

Tennessee's Star-Quality Child Care Program

The Star-Quality Child Care Program is another part of the state's comprehensive plan to provide more information to parents and improve the quality of child care in Tennessee. It is a voluntary program for child care providers that encourages and recognizes quality child care programs. If you receive reimbursements for the care of children enrolled in the certificate program and you participate in the Star-Quality Child Care Program, you will also receive higher reimbursement rates for these children.

Who can participate in this program?

To determine whether you are eligible to participate in this program, your licensing Program Evaluator will use your evaluation results to calculate a rating for each of the areas on which you were evaluated and an overall rating – one, two, or three stars – for your program. If your report card evaluation indicates that your agency would be eligible to receive at least one star for the Star-Quality Child Care Program, you will automatically be enrolled in the program unless you notify the DHS in writing on your application that you do not wish to participate in the Star-Quality Child Care Program.

What will my program be rated on?

Your licensing Program Evaluator will rate your program using the same information you supplied for your evaluation. You will not be asked to supply any additional information. Your licensing Program Evaluator will calculate your facility's rating for each area and also give you an overall rating. You can receive up to three stars in each area and up to three stars for your overall rating.

Your program's overall rating will be determined by totaling the ratings you receive for all areas and averaging the total. If your program is accredited by a DHS recognized agency, you may also be eligible to have two points added to your total before it is averaged. Based on your average, you will be awarded one, two, or three stars for your overall rating.

Everyone who participates in the Star-Quality Program will be sent a new Star-Quality Program report card with your overall rating printed on it. In addition, you will be sent stars to attach to your license. If you are a one-star program, you will receive one star to place on your license. If you are a two-star program, you will receive two stars for your license. If you are a three-star program, you will receive three stars for your license.

This new report card and the stars on your license will signify your participation in this important quality improvement initiative.

How will my program's rating affect my certificate reimbursement rate?

If your program receives reimbursements for serving children enrolled in the child care certificate program and you receive a one-star overall rating, you will receive a reimbursement rate that is 5% above the base rate established by the Department. If you receive a two-star overall rating, you will receive a reimbursement rate that is 15% above the base rate; and if you receive a three-star overall rating, you will receive a rate that is 20% above the base rate.

Are there any additional fees for participating in the Star-Quality Child Care Program?

No, there are no additional fees for participating in the Star-Quality Program.

How will I know the results of my rating?

Your licensing Program Evaluator will tell you your overall rating – one, two, or three stars – in a letter sent with your new license and your report card. In addition, you will receive up to three stars to display on your new license. The Star-Quality report card and the stars on your license will let parents and others know that you qualified for and are participating in the Star-Quality Child Care Program.

Will I have to be evaluated for the Star-Quality Program each year?

Yes, each year your program will be evaluated as part of your licensing renewal process. If, based on the results of the annual evaluation, you are still qualified to participate in the Star-Quality Program, your licensing Program Evaluator will send you your new license and a new Star-Quality Program report card.

What if I have questions about my ratings once I receive my new report card?

If you have questions about your ratings or your report card, contact your licensing Program Evaluator.

How can I obtain more information?

If you would like to learn more about the Star-Quality Child Care Program, contact your DHS licensing Program Evaluator or your local Child Care Resource and Referral Center.