

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Parents Urged to Choose ‘Step Up To Quality’ Back-to-School Child Care**

COLUMBUS, OHIO – With another school year starting, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) reminds parents that the number of child care providers with a star rating in the state’s child care quality rating system continues to climb.

“Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) recognizes child care programs that go beyond minimum standards to promote children’s learning and development,” said ODJFS Director Kimberly Hall. “Hundreds of providers throughout Ohio have stepped up to provide quality care for children. We are proud to partner with them in this important mission.”

By July 1, 2020, all Ohio child care programs that receive state funding must participate in Step Up To Quality. To date, more than 3,600 publicly funded providers across the state are rated with at least one star on the five-star scale.

ODJFS has implemented multiple initiatives to help providers become rated, which include:

- Funding incentive payments.
- Reducing application fees.
- Dedicating ODJFS staff to meet with and guide providers through the process.
- Offering free curricula and assessments.
- Paying wage and retention bonuses for provider staff members.
- Hosting workshops where providers can ask questions and receive guidance.
- Creating a mentorship program where SUTQ-rated providers help guide programs not rated.

Families can search for child care providers by county, city, ZIP code, program type, and SUTQ rating at [ChildCareSearch.Ohio.gov](http://ChildCareSearch.Ohio.gov).

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*The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services manages vital programs that strengthen Ohio families. These include job training and employment services, unemployment insurance, cash and food assistance, child care, child and adult protective services, adoption, and child support services.*

