Demonstrating Quality:

Pennsylvania Keystone STARS 2010 Program Report

pennsylvania
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
AND EARLY LEARNING

Front Matters

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Overview

A strong research base has convinced parents and policymakers that high quality early childhood programs are important for young children's optimal development. In an effort to increase access to high quality programs, Pennsylvania has implemented Keystone STARS (Standards, Training/Professional Development, Assistance, Resources, and Support) for programs serving young children. At its core, this program is designed to showcase the quality of individual programs, so that parents can select their child's provider from among a range of high quality choices; and to encourage programs to work on developing their own quality continuously to improve child outcomes.

Keystone STARS is a quality rating and improvement system in which early learning programs and practitioners are encouraged and supported to meet specific, evidence-based performance standards. Early learning and care providers that participate earn a quality rating, ranging from a STAR 1 to a STAR 4. At each level, programs must meet specific performance standards in four key areas: staff education, learning environment, leadership/management, and family/community partnerships. Higher STAR levels are designated for providers meeting more rigorous standards for quality. A Keystone STARS designation informs parents that their children are in a developmentally appropriate, respectful environment in which they are learning new things every day to support their current and future successes in school and in life.

Early care and education providers participating in Keystone STARS receive technical assistance and support to meet the performance standards. Pennsylvania, because of the development of the Keystone STARS program, is a nationally recognized leader in building a system to support quality in child care settings.

Keystone STARS is part of the Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality (Keys to Quality), which brings together numerous organizations and programs to offer professional development, technical assistance, as well as financial supports in a coordinated and systematic service delivery model critical to OCDEL services programs. PA Keys to Quality builds bridges across the Departments of Education and Public Welfare to align funding and approach, streamline implementation, and maximize resources. The system is further blended with other OCDEL programs, such as Early Intervention and family support programs, creating one vision for all early learning programs, practitioners, children, and families.

A vital part of Pennsylvania's early learning system, Keystone STARS works with Head Start and child care and school-age programs certified by the Department of Public Welfare. In 2009-10 there were approximately 265,000 children in Pennsylvania who attended an early care and education program. Of that number, 5,000 early care and education programs serving approximately 170,000 children from birth to age 12 were

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participating in Keystone STARS. Keystone STARS continues to drive quality improvement of child care, impacting Pennsylvania children of all income levels.

Keystone STARS continues to evolve in Pennsylvania as elements of the early learning system are informed by research, emerging best practice, and progress in systems development. Keystone STARS has demonstrated results by continuing to drive quality improvement in child care and provide more quality early learning opportunities for children. Child outcomes and measures of program quality demonstrate the benefit to participating providers and the children they serve, who enter Kindergarten better prepared to succeed. A critical success indicator for Keystone STARS is the feedback from parents; ninety-six percent of parents whose children attend STAR 3 or 4 programs report that they are pleased with their child's STARS program.

Quality care environments provide a stimulating, loving atmosphere in which children thrive mentally, socially, emotionally and physically. The Performance Standards for Keystone STARS quality-rated child care providers are guided by the principle that quality early learning programs are the foundation for children's success, and investment in the early care and education of Pennsylvania's children is an investment in the future.

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The Keystone STARS Program Report

The 2010 Keystone STARS Program Report presents a view into the dynamic landscape of Pennsylvania's early childhood quality rating and improvement system. This report is intended to be an exhaustive survey of the many components of the system, with an emphasis on data.

By participating in Keystone STARS, early and school-age care and education providers embark on a path of continuous quality improvement to assure that children are ready for school and reach their potential. Keystone STARS continues to evolve in Pennsylvania as elements of the early learning system are informed by research, emerging best practice, and progress in systems development. Keystone STARS has demonstrated results by continuing to drive quality improvement in child care and provide more quality early learning opportunities for children.

Development of Keystone STARS

The Keystone STARS program began in 2002 under Governor Mark S. Schweiker as a remedy for what studies in Pennsylvania indicated was a trend of declining quality in child care facilities in the late 1990's[1].

Keystone STARS is a voluntary, systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early and school-age care and education programs. Quality ratings are awarded to early and school-age care and education programs that meet a set of defined program standards. Keystone STARS includes four STAR levels that a child care provider can achieve as it meets the various quality standards established for each level.

This program, which is known as a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), provides an opportunity for Pennsylvania to increase the quality of care for children; increase parents' understanding and demand for higher quality care; and increase professional development of child care workforce. Keystone STARS has also been Pennsylvania's strategy for aligning components of the early and school-age care and education system for increased school readiness and success. Please refer to Appendix A of this document for further detail on national perspectives on quality rating and improvement systems.

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[1] "2002 Early Childhood Quality Study", Fiene, Greenberg, Bergsten, Carl, Fegley, & Gibbons (2002). The Pennsylvania early childhood quality settings study, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Governor's Task Force on Early Care and Education.

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Keystone STARS promotes parent choice as the ultimate driver of child care quality improvement. Instead of driving quality improvement through minimal licensing requirements, Pennsylvania's approach has been to invest in a QRIS that is voluntary for providers. Long term sustainability of continuous quality improvements in child care is based on a system of informed consumers and entrepreneurial suppliers. As parents become informed consumers and choose high quality, the supply of higher quality care has risen to meet demand. Through information and financial supports to parents and providers, Keystone STARS has tapped the market forces to spur both supply and demand of higher quality care.

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) in Pennsylvania manages the Keystone STARS program. OCDEL was established in 2007 as a joint initiative between the Departments of Education and Public Welfare. OCDEL promotes opportunities for all Pennsylvania children and families by building systems and providing supports that help ensure access to high quality child and family services. OCDEL established the Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality (also known as Keys to Quality) as a quality improvement system in which all early learning programs and practitioners are encouraged and supported to improve child outcomes.

To implement Keys to Quality, the Pennsylvania Key has been established in Harrisburg to coordinate state-wide programming and provides support for the deeper content work in the Regional Keys. Regional Keys are geographically and strategically located in six regions across the commonwealth to provide general oversight and leadership for the Keys to Quality system. Please refer to Appendix B for detailed roles and responsibilities of each partner of the Keys to Quality.

In the beginning, Keystone STARS was managed by four Child Care Resource Developers (CCRD) Grantees with the focus mainly on providing case management and incentive grants to child care providers but, in 2005, was transformed into the more comprehensive system of PA Early Learning Keys to Quality. The current Keystone STARS program transferred the management of the Keystone STARS program from the CCRDs to six Regional Keys, also grantees of OCDEL. In order to support the Regional Keys, the PA Key (grantee) was formed as a state-wide convener and provider of primary policy and programmatic support to the work of the Regional Keys.

The vision for Keys to Quality is that all Pennsylvania families have access to a continuum of high-quality early care and education, and school-age child care opportunities for their children that foster success in school and in life.

The mission of Keys to Quality is to maintain a quality improvement system in which all early learning programs and practitioners are encouraged and supported to improve child outcomes. Improvements in programming are designed to increase the capacity to

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support children's learning and development; increase educational attainment among staff/practitioners; and enhance professional skills and competencies of staff in support of children's learning and development.

Guiding Principles:
1. High quality benefits for children
2. Individually and culturally appropriate high expectations for children's learning
3. Leadership
4. State and regional coordination
5. Commitment to high quality content
6. All practitioners participate in quality improvement activities
7. Focus on credentials and professionalism
8. Systems coordination, integration, and accountability
9. Compensation, funding, and financing
10. Public, stakeholder, and community engagement

Pennsylvania's systems model influenced the development of Keys to Quality components.

The framework of the Regional Keys, PA Key, and OCDEL working together has created a strong foundation for the support of other Pennsylvania initiatives which improve the quality of early care and education. These include PA Pre-K Counts, Head Start State Supplemental, Keystone Babies, and Early Head Start. The cross sector implementation of Pennsylvania's high quality pre-Kindergarten program, PA Pre-K Counts, began by requiring child care providers to maintain at least a STAR 2. PA Pre-K Counts now requires providers to maintain at least a STAR 3 to participate. Keystone Babies and the

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State Early Head Start programs also require child care providers to maintain a STAR 3 or higher. Other grant and funding opportunities such as Pennsylvania Children's Trust Fund often require a STAR level criterion. Keystone STARS increases accountability for state resources by providing a recognized benchmark of quality that serves several other programs as their minimum standard for funding eligibility.

Keystone STARS also fosters accountability for subsidized child care to low income, working parents. Referrals through the Child Care Works subsidy system prioritize higher STAR level programs, and Resource and Referral (R&R) staff talk with parents, describing Keystone STARS as an indicator of quality in early learning programs. One of the benefits for child care providers participating in Keystone STARS is that the reimbursement rate for subsidized children is higher for STAR 2 programs and is further enhanced at STAR 3 and STAR 4. Higher reimbursement rates are an incentive for child care providers to continue to participate in Keystone STARS.

Keystone STARS has also served as a locus of early childhood community development efforts. School Districts, Head Start programs, Keystone STARS providers and others have formed local partnerships within communities as they work with regional specialists on local activities promoting quality in early care and education, such as professional development, conferences, and shared transition efforts.

The program also benefits from improved alignment and implementation of the Standards Aligned Systems (SAS) by the Pennsylvania Department of Education: www.pdesas.org. The Keystone STARS Performance Standards have evolved from the original published standards developed in 2002. The first set of standards reflected what was known for quality standards at the time of implementation. Release of the Early Learning Standards, Early Learning Network, and the use of the Work Sampling/Ounce Scale Systems for recording and tracking child outcomes all influenced Keystone STARS standard updates.

Keystone STARS continues to evolve in Pennsylvania as elements of the early learning system are informed by research, emerging best practice, and progress in systems development. Please refer to Appendix G for a History of Developments in Keystone STARS.

Previous Evaluations

Although research has firmly linked program quality indicators to child outcomes, there is little clear national evidence to date to causally link the implementation of evolving QRIS programs to improved program quality—and even less to link such changes to improved child outcomes. The range of factors involved in providing early childhood programs, and the complexity of different provider systems make it challenging to

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measure direct effects of QRIS support on children—although the impact of high quality overall is understood to be strong.[2]

Evaluation studies have been done in states where a QRIS has been in place for some time. These studies have looked at fidelity of implementation, the impact of QRIS on individual program quality, and now will begin to look at impact on child outcomes as well.[3]

Prior evaluations of Keystone STARS were conducted in October 2003[4], December 2004[5], and December 2006[6] by the University of Pittsburgh's Office of Child Development. These evaluations marked the first, second, and fourth year of Keystone STARS and reported on the program's implementation, performance, progression, and future. At the time of analysis in 2004, only 1,271 providers were participating in STARS, accounting for 14% of all regulated providers in Pennsylvania. In order to improve and expand the STARS program, the Year One and Year Two evaluation reports collected feedback from providers and partners on what aspects needed to be addressed. Areas in need of improvement that were identified by Keystone STARS providers included lack of outreach; difficulties with the application process; barriers to obtaining higher education for staff and caregivers; and unclear standards for Center, Family, and Group facilities. The evaluations then made recommendations for improving the program's overall effectiveness. These included:

1. Increased outreach to parents and the community.
2. Better information concerning applications, grants, and awards.
3. More convenience in obtaining higher education.
4. Assistance in identifying educational and training needs for staff and caregivers.
5. Affordable education for staff, and reducing staff turnover.
6. Unique STARS standards for Family and Group Child Care.

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[2] Buettner, C.K., & Andrews, D.W. (2009.) United States Child Care Policy and Systems of Care: The Emerging Role of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems. *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy,* Vol.3, No.1, 47.

[3] Child Trends. (2010.) Quality Rating and Improvement Systems for Early Care and Education. *Early Childhood Highlights.* Vol.1, Issue 1, May 10, 2.

[4] Barnard, W., Farber, A.E., Townsend, M.Z., & Zajac, J. (2003) Keystone STARS Year 1 Evaluation Report, Pittsburgh Office of Child Development, University of Pittsburgh.

[5] Barnard, W., DeGel, J., Farber, A.E., Townsend, M.Z., & Zajac, J. (2004) Keystone STARS Year 2 Evaluation Report, Pittsburgh, PA: Office of Child Development, University of Pittsburgh.

[6] Barnard, Etheridge-Smith, Fiene, & Swanson (2006). Evaluation of Pennsylvania's Keystone STARS Quality Rating System in Child Care Settings, Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development.

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Each of these recommendations formed the basis for system improvements and by the time of the third report in 2006, evaluators found that Keystone STARS was a reliable indicator of quality, and that it drove quality improvement in child care settings.

Since its implementation in 2002, the Keystone STARS program has not only made every effort to improve the quality of child care settings in Pennsylvania, but has also endeavored to improve its own functionality and effectiveness. Through outside evaluations and surveys of providers, partners, and parents, the STARS program has taken action to address the concerns that have been raised over the years. The following enhancements to Keystone STARS are responses to such concerns. Results from the 2008 provider survey demonstrate increased satisfaction with the application process, grants and awards, and accessing Professional Development for staff.

Increased Outreach to Parents and the Community
In the early stages of Keystone STARS, providers and partners were concerned that the program was not doing enough to reach out to parents. In response, OCDEL has increased parent awareness through informative websites such as the Pennsylvania's Promise for Children Campaign, the Child Care Information Services (CCIS), and the PA Key, which all describe the goals and functions of STARS and assist parents in finding high quality child care centers in their area. Outreach to parents and the community is also addressed through the formation of Community Engagement Groups (CEGs) which bring together early childhood programs, parents, school districts, and child-serving organizations to assess which quality early learning programs are currently available in the community and to develop ways to encourage quality early learning. CEGs, along with Regional Leadership Councils and the STARS Advisory Council, are responsible for interacting with stakeholders in the planning and dissemination of information to parents and the community.

Since January 2008, OCDEL has benefited from a full-time Special Assistant whose role is to focus on issues related to family engagement. The Special Assistant participates in the development and review of policy, procedures, and OCDEL communications to assure that OCDEL is supportive of families in their role as primary caregivers and teachers, and promotes partnerships between families and professionals. In addition, the Special Assistant coordinates the OCDEL Family Survey initiative and provides staff support and facilitation to the OCDEL Parent Advisory Council.

Better Information Concerning Applications, Grants, and Awards
Providers within Keystone STARS cited initial difficulties with the grant application process, stating that grant applications were difficult to understand and complete and that they were unsure about application deadlines. To improve providers' understanding of the application process, the Regional Keys have developed STARS Orientation trainings-- on-site STARS recruitment sessions in which enrollment

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applications are reviewed and completed. Providers interested in applying for Keystone STARS can consult the PA Key website for Eligibility Requirements; Grants and Award information; calendars; and other resources. In a 2008 Keystone STARS Survey of providers who had completed the application process, 80% of respondents rated the application "Somewhat Easy" to "Very Easy" to understand and complete. Additionally, providers acknowledged an improvement in the process for obtaining support grants and merit awards. Of the more than 200 providers receiving an Award or Grant in 2008, more than 75% of them rated the process as "Very Easy" or "Somewhat Easy."

More Convenience in Obtaining Higher Education
With increased emphasis on teacher quality of child care staff, providers felt that there were too many obstacles to obtaining higher education. Practitioners felt that they did not have enough time to attend Professional Development training or classes in order to obtain a higher degree. To meet the needs of practitioners, Professional Development instructors are now providing more workshop events in the evenings and on weekends. There are even online options for many types of Professional Development opportunities to attain degrees online. Regional Keys now have the capacity to offer Act 48 and CEU hours for workshop events. Practitioners also have the option of pursuing a CDA (Child Development Associate) and Director or School Age Credential, which translate into college credits. More resources are available for practitioners to pursue additional credit bearing courses at Pennsylvania colleges and universities through expanded Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) scholarship program, on-line coursework, and articulation agreements between two and four year institutions. The Gate Openers Project, coordinated by the PA Key, is currently working to identify additional barriers that early child care education practitioners might face when pursuing college credit.

Assistance in Identifying Educational and Professional Development Needs of Practitioners
Many Keystone STARS practitioners were unsure of what type of education they needed and how to locate the appropriate training. Professional Development needs are now assessed through individuals completing the Professional Development Record (PDR). Information on the PDR is compiled on the Facility Professional Development Plan which Regional Keys use to create the appropriate regional Professional Development opportunities. The PA Key facilitates the development of Professional Development modules based on the educational and training needs of practitioners as determined by these plans. New modules include content related to inclusive practices, infant/toddler care and learning, social emotional needs of children, business practices, and similar topics. Professional Development opportunities are aligned with increased STAR level attainment. Furthermore, the Regional Keys and providers can use Action Plans and the Career Lattice to guide the educational pursuits of practitioners. Regional Leadership teams meet on a regular basis to determine gaps and strategize solutions.

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Affordable Education for Practitioners and Reducing Staff Turnover

The cost of training and education was another concern for practitioners and providers. As a result, there has been an increase in funding for both T.E.A.C.H. scholarships and vouchers for payment of course work. Professional Development workshops are available throughout the commonwealth at little cost to practitioners. The Regional Keys offer weekend professional development conferences at little or no cost to participants. The commonwealth also provides financial support to the annual Early Childhood Education (ECE) Summit and Higher Ed Summit, as well as full support to the STARS Leadership Conference. Child care facilities are also permitted to use Merit Awards to offer scholarships to staff members. Education and Retention Awards (ERA), bonuses, and salary supplemental funds, in addition to Professional Development and Technical Assistance opportunities, are designed to aid with reducing staff turnover.

Unique STARS Standards for Family and Group Child Care

In 2003, providers desired clarity on the Keystone STARS standards for Family and Group child care facilities. Keystone STARS has since developed unique standards for Centers, Families, and Group facilities. Recognizing that Continuous Quality Improvement is applicable on a large scale, the commonwealth began researching best practices in early care and education, assessment, other QRIS systems, and standards alignment in relation to Keystone STARS. In 2008-2009, OCDEL, in co-ordination with STARS Advisory council members, Regional Key staff, members of the higher education community, and early childhood education stakeholders reviewed, revised, and in July 2009 reissued the Keystone STARS Center Standards. Group and Family Standards revisions followed relying upon the same successful process and in July 2010.

Performance Standards for Keystone STARS

Research-based Performance Standards form the bedrock of this quality improvement program. The standards are guided by the principle that quality early learning is a foundation for children's success, and investment in the early care and education of Pennsylvania's children is an investment in the future. Therefore, the Keystone STARS Performance Standards reflect research-based indicators to improve outcomes for children. The standards are organized into four STAR levels that build upon each other in order to support Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). When a provider meets the Performance Standards for a STAR level, they receive the mark of quality, a STAR designation. A Keystone STARS designation informs parents that the director and staff are committed to enhancing quality for the children and families in their program.

There are Keystone STARS Performance Standards for Centers, Group Homes, and Family Child Care Homes. Each set of Performance Standards addresses: 1.) Staff Qualifications and Professional Development; 2.) Learning Program; 3.) Partnerships

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with Family and Community; and 4.) Leadership and Management. The higher the STAR level, the higher the quality standards. The standards can be downloaded at http://www.pakeys.org/pages/starsDocs.aspx. A summary of the Performance Standards can be found in Appendix C.

Provider Tools to Achieve Keystone STARS

In 2006-2007, OCDEL established the STARS Self-Study Workgroup composed of representation from each Regional Key and staff from the PA Key. This group was charged with increasing the information available to providers to support autonomous quality improvement efforts. The group created the Optional Tools for providers, as well as some optional tools for STARS Specialists, to use during designation/verification of STAR level attainment.

In order to establish greater consistency among Regional Keys, as well as offer practitioners/staff more information regarding individual standards, a framework was created which articulates the basic requirements to meet each Performance Standard as well as "better practice" which serve as the stepping stone to achieving "best practice." The framework, titled *Good, Better, Best* (GBB), covers most Performance Standards by STAR Level and Provider Type. It provides, in plain language, the rationale/philosophy behind the standard, supporting research/sources, best practice, resources, and sources of evidence. GBB cites salient research that serves as the evidence basis for each of the Keystone STARS standard and is intended to be a measure for providers to achieve Best Practice with standards that they were already meeting while maintaining a Continuous Quality Improvement model. Additionally, the document also serves as a tool for STARS staff to maintain consistency, as well as a reference tool regarding the elements of individual STARS Performance Standards. It can be downloaded at http://www.pakeys.org/pages/starsDocs.aspx.

Designation Process

The Regional Keys determine the assignment of a STAR level to a provider through the Designation Process. During the STAR Designation, the provider offers to the Regional Key Representative site-specific documentation (sources of evidence) of each Keystone STARS Performance Standard for the STAR level under consideration. Once the provider has given appropriate documentation for each performance standard, and the Environment Rating Scale has been conducted and targeted achievements documented, the Regional Key is able to designate the achievement of that STAR level.

In some Regional Keys, staff may have expertise in both designating and supporting Keystone STAR providers. To ensure equity, Regional Key Designators do not provide Designations on any provider they may be managing in their role as a Keystone Star Specialist or Manager.

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Designator Reliability

Since Designators are housed throughout the commonwealth, in each of the six Regional Keys, Designator Reliability Visits are conducted to ensure consistency among Designators when determining whether providers are meeting Keystone STARS Performance Standards. Designators complete a Designator Reliability Visit for every fifteen designations, alternating between pairing with another Designator from the same Regional Key and a Designator from a different Regional Key. Both Designators complete the designation of a provider at the same time, but independently of one another. After the designation is complete, the results are compared to determine reliability. The results assist in determining if there are standards that need to be better clarified, if any component of the designation process needs to be better defined, or if additional training or support is required for Designators. Overall, the Designators have agreed on 88.9% of the Performance Standards and 76.8% of the *Good, Better, Best* document.

Table 1: Designator Reliability: Performance Standard % Agreement

	STAR 2	STAR 3	Overall
Director Qualifications	85.5%	98.2%	92.8%
Director Development	87.9%	96.9%	91.8%
Staff Qualifications	68.2%	87.5%	76.2%
Staff Development	87.3%	78.6%	84.8%
Child Observation/Curriculum/Assessment	84.8%	79.2%	82.5%
Environment Rating	86.4%	81.3%	75.8%
Community Resources / Family Involvement	94.8%	90.3%	92.5%
Transition	90.9%	91.7%	93.0%
Business Practices	93.2%	89.6%	92.0%
Continuous Quality Improvement	100.%	84.4%	92.0%
Staff Communication & Support	81.8%	91.7%	88.4%
Employee Compensation	95.5%	87.5%	92.3%
Overall agreement	89.0%	88.3%	88.9%

Note: Pilot data from first half of FY 09-10; STAR 2 *N*=11; STAR 3 *N*=8

Table 2: Designator Reliability: Good Better Best % Agreement

	STAR 2	STAR 3	Overall
Director Qualifications	93.9%	90.2%	86.7%
Director Development	75.0%	87.1%	76.1%
Staff Qualifications	57.1%	90.9%	65.7%
Staff Development	83.3%	83.3%	87.5%
Child Observation/Curriculum/Assessment	77.3%	70.6%	67.4%
Environment Rating	94.1%	90.5%	81.7%

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Community Resources / Family Involvement	71.2%	74.6%	66.3%
Transition	77.1%	83.3%	82.4%
Business Practices	64.7%	72.7%	86.6%
Continuous Quality Improvement	80.8%	100.%	77.8%
Staff Communication & Support	91.7%	83.8%	82.3%
Employee Compensation	76.5%	93.3%	67.9%
Overall agreement	78.3%	83.1%	76.8%

Note: Based on Performance Standards in which both designators verified as having been met; STAR 2 N=11; STAR 3 N=8

Accreditation

In most QRIS, accreditation is included as a measure of quality for ratings. The way accreditation is included varies from state to state. 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, programs that have been accredited by a national organization are required to not only demonstrate verification of their current accreditation status, but also show evidence that the program meets additional specific Keystone STARS Performance Standards in order to be awarded a STAR 3 or STAR 4-Accredited (3A and 4A) status.

All accrediting institutions applying to be a Recognized Accrediting Organization under the OCDEL Keystone STARS program must satisfactorily meet specific criteria. Recognition in Keystone STARS requires the submission of a research brief as well as a cross-walk of the standards between applicant and the commonwealth. These include but are not limited to process and program content leading to accurate assessments of program quality. The Recognized Accrediting Protocol can be accessed at:

http://www.pakeys.org/uploadedContent/Docs/Keys%20To%20Quality/Keystone%20STARS%20National%20Accreditation%20Protocol.pdf

The crosswalk with Keystone STARS Standards can be accessed at:

http://www.pakeys.org/uploadedContent/Docs/Keys%20To%20Quality/Accreditation%20Crosswalk%20withKeystone%20STARS%20Standards%202010%202%2022%2010.pdf

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Provider Participation

Over the last seven years there has been a steady growth of providers participating in Keystone STARS who move to higher quality levels. Tables 3 and 4 present data on provider participation and the estimated number of children served through Keystone STARS. Each year, the percentage of providers participating at a STAR 3 or STAR 4 level has increased. As of June 2010, 21% of STARS providers were at a STAR 3 or higher, serving an estimated 42,566 children. Please see Appendix D for further detail on provider participation and STARS movement.

Table 3: Number and Percent of Providers Participating in Keystone STARS

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Start with STARS	83	952	1,268	1,015	1,342	896	717
STAR 1	890	1,439	1,647	1,508	2,090	2,060	1,744
STAR 2	177	447	639	642	774	987	1,089
STAR 3	0	39	143	175	235	419	421
STAR 3-Acc	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
STAR 4	0	14	30	79	119	172	259
STAR 4-Acc	164	263	317	312	258	267	255
Total in STARS	*1,314*	*3,154*	*4,044*	*3,731*	*4,818*	*4,801*	*4,496*
# of Regulated Providers	9,133	8,957	8,866	8,911	9,109	8,576	8,749
% in STARS	*14.4%*	*35.2%*	*45.6%*	*41.9%*	*52.9%*	*56.0%*	*51.4%*

Note: Numbers reflect published end of year data.

