

## The Keystone STARS program:

- ★ Provides Standards, Training/Professional Development, Assistance, Resources, and Support (STARS) to facilitate continuous quality improvement.
- ★ Is administered by six Early Learning Regional Keys. The Regional Key provides assistance to STARS programs with sharing resources, interpreting the STARS Performance Standards and sponsoring professional development and technical assistance opportunities.

**For more information** about Keystone STARS or to obtain a list of Keystone STARS participants visit [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org) or call toll-free:

- ★ Central Region Key ..... 800 346-3020
  - Counties Served* – Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Perry, Snyder, Somerset, Union
- ★ Northeast Region Key ..... 800 528-7222
  - Counties Served* – Berks, Bradford, Carbon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton, Pike, Schuylkill, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Wayne, Wyoming
- ★ Northwest Region Key ..... 800 860-2281
  - Counties Served* – Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Indiana, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Potter, Venango, Warren
- ★ South Central Region Key ..... 800 864-4925
  - Counties Served* – Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, York
- ★ Southeast Region Key ..... 877 660-2273
  - Counties Served* – Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, Philadelphia
- ★ Southwest Region Key ..... 877 349-4850
  - Counties Served* – Allegheny, Fayette, Greene, Washington, Westmoreland

Or visit [www.dpw.state.pa.us](http://www.dpw.state.pa.us).



Edward G. Rendell  
Governor

Estelle B. Richman  
Secretary



# Keystone STARS is:

- Pennsylvania's voluntary program to promote continuous quality improvement in early learning and school age environments.
  - Keystone STARS provides professional development, targeted financial assistance and other supports to help early and school age education programs increase quality.
  - Quality environments and qualified staff support children's positive development that fosters success in school and life.
- An initiative with research-based Performance Standards as the foundation.
  - The standards are tiered in levels that range from STAR 1 to STAR 4 with requirements that are increased at each level.
  - The standards provide increasing indicators of quality that are used by programs as part of the quality improvement process.
- An important part of Pennsylvania's growing early learning system.
- The STARS program standards, learning standards that identify how and what children should be learning and standards of education for practitioners, come together to provide a roadmap for programs to improve services for children and families.
- By working with DPW certified programs, family providers, school-aged programs, Head Start, school districts and accrediting bodies, Keystone STARS is helping to raise the level of quality in early learning for the children of Pennsylvania.
- A valuable tool to increase parental and community awareness of the importance of quality early learning.
- Keystone STARS is an easily recognizable indication that a program is committed to continuous quality improvement and provides an important tool for parents to use to determine program quality.

## Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

### STAR 2

- Directors and staff will meet specific education level requirements on Pennsylvania's Early Learning Career Lattice.
- Directors participate in at least one professional growth and development activity annually and attend at least 15 hours of professional development annually.
- One staff member per classroom is certified in pediatric first aid, and all staff obtain child abuse mandated reporter training. Staff attend at least 12 hours of professional development annually.

### STAR 3

- Education levels for directors and staff increase.
- Directors enroll in the Pennsylvania Director's Credential.
- Directors participate in at least two professional growth and development activities and staff participate in at least one professional growth or development activity.
- Annual clock hours of professional development increase to 21 for directors and 18 for teaching staff.

### STAR 4

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

## Early Learning Program

### STAR 1

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

### STAR 2

- Child observations are completed when a child enters the program and a minimum of once yearly after the initial observation.
- The program completes an Environment Rating Scale (ERS) self-assessment and creates an Improvement Plan to improve quality.

### STAR 3

- Child observations must be completed a minimum of three times per year, and the results of the observations are used to tailor the program to the child.
- The program develops a learning curriculum that incorporates the Pennsylvania Learning Standards.
- A professional assessor completes an ERS assessment; there is a minimum required classroom score to be a STAR 3.

### STAR 4

- Assessment of the child is completed and shared with parents at least twice per year.
- The program's curriculum and assessment tools are cross walked with Learning Standards.
- The ERS score requirements increase.

## Partnerships with Family and Community

### STAR 1

- The program provides families with information about their community and transitioning their child to other educational settings.
- A "Getting to Know You" meeting is offered to parents within 60 days of the child's enrollment.

### STAR 2

- If the child has special needs, the program requests information from parents to provide appropriate classroom instruction and assistance.
- The teacher shares information about the child's day at the program.
- The program offers parents at least one conference per year.

### STAR 3

- A plan is written to refer families to community resources.
- The program coordinates a group activity to include families in meeting the program's goals.
- Parents are offered at least two conferences and a group meeting about transition.
- The program sends a letter of introduction to community and school stakeholders regarding transition and participates in transition activities.

### STAR 4

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

## Leadership and Management

### STAR 1

- Program develops and distributes a Parent Handbook.
- Illnesses and injuries are tracked, and a prevention plan is enacted.
- A staff meeting is held at least every six months.

### STAR 2

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

### STAR 3

- Teachers are provided paid lesson planning time monthly.
- Teachers are observed in the classroom and feedback shared.
- Performance evaluations are provided to employees.
- The program creates and shares a salary scale with staff.
- At least three benefits are provided to full-time staff.

### STAR 4

- Business tasks include an operational business plan, risk management plan, strategic plan and financial review by a Certified Public Accountant.
- A written code for professional staff conduct is instituted.
- Teachers are provided weekly paid lesson planning time and breaks.
- A minimum of four benefits are provided to staff.