



FACT SHEET

What:

- Great Start to Quality rates child care and preschool quality and helps programs/providers continually improve. The goal is to make sure every young child in Michigan has a high-quality early learning experience – and to show parents which ones are best.
- Programs/providers are awarded between one and five stars based on the number of state standards they meet, with five stars being the highest rating.
- The standards were drafted for the state of Michigan by a diverse group of early learning experts and parents, with assistance from national experts.
- Programs/providers are rated in five categories: 1) staff qualifications/experience 2) family/community engagement, 3) administration/management, 4) learning environment and 5) curriculum/instruction.
- More information about Great Start to Quality is at www.greatstarttoquality.org.

Why:

- Children start learning as soon as they're born, so early learning is crucial. Quality child care and preschool helps children succeed in school, work and life, research shows.
- Most states already have quality systems under way or in development. Michigan's system began rolling out in December 2012, with full implementation in 2013.
- Most Michigan young children are in child care or preschool, so Great Start to Quality helps their families spend wisely on the best programs and providers.
- Great Start to Quality also helps the state spend its funds wisely. It does this by making sure Michigan has a high-quality early childhood system this is accountable to taxpayers, parents, providers and more importantly, the children it serves.

Who:

- Parents can use the rating system to find the best child care and preschool by visiting www.greatstartCONNECT.org. More ratings will be posted as their quality is validated.
- Licensed programs – group child care homes, family child care homes, center-based child care and preschool programs, including Head Start and Great Start Readiness Programs – are rated and can participate in quality improvement plans.
- Unlicensed providers – often relatives who receive payments from the state for taking care of children – are not rated. However, they can choose to improve their quality by taking advantage of training sessions offered through their local Great Start to Quality Resource Center. They can also use books, puzzles and other educational items from the Resource Center lending library.

How:

- Ten Great Start to Quality Resource Centers across the state help programs/providers assess the quality of their services and develop improvement plans. As they improve, they can demonstrate their success to parents via the online ratings.
- For parents, Great Start to Quality Resource Centers offer a variety of resources, including the ratings, to help young children thrive. Contact them at 1-877-614-7328.