Table 4: Estimated Children Served in Keystone STARS

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Start with STARS	2,587	26,618	31,102	26,669	33,830	23,727	18,933
STAR 1	42,460	60,043	62,721	53,674	75,358	71,290	62,102
STAR 2	9,339	21,771	30,087	28,920	33,762	41,733	47,877
STAR 3	0	1,977	7,057	8,513	10,811	19,633	19,175
STAR 3-Acc	0	0	0	0	0	0	499
STAR 4	0	742	1,590	3,611	5,365	7,946	11,495
STAR 4-Acc	7,738	12,325	14,779	14,748	11,712	11,859	11,397
Total	*62,124*	*123,476*	*147,336*	*136,135*	*170,838*	*176,188*	*171,478*

Note: Numbers reflect published end of year data. Number served is based on estimated average number of children by provider type (family provider, 5; group provider, 11; center provider, 53)

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Table 5: Estimated Number Served in Keystone STARS by County Risk level & Classification

	Number of child care providers			Estimated children served			Estimated % of children in child care served by	
	Regulated	STARS	STAR 3&4	Regulated	STARS	STAR 3&4	STARS	STAR 3&4
Risk Level								
Low	1,337	734	157	52,177	35,698	7,901	68.4%	15.1%
Moderate-Low	2,668	1,349	340	86,672	53,971	15,368	62.3%	17.7%
Moderate-High	1,871	898	195	51,475	33,938	8,655	65.9%	16.8%
High	2,873	1,515	254	74,311	47,871	10,642	64.4%	14.3%
Classification								
Rural	1,055	505	115	24,559	15,989	4,973	65.1%	20.2%
Mixed	2,689	1,319	338	79,289	52,021	15,028	65.6%	19.0%
Urban	5,005	2,672	493	160,787	103,468	22,565	64.4%	14.0%
All	8,749	4,496	946	264,635	171,478	42,566	64.8%	16.1%

Notes: Provider counts reflect 2010 end of year data. County Risk Levels, Classifications and estimation methodology can be found in the FY09-10 Pennsylvania Program Reach and Risk Assessment http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=EarlyLearning_Reach

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The data in Table 5 reflect the 2010 end-of-year provider count and estimated number of children served. County risk levels, classifications and method of estimating children were drawn from the FY 09-10 Pennsylvania Program Reach and Risk Assessment (http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=EarlyLearning_Reach). The estimated percent of children served by Keystone STARS providers are consistent across county risk levels. This suggests that there is an even distribution of quality providers across the commonwealth. Overall, an estimated 65% of children enrolled in regulated child care are served in a Keystone STARS setting.

On average, Keystone STARS providers spend approximately two years at each STAR level, with the exception of Start with STARS. Table 6 presents the average length of time spent at each STAR level by provider type. Providers remain at the Start with STARS level for less than a year on average and the length of time at each STAR level increases slightly as the STAR level increases. Providers at the STAR 4-Accredited level maintain their STAR level for an average of 29 months.

Table 6: Average Time at each STAR Level (In Months)

	Center		Family		Group		Total	
	N	Avg	N	Avg	N	Avg	N	Avg
SWS	1047	8.6	599	10.0	179	8.5	1825	9.0
STAR 1	1277	24.0	469	21.8	183	23.2	1929	23.4
STAR 2	827	22.9	141	17.6	82	20.6	1050	22.0
STAR 3	255	23.9	40	11.35	14	22	309	22.2
STAR 4	144	25.5	17	20.2	5	27.4	166	25.0
STAR 4A	219	29.2	23	25.3	8	30.4	250	28.9

Notes: Resulting statistics were calculated from snapshot data from June 2004 to July 2010; based on average length of time for providers at each STAR level before moving up or down a STAR level, moving out of the STARS program, or length of time at a STAR level as of July 1st 2010.

The following table shows the steady increase in the number and percent of children who are using their Child Care Works subsidy at a STARS facility.

Table 7: Number and Percent of Subsidy Children Enrolled in Keystone STARS

	total subsidy	# enrolled in STARS	% enrolled in STARS	# in STARS 2 and up	% in STARS 2 and up
2008	142,419	55,298	38.80%	31,965	22.40%
2009	131,047	60,259	46.00%	37,882	28.90%
2010	142,536	76,005	53.30%	50,632	35.50%

Note: Data for each year is a snapshot in June.

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Child Outcomes

In 2009-2010, enrollment and outcome data for children enrolled in STAR 3 and 4 centers was collected through Pennsylvania's Early Learning Network[7]. Child outcome data was reported three times during the year using the Work Sampling System and Ounce Scale System. The assessments are tools in which teacher observations are reported through an on-line system. Each of the seven domains and composite indicators are scored as either "Not Yet," "In Process," or "Proficient." Table 8 presents the percentage of children scoring "Proficient" in each of the seven domains, by STAR level, in fall and spring. The results show that the percentage of Pre-school children scoring "Proficient" is significantly higher in the spring than in the fall, indicating an improvement in the proficiency of children ages three and four. Furthermore, the percentage of "Proficient" children is greater for STAR 4 participants than STAR 3 participants in the spring. These results suggest that participating in a higher STAR level facility leads to better child outcomes.

Table 8: Percent of Pre-school Age Children Scoring "Proficient"

	Fall			Spring		
	STAR 3	STAR 4	Total	STAR 3	STAR 4	Total
Personal and Social Development	39%	38%	38%	68%	74%	71%
Language and Literacy	33%	33%	33%	63%	69%	66%
Mathematical Thinking	28%	28%	28%	59%	64%	62%
Scientific Thinking	27%	29%	28%	60%	66%	62%
Social Studies	32%	30%	31%	62%	67%	65%
The Arts	43%	44%	44%	71%	76%	74%
Physical Development and Health	52%	49%	50%	78%	82%	80%

Note: Fall N=8,464; Spring N=9,268; Data only includes preschool age children in STAR 3 or 4 Center, but does not include children who do not turn 3 at any point during the year or children who were five or older in the Fall.

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[7] In FY 2010-2011, child outcomes will be collected at three times during the year for all family, group, and center providers that are participating at the STAR 3 or 4 level. Child outcome reporting will also be available though not required for Keystone STARS providers at the Start with STARS, STAR 1 and STAR 2 level.

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Support and Services to Children, Families and Communities

A child's early education is critical to his/her development and future success in school and life. Keystone STARS sets requirements for early childhood educators to promote the best learning environment and safest setting possible for children. Children who attend quality early learning programs come to Kindergarten ready to learn, do better in school, and are more likely to graduate high school, attend college, and get good jobs.

Online Provider Search

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Access to Social Services (COMPASS) serves as an online portal that allows Pennsylvanians to apply for and renew a range of benefits, including health care coverage, cash assistance, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps), and child care assistance. The application process is much the same as filling out a paper application and upon completion the application is automatically submitted to the appropriate state agencies.

One of the more exciting features of COMPASS is the early childhood provider search which provides resources and information about selecting quality early learning programs and allows individuals to search for providers of these programs across the state. The site allows for searching by a specific provider name, program type (i.e. Head Start, PA Pre-K Counts, Keystone STARS, etc.), as well as additional search criteria such as STAR level when appropriate. Upon obtaining search results, additional details are available about each provider and, in the instance of regulated child care providers, information about the provider's certificate.

Although the provider search allows the public to search for various early learning providers, information regarding child care providers is the most expansive. Since October 2010, additional detail is returned for all early learning providers, including age of child(ren), type of program, Keystone STARS rating, hours of operation, language(s) spoken, type of accommodation, and the availability of school and/or public transportation. This information is taken directly from Pennsylvania's Enterprise to Link Information for Children across Networks (PELICAN) and can be managed by providers through PELICAN Provider Self Service (www.pelican.state.pa.us/provider). Provider Self Service is available for all early learning providers. Please see Appendix E for more information about PELICAN systems that support Keystone STARS.

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Keystone STARS serving at-risk populations

To receive Keystone STARS award funds, the provider must have at least 5% of enrolled child care children who receive one of the following during one of the scheduled child data collection periods:

1. Child Care Works subsidized care administered through the Child Care Information Services (CCIS); and/or

2. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Early Intervention Services program for children with developmental delays and disabilities. This program is managed by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning.

To include a child receiving Early Intervention services into the provider's percentage, the following criteria must be met:
   a. The provider is providing child care services to the child; AND
   b. The provider is operating inclusive child care, which is defined as a program with no more than 33% of enrollment identified as children receiving Early Intervention Services; AND
   c. The child must have a current Individualized Education Plan (IEP) / Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) on file at the provider.

Community Engagement Groups

One of the responsibilities of each Regional Key is to oversee a Community Engagement Group (CEG). CEG activity supports community outreach and transition to school on a county level. Outreach activities include community fairs, conferences, leadership events, press conferences, town meetings, and site visits for children and families in ECE facilities (including Keystone STARS, PA Pre-K Counts, and Head Start). In 2009-2010 there were 58 contracts awards to CEGs through the Regional Keys. Table 9 presents the number of children and families who were reached through site visits in 2009-2010. The number of site visits to a Keystone STARS provider has increased from 114 in 2007-2008 to 236 in 2009-2010.

Table 9: CEG Outreach Activity to ECE Facilities

	07-08	08-09	09-10
Site Visits to ECE Facility (STARS initiative)	114	151	236
Site Visits to ECE Facility (non-STARS)	61	58	107
Attendance for Visits (STARS initiative)	6263	1615	3041
Attendance for Visits (non-STARS)	3233	791	1894

Note: Non-STARS ECE facility may be either a PA Pre-K Counts or Head Start facility.

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One of the main activities of CEGs is to form partnerships between Keystone STARS providers, school districts, and other stakeholders in the local community to coordinate transitional activities. Transition means change, and making changes can be stressful for children. Establishing transition practices that provide continuity and consider the contexts and relationships that interact with each other and the child can ease the transition process and provide the foundation for positive learning experiences.

OCDEL provides a transition toolkit to assist in developing and maintaining effective transition practices for young children. The toolkit can be accessed at: http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=TransitionToolkit. Effective transition practices require the participation of families, schools, and communities and should link family-to-school, child-to-school, school-to-school, and community-to-school.

Suggested practices to link *family-to-school* include making initial, positive contact with families; providing a tour of the facility with written materials on policies, expectations, etc.; coordinating home-learning materials; encouraging family participation at school and with special events; developing family skills; and providing opportunities for shared decision making. Practices which link a *child-to-school* include providing opportunities to visit new settings and meet new teachers; incorporating rituals and routines from the old setting into the new setting; and working to establish and maintain peer connections. Strategies which link *school-to-school* include providing intentional preparation for the new setting within classroom routines and lessons; establishing reciprocal expectations; and establishing means for sharing information, including how records will be transferred and used. Transition practices should link the *community-to-school* by establishing interagency protocols when there are concerns about the needs of a specific child; sharing community resources; and sharing community events.

Strengthening Families

Regional Keys are also tasked with implementing the Strengthening Families Initiative. Strengthening Families is an approach to working with children and families in early education centers, child welfare departments, and other settings. OCDEL is implementing this approach across a range of communities and programs to provide parents and other caregivers with what they need to parent effectively, even under stress, by building the following five protective factors in families:
   1. Parental resilience;
   2. Social connections;
   3. Concrete supports in times of need;
   4. Improved social and emotional competence in children;
   5. Parental knowledge of parenting and child development.

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For more information on Strengthening Families and the five Protective Factors visit:
http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net/index.php/about/category/the_basics/

This same goal of strengthening families and preventing child abuse and neglect before it begins is addressed by the Pennsylvania Children's Trust Fund (CTF). A 15-member board comprising public and legislative members appointed by the Governor administers CTF, with support from OCDEL. Funds are generated from a $10 surcharge on applications for marriage licenses and divorce complaints. Friends of the Children's Trust Fund was established in 2008 to raise additional funds for CTF. Three year grants are awarded to community-based programs that are embedding the Strengthening Families protective factors framework developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy within their services to families, and Keystone STARS early learning providers. Monitored through quarterly progress reports and annual site visits, each grantee develops an action plan that tracks program and community level outcomes.

In the 2008-2009 grant year, 29 CTF grantees served 1,799 early childhood education provider staff members involved in the Keystone STARS system. Over 15,000 children, adults, staff, and providers have been served through the Children's Trust Fund as of 2009, more than twice the amount served in 2002.

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Support and Services to Practitioners/Workforce

The research about positive outcomes for children when their teachers have professional development in Early Childhood content is compelling. Working with young children is a profession that requires knowledge of how children grow and develop, as well as the skills to communicate effectively with children and parents. Research compiled in the last fifteen years underscores two essential findings: 1.) that high quality early learning programs are important for good child outcomes, and 2.) that practitioner education and training are keys in providing good early learning experiences.

In support of this growing research base, OCDEL has developed, and continues to improve, its strong professional development framework. A career advising approach for practitioners in the early care and education field was developed for implementation. The Core Body of Knowledge, the basics in early childhood education for all staff in child care settings, is aligned with NAEYC (National Association of Education for Young Children) and NCATE (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education) standards of professional preparation guidelines and teacher preparation programs in Pennsylvania. A broad array of professional development options and financing supports can assist practitioners in continuing to improve skills and content knowledge no matter what level of qualifications or how many years of experience they bring to early learning programs in Pennsylvania.

Professional Development

Each of the Regional Keys provides Professional Development in cooperation with OCDEL, the PA Key, and others in the early learning community. The Regional Key ensures that adequate professional development is available to meet the needs of programs/practitioners. Professional development is categorized as:

Core Series

STARS Standards require each Director of a facility to complete the Core Series professional development. The Regional Key is responsible for providing and/or coordinating adequate sessions to meet the needs of practitioners. The content of these statewide modules is developed and distributed by the PA Key. The Core Series comprises the following workshop sessions:
- STARS Orientation Part 1
- Core Body of Knowledge/Professional Development Record
- Environment Rating Scale
- Continuous Quality Improvement
- Facility Professional Development Plan

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- Early Learning Standards or School Age Links to Learning Foundations
- STARS Orientation Part 2

STARS Support

STARS Standards require additional professional development to meet specific standards for director and staff. Content of these modules is developed and/or approved by the PA Key. The Regional Key is responsible for providing and/or coordinating adequate sessions to meet the needs of practitioners. STARS Support workshops include:
- Ages and Stages Screening Tool
- Beyond the Professional Development Record I and II
- Orientation for new staff - 15 hour self-learning modules series
- Pediatric First Aid
- CPR
- Observation/Work Sampling/OUNCE
- Mandated Reporter/Child Abuse
- Health and Safety (multiple topics)
- Business Practices
- Using Portfolios to Bring Out the Best in School-Age Children
- Links to Learning – Communicating and Coordinating with Schools (school-age)
- Links to Learning – Family Engagement (school-age)

Credentials

STARS Standards require a percentage of staff to obtain the appropriate credentials. It is the responsibility of the Regional Key to ensure adequate offerings of credential college courses or classes that articulate for college credit.
- Child Development Associate (CDA)
- School-Age Professional Credential
- Director Credential

Needs-Based Professional Development

The Regional Key is responsible for disseminating the annual Facility Professional Development Plan to all providers. The plans received from providers are then used to develop the master plan for professional development that will be offered in the region. The Regional Key collaborates with all contracted Professional Development Organizations to ensure that practitioner needs are met by:
- Identifying needs of individual practitioners using the Core Body of Knowledge and the Professional Development Record.

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- Identifying needs in the region by programs using the Facility Professional Development Plan.

Mind in the Making

Each Regional Key is responsible for the delivery of at least two Mind in the Making (MITM) sessions per fiscal year. A session requires 10 learning pairs (director and lead teacher) from child care providers participating in Keystone STARS at STAR 3 or 4. The session runs for six weeks. At the conclusion of the session, learning pairs are required to provide relevant information from the sessions in the form of instruction to the staff in their programs.

- Mind in the Making Learning Modules for Early Childhood Teachers are produced by Families and Work Institute. The sessions consist of 12 MITM modules: Beginning a Learning Adventure; Essential Connections; How Learning Begins; Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Learning are Inextricably Linked; Building Confidence and Competence; Understanding Temperament; How We Learn to Know Others' Thoughts and Feelings; Encouraging Curiosity and Problem Solving; How to Use Language to Make Meaning from Experience; Memory and Learning; Stress and Learning; and Creating Communities of Learners.
- Each Regional Key is responsible for ensuring all MITM sessions are delivered by a Pennsylvania Quality Assurance Program[8] approved MITM Learning Facilitator. The Regional Key is responsible for reporting MITM sessions and participants in a quarterly report. The Regional Key is also responsible for the distribution of MITM Learning Facilitator manuals.

Credit-Bearing Courses

It is the responsibility of the Regional Key, in collaboration with the PA Key, to develop relationships with institutions of higher education. The purpose of the relationship is for the Regional Key to inform the institution of higher education of the educational needs of the practitioners / provider staff in early childhood education programs, as well as the new policies, practices, and initiatives of OCDEL. The Regional Key also informs practitioners/provider staff of the opportunities to apply for Project T.E.A.C.H. scholarships, vouchers, and other financial assistance programs.

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[8] http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Career_PQAS

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PD Organizations by Regional Key, Program Year 2009-2010

Central Regional Key
- Cambria American Red Cross
- Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU)
- Early Childhood Professional Development Corporation
- Penn College
- Penn Highlands
- Penn State University

Northeast Regional Key
- Bucks County Community College
- Child Care Providers, Inc.
- Holy Family College
- Keystone College
- Kings College
- Lackawanna College
- Lehigh Carbon Community College
- Manor College
- Northampton Community College
- Reading Area Community College
- Office of Children and Youth
- Penn State Cooperative Extension

Northwest Regional Key
- American Red Cross
- Beaver County Community College
- Butler County Community College
- Butler County Children's Center
- Clarion University
- ECELS (Early Childhood Education Linkage System)
- Edinboro University
- Gannon University
- IndiKids
- Intermediate Unit #9
- Mercyhurst College
- Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children (PAEYC)
- Pitt Bradford
- Penn State University – Shenango and Clearfield
- Penn State Extension
- WQLN

South Central Regional Key
- CAECTI (Capital Area Early Childhood Training Institute)
- Family Support Alliance
- Harrisburg Area Community College
- Luthercare
- Northampton Community College
- PennAEYC
- Penn State Cooperative Extension
- Penn State York
- WITF
- YWCA of York

Southeast Regional Key
- Arcadia University
- Community College of Philadelphia
- Delaware County Community College
- Delaware Valley – AEYC (Association for the Education of Young Children)
- Eastern University/Esperanza College
- Gratz College
- Holy Family University
- Manor College
- Montgomery Early Learning Centers
- Northwest Interfaith Movement
- West Chester University

Southwest Regional Key
- Carlow University
- Community College of Allegheny
- Office of Children, Youth and Family
- Penn State Fayette
- Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children (PAEYC)
- Point Park University
- St. Vincent College
- University of Pittsburgh, Office of Child Development
- Westmoreland County Community College

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Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System

The Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System (PQAS) certifies instructors who provide professional development workshops to early childhood and school-age professionals in Pennsylvania. The PQAS System maintains a registry of approved Instructors to help ensure that professional development activities meet quality standards. Pennsylvania also offers PQAS Instructor Institutes to help build skills and knowledge. In 2008-2009, there were approximately 1,700 Professional Development Instructors included in the registry, conducting approximately 3,770 workshops. In 2008-2009, faculty from higher education institutions were encouraged to become PQAS approved in order to provide their students the opportunity for some of the required professional development within their college class setting. Of the 562 new PQAS approved instructors, 31 higher education faculty received PQAS-approval.

Course Offering and Attendance

Each Regional Key ensures that the content of professional development is based upon the early learning standards, core body of knowledge, Pa. Code Title 22, Chapter 49, and the most current research. Professional Development is also based on individual development plans of the practitioner, delivered by OCDEL certified Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System (PQAS) instructors, and focused on improving outcomes for children. The state has funded just over 40% of all PD courses since 2006.

Table 10: Percent of State Funded PD Courses and Number of PD Courses by Region

	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	Total
% Funded by State	45.6%	40.5%	40.0%	41.3%	41.6%
Region					
Northwest	785	984	931	1002	3702
Southwest	924	1613	1791	1781	6109
Central	693	951	978	781	3403
South Central	1371	1663	1913	1908	6855
Northeast	1362	1937	2189	2286	7774
Southeast	2099	2501	2753	2830	10183
Total	*7234*	*9649*	*10555*	*10588*	*38026*

Note: Only courses with at least one enrolled attendee are included in the tabulation.

Professional Development (PD) is categorized into the Knowledge Area and Competency levels based on the Core Body of Knowledge. PD is also labeled by Type, referring to the category of a workshop and can include: Keystone STARS Core Series, Keystone STARS Support, Needs-Based, CDA, Director Credential, School-Age Credential, School-Age PD.

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For more information about Knowledge Area, Competency Level, and Type, please refer to http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Career_CBK.

The following tables present the number of PD workshops/events and attendance by Knowledge Area, Competency Level, and Type of PD. Attendance is then further broken down by STAR level in Table 12. The number of PD workshops/events offered has increased each year since fiscal year 2006-2007. Last year (2009-2010), 10,589 workshops/events in PD were offered across the state. The majority of the events were related to Needs-Based PD. STARS Core Series was the second most prevalent event in fiscal year 2009-2010, with 970 workshops/events.

Table 11: Number of PD Courses by Competency Level, Type and Fiscal Year

	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
Competency Level					
Level 1	3264	4496	4776	4813	17349
Level 2	3431	4418	5151	5269	18269
Level 3	517	712	616	496	2341
Level 4	22	23	17	11	73
Total	*7234*	*9649*	*10560*	*10589*	*38032*
PD Type					
Director Credential	47	56	56	28	187
CDA	324	292	205	333	1154
STARS Core Series	520	876	888	970	3254
STARS Support	466	552	649	499	2166
SACC PD	151	389	392	333	1265
SA Credential	25	38	80	19	162
Needs-Based	5701	7446	8290	8407	29844
Total	*7234*	*9649*	*10560*	*10589*	*38032*
Knowledge Area					
Child Growth and Development	681	806	919	1099	3505
The Environ., Curriculum, Content	1929	2578	2653	2694	9854
Families in Societies	290	361	520	461	1632
Child Assessment	740	961	1148	1094	3943
Communication	296	327	337	383	1343
Professionalism & Leadership	500	713	819	676	2708
Health, Safety & Nutrition	1660	2308	2486	2495	8949
Program Org. & Administration	569	866	966	1128	3529
Other	525	689	684	542	2440
Instructor Institute	44	40	28	17	129
Total	*7234*	*9649*	*10560*	*10589*	*38032*

Note: Only courses with at least one enrolled attendee are included in the tabulation.

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Table 12: PD Attendance by Knowledge Area and Fiscal Year

	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
Competency Level					
Level 1	53683	76657	80980	80228	291548
Level 2	55539	76541	89238	86466	307784
Level 3	6565	9822	8345	8219	32951
Level 4	347	256	298	211	1112
Total	*116134*	*163276*	*178861*	*175124*	*633395*
PD Type					
Director Credential	492	706	680	316	2194
CDA	4374	5964	3179	5601	19118
STARS Core Series	7242	14629	14594	12105	48570
STARS Support	6354	6040	7094	7066	26554
SACC PD	1968	5509	5855	4360	17692
SA Credential	148	315	876	169	1508
Needs-Based	95556	130113	146583	145507	517759
Total	*116134*	*163276*	*178861*	*175124*	*633395*
Knowledge Area					
Child Growth and Development	11398	14056	17867	18842	62163
The Environ., Curriculum, Content	32283	45071	48929	48957	175240
Families in Societies	5437	7264	8777	8542	30020
Child Assessment	11839	16956	19081	16949	64825
Communication	5279	6501	6462	7990	26232
Professionalism & Leadership	7422	12783	13797	10773	44775
Health, Safety & Nutrition	26569	35352	37646	37524	137091
Program Org. & Administration	7148	12604	14931	13942	48625
Other	8223	11964	10734	11240	42161
Instructor Institute	536	725	637	365	2263
Total	*116134*	*163276*	*178861*	*175124*	*633395*

Notes: Individuals who attend multiple PD events are counted multiple times.

Table 13: Attendance of Practitioners by STAR Level by Fiscal Year

	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	Total
Unknown/NSR	47973	61664	62120	56075	227832
SWS	1706	2418	2351	2125	8600
STAR 1	10017	14678	16636	17842	59173
STAR 2	18291	27128	33780	36325	115524
STAR 3	14919	23088	26831	24691	89529
STAR 4	23140	33407	36197	36752	129496
STAR 4A	88	893	946	1314	3241
Total	*116134*	*163276*	*178861*	*175124*	*633395*

Note: There are unequal numbers of providers and staff at each STAR level. PD participants self reported STAR level. Absence of STAR level data may be because of no report or because of No STAR Rating (NSR).

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Despite having fewer providers, STAR 4 facilities consistently send more staff to attend PD than do providers from any other STARS level.

All of the staff and practitioners who participate in Keystone STARS have made great progress in attending the professional development sessions, which is a key factor for child care providers meeting the STARS standards.

Child Development Associate Credentialing

Keystone STARS participants at STAR 2 must ensure that a percentage of their staff have a Child Development Associate Credential:

A Child Development Associate (CDA) is an individual who has successfully completed approved coursework, the CDA assessment process, and has been awarded the CDA Credential. CDAs are able to meet the specific needs of children, and work with parents and other adults to nurture children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth in a child-development framework. Earning the CDA Credential has many advantages, including motivating caregivers toward continuing education and providing a platform for professional and career opportunities. Many view the CDA Credential as an instrument for career advancement in the early childhood care and education profession. The Council for Professional Recognition in Washington, DC works to ensure that it is a credible and valid credential, recognized by the profession as a vital part of a coordinated system of professional development.[9]

Child care practitioners can earn a CDA Credential for Pre-School, Infant/Toddler, Family Child Care, or Home Visiting. In Pennsylvania, OCDEL and the PA Key provide financial support to early childhood professionals either through the T.E.A.C.H Scholarship program or the Voucher program to obtain the CDA Credential. In Fiscal Year 2009-2010, almost two thousand practitioners (1,959) were awarded the CDA credential through support by OCDEL/PA Key. The number of practitioners with CDA credentials has increased by 60% since Fiscal Year 2007-2008. Figures 1 through 5 present the number of new and renewal CDA credentials awarded each fiscal year by CDA type.

