaging in two-way communication with families, offering ongoing opportunities for family involvement, and **working to build partnerships with families**.

Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
Licensing Compliance	<p>Family Communication Program offers 2 or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly newsletter • Family meeting, social event, or workshop (four times/year) • Ideas and suggestions to support learning at home (four times/year) • Annual family survey • Support parents in transitioning children • Connect families with community services 	<p>Family Communication Program offers 2 or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly newsletter • Family meeting, social event, or workshop (four times/year) • Ideas and suggestions to support learning at home (four times/year) • Annual family survey • Support parents in transitioning children • Connect families with community services <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Family-Teacher Conference Offered two times/year</p>	<p>Family Communication Program offers 2 or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly newsletter • Family meeting, social event, or workshop (four times/year) • Ideas and suggestions to support learning at home (four times/year) • Support parents in transitioning children • Connect families with community services <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>Conducts an annual family survey</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Family-Teacher Conference</p>	<p>Family Communication Program offers 3 or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly newsletter • Family meeting, social event, or workshop (four times/year) • Ideas and suggestions to support learning at home (four times/year) • Support parents in transitioning children • Connect families with community services <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>Conducts an annual family survey</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Family-Teacher Conference</p>

Glossary

BrightStars Criteria: BrightStars criteria are specific, measurable benchmarks within a standard that programs must meet in order to receive a BrightStars rating. For example, “Compliance with DCYF Licensing Regulations” and “Family-Teacher Conference” are criteria.

BrightStars Domain: BrightStars standards are organized into 6 domains, or general areas of program quality. The 6 BrightStars domains are: 1) Health, Safety & Nutrition, 2) Enrollment & Staffing, 3) Staff Qualifications & Ongoing Professional Development, 4) Administration, 5) Early Learning & Development, and 6) Family Engagement.

BrightStars Standard: BrightStars program standards set specific goals for program quality. For example, “Educator Qualifications” is a program standard.

Child Development Associate (CDA): The CDA credential is a nationally-awarded certificate administered by the Council for Professional Recognition. A CDA can be obtained in infant/toddler, preschool, family child care, or home visiting. In order to receive a CDA credential, an individual must have 480 hours of experience working with children, 120 hours of formal training, and complete the CDA exam. www.cdacouncil.org

Child Outreach: Child Outreach is a universal developmental screening system designed to screen all children, aged three to five years old. Screening serves as a first step in the identification of children who might have developmental delays or disabilities and who could benefit from intervention. Child Outreach also serves as a resource to families, providing information about general development, the development of their child, opportunities for involvement in their child’s development and information regarding referrals to agencies and community programs. www.ride.ri.gov

Early Intervention: RI’s Early Intervention Program promotes the growth and development of infants and toddlers who have a developmental disability or delay in one or more areas. Developmental disabilities or delays can affect a child’s speech, physical ability, or social skills. Children referred to the Early Intervention Program receive a comprehensive developmental evaluation to determine if they are eligible. www.dhs.ri.gov

Early Childhood Education/Related Field (ECE/Related): Specialized coursework in Early Childhood Education or a related field is required. For a complete definition see the BrightStars application materials or visit www.BrightStars.org

FCCERS-R: *The Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale – Revised.* The FCCERS-R assesses process quality in family child care homes. Process quality is what children directly experience in their program that has a direct effect on their development, including the various interactions that go on in a classroom between staff and children and among the children themselves, and the interactions children have with the many materials and activities in the environment, as well as those features, such as space, schedule and materials that support these interactions. ersi.info

Individualized Education Program (IEP): For students with disabilities, this means that the student must be provided with a free, appropriate, public education designed to meet his or her needs and to provide the student with access and opportunity to attain those high standards. The foundation of the program for the student with a disability is the Individualized Education Program (IEP) developed by the IEP team. www.ride.ri.gov

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP): After a child is determined eligible for Early Intervention, the Early Intervention staff and the family design a plan called the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). www.dhs.ri.gov

RI Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF): DCYF licenses child care centers, family child care homes, and school-age programs to ensure the health, safety and well-being of children while in care outside of their home. www.dcyf.ri.gov

RI Early Learning and Development Standards: The RI Early Learning and Development Standards articulate shared expectations for what young children should know and be able to do. They provide a common language for measuring progress toward achieving specific learning goals. www.rields.com

RI Workforce Knowledge and Competencies: The Rhode Island Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators articulate the essential skills and knowledge that educators who work with young children in a classroom setting need to know, understand, and be able to do to promote young children’s healthy development and learning. www.ride.ri.gov

Special thanks to United Way of Rhode Island for providing the funding to design and launch BrightStars.



BrightStars Partners:

United Way of Rhode Island

CVS Caremark Charitable Trust

Rhode Island Department of Human Services



BrightStars Advisory Committee

Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families

Rhode Island Department of Education

Rhode Island Department of Health

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

BrightStars is managed by the Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children



For more information about BrightStars visit:
www.BrightStars.org

