

ANNOUNCEMENT

Early Learning Services –

KS-18 #02

Issue Date: June 29, 2018
Effective Date: July 1, 2018
Sunset Date: Ongoing

SUBJECT: Keystone STARS Performance Standards and Program Manual

TO: Early Learning Resource Center Directors and Managers

FROM:

Suzann L. Morris, MPA
Deputy Secretary, Office of Child Development & Early Learning



PURPOSE:

The purpose of this announcement is to inform Early Learning Resource Centers of the updated Keystone STARS Performance Standards, Program Manual and corresponding resource documents. Attached to this announcement are the following documents:

- NEW: 1) Keystone STARS Performance Standards effective July 1, 2018
- NEW: 2) Keystone STARS Program Manual effective July 1, 2018
- UPDATED: 3) Resources to Support Achievement of Quality Standards
- UPDATED: 4) Suggested Measurement, Evidence and Documentation
- UPDATED: 5) Finding an Accredited Program Resources
- UPDATED: 6) National, State and Local Resources
- UPDATED: 7) Professional Development and Staff Grid
- UPDATED: 8) Minimum Evidence Template
- UPDATED: 9) Child - Confidential Records Sign off
- UPDATED: 10) Staff – Confidential Records Sign Off
- UPDATED: 11) Leadership and Management – Confidential Records Sign off
- UPDATED: 12) 2018/2019 STARS Standards Spreadsheets for Designation

This announcement becomes effective July 1, 2018 and will replace in their entirety:

- ELS-KS-17 #07 Keystone STARS Performance Standards and Program Manual on 9/30/2018
- PC-ELS-KS-17 #07 Keystone STARS Performance Standards and Program Manual
- PC #2 ELS-KS-17 #07 Keystone STARS Performance Standards and Program Manual

BACKGROUND:

On July 1, 2017, the revised Keystone STARS Performance Standards were released. During the 17/18 Fiscal Year, Early Child Care and Education programs had the

opportunity to become familiar with the revised STAR Standards during a “Hold Harmless” Year. Also during FY 17/18, OCDEL held numerous STARS Stakeholder engagement events, including STARS Think Tank, in order to capture the field’s recommendations for further refining the Performance Standards.

Following the analysis of the field’s recommendations and data collection on STAR movement in FY 2017/2018, the decision was made to further streamline the Keystone STARS Performance Standards. This update included:

- removing Quality Indicators which were covered in Certification Regulations
- combining similar Quality Indicators which appeared to be redundant in language
- further clarifying how Quality Indicators could be applied to Family Child Care and School Age Programs
- dividing some Quality Indicators into separate Quality Indicators in order to capture separate concepts
- clarifying how Bonus Point categories can be used
- updating Alternate Pathways
- introducing Staff Qualification and Professional Development long-range goals and benchmarks

DISCUSSION:

The updated Keystone STARS performance standards continue to ensure that Pennsylvania’s most vulnerable children are receiving quality early care and education. In addition, the updated standards are further streamlined to focus on elements that most impact quality services for children and families. As a result, the number of quality indicators has been further reduced.

A. Implementation Timeline

- The updated Keystone STARS standards become effective July 1, 2018.
- Programs who used the Keystone STARS Performance Standards which were effective 7/1/2017 to move up or renew their STAR Designations will not be required to re-designate using the update STARS Standards until their current designation expires or they seek to move up in STAR levels.
- During the first quarter of FY 2018/2019, programs may choose which set of standards to use (STARS Standards FY 17/18 or STARS Standards FY 18/19) when designating
- After 10/1/2018, all programs will be required to use the FY 18/19 STARS Standards

B. Additional Information/Resources

- The attached resource documents were developed to assist in the designation process and in identifying and supporting measures of quality. As providers and Early Learning Resource Centers work with the updated standards, these documents will be updated as new resources and sources of evidence emerge through the process. The 2018/2019 STARS Standards Spreadsheets for Designation are included for use in the Designation Process until the SMART Software is ready for use. In addition, the STARS Designation Manual is being updated and will be released in early FY 2018/2019.

NEXT STEPS:

1. Early Learning Resource Centers will share this information immediately with all appropriate staff.
2. OCDEL will post documents for providers' use to the PA Key website, www.pakeys.org and to the ELRC Portal www.elrcportal.dhs.pa.gov within five (5) business days after the distribution of this announcement to the Early Learning Resource Centers.
3. Comments and questions regarding this announcement should be emailed to RA-OCDEarlyLearning@pa.gov .

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