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[9]Reference: "What is the CDA." *The Council for Professional Recognition*. < http://cdacouncil.org >

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Figure 1: New and Renewal CDA Credentials by Fiscal Year

CDA Credentials

■ New ■ Renewals
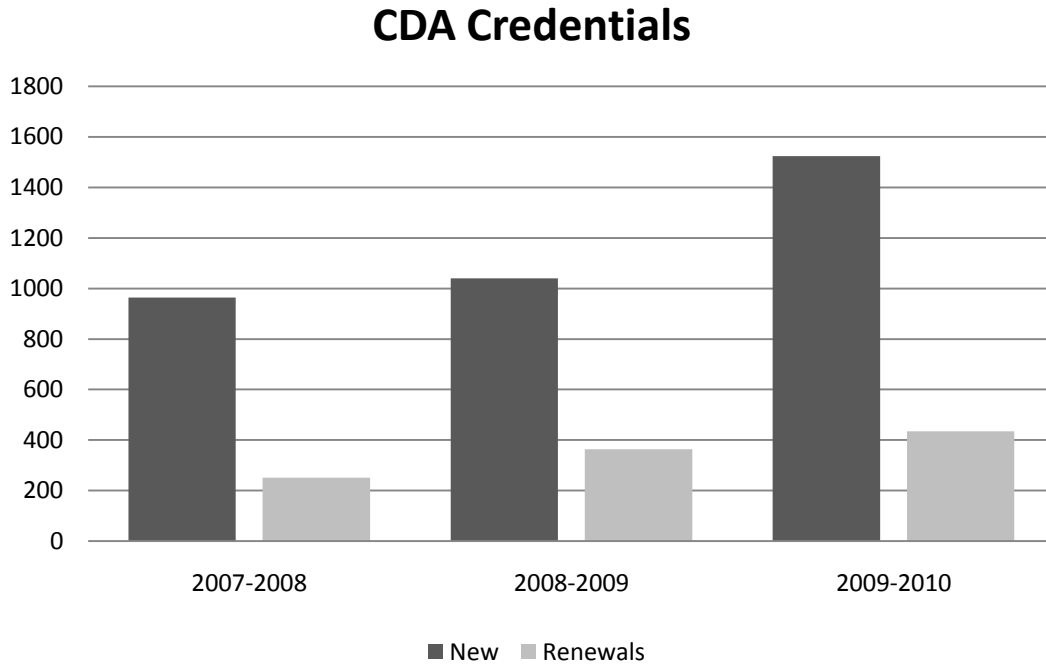
Figure 2: New and Renewal Preschool Credentials by Fiscal Year

Preschool Credentials

■ PS - New ■ PS - Renewal

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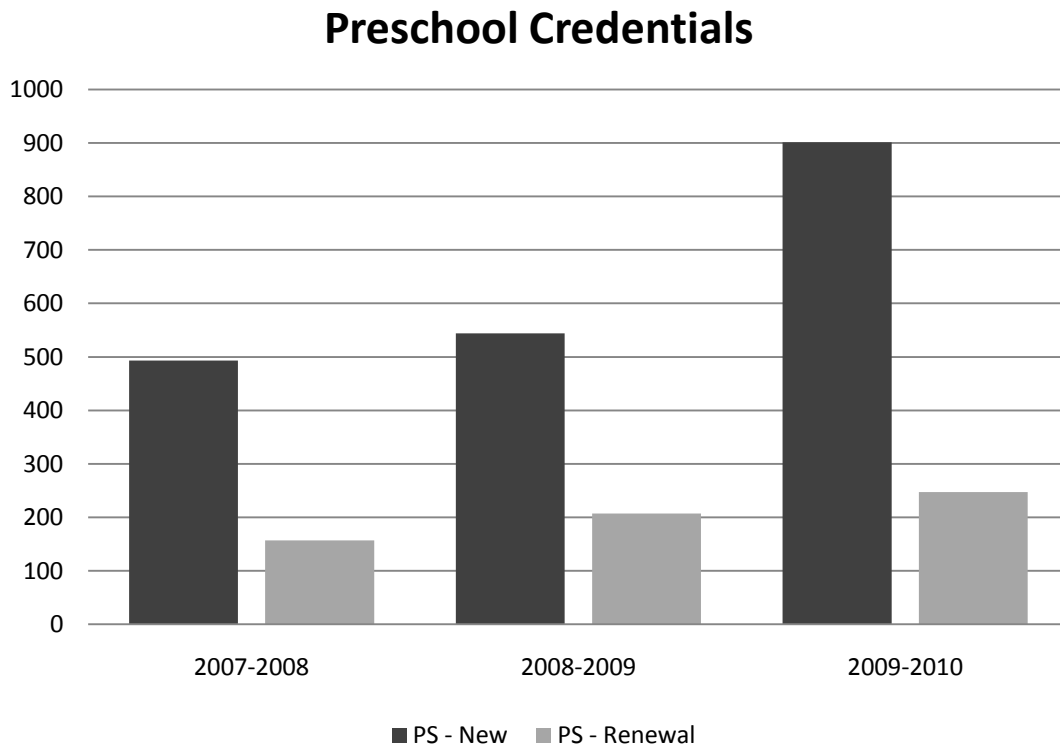
Figure 3: New and Renewal Infant/Toddler Credentials by Fiscal Year

Infant/Toddler Credentials

IT - New   IT - Renewal
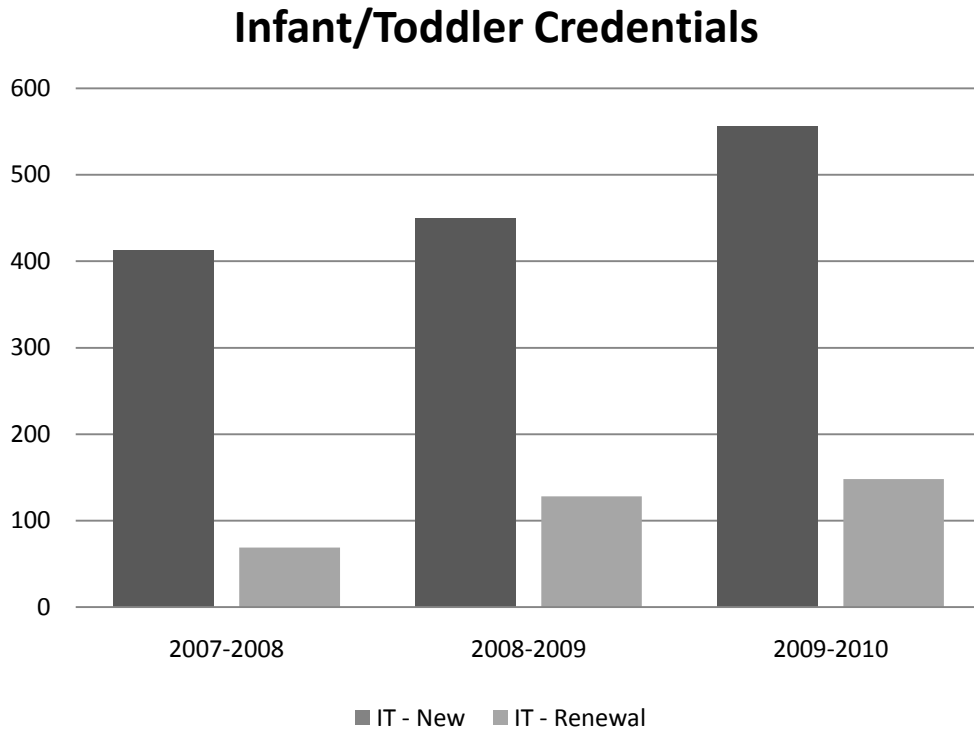
Figure 4: New and Renewal Family Child Care Credentials by Fiscal Year

Family Child Care Credentials

FCC - New   FCC - Renewal

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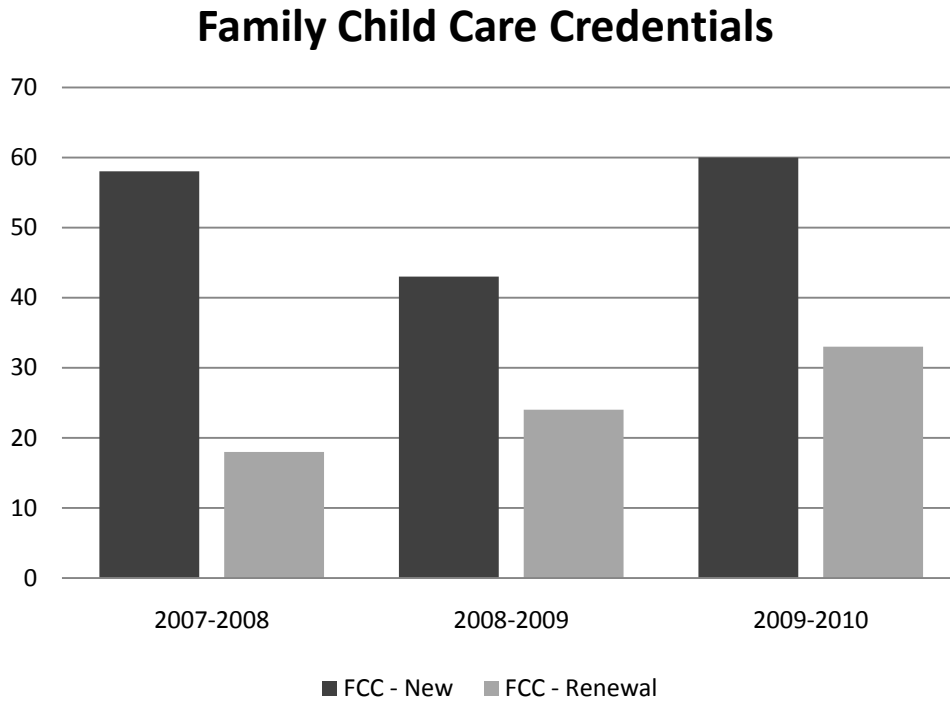
Figure 5: New and Renewal Home-Visiting Credentials by Fiscal Year

Home-Visiting Credentials

Legend: ■ HV - New ■ HV - Renewal
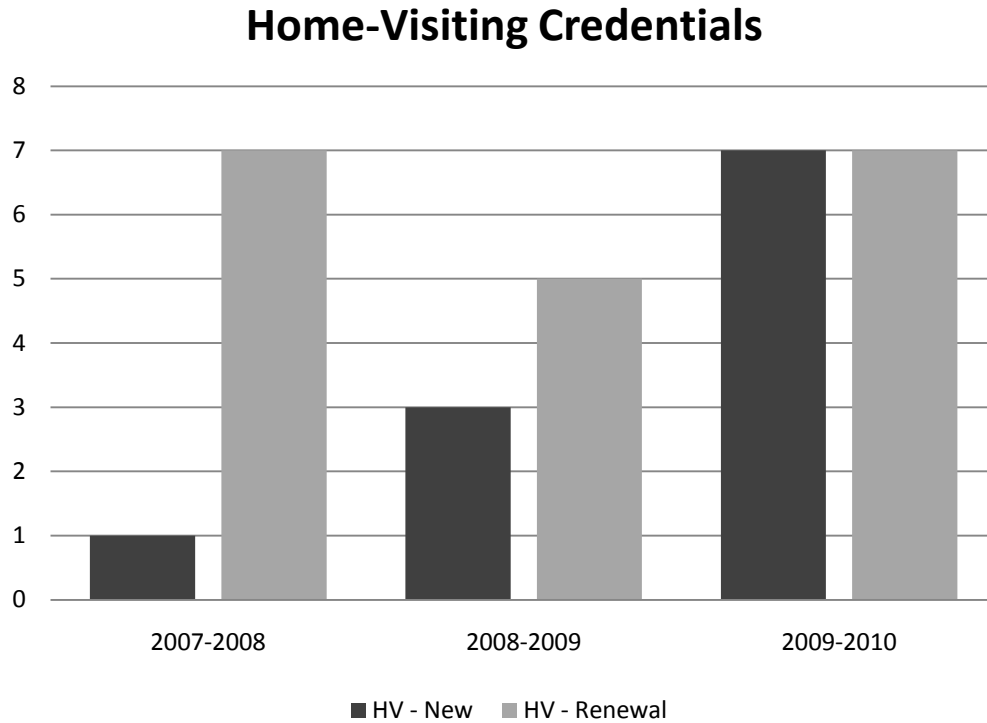
School-Age Professional Credential (SAPC)

The Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential is a competency based program modeled after the Child Development Associate (CDA) that requires 120 hours of coursework focusing on thirteen (13) Functional Areas. Additionally, specific documentation including a Portfolio and Resource File, observation and questionnaires, and an independent assessment must also be completed. The rigor of the credential requirements are written to appeal to the assessment requirements of institutions of higher education. This credential is eligible for credit in several colleges in Pennsylvania. The SAPC has also been crosswalked with the Child Development Associate (CDA). Because the SAPC is based on competence that is observed and documented, there is flexibility as to how a Candidate develops the necessary competence. The individual may choose to join an organized school-age professional development program, apply college coursework, do independent study, or a combination of these. The credential coursework is offered as community-based or college credit and is delivered as face-to-face or on-line.

This credential was developed to support school-age practitioners participating in Keystone STARS and is recognized in the system in the following ways:

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- **Career Lattice Level III** – Individuals completing the school-age credential process meet this level of the Career Lattice.
- **Keystone STARS Awards** – Recognized for purposes of the Merit, Education and Retention, Voucher awards and T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship.
- **Child Care Facility Regulations** – Recognized in regulations as equivalent to nine credit hours from an accredited college or university in elementary education or child development and one year of experience with children. This is the same as the Child Development Associate (CDA).

The School Age Professional Credential process was developed and implemented in 2006-20007. A total of 332 individuals completed the coursework. Thirty-five percent of these individuals have successfully completed the assessment process and have been awarded the credential. Individuals have as long as five years to complete the necessary coursework and submit for assessment. Years of experience of individuals participating in the coursework varied, with the majority of individuals having fewer than five years experience in the field and over 50% with a high school diploma or GED.

Criteria for Second Setting offerings have been created. The purpose of the SAPC Second Setting is to provide an opportunity for individuals with a current CDA working with school-age children and youth (ages 5-12) to demonstrate their competence without having to complete the full Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential assessment process.

More information about the credential components is available at the PA Keys website: www.pakeys.org.

Early Intervention Language Special Instruction Credential

In 2008-2009, OCDEL and Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA) piloted a new professional development series that resulted in a credential in Early Intervention Language Special Instruction. The credential is a series of four courses, that upon demonstration of competency, will improve teachers and special instructors' skills to support language and communication development. Eligible participants are teachers or special instructors working with infants, toddlers, or preschoolers in Early Intervention. Each course has required documentation of competency. The courses are designed to provide participants with the skills and knowledge to facilitate children's language and communication skills:
- Domains of language, the structural bases of human communication, and the theories of language development
- Domains of language in each developmental stage
- Verbal and non-verbal components of language
- Progression of language skills from birth through school age

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- Characteristics of common language disorders
- Difference between language differences and language disorders
- Cultural, gender, and media influences on language development
- Strategies for supporting language development in a child and family's daily activities and routines
- Coaching strategies to use with infants/toddlers in Early Intervention and their families.

In 2008-2009, approximately 80 professionals participated in coursework. EITA plans to take this pilot course series to scale state-wide.

Because of the Credentials earned by staff in many child care providers who participate in Keystone STARS, Pennsylvania is able to demonstrate improved quality in early care and education settings.

School Age Supports

Each Regional Key is responsible for implementation of school-age specific Professional Development and Technical Assistance targeting school-age practitioners participating in Keystone STARS either directly or through subcontracts.

The Regionally based school-age child care (SACC) organizations and specialists provide Professional Development and Technical Assistance (PD/TA) to meet specific needs of school-age practitioners participating in Keystone STARS. SACC-PD/TA employs research-based methods for improving program quality, and impacting positive outcomes for children. Regional SACC-PD/TA also facilitates partnerships with community stakeholders to promote the development and expansion of out-of-school programming. Some specific examples of how school-age providers are supported in Keystone STARS are described below.

1. Standards have been interpreted for school-age programs through the creation of school-age-specific worksheets and optional tools which provide guidance for meeting benchmarks.
2. Training and professional development have been developed to assist school-age practitioner movement on the Career Lattice (e.g. SAC New Staff Orientation, SAC Credential) and understanding of linking curriculum and learning standards, coordinating and communicating with families and schools, observation, and assessment.
3. Assistance is available in the form of individualized on-site assistance aimed at achieving specified knowledge relative to performance expectations of Keystone STARS.

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4. Resources are available to SACC programs meeting eligibility and specific standards in the form of merit awards, education and retention awards, vouchers, and tiered reimbursement.
5. Supports include the creation of the T.E.A.C.H. Afterschool/Youth Development Scholarship developed in partnership with the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), Pennsylvania Key, Pennsylvania Child Care Association (PACCA), Pennsylvania Afterschool Youth Development Network (PSAYDN), the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania, and the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST). The new scholarship provides financial assistance and other supports for staff to earn college coursework toward a PA School-Age Professional Credential, Youth Work Certificate, or Associate degree.

Early Child Mental Health

Each Regional Key is responsible for the implementation and delivery of Early Child Mental Health (ECMH) consultation services to early learning facilities participating in Keystone STARS. The ECMH consultation program is a consultative model based on The Center on Social and Emotional Foundations for Learning's "Pyramid Model". ECMH consultation addresses the middle level of "The Pyramid" by providing child-specific targeted social and emotional supports to mitigate challenges in the early learning program, while also supporting high quality learning environments and nurturing responsive relationships through Professional Development for teachers.

ECMH Goals are:
1. To reduce the number of children expelled from child care due to challenging behaviors;
2. To increase the understanding of social and emotional development and its impact on educational success;
3. To link and bridge systems and services on behalf of a child, family, and program.

Table 14: ECMH Descriptive Statistics

	FYs 06-08	FY 08-09	FY 09-10
Mental Health Consultants	7.5	8	11
Facilities served	133	244	272
Families/Children Benefited	226	434	449
Counties Served		48	
Teachers Receiving Consultation		837	
Children in Classrooms Receiving Consultation		5054	

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ECMH Consultants have strong educational backgrounds in mental health, child development, and early education. They work closely with STARS practitioners, observing children and program practices, and developing goals and strategies to enhance the practitioners' capacity to encourage healthy social and emotional development and to create a learning environment which promotes positive behaviors. In addition, ECMH consultants are knowledgeable about community based mental health, medical and development services enabling referrals to appropriate systems.

The Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Consultation Program is a child-specific consultative model which addresses the social-emotional development of young children within their early care and education program. Since the beginning of the pilot, the project has evolved into a statewide program funded by OCDEL with expanded reach to include children ages three to five. The ECMH Consultation Program is open to all state-registered or certified early care and education facilities enrolled in Keystone STARS, and are administered by each of the six Regional Keys. The Regional Keys are responsible for supporting early care and education practitioners in their effort to offer quality programs.

ECMH services are provided to an individual child at the request of the director or teacher and with the permission of the child's parent or guardian. The program includes an array of customized services that are based on the Pyramid Model for Promoting the Social Emotional Competence of Young Children (Center on the Social-Emotional Foundations for Early Learning). The Pyramid is designed to help organize a variety of evidence-based approaches, activities, and practices focused on young children's healthy social and emotional development. Consultants work directly with the child's teachers and parents to increase their capacity to understand and address the child's developmental needs. Research supports ECMH Consultation as an effective approach to promoting social-emotional competence in young children. Brennan, et.al (2006)[10] found that children in classrooms that received consultation showed greater improvement in social-emotional development and decreased problem behaviors than children in comparison groups that received no consultation. Within the same report there is evidence that as a result of consultation, teachers felt more competent and effective and that they were more attuned to the needs of children. Finally, programs were found to benefit from ECMH Consultation in studies that reported lower staff turnover and fewer children expelled for behavior.

During FY 08-09, the ECMH consultation program contracted with the six Regional Keys to employ six full-time and one half-time early childhood mental health consultants.

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[10] Brennan, E. M., Bradley, J. R., Allen, M. D., & Perry, D. F. (2006). "The evidence base for mental health consultation in early childhood settings: Research synthesis addressing staff and program outcomes." *Early Education and Development.*

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ECMH consultants are Masters-level professionals with strong educational backgrounds in mental health, child development, and early education. Consultation services include:

- Child-specific mental health consultation to early childhood programs such as observation, team planning, creation of individualized strategies, and coaching;
- Targeted professional development to address program-specific needs such as problem identification, referral processes, classroom management strategies, and the promotion of healthy social and emotional development;
- Referrals to community based providers (mental health, early intervention, physical health) and assistance with access to more intensive services to meet the child's and/or family's needs.

Children who are referred to the consultation program receive a social-emotional screening using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional. This screening is completed by the child's teacher, as well as, in most cases, the child's parent/guardian. The screening results are discussed with the child's caregivers and this information, coupled with observations from all team members, informs the next steps in the consultation process, which may include creation of an action plan, on-site coaching, professional development sessions or resources, and/or potential referrals to other community services. The following table demonstrates the reach of the ECMH Consultation Program:

Table 15: Number of Facilities Served by ECMH by STAR level for FY 09-10

	# of Facilities
Start with STARS	7
STAR 1	63
STAR 2	84
STAR 3	58
STAR 4	38
STAR 4A	22
Total	272

Expected annual direct service hours are 840 (70 per month) per ECMH consultant, and the average annual case load is 72 individual clients. ECMH consultants are required to deliver four professional development sessions per year. Consultation is provided based on five behavioral areas of concern: Aggression, Attachment, Communication, Interaction, and Self-Regulation. As of June 2010, 449 children have benefitted from ECMH consultation and 132 of these children have met the goals of the action plan.

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Table 16: ECMH Reason and Outcome of Consultation

	Aggression	Communication	Interaction	Self-Reg	Attachment	Total
Met Goals	49	15	16	51	1	132
Declined/ Discontinued	58	9	16	39	2	124
Referral	17	6	9	18	0	50
Closed- Other	14	2	0	7	0	23
Still Active	32	8	9	27	2	78
Monitored	15	4	5	18	0	42

The ECMH Consultation Program is an essential component of Keystone STARS. The quality of the early care and education environment is positively affected by the on-site coaching and assistance of the ECMH consultant as demonstrated by a reported decrease in expulsions of children from child care due to difficult behaviors.

Links to Learning (L2L)

Links to Learning is a series of 25 hours of professional development modules, developed by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) to support practitioner understanding of the role of afterschool in providing complementary supports to ensure developmental progress of children. Participants learn how to guide curriculum planning in afterschool and how to link activities to learning standards and quality standards. The content of the modules also explores theme- and project-based learning, coordinating and communicating with schools, and family engagement. The L2L modules include:

- Theoretical Framework - Learning and Development
- Curriculum Planning Basics (including Youth Engagement)
- Linking Activities to Benchmarks and Standards
- Theme- and Project-based Learning (including Youth Engagement)
- Coordinating and Communicating with Schools
- Family Engagement
- Key Learning Area: Social and Emotional Learning
- Key Learning Area: Physical Activity and Healthy Learning
- Key Learning Area: Science
- Key Learning Area: Technology
- Key Learning Area: Arts
- Key Learning Area: Math
- Key Learning Area: Literacy
- Key Learning Area: Homework

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This series of professional development was created to support school-age practitioners participating in Keystone STARS and is recognized in the Keystone STARS standards.

Keystone STARS Standard - Links to Learning Foundations, which consists of four modules, meets STAR 2 Director Qualifications Core Series requirement for learning standards for school-age programs. Other modules meet STAR 3 annual Staff Development requirements in the area of curriculum and learning standards and support Partnerships with Family and Community.

The modules in the foundations series include:
- Theoretical Framework - Learning and Development
- Curriculum Planning Basics
- Linking Activities to Benchmarks and Standards
- Theme- and Project-based Learning (including Youth Engagement)

Teacher Induction

As required by the Guidance for the PA Pre-K Counts program, all lead teachers in PA Pre-K Counts classrooms must be certified in Early Childhood Education (ECE). In order for community-based early care and education programs (including PA Pre-K Counts, Keystone STARS, Head Start, Licensed Nursery Schools, and Child Care PA Pre-K Counts providers) to develop and maintain a highly qualified and stable workforce, Keystone STARS program providers offer teachers the same level of professional experience and opportunity for career advancement as do public school districts. In public school district settings, teachers who have Instructional Level I certification have six years in which they may work toward their Instructional Level II certification, after which time their certificates lapse or become invalid, meaning they are no longer considered certified to teach.

Under policy revisions made in 2008 by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) regarding eligibility for the Instructional Level II certificate of early childhood education certified teachers in community-based settings, such teachers may now count their service time in these community-based settings towards acquisition of their Instructional Level II certificate. Now, ECE certified teachers will be able to remain in community-based early care and education settings and still advance their careers and obtain the next higher level teaching certificate.

An Instructional I Certificate is valid for six service years. Therefore, the educator has six years of teaching in which to complete all requirements to convert to a Level II certificate. Requirements for converting a Level I certificate to a Level II certificate include the following:

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a. 24 post baccalaureate credits of collegiate study
b. 3 years of satisfactory teaching on an Instructional I Certificate
c. Completion of a Pennsylvania Department of Education-approved Teacher Induction Program
d. 6 satisfactory semi-annual evaluations of teaching performance
e. A completed *Instructional I to Instructional II Assessment* (PDE 427) with a "Satisfactory" rating for teachers who were certified on or after September 1, 2001.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education published *Induction Plan Guidelines (Guidelines)* in May 2002, "…to help school entities and agencies prepare induction plans that meet the state requirements to provide a high quality induction experience for new teachers and educational specialists." While the *Guidelines* are written for public school districts, the requirements for community-based providers are very much the same and the language should simply be interpreted to apply appropriately to the specific type of provider in question.

Induction Plans must include the following elements:

- A requirement that all ECE certified teachers must participate in the program. This will include all ECE Level I certified teachers, some of whom may have had many years of teaching experience in a community-based setting but have never been included in a PDE approved Teacher Induction Program.
- An Induction coordinator and a description of the individuals who developed the plan and how they were selected.
- A list of the goals and competencies for the Induction program.
- A description of how the needs of inductees will be assessed.
- A list of how the mentors for each inductee, required by Chapter 49 of the State Board of Education Regulations, will be selected.
- A timeline of activities/topics, including the Code of Conduct, to be carried out/addressed.
- A description of the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the Induction Program.
- A description of how records of participation and Teacher Induction Program completion will be kept.

Cultural Competency

OCDEL, through the PA Key, offers supports to providers concerning Effective Strategies for Promoting Systematic Cultural Competence. These strategies include the promotion of cultural competence in early childhood and school-age programs, policies and practices by:

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- Creating an understanding among professionals of the complexities of family structures within diverse cultures that influence child development and learning.

- Using knowledge and understanding of the diverse cultural, ethnic, and racial context of children and families to:
  o Create learning opportunities and environments for children that result in positive child outcomes;
  o Enhance interaction with children and families from diverse cultural backgrounds;
  o Develop and maintain respectful, reciprocal relationships that support and empower families from diverse cultural backgrounds.

- Acknowledging and valuing the strengths of diverse families and involving all families positively and meaningfully in the development and learning of their children to better meet the developmental and educational needs of all children from diverse cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds.

Race Matters

In partnership with the Pennsylvania Build Initiative, OCDEL continues to implement strategies to better evaluate racial equity and diversity among OCDEL's programs and the broader early childhood community. Using the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Race Matters Toolkit*, OCDEL began work in 2007-2008 to examine to what extent its programs, policies, practices, and communications are effectively serving all of Pennsylvania's children and families, to identify discrepancies among various racial or cultural groups, and to determine ways in which the commonwealth can address those discrepancies.

OCDEL encourages its partners and programs to implement racial equity tools as they examine their organizations, leadership, and access to services; analyze and collect data; and communicate needs. The goal is to integrate the examination of racial equity into all of the early childhood community's work by training Community Engagement Groups, providers of OCDEL services, and OCDEL leadership staff on how to use these tools as program practices and policies are developed or revised tools are used. The racial equity lens is currently being applied to revisions of the *Core Body of Knowledge for Early Childhood and School-Age Practitioners* and the *Professional Development Record* which is used to record professional development accomplishments and ongoing needs.

