



New York State's quality rating and improvement system, designed to achieve the best possible care for our children



**QUALITYstarsNY**  
a winning beginning for all our children™

Every day, we use ratings to help make important decisions. And whether it's a restaurant, movie or new car, we know five stars means high quality. With the click of a mouse, rating information is available for just about everything. Yet parents don't have all the information they need to help them make one of the most important decisions they'll ever face: choosing an early learning and development program for their child.

*QUALITYstarsNY*, New York State's quality rating and improvement system, is designed to help parents access the best possible care for their child. It also helps those working with young children to strengthen their programs. By setting universal standards linked to 'star ratings,' *QUALITYstarsNY* uses proven methods to assess, improve and communicate the quality of care we provide for our children. It is also cost-effective, ensures accountability and maximizes limited funding.

Research shows children who participate in high quality early learning and development programs do better in school and in life. More than two dozen states have already adopted a quality rating and improvement system like *QUALITYstarsNY*, with impressive results. Now, New York State is taking this important step for our children and our future.



*QUALITYstarsNY* is a quality rating and improvement system designed for all types of early childhood programs. Using 'star ratings' (one to five stars), like those used for movies and restaurants, *QUALITYstarsNY* offers easy access to information for parents, programs and policymakers.





## A Quality Investment

Over the last decade, new brain research has shown that 75% of brain growth<sup>1</sup> and 85% of intellect, personality and social skills<sup>2</sup> develop before children start Kindergarten. That means learning in the early years creates the foundation children will build on for a lifetime. Yet one out of three New York children starts Kindergarten already behind in basic skills.

*QUALITYstarsNY* is a smart investment, not just in our children, but in the state's bottom line. By creating uniform standards and expectations, other states have used programs like *QUALITYstarsNY* to better direct limited government resources. Studies have shown that every \$1 invested in high quality early care and education saves \$7 to \$14 by reducing the need for remedial and special education, juvenile justice and welfare support.

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Wills, *The Runaway Brain*, 1993. <sup>2</sup> (Purves, *Body and Brain*, Harvard University Press, 1988, adopted from DW Thompson, *On Growth and Form*, Cambridge University Press).

## How does *QUALITYstarsNY* work?

*QUALITYstarsNY* is a voluntary system that will be available to all regulated programs serving young children - in centers, schools and homes. It provides guidance, support and resources for technical assistance and professional development so that programs improve their quality rating over time. Programs receive points for incorporating practices that go *above and beyond* basic health and safety requirements and are based on the latest research. Star ratings are based on an evaluation and assessment of practices in the following categories:

[Learning Environment](#)

[Family Engagement](#)

[Qualifications & Experience](#)

[Management & Leadership](#)

## Who can participate in *QUALITYstarsNY*?

There are 1.5 million children, birth to age six in New York State, and most of them are being cared for outside the home for at least part of the day. Whether they are in centers, schools or homes, we want all young children to have the benefit of a stimulating learning environment with responsive and knowledgeable adults.

Eventually, the system will be available statewide and any program regulated by the State or City of New York will be eligible to participate, including:

[Child Care Centers](#)

[Family and Group Family Child Care providers](#)

[Universal Pre-Kindergarten programs \(school and community-based\)](#)

[Head Start programs](#)

[Early Head Start programs](#)

[Registered Nursery Schools](#)

## Supporting Quality Improvement

Programs and providers who participate in *QUALITYstarsNY* get much more than a star rating. Participants receive a personalized improvement roadmap, including specific training and financial assistance to help improve their star rating.

Many people who work with young children – in centers, schools and homes – welcome professional development but it is often difficult to find and afford such opportunities. *QUALITYstarsNY* is designed to help participants access training that not only improves program quality and outcomes for children, but also helps centers, schools and homes retain quality teachers and strengthen communication, mentoring and collaboration.

## Who Benefits From *QUALITYstarsNY*?

### Children

from participating in high quality, nurturing learning environments, rooted in proven research and techniques that maximize cognitive, social and emotional development to improve school readiness

### Parents

from having access via a website and literature, to uniform, easy-to-compare information about the quality of local early learning and development programs to help make the best choice of care for their child

### Teachers & Providers

from valuable professional development, customized to strengthen the program's child learning outcomes, collaboration and support among staff

### Employers

from a workforce that is more productive and with less absenteeism and turnover when parents are confident their children are being cared for in a high quality setting

### Taxpayers, Policy-makers, & Donors

from a set of uniform tools to guide improvement and investment, ensure accountability and cost-effectiveness and maximize limited resources

## Building Momentum

*QUALITYstarsNY* is being led by the New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council, a group of early childhood experts from across the state. In 2010, a field test was conducted in 13 communities across the state. More than 200 early childhood providers volunteered to test *QUALITYstarsNY*, sharing their experiences and providing important feedback. Now, work is being done to implement *QUALITYstarsNY* as a permanent system in New York State.



## *QUALITYstarsNY* will help ensure our youngest children are getting the high quality early learning experiences they need to succeed in school and in life.

Every day, star ratings help us make important decisions. *QUALITYstarsNY* will help early childhood providers develop high quality programs, help parents access those programs for their children and help New York State maximize the benefit of limited education spending.

Research shows 75% of brain growth and 85% of intellect, personality and social skills develop *before* age five. Yet parents don't have all the information they need to help them make one of the most important decisions they'll ever face: choosing an early care and learning program for their child.

## Visit us online!

[QUALITYstarsNY.org](http://QUALITYstarsNY.org)

Visit us online for more information, including:

[Why quality matters in early childhood education](#)

[Quality standards for \*QUALITYstarsNY\*](#)

[Implementation update for communities across the state](#)

## Watch the video!



*What is QUALITYstarsNY?* features a child care provider, parent and business leader sharing why New York State needs a quality rating and improvement system.

Produced by Winning Beginning NY and Citizen Action's Public Policy and Education Fund, the video can be accessed at:

[QUALITYstarsNY.org](http://QUALITYstarsNY.org)

There are currently **25** states (including the District of Columbia) that already have systems like *QUALITYstarsNY* in place. **200** early childhood providers across the state participated in the *QUALITYstarsNY* field test in 2010. Research shows **75%** of brain growth and **85%** of intellect, personality and social skills develop before **age 5**. In New York State, there are **1.5 million** children, birth to age six, and most are cared for outside the home.

