

News Release
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
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Bob Taft
Governor

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Child care quality rating program to go statewide

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services today announced that a voluntary child care quality rating system would soon be available statewide. Step Up To Quality is a voluntary quality rating system now being piloted in Athens, Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Hocking, Lucas, Muskingum, Perry and Stark counties.

“The goal of this program is to promote school readiness by improving the quality of early care and education for all children while providing parents with an easy to use tool to assist them in selecting early childhood programs,” ODJFS Director Barbara Riley said. “These ratings can help parents make informed decisions about the programs that they place their children in.”

Step Up To Quality recognizes early care and education programs that exceed quality benchmarks over and above minimum health and safety licensing standards. The program is based on national research identifying the key benchmarks that lead to improved outcomes for children. These benchmarks include low child to staff ratios, group size, accreditation, staff education, specialized training, improved workplace characteristics and early learning standards.

There are approximately 4,100 licensed centers in Ohio. In Step Up To Quality’s first year, more than 400 programs are participating. A total of 11,490 children are served in 141 programs that have earned a star rating.

One, Two and Three Star rated programs include lower staff to child ratios, administrators and teachers with higher qualifications and more specialized training in early childhood development and learning, have increased administrative supports in the area of benefits and compensation, and teachers who are familiar with Ohio’s Early Learning Content standards which outline what children should know and be able to do when they enter kindergarten.

Governor Bob Taft signed an executive order in May allocating Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding of \$15 million to expand Ohio's voluntary child care provider-rating system.

On November 30, Step Up To Quality will be available statewide. To learn more about this program visit: <http://www.jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/stepUpQuality.stm>