

# Keystone STARS: Understanding STARS Levels

May 2011

Early learning programs earn a STAR 1 to STAR 4 by meeting the performance standards for that level. STARS performance standards measure the pieces of an early learning program that affect the quality of your child's early learning in that program, such as:

- Teacher qualifications;
- Classroom and learning activities;
- Working with families; and
- Program management.



**Count the STARS.** The higher the STAR level, the higher the quality.

## What to expect at a

STAR 1 Program ★	STAR 2 Program ★★	STAR 3 Program ★★★	STAR 4 Program ★★★★
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs will have the PA Early Learning Standards that provide milestones for children's development on hand.</li> <li>• Families receive a Parent Handbook and information on social and family services in the community.</li> <li>• Teachers hold a meeting with families when a child enrolls.</li> <li>• When a child is ready to move to a new classroom or school, families receive information on making it a smooth transition.</li> <li>• Staff develop an annual plan to continue their education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least half of the lead teachers have an Associate's degree in early childhood education.</li> <li>• Teachers hold a meeting with families when a child enrolls, provide daily updates on the child's activities and hold at least one teacher conference to share child's progress each year.</li> <li>• Teachers assess children's development once a year, the first within 45 days of enrollment.</li> <li>• Teachers use the PA Early Learning Standards to plan learning activities.</li> <li>• Teachers use a standardized tool (Environment Rating Scale) to evaluate and improve their classroom setup and learning activities.</li> <li>• Program offers activities to help smooth a child's transition to a new classroom or on to school.</li> <li>• Staff receive at least two employee benefits, such as health insurance, which helps reduce staff turnover.</li> <li>• Staff complete continuing education each year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead teachers have at least an Associate's degree in early childhood education.</li> <li>• Teachers hold a meeting with families when a child enrolls, provide daily updates on the child's activities and hold at least two teacher conferences to share child's progress each year.</li> <li>• Teachers assess children's development 3 times a year, the first within 45 days of enrollment.</li> <li>• Teachers use the PA Early Learning standards to develop curriculum and learning activities.</li> <li>• Programs receive an independent evaluation of their classroom setup and learning activities using a standardized tool (Environment Rating Scale).</li> <li>• Program works with families &amp; schools to make a smooth transition for children to kindergarten.</li> <li>• Staff receive at least 3 employee benefits, such as health insurance, which helps reduce staff turnover.</li> <li>• Staff complete continuing education each year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least half of lead teachers have a Bachelor's degree in early childhood education, all have at least an Associate's degree.</li> <li>• Teachers hold a meeting with families when a child enrolls, provide daily updates and hold at least two teacher conferences to share child's progress each year.</li> <li>• Teachers assess children's development three times a year, the first within 45 days of enrollment.</li> <li>• Teachers use the PA Early Learning Standards to develop curriculum and assessment.</li> <li>• Programs receive independent evaluation of their classroom setup and learning activities using a standardized tool (Environment Rating Scale).</li> <li>• Teachers will meet with each family to make the child's transition to kindergarten easier.</li> <li>• Staff receive at least four employee benefits, such as health insurance, which helps reduce staff turnover.</li> <li>• Staff complete continuing education each year.</li> </ul>