

Start Up Technical Assistance Peer Mentoring Helps Increase Quality Child Care!

Are you or someone you know providing childcare services in an identified rural county? Interested in getting help to become a DHS Certified Childcare provider and Keystone STARS provider? Keystone STARS can help YOU!

In effort to create high quality child care options, potential Keystone STARS providers have the option to join **Start Up Technical Assistance Peer Mentoring** to lay the foundation of a high-quality child care facility.

As part of the Race to the Top (RTT)-Early Learning Challenge Grant, Keystone STARS is focusing recruitment efforts in 33 counties¹ that are identified as *Moderate-High Risk* or *High Risk*, as defined in the 2012/2013 Reach and Risk Report. These counties are considered *Moderate-High Risk* or *High Risk* because the identified county lacks high quality child care options.

Receive personal one-on-one help and get the support you need to start your path to Keystone STARS!

Mentees receive one-on-one provider peer support such as:

- PD Registry support
- Business practices
- Child care certification process
- Zoning in their local community
- Completing the STARS Enrollment packet
- And more based on the new provider's needs!

For how you can become involved, please contact your [Regional Key](#) for more information.

After months of working alongside Emily of Fayette County, Emily will be moving to a STAR 1 level very soon. Emily's full Certificate of Compliance was approved in February. The Southwest Regional Key is very excited to see this motivated provider achieve success!

¹ 2012/2013 Reach and Risk Report- RTT Targeted Rural Recruitment Counties:

High-Risk Counties in Rural Pennsylvania: *Bradford, Fayette, Greene, Northumberland, Potter, Warren and Venango*

Moderate-High-Risk Counties in Rural Pennsylvania: *Armstrong, Blair, Cambria, Cameron, Carbon, Clarion, Clearfield, Clinton, Crawford, Forest, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Indiana, Jefferson, Lawrence, Lycoming, McKean, Mercer, Mifflin, Perry, Schuylkill, Somerset, Sullivan, Susquehanna, and Tioga.*

Success stories from mentees enrolled in Start Up Technical Assistance Peer Mentoring

Indiana County

The owner of Lola's Early Care and Education saw a need for quality early childhood care in her community and decided to step up and help. She also recruited others passionate about providing the best possible environment for children to make this happen. Megan was hired as the executive director and she was adamant from day one that if she was going to bring her children there and take responsibility for the outcomes of the children attending the facility that it had to be a STARS participating facility. She took on the project and enrolled in Start Up Technical Assistance Peer Mentoring as soon as the building was built. In less than one year's time Lola's has achieved their full Certificate of Compliance and moved to STAR 1, then STAR 2 and is now working on STAR 3! Their enrollment is growing and they continue to improve their facility.

Crawford County

In Crawford County, eight Family and Community Christian Association sites were committed to maintaining their child care for the children in their community. Due to funding issues, they needed to restructure their programs and begin from scratch for each of their sites. In less than a year they have joined Start Up Technical Assistance Peer Mentoring, met all requirements necessary to receive their Certificates of Compliance, and are on track to move to STAR 3 or 4 before the end of June. These sites serve over 100 children that would need to find other care / quality pre-school if it were not for the continued commitment of this program. Each of their directors have stepped up and completed every task that was asked of them and even attended every learning community meeting this fiscal year. They have demonstrated their desire to learn all they can about DHS Childcare Certification, Keystone STARS and to create the best possible program they can for the families they serve.

When Susan in Blair County learned the child care center where she worked for years was going to close, she was worried what would happen to the children from her community who may not have another facility to attend. She stepped up and opened her home. She enrolled in Start Up Technical Assistance Peer Mentoring and asked what she would need to do to help at least some of these families. She has acquired her provisional DHS Certificate of Compliance and as soon as she receives her full license, she will be ready to move to STAR 1. She is already looking ahead to what she will need to do to move to STAR 2 and is even considering moving from family to group so she can serve more families in need.

Susquehanna County

After a child care center closed in Audra's area of Susquehanna County, she decided to open her own center to continue giving children in her community a safe and quality program to attend. Since Audra is not as familiar with opening a child care center, the Northeast Key Race to the Top Specialist has been working hand in hand with her to help her complete the certification process and get her ready for her initial inspection. Audra is dedicated to making her space as inviting for children and staff as possible. Audra's completed her initial inspection and she is currently working on completing her STARS

Standards to be able to designate as quickly as possible upon obtaining her full Certificate of Compliance.

Philadelphia County

Three ESCALERAS Spanish-speaking cohort participants were inspected in late December 2016 and received OCDEL initial provisional certification as family child care homes. The ESCALERAS support team is in the process of scheduling a group meeting with these newly licensed participants to enroll them in Keystone STARS during their six-month initial provisional certification period and assist them in moving up to STAR 1 upon receipt of their full regular certificate of compliance. The Philadelphia Freedom Valley YMCA has committed to providing learning materials and other resources to each of these newly licensed family child care providers once they have enrolled in STARS and through their achievement of STAR 1.