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KEYSTONE STARS
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING

KEYSTONE STARS PROGRAM MANUAL

October 1, 2023

Contents

pennsylvania
KEYSTONE STARS
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING

pennsylvania
KEYSTONE STARS
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING

pennsylvania
KEYSTONE STARS
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING

pennsylvania
KEYSTONE STARS
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING

SECTION ONE: KEYSTONE STARS

Section One: Keystone STARS

About the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)

History: The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) was established in 2007 as a joint initiative between the Departments of Education and Human Services. It was established to promote opportunities for all Pennsylvania's children and families by building systems and providing supports that help ensure access to high-quality child and family services.

Mission: The Office of Child Development and Early Learning provides families access to high quality services to prepare children for school and life success.

Goals:

- Work effectively, collaboratively, creatively, and successfully to ensure that all families have access to high quality programs for their children;
- Engage stakeholders in actionable ways that provide guidance on programs and policies; and
- Identify and use key data and research to improve policies and practices.

OCDEL is composed of five Bureaus:

Bureau of Certification Services
The Bureau of Certification Services is responsible for the regulation of all child care centers, group child care homes and family care homes in Pennsylvania. The Certification Bureau receives inquiries regarding a variety of topics, including: the requirements and process for opening a child care facility; the statutes and regulations for designation of a child care facility; the status and compliance history of specific facilities; and the complaints regarding child care facilities.

Bureau of Finance, Administration, and Planning
The Bureau of Finance, Administration, and Planning oversees a budget of approximately $2 billion dollars in state and federal resources combined to serve children, families, and programs. Additionally, the bureau manages the Office's IT systems development, data needs, and personnel supports.

Bureau of Early Intervention Services
The Bureau of Early Intervention (EI) Services assures that all eligible children from birth to five with disabilities and/or developmental delays receive services and supports that maximize their development, so they are successful in any early care and education setting. Services are provided to eligible infants, toddlers, and young children three and older. This Bureau oversees the Early Intervention Program for children from birth to school age and provides family support programs that strengthen families, reduce risk, and increase early learning opportunities for children.

Bureau of Early Learning Resource Center Operations and Monitoring
The Bureau of Early Learning Resource Center Operations and monitoring provides direct support to the ELRCs through instruction, technical assistance, and remediation, as

pennsylvania
KEYSTONE STARS
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING

warranted, on all programmatic and system requirements. It is also responsible for establishing processes and tools to measure and enforce grantee accountability and program integrity and for monitoring grantees to assure fiscal, grant and programmatic compliance and adherence to federal and fiscal reporting requirements. This work is carried out through the Bureau's two divisions, the Division of Fiscal Monitoring and Compliance and the Division of Technical Management and Compliance.

Bureau of Early Learning Policy and Professional Development

The Bureau of Early Learning Policy and Professional Development develops and implements standards for early childhood education programs and professional to improve the quality of early learning for young children and provides technical assistance for programs and professional. The Bureau is also responsible for establishing and maintain the rules, regulations, and policies for the subsidized child care program, Child Care Works (CCW) and for Child Care Certification.

The Division of Standards and Professional Development, funded primarily through the Department of Education, is responsible for the implementation of Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (PA PKC), and the Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (HSSAP). The division provides support for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) early education coordination requirements; implementation of the Early Childhood Education Professional Standards and the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards; and the implementation of the Early Childhood Education Professional Development Organizations (ECE PDO).

The Division of Keystone STARS and Child Care Works (CCW) Policy is responsible for developing the standards and policy related to Pennsylvania's Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) and the regulations and policy related to Pennsylvania's subsidized child care program. The division is also responsible for ensuring federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) compliance.

The Division of Regulatory Administration and Policy (RAP) is responsible to plan, organize and manage the development of policy, procedures, and regulations as they relate to Pennsylvania's regulations for the certification of child care facilities and its relationship to the quality rating improvement system Keystone STARS to ensure compliance with state and federal requirements. This unit develops, oversees, and conducts training as needed to maintain procedures and regulatory compliance standards for all providers. Oversee policy announcements, clarifications, regulatory interpretations, and training and communication materials for all providers as related to certification of child care facilities.

About Keystone STARS

Keystone STARS is a program of Pennsylvania's Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL). Keystone STARS is a responsive system to improve, support, and recognize the continuous quality improvement (CQI) efforts of early learning programs in Pennsylvania.

Keystone STARS is guided by three core principles:

- A whole child approach to education is essential to meeting the holistic and individual needs of each and every child and family.
- Knowledgeable and responsive early childhood education professionals are essential to the development of children and the support of families.

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KEYSTONE STARS
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING

- Building and sustaining ongoing positive relationships among children, families, early childhood and education professionals, and community stakeholders is essential for the growth and development of every child.

Inclusion, diversity, equity, and respect are foundational values embedded in these principles.

Keystone STARS has four primary goals:

- To improve the quality of early childhood education (ECE).
- To support ECE providers in meeting their quality improvement goals;
- To recognize programs for CQI and meeting higher quality standards; and
- To provide families a way to choose a quality ECE program.

OCDEL's Keystone STARS Program supports ECE programs in making quality improvements. Programs are encouraged to think about the Keystone STARS Performance Standards as a tool to support continuous quality improvement (CQI) that will have positive impacts services for the children and families in their care. Pennsylvania is required to use a portion of its federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) funds for activities that improve the quality of child care services and increase families' options for, and access to, high-quality child care. CCDF is devoted to helping low-income families working or participating in education and training to pay for child care and improve their access to quality child care. Keystone STARS is funded by Pennsylvania's quality set-aside fund as well as state funding streams.

Keystone STARS – A Commitment to the Diversity of Pennsylvania's ECE Providers

OCDEL's Keystone STARS Program supports all ECE programs in making quality improvements. Programs are encouraged to think about the Keystone STARS Performance Standards as a tool to support CQI that impacts services to the children and families in their care.

The Keystone STARS Performance Standards are intended to support programs in developing a meaningful, individualized CQI Plan. In addition, the Standards allow the broad diversity of ECE providers in Pennsylvania to demonstrate quality practices in ways that are meaningful to them and the families in their care. Keystone STARS is a hybrid system with required quality indicators at each STAR level combined with the additional ability to earn points among optional quality indicators at the STAR 3 and 4 levels. The optional, points-based quality indicators at the higher STARS levels allow programs to choose the activities that they feel best demonstrate their quality practices.

Keystone STARS Performance Standard Categories

There are 4 categories in Keystone STARS Performance Standards, each of which have quality indicators at STAR 2, 3 and 4 levels:
- **Staff Qualifications and Professional Development (SQ)**
  - At STAR 2, there are three required SQ quality indicators.
  - At STAR 3 and 4, there is one required SQ quality indicators and nine optional points-based quality indicators.
- **Early Childhood and Education Program (EC)**
  - At STAR 2, there are five required EC quality indicators.

- At STAR 3 and 4, there is one required EC quality indicator and five optional points-based quality indicators.
- **Partnerships with Families and Communities (FC)**
  - At STAR 2, there are four required FC quality indicators.
  - At STAR 3 and 4, there are eight optional points-based quality indicators.
- **Leadership and Management (LM)**
  - At STAR 2, there are five required LM quality indicators.
  - At STAR 3 and 4, there are 11 optional points-based quality indicators in this category.

Intent, Implementation, and Impact: *The Three I's* in Keystone STARS

When using the Keystone STARS Performance Standards, programs are encouraged to examine each individual quality indicator in terms of their Intent, Implementation, and Impact. Each of the 3 I's is explained in further detail below:

INTENT refers to the purpose of each quality indicator and their importance for the experiences of the children and families enrolled as well as to the program staff. Identifying the intent of each quality indicator will also help programs think about how they will implement the quality activity.

IMPLEMENTATION refers to the methods a program uses to carry out the intent of the quality indicator. When thinking about implementation strategies, it is important to realize that these strategies may look different in each program due to the flexibility built into the Keystone STARS Performance Standards. Implementation strategies can be thought of as what it might it look like, feel like, and sound like in a program that is fully applying the intent of each quality indicator. The strategies a program chooses to implement each quality indicator will dictate what sources of evidence and documentation the program will submit to their Quality Coach and Designator.

IMPACT refers to the how implementing the quality indicator will enrich, or positively impact, the experiences of children and families enrolled at the program. Beyond children and families enrolled at the program, the impact of the quality indicator can also be thought of in terms of how staff working at the program will be positively affected.

Through thinking about each STARS quality indicator in terms of the 3 I's, programs will:

- have a better understanding of the purpose and importance of each quality indicator for the experiences of children and families enrolled at the program as well as for program staff. (INTENT)
- be able to demonstrate the explain how they are meeting the intent of the indicator within their program (IMPLEMENTATION)
- be able to explain how children and families in their program are positively affected by the quality activity (IMPACT)

The "Thoughtful Questions for Quality Coaches and Providers" column in the Performance Standards will support programs in helping them to identify how they are implementing the intent of the individual indicators.

Benefits of Keystone STARS

Since the inception of the Keystone STARS program in 2002, the Performance Standards have been the foundation of the program. The standards are guided by the principle that quality early learning programs are the foundation for children's success, and investment in Pennsylvania's field of ECE is an investment in the future. Keystone STARS Performance Standards reflect research-based practices to improve outcomes for children.

Quality ECE benefits children, families, and ECE programs across Pennsylvania.

Benefits for Children and Families Include the Following:
- Quality ECE promotes children's healthy development and early learning.
- Quality ECE programs allow families to have confidence that their children are in a safe, respectful environment.
- Keystone STAR designations help families identify quality child care programs that best meet the needs of their children.
- Reliable quality child care allows families to focus on work, education, or training and results in fewer absences due to child care issues; and
- Quality ECE programs help families locate additional resources within the community that can further support the needs of their children.

Benefits for Providers Include the Following:
- Providers receive individualized support and assistance from Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) Quality Coaches;
- Providers can receive grants, awards, and other financial supports as offered;
- Providers can participate in supportive professional development;
- Providers benefit from the outreach and marketing of Keystone STARS to families; and
- Providers can receive increased Child Care Works (CCW) payments based on quality level.

Keystone STARS Incentives

Child Care Subsidy Daily Add-On, Tiered Reimbursement, for Keystone STARS Programs

As part of OCDEL's commitment to CQI, programs participating in Keystone STARS at STAR 2 level and above receive a quality add-on rate for every child they serve who is enrolled in Child Care Works (CCW).

This subsidy add-on, or *tiered reimbursement,* is applicable to Family Child Care Homes, Group Child Care Homes, and Centers at STAR 2 and higher and increases with each STAR level. The add-on is automatically applied to the daily, subsidized child care rate for the program. The additional daily amount may, in some circumstances, increase provider rates to an amount that exceeds the Maximum Child Care Allowance (MCCA) rate.

Tiered Reimbursement Quality Add on Rates for Children Receiving Child Care Works

Age of Child	STAR 2		STAR 3		STAR 4	
Infant	Full Time $ 2.00	Part Time $ 1.20	Full Time $ 8.70	Part Time $ 4.15	Full Time $ 13.20	Part Time $ 5.25
Young/old toddlers	Full Time $ 1.85	Part Time $ 1.10	Full Time $ 8.45	Part Time $ 3.95	Full Time $ 12.95	Part Time $ 5.00
Preschool	Full Time $ .95	Part Time $ .45	Full Time $ 5.90	Part Time $ 2.50	Full Time $9.20	Part Time $ 3.20
School Age	Full Time $ .95	Part Time $ .45	Full Time $ 5.90	Part Time $ 2.50	Full Time $ 9.20	Par Time $ 3.20

**EFFECTIVE DATE: September 1, 2019.

Grants and Awards

Qualifying child care programs may receive Keystone STARS grants and awards when available.

Tuition Assistance

Several types of tuition assistance are available to program staff working at Keystone STARS facilities:

- **Professional Development Organization (PDO) Funded Opportunities**

  Early Childhood Education Professional Development Organizations (ECE PDOs) * specialize in offering access to credit-bearing coursework through low- to no-cost programs for ECE professionals in Pennsylvania.

  For more information about the PDOs, click PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS (PDOs)

- **Child Development Associate (CDA) Assessment Fee Voucher Program**

  The CDA ASSESSMENT FEE VOUCHER PROGRAM supplies payment for the CDA Assessment Fee that is required to complete the CDA Assessment process. The full CDA Assessment Fee of $425 is paid directly to the Council for Professional Recognition. This program does not reimburse individuals.

  The Pennsylvania Key also offers a voucher for $125 to cover an individual's CDA Renewal Fee.

  For more information about the CDA Voucher Program, click here visit the Pennsylvania Key website at www.pakeys.org.

- **Rising STARS Tuition Assistance**

  The Rising STARS Tuition Assistance Program pays 95% of tuition costs and fees for eligible college coursework taken by early learning professionals, with a maximum benefit of $8,000 per individual each fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). Tuition costs and fees net of other funding sources such as scholarships, stipends, discounts, or grants (except the Pell Grant) are used to determine the amount of

assistance. It is recommended completed applications be submitted at least four weeks prior to the start of the course, or prior to the tuition due date, whichever is first.

For more information about the Rising STARS Tuition Assistance program, click here or visit the Pennsylvania Key website at www.pakeys.org.

- **Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Pennsylvania Scholarship Program**

  T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Early Childhood Pennsylvania offers a variety of scholarship options to help early childhood professionals complete course work toward a degree in early childhood education (ECE) and increase their compensation, while also helping early childhood programs to retain qualified staff. Pennsylvania Child Care Association (PACCA) is the licensed administrator of the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Program in Pennsylvania. For more information on the types of scholarships available, eligibility criteria, program requirements or to download brochures and applications, visit PACCA's website at www.pacca.org/how_to_apply.php.

