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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 four 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 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 data 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**
The Bureau of Early Learning Resource Center Operations provides direct support to the ELRCs in managing the Child Care Works and Keystone STARS programs through program coaching and instruction on all fiscal, programmatic and system requirements.

**Bureau of Policy and Professional Development**
The Bureau of Early Learning Policy and Professional Development works to ensure all programmatic policies align to improve cross-systems efficiencies, identify potential policy
barriers, leverage policy opportunities, and ensure compliance with federal reporting requirements. In addition, ELRC program compliance will be supported through internal and external professional development and technical assistance supports ensuring consistent state-wide service delivery and efficient use of available state and federal resources.

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.
- 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.

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:**
- Individualized support and assistance from Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) Quality Coaches;
- Grants, awards, and other financial supports as offered;
- Supportive professional development;
- Outreach and marketing of their program to families; and
- 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.

**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) – THE PENNSYLVANIA KEY (pakeys.org)](pakeys.org)

- **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](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](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
Navigating the Process of Keystone STARS

There are four levels of quality in Keystone STARS:

- **STAR 1** represents Certification Compliance and a focus on health and safety. STAR 1 programs are encouraged to continue working toward higher STAR levels.
- **STAR 2** represents programs that must address required quality indicators that show a commitment to CQI and are related to structural quality.
- **STAR 3 and STAR 4** represents programs that must meet all required quality indicators at the lower STARS levels and then earn a minimum number of points using the STAR 3 and 4 flexible quality indicators.

**Step 1: Maintain STAR 1 Eligibility**
All programs who have a regular certificate of compliance through Pennsylvania’s Department of Human Services or a private academic license through Pennsylvania’s Department of Education 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 will demonstrate that they are meeting all STAR 2 required quality indicators to achieve a STAR 2 designation. STAR 2 focuses on Structural Quality which ensures children have a healthy, safe, challenging, and supportive environment and includes aspects such as group size, children-to-teacher ratio, and teachers’ qualifications. Additionally, STAR 2 programs ensure teachers have the supports they need to foster responsive and meaningful child-adult interactions.

**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
- 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**

In most cases, a program’s Keystone STARS designation will be valid for three years. At the end of years 1 and 2, all programs regardless of STAR level will need to complete an annual renewal which includes ensuring staff continue to meet the STARS requirements and showing that the program is continuing to work on CQI activities and practices. At the end of their third year, the program will be required to undergo another full designation visit in which all aspects of quality are monitored. Programs may seek to move up to higher STAR levels at any point in their 3-year cycle.

The annual paperwork renewal is due 30 days prior to a program’s designation anniversary.

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
- Program experiences a revocation, suspension, or issuance to provisional Certification status
- 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.

**Continuous Quality Improvement in Keystone STARS**

Keystone STARS is designed to help early childhood education programs develop and implement a continuous quality improvement (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 (EC 2.1) 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)
- 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
- Includes goals beyond minimum requirements and actions steps under the program’s Child Care Facility COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan

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.

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

There are two CQI Plan template examples and instructions for use in the appendix. Programs choosing to use their own CQI Plan template must ensure that their plan contains at minimum the information detailed in the template examples.
SECTION THREE: PROGRAM OBSERVATION IN KEYSTONE STARS
Connecting Program Observation and Continuous Quality Improvement Planning

The CQI Plan should reflect your program’s priorities and culture and be updated regularly to show progress toward previous goals as well as the addition of new goals. CQI Plans are dynamic working documents and will change over time.

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. The annual update should include a review of annual assessment results and the previous CQI Plan to:

- Summarize progress made toward achievement of both short-term and long-term goals.
- Identify new goals and action steps based on reflective activities and internal assessment activities.
- Discuss any goals no longer deemed necessary.
- Indicate individuals responsible for achieving goals.

Your 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, adult-child 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 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 suggested 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 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, planning for internal assessment, and using 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).
- Selecting a POI for each age group.
- 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.
- Providing the completed assessments to all IA Team members.
- IA Team consultation for CQI Plan goals.

Developing a process for your internal assessments will help you prepare for a meaningful experience that builds on your program’s philosophy, priorities, and culture. Partnership with your quality coach and an assessor is integrated into the IAP to support you in collecting information through observations and using that information for CQI goal setting.

Programs seeking to maintain or achieve a STAR 3 or 4 designation need to consider any current STAR expiration or PQA Effective End Date in planning their IA activities. To support timely completion of required activities for programs working to renew their STAR 3 or 4 designation, IAP planning should begin at least six months prior to any Program Quality Assessment Score Effective End Date for programs who previously had a formal assessment using ERS or CLASS. Programs seeking to move up to a STAR 3 or 4 should begin IAP planning six months prior to the site’s goal date for STARS move-up.

