Delaware Stars for Early Success

Vision and Mission:

• Ensuring all children have access to high quality early care and education, especially children with high needs
• To design and implement a system that defines quality and supports the development of quality early care and education
• Provides consumer education about the important of quality early care and education

Program Organization:

• Collaborative effort between three state agencies and the University of Delaware
  o Delaware Department of Education
  o Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families
  o Delaware Department of Health and Human Services
  o University of Delaware: College of Education and Human Development

Program Structure:

• Five Tiered Quality Rating Program
• Hybrid, Point-based and Fixed rating model
• Strengths Based Framework
• Community of Practice Model for high need programs
• Four Quality Elements: Family and Community Partnerships; Qualifications and Professional Development; Management and Administration; Learning Environment and Curriculum
• Grants/Awards supporting quality
• Three Program Types: Early Care and Education; Family Child Care; School Age

Tiered Reimbursement:

• Child Care Subsidy rates at 65% of county market rate
• Tiered Reimbursement: Star Level 1 and 2 receive 65% rate; Star 3 = 80% of market rate; Star 4 = 90% of market rate; Star 5 = 100% of market rate

Diversity and Children with High Needs:

• Inclusion policy in staff and parent handbooks
• At least 25% of staff trained on inclusion
• “Program makes accommodations for families of children with identified disabilities or who are dual language learners”
• “Written communication to parents providing information specific to child’s progress ...in accordance with IEP/IFSP”
• “Program implements formalized procedures for making accommodations for children with identified disabilities

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT DELAWARE STARS

How many programs are in Stars? 265 programs

What is the admission criterion for Delaware Stars? A program must have a valid license from the Office of Child Care Licensing (OCCL) for a minimum of 12 months prior to application and serve families. At the time of enrollment a program cannot be under any OCCL enforcement action, cannot have any outstanding concerns with POC or the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Applications were selected based on these priorities were determined by the Governor’s office:
- Percentage of provider’s childcare slots devoted to Purchase of Care
- High-need areas
- Ages of children served

What happens once you get accepted? All new programs come in at Star Level 1. They are asked to sign a Letter of Expectations outlining key responsibilities and expectations for both Delaware Stars and the program.

The next step in the process is On-boarding. After acceptance and signing the Letter of Expectations, the program has one year to complete the following:
- An online orientation session
- 6 hours of professional development offered by Stars
- Participation in an on-boarding visit from a Stars Technical Assistant
- Completion of an initial Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). This plan sets short-term goals related to Star standards and the relevant ERS. Ideally a program should be actively working on at least three standards at a given time.
- After successful completion the program is eligible to move up to Star Level 2

How much assistance do programs get from their assigned Technical Assistants? Star Level 1 programs receive one or two visits to complete the on-boarding observation, with feedback and an initial QIP. Programs at Star Levels 2, 3, and 4 that are actively working towards a higher Star Level receive visits from their TA approximately twice a month. Programs at Star Level 5 or who are maintaining at a lower Star Level may receive TA in preparation for re-verification. Each TA will have a caseload of approximately 40 programs.

Stars Plus – There will be additional technical assistance and resources to programs identified to participate in Stars Plus cohorts. These cohort groups are specifically being funded by the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant. There will be five cohort groups identified for the next 3 years. Each cohort will have 8-10 programs participating. Each cohort will have a designated TA.

What strategies do TAs use with programs? TAs utilize a variety of strategies to assist programs, including mentoring, coaching, demonstration lessons, and technical assistance.

What will Grants and Awards look like? Grants and awards will be available dependent on funding. Merit Awards will be one time awards when a program achieves Star Level 3, 4, or 5. Grants will be available on an annual basis at this time and are allocated to programs that have verified at Star Levels 2, 3, and 4 and are working toward a higher Star Level. It must be clear on the QIP that the program is actively working

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