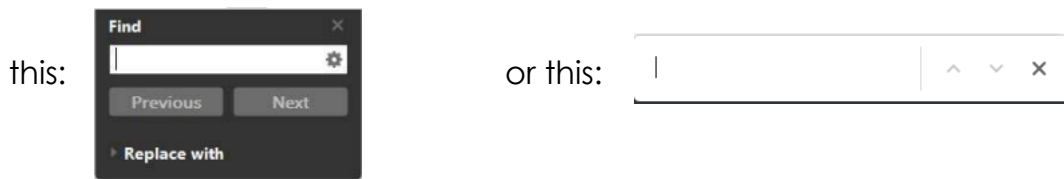


Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Head Start/Early Head Start Standards of Quality

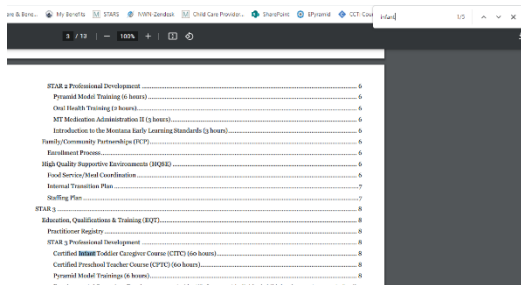
Welcome to the Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Center Standards. This document will guide licensed centers, serving children from birth-12 years of age, through STARS to Quality. Additional information can be found by visiting [STARS to Quality](#). For more detailed information, please refer to the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

Document Navigation

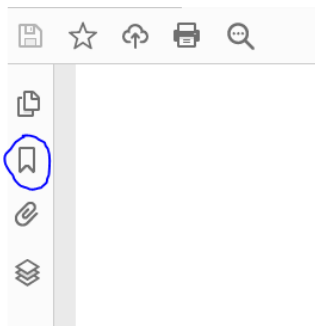
To navigate this document more easily, you may click “Ctrl F” and type a key word in the navigation bar. The navigation bar may look like



Keywords will be highlighted in the text. To see the next occurrence of the word, click the up and down arrows.



You may also select the bookmark icon on the left-hand navigation pane to view the document headings and subheadings.



Instructions & Key

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

Submitting for STARS to Quality


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

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STAR 1

Cost of Care

Program must determine Cost of Care by completing the Cost of Care tab in the STARS Budget and Cost of Care Calculator template.

Quality Improvement Action Plan (QIAP)

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

Education, Qualifications & Training (EQT)

STAR 1 Professional Development

STARS to Quality Essentials (2 hours)

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

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

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

Pyramid Model (2 hours)

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

Food Safety Course

Met by Head Start Performance Standard: 1302.47(b)(6)(ii)

Family/Community Partnerships (FCP)

High Needs

Met by Head Start Performance Standard: 1302.14(b)

High Quality Supportive Environments (HQSE)

Self-Assessment

HQSE 1: The Director will complete a self-assessment using the appropriate Environment Rating Scale(s) (ECERS-3; ITES-3) unless submitting for a STAR 3-5.

- ERS subscale scores below a 3.0 must be addressed in the QIAP*. Programs may choose one classroom per tool to conduct a self-assessment.

Leadership & Program Management (LPM)

Program Management

LPM 1: Programs must complete or update the Program Profile (Program Info and Classrooms Tabs) in the STARS Application Site. Programs must assign a minimum of one classroom in the Classrooms tab and assign a lead teacher to each created classroom. High Needs data must be accurate and up to date. This must be updated within 1 month of STAR level submission.

Self-Assessment

LPM 2: The Director or designated individual must complete a self-assessment using the Program Administration Scale (PAS) unless submitting for a STAR 3-5.

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

STAR 2

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

Education, Qualifications & Training (EQT)

Practitioner Registry

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

Individualized Professional Development Plan

Met by Head Start Performance Standard: 1302.31(a)

STAR 2 Professional Development

Pyramid Model (6 hours)

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

Oral Health Training

Met by Head Start Performance Standards: 1302.43 & 1302.42(c)(3)

MT Medication Administration II

Met by Head Start Performance Standards: 1302.47(b)(4)(c) & 1302.47(b)(7)(iv)

Introduction to the Montana Early Learning Standards (3 hours)

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

Family/Community Partnerships (FCP)

Enrollment Process

Met by Head Start Performance Standard: 1302.1

High Quality Supportive Environments (HQSE)