There are two main sections to the *Race Matters* initiative in PA:

I. *Race Matters: Classroom Practices to Support Conversations about Race and Culture in Early Childhood Settings*:

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- To examine program and classroom practices that support racial equity and tolerance in the early childhood education classroom;
- To identify specific strategies to address race and culture and impact classroom behaviors and environment through the development of an action plan that engages all stakeholders.

II. *Race Matters: Exploring Program Policies and Practices:*
- To use selected components of the *Race Matters Toolkit* designed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation to examine program policies and practices;
- To improve program policies and practices to ensure equal opportunities for all and specifically to reduce racial disparities.

Building on these efforts, in 2008-2009, the initiative continued to include a variety of professional development opportunities reaching more than 300 participants from OCDEL, Regional Keys, national BUILD initiative, cross system technical assistance organizations, and faculty from higher education institutions. Programs impacted include Keystone STARS, PA Pre-K Counts, Early Intervention, Early Childhood Mental Health, Head Start, Subsidy, Children's Trust Fund, and Certification.

In 2009 - 2010, a 12-hour series of professional development modules related to racial equity and tolerance in the early learning classroom was created and introduced to 42 instructors representing a range of organizations including Head Start, intermediate units, school districts, cooperative extension, Regional Keys, Pre-K Counts, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, AEYC Affiliates, and STARS Technical Assistance. "Supporting Conversation about Race and Culture in Early Childhood Settings" will be implemented through the Regional Keys in 2010 - 2011.

Pathways to Cultural Competence

The goal of NAEYC's *Pathways to Cultural Competence Project* is to give early childhood programs that are participating in their state's QRIS two checklists to help guide them in reflecting and improving upon their use of culturally-competent practices. The goal is for staff in early childhood programs to reflect upon the program's use of culturally-competent practices and determine areas in which they can improve.

The checklists are arranged by the concepts of cultural competence that were developed by a group of nationally-recognized experts in 2008. The summarized concepts are:

Concept 1: Children are nested in families
Concept 2: Identify shared goals among families and staff

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Concept 3: Authentically incorporate cultural traditions and history in the classroom

Concept 4: Acknowledge child development as a culturally-driven, ongoing process that should be supported across contexts in a child's life

Concept 5: Individuals and institutions' practices are embedded in culture

Concept 6: Ensure decisions and policies embrace home languages and dialects

Concept 7: Ensure policies and practices embrace and respect families cultural values, attitudes, and beliefs toward learning

Concept 8: Equalize balances of power; counter stereotyping, and bias through intentional teaching.

In the spring of 2009, Pennsylvania introduced the NAEYC *Cultural Competence Project* through a cross-sector professional development and technical assistance webinar. Moving forward, Pennsylvania will identify strategies for embedding these checklists in the current work around Continuous Quality Improvement, *Race Matters*, and through Professional Development and Technical Assistance efforts.

English Language Learner Toolkit

The *ELL Tool Kit* is an initiative of OCDEL and is a collaborative effort between the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare (DPW) and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to address the needs of infants, toddlers, and PreK-4 English Language Learners (ELLs) from immigrant, refugee, and migrant families within the commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The *ELL Tool Kit* has been developed to provide research-based information, guidelines, and principles for early learning professionals to promote culturally competent practice. While it provides a broad range of information about young ELLs and their families, its primary purposes are:

- To define cultural competence and proficiency;
- To describe second language acquisition;
- To unpack myths and realities about ELLs;
- To highlight research and best practices for educating and supporting young ELLs and their families; and
- To outline strategies to build and sustain culturally competent and proficient early learning professionals and organizations.

Pennsylvania's *English Language Learner Early Care and Education Tool Kit* - including the Research Brief, six tools, web resources, and OCDEL presentation materials can be accessed at the following website:
http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=ELLToolkit

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Career Lattice

The Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality Career Lattice is an integral part of Keystone STARS Performance Standards and acts as a guide to the education levels required for many different positions in the Early Care and Education field. The Career Lattice encourages practitioners to attain credentials and degrees and to plan their educational pathway according to the position that they are interested in attaining.

The term "career lattice" refers to a framework that outlines multiple pathways for professional growth and development. It allows the early childhood education and school age care practitioner to move vertically, horizontally, or diagonally across the Early Learning system in order to advance their career. The framework also provides information regarding the minimum requirements of some positions within the system so that practitioners can plan their education in relation to the position they are seeking. The Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality Career Lattice is organized in eight levels and includes a continuum of professional development from entry level through credit-bearing coursework and degree attainment.

The goal of this lattice is to ensure that children in Pennsylvania are being educated by professionals who have achieved adequate levels of education that are consistent across the commonwealth. Also, the lattice serves as a guide for those who are interested in related positions within the field by indicating the typical requirements for those positions.

Many practitioners within ECE and school age care may have degrees in related fields. While it is important to keep these practitioners in the field, the lattice helps to reinforce the value of ECE specific content to child outcomes by requiring varying numbers of ECE credits to meet lattice levels.

The following is a summary of each level of the Career Lattice; please refer to Appendix F for additional detail.

LEVEL I

This is an entry level and starting point for practitioners in the field such as Family Child Care Providers, Child or School Age Care Aides and Assistant Teachers, or Aides for Early Head Start and Head Start. The 15 hour Orientation Training can vary across programs. The content of the Orientation Training as well as the requirements for completion will vary from sector to sector. Regardless of educational level, all practitioners who are new to the field and have not previously worked directly with children should have the opportunity to participate in an orientation session.

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LEVEL II

This level lists the minimum amount of professional development for practitioners such as Assistant Teachers and Assistant Group Supervisors within Child or School Age Care. The 45 hours of professional development includes the minimum 15 hours of Orientation credit. The additional 30 hours of professional development may be workshop, seminar, or college credit based experiences.

LEVEL III

Practitioners who have met the minimum requirement to serve as Assistant Teachers and Assistant Group Supervisors working in Child or School Age Care and Teachers and Home Visitors within Early Head Start and Head Start may be found at this level. Acceptable certificates or diplomas can vary based on the position. Some examples of the required credentials are a Child Development Associate (CDA), Specialized Certificates, or Diplomas in ECE or Child Development, which range from nine to 18 credits.

LEVEL IV

Assistant Teachers or Group Supervisors in Child or School Age Care programs, as well as Assistant Teachers or Para-Professionals working in Public Schools, are some of the individuals who may be found at this level. These are practitioners who have earned 30 college credits including 12 ECE specific credits that may articulate into a degree.

LEVEL V

The practitioners who have met the minimum requirements to be a Director, Lead Teacher, or Group Supervisor for a Child or School Age Care program or Assistant Teachers in Private Academic Schools may be at this lattice level. These are individuals who have already earned an Associate's (AA) or Associate's of Applied Science (AAS) degree that includes 18 ECE specific credits.

LEVEL VI

Directors, Lead Teachers, or Group Supervisors in Child or School Age Care programs; Directors, Coordinators, and Teachers in Early Head Start or Head Start; various positions within Early Intervention; Public School Teachers; Teachers, Administrators, and Directors for Private Academic Schools; and Technical Assistance (TA), Consultants, Mentors, and Instructors may be found at this level. They are practitioners who have earned a Bachelor's (BA/BS) degree including 30 ECE specific credits.

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LEVEL VII

> This level incorporates all the positions listed at Level VI and is also the minimum criteria established for faculty in Higher Education. This group of practitioners has achieved a Master's (MA) degree including 30 ECE specific credits.

LEVEL VIII

> This is the highest level of the lattice. Any practitioner who has chosen to obtain a Doctorate (Ph.D or Ed.D) degree has attained additional knowledge beyond the minimum requirements for positions listed in the lattice. The education achieved by these practitioners includes 30 ECE specific credits.

Higher Education

The research regarding outcomes for children when practitioners have Professional Development in Early Childhood content is compelling. Working with young children is a profession that requires knowledge of how children grow and develop, as well as the skills to communicate effectively with children and parents. Research compiled within the last fifteen years underscores the important of high quality early learning and school age programs to child outcomes, and the importance of practitioner professional development to providing quality care and education.

T.E.A.C.H.

The Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Scholarship Program works with providers, colleges, and child care staff members to offer scholarships and support systems that improve the education and compensation of child care staff. Since its implementation in September 1998, T.E.A.C.H. has expanded to offer scholarships in 58 counties statewide. By helping to increase professionalism, raise wages, and reduce turnover of child care staff, T.E.A.C.H. is taking an active role in bringing higher quality care to Pennsylvania's children. T.E.A.C.H. is administered by the Pennsylvania Child Care Association (PACCA).

T.E.A.C.H. has assisted 5,067 child care staff to date in continuing their education with various degrees, certificates, and credentials. The program has received increased participation from colleges, sponsors, and recipients since 1998 and continues to expand across state.

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Table 17: T.E.A.C.H. Participation by Fiscal Year

	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09
Colleges	14	14	20	20	22	22	30	34	39	44	48
Sponsors	231	159	575	535	600	584	700	769	1026	1219	1423
Recipients	292	333	744	930	838	803	1023	1232	1928	1423	3357

Table 18: T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Recipients by Scholarship Type

	# in 09-10	Total unduplicated #
AA Center	1158	3313
AA Family	85	364
CDA Center	92	555
CDA Family	1	20
BA Center	358	558
BA Family	37	56
CO Center	77	100
CO Family	2	2
DC Center	29	71
MA Center	0	28
Total # of Recipients	*1839*	*5067*

Notes: Total unduplicated is for Scholarship from Fall 1998 – Summer 2010 and funded by all sources; *AA = Associate Degree; CDA = Child Development Associate Credential; BA = Bachelor's Degree; CO = Certification Only; DC = Director Credential; MA = Master's Degree*

Voucher Program

PA Keys to Professional Development Refund Voucher Program offers reimbursement for courses that earn college credits (including CDA coursework) and payment for the CDA assessment. Vouchers are available to teachers working in STAR 1 or higher child care programs, or in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts classrooms. In 2009-2010, approximately 2,808 vouchers were awarded to professionals for their coursework.

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Table 19: Voucher Guidelines & Requirements for each year

	06-07	07-08	08-09
Total Amount	$569,695	$695,613	$1,176,466
Reimbursement requirements			
Reimburse 90% of tuition costs	X	X	X
Up to $500 per credit hour	X	X	X
Reimbursement for the CDA Assessment Fee	X	X	X
Cannot be used toward books, materials, or fees	X	X	X
Up to six credits of college coursework per year	X		
Up to $3,000 of college coursework per year		X	X
Ineligible if receiving funding through T.E.A.C.H.		X	X
Practitioner must receive a grade of "C" or better		X	
Practitioner must receive a grade of "B" or better			X
Applicant requirements			
Must currently be participating in Keystone STARS	X	X	X
Must currently be employed by a program that is designated a Keystone STAR 1 or higher		X	X
Must be a resident of Pennsylvania			X
Must work in a program at least 20 hours per week			X
Course requirements, Course must…			
provide at least one (1) college credit or convert to at least one (1) college credit	X		
have content related to early childhood or school-age	X		
provide at least one (1) college credit OR be a CDA course conducted by a college/university		X	
be in a program that leads to a degree in early childhood education or child development for ECE practitioners		X	
be in a program that leads to an elementary education or recreation degree for school age practitioners		X	
provide at least one (1) college credit and be conducted by an accredited college/university			X
be in a program for the CDA, Director or School-Age Credential OR part of a program that leads to a degree or certification for early childhood education (ECE) practitioners OR leads to an elementary education or recreation degree for school age practitioners.			X

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Gate Opener

The Gate Opener initiative is a joint project of the Office of Child Development & Early Learning (OCDEL) in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Key and the Grable Foundation, the Heinz Endowments and the William Penn Foundation. In 2009 - 2010, nine institutions of higher education received funding to work with early childhood professionals on various challenges these individuals face in accessing four-year institutions, staying in school and obtaining a Bachelor's degree in Child Development or ECE, with or without ECE Certification. Some of the barriers addressed in the first year of the project included PRAXIS review support, a need for non-traditional scheduling options, student teaching placement options, articulation issues among two and four year institutions, and limited ECE offerings, especially at the post baccalaureate level. Approximately 577 early childhood professionals have benefited from the project to date.

Ten higher education institutions have been approved for funding to work with early childhood professionals in accessing baccalaureate degree programs, staying in school and graduating with a Child Development or ECE degree with/without Teaching Certification.

Year One 2009-2010: Shippensburg University, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Keystone College, King's College, Arcadia University, Eastern University, Carlow University, Point Park University, and Lock Haven University

Year Two 2010-2011: Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Keystone College, Arcadia University, Eastern University, Neumann University, Chestnut Hill College, Carlow University, Point Park University, Slippery Rock University, and Lock Haven University

Articulation Agreements

In light of compelling research findings on the benefit of having a well educated teacher in an early childhood classroom, numerous states across the nation, including Pennsylvania, are creating policies to address the surge in demand for early childhood teachers and encourage growth of trained and qualified early childhood professionals. Such policies include increasing the level of educational requirements for teachers in all early childhood settings in order to build a quality early education continuum. Keystone STARS participants at the STAR 4 level, for instance, required that at least 50% of their lead teachers hold Bachelor's degrees in either Early Childhood Education or Child Development; however, difficulties in transferring Associate degree credits towards a four-year institution created barriers for early childhood professionals in improving the quality of their education. In response to these barriers, OCDEL, in collaboration with the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), began developing a

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Statewide early childhood education Program-to-Program Articulation agreement to allow students the ability to transfer credits between two- and four-year institutions.

A Pennsylvania Early Childhood Program to Program Articulation is a seamless transfer of an ECE Associate degree program that contains a 30 credit early childhood professional studies curriculum aligned with NAEYC Associate Degree Standards and PDE PK-4 core competencies, into a PK-4 certificate program with 54 or more credits counted towards graduation. The 54 or more credits include 24 or more ECE credits and a minimum of 30 general education credits. The accepting institution will not increase the total number of education and/or general education credits required for graduation from that institution for transferring students. The articulation is based on shared standards, competencies, and outcomes and requires completion of the associate degree with a GPA of 2.8 or greater and passing the Praxis 1 Exam.

In 2008-2009, OCDEL and PA Key, in collaboration with PASSHE, funded four ECE program-to-program articulation agreement pilot projects in the commonwealth. The four teams, made up of both two- and four-year colleges and universities, including private institutions, are led by West Chester University, Shippensburg University, Bloomsburg University, and Slippery Rock University respectively. A total of 32 ECE program-to-program articulation agreements have been signed between two- and four-year institutions to date, thereby creating opportunities for students with associate degrees to seamlessly transfer into a four-year baccalaureate Pre-K-Grade 4 degree program at each of the participating institutions and gain junior status. This is a historic and momentous accomplishment, as these students will be able to transfer between 54 and 60 associate degree credits into the baccalaureate program without losing credits for courses already taken at the two year level.

An articulation agreement assures accessible, affordable education for early childhood professionals and provides a straightforward pathway for those with a completed Associate degree in ECE into a four-year institution for Baccalaureate degree completion. It is an officially approved agreement that is designed to help students make a smooth and simple transition from one level of educational preparation to another without having to lose credits already earned. Without such an agreement, students who enter a bachelor degree program with an associate degree are forced to repeat courses, thus slowing the process of building a qualified teacher corps.

There are a total of 33 early childhood education Program-to-Program Articulation agreements in Pennsylvania to date. Below is a list of existing early childhood education Program-to-Program articulation agreements in Pennsylvania:

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- Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania
  - Lehigh Carbon Community College
  - Luzerne County Community College
  - Northampton Community College
- East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania
  - Northampton Community College
- DeSales University
  - Northampton Community College
- Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania
  - Northampton Community College
  - Pennsylvania College of Technology
- Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania
  - Harrisburg Area Community College
  - Northampton Community College
- Carlow University/Slippery Rock University/California University/Clarion University/Indiana University of PA
  - Penn Highlands Community College
  - Westmoreland Community College
  - Community College of Beaver
  - Butler County Community College
  - Community College of Allegheny College
- Carlow University
  - Penn College of Technology

Director Credentialing

Pennsylvania Director Credential is designed to provide a standard by which to measure program and fiscal management and leadership abilities of early childhood and school-age directors and administrators. It is also a requirement of Keystone STARS continuous quality improvement program at the STAR 3 and above level. There are eight core knowledge areas and 78 learning objectives for the Director Credential. Administering an early childhood or school-age program is a complex job that requires extensive skills, competencies, and knowledge of how children grow and learn; an understanding of child development, program administration, personnel supervision, leadership, and job-related experience. The expectation that directors and administrators of these programs should be well educated and credentialed is gathering momentum around the nation. In keeping with this growing national trend, Pennsylvania has developed the Director Credential program offered through approved institutions of higher education.

As Pennsylvania continues to invest in early childhood and school-age programs and families continue to seek quality developmental and learning experiences for their children, it is critical that the field continues to expand leadership opportunities and

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promote program outcomes and competencies for those administering these programs. Research has tied program quality to director qualifications, skills and competencies. The Pennsylvania Director Credential is designed to provide for and be recognized as a standard by which to measure and validate the abilities and competencies of directors and administrators to administer high quality early childhood and school-age programs. Additionally, it represents a level of personal and professional accomplishment of directors and administrators, and their professional contributions through demonstrated leadership and active engagement in professional endeavors beyond the scope of the daily operation of a program.

In FY 2009-2010, a total of 237 Director Credential certificates were awarded to successful applicants, an increase of 60% from FY 2007-2008.

Table 20: Number of Director Credentials Awarded by Region and Fiscal Year

	FY 07-08	FY 08-09	FY 09-10
Central	16	20	18
Northeast	41	76	64
Northwest	20	27	29
South Central	25	24	21
Southeast	32	91	66
Southwest	16	26	39
Total	*150*	*264*	*237*

Early Childhood Executive Leadership Institute

The Early Childhood Executive Leadership (ECEL) Institute focuses on what early childhood leaders and educators need to know and be able to do in order to understand and connect the variety of systems serving children (birth to grade 4) and to ensure instructional improvements that will lead to student growth in cognitive, social, emotional, and attentional areas.

The five-day ECEL Institute has been designed primarily for superintendents and assistant superintendents, principals and assistant principals, and early childhood development center/facility directors. Ideally, communities of participants come from the same service area or network so that members of the development and education system(s) can engage, integrate, and implement key concepts and approaches—and thereby ensure smooth transitions across the elements.

Participants acquire the deep knowledge and leadership skills needed to successfully identify and navigate the challenges and opportunities confronting Pre-K-to-Grade 4 early childhood developers and educators in delivering coordinated, aligned, and

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coherent learning experiences to students (birth through grade 4)—in collaboration with the families. Participants will have the opportunity to: conduct ECEL leadership and program self-assessments; apply well-researched ECEL instructional practices; develop strategies to increase teacher, family, and community capacity for ECEL improvement; and engage in an action project.

Learning Objectives
- Become familiar with advances in the science of early childhood growth and early brain development;
- Develop an awareness of the important influence of early childhood educational experiences on the production of a sturdy foundation for future cognitive, social, and emotional development;
- Identify the multiple contexts within which children develop and summarize the best research, policies, and practices to apply in a given context;
- Acquire leadership strategies for effectively coordinating early childhood and K-4 learning environments, including transitions from preschool to kindergarten and on to the primary grades.

Program Requirements
The five-day Institute consists of an initial three consecutive days of professional development, followed by a break in which participants complete an action project focused on their particular school or program. The action project is a major component of the Institute that allows participants to immediately apply what they have learned. Completion of the project requires time beyond the Institute sessions. Within three to four months, participants return for the final two days of Institute training.

Facilitators with expertise in Birth to Grade 4 leadership deliver the sessions. National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) provides participants with an ECEL handbook, two textbooks, and a CD with support materials to prepare for each day of the institute. A NISL faculty coach helps guide participant projects between sessions. Group projects may be engaged in by 2-3 participants. There is no pre-work prior to the first day of the Institute, but some preparation work following the first, second, and third days. The work includes completing diagnostic tools, reading selections from textbooks, completing the online materials, and conducting and implementing the action projects.

Table 21: ECE Leadership Institute Pilot Cohort Details

	# Participants
King of Prussia	31
Harrisburg	37
PDE/Cohort at LLIU 13	31
Total Participants	99

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Support and Services to Providers

Keystone STARS encourages and supports providers to develop and sustain higher levels of quality in order to strengthen outcomes for children and families and to improve school readiness. It is understood that adequate financing is part of the quality equation. OCDEL supports programs by offering financial incentives and technical assistance.

The financial supports to providers include Support Grants and Merit Awards, as well as STARS Add-on rates for STAR 2 and above for children enrolled in the Child Care Works subsidy program. An Education and Retention Award (ERA) is available for qualifying staff. See: http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_STARS_Grants

Technical Assistance to meet STARS Standards is provided by the Regional Keys for all providers designated at a STAR level. The Keystone STARS Technical Assistance (TA) Accountability and Quality Assurance Benchmarks protocol establishes baselines for expectations of measurable success of the technical assistance delivered. Advances have been made through convening a cross systems TA group in defining TA guiding principles, competencies, and professional development.
http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Programs_Tech

Monetary Support and Awards

Keystone STARS is an initiative to improve, support, and recognize the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) efforts of Pennsylvania's early learning and school-age programs. Providing financial supports to providers serving children who are vulnerable and at risk is one strategy implemented by OCDEL to promote continuous quality improvement. Table 22 below presents the five different STARS grants and awards provided by OCDEL and the amount distributed for each financial support by fiscal year. Overall, the total amount of financial supports has increased each fiscal year from 2005-2006 to 2008-2009.

Table 22: Keystone STARS Support and Awards Trends

	FY 05-06	FY 06-07	FY 07-08	FY 08-09
Start with STARS Grant	$935,569	$398,525	$876,046	$397,943
STARS Support Grant	$3,898,852	$1,720,071	$2,471,174	$2,159,876
STARS Merit Award	$11,153,541	$14,227,704	$15,059,397	$18,395,122
STARS ERA	$6,450,545	$6,294,247	$6,690,166	$7,828,519
STARS Add-on	Did not exist	Did not exist	$2,391,678	$6,770,328
Total	$22,438,507	$22,640,547	$27,488,461	$35,551,788

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OCDEL is committed to providing financial supports to eligible participants of the Keystone STARS program to enhance quality learning experiences for Pennsylvania's children. It is the responsibility of the award recipient/provider to expend award funds in a manner that supports Continuous Quality Improvement and aligns the provider with research-based quality standards and criteria. To guide the intentional expenditure of award funds, written justifications have been added to each award category. OCDEL provides guidance for providers regarding Best Practices in Keystone STARS Financial Award Spending which can be found at http://www.pakeys.org/pages/starsDocs.aspx.

All grants and awards are site-specific. The provider must hold a regular DPW Certificate of Compliance. If a provider has a Provisional Certificate of Compliance, award funds may be available when the provider has corrected the violations that lead to the provisional certificate of compliance.

STARS grants and awards in previous years must have been expended in accordance with grant agreements between the provider and the Regional Key. To receive Tiered Reimbursement award funds, the provider must have an agreement with the local Child Care Information Services (CCIS) office, which means a provider must be willing to accept for enrollment a child who qualifies for a Child Care Works subsidy, when the provider has space available.

The amount of the provider's Tiered Reimbursement financial award is based upon the following:
- o The provider's size based upon the calculation of the full-time and part-time enrollment of children receiving child care services;
- o The provider's percentage of full-time and part-time enrollment receiving Child Care Works subsidy or the commonwealth's Early Intervention Services. If a child is receiving both Subsidy and Early Intervention Services, the child will be counted only one time;
- o To be included in the award percentage, children must be enrolled in Child Care services. Children funded exclusively through Head Start, PA Pre-K Counts, or Early Intervention do not count toward the award size;
- o A provider may be eligible for a higher award by serving a 26% or higher population receiving subsidy or Early Intervention (EI), however, the EI population should not exceed more than 25%.

Start with STARS Grant

The 2004-2005 fiscal year saw the advent of the Start with STARS enrollment, establishing a continuum of quality from Certification regulations to STAR 4. By enrolling, providers denote their intention to begin the journey of quality enhancement at their facility and may access a Start with STARS Grant.

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The Start with STARS Grant is available for one time only to providers that are newly entering Keystone STARS. Upon enrollment in STARS, a Start with STARS Grant may be requested to help address the provider's environmental safety needs that are identified on the Site Environment Checklist. The following tables provide the number and amount of Start with STARS grants that were received by fiscal year and region. The number and amount of Start with STARS grants varies depending on the number of providers entering Keystone STARS each year.

Table 23: Number of Providers Receiving Start with STARS Grants

	FY 05-06	FY 06-07	FY 07-08	FY 08-09
Central	144	53	67	43
Northeast	152	67	94	65
Northwest	166	61	97	45
South Central	176	69	105	74
Southeast	239	167	447	144
Southwest	171	95	103	42
Total	1048	512	913	413

Table 24: Total Start with STARS Grant Funds Issued by Region

	FY 05-06	FY 06-2007	FY 07-08	FY 08-2009
Central	$128,646	$49,242	$58,674	$41,530
Northeast	$167,892	$68,828	$79,277	$69,909
Northwest	$153,988	$43,519	$71,627	$38,309
South Central	$227,491	$56,083	$101,814	$62,237
Southeast	$296,000	$180,853	$473,882	$144,089
Southwest	$188,816	$94,440	$90,772	$41,869
Total	$935,569	$398,525	$876,046	$397,943

STARS Support Grant

The Keystone STARS Support Grant assists STAR 1 designated providers in achieving a higher STAR designation through Continuous Quality Improvement. The Support Grant covers two categories of supports, including Professional Development for staff and Site Supports for improvements to the physical location. To be eligible for the Support Grant, a provider must meet the following requirements:

1. The provider must meet all Keystone STARS Performance Standards associated with a STAR 1 designation.
2. The provider must maintain at least a STAR 1 designation during the approval and payment phase of the Support Grant.

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A provider may receive only one Support Grant in a fiscal year and may only receive the STARS Support Grant twice. The following tables present the number and amount of STARS Support Grants that were received by fiscal year, region, and type of support grant.

