



Reading the Stars

If you are a parent or family member looking for a quality child care or early learning program, Grow NJ Kids, New Jersey's Quality Rating Improvement System, can help. Since 2013, Grow NJ Kids - which is based on recognized research - has been working with programs to raise the quality of child care and early learning across the state.

Grow NJ Kids provides you with information on choosing a quality provider, helping you to make the most of your child's early learning opportunities. Here are the five areas that are assessed:

- the health and safety of your child and the classroom,
- age appropriateness of learning environments and lesson plans,
- the relationship of your child's program with you and the community,
- staff education, and
- business operations.

Based on these assessments, each program is given a star rating, up to 5 stars. The standards are high and reaching the highest quality levels is often a long-term process. All participating programs are committed to making improvements that help prepare kids for school and life.

The star ratings easily help families recognize quality programs. In addition, these star ratings help guide the process and encourage programs to improve. Programs that choose to meet higher standards can apply for a three-to five-star rating. As programs move up the rating system, requirements increase. Once a program is ready to be rated, the state-designated rating entity determines how many stars a program should receive. The star ratings are valid for three years from the review date. The information below gives examples of what the programs completed to get their star rating. Grow NJ Kids also stresses to parents that star ratings are just one of several factors to consider in finding the right program for their family's needs.

Grow NJ Kids Participating Program/Provider

- A license or certificate of registration from the Department of Children and Families or a Department of Education-approved school district.
- Completed the Grow NJ Kids Director's Orientation.
- Completed a self-assessment and quality improvement plan that identifies areas of strength and how the program will work toward a Grow NJ Kids rating.



- Met all of the requirements as a Grow NJ Kids participating program/provider.
- All teaching staff attended a minimum of five hours of training on selected research-based curriculum/developmentally appropriate practices.
- Classrooms met quality standards, using a nationally recognized rating scale.



- Met all of the requirements for three stars.
- All teaching staff attended a minimum of 10 training hours on selected research-based curriculum/developmentally appropriate practices.
- Classrooms met high quality standards, using a nationally recognized rating scale.



- Met all of the requirements for four stars.
- Implemented research-based curriculum and developmentally appropriate practices.
- Classroom met high-quality standards, using a nationally recognized rating scale.

For more information visit www.GrowNJKids.gov