  T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Pennsylvania is supported by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) of Pennsylvania's Department of Human Services (DHS) and Pennsylvania's Department of Education (PDE). For more information, visit www.dhs.pa.gov and www.education.pa.gov.

SECTION TWO: THE KEYSTONE STARS DESIGNATION PROCESS

Section Two: The Keystone STARS Designation Process

Navigating the Process of Keystone STARS

There are four levels of quality in Keystone STARS:

- STAR 1 equates to a Department of Human Services (DHS) Certificate of Compliance and/or a Department of Education (PDE) private academic license and a focus on health and safety. STAR 1 programs are encouraged to continue working toward higher STAR levels.
- STAR 2 signifies a commitment to CQI and to structural quality. STAR 2 programs must meet all required quality indicators at STAR 2 before moving to a high STAR level.
- STAR 3 and STAR 4 is thought to represent the highest level of quality in ECE. Programs must meet all required quality indicators at the lower STAR levels and then earn a minimum number of points using the STAR 3 and 4 optional, point-based quality indicators.

Programs can move directly to a higher STAR level without being designated at a lower level. For example, a STAR 2 program can move directly to a STAR 4 by successfully meeting all STAR 4 performance indicators without first being designated as a STAR 3, providing they meet the higher required points.

Step 1: Maintain STAR 1 Eligibility

All programs who have a regular certificate of compliance through DHS or a private academic license through PDE are automatically welcomed into Keystone STARS as a STAR 1. These programs can choose to move up to higher STAR levels by using the Keystone STARS Performance Standards. All programs in Keystone STARS must be in good standing with the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue to maintain eligibility.

Step 2: Commitment to Increase Quality Practices

STAR 1 programs are encouraged to continue their commitment to higher quality and work to meet the more rigorous quality indicators at the higher STAR levels. STAR 1 programs should review the quality indicators for a STAR 2 program and begin to implement these standards to move towards becoming a STAR 2 program.

Step 3: Achieve STAR 2 Designation

Programs that demonstrate they are meeting all STAR 2 required quality indicators will be designated as a STAR 2.

Step 4: Pursue Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Activities

Programs that successfully achieve a STAR 2 designation are encouraged to engage in continued higher quality practices, implement, and build upon their CQI plan, and develop a robust Internal Assessment Process.

Programs working toward the STAR 3 and 4 levels are encouraged to seek CQI assistance from a Quality Coach. At these levels, Quality Coaches will:

- Support programs through the STAR 3 and 4 evidence-gathering process

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- Provide guidance in creating a CQI Plan with goals and activities to support comprehensive program improvements
- Review evidence of meeting STAR 3 and 4 quality indicators

Step 5: Achieve a STAR 3 or STAR 4 Designation

STAR 3 and STAR 4 designations are considered the highest of quality for early childhood education programs. At these levels, a program is demonstrating strengths in all 4 of STARS Performance Standard categories and is committed to a culture of continuous quality improvement in their program.

Step 6: Complete Annual Renewal and a Full Designation Renewal Every Three Years

At the end of years 1 and 2 heading into years 2 and 3, all STAR 2, 3, and 4 programs are required to complete an annual renewal which includes the following steps:

- Complete their Annual Renewal application in the PD Registry which includes electronically signing an attestation through which they acknowledge that they are continuing to meet all STARS quality indicators at which they designated.
- Submit a copy of their updated Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) plan which demonstrates that the program is continuing to implement CQI activities and practices. Programs can complete their CQI Plan within the Registry Designation System or outside of the system using one of the 2 CQI Plan templates located in the Appendix (Resource Document #2 and Resource Document #3).
- Ensure that the information on their *Staff Report* in the PD Registry Designation System is correct including their staff's position titles and hire dates. Update any incorrect or missing information for staff. Click here for more information on verifying staff. (The *Staff Report* can be found on the program's *Organization Profile* tab in the PD Registry Designation System.)
- Ensure that all current onsite leadership team members and teaching staff have taken the course, *Overview of Keystone STARS: Pennsylvania's Quality Rating and Improvement System* within 90 days of hire. (SQ 2.1)
- Ensure that all current onsite leadership team members and teaching staff have completed their PD Registry Profile to the point of having their Career Pathway level assigned and their employment has been verified by the program within 90 days of hire. (SQ 2.2) Click here for more information on this step.
- Ensure that, within 90 days of hire, all current onsite program leadership team members and teaching staff have completed their Professional Development Plans (PDP) in the PD Registry to support their educational achievement and professional growth.(SQ 2.3) Click here for more information on this step.

At the end of their third year, programs are required to complete another full designation visit in which all aspects of quality are monitored. Following completion of the full designation, programs will begin a new three-year cycle.

Keystone STAR designations are awarded for a 3-year period. Exceptions to the 3-year designation may occur under certain circumstances including but not limited to:

- Program is ready to achieve a higher STAR designation and applies to move up in STAR levels in the PD Registry System

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- Program experiences a revocation, suspension, or issuance of provisional DHS Certificate of compliance
- Program experiences loss of OCDEL-approved Alternate Pathway accreditation
- OCDEL and/or its partners field concerns about a program's quality from parents, families, and/or other stakeholders

In these cases, the program may need to undergo a full designation in order to maintain their STAR. As significant changes occur, programs are required to report these to their Quality Coach who will then determine if a new designation is required.

Using the PD Registry Designation System for Keystone STARS Designations
(The following incorporates information contained in **ELRC Policy Announcement 22 #03 Streamlined Keystone STARS Designation System**)

The Keystone STARS designation system launched on July 1, 2022, in the PA PD Registry. Programs access the streamlined Keystone STARS designation system in the PD Registry by clicking on the *Keystone STARS/Grants* tab located on their organization's profile page. The screenshot below shows where the *Keystone STARS/Grants* tab will be once an individual has logged into their organization profile in the PA PD Registry.

Organization Profile in the PD Registry
Once a year, program directors/administrators will be prompted to update their Organization Profile within the PA PD Registry. After logging into their *Organization Profile*, program directors/administrators will be asked to review and update all information in their *Organization Profile*. To complete this step, program directors/administrators should do the following:
- Logging into the PD Registry and clicking on the Organization tab on the upper right dropdown menu.
- Click each "Review" tab and update all information in each area including *General Information, Capacity, Classrooms,* and *Employees.*

By updating this information yearly, it can be ensured that the data captured within the PA PD Registry is up to date and accurate for Keystone STARS and reporting at the local, state, and federal level. In addition, program directors/administrators can update the information in their *Organization Profile* at any time as changes occur.

Document Vault Functionality
The Keystone STARS Designation System features a *Document Vault*. The *Document Vault*, located within a program's *Organization Profile* in the PA PD Registry, allows programs to upload evidence and documentation electronically to a centralized storage file. From a program's *Document Vault*, programs can view the documents, upload additional documents, download documents back to a computer file, delete outdated documents, and attach documents to the STARS quality indicators.

Programs can choose to upload documents to their *Document Vault* at any point in their Keystone STARS designation cycles including well in advance of designation renewals. For example, after updating their Family Handbook, a program decides to upload electronically to their Document *Vault* even though their designation renewal is not for several more months. In this way, the program can be better prepared when they begin work to renew their full designation at any point in the future.

The screenshot below illustrates where the *Document Vault* feature is located within a program's *Organization Profile* in the PA PD Registry.
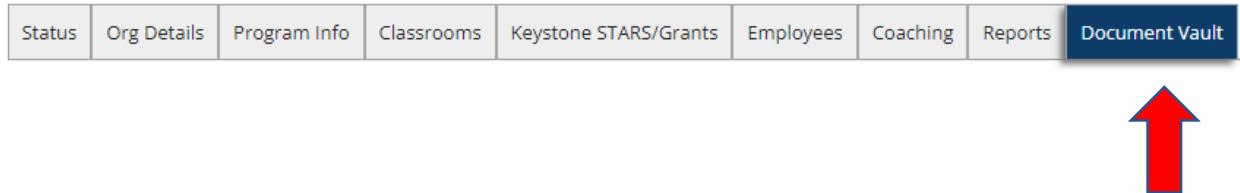
While the Keystone STARS Designation System allows a program to upload and attach evidence directly to a quality indicator from a computer file, it is beneficial for programs to upload all evidence first to their *Document Vault*. There are several reasons for this.

- First, documents that are uploaded to a program's *Document Vault* will remain available for viewing, downloading, and attaching to STARS quality indicators at any time.
- Second, the *Document Vault* will serve as an "electronic file cabinet" where all important documents related to their Keystone STARS designation can be saved and easily accessed. This could be especially important when there is a change in director and the previous director had saved important documents in a computer file that is not accessible to the new director.
- Further, having a document saved in the *Document Vault* allows a program to easily retrieve it for attaching to multiple quality indicators without having to upload the same document repeatedly.

Tip sheets on using the *Document Vault* can be found here.

NOTE: Documents that are uploaded and attached directly to a quality indicator from a computer file are **not** saved/transferred into a program's *Document Vault* at this time.

Documentation and Evidence Requirements in the Keystone STARS Designation System
The STARS Designation System is designed to require that for every quality indicator a program is attempting to meet, at least one source of evidence **must** be uploaded and attached to the quality indicator in the system unless there is an associated system-generated report as explained below or in cases in which a program automatically receives points for a quality indicator.

Programs who require help in uploading documents to their *Document Vault* and/or attaching documents to quality indicators should reach out to their ELRC or the PD Registry team at registry@pakeys.org Additionally, there are many resources on uploading documents on the Pennsylvania Key website including tip sheets, recorded trainings, and video tutorials.

System Generated Reports Within the Keystone STARS Designation System

The Keystone STARS Designation System offers increased functionality by allowing system-generated reports from the PD Registry to be selected from a drop-down menu within certain quality indicators.

Protocol for Confidential Information in STARS Designation System

Programs should refrain from uploading documents that contain personally identifiable information (PII) or confidential information about individual children and/or staff. Examples of documents that often contain confidential information would include, but not limited to:

- Individual Family Service Plans (IFSP)
- Individual Education Programs (IEP)
- Child screenings
- Child assessments
- Staff salaries and performance evaluations.

Programs should first redact, black out, or otherwise hide the confidential information on such documents prior to uploading into the Keystone STARS Designation system. In cases in which a Quality Coach or Designator views such documentation during an onsite visit, a Confidential Records Sign Off Form can be completed and then uploaded and attached to the respective quality indicators.

Annual Paperwork Renewals in the PD Registry

Programs must complete their annual Keystone STARS designation renewals within the PA PD Registry. To complete an annual renewal, a program director/administrator will need to click the *Keystone STARS/Grants* tab and then click *Quality Dashboard*. A program's annual renewal case will auto-populate in their *Quality Dashboard* 120 prior to the program's next designation renewal due date in Years 2 and 3 in the PD Registry Designation System. It is important to note that failure to complete an annual renewal in the Designation System will result in a program dropping to a STAR 1. A tip sheet on Annual Renewals can be found here.

OCDEL Approved Alternate Pathways

(The information below incorporates information from **ELRC Policy Announcement 22 #08 Requirements for Programs Using an OCDEL-Approved Alternate Pathway in Keystone STARS**)

OCDEL recognizes that there are state and national accrediting organizations that similarly serve to ensure early childhood education programs are providing high quality and enriching programming to children and families. In order to give credence to these organizations and their accreditation standards of quality, OCDEL offers several OCDEL-approved alternate pathways to a Keystone STARS designation.

The following table provides information on OCDEL-approved Alternate Pathways and their corresponding STAR designation. Alternate pathway options apply to individual program locations.

More information can be found by clicking here. https://www.pakeys.org/keystone-stars/stars-resources/

Accrediting Agency	Evidence / Documentation	STAR Level
Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) Accreditation plus regular DHS Certificate of Compliance or PDE private academic license	Accreditation Certificate (5 year), electronic database listing and by calling or emailing ACSI (no annual letter issued)	STAR 3
Head Start / Early Head Start (HS/EHS) grantee in good standing with Office of Head Start	Annual Re-Funding Letter provided by Office of Head Start	STAR 4
Montessori Recognition (AMI) or Accreditation (AMS) by: Association Montessori Internationale (AMI/USA) Recognition or American Montessori Society (AMS) Accreditation plus regular DHS Certificate of Compliance or PDE private academic license	Certificate of Accreditation from AMS (issued every August) and by calling or emailing AMS Certificate of Recognition and annual letter from AMI	STAR 4
National Association of Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation plus regular DHS Certificate of Compliance or PDE private academic license	Accreditation Certificate (5 year) or electronic database listing and NAEYC Annual Report	STAR 4
National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) Accreditation plus regular DHS Certificate of Compliance or PDE private academic license	Accreditation Certificate (3 Year) or electronic database listing and NAFCC Annual Report	STAR 4
National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA) plus regular DHS Certificate of Compliance or PDE private academic license	Accreditation Certificate (3 Year) or electronic database listing and, NECPA Annual Report	STAR 4
Out of School Time (OST) Only Providers **School Age Child Care (SACC) Accreditation through Council of Accreditation (COA)** plus regular DHS Certificate of Compliance, as appropriate **Compliant 21st Century Community Learning Centers** plus regular certificate of compliance or PDE private academic license	Accreditation Certificate or electronic database listing and by calling or emailing COA (COA does not issue annual letters) Designation Certificate or electronic database listing and, as applicable 21CCLC Annual Report	STAR 4 STAR 4

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The Professional Development (PD) Registry System: Initial Steps for Programs Using an OCDEL-approved Alternate Pathway

Programs who are or become accredited through an OCDEL-approved Alternate Pathway **must** complete the following steps in the PD Registry Designation System:

1. Claim their program's Organization Profile in the PD Registry. Click here for more information on claiming an organization profile.
2. Submit documentation of the OCDEL-approved Alternate Pathway accreditation in the PD Registry. Click here for more information on how uploading verification of accreditation. Programs should refer to the Appendix: Resource Document #10 ELRC Announcement 22 #08 Requirements for Programs Using an Alternate Pathway in STARS-FINAL_.pdf for guidance on the required documents to be uploaded for each accrediting agency.
3. Submit a copy of their most recent CQI plan which demonstrates that the program is continuing to implement CQI activities and practices. Programs can complete their CQI Plan within the Registry Designation System or outside of the system using one of the 2 CQI Plan templates located in the Appendix (Resource Document #2 and Resource Document #3). If programs complete their CQI Plan outside the PD Registry Designation System, they must upload it to their *Document Vault* prior to completing their designation application. Click here for more information on accessing and navigating the Document Vault.
4. Review their staff information including their positions and employment dates and update any incorrect entries and ensure their *Staff Report* in the PD Registry Designation System is accurate. Click here for more information on verifying staff. (The *Staff Report* can be found on the program's *Organization Profile* tab.)
5. Ensure that all current onsite leadership team members and teaching staff have taken the course, *Overview of Keystone STARS: Pennsylvania's Quality Rating and Improvement System* within 90 days of hire.
6. Ensure that all current onsite leadership team members and teaching staff have completed their PD Registry Profile within 90 days of hire to the point that their Career Pathway level can be assigned and their employment has been verified by the program. Click here for more information on this step.
7. Ensure that all current onsite program leadership team members and teaching staff have completed their PD Plans (PDP) in the PD Registry within 90 days of hire to support their educational achievement and professional growth. Click here for more information on this step.