Table 25: Number of Support Grants Issued

	FY 05-06	FY 06-07	FY 07-08	FY 08-09
Central				
Site Supports	179	155	171	114
Professional Development	38	18	17	25
Northeast				
Site Supports	240	160	210	183
Professional Development	49	38	36	30
Northwest				
Site Supports	227	149	108	127
Professional Development	29	25	13	28
South Central				
Site Supports	247	222	260	248
Professional Development	48	39	41	61
Southeast				
Site Supports	444	243	515	448
Professional Development	69	24	76	97
Southwest				
Site Supports	149	117	132	131
Professional Development	16	16	20	36
Total	*1735*	*1206*	*1599*	*1528*

Table 26: Total Support Grant Funds by Region and Type

	FY 05-06	FY 06-07	FY 07-08	FY 08-09
Central				
Site Supports	$369,143	$212,194	$235,780	$171,960
Professional Development	$20,446	$11,810	$3,693	$5,566
Northeast				
Site Supports	$601,488	$297,365	$418,232	$342,002
Professional Development	$38,428	$10,051	$18,524	$13,305
Northwest				
Site Supports	$437,738	$201,896	$127,374	$163,452
Professional Development	$34,783	$8,370	$6,902	$7,513
South Central				
Site Supports	$564,427	$322,602	$420,190	$388,699
Professional Development	$36,707	$26,416	$21,702	$16,729
Southeast				
Site Supports	$1,355,383	$425,905	$915,661	$808,325
Professional Development	$74,966	$12,178	$47,314	$39,215

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Southwest				
Site Supports	$357,285	$185,142	$247,103	$193,786
Professional Development	$8,058	$6,142	$8,699	$9,325
Total	*$3,898,852*	*$1,720,071*	*$2,471,174*	*$2,159,876*

STARS Merit Award

The STARS Merit Award supports continuous quality improvement in early learning and school-age programs to achieve a STAR 2 or higher. This award is available to eligible providers at a STAR 2 or higher and includes expenses relating to Equipment and Supplies/Materials, Professional Development, Accreditation Costs, Staff Bonuses, Salaries and Compensation, and other expenses.

To be eligible for the Merit Award, a provider must meet the following requirements:
1. The provider must meet all Keystone STARS Performance Standards associated with a STAR 2 (or higher) designation.
2. The provider must maintain the STAR designation for which the provider received the Merit Award during the approval and payment phase of the Merit Award, and it is expected that the provider is making a commitment to maintain the awarded STAR designation.

STAR 2 providers may be eligible to receive a Merit Award once a year for up to three years in order to improve quality to reach STAR 3 and 4. Award funding for STAR 2 providers will be extended for an additional two years with the submission of a detailed STARS Continuous Quality Improvement Plan. A provider may receive only one Merit Award per STAR level per fiscal year. In the event that a provider achieves a higher STAR level designation after receiving a Merit Award, the provider may be eligible for additional award funding at a pro-rated level. The number of Merit Awards issued to providers by OCDEL has doubled from fiscal year 2005-2006 to 2008-2009 and the amount of the award has increased from $11 million to $18 million in that time frame. Tables 27 and 28 provide further detail on the number and amount of Merit Awards received by region, fiscal year, and type of expense.

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Table 27: Number of Merit Awards Issued by Region and Type

	FY 05-06	FY 06-07	FY 07-08	FY 08-09
Central				
Accreditation	10	10	9	6
Equip. & Supplies/Materials	55	112	133	173
Other	29	59	72	92
Professional Development	37	42	55	91
Staff Bonuses, Salaries, & Comp.	77	88	91	116
Northeast				
Accreditation	20	27	20	34
Equipment & Supplies/Materials	140	201	231	330
Other	48	113	135	185
Professional Development	88	104	136	169
Staff Bonuses, Salaries, & Comp.	133	145	161	221
Northwest				
Accreditation	3	8	12	16
Equipment & Supplies/Materials	74	138	139	154
Other	20	62	74	89
Professional Development	37	57	79	102
Staff Bonuses, Salaries, & Comp.	85	119	137	164
South Central				
Accreditation	11	12	14	28
Equipment & Supplies/Materials	93	158	190	370
Other	34	118	107	208
Professional Development	52	59	93	198
Staff Bonuses, Salaries, & Comp.	113	115	131	239
Southeast				
Accreditation	37	27	37	45
Equipment & Supplies/Materials	175	221	331	294
Other	32	52	82	113
Professional Development	92	108	181	163
Staff Bonuses, Salaries, & Comp.	205	230	232	185
Southwest				
Accreditation	13	16	21	24
Equipment & Supplies/Materials	88	134	142	186
Other	37	85	83	104
Professional Development	41	54	65	85
Staff Bonuses, Salaries, & Comp.	88	104	107	137
Total	*1967*	*2778*	*3300*	*4321*

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Table 28: Total Merit Award Funds by Region and Type

	FY 05-06	FY 06-07	FY 07-08	FY 08-09
Central				
Accreditation	$5,412	$7,840	$3,720	$2,070
Equipment & Supplies/Materials	$402,212	$624,209	$806,715	$1,103,410
Other	$100,882	$92,714	$121,842	$118,105
Professional Development	$71,295	$64,441	$92,082	$144,701
Staff Bonuses, Salaries, & Comp.	$416,482	$495,115	$364,694	$490,964
Northeast				
Accreditation	$47,515	$12,030	$8,516	$18,751
Equipment & Supplies/Materials	$892,743	$1,548,023	$1,614,039	$2,328,654
Other	$252,049	$327,134	$254,573	$436,817
Professional Development	$163,360	$166,835	$144,159	$194,915
Staff Bonuses, Salaries, & Comp.	$746,784	$833,288	$846,193	$1,348,062
Northwest				
Accreditation	$1,050	$4,375	$6,521	$8,302
Equipment & Supplies/Materials	$575,580	$875,173	$820,812	$839,217
Other	$98,986	$67,353	$106,486	$134,385
Professional Development	$75,729	$89,913	$104,329	$136,360
Staff Bonuses, Salaries, & Comp.	$383,072	$604,176	$658,801	$927,376
South Central				
Accreditation	$8,800	$17,505	$17,118	$16,508
Equipment & Supplies/Materials	$729,478	$1,144,830	$1,303,688	$2,384,828
Other	$81,008	$108,945	$128,248	$278,676
Professional Development	$84,352	$118,264	$140,843	$258,449
Staff Bonuses, Salaries, & Comp.	$730,483	$677,494	$712,008	$1,027,033
Southeast				
Accreditation	$35,565	$19,415	$26,171	$30,980
Equipment & Supplies/Materials	$1,552,640	$2,087,492	$2,569,050	$2,203,356
Other	$165,196	$119,763	$191,551	$181,311
Professional Development	$189,316	$185,006	$375,160	$361,210
Staff Bonuses, Salaries, & Comp.	$1,647,438	$1,834,827	$1,522,905	$1,011,541
Southwest				
Accreditation	$8,243	$16,045	$14,292	$13,962
Equipment & Supplies/Materials	$746,488	$1,165,812	$1,246,880	$1,397,247
Other	$209,010	$194,242	$141,499	$149,923
Professional Development	$70,811	$76,262	$87,692	$152,120
Staff Bonuses, Salaries, & Comp.	$661,562	$649,183	$628,810	$695,888
Total	*$11,153,541*	*$14,227,704*	*$15,059,397*	*$18,395,122*

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STARS Education & Retention Award

The STARS Education & Retention Award (ERA) is available to eligible providers at a STAR 2 or higher. It contains staff-specific awards for highly qualified directors and teaching staff.

To be eligible for the ERA, a provider must meet the following requirements:
1. The provider must meet all Keystone STARS Performance Standards associated with a STAR 2 (or higher) designation.
2. The provider must maintain the STAR designation for which the provider received the ERA during the approval and payment phase of the ERA, and it is expected that the provider is making a commitment to maintain the awarded STAR designation.

The intent of the Keystone STARS Education & Retention Award (ERA) is to provide annual financial awards to highly qualified directors and/or teaching staff who have attained specialized degrees, credentials, and credit-based professional development in content areas that correspond to the age and developmental needs of the children being served. A further intent of the ERA is to assist providers in establishing a stable workforce as they work toward higher levels of quality by reducing turnover and improving the education of teaching staff. To be eligible, a provider must meet site-specific requirements as well as staff-specific requirements. In fiscal year 2008-2009, 1,282 Education and Retention Awards were received by providers, an increase of over 60% from 2005-2006. Tables 29 and 30 outline the number and amount of ERAs issued by region and fiscal year.

Table 29: Number of Providers Receiving Education and Retention Awards by Region

	FY 2005-2006	FY 2006-2007	FY 2007-2008	FY 2008-2009
Central	78	88	112	148
Northeast	149	164	193	260
Northwest	71	101	137	163
South Central	107	120	151	273
Southeast	259	279	317	267
Southwest	105	114	135	171
Total	769	866	1045	1282

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Table 30: Total Education and Retention Award Funds Issued by Region

	FY 2005-2006	FY 2006-2007	FY 2007-2008	FY 2008-2009
Central	$619,230	$592,445	$684,778	$900,509
Northeast	$1,072,585	$1,099,330	$1,198,277	$1,739,041
Northwest	$569,760	$685,685	$758,687	$902,062
South Central	$753,840	$731,465	$861,228	$1,573,406
Southeast	$2,331,740	$2,102,600	$2,055,750	$1,442,891
Southwest	$1,103,390	$1,082,722	$1,131,446	$1,270,610
Total	$6,450,545	$6,294,247	$6,690,166	$7,828,519

STARS Tiered Reimbursement Add-On

Keystone STARS providers serving children who are receiving a Child Care Works (CCW) subsidy for child care can receive additional funds per child as they reach higher STAR levels. The amount of STARS Add-On received by providers has significantly increased each year as can be seen in the table below.

Table 31: STARS CCW Add-On Trend

	2008	2009	2010	Total
Full Time	$1,882,635	$5,551,612	$10,561,300	$17,995,547
STAR 2	$488,686	$1,439,741	$2,264,725	$4,193,152
STAR 3	$439,153	$1,581,275	$3,746,673	$5,767,101
STAR 4	$954,796	$2,530,596	$4,549,902	$8,035,294
Part Time	$509,043	$1,218,716	$1,867,362	$3,595,121
STAR 2	$145,400	$301,167	$406,557	$853,124
STAR 3	$122,656	$357,289	$639,636	$1,119,581
STAR 4	$240,987	$560,260	$821,169	$1,622,416
Total	*$2,391,678*	*$6,770,328*	*$12,428,662*	*$21,590,668*

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Keystone STARS Non-Monetary Program Support

STARS Manager/Specialist

Each Regional Key utilizes STARS Managers/Specialists to provide guidance and direction to early learning facilities and school-age programs to achieve Keystone STARS Standards by engaging in a process of Continuous Quality Improvement. STARS Managers have an expertise about Early Childhood Education attained through a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood or a related field. Additionally, STARS Managers are adept at elemental business practices such as providing guidance for the creation of budgets and business plans to providers.

The STARS Managers have three critical tasks:
1. Interpreting the Keystone STARS Standards;
2. Guiding providers through the standards (being expert on available resources for programs); and
3. Being an expert on the operations and management of the providers in their caseload in order to enable them to develop and meet goals for STAR level, grants, and professional development.

STARS Management services include, but are not limited to:
- Outreach and promotion of Pennsylvania's early learning quality initiatives;
- Interpreting the Keystone STARS Performance Standards;
- Connecting and/or providing practitioners with information, supports, resources, and professional development;
- Collaboratively assisting practitioners to develop and implement appropriate plans to achieve practitioner-defined Keystone STARS goals;
- Designating and awarding Keystone STARS.

Tasks:
- Develop and maintain a working relationship with early learning and school-age providers and practitioners.
- Work in collaboration with Community Engagement Groups (CEG) to promote early learning and school-age education and STARS growth.
- Plan and implement learning communities.
- Develop and monitor provider's individualized improvement plans based on the Keystone STARS levels to help ensure continuous quality improvement.
- Complete an annual planning and projection process with assigned providers.
- Complete reports regarding estimated grant amounts for facilities.
- Inform providers of available resources such as training, additional grants, or consultants.

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- Develop, oversee, and provide educational materials for Keystone STARS providers.
- Provide entry-level technical assistance to programs (business practices, etc.).
- Refer programs to and coordinate support with STARS Technical Assistance (TA) when technical assistance is in-depth and related to a specific standard.
- Maintain frequent regular communication with Certification, Environment Rating Scales (ERS) assessors, STARS TA, and other partners working in the program regarding progress and needs of providers in caseload.
- Provide assistance to facilities interested in requesting grants or awards; complete on-site program assistance to insure grant compliance.
- Systematically maintain awareness of changing early education and school age needs (local, regional, state, national).
- Represent agency at OCDEL, AEYC, PACCA, PD events, and other provider organizations/groups; attend seminars, trainings, and conferences as assigned; network with other agencies when possible.
- Pre-designate programs at appropriate STAR levels based upon criteria and provider information.
- Coordinate with Designator to schedule designation visits.
- Review appropriate sections of grant applications to ensure they meet program requirements.
- Maintain accurate records and timely completion of assigned reports.

As the Regional STARS Managers work with the provider staff in their caseloads, they must assure, that in assisting the providers in meeting the STARS standards, they direct the provider staff to the appropriate resources for professional development. Many of the Keystone STARS standards require enhanced professional development experiences to meet standards.

Technical Assistance

STARS Technical Assistance (TA) is an intensive, one-on-one service provided to participants to help the facility achieve specific Keystone STARS quality performance standards and movement in STAR levels.

Technical Assistance is administered through the Regional Keys, by contract with consultants who have the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to guide programs in the Keystone STARS content areas of Staff Qualifications and Professional Development, Leadership and Management, Early Learning (and School Age) Program, and Partnerships with Family and Community.

The goals of STARS Technical Assistance are:

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Assist - Assist eligible STARS facilities to achieve specific quality performance standards and achieve higher STAR levels using an established action plan.

Enhance - Enhance, but not duplicate, the services provided by other parts of the early childhood education system including the STARS Management process, professional development, and the initiatives of the Department of Public Welfare and the Department of Education.

Promote - Promote a team approach to addressing the needs of practitioners and programs, in conjunction with the STARS Manager and other partners.

Any certified or registered center, group, and/or home-based child care provider, that is enrolled in Keystone STARS at the Start with STARS (SWS) level or above and has enrolled in or completed the Keystone STARS Core Professional Development Series, may request STARS TA services.

Previous Studies on TA

In 2007, two studies of STARS Technical Assistance were conducted in the Southwest Regional Key and Southeast Regional Key by researchers at the University of Pittsburgh and Thomas Jefferson University respectively. Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh analyzed Technical Assistance within the Southwest Regional Key while Thomas Jefferson University reported on the Southeast Regional Key.

Researchers at the Office of Child Development within the University of Pittsburgh analyzed STARS movement for 35 providers with a Closed TA status of which 31 had observable outcomes. They discovered that sixteen STAR 1 providers and ten STAR 2 providers advanced at least one STAR level after receiving Technical Assistance. Also, all four STAR 4 providers maintained their STAR level. The table below presents a comparison of providers receiving TA to all other providers in the Southwest based on STAR movement. The study found that 84% of providers receiving TA advanced a STAR level compared to only 25% of Southwest providers not receiving TA. Also, no providers receiving TA lost a STAR level, but 14% of all other providers in the Southwest moved down a STAR level. The study concluded that TA is effective in assisting providers in advancing a STAR level.

Table 32: STARS Movement by Percentage of Total Practitioners for SW Key and STARS TA

	Advanced STAR Level	Maintained STAR 4 Level	Maintained other STAR Level	Lost STAR Level
TA Practitioners	84%	10%	6%	0%
SW Practitioners	25%	12%	50%	14%

Source: Townsend, Maria Zeglen and Dick, Doris A."STARS TA Benchmarking Summary Data through August 31, 2007." Office of Child Development, University of Pittsburgh. Sept. 2007.

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Thomas Jefferson University also reported on 35 providers receiving TA in the Southeast region between January 2005 and June 2006[11]. Of these 35, nineteen (54.3%) providers moved up at least one STAR level. In comparison, thirteen of the 48 (27.1%) providers not receiving Technical Assistance moved up a STAR level during this time. Due to the small sample size of this research, OCDEL initiated a similar study that examined TA statewide in 2009-2010.

2009-2010 Technical Assistance Study

An evaluation of STARS TA was conducted to determine if TA was associated with a higher rate of upward movement in STAR level during the first three quarters of FY 2009-2010.

During the period of this study, 569 STARS providers received STARS TA and 2,925 providers did not. Providers that had already achieved a STAR 4 level were removed from the study, given that they were not able to move any higher[12]. Each provider receiving TA was categorized in one of five possible statuses:

Table 33: Technical Assistance Status Definitions

Active	Case becomes active when the case enters the intake process. A case remains active through the assignment of the consultant and execution of the service plan.
Closed	Case is closed when the service plan is complete and the exit interview has been conducted.
Deferred	If after beginning TA services a facility requests to put services on hold or is determined not to be ready, the case becomes deferred.
Withdrawal	Case is identified as withdrawal if the facility decides not to proceed after submitting a TA request or if TA services are discontinued by the Regional Key and STARS TA.
Waiting	If a TA request is received and a TA consultant is not available to take the assignment, the facility is placed on the waiting list and given a waiting status.

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[11] *Impact of resources and supports provided to child care providers in Southeastern Pennsylvania enrolled in the Keystone STARS quality improvement system between January 2005 and June 2006.* (2007). Thomas Jefferson University, Child and Family Studies Research Programs.

[12] Fifty-two locations that received TA and 295 providers that did not receive TA were removed because each had a STAR 4 level at the beginning of the fiscal year.

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Figure 6 plots the distribution of direct hours of Technical Assistance provided within each status. TA facilities with Closed Service Plans have received the greatest average number of hours.

Figure 6: Distribution of Direct Hours of TA by TA status
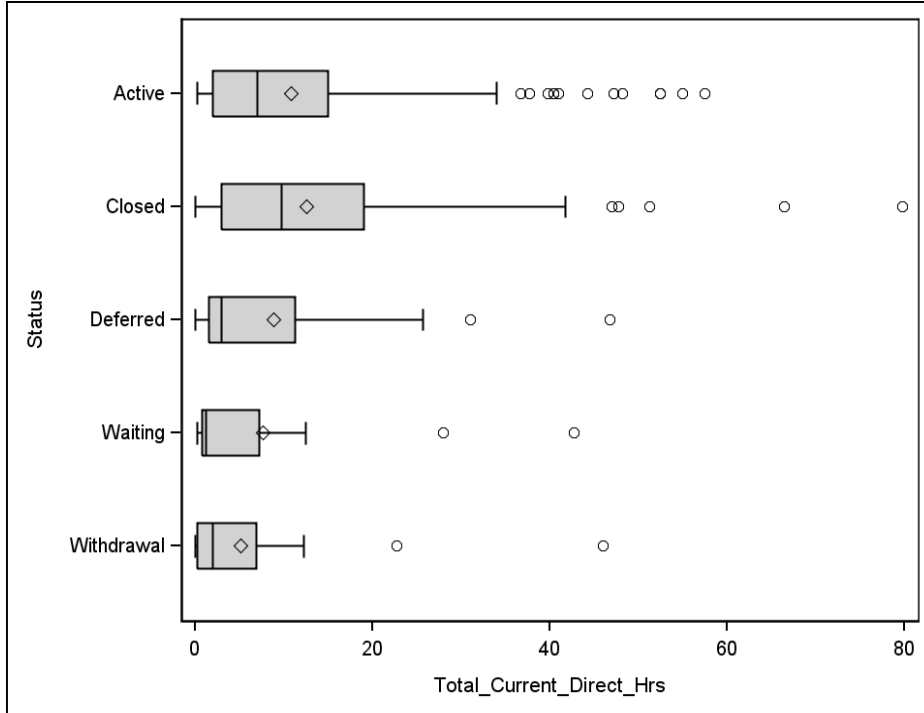
Table 34 displays the number of facilities within each status, as well as the number of STARS facilities not receiving Technical Assistance. The table also shows the number of facilities within each category who have moved up a STAR level within the fiscal year.

Table 34: Technical Assistance Status and STARS Movement in FY 2009-2010

TA Status	Move Up STAR Level		Total	% Move up
	Yes	No		
No TA	722	1908	2630	27.5%
Active	73	152	225	32.4%
Active ≥ 12 dir. hrs.	*27*	*45*	*72*	*37.5%*
Active < 12 dir. hrs.	*46*	*107*	*153*	*30.1%*
Closed	99	116	215	46.1%
Deferred	7	26	33	21.2%
Waiting	5	7	12	41.7%
Withdrawal	10	22	32	31.3%
Total	*916*	*2231*	*3147*	*29.1%*

Notes: Numbers do not include STAR 4 providers and providers who have moved out of the STARS program.

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Table 34 shows that 46.1% of the facilities with Closed TA moved up a STAR level within the previous fiscal year. Closed TA facilities have successfully and completely been administered a TA service plan, and therefore provide the most accurate measurement of the effectiveness of TA. Locations with a Deferred, Waiting, or Withdrawal status are not considered accurate representations of STARS Technical Assistance efficacy.

Of the Active TA facilities, 32.4% attained higher STAR levels. Active facilities are in the process of receiving Technical Assistance, but have not yet completed the service plan. These facilities may or may not be accurate representations of TA depending on how much of the service plan has been administered. For this report, since the average number of hours provided to Closed TA facilities is approximately 12 hours, then Active facilities with 12 or more hours of TA will be included in analyzing the effectiveness of Technical Assistance. Seventy-two Active facilities have received 12 or more hours of TA service, of which 37.5% have move up a STAR level. One hundred fifty-three Active TA facilities received less than 12 hours of service, of which 30.1% have moved up.

Table 35: Odds Ratios for Technical Assistance FY 2009-2010

	# Receiving TA	Moved Up	# Not Receiving TA	Moved Up	Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Limits	
Overall	287	43.9%	2630	27.5%	2.1***	1.61	2.65
Provider Type[a]							
Family^	31	61.3%	654	28.6%	4.0***	1.78	9.10
Group^	15	46.7%	219	24.2%	2.7*	.80	9.07
Center	241	41.5%	1757	27.4%	1.9***	1.41	2.50
STAR Level[b]							
Start w/ STARS[c]	7	100%	540	73.2%	-	-	-
STAR 1^	83	69.9%	1230	17.3%	11.1***	6.63	18.89
STAR 2	120	30.8%	585	9.7%	4.1***	2.48	6.79
STAR 3	77	31.2%	275	20.7%	1.7*	0.99	3.14

Notes: [a] Across all STAR Levels and Regions, [b] Across all Provider Types and Regions, [c] Odds Ratio cannot be estimated because all providers that received TA moved up, [d] Across all Provider Types and STAR Levels, ^ Estimates based on Fisher's Exact Test due to small sample size, *** p<.0001, ** p<.05, * p<.10

The results of the analysis can be seen in Table 35. Of the 287 facilities receiving Technical Assistance, 43.9% achieved a higher STAR level. For facilities not receiving TA, only 27.5% moved up. The odds ratio measures the odds of moving up a STAR level for facilities receiving TA compared to facilities not receiving TA. Facilities receiving Technical Assistance are 2.07 times more likely to move up a STAR level between 08-09 and 09-10 than facilities not receiving Technical Assistance. The 95% confidence limits indicate that there is a 95% chance that the true odds ratio is within these upper and lower limits.

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The odds ratio for Family providers is much higher than for Group or Centers. Of Family providers receiving STARS TA, 61.3% moved up a STAR level within the previous fiscal year. Based on the odds ratio given by Fisher's exact test, Family providers receiving TA are almost four times more likely to achieve higher STAR levels than those not receiving TA. STARS Technical Assistance was also proven to be highly effective for Centers, where it increases the odds of movement by 88%.

All seven facilities receiving Technical Assistance at a Start with STARS level advanced a STAR level. For STAR 1 facilities, the odds of moving up a STAR level were 11 times greater for facilities receiving Technical Assistance. STAR 2 facilities obtaining Technical Assistance were four times more likely to move up. The relationship for STAR 3 facilities was only shown to be marginally statistically significant.

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Accountability: Demonstrating Quality

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) embraces accountability as a core value for Keystone STARS and all early childhood programs and services. Key indicators that are used to assess the effective use of state resources include measures of program quality, child outcomes, and family satisfaction. Data on child outcomes is presented in previous sections of this report. The following includes data from survey and direct observation that demonstrate how Keystone STARS has been an important factor in the statewide advancements in early care and education over the last decade.

2010 Family Survey Results for STARS

The family survey is an opportunity for family members to provide valuable input that is used to guide continuous program improvement efforts statewide.

In the spring of 2008, with stakeholder input, OCDEL developed a statewide cross-program family survey. The tool was designed to include a core set of items (questions) that would be asked of families across OCDEL programs. In January of 2009, the survey tool was piloted across OCDEL programs and in the spring of 2009, a statewide implementation methodology was developed in coordination with the entry of OCDEL programs into the Early Learning Network data system. As programs enrolled into this statewide system, family members were surveyed on an annual basis. Fiscal year 09-10 marked the first year of the family survey implementation for Keystone STARS families.

In FY 09-10, families whose children were enrolled in Early Intervention, PA Pre-K Counts, State-funded Head Start, STAR 3 or 4 level centers, and a stratified random sample of families with children receiving Child Care Works subsidy received surveys. A cover letter and survey were mailed directly to the homes of families. The cover letter provided family members with some basic information regarding the purpose of the family survey as well as a toll free helpline (CONNECT) that families could call if they had questions about the survey or needed language translation services. Family members were provided a postage-paid, addressed envelope to return the surveys to OCDEL.

Table 36: Family Survey Response Rate by STAR Level

	STAR 3	STAR 4	Total
Number of surveys mailed out	7244	14056	21300
Number of surveys returned	2124	4889	7013
Response rate	29%	35%	33%

Notes: FY09-10; Surveys were mailed only to the households of children who were entered into the Early Learning Network. Families with children enrolled in PA Pre-K Counts and Head Start State Supplemental also received surveys with response rates of 30% and 24% respectively.

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The survey contained a 6-point scale ranging from very strongly disagree to very strongly agree. Table 37 provides the statewide average for three categories of items, based upon this scale. The categories are: program features, supporting the family/child relationship, and helping families access resources, support, and information.

Composite scales that represent various dimensions of family satisfaction were produced based on exploratory methods that identify latent constructs that emerge from the collection of items. Questions from the family survey were grouped into three scales that represent different dimensions of satisfaction.

Table 37: Family Survey: Keystone STARS results

| | Average | | | % Agreement |
	STAR 3	STAR 4	Total	Total
Program Features	5.1	5.3	5.2	96%
Supporting the Family/Child Relationship	4.8	4.9	4.9	89%
Helping Families Access Resources, Support and Information	4.3	4.5	4.4	76%

Notes: All scales range from 1 to 6. Scale scores were calculated as a simple average of composite survey items.