Programs partner with their quality coach and assessor to plan and implement the entire IA Process. Assessments used for CQI planning should reflect current program practices, classroom make-up, and teaching staff.

Identifying the 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, 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
- trained observers use the POI’s scoring system accurately

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.

At STAR 2 programs may select any POI from the chart located in the STARS Standards or this Program Manual. As they work toward STAR 3 and 4 if the PAS or BAS were used for internal assessment it can continue to be used to meet indicator LM 3.4.9. The program will need to also select a classroom practice focused POI for the required indicator EC 3.4.5.
NOTE: The rationale for removing PAS and BAS as suggested POIs for EC 3.4.5 and EC 3.4.6 is the placement of those quality indicators in the Early Childhood Program section of the Keystone STARS standards and the deeper engagement in CQI at STAR 3 and STAR 4. PAS and BAS are still included as suggested POIs for EC 2.1.

To meet the requirements of EC 3.4.5:

- Programs select a POI for each age group served when the program has multiple classrooms and children are grouped by age. At least one classroom from each age group served by your program must be included in the plan for EC 3.4.5.
- Home-based providers with mixed age groups select a POI designed for mixed age groups and/or home-based ECE programs.

NOTE: Your quality coach and assessor can support you 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.

To meet the requirements of EC 3.4.6:

- Programs have the option to:
  - select an additional POI beyond the POI used for EC 3.4.5 for additional internal assessment -OR-
  - work with the assessor to complete:
    - one external assessment with the POI used for EC 3.4.5 -OR-
    - or one external assessment with an additional POI.

- All activities required in EC 3.4.5 are also required for EC 3.4.6.

To meet the requirements of LM 3.4.9:

- Programs, in partnership with their IA Team add the PAS or BAS to their IAP plan.
- All activities required in EC 3.4.5 are also required for LM 3.4.9.

Programs are not required to achieve reliability or certification on the POI(s) selected. Programs are encouraged to obtain professional development for their selected internal assessor on how to conduct observations using the POI(s) selected. This will support obtaining authentic results from the internal assessments.

As you investigate the various POIs, these questions may support your decision-making conversation:

- What are you hoping to learn through assessment?
- What are the goals and priorities for your program?
- Which POI will provide data that most closely aligns with the program’s goals and priorities?
The chart below outlines POIs suggested for use in Keystone STARS program quality assessment activities; a link to more detailed POI resources is included at the end of the chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POIs that focus on:</th>
<th>Consider using or requesting an OCDEL-approved assessor for:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Social-emotional learning</td>
<td>• Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Classroom climate</td>
<td>• Teaching Pyramid Infant Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Social-emotional learning: Program Quality Assessment (SEL PQA)</td>
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<td>• Climate of Healthy Interactions for Learning and Development (CHILD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Practices that support children with an IEP</td>
<td>• Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Adult-child interactions</td>
<td>• Parenting Interactions with Children: Checklist of Observations Linked to Outcomes (PICCOLO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Note: PICCOLO can also be used to observe teacher-child interactions.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An overview of classroom practices, interactions, and</td>
<td>• Environment Rating Scale (ERS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>environment</td>
<td>• Rating Observation Scale for Inspiring Environments (ROSIE)—<em>looks at aesthetics of the classroom</em></td>
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<td>• School-age Program Quality Assessment (SPQA)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Developmental Environment Rating Scale (DERS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• An overview of the program’s leadership, business, and</td>
<td>• Program Administration Scale (PAS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>management practices.</td>
<td>• Business Administration Scale (BAS)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>* 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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional information on the suggested POIs is available on The Pennsylvania Key website (www.pakeys.org) and from your 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.
Key considerations for your IAP timeline:

- Your program’s STAR goal and important dates for that goal
- Adequate time to create your IA Team and begin discussions
- Time for exploration of the POI options and to complete relevant training
- Purchase of POI materials as applicable
- Completion of all planned observations
- Time to organize observation notes and seek scoring clarification as needed
- When you will share feedback with teachers and the IA Team
- Consideration of schedules for anyone completing observations.
- Time for the IA Team to come together to review the completed observations, discuss, and clarify the information gathered, apply the information to CQI planning and goal setting, and plan for any next steps.

**REMINDER:** Assessments shared with the quality coach and assessor 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 current PQA Effective End Date.