The PD Registry Designation System: Applying for and Renewing a Keystone STARS Designation Using an OCDEL-Approved Alternate Pathway

Programs using an OCDEL-approved Alternate Pathway should follow the steps on *Tip Sheet for Applying for Keystone STARS Designation Through an Alternate Pathway* when applying for and renewing a Keystone STARS Designation in the PD Registry System. Annually, programs **must** renew their OCDEL-approved Alternate Pathway designation in the PD Registry Designation system. The PD Registry System processes annual renewals the same way it handles full designations for OCDEL-approved Alternate Pathway programs.

Functionality of the PD Registry Designation System for Alternate Pathway Programs

The PD Registry's Designation System assigns designation expiration dates that are three years in the future to all programs, including those using an OCDEL-approved Alternate Pathway.

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NOTE: It is important to note that while the PD Registry Designation System implies that an Alternate Pathway program's designation is valid for 3 years, programs must complete annual renewals during Years 2 and 3 in order to maintain their STAR rating. **Failure to complete annual renewals at Years 2 and 3 or a Full designation in Year 1 will result in an Alternate Pathway program dropping to a STAR 1.**

Programs using an OCDEL-approved Alternate Pathway should be aware of the following:
- The ability to apply for a **full designation** will always be available in the PA PD Registry System.
- The ability to apply for an **annual renewal** will be available in the PA PD Registry 120 days prior to the program's next designation Renewal Due date in Years 2 and 3 in the PA PD Registry System.
- The PA PD Registry designation system processes both **full designations and annual renewals** of Alternate Pathway programs in the same way.

Eligibility and Process for Extending STAR 4 Reciprocity to Head Start and Early Head Start Federal Grantee Locations

(The following incorporates information contained in *ELRC Policy Announcement 21 #03 Eligibility and Process for Extending STAR 4 Reciprocity to Head Start and Early Head Start Federal Recipients)*

OCDEL recognizes HS and EHS programs as high-quality early childhood learning environments and as such, has established a process for extending the highest STAR level, STAR 4, to eligible HS/EHS locations. The Head Start Performance Standard 1302 Subpart E-Family and Community Engagement Program Services, 45 CFR 1302.53(b)(2) states[1]:

> (b) Coordination with other programs and systems. A program must take an active role in promoting coordinated systems of comprehensive early childhood services to low-income children and families in their community through communication, cooperation, and the sharing of information among agencies and their community partners, while protecting the privacy of child records in accordance with subpart C of part 1303 of this chapter and applicable federal, state, local, and tribal laws.
>
> > (2) Quality Rating and Improvement Systems. A program, with the exception of American Indian and Alaska Native programs, must participate in its state or local Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) if:
> >
> > > (i) Its state or local QRIS accepts Head Start monitoring data to document quality indicators included in the state's tiered system;
> > >
> > > (ii) Participation would not impact a program's ability to comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards; and,
> > >
> > > (iii) The program has not provided the Office of Head Start with a compelling reason not to comply with this requirement.

Since July 2017, focus groups have worked to develop protocol on how to best incorporate federally funded HS and EHS grantees with locations where they operate Department of Human Services (DHS) certified child care locations, or have entered into a partnership with a community

provider to provide child care, into Keystone STARS. This work has been thorough and involved representatives from OCDEL, the Pennsylvania Key, HSSCO, PA Pre-K Counts, and the ELRCs.

OCDEL has established the following process through which STAR 4 reciprocity will be extended to all locations under a HS/EHS grantee's Master Provider Index (MPI) number.

There are three exceptions to this STAR 4 reciprocity extension. The following HS/EHS locations are not eligible to receive STAR 4 reciprocity and will need to follow the Keystone STARS Performance Standards in order to move up in Keystone STARS:

- DHS certified child care sites operated under a HS/EHS grantee in which there are no HS/EHS children enrolled and the site is not following the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS).
- DHS certified child care sites who have partnerships with a HS/EHS grantee, including Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP), whose DHS certificate of compliance (CoC) is held under the child care provider's MPI and who is a separate legal entity from the HS/EHS grantee.
- Non-DHS certified HS/EHS grantee locations that are not serving any HS/EHS children and are not following HSSPS.

Process for Granting STAR 4 Reciprocity to Eligible HS/EHS Locations Operating Under a HS/EHS Federal Grantee

The following process will be implemented in order to confirm that all eligible HS/EHS locations are designated with STAR 4 reciprocity appropriately:

1. Each HS/EHS federal grantee will complete a Head Start and Early Head Start Location Demographics Spreadsheet, attached to this policy announcement and also found on the Pennsylvania Key website at www.pakeys.org.
2. Each HS/EHS grantee will return a copy of the completed Head Start and Early Head Start Location Demographics Spreadsheet to their ELRC.
3. Upon receipt of the completed Head Start and Early Head Start Location Demographic Spreadsheet, the ELRC will ensure that all HS/EHS location information is complete and accurate in PELICAN.
4. The ELRC will use the Flowchart for Determining Keystone STARS Level: *Head Start/Early Head Start with DHS Certified Child Care* to determine whether each location is eligible or ineligible for Head Start STAR 4 reciprocity. The ELRC will then indicate one of the following eligibility determinations for each HS/EHS location on the Head Start and Early Head Start Location Demographics Spreadsheet:
- Eligible for Head Start STAR 4 Reciprocity.
  - These locations contain at least one federal and/or state funded child in every classroom, therefore the entire location is subject to monitoring by the Federal Office of Head Start (OHS). These grantees must sign Section 1 of the Keystone STARS Attestation for Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees.
- Eligible for Head Start DHS STAR 4 Reciprocity.
  - These locations have a DHS Certificate of Compliance and contain at least one classroom that does not serve at least one HS/EHS child and therefore will not be monitored by OHS.

- o These locations require further attestation that the HS/EHS grantee follows the HSPPS identified in the Keystone STARS Attestation for Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees for all classrooms at the location and must sign Section 2 of the Attestation.
- Ineligible for Head Start STAR 4 Reciprocity as the location does not meet an eligible provider type for Keystone STARS.

5. The ELRC will send a copy of the completed Head Start and Early Head Start Location Demographics Spreadsheet with reciprocity determinations to each HS/EHS federal grantee in their region along with the Keystone STARS Attestation for Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees. The Attestation form can also be found on the Pennsylvania Key website at www.pakeys.org.
6. Each HS/EHS grantee will review the reciprocity determinations made for their locations by the ELRC on the completed Head Start and Early Head Start Location Demographic Spreadsheet. The HS/EHS grantee will contact the ELRC with any questions about reciprocity decisions.
7. Each HS/EHS grantee will read and sign the Keystone STARS Attestation for Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees if they are requesting to receive Head Start STAR 4 Reciprocity or Head Start DHS STAR 4 Reciprocity for their eligible locations and return a copy of the Attestation to their ELRC.
8. Following the receipt of the signed Keystone STARS Attestation for Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees, ELRC staff will ensure that the information for each location under the HS/EHS grantee is accurate and complete.
9. The ELRC will send the appropriate Keystone STAR 4 Designation Certificates with one-year expiration dates to the HS/EHS grantees who are responsible to distribute the designation certificates to their respective locations.

The steps outlined above will become part of an annual renewal process to be completed by the ELRC and the HS/EHS federal grantees. During the annual renewal process, the ELRC and HS/EHS grantee(s) will work to ensure continued accuracy of data, location information, and STAR 4 reciprocity determinations. OCDEL will issue future clarifications as needed to communicate any changes in protocol.

In cases in which a HS/EHS federal grantee has locations in more than one ELRC region, the ELRC where the grantee's administrative office is located will take the lead in this process and share information regarding any outlying locations with the other applicable ELRCs.

Updated Attestation Form for HS/EHS Grantees
The Attestation Form for HS and EHS Federal Grantees has been updated to include:

- Section #1 – Attestation statements that must be read and signed off on by the HS/EHS grantees that have locations that contain at least one federal and/or state funded child in every classroom therefor the entire location is subject to monitoring by the Federal Office of Head Start (OHS).
- Section #2 - Additional attestation statements that must be read and signed off on by any HS/EHS grantee that have a location(s) with a DHS Certificate of

Compliance (CoC) that contains at least one classroom that does not serve at least one federally and/or state funded HS/EHS child and therefore would not be subject to monitoring by OHS.

- The attestation statement includes an updated requirement that all on-site leadership team members and teaching staff working at HS/EHS locations complete their profile in the Professional Development (PD) Registry to the point at which their Career Pathway is assigned. Moving forward, this requirement must be met by any newly hired staff within 90 days of hire. More information including tip sheets for PD Registry profile completion can be found by clicking here.

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SECTION THREE: CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT & PROGRAM OBSERVATION IN KEYSTONE STARS

Section Three: Continuous Quality Improvement & Program Observation in Keystone STARS

Continuous Quality Improvement in Keystone STARS

Keystone STARS is designed to help early childhood education programs develop and implement a CQI plan that will guide the program in ongoing self-evaluation activities to identify areas where growth would be most beneficial to the children and families served as well as to the overall program.

A program's CQI Plan is a roadmap of activities that builds on existing strengths and includes areas for growth to improve the daily practices and increase staff knowledge. The CQI Plan should reflect a program's journey and growth, including progress toward current goals and new goals for additional improvements. CQI Plans are dynamic, change over time, and reflect the total program. CQI plan goals may include but are not limited to:

- Growth in classroom practices
- Growth in family engagement
- Growth in the professional development of program staff
- Growth in leadership and management practices

At STAR 2 and above, programs begin their journey in CQI planning by creating a required CQI Plan that:

- Is informed by annually conducted internal assessment using an approved program observation instrument (POI). At STAR 2 programs must select a POI from the chart located in on pages 29 and 30 for use in conducting their internal assessments. (EC 2.1)
- Is updated annually to:
    - Remove goals that were successfully met or deemed no longer relevant.
    - Add new long-term and short-term goals.
    - Indicate progress in meeting previous CQI Plan's goals.
- Includes actions items to support overall quality improvement.
- Includes goals for increasing staff qualifications.

The 2023 Keystone STARS Performance Standards removed the requirement at EC 2.1 for programs to include goals in their CQI Plan that were related to the Child Care Facility COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan. This change was made as a result of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) allowing the Public Health Emergency (PHE) for COVID19 to expire on May 11, 2023.

At STAR 3 and STAR 4, a culture of ongoing CQI ensures that programs routinely evaluate their strengths and expand their CQI Plan activities to maintain existing quality and continue to grow new practices that support children and families. Throughout the development and updating of the CQI plan, programs should connect with their Quality Coach and other relevant STARS supports to enhance their CQI journey.

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As part of all Keystone STAR 2, 3, and 4 designations and annual reviews, programs are required to submit a copy of their updated annual CQI Plan to their Quality Coach as a source of evidence. Annual updates should include a review of the previous CQI Plan and:

- Summarize progress made toward achievement of both short-term and long-term goals.
- Identify new goals and action steps based on reflective activities, internal or external assessments and other work related to the STARS Indicators
- Discuss any goals no longer deemed necessary.
- Indicate individuals responsible for achieving goals.
- Programs can complete their CQI Plan within the Registry Designation System or use one of the OCDEL approved CQI Plan templates located in the Appendix. ([Resource Document #2](#) and [Resource Document #3](#)). Programs can also choose to use their own CQI Plan format but must ensure that their plan contains at minimum the information detailed in the OCDEL approved templates.

Connecting Program Observation and Continuous Quality Improvement Planning

A program's CQI Plan is a roadmap for goal setting and uses information from observations to improve the experiences of children and families. Program observations support reflection on classroom practices, classroom environments, interactions, or program leadership and management practices using POIs. These observations can help early childhood and school-age professionals review what they are doing well, identify areas for growth, and inform CQI Plan goals related to classroom practices and program management.