Category: Program Features (items included)

In the past year, staff from my child's program…

- Gave me information about their mission, goals, policies, and procedures
- Were available to talk with me at times that fit into my schedule
- Were honest, even if they had difficult issues to discuss.
- Made it easy for me to talk to them about my child and our family.
- Interacted with children in a positive manner.
- Had background and experience that met my expectations.
- Informed me about daily happenings and events.
- Respected my culture.
- Built on my child's strengths and interests.
- Was provided during times that met our family's needs.
- Included books, toys, outdoor and indoor play equipment, and other materials that I was satisfied with.
- Included daily activities that met my expectations.
- Provided an educational program that met my expectations.
- Provided ways for parents to take part in the program (for example: helping in the classroom, participating in field trips, sharing a meal/snack, sharing suggestions, and/or serving on a parent advisory council etc.).

Category: Supporting the Family/Child Relationship (items included)

In the past year, staff from my child's program…

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- Asked me how well the program is meeting the needs of my child.
- Asked me about what is important to our family.
- Explained why they recommend one practice over another and provided information on other approaches so that our family could be a partner in decision making.
- Helped me feel more confident in my skills as a parent.
- Let me know about good things my child does.
- Provided services that met my child's needs.
- Gave me ideas of how to support my child's development at home.
- Has helped me to handle my child's behavior
- Has helped me to see how much progress my child is making.
- I have used information about my child's performance to support my child learning and development at home.
- I have used information about my child's performance to make changes in how I teach my child.

Category: Helping families access resources, support and information (items included)
In the past year, staff from my child's program…
- Helped me to access other programs and/or services for my family (for example: parent support, food stamps, WIC, library, etc.)
- Asked me what I like and don't like about the program
- Helped families get to know and support each other.
- Offered parent training and information sessions.

Table 38: Family Survey: Keystone STARS items with high levels of satisfaction

In the past year, staff from my child's program…	STAR 3	STAR 4	3 & 4
Had background and experience that met my expectations	96%	97%	96%
Respected my culture	98%	98%	98%
Helped me feel more confident in my skills as a parent	87%	89%	88%
Built on my child's strengths and interests	94%	95%	95%
Provided services that met my child's needs	96%	97%	97%
Provided an educational program that met my expectations	94%	96%	95%
Has helped me to be able to see how much progress my child is making	93%	95%	94%

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I have used information about my child's performance to support my child's learning and development at home	94%	95%	95%
I have used information about my child's performance to make changes in how I teach my child	88%	89%	89%

Notes: Overall response rate = 33%

Environment Rating Scale

Environment Rating Scale (ERS) professional development and assessments are an important component of Pennsylvania's quality early learning initiatives. Child care directors and owner operators are expected to participate in ERS professional development sessions which prepare them to conduct self-assessments of classroom quality throughout the facility. The self assessment process provides a baseline of quality for site leadership and classroom teachers. The assessment provides a comprehensive overview of the classroom environment, focusing on four main areas: health and safety, curricular activities and materials, program policies and procedures, and teacher and child interactions. The outcome of these self assessments can be applied to initial quality improvement efforts.

Keystone STARS standards require that reliable ERS assessors conduct regularly scheduled assessments at STAR 2 for family child care providers and for all providers moving to or renewing at STAR 3 and 4. These objective assessments using valid and internationally accepted tools are a great source of evidence for programs in their continuous quality improvement plans. Bi-annual assessments are conducted in all facilities during a four week window agreed upon between site leadership and the assessor. Classrooms to be assessed are determined at random and at least one third of all classrooms participate in the assessment process. Additionally, at least one classroom representing each age group in the center is assessed. Once the assessment process is complete, the Regional Key and program receive a facility report which provides detail on each classroom assessed. Through the facility report, both site leadership and regional support services are made aware of areas of high quality and areas where improvement is warranted.

Figure 7 presents Pennsylvania's six year trend in preschool classroom quality[13]. Each point in the figure is a single assessment of a classroom. The reasons and process for collecting this data have not changed during this period. The upward trend demonstrates the increasing quality in Pennsylvania preschool settings over the last six years. This trend is statistically significant and is evidence of a sea level rise in the quality of early childhood care and education.

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[13] Classroom quality assessed using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Revised (ECERS-R)

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Figure 7: Six-Year Trend in Preschool Classroom Quality
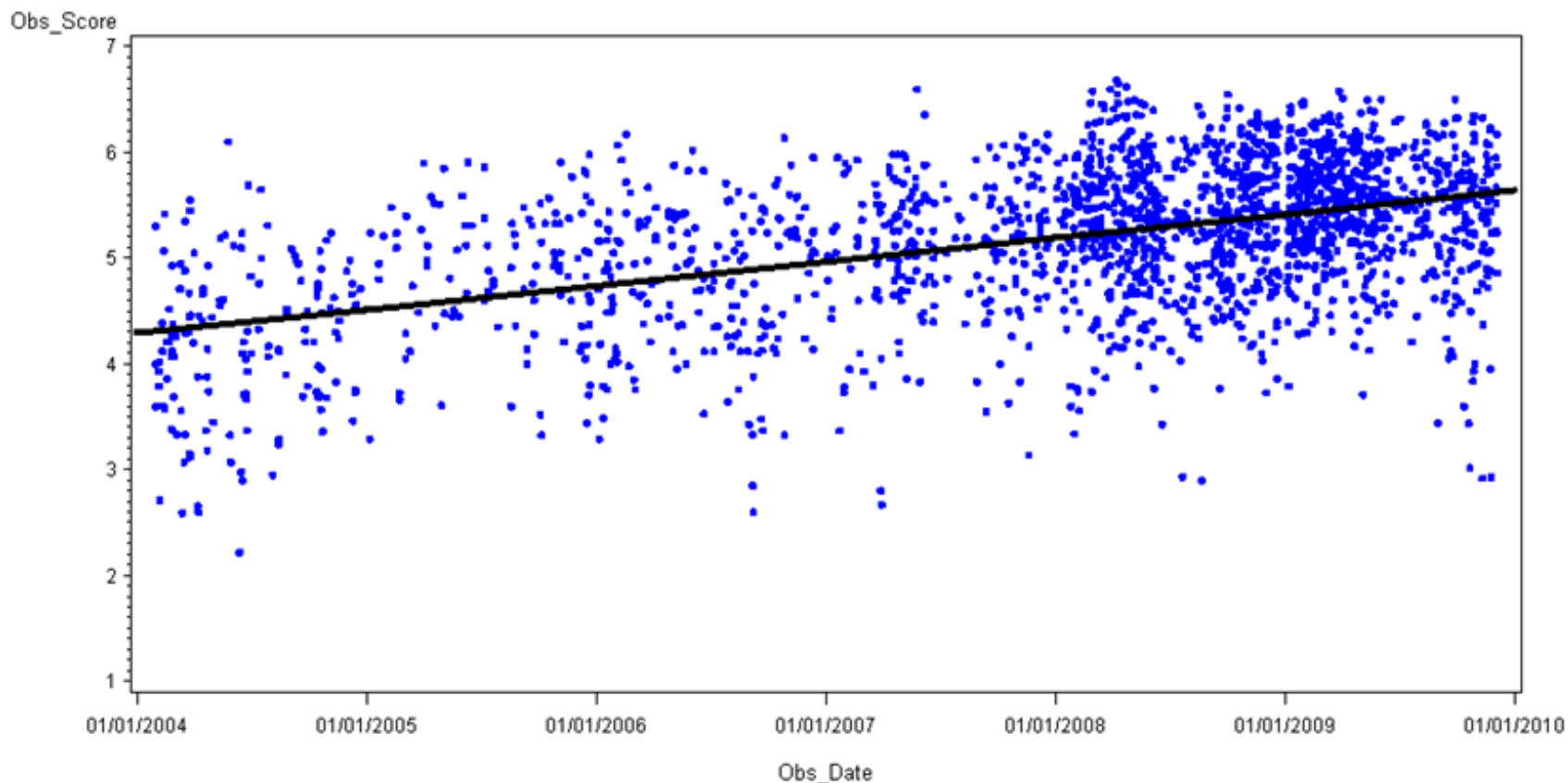
Note: Figure presents all available ECERS-R scores, including Keystone STARS, PA Pre-K Counts, and Head Start facilities. Assessments are made at the classroom level. The upward trend was consistently found for the assessments of classroom settings including infant and toddler tools, school age rooms, and family providers (Using ITERS-R, SACERS, and FCERS-R)

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ERS assessments help providers assure that high quality practices are implemented and maintained throughout the site, identify barriers to improvement, and highlight program successes. ERS data is frequently the foundation for determining technical assistance goals and action plans. Additionally, ERS assessments provide a rich and comprehensive data source for professional development analysis and provide a valid measure of program maintenance and growth throughout the commonwealth.

Inter-rater reliability, the agreement of independent raters when assigning scores, is assured through extensive training, as well as follow-up reliability checks. The ERS reliability protocol is important for obtaining reliable scores across multiple regions and time points. The Pennsylvania ERS team maintains reliability on each of the four Environment Rating Scales by conducting assessments with two team members (either an assessor and their supervisor or two peers), during which the assessor's initial scores must be within 85% of the finalized scores. A newly hired assessor must be reliable five times on an individual scale in order to be able to conduct independent assessments on that scale. After they have established that initial reliability, assessors must do quarterly reliability visits for the first year of employment and semi-annual reliability assessments thereafter.

In 2009, additional ERS data was collected on a sample of Start with STARS, STAR 1, and STAR 2 providers to investigate quality at lower STAR levels. A study to collect ERS data on infant/toddler and preschool classrooms in a random sample covering all 6 regions, 3 provider types, and 3 STAR levels was implemented. Several sites declined to participate (many cited the state budget impasse as reason, as some were serving no children at the time.)

Figure 8 shows how ERS scores vary across STAR levels. In general, the higher the STAR level, the higher the ERS score. STAR 1 providers have an average ERS score of less than 4.0 whereas STAR 4 providers average greater than 5.0 on the ERS. Figure 9 presents how STAR 3 and 4 providers match up closely with PA Pre-K Counts and Head Start programs in terms of ERS scores. Both figures demonstrate the effect that increasing the quality of child care has on ERS scores.

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Figure 8: Overall ERS score by STAR level

Overall ERS Scores by STAR Level
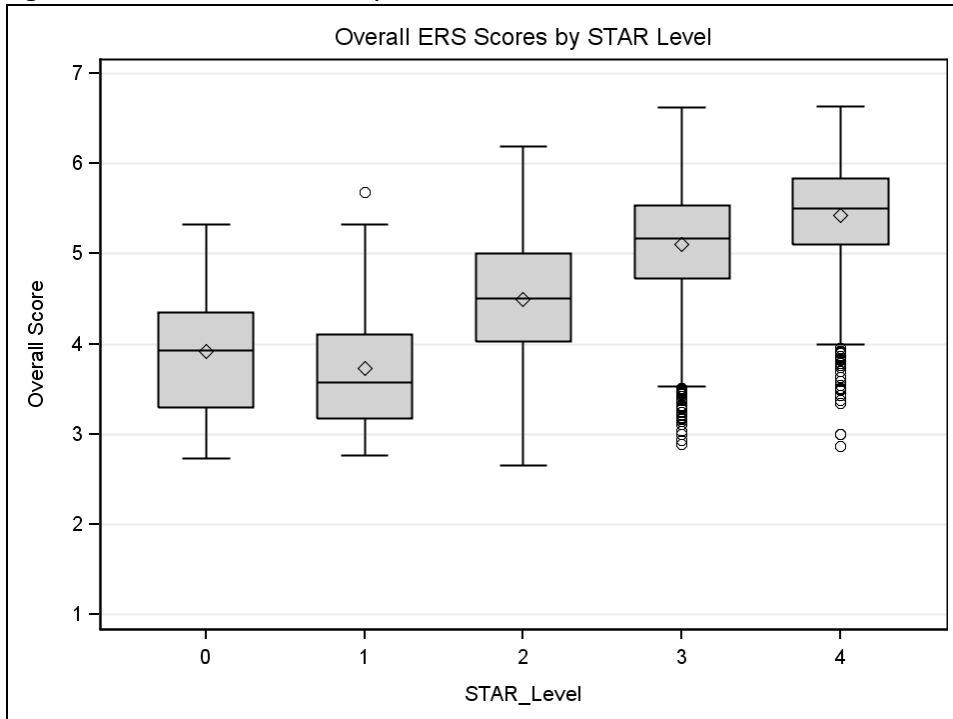
Note: STAR level 0 = Start with STARS

Figure 9: Overall ERS score by Program

Overall ERS Scores by Program

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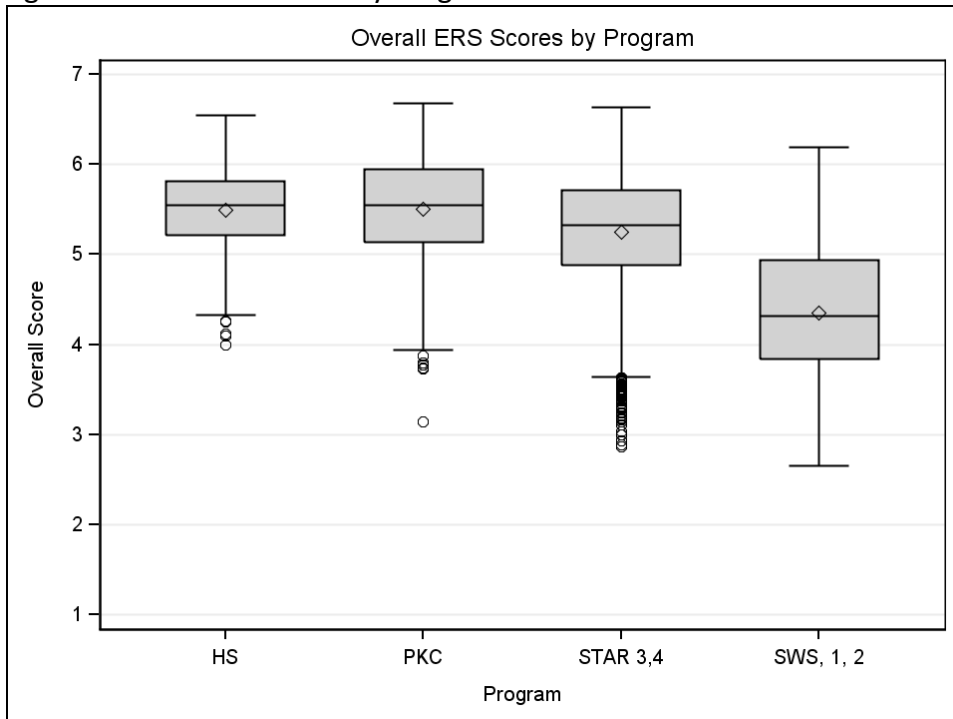
The data show a strong association between STAR level and classroom quality as measured by the ERS and serves to lend validity to both as measures of program quality.

The following figures present box plots of ERS scores by subscale. For the ECERS-R scale in Figure 10, ERS scores are distributed higher for the Interaction subscale, followed by the Parents Staff and Language-Reasoning subscale. The Personal Care Routines scores are distributed the lowest and the Program Structures subscale has the greatest variation in scores of the seven subscales. The ITERS-R scale in Figure 11 portrays similar characteristics to ECERS-R with Interaction, Parents Staff, and Language-Reasoning scores distributed higher than the remaining subscales, and Personal Care Routines again being the lowest. Scores for the SACERS scale in Figure 12 are distributed higher than the other three observation scales. Approximately 75% of the ERS scores for SACERS are 5 or higher, with Program Structure having the highest distributed scores. The FCCERS-R scale in Figure 13 also displays similar characteristics to the ECERS-R and ITERS-R.

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Figure 10: Preschool ERS subscale scores

ECERS-R Scores by Subscale
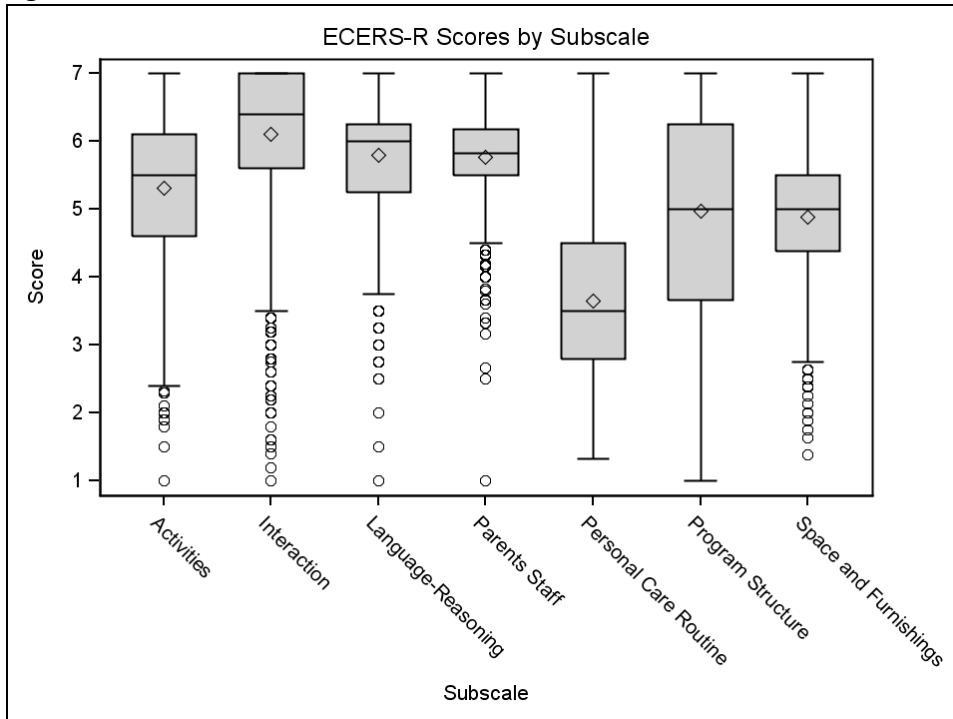
Figure 11: Infant Toddler ERS subscale scores

ITERS-R Scores by Subscale

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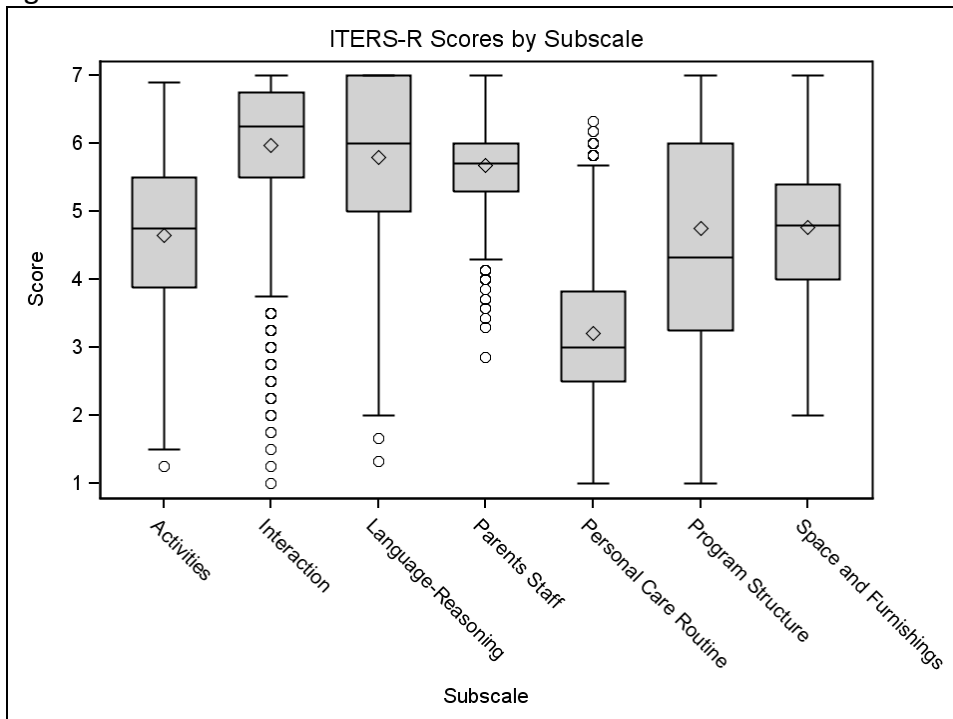
Figure 12: School age ERS subscale scores

SACERS Scores by Subscale
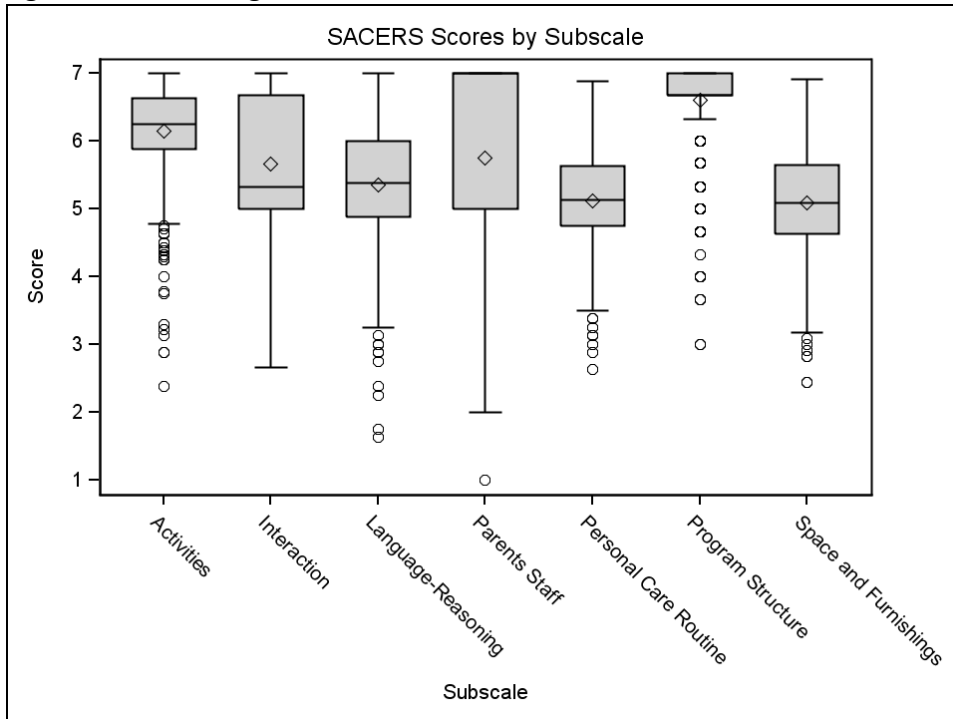
Figure 13: Family Child Care ERS Subscale Scores

FCCERS-R Scores by Subscale

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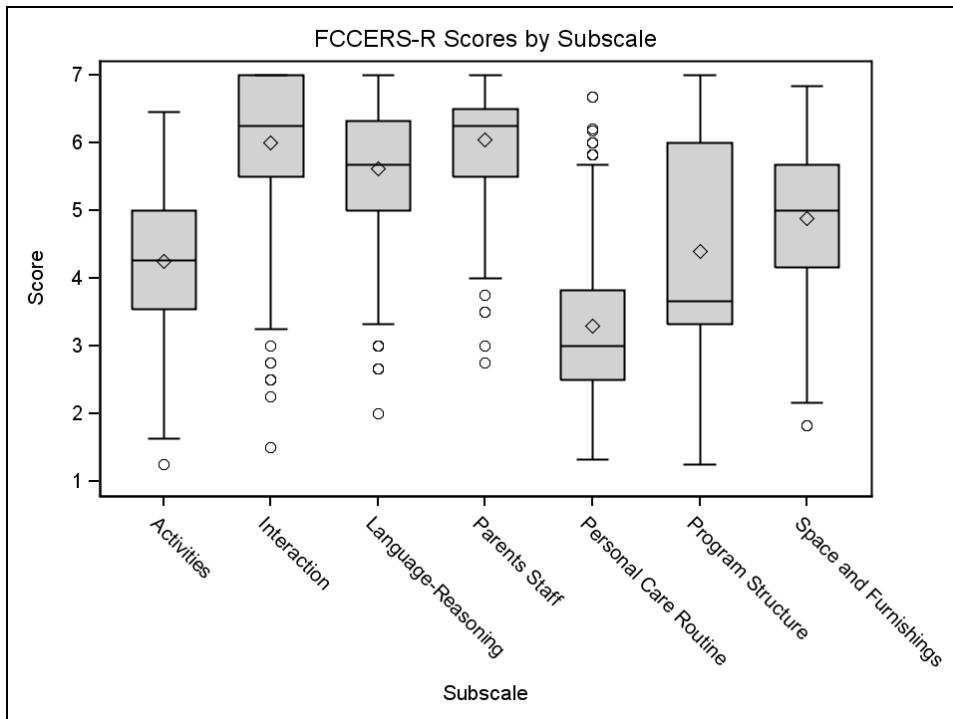
Table 39: Average ERS Scores by Observation Scale

	Average	95% Confidence Interval	
ITERS-R: Total	4.97	4.94	5.00
Activities	4.65	4.59	4.71
Interaction	5.96	5.90	6.03
Language-Reasoning	5.80	5.73	5.86
Parents Staff	5.68	5.65	5.71
Personal Care Routine	3.20	3.15	3.26
Program Structure	4.74	4.66	4.83
Space and Furnishings	4.77	4.72	4.82
ECERS-R: Total	5.23	5.21	5.26
Activities	5.31	5.26	5.35
Interaction	6.10	6.05	6.15
Language-Reasoning	5.80	5.76	5.84
Parents Staff	5.76	5.74	5.79
Personal Care Routine	3.65	3.60	3.70
Program Structure	4.98	4.92	5.04
Space and Furnishings	4.89	4.85	4.93
SACERS: Total	5.67	5.64	5.69
Activities	6.15	6.11	6.20
Interaction	5.67	5.60	5.74
Language-Reasoning	5.36	5.30	5.41
Parents Staff	5.75	5.55	5.95
Personal Care Routine	5.12	5.08	5.17
Program Structure	6.60	6.55	6.64
Space and Furnishings	5.08	5.03	5.13
FCCERS-R: Total	4.92	4.87	4.98
Activities	4.25	4.13	4.37
Interaction	6.00	5.89	6.11
Language-Reasoning	5.62	5.51	5.73
Parents Staff	6.04	5.96	6.12
Personal Care Routine	3.29	3.18	3.40
Program Structure	4.40	4.22	4.58
Space and Furnishings	4.89	4.78	5.00
Overall: Total	5.21	5.19	5.22
Activities	5.20	5.17	5.23
Interaction	5.98	5.94	6.01
Language-Reasoning	5.70	5.68	5.73
Parents Staff	5.76	5.73	5.78
Personal Care Routine	3.77	3.74	3.81
Program Structure	5.16	5.12	5.21
Space and Furnishings	4.89	4.87	4.92

Notes: # of classroom assessments: 1,242 ITERS-R; 2,087 ECERS-R; 822 SACERS; 345 FCCERS-R

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Table 40: Average ERS Scores by STAR Level/Program

	Average	95% Confidence Interval	
Start with STARS: Total	4.03	3.80	4.26
Activities	3.37	2.85	3.90
Interaction	5.26	4.82	5.71
Language-Reasoning	4.82	4.30	5.33
Parents Staff	4.94	4.48	5.39
Personal Care Routine	2.73	2.43	3.03
Program Structure	3.01	2.57	3.44
Space and Furnishings	4.09	3.60	4.57
STAR 1: Total	3.92	3.75	4.09
Activities	2.89	2.56	3.22
Interaction	5.14	4.68	5.61
Language-Reasoning	4.45	4.07	4.82
Parents Staff	4.85	4.54	5.16
Personal Care Routine	2.63	2.38	2.87
Program Structure	3.63	3.19	4.06
Space and Furnishings	3.86	3.53	4.18
STAR 2: Total	4.70	4.62	4.77
Activities	4.00	3.85	4.14
Interaction	5.92	5.77	6.07
Language-Reasoning	5.43	5.29	5.58
Parents Staff	5.81	5.72	5.91
Personal Care Routine	3.02	2.90	3.14
Program Structure	4.04	3.82	4.26
Space and Furnishings	4.61	4.49	4.74
STAR 3: Total	5.19	5.16	5.21
Activities	5.24	5.20	5.29
Interaction	5.86	5.81	5.91
Language-Reasoning	5.63	5.59	5.68
Parents Staff	5.75	5.72	5.79
Personal Care Routine	3.80	3.74	3.84
Program Structure	5.28	5.21	5.35
Space and Furnishings	4.84	4.80	4.87
STAR 4: Total	5.50	5.47	5.52
Activities	5.61	5.56	5.66
Interaction	6.21	6.16	6.25
Language-Reasoning	5.96	5.91	6.00
Parents Staff	5.92	5.88	5.95
Personal Care Routine	4.13	4.07	4.18
Program Structure	5.52	5.45	5.59
Space and Furnishings	5.18	5.14	5.22
All STARS: Total	5.27	5.26	5.29
Activities	5.30	5.27	5.33
Interaction	6.00	5.97	6.03
Language-Reasoning	5.74	5.71	5.78

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Parents Staff	5.81	5.79	5.84
Personal Care Routine	3.88	3.84	3.92
Program Structure	5.29	5.24	5.34
Space and Furnishings	4.96	4.93	4.98
Head Start: Total	5.52	5.46	5.58
Activities	5.57	5.46	5.69
Interaction	6.35	6.22	6.47
Language-Reasoning	6.17	6.06	6.28
Parents Staff	6.00	5.92	6.09
Personal Care Routine	4.05	3.89	4.22
Program Structure	5.23	5.05	5.42
Space and Furnishings	5.16	5.06	5.27
PA Pre-K Counts: Total	5.55	5.52	5.59
Activities	5.60	5.53	5.67
Interaction	6.44	6.38	6.49
Language-Reasoning	6.10	6.04	6.15
Parents Staff	6.00	5.94	6.05
Personal Care Routine	3.94	3.84	4.04
Program Structure	5.17	5.07	5.28
Space and Furnishings	5.07	5.01	5.13

Notes: Start with STARS: 18; STAR 1: 35; STAR 2: 210; STAR 3: 1971; STAR 4: 1621 assessments; State funded Head Start 183; PA Pre-K Counts 629

Table 41 presents correlations among ERS subscales and classroom variables by assessment type. The classroom variables listed in the table include the number of staff present in the classroom, the total number of years experience at the facility for the staff members, the total number of years experience in early childhood education for the staff members, the education level of the staff, the teacher:child ratio, the age range of the children in the classroom (oldest minus youngest), the number of children with special needs in the classroom, and a variable that indicates if the facility is accredited. The values in the table that are boldface and starred indicate a significant correlation between the classroom variable and the corresponding subscale. Correlation values can range from -1 to 1; the valence indicates whether there is a positive or negative relationship and the distance from zero indicates the magnitude of the relationship.