**Be sure to update your quality coach and assessor about changes to dates in your timeline as they occur.**
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 to check for alignment with each POI’s guidance for use, analyze the results for practice patterns and formulate questions to pose to the IA Team during the consultation.

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

Things you may want to consider sharing with your 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 you share with your 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 your program’s unique culture and priorities, and 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.

The Early Childhood Program goals created through the IAP are one element of the overall CQI plan; developing meaningful and effective goals for growth supports programs in allocating resources across all areas of their CQI plan according to their priorities for improvement.

To set the stage for CQI planning, the assessor will update the IA Team about their review of the completed assessments. This update might include alignment clarification for the POI(s) used, trends the assessor has noted across the completed assessments, and connecting internal assessment results with any external or co-rated observations.

In addition to the assessor’s update on the reviewed observations, 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 quality coach and assessor are available to support programs through the IA process and follow up activities as needed.
SECTION THREE: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & THE PD REGISTRY
Professional Development Requirements in Keystone STARS

Keystone STARS considers professional development (PD) as degree attainment/career pathway advancement and ongoing professional development. On-going PD includes training, technical assistance and coaching activities that support an individual’s or program’s continuous quality improvement.

STARS PD is provided to ECE professionals with the goal of increasing knowledge, skill, and practice in their work with children and families. As a result, STARS PD will help programs achieve higher quality practices and help them achieve higher STAR levels. OCDEL funds PD aligned with CQI and the office’s priorities. Approved PD is available in the PD Registry. Quality Coaches can support programs in identifying PD that best fulfills the program’s CQI needs.

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 programs;
- 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.

PD Registry Information

The Pennsylvania Key provides access to professional development courses developed in-state and nationally through the 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, individuals can complete their Professional Development Plan (PDP) take a self-assessment of their current knowledge and apply for placement on the Career Pathway, all through the PD Registry.
For more information on the PD Registry, click [here](http://www.pakeys.org) or visit The Pennsylvania Key website at [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org).

**Organization Profile in the PD Registry**
Once a year, Program Directors or Administrators will be prompted to update their Organization Profile within the PA PD Registry. This can be completed by logging into the PD Registry and clicking on the organization tab on the upper right dropdown menu. Directors or administrators should 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.

**PD Registry Requirements for Programs at STAR 2 and Above**

**New Keystone STARS Overview Course (SQ 2.1)**
A new PD course entitled, *Overview of Keystone STARS: Pennsylvania’s Quality Rating and Improvement System*, will be launched on July 1, 2022. The new course will take the place of the previous STARS 101 and STARS 102 courses. Beginning July 1, 2022, newly hired on-site leadership team members and teaching staff will be required to complete this course within 90 days of hire. In addition, because the content in the PD course has been updated, all current on-site Leadership team members and Teaching Staff will be required to take the new PD course by their next Keystone STAR designation renewal, full or paperwork occurring after October 1, 2022.

**Completing and Renewing a PD Registry Profile (SQ 2.2)**
At STAR 2 and above, programs are required to have their teaching staff and on-site leadership team members complete their PD Registry Profile. Ongoing, all teaching staff and on-site leadership team members are required to renew their PD Registry Profiles annually. Through renewing one’s PD Registry Profile, their Career Pathway placement is also renewed for another year. A Tip Sheet on completing and renewing PD Registry Profiles can be found [here](http://www.pakeys.org).

To meet **SQ 2.2**, STAR 2, 3, and 4 programs must ensure all onsite leadership team members and teaching staff have completed their PD Registry Profile within 60 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*. Ongoing, all staff must renew their PD Registry Profile annually. 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).

It is important to note that Career Pathway placements must be renewed annually as part of Keystone STARS. Through updating one’s PA PD Registry Profile, an individual’s Career Pathway placement will also be renewed for another year. Individuals must renew their PD Registry Profile and Career Pathway placement 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.
**Note**: Prior to July 1, 2022, Career Pathway placements had expiration dates. Beginning July 1, 2022, this language has been changed from “Expired” to “Renewal Due”. The PD Registry Staff Report will reflect this new language.

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.

Individuals who receive another degree or credential and wish to update their PD Registry Profile prior to their current PD Registry Profile renewal due date may do this by completing the *Career Pathway 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 do not have to update their Career Pathway after they finish individual courses but only after events such as completing a degree, earning a certificate, or completion of sufficient coursework that may push them to a higher Career Pathway placement.