Food Service/Meal Coordination

Met by Head Start Performance Standard: 1302.31(3)(2) & 1302.44(a)

Internal Transition Plan

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

HQSE 3: Staffing Plan

Met by Head Start Performance Standard: 1302.90

STAR 3

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

Education, Qualifications & Training (EQT)

Practitioner Registry

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

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

STAR 3 Professional Development

Certified Infant Toddler Caregiver Course (CITC) (60 hours) and Certified Preschool Teacher Course (CPTC) (60 hours)

EQT 2: Director (DIR) and lead teachers (ECLT) must be enrolled in or have completed one of the 60-hour courses or its approved equivalent. Enrolled is defined as currently taking the course or beginning the course in the quarter following application for STAR 3.

Consideration for which course to take should be based on whether the program cares for or might care for infants and toddlers. If even one child is ages 0-2, the Certified Infant Toddler Caregiver Course is strongly recommended.

If a program is licensed for ages 2 and up, teachers may take the Certified Infant Toddler Caregiver Course to be prepared for varied developmental levels. If the Certified Infant Toddler Caregiver Course is not taken, the Certified Preschool Teacher Course must be completed.

It is available through the [CCR&R](#), UM-Western, Dawson Community College, Salish Kootenai College, or Flathead Valley Community College.

- CPTC can be waived if an individual is a Level 4 or higher on the Practitioner Registry. If an individual is enrolled in college courses or the MT Apprenticeship program that will result in being a Level 4 on the Registry within 2 years of application for STAR 3, this course can be waived.
- CPTC can be waived if the Introduction to Early Childhood college-level course has been successfully completed with the grade of a C or higher.

Pyramid Model Trainings (6 hours)

EQT 3: E-Pyramid Birth-5 Module 2 (6 hours): (Prerequisite Introduction and Montana Blended Module 1 or E-Pyramid Birth-5 Module 1) Director (DIR) and all teaching staff (ECLT, ECT) must complete this course. It is available through the Montana Early Childhood Project, Statewide Training Calendar.

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

EQT 4: Developmental Screening Course: Director (DIR) and all lead teaching staff (ECLT) must complete this course. It is available online at [ChildCareTraining.org](#).

Family/Community Partnerships (FCP)

Community Resources

Met by Head Start Performance Standards: 1302.33 & 1302.53

Transitions

Met by Head Start Performance Standards: 1302.70, 1302.71, & 1302.72

Family Engagement

Met by Head Start Performance Standards: 1302.34(a)(b) & 1302.50 (a)(b)

High Quality Supportive Environments (HQSE)

Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Assessment

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

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

Curriculum

Met by Head Start Performance Standards: 1302.32(a)(1)(i)(ii)(iii)

Observations

Met by Head Start Performance Standard: 1302.33(b)(1)(2)

Leadership & Program Management (LPM)

Program Administration Scale (PAS) Assessment

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

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

STAR 4

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

Education, Qualifications & Training (EQT)

Practitioner Registry

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

EQT 1: 25% of teaching staff (ECLT, ECAT) are current at Level 3 or higher AND 50% of teaching staff (ECLT, ECAT) are current at Level 2 or higher

STAR 4 Professional Development

Inclusion Course (15 hours)

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

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

Family/Community Partnerships (FCP)

High Needs

Met by Head Start Performance Standard: 1302.14(b)

Conferences

Met by Head Start Performance Standard: 1302.34(b)(3)

Home/School Communication

Met by Head Start Performance Standards: 1302.34(b)(2)(4) & 1302.50(b)(2)

Developmental Screening

FCP 4: The program must have a screening process which is regularly reviewed. The program must offer developmental screening using a valid and reliable tool at the chosen tool's recommended intervals for all children enrolled. Screening data must be entered into the Organization Profile, Program info tab.

High Quality Supportive Environments (HQSE)

Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Assessment

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

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

Leadership & Program Management (LPM)

Program Administration Scale (PAS) Assessment

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

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

STAR 5

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

Head Start Performance Standards

Early Head Start/Head Start Programs must meet Head Start Performance Standards and have qualified for continued funding under the Head Start Designated Renewal System (DRS).

Education, Qualifications & Training (EQT)

Practitioner Registry

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

STAR 5 Professional Development

Inclusion Course (30 hours)

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

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

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

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

High Quality Supportive Environments (HQSE)

Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Assessment

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

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

Leadership & Program Management (LPM)

Program Administration Scale (PAS) Assessment

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

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