The majority of significant correlations were positive. For example, a significant positive relationship was found for the number of staff present in the classroom and the Space and Furnishing subscale of the ERS for ITERS-R. This can be interpreted by stating that as the number of staff present increases, the average score for the Space and Furnishing subscale increases as well. For the ITERS-R, numerous classroom variables have a positive correlation with the overall ERS score. Two of the strongest correlations correspond with the variables educational attainment and accreditation. As the education level of the teacher increases, overall ERS scores increase, and similarly, scores are higher for accredited facilities. ITERS-R is also very strongly correlated with

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teacher:child ratio. This correlation can be interpreted as: the fewer the number of children that a staff member is responsible for, the higher the overall ERS scores.

The ECERS-R observation scale also has positive correlations with educational attainment and accreditation. Additionally, ECERS-R displays positive correlations with the number of staff present in the classroom and the number of children with special needs in the classroom. Similar to ECERS-R, the SACERS-R observation scale shows positive correlations in overall ERS scores with number of staff present, educational attainment, accreditation, and teacher:child ratio. The FCCERS observation scale has fewer correlations than the other three scales, but still has significant positive correlations with educational attainment, years of experience at the facility, and years of experience in early childhood education.

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Table 41: Correlations among ERS subscales and classroom variables

	Descriptive Stats			Space & Furnish	Personal Care	Lang-Reason	Activities	Interaction	Program Structure	Parents Staff	Total ERS
	avg	min	max								
ITERS-R											
# of Staff Present	2.4	1	12.0	**0.16*****	-0.04	0.04	**0.15*****	0.02	0.02	**0.11*****	**0.10*****
Yrs Experience at Facility	4.3	0	34.0	0.03	**0.09*****	**0.06***	0.03	**0.08****	0.01	**0.09*****	**0.08****
Yrs Experience in ECE	8.4	0	45.0	**0.06***	0.07**	**0.07****	0.04	**0.11*****	-0.03	**0.08****	**0.08****
Educational Attainment	2.5	0	5.0	**0.18*****	**0.13*****	**0.12*****	**0.15*****	**0.13*****	**0.11*****	**0.13*****	**0.19*****
Teacher:Child Ratio	1:2.7	1:9	1:1	**0.08****	**0.15*****	**0.12*****	0.01	**0.24*****	0.00	0.04	**0.12*****
Child Age Range	0.9	0	4.9	**0.07***	0.03	**0.06***	**0.12*****	*-0.06**	**0.06***	0.04	**0.07****
# with Special Needs	0.2	0	8.0	0.03	0.00	0.03	**0.09*****	0.01	**0.10*****	0.05	**0.07****
Accredited	0.3	0	1	**0.19*****	**0.21*****	**0.15*****	**0.21*****	**0.16*****	**0.13*****	**0.15*****	**0.25*****
ECERS-R											
# of Staff Present	2.3	1	12.0	**0.08*****	**0.04***	**0.16*****	**0.10*****	**0.12*****	**0.12*****	**0.10*****	**0.13*****
Yrs Experience at Facility	4.3	0	38.5	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.00	0.01	**0.05****	0.01
Yrs Experience in ECE	8.4	0	48.0	0.00	-0.01	0.04	**0.05****	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.02
Educational Attainment	3.5	0	5.0	**0.15*****	**0.14*****	**0.26*****	**0.20*****	**0.20*****	**0.15*****	**0.16*****	**0.26*****
Teacher:Child Ratio	1:5.2	1:17	1:1	0.03	**0.09*****	**0.07*****	0.00	**0.10*****	**0.06****	-0.02	**0.04***
Child Age Range	1.5	0	10.8	0.00	0.04	**0.06*****	0.03	0.01	**0.04***	*-0.08*****	0.02
# with Special Needs	1.1	0	13.0	**0.07*****	**0.08*****	**0.13*****	**0.07*****	**0.11*****	**0.09*****	**0.14*****	**0.14*****
Accredited	0.2	0	1	**0.23*****	**0.21*****	**0.17*****	**0.24*****	**0.18*****	**0.14*****	**0.21*****	**0.24*****

Table continues on next page.

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	Descriptive Stats			Space & Furnish	Personal Care	Lang-Reason	Activities	Interaction	Program Structure	Parents Staff	Total ERS
	avg	min	Max								
SACERS											
# of Staff Present	2.5	1	8.0	**0.09****	0.02	**0.15*****	0.01	**0.13*****	**0.11*****	0.06	**0.14*****
Yrs Experience at Facility	3.9	0	41.0	-0.01	0.05	0.04	-0.03	0.01	0.05	-0.06	0.02
Yrs Experience in ECE	7.1	0	45.0	0.05	**0.08***	0.05	-0.03	-0.01	**0.10****	0.06	0.05
Educational Attainment	3.1	0	5.0	**0.12*****	**0.10*****	**0.16*****	**0.09****	**0.14*****	0.04	0.09	**0.19*****
Teacher:Child Ratio	1:5.7	1:18	1:1	0.04	**0.13*****	0.04	**0.12*****	-0.01	0.06	-0.07	**0.09****
Child Age Range	5.1	0	14.3	*-0.10****	-0.02	**0.07***	0.05	0.06	0.01	0.00	0.00
# with Special Needs	0.6	0	12.0	-0.01	0.03	0.04	0.06	**0.12*****	0.00	0.09	0.06
Accredited	0.2	0	1	**0.13*****	**0.20*****	0.04	**0.08***	0.00	*-0.11****	0.05	**0.12*****
FCCERS-R											
# of Staff Present	1.4	1	3.0	-0.02	*-0.16***	*-0.12**	-0.04	-0.01	-0.02	**0.27*****	-0.05
Yrs Experience at Facility	7.3	0	30.0	**0.12***	**0.15****	0.10	**0.13***	0.05	0.05	**0.17****	**0.16****
Yrs Experience in ECE	11.5	0	44.0	**0.12***	0.11	0.06	**0.17****	-0.01	**0.13***	**0.18*****	**0.16****
Educational Attainment	2.2	0	5.0	**0.14****	**0.17****	**0.13***	**0.25*****	0.07	0.09	**0.16****	**0.23*****
Teacher:Child Ratio	1:2.8	1:9	1:1	-0.07	0.07	-0.08	-0.09	**0.20*****	-0.05	0.00	-0.03
Child Age Range	5.5	0	13.8	-0.10	0.00	-0.08	*-0.13**	-0.02	-0.03	-0.06	-0.10
# with Special Needs	0.3	0	5.0	-0.09	-0.04	-0.06	-0.04	-0.10	0.01	0.06	-0.06
Accredited	0.0	0	1	0.06	0.00	-0.10	**0.14****	0.02	-0.07	**0.14****	0.06

Note: ***, **, * indicates significance at the .01, .05, and .10 level respectively. Educational attainment indicates the highest level of all staff in the room {GED/High School = 0, Some college = 1, CDA = 2, Associate Degree = 3, Bachelors Degree = 4, Masters Degree or Higher = 5}

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Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

In 2009, OCDEL initiated a pilot study of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) to examine its potential for use in OCDEL programs in Pennsylvania. OCDEL was interested in determining whether using CLASS would provide information to supplement ECERS assessments. The pilot was designed to provide opportunities for assessors to offer extensive feedback on the ease of administration, value as a training tool for teachers, and relevance to classroom practice. A group of 15 assessors was recruited from across the commonwealth, trained to administer CLASS, and asked to administer the observation in six classrooms each, over a period of three months. The goal was to prepare at least three trainers to be trained to train others, and to have at least 90 observations over that period.

Ten of 15 trainers achieved reliability through the vendor's online video reliability scoring system. Assessors not reaching reliability tended to score programs slightly higher in all areas than those who had reached reliability. If implementing the program formally, OCDEL would require reliability for all assessors.

Classrooms for observation were selected based on whether they would soon be due for an ECERS assessment, and reflected the geographic distribution of the assessors. If one classroom was unavailable, an assessor would request another in any center he or she was observing.

Eighty-eight CLASS assessments were completed in the first half of FY 09-10. Reflecting national trends, classrooms tended to score best on Emotional Climate in the classroom (5.81), indicating that most classrooms were pleasant for children and teachers. Classroom Organization was second highest (5.12), revealing that children knew where they were supposed to be and what they should be doing, and that classroom activities provided learning opportunities during transitions. Classrooms tended to score lowest on Instructional Support (3.79); meaning teachers were missing opportunities to scaffold learning for children, to extend and deepen the meaning of daily activities and to provide rich, detailed language to enhance understanding and vocabulary.

Table 42: CLASS pilot results

	Average score			Overall Range	
	STAR 3	STAR 4	Total	Min	Max
Negative Climate (Reversed)	6.34	6.63	6.52	4.00	7.00
Positive Climate	5.86	6.07	5.99	2.75	7.00
Teacher Sensitivity	5.29	5.66	5.49	2.75	7.00
Behavior Management	5.05	5.63	5.42	2.33	7.00
Productivity	4.91	5.36	5.35	3.00	7.00
Regard to Student Perspectives	5.01	5.61	5.22	2.00	7.00

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Instructional Learning Formats	4.46	4.99	4.78	1.50	7.00
Language Modeling	3.79	4.22	4.05	1.75	6.50
Quality of Feedback	3.63	4.09	3.91	1.50	6.50
Concept Development	3.31	3.93	3.68	1.25	6.75

Notes: Data is from FY 09-10. Total N = 88; Negative Climate is Reversed so a high score indicates less bullying, yelling, negativity.

Across all rated items, STAR 4 classrooms were found to score significantly higher than STAR 3 classrooms. Behavior Management and Productivity were scored higher than Teacher Sensitivity and Regard for Student Perspectives in STAR 4 centers, while the opposite was true in STAR 3 centers. This reversal across STAR level may reflect chance variation, or differing areas of emphasis.

Surprisingly, Instructional Support scored lowest in STAR 3 and 4 centers, suggesting that additional PD in this area may be helpful. Individual scores for programs can clearly indicate which specific domains might require close attention across the program or in individual classrooms—or may reveal areas with excellent scores, in which best practices are modeled and can be studied for wider dissemination.

Following this study, OCDEL plans to increase the use of CLASS as an observational tool to assess quality in classrooms.

Certification Violations

While it is expected that STAR level is positively correlated with measures of quality such as the ERS and CLASS assessments, it is also expected that participating providers have lower levels of certification violations. The following table presents the number and percent of providers with certification violations in FY 09-10:

Table 43: Providers with certification violations by STARS participation

	# Providers	With Violations		with High Risk Violations	
		#	%	#	%
In STARS	4420	1823	41.2	1379	31.1
Not in STARS	4329	2194	50.7	1544	35.7
Total	8749	4017	45.9	2923	33.4

Note: 2009-2010 data

The differences between percentages are statistically significantly different for both all violations and high risk violations.

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Provider Survey

As part of its work to continue to strengthen and improve the Keystone STARS program, OCDEL conducted a provider survey that focused on provider perception of the most beneficial aspects of STARS and on ease of use of the various STARS resources. Eighty percent of providers reported that the processes associated with the Support Grants and Merit Awards, and the Education and Retention Awards, were somewhat easy to very easy to use and 75 percent of the providers found that the STARS Technical Assistance and Professional Development supports were at least good quality and were helpful.

> "I am so thankful for the Keystone STARS program! Without it, we wouldn't be able to offer the high-quality care that we do. They have played an instrumental role in moving the profession of Early Childhood Education to one viewed with respect and professionalism."
> – STAR 2 Center in Blair County

The primary purpose of the Keystone STARS Provider survey is to gather information about the strengths and areas of improvement for the program. In October 2008, OCDEL disseminated the Keystone STARS Provider Survey to a random sample of 582 providers chosen from the 5,037 providers in the STARS system. This stratified random sample of providers represented the provider type, geographical location, and STAR level of the state level demographics of Keystone STARS providers. Providers had the option of completing a paper survey or completing the survey online through Survey Monkey. Additionally, the link to Survey Monkey was posted on the PA Keys website, giving providers not selected in the random sample an opportunity to complete the survey.

2008 Keystone STARS Provider Survey Results

Nearly one-third (30%) of respondents cited Grant Funds as the main reason for increasing their STAR level. The other leading reasons given for increasing STAR level focused on financial support through Education and Retention Awards at 14.5 percent and supports through STARS Managers, the T.E.A.C.H. educational scholarship, and STARS Technical Assistance, all at approximately 10 percent.

Almost 60 percent felt that their STARS Manager/Specialist was very helpful or essential to their participation in STARS. Another 16 percent of respondents indicated that their STARS Manager/Specialist was helpful, for a total of 76 percent finding the STARS Manager/Specialist services ranging from helpful to essential.

Seventy-nine of the 188 respondents who rated the ease of requesting STARS TA stated that it was somewhat or very easy. Only nine providers (4.8%) stated that requesting

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STARS TA was very difficult. Of the 196 respondents, 76 percent rated STARS TA as helpful, very helpful or essential in increasing their facility's quality. One-quarter (25%) of these respondents felt that STARS TA was essential.

Forty-three percent stated that they found the application easy or very easy to complete. Another 41 percent found the application somewhat easy. A total of 84 percent found the application process to be somewhat to very easy. The following table presents response data related to the application process.

Table 44: Provider Survey Results: Application Process

	Very Easy	Easy	Somewhat Easy	Somewhat Difficult	Very Difficult
How was the application to complete?	27.2%	16.1%	41.5%	13.6%	1.5%
How were the instructions to follow?	25.3%	13.1%	44.7%	14.1%	2.8%

One-third (33.6%) of respondents thought that the Start with STARS process was very easy. Another 54 percent of respondents felt that it was somewhat easy, for a total of 88 percent finding the process somewhat to very easy.

Of the 258 respondents that answered this question, almost 80 percent said that the Support Grant Process was somewhat or very easy. Of the 214 providers who responded to the question, more than three-quarters (77%) stated that the Merit Award process was somewhat or very easy. Eighty-one percent of the 192 respondents that rated the ease of the ERA process stated that it was somewhat or very easy. Eighteen percent felt that it was somewhat difficult or very difficult.

Table 45: Provider Survey Results: Grants and Awards

	# Receiving Award/Grant	Very Easy	Somewhat Easy	Somewhat Difficult	Very Difficult
How was the Start with STARS Grant Process?	238	33.6%	54.6%	11.3%	0.5%
How was the Support Grant Process?	258	26.4%	53.5%	17.8%	2.3%
How was the Merit Award Process?	214	21.5%	56.1%	19.1%	3.3%
How was the Education and Retention Award Process?	192	27.1%	54.2%	15.6%	3.1%

Forty-three percent of the 316 respondents felt that STARS Professional Development was very good or excellent. Another 39 percent indicated that their STARS Professional Development experience was good.

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Closing remarks

Continued funding for Keystone STARS and administrative support have led to a vastly improved early care and education system in Pennsylvania. This report has presented a detailed view of Pennsylvania's early childhood quality improvement system and includes multiple data models, measured deliverables, and quality benchmarks. Keystone STARS continues to evolve as elements of the early learning system are informed by research, emerging best practice, and progress in systems development. It has created a framework that provides a home for innovation, and a vehicle for incorporating new and different early learning supports. Keystone STARS has demonstrated results by continuing to drive quality improvement in child care and provide more quality early learning opportunities for children.

Child care providers participating in Keystone STARS receive the resources and training opportunities they need in order to achieve higher child care quality standards. Quality child care offers a child a stimulating, nurturing environment which should help prepare him or her for school and to reach his or her full potential. Quality care environments provide a stimulating, loving atmosphere in which children will mentally, socially, emotionally, and physically thrive. The Performance Standards for Keystone STARS quality-rated child care providers are guided by the principle that quality early learning programs are the foundation for children's success, and investment in the early care and education of Pennsylvania's children is an investment in the future.

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Appendices A through G

Appendix A: Perspectives on Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS)

State Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) work to improve early childhood program quality by offering an array of encouragements and services to providers, such as professional development, technical assistance, and financial incentives. The definitions of quality standards (i.e. measures used to generate ratings) vary by state, but may include indicators of teacher training and experience; classroom ratings; teacher-child ratios; licensing status; and accreditation.

QRISs provide highly visible ratings of existing programs, so that parents are able to easily determine which providers have reached a particular level of quality, and can seek those for their children, thus driving improvement in quality via market forces.

States and Territories are involved in a variety of activities to improve the availability and quality of early and school-age care and education programs. Most often these activities are supported by quality set-aside funds from the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). A growing number of States use CCDF funds to create QRISs. Pennsylvania has chosen to use CCDF funds for QRIS.
Additional information about QRIS is available on NCCIC's Web site at:
http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/topics/topic/index.cfm?topicId=44.
QRIS' are composed of five common elements: (1) standards; (2) accountability measures; (3) program and practitioner outreach and support; (4) financial incentives; and (5) parent/consumer education efforts.

1. **Standards**: QRIS standards are built on the foundation of child care licensing requirements and add multiple steps between licensing and higher quality standards, such as those associated with accreditation.

2. **Accountability measures**: Accountability and monitoring processes are used to determine how well providers meet QRIS standards and to assign ratings.

3. **Program and practitioner outreach and support**: Support for providers, such as training, mentoring, and technical assistance, are included to promote participation and help programs achieve higher levels of quality.

4. **Financing incentives**: Financial incentives, such as tiered subsidy reimbursement (which pays a higher reimbursement rate to providers who care for children from families who receive CCDF subsidies and meet standards

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beyond minimum licensing requirements in the state, are awarded to providers when they demonstrate that they have achieved quality levels.

5. **Parent/Consumer education efforts**: Most QRIS awards are easily recognizable symbols, such as stars, awarded to providers to indicate the levels of quality and to inform and educate parents

By participating in their State's QRIS, early and school-age care and education providers embark on a path of continuous quality improvement. Even providers that have met the standards of the lowest QRIS levels have achieved levels of quality that exceed a state's minimum licensing requirements to operate.

As of July 2010, twenty-two States have a statewide QRIS' with all five elements:

Colorado	**Louisiana**	**Ohio**
Delaware	**Maine**	**Oklahoma**
Distr. of Columbia	**Maryland**	**Pennsylvania**
Idaho	**Mississippi**	**Rhode Island**
Illinois	**Montana**	**Tennessee**
Indiana	**New Hampshire**	**Vermont**
Iowa	**New Mexico**	
Kentucky	**North Carolina**	

Across states, QRIS requirements tend to fall somewhere between licensing (which, in many states, sets a minimal level of quality for regulated providers) and accreditation, (which requires intensive provider effort to reach high quality standards). [14]

Pennsylvania was the eighth state to institute a quality improvement program and is now seen as a national leader in QRIS implementation.

http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/pubs/qrs-defsystems.html

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[14] Buettner, C.K., & Andrews, D.W. (2009.) United States Child Care Policy and Systems of Care: The Emerging Role of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems. *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy, Vol.3,* No.1, 43-50.

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Appendix B: Pennsylvania Keys to Quality

PA Keys to Quality brings together numerous organizations and programs providing quality improvement, professional development, technical assistance, as well as financial supports, in a coordinated and systematic service delivery model critical to OCDEL services programs including Keystone STARS, PA Pre-K Counts, Head Start, etc. PA Keys to Quality builds bridges across the Departments of Education and Public Welfare to align funding and approach, streamline implementation, and maximize resources. PA Keys to Quality is further blended with other OCDEL early learning strategies, such as Early Intervention and family support programs, creating one vision for all early learning programs, practitioners, children, and families.

The Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) has primary responsibility for the overall management and coordination of Keys to Quality including specifically:

A. State level funds management, grant allocation, policy development;

B. Establishing Keystone STARS award/grant levels;

C. Developing and implementing STAR Standards, management and administrative policies, program accountability and targets;

D. Monitoring and ensuring accountability of the PA Key and Regional Key.

To implement PA Keys to Quality, the Pennsylvania Key has been established in Harrisburg to coordinate state-wide programming and provides support for the deeper content work in the Regional Keys.

The support includes technical assistance in the activities managed by the Regional Keys. Other activities by the PA Key are technical assistance for Community Engagement Groups, oversight of School Age Child Care programs, and the management of a professional development system for all staff of child care providers. The PA Key also holds state-wide contracts which support the Regional Keys quality improvement efforts, such as T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program, Better Kid Care, and ECELS, and directly operates the Environment Rating System Assessment. Additional initiatives such as Early Childhood Mental Health, Mind in the Making and Keystone Color Me Healthy have been added regionally with coordination and support from the PA Key.

The PA Key roles related to the work in PA Keys to Quality (directly or subcontracted) include:

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A. Development of policies and programs related to professional development and technical assistance including cross sector work;

B. Management of the professional development infrastructure support including:

    1. Manages Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System (PQAS)
    2. Online professional development calendar, provider registry, and the professional development 1-800- information call line.
    3. Manages the process for Director's Credential and School Age Professional Credential

C. Coordination of the development and implementation of career lattice, core body of knowledge, professional development records, and career counseling approach;

D. Management of the contract for Project T.E.A.C.H. scholarships through PACCA and direct management of the voucher program;

E. Management of Early Childhood Education Linkage System (ECELS) http://www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org/ and Better Kid Care http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/ state-wide contracts;

F. Management of the Environment Rating Scale assessment process and staff to prevent any conflict of interest;

G. Coordination of the Head Start Collaboration Office;

H. Coordination of the state-wide policies and practices related to Early Childhood Mental Health and School Age projects;

I. Facilitation of the linkages to Higher Education including program to program articulation projects;

J. Provides content information, communication materials, and technical assistance to Community Engagement Groups.

Regional Keys are geographically and strategically located in six regions across the commonwealth to provide general oversight and leadership for the Keys to Quality system. The Regional Keys develop and implement the following activities for Keys to Quality, which include but are not limited to: developing regional quality improvement plans for professional development and technical assistance; partnering with

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Community Engagement Groups; and conducting outreach campaigns. Specifically, the Regional Keys:

A. Work in an integrated and collaborative way both locally and statewide within the early care and education community.

- Facilitate community interface with Head Start, Early Intervention, PA Pre-K Counts, Child Care Information Services agencies, Certification Regional Offices, local School Districts, etc. The Regional Key serves as a geographic hub to connect early learning programs and services.

- Provide Community Engagement contract management and partnership to the 58 active Community Engagement Groups (CEG) statewide.

- Develop and implement communication strategies to assure that early learning practitioners are aware of professional development opportunities. The Regional Keys also assure that programs and communities are aware of Keystone STARS, and that new advances and opportunities are appropriately communicated to participants and community stakeholders.

B. Encourage all early learning practitioners/provider staff to participate in the program and Professional Development system and increase their educational attainment.

- Ensure that the content of professional development be based upon the early learning standards, core body of knowledge, Pa. Code Title 22, Chapter 49, and the most current research.

