

Keystone STARS Accreditation Application



Philosophy

The Keystone STARS program is Pennsylvania's QRIS which began in 2002. There are four quality levels from STAR 1 to STAR 4, each level building on the prior levels; this type of quality system is often described as a block system. Keystone STARS leverages and attempts to not duplicate indicators found in associated standards such as certification (licensing) or Environment Rating Scales (ERS).

In most QRIS, accreditation is included as a measure of quality for ratings. In some states, accreditation stands in for a rating in the quality system and no further evidence of quality is required. In other states accreditation is required to meet the highest level in the QRIS. In Pennsylvania, accepted accreditation programs include several STAR 4 Keystone STAR standards and also often incorporate additional quality standards. Keystone STARS requires accredited programs to demonstrate not only verification of their current accreditation status but show evidence that the program meets additional specific Keystone STAR standards.

Below are the additional standards from the Center Based (and School Age), and Family Keystone STARS Standards 2014/2015. For more information on the Keystone STARS Standards, refer to the link below.

http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_STARS

Keystone STARS Standards – Center

Director Development

1. Annually participate in 3 professional growth and development activities.
2. 27 annual clock hours of professional development based on the Professional Development based on the Big Ideas and IPDP, including the Director's section.

Staff Development

1. For each Teacher/Assistant Teacher, 24 annual clock hours of professional development based on IPDP15; each Aide 15 clock hours based on IPDP.
2. Annually, all staff involved in 2 professional growth and development activities.

Child Observation/Curriculum/Assessment

1. All demographic information, including child, program and staff information, is recorded timely and accuracy is maintained in the Early Learning Network (ELN).

Environment Rating

1. The average facility score of all sampled classrooms/age groups assessed by a STARS ERS assessor must be a 5.25.
2. Each individual sampled classroom/age group must have an ERS score no less than 4.25.
3. A written Improvement Plan is developed to address any ERS subscale score below a 4.25.

Community Resources/Family Involvement

1. A minimum of two family conferences are offered per year to discuss the child's progress and behavioral, social and physical needs. Authentic assessments of the child are shared with the family a minimum of two times per year.

Continuous Quality Improvement

1. Provider develops a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan using multiple sources.
2. A Strategic Plan is aligned with the program's mission statement and put in place.

Keystone STARS Standards – Family Child Care Homes

Primary Staff Person/Owner Operator Qualifications

1. Complete professional development on the Pennsylvania Core Knowledge Competencies for Early Childhood and School Age Professionals (CKC)/ Pennsylvania Big Ideas Framework (Big Ideas) and Individual Professional Development Plan for Early Childhood and School-Age Professionals (IPDP) and FCCERS.

**Note: PDR will remain in effect until June 30, 2015. Copies of the PDR will no longer be available for ordering or downloading as of July 1, 2014. During 7/1/14-7/1/15 will be the transition from PDR to using Big Ideas and IPDP.*

2. Complete professional development on Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) and the Learning Standards.
3. Complete Family Child Care Home STARS Orientation Part 2.

Primary Staff Person/Owner Operator Development

1. Annually participate in 2 professional growth and development activities.
2. 24 annual clock hours of professional development based on the Big Idea and IPDP.

Secondary Staff/Substitutes and Assistants Development

1. 12 annual clock hours of professional development based on the Big Ideas and IPDP, taken by each staff member.

Child Observation/Curriculum/Assessment

1. All demographic information, including child, program and staff information, is recorded timely and accuracy is maintained in the Early Learning Network (ELN).
2. Based on ongoing child observations, developmentally appropriate authentic assessments of the child are completed and reported electronically into an OCDEL approved assessment tool following the tool's specified timeframes.

Environment Rating

1. A FCCERS-R assessment by a STARS ERS assessor must average a score of 5.25.
2. A written Improvement Plan is developed to address any ERS subscale score below a 4.25.

Continuous Quality Improvement

1. Provider develops a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan using multiple sources.

The Keystone STARS program leverages high quality accreditation systems by using the supports, monitoring and tools provided in those systems to assist programs in Pennsylvania in reaching higher levels of comprehensive quality.

Accreditation Committee

The accreditation committee's review panel consists of a representative from Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), a representative from the PA Key, and a third member from an organization (such as higher education, a Regional Key, or a community organization) who has substantive expertise in early childhood education and quality improvement. The committee's role is to review applications and make recommendations to OCDEL within 60 days of receipt of an application. OCDEL's

deputy secretary will review the recommendations of the committee and will make the final decision and transmit this, in writing, to the applicant.

