

## YoungStar News Brief

On June 23rd 2010, the Wisconsin's Joint Committee on Finance made a unanimous, bi-partisan 16-0 decision to support a child care quality improvement rating system. This system titled YoungStar is one of the most progressive, child and family friendly decisions that WI lawmakers have made in recent history. YoungStar aims to systematically build, support, and monitor the quality of regulated child care in Wisconsin and make information about the quality of care available to parents. While the proposal is clear that all programs receiving public subsidy to care for children must participate in the quality rating and improvement system, opportunities for strengthening programs also exist on a voluntary basis for those child care businesses that do not have children/families receiving subsidy. Wisconsin taxpayers also have reason to celebrate. This is an effort that is a combination of family and child friendly policy and smart investment and good stewardship of public dollars to assure the quality of state funded child care.

Supporting Families Together Association, SFTA and Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, CCR&Rs celebrate this ground breaking decision to invest in a system that supports children and family and those who serve them. Children in Wisconsin deserve to be served by the most competent, nurturing care and education providers possible and parents deserve the peace of mind afforded by a rating informed decision.

So, what does this mean for early care and education professionals? Simply put, it means support in growing and sustaining high quality child care programs. SFTA and CCR&Rs realize that positive attitude, behavior, and practice change requires a deeper level of professional development best accomplished through coaching and technical assistance as well as training. Research about improving quality early care and education is clear. In order for a quality improvement rating systems to be effective it must not simply assess quality, there must also be a mechanism to intentionally build quality through research informed strategies. Intensive on-site, data-driven, individualized, targeted technical assistance/coaching that result in sustainable increases in quality include:

- delivery of technical assistance services in a professional manner by highly skilled, experienced, and collaborative professionals in a way that is the “right dose at the right time for the right duration”
- Previously and currently funded efforts from DCF to SFTA and CCR&Rs underscore the importance of this approach to achieve meaningful gains in the quality indicators that most impact children’s experiences and business practices
- an infusion of technical resources and materials to implement a quality improvement action plan
- development of a balanced quality improvement action plan that targets a sufficient number of indicators to create a “tipping point” to improve the quality in a early care and education setting but that is not so ambitious that family and group centers believe that change is unachievable
- builds linkages to additional resources and professional supports

For more information about YoungStar go to <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/details.htm> or call Family Connections, your local Child Care Resource & Referral Agency serving Sheboygan, Manitowoc, & Fond du Lac counties, to learn what you can do to gear up for quality.