- Implement Professional Development for early childhood professionals/provider staff in the region through a complex network of contracts with professional development organizations, higher education providers, and individuals

  The following are Professional Development responsibilities that each Regional Key provides in cooperation with OCDEL, the PA Key, and others in the early learning community. The Regional Key ensures that adequate professional development is available to meet the needs of programs/practitioners. Professional development is categorized as:
  a. Core Series (basic training for child care staff)
  b. STARS support
  c. Credentials
  d. Needs-based professional development

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     e. Mind in the Making

     f. Credit-bearing courses

C. Increase communication and collaboration with the higher education community in order to achieve goals of increased support for the attainment of early education credentials and increased number of higher education programs that offer early childhood education coursework and certification.

D. Assist in facilitating Teacher Induction and Evaluation Plans for Teacher Preparation Programs (Instructional Certification).

E. Provide or subcontract for STARS Technical Assistance within the region for participating STARS Providers to support providers moving to higher STAR levels. Regional Keys will implement the pay-for-performance and accountability systems in technical assistance.

F. Implement Early Child Mental Health (ECMH) consultation services to early learning facilities participating in Keystone STARS.

   ECMH Goals are:

1. To reduce the number of children expelled from child care due to challenging behaviors;
2. To increase the understanding of social and emotional development and its impact on educational success;
3. To link and bridge systems and services on behalf of a child, family, and program.

G. Implement School-Age Supports including specific Professional Development and Technical Assistance targeting school-age practitioners participating in Keystone STARS, either through subcontracts or directly.

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To learn more about a Regional Key, visit www.pakeys.org or call toll free:

Central Regional Key 1.800.346.3020 Counties served - Bedford, Blair, Bradford, Cambria, Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Perry, Snyder, Somerset, Sullivan, Tioga, Union

Northeast Regional Key 1.800.528.7222 Counties served - Berks, Bucks, Carbon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton, Pike, Schuylkill, Susquehanna, Wayne, Wyoming

Northwest Regional Key 1.800.860.2281 Counties served - Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Indiana, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Potter, Venango, Warren

South Central Regional Key 1.800.864.4925 Counties served - Adams, Chester, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, York

Southeast Regional Key 1.267.773.4400 Counties served - Delaware, Montgomery, Philadelphia

Southwest Regional Key 1.877.349.4850 Counties served - Allegheny, Fayette, Greene, Washington, Westmoreland

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Appendix C: Summary of Performance Standards

Learning Program

STAR 1
- Site obtains and maintains copies of the appropriate Learning Standards for all age groups in the program.
- Site completes an environment checklist.

STAR 2
- Child observations are completed at the beginning of a child's time in the program and once yearly after the initial observation.
- The program completes an Environment Rating Scale (ERS) self-assessment and creates an Improvement Plan for low scores.

STAR 3
- Child observations must occur at least three times per year, and the results of the observations must be used to tailor the program to the child.
- A learning curriculum that incorporates the Pennsylvania Learning Standards is established.
- An ERS visit is completed with required minimum average and classroom scores.

STAR 4
- Assessment of the child is completed and shared with parents at least twice per year.
- The program's curriculum and assessment tools are cross-walked to the Learning Standards.
- The minimum ERS scores that the facility must meet increase.

Partnerships with Family and Community

STAR 1
- Families are provided information about their community and transitioning their child to other educational settings
- A "Getting to Know You" meeting is held with parents within 60 days of enrollment.

STAR 2
- If the child has an IEP or IFSP, the program requests a copy to inform classroom practice.
- Information about the child's day at the program is shared with parents.
- Parents are offered at least one conference per year.

STAR 3
- A plan is written to refer families to community resources.
- The program coordinates a group activity to include families in meeting the program's goals.

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- Parents are offered at least two conferences and a group meeting about transition.
- The program sends a letter of introduction to community and school stakeholders regarding transition and participates in transition activities.

STAR 4
- Activities are implemented to meet IEP/IFSP goals.
- Policies regarding parent engagement and partnership in the planning and decision making for the program are implemented.
- The program offers parents an individual meeting about transition and develops and shares a plan for child transition with parents and stakeholders.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

STAR 2
- Effective July 1, 2008, directors and staff will meet specific levels on Pennsylvania's Early Learning Career Lattice.
- Directors participate in at least one professional growth and development activity annually and attend at least 15 hours of training annually.
- One staff member per classroom must have pediatric first aid certification, and all staff must have child abuse mandated reporter training. Staff must attend at least 12 hours of training annually.

STAR 3
- Minimum qualifications for directors and staff increase.
- Directors enroll in the Pennsylvania Director's Credential.
- Directors participate in at least two professional growth and development activities and staff participate in at least one.
- Annual clock hours of training increase to 21 for directors and 18 for teaching staff.

STAR 4
- Staff qualifications represent best practices for the early learning field.
- Directors participate in at least three professional growth and development activities.
- Staff participate in at least two professional growth and development activities.
- Annual clock hours of training increase to 27 for directors and 24 for teaching staff.

Leadership and Management

STAR 1
- Program develops and distributes a Parent Handbook
- Illnesses and injuries are tracked, and a prevention plan is enacted.
- A staff meeting has been held within the past six months.

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STAR 2

- Program creates an operating budget and financial record keeping system.
- A personnel policy manual is created and shared with staff.
- System of site safety review and action plan created.
- Staff meetings held at least once per month.
- Director meets with staff to discuss quality and professional development.
- At least two employee benefits are provided to full-time staff.

STAR 3

- Teachers are provided paid lesson planning time monthly.
- Teachers are observed in the classroom, and they are provided feedback.
- Performance evaluations are provided to employees.
- A salary scale is created and shared with staff
- Three benefits are provided to full-time staff.

STAR 4

- An operational business plan, risk management plan, strategic plan, and financial review by a CPA are completed.
- A written code for professional staff conduct is instituted.
- Teachers are provided weekly paid lesson planning time and breaks.
- Four benefits are provided to staff

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Appendix D: Provider Participation and STARS movement

As Keystone STARS matured and implemented provider and partner recommendations, the number of voluntary providers participating did as well. The following tables present the number of child care providers participating in Keystone STARS by STAR level and provider type as well as the movement in STAR levels. This information is presented separately by fiscal year from 2004-2010.

Tables 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, and 56 indicate the number of providers participating at each STAR level by provider type at the start of the fiscal year. These figures are tabulated before any STAR movement occurs during the year. Tables 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, and 57 summarize the number of providers moving up or down a STAR level within the fiscal year. Each cell presents the number of providers moving from their previous STAR level to the corresponding current STAR level. All numbers above the diagonal (white cells) indicate that providers moved up a STAR level during the year, while numbers below the diagonal indicated that providers moved down during the fiscal year. The net total column is the difference between the number of providers moving up a STAR level and the number moving down a STAR level.

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Table 46: Fiscal Year 2004-2005 STARS Participation

STAR Level	Center	Family	Group	Total
Start with STARS	42	25	10	**77**
STAR 1	684	41	47	**772**
STAR 2	154	0	0	**154**
STAR 3	6	0	0	**6**
STAR 4	0	0	0	**0**
STAR 4-Acc	131	9	9	**149**
Total	**1017**	**75**	**66**	**1158**

Note: Counts represent the number of participants at the start of the fiscal year.

Table 47: Fiscal Year 2004-2005 STARS Movement

Centers							
			Current STAR Level				
Previous STAR Level	**Start with STARS**	**STAR 1**	**STAR 2**	**STAR 3**	**STAR 4**	**STAR 4-Acc**	**Total**
Start with STARS		198	27			38	**263**
STAR 1			239	5	1	26	**271**
STAR 2		2		28		1	**27**
STAR 3			1		9		**8**
STAR 4				1			**-1**
STAR 4-Acc							
Net Movement							**568**
Family Providers							
Start with STARS		66	4			3	**73**
STAR 1			13				**13**
STAR 2				1			**1**
STAR 3							
STAR 4							
STAR 4-Acc							
Net Movement							**87**
Group Providers							
Start with STARS		50	2			8	**60**
STAR 1			10				**10**
STAR 2							**0**
STAR 3							**0**
STAR 4							
STAR 4-Acc							
Net Movement							**70**
Net Total Movement							**709**

Note: Numbers above white squares indicate upward movement of STAR levels. Numbers below white square indicate downward movement of STAR levels.

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Table 48: Fiscal Year 2005-2006 STARS Participation

STAR Level	Center	Family	Group	Total
Start with STARS	377	321	65	**763**
STAR 1	918	168	116	**1202**
STAR 2	367	20	13	**400**
STAR 3	36	1	0	**37**
STAR 4	12	0	0	**12**
STAR 4-Acc	214	13	18	**245**
Total	**1924**	**523**	**212**	**2659**

Note: Counts represent the number of participants at the start of the fiscal year.

Table 49: Fiscal Year 2005-2006 STARS Movement

Centers							
				Current STAR Level			
Previous STAR Level	**Start with STARS**	**STAR 1**	**STAR 2**	**STAR 3**	**STAR 4**	**STAR 4-Acc**	**Total**
Start with STARS		331	12		4	33	**390**
STAR 1			273	9		31	**313**
STAR 2		4		84	3	4	**87**
STAR 3					8		**8**
STAR 4							
STAR 4-Acc							
Net Movement							**798**
Family Providers							
Start with STARS		136	2			5	**143**
STAR 1			24			6	**30**
STAR 2				9		1	**10**
STAR 3							
STAR 4							
STAR 4-Acc							
Net Movement							**183**
Group Providers							
Start with STARS		68	2			2	**72**
STAR 1			20				**20**
STAR 2				1			**1**
STAR 3							
STAR 4							
STAR 4-Acc							
Net Movement							**93**
Net Total Movement							**1074**

Note: Numbers above white squares indicate upward movement of STAR levels. Numbers below white square indicate downward movement of STAR levels.

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Table 50: Fiscal Year 2006-2007 STARS Participation

STAR Level	Center	Family	Group	Total
Start with STARS	421	462	115	**998**
STAR 1	1042	279	162	**1483**
STAR 2	504	34	32	**570**
STAR 3	122	9	1	**132**
STAR 4	27	0	0	**27**
STAR 4-Acc	285	23	17	**325**
Total	**2401**	**807**	**327**	**3535**

Note: Counts represent the number of participants at the start of the fiscal year.

Table 51: Fiscal Year 2006-2007 STARS Movement

Centers							
				Current STAR Level			
Previous STAR Level	**Start with STARS**	**STAR 1**	**STAR 2**	**STAR 3**	**STAR 4**	**STAR 4-Acc**	**Total**
Start with STARS		202	4			31	**237**
STAR 1			155				**155**
STAR 2		18		75	3		**60**
STAR 3			11		32		**21**
STAR 4				2			**-2**
STAR 4-Acc							
Net Movement							**471**
Family Providers							
Start with STARS		126	2			5	**133**
STAR 1			22	1	1	5	**31**
STAR 2				3	5		**8**
STAR 3					5		**5**
STAR 4							
STAR 4-Acc							
Net Movement							**177**
Group Providers							
Start with STARS		77	1			3	**81**
STAR 1			19	1		1	**21**
STAR 2		2		6			**4**
STAR 3							
STAR 4							
STAR 4-Acc							
Net Movement							**106**
Net Total Movement							**754**

Note: Numbers above white squares indicate upward movement of STAR levels. Numbers below white square indicate downward movement of STAR levels.

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Table 52: Fiscal Year 2007-2008 STARS Participation

STAR Level	Center	Family	Group	Total
Start with STARS	411	464	95	**970**
STAR 1	957	371	209	**1537**
STAR 2	546	63	53	**662**
STAR 3	158	10	7	**175**
STAR 4	52	12	2	**66**
STAR 4-Acc	314	29	13	**356**
Total	**2438**	**949**	**379**	**3766**

Note: Counts represent the number of participants at the start of the fiscal year.

Table 53: Fiscal Year 2007-2008 STARS Movement

Centers							
				Current STAR Level			
Previous STAR Level	**Start with STARS**	**STAR 1**	**STAR 2**	**STAR 3**	**STAR 4**	**STAR 4-Acc**	**Total**
Start with STARS		429	40	2		6	**477**
STAR 1	1		173	6		5	**183**
STAR 2		17		76	5		**64**
STAR 3			8		30		**22**
STAR 4				2			**-2**
STAR 4-Acc	1	3		2			**-6**
Net Movement							**738**
Family Providers							
Start with STARS		236	8			1	**245**
STAR 1	1		33	2		1	**35**
STAR 2				13	3		**16**
STAR 3					4		**4**
STAR 4				1			**-1**
STAR 4-Acc							
Net Movement							**299**
Group Providers							
Start with STARS		81	5			2	**88**
STAR 1			22	2		1	**25**
STAR 2				3	2		**5**
STAR 3			1				**-1**
STAR 4							
STAR 4-Acc							
Net Movement							**117**
Net Total Movement							**1154**

Note: Numbers above white squares indicate upward movement of STAR levels. Numbers below white square indicate downward movement of STAR levels.

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Table 54: Fiscal Year 2008-2009 STARS Participation

STAR Level	Center	Family	Group	Total
Start with STARS	562	705	118	1385
STAR 1	1367	526	263	2156
STAR 2	641	96	72	809
STAR 3	207	23	13	243
STAR 4	108	17	2	125
STAR 4-Acc	244	30	17	291
Total	3129	1397	485	5011

Note: Counts represent the number of participants at the start of the fiscal year.

Table 55: Fiscal Year 2008-2009 STARS Movement

Centers							
				Current STAR Level			
Previous STAR Level	Start with STARS	STAR 1	STAR 2	STAR 3	STAR 4	STAR 4-Acc	Total
Start with STARS		282	34	6	1	10	333
STAR 1	1		287	17		11	314
STAR 2		15		155	14	1	155
STAR 3			4		37		33
STAR 4				17			-17
STAR 4-Acc				4			-4
Net Movement							814
Family Providers							
Start with STARS		221	11			6	238
STAR 1			55	3			58
STAR 2		2		11	3	3	15
STAR 3			1		3		2
STAR 4				1			-1
STAR 4-Acc			1				-1
Net Movement							311
Group Providers							
Start with STARS		62	5				67
STAR 1			33	4	1	1	39
STAR 2		3		8	1		6
STAR 3					1		1
STAR 4							
STAR 4-Acc							
Net Movement							113
Net Total Movement							1238

Note: Numbers above white squares indicate upward movement of STAR levels. Numbers below white square indicate downward movement of STAR levels.

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Table 56: Fiscal Year 2009-2010 STARS Participation

STAR Level	Center	Family	Group	Total
Start with STARS	379	439	54	**872**
STAR 1	1266	565	263	**2102**
STAR 2	765	135	94	**994**
STAR 3	353	30	26	**409**
STAR 3-Acc	2	0	0	**2**
STAR 4	145	21	5	**171**
STAR 4-Acc	229	32	19	**280**
Total	**3137**	**1222**	**469**	**4828**

Note: Counts represent the number of participants at the start of the fiscal year.

Table 57: Fiscal Year 2009-2010 STARS Movement

Centers							
		Current STAR Level					
Previous STAR Level	**Start with STARS**	**STAR 1**	**STAR 2**	**STAR 3**	**STAR 4**	**STAR 4-Acc**	**Net Total**
Start with STARS		259	32	3	1	14	309
STAR 1	4		245			14	255
STAR 2		7		73	8	2	76
STAR 3			9		49		40
STAR 4			5	3			-8
STAR 4-Acc		1	3	7			-11
Net Movement							661
Family Providers							
Start with STARS		141	7	1		9	161
STAR 1	1		53	4		3	59
STAR 2		1		16	12	3	30
STAR 3					6		12
STAR 4							0
STAR 4-Acc							0
Net Movement							253
Group Providers							
Start with STARS		38	2				40
STAR 1	3		13				10
STAR 2		1		10	3		12
STAR 3			1		3		2
STAR 4							0
STAR 4-Acc				2			-2
Net Movement							62
Net Total Movement							976

Note: Numbers above white squares indicate upward movement of STAR levels. Numbers below white squares indicate downward movement of STAR levels.

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Appendix E: PELICAN Keys to Quality

The Pennsylvania's Enterprise to Link Information for Children across Networks (PELICAN) project is the Department of Public Welfare's initiative to design and develop a system that will integrate the Department's child care programs under a single management information system.

All child care services information is managed in Pennsylvania's Enterprise to Link Information across Networks (PELICAN). Formerly, provider Keystone STARS ratings were designated and tracked in a separate application (KIDS). PELICAN and KIDS did not share information/data. Keys to Quality is a repository that allows OCDEL, PA Keys, and the Regional Keys to track:
- Provider facility information;
- Historical information relating to STARS designation;
- New provider application processing;
- STARS renewals;
- Use of grant funds;
- Technical Assistance contract details such as length of open Action Plan, services provided, and specific Keystone STARS Standards targeted.

The main objectives of this initiative were to consolidate the Keystone STARS ratings data, and to integrate the KIDS functionality into the framework of PELICAN. This system integration effort ensured that the PELICAN application and its users always have the most up-to-date data on provider Keystone STARS ratings.

PELICAN Keys to Quality:
- Integrates and communicates with existing DPW enterprise systems such as MPI, PELICAN Child Care Works, PELICAN Provider Certification and, PELICAN PA Pre-K Counts.
  - The functionality was developed and implemented using a phased approach to fully meet this objective.
- Eliminates duplicate data entry and separate maintenance efforts.
- Standardizes business processes and procedures for all Regional Keys, to reduce administrative overhead and improve accountability.
- Meets the federal reporting mandate for Infant/Toddler Expenditure reports and information requests from the Governor's Budget Office, Pennsylvania legislators and the early learning community.
- Allows OCDEL to more effectively manage funds across programs, both at a statewide level and at the Regional Key level by providing access to real-time data.

Specifically, PELICAN Keys to Quality:

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- Captures the following information to improve opportunities for programmatic monitoring and fiscal accountability
  - Provider level data (MPI)
  - Provider level data, Environment Rating Scale ERS data
  - Designation information
  - Grant details

Analysis of this data, in turn:
  - Supports new initiatives for continuous quality improvements of early learning and child care programs for Keystone STARS providers, which is targeted to increase and reward provider participation in Keystone STARS programs, through tiered reimbursement.

Keys to Quality was implemented in a two-phase approach:
- Release 1 (June 2009): Management of Keystone STARS – Intended to cover the integration of the KIDS functionality and integrate the management of the STARS program with PELICAN Provider Certification, PELICAN Child Care Works, and PELICAN PA Pre-K Counts.

- Release 2 (October 2010): Management of Technical Assistance– Intended to build on the first release by adding the management of both TA services.

Computer Access

During the implementation of the Early Learning Network a survey was conducted to gather information about computer and internet access and use in child care settings as they relate to services to children and families. To collect necessary data, a stratified random sample was drawn for all Keystone STARS providers by STAR level and provider type. Sample weights were developed for the sample of 300 out of 8,669 total providers. To reduce the number of survey questions, a unique ID was coded onto each survey so that response data could be matched to state PELICAN records. One hundred forty-three surveys were returned, representing a 48% response rate.

Of the child care providers who responded to the survey, 87% had broadband internet access, 19% had low speed internet, and 6% had no internet access. Providers without broadband tended to be smaller and of lower STAR ratings.

A set of survey questions asked the providers about their intention to expand child care services. It was found that lower STAR level providers were more likely to plan to increase their hours of operation while higher STAR level providers were more likely to plan to increase the number of children they serve.

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STARS child care providers in Pennsylvania have an average of 3.6 total computers, two of which are available for use by children and one and a half (on average) are used exclusively by staff and administrators. Providers with a computer exclusively available to staff or administrators are 2.5 times more likely to plan to increase their hours of operation. (95% Wald CI 1.3 – 4.5). This suggests that increasing the availability of administrative computers to providers may allow providers to increase the supply of child care.

Among STARS child care providers in PA, 59% report that teachers at their location incorporate computers into activities and projects, but only 36% of providers report a computer in every classroom. Providers with a computer in every Pre-K classroom were 6.4 times more likely to have teachers who incorporate computers into activities and projects (95% Wald Confidence 2.2 – 18.7). A higher percent of STAR 3 and 4 providers reported using a computer in every classroom than did Start with STARS, STAR 1, and STAR 2 providers.

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Appendix F: Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality Career Lattice

Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality Career Lattice

NOTE 1: High school diploma/GED are assumed at Level I.

NOTE 2: These 45 Hours may include 15 Hours of Orientation Training from Level 1.

NOTE 3: For SACC providers, credits on the Career Lattice may be in Education (excluding Secondary Education).

NOTE 4: Human Development and Family Studies (specific to young children) is the equivalent to an ECE degree.

NOTE 5: For Education and Retention (ERA) eligibility, refer to ERA guidance at all levels.

NOTE 6: On the Career Lattice, related fields include Human Development, Psychology, Sociology, Social Work, Education, Nursing, Home Economics/Family and Consumer Science, Recreation, Child and Family Studies, and Business.

NOTE 7: Credential/Certificate/Diploma programs vary. These may fall on Level III or IV depending upon number of credits awarded. Review transcripts accordingly.

NOTE 8: Unrelated BA/AA Degrees that include 30 ECE credits meet Level V of the Career Lattice.

NOTE 9: Continuing college students with at least 60 college credits/18 credits in ECE (EDUC - excluding Secondary Educ. if a SAC only program) are at Level V.

NOTE 10: At levels VI and above on the Career Lattice, in-state or out-of-state ECE Certification is also accepted regardless of degree awarded.

Levels:

I – 15 HOURS Orientation Training [1]

II – 45 Hours or 3 ECE Credits [2,3]

III – Credential, Diploma, Certificate [5,7] or 6 ECE Credits.

IV – 30 credits including 12 ECE credits

V – Associate's/Associate's of Applied Science in ECE/HDFS [4] OR related field (BA/AA/AAS) [6] including 18 ECE credits [5,8,9]

VI – Bachelor's in ECE/HDFS OR related field including 30 ECE credits [4,10]

VII – Master's in ECE/HDFS OR related field including 30 ECE

VIII – Ph.D. or Ed.D in ECE/HDFS OR related field including 30 ECE

POSITIONS

Position			
Child Care / School Age Care	Aides / Family Child Care Providers	Assistant Teacher or Assistant Group Supervisor	Director, Lead or Teacher/ Group Supervisor
Early Head Start / Head Start	Assistant Teachers / Aides	Teachers / Home Visitors	Director / Coordinators / Teachers
Early Intervention		Service Coordinator	Therapist / Case Manager / Director / Supervisor / Early Interventionist / Teacher
Public School Districts		Assistant Teacher / Para-Professional	Teacher (including ECE or EI Ed. Certification) Administrator (including Principal's Certification) / Social Worker
Private Academic Schools	Aides	Assistant Teachers	Administrator / Director / Teacher
TA/ Consultants/ Mentors/ Trainers			
Higher Ed. Faculty			

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Appendix G: Highlights in Development of Keystone STARS

OCTOBER 2002	Department of Public Welfare distributed the Keystone STARS pilot project application to Regulated Child Care Centers and Group Homes
JANUARY 2003	STAR 1 and STAR 4-Accredited designations awarded STAR 1 programs randomly selected for case management
MARCH 2003	STARS Case Managers began onsite visits to Keystone STARS sites
MAY 2003	Keystone STARS Merit Awards established and distributed to STAR 4 providers
JUNE 2003	Keystone STARS moved from a pilot project to statewide implementation
JULY 2003	898 Child Care Center and Group Home Providers Participated in Keystone STARS (752 at STAR 1, 33 at STAR 2, 113 at STAR 4)
OCTOBER 2003	First Step to STARS Grant made available and distributed to 1,454 Providers
DECEMB 2003	Keystone STARS Education & Retention Award (ERA) established
JANUARY 2004	Department of Public Welfare distributed the Keystone STARS Performance Standards for Family Day Care Homes
JUNE 2004	Family Child Care began participating in Keystone STARS
JULY 2004	Keystone STARS became the system of Continuous Quality Improvement; STARS Technical Assistance began
SEPTEMB 2004	Department of Public Welfare established the *Office of Child Development*
FEBRUARY 2005	First Early Learning Program achieved a STAR 4 based on the Keystone STARS Performance Standards (with accreditation)
APRIL 2005	Number of Keystone STARS participants surpassed the 3,000 mark
JULY 2005	The *Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality* established including Six *Regional Keys* and the *PA Key* based in Harrisburg, PA
JANUARY 2006	Infant/Toddler Mental Health Pilot Project began in the Northwest, Southwest, and South Central Regional Keys
MAY 2006	Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality Career Lattice released
JUNE 2006	Pennsylvania Director's Credential Portfolio Assessment began
JULY 2006	Keystone STARS Performance Standards for Centers revised; Head Start State Supplemental Programs and Keystone STARS began collaboration; School Age Child Care (SACC) Project aligned with the Regional Keys; Online PD Calendar made available

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AUGUST 2006	First Family Child Care achieved STAR 4 based on the Keystone STARS Performance Standards (with accreditation)
SEPTEMB 2006	First School-age Professional Credential classes began
JANUARY 2007	Pennsylvania's Departments of Education and Public Welfare established the Office of Child Development and Early Learning
MARCH 2007	First STAR 4 awarded to a Head Start State Supplemental Program
MAY 2007	Environment Rating Scale (ERS) staff doubled to meet increasing demands; over 3,000 practitioners trained on ERS Scales
JUNE 2007	OCDEL offices established at 333 Market Street, 6th Floor, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
AUGUST 2007	SACC-specific STARS Worksheets available
SEPTEMB 2007	Initiation of Tiered Reimbursement increased the daily subsidized child care rate for Keystone STARS providers with a STAR 2 and above
NOVEMB 2007	STARS Advisory Committee visited each region during the Listening Tours to obtain feedback from the provider community
APRIL 2008	Keystone STARS Media Campaign occurred
JULY 2008	Early Intervention participation included in calculation of STARS Grants/Awards eligibility; Tiered reimbursement rate increased for children who receive CCW subsidy; First STARS Leadership Institute held in State College, PA
FEBRUARY 2009	Official results released on Keystone STARS Provider Survey
MARCH 2009	The Performance Standards for Group Homes revised based on feedback from Providers, Advisory Committee, and Regional Keys.
JUNE 2009	PELICAN Keys to Quality implemented, allowing for improved tracking of designations and grants/awards Second STARS Leadership Institute
JULY 2009	OCDEL partners with Office of Children, Youth & Families to integrate Keystone STARS into child care purchasing through child welfare agencies; Speech from President Obama references Pennsylvania's success in early learning.
AUGUST 2009	STAR 3 and STAR 4 Centers began accessing the Early Learning Network (ELN) to report child outcome data using the Work Sampling System and Ounce Scale Online
SEPTEMB 2009	Improved use of Keystone STARS in Child Care Works reported with over a 6% increase during the past year, with 46% of Child Care Works children receiving child care from Keystone STARS providers
OCTOBER 2009	Version 1.0 of "Good, Better, Best: Pennsylvania's Continuous Quality Improvement Guide to Best Practices" released

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