The program observation process can be completed through internal assessment, external assessment by an OCDEL-approved external assessor (hereafter referred to as assessor), co-rating by program staff in partnership with an assessor, or a combination of approaches.

Internal Assessment Process (IAP) in Keystone STARS

Programs in Keystone STARS are required to complete internal assessments beginning at STAR 2 using one of the approved POIs from the chart found in the Keystone STARS standards and this Program Manual. Quality coaches and assessors can support your program, as needed, with planning for your internal assessment work.

At STAR 2, programs annually complete an internal assessment to inform their annual CQI plan. Programs are invited to consult with their quality coach and can request consultation with an assessor to support POI selection, plan for internal assessment, and use assessment results to create CQI goals.

As programs work to achieve or maintain STAR 3 and 4 designation, they expand their commitment to CQI using POIs by developing a team approach to planning for and conducting their internal assessments each year. In partnership with the identified IA Team which includes a quality coach and an assessor, programs are required to create and implement an IAP plan that informs and supports CQI goals and opportunities for professional development.

The IAP includes:
- Identifying the members of the Internal Assessment Team (IA Team).

2023 Keystone STARS Program Manual

- Selecting a POI.
    - Programs must select a POI from the chart on pages 29 and 30 for each age group served when the program has multiple classrooms and children are grouped by age.
    - Home-based providers with mixed age groups select a POI designed for mixed age groups and/or home-based ECE programs.
- Creating a timeline for the current program year's internal assessment activities including the completion of internal (or external when applicable) assessments and other action steps.
- Completing the internal assessment(s). At least at least one classroom from each age group served by the program must be included in the plan for EC 3.4.5.
- Providing the completed assessments to all IA Team members.
- IA Team consultation with an assessor to reflect on the IA results for CQI Plan goals.

Programs working to achieve or maintain designation at STAR 3 or 4 are also encouraged to consider optional STARS indicators that add additional support for CQI planning for program and classroom practice quality by incorporating the activities for indicator EC 3.4.6 and/or indicator LM 3.4.9 into their IAP. These indicators support programs in expanding their use of POIs to gather additional information on other aspects of program practice and/or, include external assessment feedback into their process to inform the development of CQI plan goals.

Adding EC 3.4.6 to the IAP supports programs in:

- using an additional approved POI for internal assessment from the list on pages 29 and 30 to gather information on classroom practices that the POI selected for EC 3.4.5 does not consider, **OR**,
- working with an OCDEL-approved external assessor to complete one external assessment.

The external assessment compliments the program's internal assessments by providing additional practice feedback collected by an experienced OCDEL-approved assessor. The external assessment could be conducted using one of the POIs selected for the required internal assessment work at EC 3.4.5, or an additionally selected POI to expand on the information gathered. The external assessment could be conducted separately from the internal assessments, or it could be conducted with the program's internal observer to both provide external feedback and support the internal observer's growing observation skills.

Adding LM 3.4.9 to the IAP supports programs in:

- utilizing the PAS (center-based programs) or BAS (home-based programs) to gather information for improving their business, leadership, and management practices.

Adding a review of current program practices that occur outside the classroom, but impact teachers, children and families provides the IAP team with feedback for CQI planning that is representative of all aspects of the program.

Planning a process for internal assessments helps prepare programs for a meaningful experience that builds on their program's philosophy, priorities, and culture. Partnering with their quality coach and an assessor throughout the IAP support programs in collecting information through observations and using that information for CQI goal setting. Programs are expected to coordinate the process with their quality coach and assessor during the initial IAP and every three years thereafter. During years two and three of the three year cycle the program should continue to

create an IA timeline, conduct internal assessments, and use the results to update their CQI plan goals independently.

Planning Time for IAP Activities

Programs seeking to maintain or achieve a STAR 3 or 4 designation as well as programs seeking to move up to a STAR 3 or 4 should begin their IAP planning **at least six months prior** to their STAR expiration date and/or goal date for STAR move up. If a program believes they will need more time to complete their IAP activities, they should talk to their quality coach about beginning the process earlier.

Identifying Members of the Internal Assessment Team (IA Team)

The IA Team includes program selected individuals who work together to plan for and carry out all activities associated with yearly quality assessment of current program practices. At a minimum the IA Team should include members from the program's leadership team, an ELRC quality coach and an assessor. Programs are encouraged to consider other individuals for team membership including, but not limited to classroom staff, other coaching/TA partners, parents/guardians, etc.

Selecting a Program Observation Instrument (POI) for Each Age Group

POIs are a way to look at various aspects of quality practices. POIs help early learning professionals organize their observation notes and make plans for improvement. The POIs suggested for use in Keystone STARS are evidence based, reliable instruments – that means:

- the POI has been tested to make sure it measures what it was designed to measure;
- they have been tested in community-based early learning programs to make sure all observers will be able to use the POI as the author intended to collect feedback on practices; and
- reliable or certified observers use the POI's measurement system with a high degree of accuracy, ensuring feedback objectively reflects observed practices as viewed by the instrument.

Some POIs use a broad lens to consider the many elements, relationships, and practices that support individualized growth and development for all children. Other POIs use a focused lens to consider very specific practices, elements, or relationships. Selecting a POI that will enhance CQI goal planning is an important decision for programs. A program might opt to use multiple POIs to inform their goals, as they develop new practices, encounter new challenges, or support staff with various levels of experience and skills.

Quality coaches and assessors can support programs in determining the appropriate POI(s) for different age groups. This conversation may be especially helpful when infants and toddlers, older toddlers and preschoolers, or other age combinations are grouped together.

Programs are not required to achieve reliability or certification on the POI(s) selected. External assessors who are trained to reliability or certification standards have received extensive professional development and routinely complete reliability observations to maintain a level of consistency with the use of the POI. **The goal for internal assessment in Keystone STARS is for identified internal observers to learn enough about the POI to align the practices they observed with the instrument's scoring rubric and develop a complete picture of current program practices. It is recommended that programs have their identified internal observer(s) obtain professional development on how to conduct observations using the POI(s) selected.** This will support obtaining authentic results from the internal assessments.

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Approved Program Observation Instruments (POIs) Programs Can Use to Support and Inform their CQI goals (EC 2.1, EC 3.4.5, EC 3.4.6 & LM 3.4.9)

Program Observation Instrument	Age Level (if applicable)	Supports Goal Setting For:
Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Suite		
Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale - Revised (ITERS-R)*	Birth to 36 months	Classroom practices that support infants' and toddlers' physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development
Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale – Third Edition (ITERS-3)	Birth to 36 months	Classroom practices that support infants' and toddlers' physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development
Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale - Revised (ECERS-R)*	37 months to kindergarten	Classroom practices that support preschoolers' physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development
Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Third Edition (ECERS-3)	37 months to kindergarten	Classroom practices that support preschoolers' physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development
School-age Environment Rating Scale – Updated (SACERS-U)	Younger School-Age/Older School-Age	Classroom practices that support school age children's physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development
Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale – Revised (FCCERS-R)*	Birth to Older School-Age	Classroom practices that support infants', toddlers', preschoolers' and school age children's physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development in home-based settings
Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale – Third Edition (FCCERS-3)	Birth to Older School-Age	Classroom practices that support infants', toddlers', preschoolers' and school age children's physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development in home-based settings
Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Suite		
Infant CLASS	Birth to One Year	Interactions between teachers and infants, and teacher supports for their learning and development
Toddler CLASS	1-3 Years	Interactions between teachers and toddlers, and teacher supports for their learning and development
Pre-K CLASS	3-5 Years	Interactions between teachers and preschoolers, and teacher supports for their learning and development
K-3 CLASS	School-Age Children	Interactions between teachers and school-age children, and teacher supports for their learning and development
Business Administration Scale (BAS) Can be used for EC 2.1 at STAR 2. Can be used for LM 3.4.9 at STAR 3 & 4	N/A	Family child care business practices

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Program Observation Instrument	Age Level (if applicable)	Supports Goal Setting For:
Climate of Healthy Interactions for Learning and Development (CHILD)	3-5 Years	Interactions that support children's social/emotional development
Developmental Environment Rating Scale (DERS)	3-12 years	Practices that support children's executive functioning, literacy, and social-emotional development.
Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP)	2-5 Years with IFSP/IEP	Inclusive classroom practices supporting educational and developmental needs of children with disabilities
Parenting Interactions with Children: Checklist of Observations Linked to Outcomes (PICCOLO)	3 months – 6 years, 1 month old	Adult behaviors and interactions linked to child outcomes
Program Administration Scale (PAS) Can be used for EC 2.1 at STAR 2. Can be used for LM 3.4.9 at STAR 3 & 4	N/A	Center-based administration and leadership practices
Rating Observation Scale for Inspiring Environments (ROSIE)	Preschool	Function and adaptability of the classroom space to meet the needs and interests of the current group
School-age Program Quality Assessment (SPQA)	Kindergarten through 6th Grade	Enacting best classroom practices that support the needs of school-age children
Social Emotional Learning Program Quality Assessment (SEL-PQA)	Kindergarten through 6th Grade	Practices that support social and emotional learning for school-age children.
Teaching Pyramid Infant Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS)	Infant/Toddler	Adult behaviors and classroom environment variables supporting and promoting the social-emotional development of infants and toddlers.
Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT)	Preschool	Teaching and support practices that support social-emotional competence and address challenging behaviors of preschool children.

*Beginning in FY 2024-2025, the use of the revised versions of the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) will be discontinued. During FY 2023-2024 programs may use the revised versions but should include goals within their CQI plan to make the transition to using the third editions of the ERS for their IAP.

As programs investigate the various POIs, the following questions may support their decision-making:

- What are we hoping to learn through assessment?
- What are the goals and priorities for our program?
- Which POI will provide data that most closely aligns with our goals and priorities?

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The chart below organizes the approved POIs for use in Keystone STARS program quality assessment activities in a different way - based upon the area of focus. A link to more detailed individual POI resources is included at the end of the chart.

POIs that focus on:	Consider using or requesting an OCDEL-approved assessor for:
• **Social-emotional learning** • **Classroom climate**	• Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) • Teaching Pyramid Infant Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS) • Social-emotional learning: Program Quality Assessment (SEL PQA) • Climate of Healthy Interactions for Learning and Development (CHILD)
• **Practices that support children with an IEP**	• Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP)
• **Adult-child interactions**	• Parenting Interactions with Children: Checklist of Observations Linked to Outcomes (PICCOLO) *Note: PICCOLO can also be used to observe teacher-child interactions.* • Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
• **An overview of classroom practices, interactions, and environment**	• Environment Rating Scale (ERS) • Rating Observation Scale for Inspiring Environments (ROSIE)— *looks at aesthetics of the classroom* • School-age Program Quality Assessment (SPQA) • Developmental Environment Rating Scale (DERS)
• **An overview of the program's leadership, business, and management practices.**	• Program Administration Scale (PAS) • Business Administration Scale (BAS) **Note:** *PAS and BAS can be used for EC 2.1 and LM 3.4.9, they cannot be used for EC 3.4.5 or EC 3.4.6.*
Additional information on the suggested POIs is available on The Pennsylvania Key website (www.pakeys.org) and from an ELRC Quality Coach. **When visiting The Pennsylvania Key website, search for *Program Observation Instruments*. Click on any POI on the website chart to learn more.**	

Creating a timeline for the current year's internal assessment activities

A well-developed and realistic IAP timeline is an essential tool for guiding the development of CQI across all areas of the program. Programs are invited to consult with their quality coach and assessor about scheduling an optional pre-implementation meeting before beginning to use the *Keystone STARS IAP* template (Appendix Resource Document #4).

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Key considerations for a program's IAP timeline:

- The program's STAR goal and important dates for that goal
- Adequate time to create their IA Team and begin discussions
- Time for exploration of the POI options and to complete relevant training
- Purchase of POI materials as applicable
- Adequate time for completion of all planned observations
- Time to organize observation notes and seek scoring clarification as needed
- Plan for sharing feedback with teachers and the IA Team, including adequate time for all members to independently review and reflect upon the results
- Time for the IA Team to come together to share their independent feedback and reflections, discuss, and clarify the information gathered, apply the information to CQI planning and goal setting, and plan for next steps.

The most important consideration for establishing an IAP timeline is the activities cannot take place at the last minute, in a short timeframe. Start with considering when the STAR 2 IAs are completed each year. Then factor in any target dates for achieving a higher STAR level or needing to renew a current designation. When necessary, programs may need to adapt their timing of internal assessments to allow enough time for all of the IAP work to be completed in advance of the target date for designation.

Finally, work backwards to consider the timing for each of the IAP activities (including EC 3.4.6 and LM 3.4.9 activities when applicable) and possibly build in some extra time for unexpected delays. This will establish a solid timeline for completing the work and ensure that there is plenty of time between the IA Team consultation with an assessor and the need to document that work for designation.

REMINDER: Assessments shared with the IA Team for review and CQI planning as described in the STARS quality indicator EC 3.4.5, EC 3.4.6, and/or LM 3.4.9 can be completed no more than twelve months prior to the date they are being shared. The intent of the IAP is for the program to use feedback on current practices. Internal assessments completed more than 12 months prior reflect practices, teachers, or enrolled children that may no longer be present.

Programs should be sure to update their quality coach and assessor about changes to dates in the established timeline as they occur.