**PD Registry Requirements for STAR 3 and 4 Programs**

**Staff Qualifications and Career Pathway Placements (SQ 3.4.2)**

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 amount 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. As such, it is important that all STAR 3 and 4 programs who are completing a full Keystone STAR designation, as well as those programs who are seeking to move up to a STAR 3 or STAR 4, must ensure Career Pathway levels have been assigned to all onsite leadership team members and teaching staff.

To have all of their teaching staff and on-site leadership team member’s Career Pathway levels assigned by the time of a full STAR designation, all STAR 3 and STAR 4 programs should begin working on this indicator a minimum of **90 days** prior to their STAR expiration date.

**Professional Development Topics (SQ 3.4.3 though SQ 3.4.9)**

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 were identified as key components that should be included in every teaching staff’s professional development plan (PDP):

- language development and academic achievement of all children including those who are culturally and linguistically diverse (SQ 3.4.3)
- social and emotional development of children (SQ 3.4.4)
- positive interactions with children and families (SQ 3.4.5)
- implementation of curriculum selected by the program (SQ 3.4.6)
- administration of the program’s adopted developmental screening tool (SQ 3.4.7)
- administration of the program’s adopted observation-based assessment (SQ 3.4.8)
- work with children with disabilities and other at-risk populations (SQ 3.4.9)
In order for programs to earn points in each of the quality indicators listed above at the time of a STARS designation, all onsite leadership team members and teaching staff must:

- have taken PD in the topic area within one year of hire at current program, or
- have taken PD in in the topic area within last 3 years, or
- be currently enrolled and making active progress in credit-bearing coursework.

Ongoing, the assessment of ongoing professional development (PD) needs of teaching staff should be included in annual discussions between leadership and teaching staff. These assessments should be informed by classroom observations, performance evaluations, instructional observations, PDPs, and the current needs of enrolled children and families. Assessing the PD needs of teaching staff also includes exploring when more scaffolded PD courses that build upon the more basic, foundational coursework could extend learning and quality practices.

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

The PA PSCECE are the general knowledge and skills that educators need to know and be able to demonstrate. 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. Effective July 1, 2022, the PA PSCECE will replace the CKCs. All course offerings in the PD Registry will be coded with the PA PSCECE standard area(s) to which the course material covers.

The following chart lists the STARS Quality Indicators in the Professional Development and Staff Qualifications by number, topic area, PQAS requirement, as well as the corresponding PA PSCECE Standard Area(s).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SQ Quality Indicator</th>
<th>Topic Area</th>
<th>Does the PD need to be PQAS Approved?</th>
<th>PA PSCECE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SQ 3.4.3</td>
<td>Language development and academic achievement of children who are culturally and linguistically diverse</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Standard Areas 1, 4 and 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SQ 3.4.4</td>
<td>Social and emotional development of children</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Standard Areas 1,4,5 and 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SQ 3.4.5</td>
<td>Positive interactions with children and families</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Standard Areas 1,2, 3, and 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SQ 3.4.9</td>
<td>Special needs of young children</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Standard Areas 1, 3, and 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please see the PA Keys website at [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org) for a thorough listing of PQAS approved courses that provide approved professional development in the above quality indicators. Coursework can take the form of face-to-face or self-paced online modules including those offered through Better Kid Care and other national approved organizations.

Vendor-related Professional Development (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 tool, and observation-based assessment tool 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 adopts and begins using a different 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 these 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 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. For the three topics of curriculum, developmental screening, and
observation-based assessment, the best practice would be for all teaching staff to take PD offered
from the vendor directly. However, when this is cost-prohibitive, other options are also acceptable.

Beginning July 1, 2022, the following PD options are accepted for the three vendor-specific tools of
curriculum, developmental screening, and observation-based assessment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Accepted Professional Development</th>
<th>Additional PD Required</th>
<th>Documentation Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option 1</td>
<td>Training directly from the vendor (excluding webinars).</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>a. Certificate of completion from vendor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 2</td>
<td>PQAS Training in the specific curriculum, screening tool or assessment tool. Dependent on vendor requirement instructor delivery.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>a. Professional Development Learning Record- verified PQAS hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 3</td>
<td>Taking part in vendor-offered webinars in the specific curriculum, screening tool or assessment.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>a. Both the staff person and a member of the program leadership team should sign off on the screenshot/certificate of completion. AND b. Professional Development Learning Record-verified PQAS hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Examples include: Assessment: Beyond the Basics of Observation and Data Utilization; Linking Standards, Curriculum Framework, and Assessment; Using Ages and Stages Questionnaires as a
Professional Development for Non-Instructional Staff (SQ 3.4.10)

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Expert/Resource</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>STARS Performance Standard(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical Professional</td>
<td>Health-related issues</td>
<td>FC.3.4.1 LM.3.4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Professional</td>
<td>Legal issues</td>
<td>LM.2.2 FC.2.1 FC.2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services</td>
<td>Business/Budget issues</td>
<td>LM.2.1 LM.3.4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Professional Quality Assurance System (PQAS) Information

The Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System (PQAS) is a system designed to ensure quality PD and technical assistance (TA) 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.

