

TO: Step Up To Quality Programs
FROM: Office of Family Assistance, ODJFS
DATE: February 18, 2022
RE: Step Up To Quality Upcoming Changes

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) are making improvements to the Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) program. These improvements are intended to eliminate redundancy and unnecessary paperwork. These changes include:

- A reduction in the paperwork for programs at initial registration or when requesting a higher rating,
- Discontinuing the rating renewal process to make SUTQ ratings continuous, and
- No longer requiring a school age curriculum.

To begin implementing a continuous rating system, the following guidance is being shared to assist with the transition.

	Action
Annual Report	If your program’s rating expires on or after April 15, 2022, you do <u>NOT</u> need to submit an annual report to maintain your current SUTQ rating. Disregard emails received reminding your program that the annual report is due.
Ongoing Rating/Renewal Registration	If your program’s rating expires on or after April 15, 2022, you do <u>NOT</u> need to submit an ongoing registration to maintain your current SUTQ rating. Disregard emails received reminding your program to complete an ongoing registration.
Specialized Rating	If your program currently holds a change of ownership, re-instatement, or expedited rating, you must still submit an initial registration within the 120- day deadline, as this rating type is not continuous.

Initial/Change Rating Registration	<p>Initial and change rating registrations will be assessed based on the rules in effect at the time the registration is reviewed by the State or county agency.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. If the registration is reviewed before the SUTQ changes are effective, then all documents uploaded will be reviewed under the current standards at desk review.2. If the registration is reviewed after the SUTQ changes are effective, then only documents required to be uploaded under the revised standards will be reviewed.
Publicly Funded Child Care	<p>Your program's Provider Agreement for Publicly Funded Child Care will not be terminated because your program did not submit an annual report or ongoing registration if your rating expires on or after April 15, 2022.</p> <p>Programs providing Publicly Funded Child Care continue to be required to be rated in Step Up To Quality, unless exempt.</p>

A manual procedure letter will be issued closer to the effective date of these changes.