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Completing the Internal Assessments

Once the IAP timeline is established the program's identified internal observer can begin preparing to conduct the assessments. Below are some tips to consider before, during, and after the observations:

Tips for Successful and Effective Observations
Before: Whenever possible, enroll at least the internal observer in professional development for the POI selected. The PQA Professional Development Catalog contains information on both formal and informal opportunities to learn about each POI. The internal observer should thoroughly review the POI, its scoring sheets, and other available sources of clarification for applying what is observed to the POI's scoring rubric. POI How to Guides for each of the approved POIs are available on the Pennsylvania Key website for programs to access and review. These guides also outline important steps internal observers can take to better align their observations with accurate reflections of practice.
During: Effective observations include adhering to the POIs recommended time sampling, note-taking, and observation guidance. While a program might ask multiple people to serve as internal observers, ideally one observer should complete a classroom's full observation. To obtain the most meaningful feedback what is observed should be reflected in the POI rubrics scoring, not what the internal observer already knows or believes about the teaching staff's practices and the classroom environment.
After: The score sheet and observation notes should reflect only what was observed, or when appropriate what was reported. Being honest about current practices is the foundation for exploring teachers' strengths and areas for growth supports planning pathways for growth that matter to the experiences of the children in the group. Once the observation is complete if the internal observer has questions, reaching out to the quality coach and assessor can support the individual in applying what was observed to the scoring rubric to arrive at feedback to use in CQI planning. **Important Reminder: Feedback from program observations is always considered a point in time snapshot of current practices. Observations are a guide to support goal setting and not a test to be passed.**

Providing the Completed Assessments to the IA Team

Each member of the IA Team brings unique insight and experience to the IAP; that diversity is especially powerful as the Team begins to organize their thoughts for CQI goal setting. Providing the completed internal assessment results to each member of the team will allow them to review the information prior to the CQI Consultation meeting. Assessors will use the time between receiving the completed assessments and the meeting to review the results and consider what strengths and areas for growth are present, where observed practices may not be accurately aligned with the POI lens and to formulate questions to pose to the IA Team for consideration during the consultation. The other members of the program's IA Team are encouraged to review the internal assessment results as well to note their own questions, thoughts, and ideas. If a program has requested any external assessment during their IAP, the feedback from that

assessment should be shared with the IA Team as well and included in the CQI Consultation discussion.

Each IA Team will identify how assessment documentation is shared prior to the CQI Consultation meeting. After receiving a program's completed observation documentation, the assessor will work with them to schedule a CQI Consultation meeting.

Resources a program may want to consider sharing with its IA Team:

- Completed POI score sheets from each assessment
- Observer notes gathered during the assessment(s)
- Questions that the observer has about the internal assessment process or observation results
- Areas of noted practice strengths and/or areas where growth is needed
- Current CQI Plan goals

The more that is shared with the IA Team, the richer the CQI Consultation conversation will be, which will support writing new CQI Plan goals.

IA Team CQI Consultation for CQI Plan Goals

The IAP is an opportunity to learn about the how to conduct objective assessment through a lens reflective of a program's unique culture and priorities, and to use the information gathered for authentic CQI work. The cycle of quality improvement includes:

- collecting information about current practices and elements of the program through observation,
- using POI results to create specific measurable and achievable goals for growth,
- implementing strategies that move learning programs toward quality practices, and
- reviewing the success of planned strategies, updating goals, and planning for next steps.

Review Effectiveness → Plan for IAP → Implement IAP → Create Goals → Implement Goals → Review Effectiveness

To set the stage for CQI planning during the CQI Consultation, the assessor will facilitate a conversation with the IA Team about their individual reviews of the completed assessments. Group

reflection often uncovers practice trends noted by multiple team members and, strengths or areas for growth not previously identified. The conversation allows the assessor to answer questions about the results and clarify how observed practices are represented within the POI, supporting the growth of internal observers' skills. Assessors can also support the IA Team's consideration of adapting their observation process in future years.

In addition to the reflective conversation, the CQI Consultation meeting includes a variety of elements based on the program's unique process and needs such as:

- The program identifies priorities for CQI goals. This may include determining immediate, short-term, and/ or long-term timeframes for goals.
- The program creates goals for growth that reflect the information gathered through the IAP. This may include identifying involved staff, resources needed, and timeframes for achieving goals.
- The program builds on the completed IAP by planning follow-up observations to measure progress toward CQI goals.
- The program considers possible adaptations to the established IAP that will be implemented in subsequent years based on lessons learned during the current cycle.

Although many CQI Consultation meetings may end with established CQI goals for growth of classroom, business, leadership and/or management practices, some may not. Many factors inform meeting outcomes including how many internal/external assessments a program has feedback from, the scope of the conversation during the meeting and how many identified areas for growth are being considered. When CQI goals are not created during the meeting, programs are still expected to use the information gained during the meeting to update their CQI plan goals for the coming year.

SECTION FOUR: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & REGISTRY REQUIREMENTS

Section Four: Professional Development & Registry Requirements

Professional Development Requirements in Keystone STARS

The National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) defines professional development (PD) as the process of continuing learning and activities that are intended to prepare professionals for their best work with young children and families OCDEL recognizes that PD may take several different forms depending on the individual and their ECE professional journey.

Professional Development Goals

- Assist eligible STARS facilities in achieving specific quality performance standards and higher STAR levels;
- Enhance, but not duplicate, the services provided by other parts of the ECE system; and
- Support a team approach to addressing the needs of educators and their programs.

Professional Development Guiding Principles

- PD is comprehensive and coordinated;
- PD is relationship-based, culturally sensitive, and use a strength-based approach that focuses on the individual needs of the teachers/directors and program,
- PD maximizes resources by collaborating with, but not duplicating the services of other partners;
- PD values a collaborative model of service delivery;
- PD acknowledges and builds on the diversity and commonalities of all teachers/directors and programs;
- PD promotes a cross-systems network allowing partners to communicate and refer effectively;
- PD uses research and evidence-based practice; and
- PD establishes consistent data collection procedures to assess programs and inform decision-making and program improvement.

The Pennsylvania Professional Development (PD) Registry Information

The Pennsylvania Key provides access to professional development courses developed in-state and nationally through its PD Registry. The PD Registry is a technology system that functions as a workforce registry. A workforce registry increases the number of high-quality early childhood education programs by helping to develop and track a knowledgeable and skilled ECE workforce in Pennsylvania.

The PD Registry tracks an individual's professional achievements and provides important data about the early childhood workforce to help raise the status and compensation for ECE professionals.

In addition, within the PD Registry, individuals can:

- Complete/Update their PD Registry Profile.
- Apply/Renew placement on the Pennsylvania Early Childhood Education Career Pathway through the PD Registry.

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- Complete a self-assessment using the Big Ideas Framework and see their results in their *Big Ideas Framework Definitions and Results Report* within the Reports tab.
- Complete/Update their Professional Development Plan (PDP) using the *Big Ideas Framework Definitions and Results Report.* The PDP can be found within the left-hand menu of the PD Registry Profile.

For more information on the PD Registry, click here or visit the Pennsylvania Key website at www.pakeys.org.

STAR 2 PD Registry Requirements for Program Leadership and Teaching Staff

Beginning **July 1, 2023**, all onsite leadership team members and teaching staff members working at STAR 2, 3, and 4 programs have to complete the following tasks **within 90 days of hire**:

- **SQ 2.1: Complete Overview of Keystone STARS: Pennsylvania's Quality Rating and Improvement System**

    At STAR 2 and above, newly hired on-site leadership team members and teaching staff are required to complete the PD Course, *Overview of Keystone STARS: Pennsylvania's Quality Rating and Improvement System* **within 90 days of hire**. This course replaced the previous courses STARS 101 and 102 in July 2022. All current on-site Leadership team members and Teaching Staff are required to complete *Overview of Keystone STARS* by the program's next Keystone STAR designation renewal, full or paperwork occurring after October 1, 2022.

- **SQ 2.2: Complete PD Registry Profile & Renew Annually**

    At STAR 2 and above, all teaching staff and on-site leadership team members must **complete** their initial PD Registry Profile **within 90 days of hire**. A Registry Profile is considered complete when the Career Pathway Level is listed as "*applied*" or "*verified*" in the PD Registry and on the PD Registry Report, *Staff Report*. In order to be assigned the appropriate Career Pathway level, individuals must upload all relevant documentation of their self-reported education within the Career Pathway application.

    College transcripts that are uploaded must include the following information:

    - student name,
    - institution name,
    - courses,
    - grades,
    - credits,
    - confer date, and
    - identified major.

    Foreign degrees must be **evaluated** course by course by a NACES www.naces.org/members or AICE www.aice-eval.org/members member.

    Ongoing, all teaching staff and on-site leadership team members are required to **renew** their PD Registry Profiles annually even if no changes have occurred. Individuals are sent email reminders to update their PD Registry Profile 60 days prior to the date of their Renewal becoming due. Through renewing one's PD Registry Profile, an individual's

Career Pathway placement is also renewed for another year. A Tip Sheet on completing and renewing PD Registry Profiles can be found [here](#).

Programs are encouraged to ensure all the teaching staff and leadership team members are actively working on completing their initial Registry Profile or renewing their PD Registry Profiles **at least 90 days prior** to their current STAR designation expiration (full or annual).

The PD Registry Profile renewal due date is one year from the original date an individual was awarded their Career Pathway level. For Keystone STARS designations, individuals must have current Career Pathway levels and should not have "Renewal Due" statuses.

- **SQ 2.3 Complete Professional Development Plan (PDP)**

At STAR 2 and above, all teaching staff and onsite leadership members must complete their initial PDP in the PD Registry **within 90 of days of hire** and update these plans annually. These PDPs are:

- based on individual needs identified in the PD Self-Assessment using the Big Ideas Framework;
- informed by internal assessments using evidence-based tools;
- informed by instructional observations or performance evaluations;
- inclusive of goals to support further education;
- updated annually at a minimum;
- used to inform program's CQI plan and overall PD activities.

Guidelines for Updating One's Education in the PD Registry

Individuals can upload documentation of educational milestones such as enrolling in an ECE degree/credential program (including a Child Development Associate (CDA), School Age Child Care (SACC) Credential, or a PA Director's Credential or equivalent, completing coursework, and/or completing a degree/credential at any time.

When an individual believes that completed educational milestones may push them to a higher Career Pathway level, they should upload documentation and then complete the *Career Pathway Placement Review Form* found on the Pennsylvania Key website. If a new Career Pathway level is assigned based on the additional coursework, the PD Registry renewal due date will then be one year from this new assignment date.

Please note individuals **are not required** to update their Career Pathway after they finish individual courses but only after events as explained above that may push them to a higher Career Pathway placement. (i.e., 6, 9 or 12 ECE-related college credits)

STAR 3 and STAR 4 PD Registry Requirements for Program Leadership and Teaching Staff

- **SQ 3.4.2: Staff Qualifications and Career Pathway Placements**

At STAR 3 and 4, programs can earn points for optional quality indicator, **SQ 3.4.2**, based on the Career Pathway levels assigned to their onsite leadership team members and teaching staff. The number of points a program will earn at SQ 3.4.2 is determined by the Career Pathway placement levels assigned to the onsite leadership team members and teaching staff.

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At the time of every full STAR 3 and 4 designation, including move up designations to STAR 3 and 4, all teaching staff and onsite leadership team members must have been assigned Career Pathway levels. In order to ensure that this is complete, all STAR 3 and STAR 4 programs should begin working with their staff a minimum of **90 days** prior to their STAR expiration date to ensure that their Career Pathway placement is complete and not in need of renewal.

- **SQ 3.4.3 through SQ 3.4.9: Complete Professional Development in Identified Topic Areas**

  AT STAR 3 and 4, programs can earn points by meeting optional point-based quality indicators related to professional development taken by their leadership team members and teaching staff.

  Keystone STARS seeks to ensure that ECE professionals are well-educated and skilled in key areas related to child development and best practices in the classroom. The following subject areas are considered to be key components that should be included in every teaching staff's professional development plan (PDP):

  - Supporting effective teaching practices that promote the development across all content areas for all children, including those who are culturally and linguistically diverse. (SQ 3.4.3)
  - Supporting the social and emotional development of all children (SQ 3.4.4)
  - Engaging in positive interactions with children and families (SQ 3.4.5)
  - Effectively implementing the curriculum selected and in use by the program (SQ 3.4.6)
  - Effectively administering the developmental screening tool selected and in use by the program (SQ 3.4.7)
  - Effectively administering the observation-based assessment selected and in use by the program (SQ 3.4.8)
  - Supporting children with disabilities and other at-risk populations including children experiencing homelessness and in foster care (SQ 3.4.9)

  STAR 3 and 4 programs can earn points by having their leadership team members and teaching staff complete acceptable forms of PD in the subject areas above.

Acceptable Forms of PD to Meet Keystone STARS Quality Indicators SQ 3.4.3, SQ 3.4.4, SQ 3.4.5, and SQ 3.4.9:

OCDEL recognizes that PD can take place in a variety of forms, depending on the individual and their professional journey. The chart on the following page outlines the OCDEL-approved forms of PD that can be used by individuals to satisfy the Staff Qualification (SQ) quality indicators of SQ 3.4.3, SQ 3.4.4, SQ 3.4.5, and SQ 3.4.9 at the time of a program's full designation, including move up designations.