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.

Pennsylvania’s Quality Assurance System (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, they 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 E-Learning Courses on various topics to meet your needs. To find these courses, check the “E-Learning” box at the bottom of the Training calendar and uncheck all other options. A list of these courses will allow you to register for the course and complete the course directly within the PD Registry for your convenience.

Finding PQAS Approved Instructors in the PA PD Registry
PQAS approved instructors in your area can be found by logging into www.papdregistry.org and clicking on Training Calendar in the left menu. Click on the “Find Instructors” tab on the Training Calendar and search by:

- Name
- PA PSCECE Standard Area
- Age Group
- Training Language
- Training Counties
- Keyword of Trainings

Once you click “Search Instructors,” a list of approved PQAS Instructors will be shown on the display.

If you are not finding a specific course in the registry, or courses in your area, you may contact a PQAS approved instructor and arrange to have PD provided "on-demand". To find a PQAS approved instructor use the instructions above and click on “Contact Instructor” to reach out to the instructor with your request.

Act 48 Credit Hours
Act 48 credit hours do qualify as PQAS-approved PD for Keystone STARS designations. Some courses in the PD Registry have Act 48 credit hours associated with them allowing for those courses to appear on a staff person’s PD Learning Record. For Act 48 coursework taken from outside the PD Registry, the individual will need to print out their PERMS information for review at the time of STARS designation.
At this time, most **online** courses offered by the Pennsylvania Key are Act 48 approved. If an individual has their PPID number listed in their profile, information is sent to PDE each month for those that have completed these courses to be awarded ACT 48 hours in their PERMS account. If they take any other type of course other than online that is ACT 48 approved in the PD Registry, they must complete a form at the face-to-face session and the instructor will send the information to PDE on their behalf to receive ACT 48 credits on their PERMS account.
SECTION FOUR: APPENDIX
The following documents can be found and accessed at the Pennsylvania Key website.

Keystone STARS Continuous Quality Improvement Plan - Instructions and Template #1

Keystone STARS Continuous Quality Improvement Plan – Template #2

Keystone STARS Internal Assessment Process (IAP) – Template

Facility Staff Qualifications Grid

Professional Development Tracking Grid for STAR 3 & 4 Programs: Teaching Staff

Professional Development Tracking Grid for STAR 3 & 4 Programs: Non-Instructional Staff

Resources to Support Achievement of Keystone STARS Performance Standards

Confidential Records Sign Off Form: Children’s Records

Confidential Records Sign Off Form: Leadership and Management and Program Staff
SECTION FIVE: 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: www.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)
Where do I go to find additional information on PA Eco Healthy Child Care?

- ECELS Indoor Air Quality Self-Learning Module
- ECELS Pest Management: Integrated Pest Management Self-Learning Module
- Children’s Environmental Health Network: [https://cehn.org](https://cehn.org)
- Eco-Healthy Child Care Online Module
- Eco-Healthy Child Care Fact Sheets
- Eco-Healthy Child Care Endorsement
- PD Registry: [papdregistry.org](http://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 a 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
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](http://www.pafarmtoschool.org)
- [https://learning.thefoodtrust.org/preschool](https://learning.thefoodtrust.org/preschool)
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.

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 and materials 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 NAPSA), 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 at least 1 focus area
- Action Plan(s) showing goals identified in at least 1 focus area, with at least 1 goal completed

The evidence above can be viewed and downloaded from a program’s Go NAPSACC account.


Who do I contact for more information on NAPSACC or to get connected to a local technical assistance provider?
Organization: Pennsylvania Department of Health, Bureau of Health Promotion and Risk Reduction
Address: 625 Forster Street, 10th Floor, Harrisburg, PA
Phone: 717-547-3212
Email: RA-DHSPAN@pa.gov
Website: https://www.keystonekidsgo.org/pa-napsacc.html
Application Website: https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/5202959/GO-NAP-SACC-Access-Application
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?

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 included on the Severe Deficiency list or payment hold status. 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 or independent licensed child care site

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

Home Day Care Sponsor: Administrator of nonresidential 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.
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