

## **YoungStar Trends Early 2012 to Feb. 2013: Movement Toward Higher Quality Ratings**

The trends in YoungStar show a shift toward higher quality ratings. This analysis examines changes over time for child care programs rated by YoungStar and for the children served, broken out by YoungStar ratings from one star to five stars. The data is from the Department of Children and Families' YoungStar website, which posts monthly statistics:

<http://dcf.wi.gov/youngstar/statistics.htm>

### **Trends for Children: 57% are now in 3- to 5-star rated child care programs**

As of February 2013, over 57% of children funded through the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy system and served in programs rated by YoungStar are in facilities rated at 3 to 5 Stars, as illustrated by Fig. 1 below.

<b>Figure 1            Wisconsin Shared-Funded Children Served in            Programs Rated 3-Star, 4-Star, and 5-Star            February 2013</b>				
	<b>3-Star</b>	<b>4-Star</b>	<b>5-Star</b>	<b>3- to 5- StarTotals</b>
<b>Children Served</b>	19,115	1301	5091	25,507
<b>Percent of Total Children Served</b>	43.0%	2.9%	11.4%	57.3%

Back in March 2012, only 40% of children funded through Wisconsin Shares were served in programs rated at 3 to 5 Stars, so the change to 57% is significant over a year. The *number* of children served by programs rated at 3 to 5 Stars also increased significantly, from 13,759 in March 2012 to 25,507 in February 2013, an increase of 85%. The number of children in 3-Star programs more than doubled over the period, as illustrated in Fig. 2.

Note that substantially fewer programs had been rated in early 2012 compared to early 2013. It is difficult to determine to what extent the rise in children served in higher-rated locations is

the result of YoungStar incentives and help, and to what extent it is attributable to more programs with higher quality level getting rated and becoming part of the calculation. But since most programs are now rated, the trends in increased quality are becoming clearer.

Child care programs working to improve have been helped by several efforts:

- Over 4100 programs have received technical assistance;
- Over 3500 have received micro-grants totaling over \$2.6 million;
- At least 1300 individuals have received professional development counseling; and
- Well over 1200 individuals have had T.E.A.C.H. scholarships for credit-based education.

<b>Figure 2 Number and Percent of Wisconsin Shares-funded Children by YoungStar Ratings March 2012 – February 2013</b>									
		<b>2-Star</b>		<b>3-Star</b>		<b>4-Star</b>		<b>5-Star</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Total Children</b>	<b>Children served</b>	<b>Percent of total served</b>	<b>Children served</b>	<b>Percent of total served</b>	<b>Children served</b>	<b>Percent of total served</b>	<b>Children served</b>	<b>Percent of total served</b>
<b>March 2012</b>	34,530	20,771	60.2%	8323	24.1%	674	2.0%	4762	13.8%
<b>Feb. 2013</b>	44,498	18,891	42.5%	19,115	43.0%	1301	2.9%	5091	11.4%
<b>Change</b>	<b>+9968</b>	<b>-1880</b>	<b>- 17.7%</b>	<b>+10,792</b>	<b>+18.9%</b>	<b>+627</b>	<b>+0.9%</b>	<b>+329</b>	<b>-2.4%</b>

*Note: Wisconsin Shares does not provide funding for services in 1-Star programs.*

The 17.7% drop in the percentage of children in 2-Star programs and the 18.9% increase in the percentage of children in 3-Star programs provide strong evidence that many programs moved from 2-Star to 3-Star ratings.

**Trends for Programs: 33% of child care programs are rated 3-5 Stars, a 12% increase**

In January 2012 only 21% of programs rated earned 3 to 5 stars. Thirteen months later in February 2013, 33% have been rated at 3 to 5 Stars, a significant change. The percentage of programs with higher rating is quite different from the percentage of children served by higher-rated programs; the difference has to do with where the children are.

Over 79% of children served by Wisconsin Shares are in center-based settings: licensed group child care centers (75%) and child care operated by schools (4%). Only 20% of children are served in family child care settings. (See <http://dcf.wi.gov/childcare/wishares/scplc.htm>)

Because center-based programs serve many more children than family child care settings, and because center-based programs are generally rated much higher under YoungStar, the **percentage of children** served in higher quality programs is significantly higher than the **percentage of programs** rated as higher quality. That explains why 33% of the **programs** are rated at 3 to 5 Stars, while 57% of **children** are served in 3- to 5-Star-rated programs.

Fig. 3 shows the change in program ratings over 13 months. Compared to January 2012, an additional 1134 programs were rated in February 2013. As many more programs were rated, there was a modest 13% increase in 2-Star programs, a 126.8% increase in 3-Star programs, a 213.6% increase in 4-Star programs, and a 40% increase in 5-Star programs. When programs rated at a star level are viewed as a percentage of total programs rated, we see that there was an 11.4% drop in the percentage of 2-Star programs and a 10% increase in the percentage of 3-Star programs, with a slight increase in the percentage of programs rated 4-Star and 5-Star.

<b>Figure 3</b> <b>Number and Percentage of Child Care Programs</b> <b>by YoungStar Ratings</b> <b>January 2012- February 2013</b>							
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Programs By Rating Over 13 months</b>				<b>Percent of Total by Rating</b>		
	# rated child care programs Jan 2012	# rated child care programs Feb 2013	Change in # over 13 months	Percent change over 13 months	Percent of total programs Jan 2012	Percent of total programs Feb 2013	Change in percent of total
1 Star	39	25	-14	-35.9%	1.1%	0.5%	<b>-0.6%</b>
2 Stars	2710	3063	+353	+13.0%	77.7%	66.3%	<b>-11.4%</b>
3 Stars	488	1107	+619	+126.8%	14.0%	24.0%	<b>+10.0%</b>
4 Stars	44	138	+94	+213.6%	1.3%	3.0%	<b>+1.7%</b>
5 Stars	206	288	+82	+39.8%	5.9%	6.2%	<b>+0.3%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3487</b>	<b>4621</b>	<b>+1134</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Overall, the trends are in the direction of higher quality, but still two-thirds of the programs are rated below 3-Star. Data show steady movement of programs from 2-Star ratings to 3-Star ratings, but less than 10% of programs are rated at 4-Star or 5-Star.

Earlier analysis by WCCF showed significant differences between center-based programs and family child care programs, which requires more examination.