OCDEL Approved PD Options to Meet SQ 3.4.3, 3.4.4, 3.4.5, and 3.4.9	
1. Being actively enrolled* in an Early Childhood Education/Child Development (ECE/CD) degree program, including a Child Development Associate	• Being actively enrolled in ECE/CD coursework is recognized as quality PD and therefore considered to meet **all**

OCDEL Approved PD Options to Meet SQ 3.4.3, 3.4.4, 3.4.5, and 3.4.9	
(CDA), School Age Child Care (SACC) Credential, or a PA Director's Credential or equivalent, at a regionally accredited institute of higher education (IHE). *Please see definition of "active enrollment" in Keystone STARS Glossary.*	**four quality indicators** in full without review of individual coursework. • Individuals will need to provide documentation of active enrollment in ECE/CD coursework.
2. Completed coursework and/or completed degrees in an ECE/CD degree program, including a CDA, School Age Child Care (SACC) Credential, or a PA Director's Credential or equivalent at a regionally accredited IHE within the last three years.	• Completed coursework in ECE/CD is recognized as quality PD and therefore considered to **meet all four quality indicators** in full without review of individual coursework. • Individuals will need to provide documentation of completed coursework and/or completed degree.
3. Completed PQAS course within the last three years aligned to the identified topic area.	• PQAS courses that are at least two hours in length may be used to meet a maximum of two quality indicators providing the course content covers both topic areas identified in the two indicators. • Individuals can view their completed PQAS trainings within their "*My Professional Development Learning Record*". This information can be found by clicking on the reports tab within their Personal Profile.
4. Completed Act 48 course within the last three years aligned to the identified topic area.	• Act 48 courses that are at least two hours in length may be used to meet a maximum of two quality indicators providing the course content covers both topic areas identified in the two indicators. • Individuals with a PPID can view all completed Act 48 courses and print

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OCDEL Approved PD Options to Meet SQ 3.4.3, 3.4.4, 3.4.5, and 3.4.9	
	their PERMS *Continuing Education Details Report* as documentation.
	• Individuals without a PPID who take Act 48 courses will need to provide documentation of completed course(s).
5. Completed EITA course within the last three years aligned to the Identified topic area.	• EITA courses that are at least two hours in length may be used to meet a maximum of two quality indicators providing the course content covers both topic areas identified in the two indicators.
	• Individuals who take courses through the EITA portal will need to provide documentation of completed course(s).
6. Being actively enrolled* in coursework in a program of study other than ECE/CD that shows alignment to the identified topic area at a regionally accredited IHE. *Please see definition of "active enrollment" in Keystone STARS Glossary.*	• Individuals will need to provide evidence of being actively enrolled in coursework that shows alignment to the identified topic area in the indicator, such as a syllabus or a course description(s).
	• Coursework will be reviewed by a Quality Coach and/or Designator to verify alignment to identified topic area in the quality indicator.
	• A single enrolled course may be used to satisfy a maximum of two quality indicators providing the course content is found to align to both topic areas identified in the two indicators.
7. Completed coursework in a program of study other than ECE/CD that shows alignment to the identified topic area at a regionally accredited IHE within the last three years.	• Individuals will need to provide evidence of completed coursework that shows alignment to the identified topic area in the indicator, such as a syllabus or course description(s).
	• Coursework will be reviewed by a Quality Coach and/or Designator to verify alignment to identified topic area in the quality indicator.

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OCDEL Approved PD Options to Meet SQ 3.4.3, 3.4.4, 3.4.5, and 3.4.9	
	• A single completed course may be used to satisfy a maximum of two quality indicators providing the course content is found to align to both topic areas identified in the two indicators.

Note: While OCDEL does not specific a minimum length for PQAS, Act 48, and EITA trainings as approved PD options, it does consider it best practice for courses to be **a minimum of one hour** in length that are completed to meet the STAR 3 and 4 quality indicators
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Requirements for Staff Entering or Re-Entering the ECE Profession

Individuals who enter the ECE profession for the first time or re-enter the ECE profession after being out of the field for more than three years, will have a full three years from their hire date to complete the PD for STARS quality indicators SQ 3.4.3, 3.4.4, 3.4.5, and 3.4.9. If the program at which an individual is employed has a full designation prior to the individual's three-year anniversary, such individual(s) can be marked "N/A" and will be considered to have met any of the 4 indicators that the program is attempting to meet for STAR 3 and 4 designation. At the program's subsequent designations, the individuals will need to meet the indicators using one of the acceptable forms of PD listed above.

Note: Individuals who enter the ECE profession for the first time or re-enter the ECE profession after being out of the field for more than three years are required to complete the appropriate PD to meet SQ 3.4.6, 3.4.7, and 3.4.8 **within their first year of hire**.

Information on Child Development Associate (CDA) Credentials
OCDEL recognizes that CDA's are offered in a variety of ways including through community-based organizations and higher education institutions. While OCDEL recognizes that individuals can choose the option that best fits their needs, OCDEL also believes that there are differences in how the coursework offered in the different CDA programs will be interpreted for Keystone STARS.

The following chart outlines the most common CDA options and how individuals enrolled in these programs and the coursework will be considered in terms of Keystone STARS Professional Development:

Pathway to CDA	Is Individual Considered to be "Actively Enrolled"?	Is the completed coursework considered PQAS PD or ECE/CD coursework?	Does the CDA once conferred count as a completed program of study in ECE/CD?
Community Based CDA Program • Courses are not in the Registry at all or are not in the Registry as a specific 120-hour CDA course (only individual courses are listed that	No	Neither for courses not in Registry at all. For individuals courses in the Registry which can be used toward CDA coursework: PQAS PD only.	Yes

Pathway to CDA	Is Individual Considered to be "Actively Enrolled"?	Is the completed coursework considered PQAS PD or ECE/CD coursework?	Does the CDA once conferred count as a completed program of study in ECE/CD?
could be used toward CDA coursework).			
Community Based CDA Program (120-hour course) • Courses are in the Registry	Yes	PQAS PD*	Yes
CDA Program at IHE	Yes	ECE/CD Coursework	Yes

*Some Community-based CDA programs may articulate for college credits at some IHEs once an individual enrolls in a degree program (AA or BA).

Acceptable Forms of PD to Meet Keystone STARS Quality Indicators SQ 3.4.6, SQ 3.4.7, and SQ 3.4.8:

There is special consideration given to the vendor-related tools of curriculum, developmental screening, and observation-based assessment in SQ 3.4.6, SQ 3.4.7, and SQ 3.4.8. Because these three areas are specific to the curriculum, screening tool, and assessment in use by a program, staff who take vendor-specific PD in each of these three areas will **not** be required to take additional training unless:

- the author of the tool releases updates/changes to their product;
- the program chooses to adopt a different vendor related tool; or
- program leadership determines additional PD is indicative of quality teaching practices.

Programs, as part of their annual CQI activities, should determine if updates have been released by the vendor for the curriculum, screening tool, and assessment tool they use. When updates and revisions are identified, teaching staff and onsite leadership team members will be expected to participate in relevant updated trainings offered by the vendor in order to earn points in these indicators at their next designation.

For these three indicators, PD must be completed within one year of hire by all teaching staff and onsite leadership team members unless they are able to produce record of previous completed training in the selected tool.

In addition to the consideration outlined above, OCDEL recognizes the need for increased flexibility as PD related to vendor-specific tools can often be costly and difficult to find when taken directly from the vendor. Best practice is for all teaching staff to take PD offered directly from the respective vendor. However, when this option is cost prohibitive, OCDEL will recognize several other forms of PD to meet these three quality indicators.

The chart on the following page outlines the OCDEL-approved forms of PD that can be used by individuals to satisfy the Staff Qualification (SQ) quality indicators of SQ 3.4.6, SQ 3.4.7, and SQ 3.4.8 at a program's full designation, including move up designations.

OCDEL Approved Options to Meet SQ 3.4.6, 3.4.7 and 3.4.8		
Option	**Additional PD Required?**	**Documentation Required**
1. Official training endorsed by the vendor offered in-person or virtually.	No	Certificate of completion from vendor
2. PQAS course(s) in the **specific** curriculum, screening tool or assessment tool. *	No	Professional Development Learning Record- verified PQAS hours
3. Taking part in unofficial training in the specific curriculum, screening tool, or assessment through social media and/or YouTube.	Yes	Both the staff person and a member of the program leadership team should sign off on the screenshot/certificate of completion.
	PQAS training in the general topics of curriculum, developmental screening, or child observation-based assessment	Professional Development Learning Record- verified PQAS hours

*Courses in the PA PD Registry that are related to specific curricula, screening tools, and assessment tools are reviewed for quality assurance and meet option #2 above.

Pennsylvania Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (PA PSCECE)

(The following incorporates information contained in ***ELRC Policy Announcement 22 #01 Systems Alignment to the Pennsylvania Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (PA PSCECE)***

In response to the recent National context, Pennsylvania adopted the Pennsylvania Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (PA PSCECE) in 2022. This set of standards and competencies replaced the PA Core Knowledge Competencies (CKCs) and were adopted from the national Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators. The PA PSCECE are the general knowledge and skills that educators need to know and be able to demonstrate. They are not the specific standards and competencies needed for specific professions and occupations within the early childhood field. Following the release of the seminal 2015 Institute of Medicine Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation (IOM Report), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) announced a collaborative initiative called Power to the Profession. This initiative established the first ever Unifying Framework for the early childhood profession with the goal of advancing ECE as a recognized professional field of practice. The PA PSCECE are designed to increase the reliability, portability, and relevance of ECE professional development (PD) (including higher education programs) nationwide. These standards help to ensure Pennsylvania's ECE professionals are prepared to support the growth and development of every child, birth through age eight, across the commonwealth.

The PA PSCECE include seven standards. The first six standards are adopted directly from the national standards, the seventh standard, Health, and Safety is Pennsylvania specific. In addition, the standards include resources that are Pennsylvania-specific and can be integrated into coursework and trainings. These PA PSCECE will guide Pennsylvania's early learning PD system, including both educator preparation and non-certification programs in ECE; ongoing professional growth and development activities; and credentials.

Early learning providers can learn more about the PA PSECEC, by taking the course, *PA Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators* course in the PD Registry. This course explores the of PA PSCECE while helping learners:

- Understand why a new set of standards for early childhood educators is being implemented and how they were developed
- Understand the main aspects and components of the PA Professional Standards
- Understand the key shifts found throughout the PA Professional Standards

This course can be accessed through the training calendar in the PD Registry or by accessing the following link ([PA Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators](#)).

All course offerings in the PD Registry are coded with the PA PSCECE standard area(s) to which the course material covers. In addition, STARS standards SQ 3.4.3 through SQ 3.4.9 include tips for searching for courses in the PD Registry that most closely align with each topic area.

When searching the Registry for the PA PSCECE Standard Area(s), individuals should use the PD *Registry Training Event Search* under *Training Content*. The Professional Standard Areas are listed in a drop-down menu which can be used to filter event the PA PSCECE Standard Areas. The screenshot below shows the Training Content menu and the drop-down menu for the Professional Standard area.
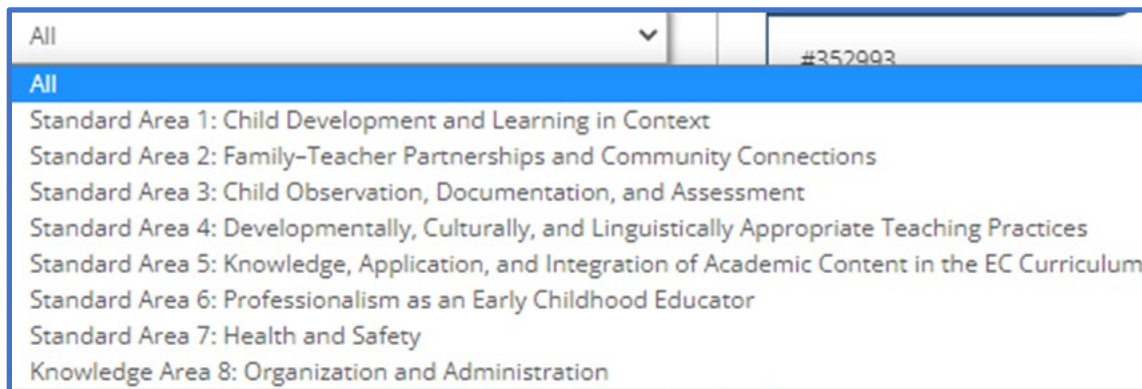
Note: Even through each of the quality indicators include "Tips" for searching for courses in the PD Registry within each PA PSCECE Standard Areas, individuals must evaluate the courses offered in terms of the topic area identified in each quality indicator. For example, not every PD course coded as PA PSCECE Standard Area 1 will align with the topics identified in SQ 3.4.3, SQ 3.4.4, and SQ 3.4.9.

Please see the Pennsylvania Key website at www.pakeys.org for a thorough listing of PQAS approved courses that provide approved professional development in the above quality indicators.

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Coursework can take the form of face-to-face or self-paced online modules including those offered through Better Kid Care and other national E-learning PQAS approved organizations.

SQ 3.4.10: Professional Development for Non-Instructional Staff

In order to meet the professional development indicator of SQ 3.4.10, non-instructional staff do not have to receive PQAS PD. The program's leadership team should discuss appropriate trainings with the non-instructional staff and at minimum, share information related to developmentally appropriate practice and appropriate child-adult interactions. In some cases, PQAS approved PD may be considered best practice and appropriate for non-instructional staff.

Professional Development to Increase Knowledge in Other Keystone STARS Quality Indicators

Providers may choose to take PD in topics that are not specific to Staff Qualifications and Professional Development Performance Standards. Because these quality indicators do not require PD be taken as part of fulfilling the indicator, programs have flexibility in the type of PD they take in order to increase knowledge. However, it must be noted that non-PQAS PD taken will not be captured in an individual's PD Learning Record in the PD Registry.

