



**Quality Achievement Awards  
Policy Changes  
7/1/09 to 6/30/10**

**General Scope of Policy Changes:**

1. Changes to continue to simplify the process and provide more flexibility in allowable expenditures while maintaining accountability for federal funds
2. Focusing resources on programs that serve low-income children to encourage achievement and maintenance of higher ratings because low-income children have the most to gain from high quality programs.

**Policy Changes Effective July 1, 2009:**

1. New payment matrix for programs that are initially rated or renewed as of 7/1/09.
2. Enrollment as documented at the program's last licensing visit will be used for program size instead of license capacity.
3. A per child amount based on Star rating times the number of subsidized children instead of percent of enrollment. Note: Based on available funding, a cap may be placed on the total per child multiplier.
4. Programs may only increase their Star rating at time of renewal.
5. Programs have 90 days from the date indicated on the QAA notification packet to complete their initial budget. This packet is sent by OCCRRA to the program administrator after ODJFS authorizes a QAA amount. Programs must complete their purchases and reconciliation within one year of their date of Star rating/renewal.
6. Programs may opt for Electronic Fund Transfers instead of a paper check. An EFT Permission Form must be submitted with the initial budget to complete this option.
7. During Fiscal Year 2010, programs will have the ability to enter their initial budget and reconciliation online.
8. Participation in research and evaluation is a requirement for receiving a Quality Achievement Award.

9. While 25% of the QAA must be spent on Program Improvements, the Early Learning Resources category is being replaced by a category called “Benchmark”. The intent is to allow expenditures related to costs associated with achieving and maintaining the benchmarks.

Allowable Items:

<b>Benchmark:</b>	<b>Description:</b>
Ratio, Group Size	Personnel costs associated with ratio/group size reduction
Staff Education and Qualifications	Programs share of TEACH expenses, CDA expenses and/or college course work.
Specialized Training	Costs associated with SUTQ Specialized Training: training/registration fees, hiring a consultant or trainer, personnel, substitutes and travel - all other professional development should be captured under merit
Administrative Practices	TEACH expenses, professional memberships, PAS book, Specialized Training (see above) – all other benefits and practices should be captured under merit
Early Learning	Curriculum aligned with one or more of the following: Ohio’s Infant and Toddler Program Guidelines, Ohio’s Early Learning Content Standards, Ohio’s K-12 Standards. Assessment tools that are valid and reliable which include but are not limited to the Environment Rating Scale and Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation. Materials that support and are used for ongoing child assessment (including computers, digital cameras, video cameras and voice recorders).

10. Additional clarification on allowable items

- a. Classroom Supports may include playground equipment and materials
- b. Compensation must be site specific and related to staff members who are responsible for child interaction, child outcomes and/or supervision.
- c. Program Support may include membership fees or other costs associated with using locally available equipment like laminators, Ellison machines and etc.
- d. Program Support may include fee based early childhood mental health consultations/services, vision, hearing and speech screenings when not required and funded by another funding source.
- e. Costs associated with program marketing including but not limited to the purchase of ads or billboards is prohibited with QAA funds.

**Policies With No Change**

1. Subsidized children are those receiving either child care subsidy or are funded by Early Learning Initiative (ELI).
2. Reconciliation for any previous QAA must be completed and approved before a new QAA will be processed.
3. Child Care subsidized enrollment is calculated from billing information supplied by CDJFS and based on the subsidized enrollment three months prior to the date of the Star Rating certificate.
4. ELI enrollment is calculated from billing information captured in the Kinderattend attendance and payment tool and based on the ELI enrollment three months prior to the date of the Star Rating certificate.
5. QAA is subject to the availability of funds.