



# Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System

## Redefining Quality

The educational experiences children have during the first five years of life will shape the adults they become, making it especially important for all children to have access to quality care and early education.



## Parent Aware Ratings

Parent Aware Ratings provide an easy-to-use tool designed to help Minnesota parents find the quality child care and early learning programs their children need to succeed in school and life. The Minnesota Department of Human Services leads Parent Aware in coordination with the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Department of Health. Child Care Aware of Minnesota is working in local communities to share the Ratings with parents, and assist participating child care and early education programs.

## Stars Defined

The Parent Aware One-to-Four-Star Ratings combine years of early childhood development research to provide an objective assessment of quality that improves kindergarten readiness. Parents can instinctively judge if a program is clean, affordable, and in a good location. But based on a brief visit, it's nearly impossible to learn whether a program is using a full range of early learning best practices. Parent Aware provides this difficult-to-obtain information to help parents determine how well a program will prepare their child for school and life. The Ratings measure if and how child care and early learning professionals are using best practices that are most predictive of kindergarten readiness, including these categories:

- ★ Health and Well-being
- ★ Teaching and Relationships with Children
- ★ Relationships with Families
- ★ Assessment and Planning for Each Individual Child
- ★ Professionalism

## National Movement

Parent Aware is Minnesota's version of a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Each state has adopted, or is planning to adopt, a similar program. Licensed family child care programs, child care centers, Head Start, ECSE, and public school prekindergarten programs are eligible to participate.

## Find Rated Programs

Parents can learn more and use the free Parent Aware search tool at [ParentAware.org](http://ParentAware.org) or by calling 888.291.9811. Additionally, the website offers guides and checklists for Minnesota parents during their search for a quality program.

## Accessing High-Quality Early Education

Access and affordability are barriers to high-quality early education for too many Minnesota families. To help bridge the gap, the Minnesota Department of Education offers Early Learning Scholarships to help eligible families enroll in high-quality child care and early learning programs participating in Parent Aware. Child care providers caring for young children receiving child care assistance can also receive higher rates of reimbursement with a Three- or Four-Star Parent Aware Rating.

## Getting a Rating

Parent Aware is a voluntary program. Participants receive one-on-one coaching and professional development advising throughout the Rating process. Programs also receive free promotional materials and have access to business training and consultations through First Children's Finance. According to research conducted following the Parent Aware pilot, 92 percent of Rated programs say that participating in the Ratings helped them improve their quality.

For more information on Parent Aware, visit [ParentAware.org](http://ParentAware.org) or call 888.291.9811.