Examples of non-PQAS PD that may help providers gain the knowledge and skills that will support their implementation of select Keystone STARS quality indicators are as follows:

Content Expert/Resource	Content	STARS Performance Standard(s)
Medical Professional	Health-related issues	FC.3.4.1 LM.3.4.10
Legal Professional	Legal issues	LM.2.2 FC.2.1 FC.2.4
Financial Services Professional	Business/Budget issues	LM.2.1 LM.3.4.7

Professional Quality Assurance System (PQAS) Information

The Pennsylvania Key and OCDEL has implemented a system for approving individuals and organizations who provide professional development and technical assistance to early childhood and school-age professionals in Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System (PQAS) maintains a registry of approved Professional Development Instructors and Technical Assistance Consultants/Coaches to help ensure that professional development activities and technical assistance meet quality standards.

Generally, PD that an individual takes to meet Keystone STARS Performance Standards should be PQAS approved to ensure that it is high quality and delivered by approve instructors. In addition, by taking PQAS-approved courses, individuals can be assured that the PD they take will appear in their Learning Record in the PD Registry.

PQAS is designed to ensure quality professional development (PD) is provided to early childhood and school-age practitioners in Pennsylvania. Approved instructors are required to meet and maintain established qualifications, including educational achievements and professional development experience. When choosing a PQAS approved instructor, staff can be assured they will be receiving quality instruction from a content expert.

All PQAS approved courses are listed in the PD Registry at www.papdregistry.org. In addition, all PQAS approved coursework that is taken by an individual will be included on their PD Learning Record in the PD Registry.

Finding PQAS Courses in the PA PD Registry

All courses found in the PD Registry are PQAS approved, and individuals are encouraged to find events posted on the Search Training Events Tab by going to www.papdregistry.org. Once logged in, individuals can click the Search Training Events tab from the left menu.

Individuals may search by specific criteria such as:
- Keywords of Training
- Course Title
- City
- County
- Date range
- PA PSCECE Standard Area
- CDA Content Areas
- Level
- Language
- Modality of training such as classroom, E-Learning, and online self-paced.

The Pennsylvania Key has created over 50 PQAS approved online, self-paced courses on various topics to meet individual's needs. To find these courses, individuals should check the "Online Self-Paced" box within the Training Type section at the bottom of the search and click Search. Once the list appears, individuals will be able to register for the course and complete the course directly within the PD Registry at their convenience.

Finding PQAS Approved Instructors in the PA PD Registry

To search for approved PQAS Instructors within the PD Registry, individuals should follow these steps:
1. Log into www.papdregistry.org
2. Within the left-hand menu, click **Search Instructor Directory.**
3. Complete/select the criteria within the Instructor Directory.
4. Click **Search Instructors** to view your search results.

Individuals who are having difficulty finding a specific course in the Registry or in-person courses in their area may contact a PQAS approved instructor to inquire about having PD provided "on-demand". PQAS approved instructors can be contacted through the steps above, followed by clicking on "Contact Instructor".

Act 48 Credit Hours

Act 48 of 1999 requires all Pennsylvania educators holding Pennsylvania public school certification (including Instructional I and II, Educational Specialist I and II, Administrative, Supervisory, Letters of Eligibility, and all vocational certificates) to participate in ongoing professional education.

Individuals can visit the Professional Education Record Management System (PERMS) where they can find/review:

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- Their Professional Personnel Identification (PPID) number and continuing education progress
- Current course offerings
- Approved providers

Act 48 credit hours are an approved form of PD for Keystone STARS designations. Individuals with a PPID can view all completed Act 48 courses and print their PERMS *Continuing Education Details Report* as documentation. Individuals without a PPID who take Act 48 courses will need to provide documentation of completed course(s).

Act 48 courses that are at least two hours in length may be used to meet a maximum of two quality indicators providing the course content covers both topic areas identified in the two indicators.

Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA) Portal Coursework

Courses taken through the [Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA) Portal](#) are an approved PD option for Keystone STARS designations. EITA courses that are at least two hours in length may be used to meet a maximum of two quality indicators providing the course content covers both topic areas identified in the two indicators.

Individuals who take courses through the EITA portal will need to provide documentation of completed course(s).

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SECTION FIVE: PENNSYLVANIA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CAREER PATHWAY LEVELS AND QUALIFYING ACHIEVEMENTS

Section Five: Pennsylvania's Early Childhood Education Career Pathway Levels and Qualifying Achievements

Information on Pennsylvania's Early Childhood Educator Career Pathway Levels

OCDEL aims to support the professional growth and development of the early childhood education workforce, both those entering the field, as well as those already in the field. Establishing shared benchmarks through Pennsylvania's Early Childhood Education (ECE) Career Pathway helps to do this with predictability, reliability, and consistency across the commonwealth, while still allowing for flexibility in how one qualifies at each level.

Career Pathway placement signifies early childhood education professional competency based on verified diploma's, credentials, degrees and/or college coursework earned from a regionally accredited institutions of Higher Education, or IHEs.

Multiple systems that support the ECE workforce within Pennsylvania, such as Rising STARS Tuition Assistance (RSTA) and Professional Development Organizations (PDO), use established Career Pathway levels to determine eligibility for funding and prioritization of programming for professionals.

Pennsylvania's Early Childhood Education Career Pathway Levels and Qualifying Achievements

Entry Level	Level A	Level B	Level C	Level D
• High School Diploma or GED • Documentation to verify high school enrollment • Documentation to verify DHS certification aide status	• Holds a current CDA certificate from the Council for Professional Recognition • Current School Age Credential • 9 Early Childhood Education (ECE) credits	• ECE focused ASB or AST • AA/AS in ECE • AA/AS/BA/BS in related field with 18 ECE credits • AA/AS/BA/BS in an unrelated field with 30 ECE credits • Elementary Ed Degree with 12 ECE credits	• BA/BS in ECE • BA/BS related field with 30 ECE credits • Elementary Ed with 18 ECE credits • Any field with Prek-4 Certification	• Master's in ECE Meets Level C AND: • Achieved a Master's Degree in a related field, • Master's Degree in Elementary Education with 18 ECE credits • Master's Degree in any field & PreK-4 certification
Rising Level A	**Level A Plus**	**Level B Plus**	**Level C Plus**	**Level E**
• Verified Child Development Associate (CDA) ready Career and Technology (CTE) graduate OR Enrolled CDA coursework • Enrolled School-Age Professional Credential (SAPC) • Enrolled in an OCDEL-Approved Certificate or Credential • Enrolled ECE Program OR 6 Early Childhood Credits (ECE) credits	Meets Level A and has completed: • 12 or more ECE credits towards an AA/AAS degree in ECE OR is a Level A AND currently has a one of the following: • Director's Credential • Infant Toddler Mental Health Endorsement • Infant Toddler Credential • Apprenticeship Completion Certificate	Meets Level B AND has completed: • 12 or more ECE credits towards a BA/BS degree in ECE OR currently has one of the following: • Director's Credential • Infant Toddler Mental Health Endorsement • Infant Toddler Credential • Current School Age Credential • Apprenticeship Completion Certificate	Meets Level C AND has completed: • 12 or more ECE credits towards a master's degree in ECE OR currently has one of the following: • Director's Credential • Infant Toddler Mental Health Endorsement • Infant Toddler Credential • Current School Age Credential • Apprenticeship Completion Certificate	• Ph. D/Ed. D in an ECE related area • Doctorate in related field and meets Level C or Level D

All verified credits must be from a regionally accredited institution.

SECTION SIX: OCDEL-APPROVED CURRICULA AND DEVELOPMENTAL ASSESSMENTS IN KEYSTONE STARS

Section Six: OCDEL-Approved Curricula and Developmental Assessments in Keystone STARS

OCDEL Approved Curricula and Developmental Assessments in Keystone STARS
(The following incorporates information contained in *ELRC Policy Announcement 22 #07 OCDEL approved Curricula and Developmental Assessment Tools.*)

STAR 3 and STAR 4 programs can earn points in optional quality indicator EC 3.4.1 by using an OCDEL approved curriculum and EC 3.4.2 by using an OCDEL approved developmental assessment tool. The list of OCDEL approved curricula for use by programs can be found on the Pennsylvania Department of Education's website here. The list of OCDEL approved developmental assessment tools can be found on the PA Key's website here.

The optional requirements for STAR 3 and 4 providers to use OCDEL-approved curricula and development assessments in order to earn points in EC 3.4.1 and EC 3.4.2 has **not** changed in recent years. However, OCDEL recognizes these requirements may not have been communicated effectively or implemented consistently across the commonwealth. Effective December 1, 2022, **only** current OCDEL-approved curricula and developmental assessment tools will be accepted in meeting EC 3.4.1 and EC 3.4.2 for STAR 3 and 4 designations as outlined in this policy announcement.

Updates to the Listings of OCDEL-Approved Curricula and/or Developmental Assessment Tools
OCDEL is implementing an annual process during which time, a Bureau of Early Learning Policy and Professional Development staff will contact all currently approved vendors to inquire about any updates or revisions that were made to their curricula and/or assessments tools over the last year. This process will occur during the months of January and February when OCDEL will also place a call for any additional vendors to apply to have their curricula and/or developmental assessments tools approved for use.

 Following the annual review process, OCDEL will update the listings of approved curricula and/or developmental assessments tools to reflect the following:

- Older versions of curricula and/or assessments tools that are no longer supported by vendors will be marked as "Sunset", effective June 30 of the following fiscal year. These sunset tools will be removed from the OCDEL approved listings in their entirety at the start of the following fiscal year.
  - **Example**: An assessment tool is determined to be no longer supported during OCDEL's annual review in Jan/Feb 2023. In March of 2023, the updated listing of OCDEL-approved assessment tools will indicate that this assessment will be sunset effective June 30, 2023. The tool will remain on the listing through the fiscal year 2023-2024, with the clarifying language that it was sunset effective June 30, 2023. The tool will be totally removed from the listing the following year, July 1, 2024.
- Approved new curricula and/or assessments tools and updated versions of previously approved curricula and/or assessments tools will be added to the listing and will become effective July 1 of the following fiscal year.
- Curricula and/or assessments tools from additional vendors will be added to the listing and will become effective July 1 of the following fiscal year.

In cases in which a vendor releases a newer version of a curricula and/or developmental assessment tool that has only minor changes and the older version is still supported by the vendor, both the former version and the updated version will be included on the OCDEL-approved lists.

Note: It is important to note that while the OCDEL-approved curricula and/or developmental assessments listings will be updated each March to reflect any tools that will be sunset at the end of the current fiscal year, providers will have until July 1 of the following fiscal year to choose and adopt a new approved tool.

> **Example**: ABC Child Care is currently using an approved curriculum. In March 2023, the updated approved curricula and assessment listings are released and indicate that the curriculum ABC Child Care is using will be sunset on June 30, 2023. ABC Child Care will have until July 1, 2023, to choose and adopt a new curriculum from the approved listing in order to meet EC 3.4.1.

Communication to the Keystone STARS Providers Regarding Updates to the Curricula and/or Developmental Assessments Listings

OCDEL will communicate any changes to the listings of approved curricula and/or developmental assessment tools that will become effective July 1 of the following fiscal year via the Pennsylvania (PA) Early Education Newsletter. It is estimated that the listings will be updated in March of every fiscal year and the field will be notified via the PA Early Education Newsletter at that time.

Expectations for Keystone STARS Providers when Updates Occur to Approved Curricula and/or Developmental Assessments Tools Listings

Keystone STAR 3 and STAR 4 providers who wish to continue to meet EC 3.4.1 and EC 3.4.2 will need to confirm that the curriculum and developmental assessment tool they are using are OCDEL-approved. Such providers will also need to ensure that the curricula and/or developmental assessments tool they are using will **not** be sunset at the beginning of the following fiscal year. Providers should make this review a regular part of their annual Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) activities and CQI plan update.

Providers who are using a curriculum and/or developmental assessment tool or previous version of a tool that is no longer considered approved, will need to choose a new tool, or newer version of a tool, that is OCDEL- approved if they wish to continue meeting EC 3.4.1 and EC 3.4.2. Providers will need to choose a new tool before their next full Keystone STARS designation if they wish to meet the relevant STARS Quality Indicators. In addition, by the time of their next full designation, these providers would need to have all onsite leadership team members and teaching staff take appropriate professional development (PD) in the new vendor-related tool if they wish to meet the relevant STAR PD Quality Indicators (SQ 3.4.6 and SQ 3.4.8)

The real-time listing of OCDEL approved curricula for use by programs can always be found on the Pennsylvania Department of Education's website here. The real-listing of OCDEL approved developmental assessment tools can always be found on the PA Key's website here.

The latest listing of approved curricula and developmental assessment tools can be found in the Appendix (Resource Document #7)

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KEYSTONE STARS BONUS POINT QUALITY INITIATIVES

Keystone STARS Bonus Point Quality Initiatives

Keystone STARS Bonus Point Quality Initiative: After School Quality (ASQ)

In which Keystone STARS Performance Standard will my program earn bonus points for successfully implementing ASQ?
Leadership and Management (2 points)

How does ASQ align with the Keystone STARS Performance Standards?
ASQ supports the Leadership and Management Performance Standards because it is an effort to invest in CQI and utilizes program observation instruments. A program that is using ASQ will use observations and self-assessments to inform their CQI plan and technical assistance goals with information that is above and beyond the feedback received from their required ERS or CLASS assessments.

ASQ is a five-step process that helps a program and a team of people committed to quality improvement examine their program and make changes that will lead to better practices. Programs will involve their ASQ team in an open dialogue about their program. Together, programs set a vision and assess how well they are meeting the needs of the children, youth, and families they serve. A program's ASQ Team will develop an action plan to reach improvement goals. The ASQ process considers that administration, staff, families, children, youth, and community members – are the best people to make the quality improvement changes.

