

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](#) or visit The Pennsylvania Key website at 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](#).

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 through 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).

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

Please see the PA Keys website at 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:

| Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum • Developmental Screening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Observation-Based Assessment | Accepted Professional Development | Additional PD Required | Documentation Required |
|--|---|---|---|
| Option 1 | Training directly from the vendor (excluding webinars). | No | a. Certificate of completion from vendor |
| Option 2 | PQAS Training in the specific curriculum, screening tool or assessment tool. Dependent on vendor requirement instructor delivery. | No | a. Professional Development Learning Record- verified PQAS hours |
| Option 3 | Taking part in vendor-offered webinars in the specific curriculum, screening tool or assessment. | Yes PQAS training in the general topics of curriculum, developmental screening, or child observation-based assessment* PA PSCECE Standard Area 3 | 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 |

*Examples include: Assessment: Beyond the Basics of Observation and Data Utilization; Linking Standards, Curriculum Framework, and Assessment; Using Ages and Stages Questionnaires as a Screening Tool; Director Instructor Child Observation series or other trainings within PA PSCECE Standard Area 3.

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:

| Content Expert/Resource | Content | STARS Performance Standard(s) |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Medical Professional | Health-related issues | FC.3.4.1 LM.3.4.10 |
| Legal Professional | Legal issues | LM.2.2 FC.2.1 FC.2.4 |
| Financial Services Professional | Business/Budget issues | LM.2.1 LM.3.4.7 |

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.