Criteria

All accrediting institutions applying to be a Recognized Accrediting Organization under the OCDEL Keystone STARS program must satisfactorily meet all of the criteria listed below. Applications must describe how they meet the criteria listed below and submit supporting documentation:

Criteria I: Fiscal and Administrative Capability for Administering an Accrediting Process (5 pages maximum)

- A. Demonstrated fiscal and administrative capability
Describe in sufficient detail the organizational capacity for administering an accreditation program (support documents may be included such as the most recent audit or annual financial report, current operating budget, organizational chart, staff resources, job descriptions, etc.) *Submit documents as an appendix.*
- B. A nationally established program
A nationally established accreditation program must be established for at least 3 years and oversee accredited program in multiple states. Document how long the program has been in existence, the number of accreditation visits conducted and the number of currently accredited programs nationally and in Pennsylvania.
- C. Verifiable, public listing of accredited programs
Indicate how and where the accrediting body maintains a verifiable, current, public listing of accredited programs.

Criteria II: Administrative Policies and System Evaluation Procedures (10 pages maximum)

Describe the administrative policies and system evaluation capacity of the administering agency including the following components:

- A. Administrative Policies
Administrative policies and system evaluation procedures are in place to avoid conflicts of interest and address issues such as deferred status, withdrawal of accreditation, appeal processes, and complaints.
- B. Validation/Assessment
Describe the academic qualifications and formal training requirements of the applicant's staff by the accrediting group.
- C. Continuous Improvement/Quality Assurance
Peer-reviewers, training procedures, and instruments used in the process are evaluated for reliability and validity. Describe process and frequency.

Criteria III: Accreditation Process (15 pages maximum)

Describe the accreditation process including the following components:

A. Self-Evaluation

Accreditation program has a comprehensive self-evaluation that includes parents, staff, and program administrators, and that promotes program improvement. Describe.

B. On-site program review

Describe the review process (program and administrative) including on-site reviews of programs applying for accreditation.

C. Decision process

Accreditation decision made by experts in the field after a review of all documentation, and based on boundaries and criteria established by the organization for the guidance of these experts.

D. Award period

Describe the length of the award period and the process for interim accountability to ensure maintenance of high quality standards. Be sure to include frequency of interim program reports, content of the reports, process for turnover, etc.

Criteria IV: Institution's Standards for Early Learning Programs or School-Age/Afterschool Programs

A. Crosswalk of accreditation standards

Provide a crosswalk of the accreditation standards with applicable Keystone STARS Standards **on the chart provided in Attachment A**. The crosswalk demonstrates how the accreditation standards address the categories defined in Keystone STARS. Also, illustrate how the accreditation standards might address additional areas. Highlight in yellow areas where the accreditation standard does not meet the Keystone STARS standard or write Not Covered and highlight in yellow where the accreditation program does not have a similar standard. At the bottom of the chart, list areas covered in the accreditation which does not have a similar Keystone STAR standard. Utilize the Family or Center (includes school-age) standards as a reference guide.

- See Attachment A: *Accreditation Crosswalk with Keystone STARS Standards*

B. Research base

Program standards must be evidence-based and periodically updated. Provide information about the research basis for the accreditation standards, the review cycle of the standards and the date of the latest accreditation standards update. Also provide citations and summary of recently published research on the accreditation.

C. Validation

All accrediting institutions applying to be a Recognized Accrediting Organization under the OCDEL Keystone STARS program must submit a *validation study research brief*. This brief must use empirical evidence to validate the accreditation using a recognized benchmark of program quality, such as Keystone STAR level,

other accreditation system, ERS assessment scores, CLASS assessment scores, or any of the specific Keystone STAR standards. Research Base Validation must be met in order for institution to be recognized as an accrediting agency by Keystone STARS.

- At a minimum, the research should present quantitative evidence that accreditation measures are strongly related to the approved criterion measures. Describe the methods, analysis, and findings of the research.
- Depending on availability of data, research might include statistical correlations, odds ratios, or predictive models to establish a robust picture of the relationships being examined.
- In as much as possible, the sample should be representative of current PA children and providers. The accreditation and data collection process must be appropriately blinded to the research objectives. *While the research methodology is not prescribed, it must be approved* and should contain:
 - Recently published research on the accreditation
 - Context of the study as background: characteristics of providers (provider type, center size, etc), blind study, etc.
 - Narrative regarding data collection methodologies and protocols
 - Research findings

For Questions, contact:

OCDEL- Bureau of Early Learning Services

RA-OCDEarlyLearning@pa.gov

Submit Accreditation Packet to:
Tracey Campanini, Bureau Director
OCDEL - Bureau of Early Learning Services
333 Market Street
Harristown II, 6th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126

**Keystone STARS
Accreditation Application**

Cover Sheet

Include the following information as a cover sheet to the application for accreditation recognition in Keystone STARS.

Application Information

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Name of Accrediting Program	Phone Number		
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Name of Association Submitting Application			
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Address	City	State	Zip
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Name of Person Submitting Application	Title	Date	

Contact Information: If different from above, indicate who should be contact regarding any follow-up questions.			
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Name of Contact Person	Email	Phone Number	
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Address	City	State	Zip

Area of Specialization: Please select all that apply	
<input type="checkbox"/> Facility based Birth – 5 yrs	<input type="checkbox"/> School based K-12
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Child Care Home	<input type="checkbox"/> Afterschool/School-age
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	