What evidence should I expect to provide to my Quality Coach to show full implementation of ASQ?
Upon completion of the ASQ process, a paperwork review will be conducted by a trained ASQ quality coach/consultant. A specific template has been established that helps ensure a program has implemented the ASQ 5-step process. This template is available from Betsy Saatman at the email address below. In addition to the template, programs should expect to share evidence of implementation and take part in an informal interview with a trained ASQ Quality Coach or consultant.

Who do I contact for more information on ASQ?

Organization: The Pennsylvania Key
Address: 200 N. 3rd St. 2nd Floor Harrisburg, PA 17101
Phone: 484-955-5909
Contact: The Pennsylvania Key
Email: info@pakeys.org
Website: www.pakeys.org

Where do I go to find additional information on ASQ?

- ASQ Website: ASQ: A Guide to After-School Quality - National Institute on Out-of-School Time (niost.org)

Keystone STARS Bonus Point Quality Initiative: PA Eco Healthy Child Care

In which Keystone STARS Performance Standard will I earn bonus points for successfully implementing PA Eco Healthy Child Care?
Leadership and Management (2 points)

How does PA Eco Healthy Child Care align with the Keystone STARS Performance Standards?
PA Eco Healthy Child Care supports Leadership and Management because it is an organized effort to promote environmental health improvements in early childhood education programs. Programs will be making their facilities and programs healthier resulting in a positive impact on the health of the children and program staff.

Through completing professional development courses, programs will focus on creating and maintaining an early childhood learning environment that addresses the range of environmental health topics including but not limited to:

- Air Quality
- Integrated Pest Management
- Chemical Hazards
- Environmental Tobacco Smoke
- Water Quality
- Lead (soil, water, products)
- Sun Safety
- Radon
- Plastics
- Furniture and Carpets
- Playground Equipment
- Noise Pollution
- Art Supplies
- Recycling and Garbage Storage

This will reduce children's and staff's exposure to chemicals and pollutants and will support programs that sustain environmentally friendly practices (recycling, reducing paper use, purchasing sustainable products, reducing waste, etc.).

What evidence should I expect to provide to my Quality Coach to show full implementation of PA Eco Healthy Child Care?
Evidence of annual professional development for staff (minimum 2 hours per person) on environmental health topics, presented by qualified professionals or approved Pennsylvania Key online module.

Assessment using EHCC Checklist Self-endorsement is optional because of cost and extremely limited validation of checklist items. Fee: $25.00 if 1 - 20 children; $50.00 if 21 or more children.

Policies in staff and family handbooks that are consistent with *Model Child Health Policies*, or equivalent, with inclusion of *Caring for Our Children* Standards.

Who do I contact for more information on PA Eco Healthy Child Care?

Organization: PA Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics/Early Childhood Education Linkage System (ECELS)
Address: Rose Tree Corporate Center II – 1400 North Providence Rd, Suite 4000 Media, PA 19063
Phone: 800-243-2357
Email: ecels@paaap.org
Website: www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org

Where do I go to find additional information on PA Eco Healthy Child Care?

- Early Childhood Education Linkage System (ECELS): www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org
- ECELS Indoor Air Quality Self -Learning Module
- ECELS Pest Management: Integrated Pest Management Self-Learning Module
- Children's Environmental Health Network: https://cehn.org
- Eco-Healthy Child Care Online Module
- Eco-Healthy Child Care Fact Sheets
- Eco-Healthy Child Care Endorsement
- PD Registry: papdregistry.org
- Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs - Chapter 5: Facilities, Supplies, Equipment, and Environmental Health
- Model Child Care Health Policies (MCCHP5) - Section 8 Environmental Health

Keystone STARS Bonus Point Quality Initiative: Farm to Early Care and Education (Farm to ECE)

In which Keystone STARS Performance Standard will my program earn bonus points for successfully implementing Farm to ECE?
Partnerships with Families and Communities (2 points)

How does Farm to ECE align with the Keystone STARS Performance Standards?
Farm to ECE offers benefits that parallel the goals and priorities of the early care and education community. Farm to ECE expands healthy food access for children and families. The reasons below highlight how Farm to ECE activities help providers meet their goals of providing the highest quality care and educational experience available to the children they serve.

Health: Farm to ECE activities like taste tests, cooking lessons, and gardening offer repeated exposures to new and healthy foods. This promotes lifelong healthy food preferences and eating patterns and decreases the risk for obesity.

Family and Community Engagement: Gardening and food related activities appeal to families and create more opportunities for meaningful engagement. Children take home the excitement of learning about new foods and act as a catalyst for change in the family and community. Purchasing local products also helps the community.

Experiential Education: The experiential learning opportunities associated with Farm to ECE enhance the learning environment, can help achieve early learning standards, and support appropriate cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development.

Below are some specific examples of Farm to ECE:

- Using a curriculum of set of activities that includes a focus on local foods such as the USDA's Grow It, Try It, Like It curriculum or using a Harvest of the Month framework for classroom activities.
- Cooking in the classroom
- Farm field trips
- Having a farmer or chef visit the classroom
- Serving local fruit and/or vegetable for a snack
- Procuring a locally grown or produced item to use in CACFP
- Planting seeds indoors
- Creating a raised bed garden and inviting parents to volunteer

Though healthy foods of all kinds are valuable, Farm to ECE is about a connection to local agriculture. This could mean local food from your county, state, or region.

What evidence should I expect to provide to my Quality Coach to show full implementation of Farm to ECE?
Upon implementation of this quality initiative, you should be able to do one or more of the following:

- Offer photos
- Walk through your garden
- Share lesson plans & activity write ups
- Highlight local items on CACFP menu

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- Identify farms from which items were procured
- Keep an Early Care and Education binder to record activities and dates

Who do I contact for more information on Farm to ECE?

Organization:	The Food Trust
Address:	1617 John F Kennedy Blvd. Suite 900 Philadelphia, PA 19103
Phone:	215-575-0444 ext. 7172
Email:	contact@thefoodtrust.org
Website:	www.thefoodtrust.org

Where do I go to find additional information on Farm to ECE?

- www.pafarmtoschool.org
- https://learning.thefoodtrust.org/preschool
- www.paharvestofthemonth.org

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Keystone STARS Bonus Point Quality Initiative: Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAPSACC) Program

In which Keystone STARS Performance Standard will my program earn bonus points for successfully implementing the NAPSACC program?
Partnerships with Families and Communities (2 points)

How does the NAPSACC program align with Keystone STARS Performance Standards?
The NAPSACC program supports Partnerships with Families and Communities because it is an organized effort to promote health and wellness for children and includes families to support nutrition and physical activities at home. Families are encouraged to be part of the continuous quality improvement team through family engagement activities.

The NAPSACC program is an online continuous quality improvement process focused on health practices and policies within early childhood settings. The program utilizes Go NAPSACC, an evidence-based tool, to guide participants through self-assessment, action planning, implementation, policy development, re-self-assessment, and reflection. The process empowers program leadership and includes tips, materials, and on-line trainings to increase knowledge and improve quality of practice and policy. Programs can participate in NAPSACC independently, as part of an organized mini-grant opportunity (PA NAPSACC), or with support from another agency or technical assistance provider/consultant.

What evidence should I expect to provide to my Quality Coach to show full implementation of the NAPSACC program?
The NAPSACC program is a sustained, high level, comprehensive example of professional development that is ongoing and is more intensive than a one-time professional development event or activity. Programs can choose one or more areas to focus on: Child Nutrition, Infant Child Physical Activity, Breastfeeding and Infant Feeding, Farm to ECE, Screen Time, Nutrition and Oral Health, and Outdoor Play and Learning. Upon full implementation, you should be able to provide:
- Pre and post self-assessment results in the Child Nutrition and Infant-Child Physical Activity modules
- Action Plan(s) showing goals identified in the Child Nutrition and Infant-Child Physical Activity modules, with at least 1 goal completed in each area

The pre and post self-assessment results and action plans with goals can be viewed and downloaded from a program's Go NAPSACC account. This evidence should be submitted in the PD Registry Designation System for Bonus Points.

Get started here:
www.keystonekidsgo.org/uploads/4/4/6/1/44611119/getting_started_with_napsacc_guide_4-14.pdf

Who do I contact for more information on NAPSACC or to get connected to a local technical assistance provider?
> **Organization:** Tuscarora Intermediate Unit 11 - Community Education and Workforce Services
> **Address**: 6395 SR 103 N. Lewistown, PA 17044
> **Phone:** 717-248-4942
> **Contact:** Lori McMonigal
> **Email:** lmcmonigal@tiu11.org
> **Website:** www.keystonekidsgo.org/napsacc.html

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Keystone STARS Bonus Point Quality Initiative: Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

In which Keystone STARS Performance Standard will my program earn bonus points for successfully implementing PBIS?

Early Childhood Education Program (2 points)

How does PBIS align with Keystone STARS Performance Standards?

Children benefit from safe, nurturing environments, clear and consistent routines, and effective teachers who understand behavior is a child's way of communication needs.
Program-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PW-PBIS) is a conceptual framework for supporting social emotional development and addressing challenging behaviors in early childhood, based on the guidance and resource of the Pyramid Model. PW PBIS supports administrative teams to use implementation science and practical strategies to support their staff and families. This initiative guides programs to make data-based decisions, engage in shared leadership, and coach staff to implement evidence-based practices.

What evidence should I expect to provide to my Quality Coach to show full implementation of PBIS?

The PAPBS Network will evaluate programs who have implemented PBIS based on their standards. Once the facility has met those standards, they will receive a banner to display. In subsequent years, the program will receive a dated badge to attach to the banner. The Quality Coach will need to see the banner indicating recognition within the past 12 months.

Who do I contact for more information on PBIS?

> Organization: PA Positive Behavior Support Network (PAPBS)
> Address: 6340 Flank Dr. Harrisburg, PA 17112
> Phone: 717-829-1711
> Website: www.papbs.org

Where do I go to find additional information on PBIS?

- Website: https://papbs.org/program-wide-PBIS

Keystone STARS Bonus Point Quality Initiative: Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

In which Keystone STARS Performance Standard will my program earn bonus points for successfully implementing CACFP?

Partnerships with Families and Communities (2 points)

How does CACFP align with the Keystone STARS Performance Standards?

CACFP is a federal program, that provides reimbursements for nutritious meals and snacks served to eligible children who are enrolled for care at participating child care centers and day care homes, as well as for meals/snacks served to children and youth participating in afterschool care programs. CACFP contributes to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of young children.

Participation in CACFP reinforces areas currently identified in Pennsylvania child care licensing regulations and QRIS standards related to wellness policies and practices of child care providers, and supports critical areas such as breastfeeding support, nutritional quality of meals and snacks served in CACFP, and environments that support physical activity.

What evidence should I expect to provide to my Quality Coach to show full implementation of CACFP?

Independent licensed child care site or Sponsoring Organization (Responsible for two or more licensed child care sites):

- Will be able to access from the Child Nutrition Program Electronic Application and Reimbursement System (CN PEARS) to provide Quality Coach with proof of approved status for the current program year.
- Will disclose results of Administrative Review to Quality Coach including Technical Assistance and Corrective Action Document to demonstrate and maintain compliance of CACFP Performance Standards. This may include CACFP sponsor being referred for Severe Deficiency. Quality Coach may contact PDE CACFP Program staff for status and/or resolution.
- Will provide Certificate of Completion for the CACFP Annual Sponsor training from the Child Nutrition Toolbox, and Civil Rights training certificate for all individuals interacting with program participants and children in care.
- Will make available planned menus and other required documentation for foods planned for infants' and children's meals and snacks that meet the CACFP meal pattern and nutrient requirements to the Quality Coach.

Centers: Site administered by Sponsoring Organization

- Will be able to provide Sponsor to sponsor agreement, Unaffiliated Center Food Agreement, or Unaffiliated Reimbursement Agreement

Home Day Care Sponsor: Administrator of residential child care program for children enrolled in a private home, licensed, or approved as a family or group day care home

- Will be able to access from the Child Nutrition Program Electronic Application and Reimbursement System (CN PEARS) to provide Quality Coach with proof of approved status for the current program year.

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- Will disclose results of Administrative Review to Quality Coach including Technical Assistance and Corrective Action Document to demonstrate and maintain compliance of CACFP Performance Standards. Quality Coach may contact PDE CACFP Program staff for status and/or resolution.

Who do I contact for more information on CACFP?

Organization: PDE, Division of Food and Nutrition
Address: 333 Markey Street, 4th Floor Harrisburg, PA 17126
Phone: 800-331-0129
Contact: CACFP Staff Member
Email: ra-cacfp@pa.gov
Website: www.education.pa.gov

Where do I go to find additional information on CACFP?

CACFP Website: www.education.pa.gov

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SECTION EIGHT: APPENDIX

Section Eight: Appendix

Resource Document #1: 2023 Keystone STARS Performance Standards

Resource Document #2: Keystone STARS Continuous Quality Improvement Plan - Instructions and Template #1

Resource Document #3: Keystone STARS Continuous Quality Improvement Plan – Template #2

Resource Document #4: Keystone STARS Internal Assessment Process (IAP) – Template

Resource Document #5: Professional Development Tracking Grid for STAR 3 & 4 Programs: Teaching Staff

Resource Document #6: Professional Development Tracking Grid for STAR 3 & 4 Programs: Non-Instructional Staff

Resource Document #7: Approved Curriculum and Developmental Assessment Information for Keystone STARS (corrected May 2023)

Resource Document #8: ELRC Announcement 22 #08 Requirements for Programs Using an Alternate Pathway in STARS-FINAL_.pdf

Resource Document #9: Confidential Records Sign Off Form: Children's Records (for ELRC Use)

Resource Document #10: Confidential Records Sign Off Form: Leadership and Management and Program Staff (for ELRC Use)