

Janet T. Mills  
Governor

Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.  
Commissioner



Maine Department of Health and Human Services  
Child and Family Services  
11 State House Station  
2 Anthony Avenue  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011  
Tel.: (207) 624-7900; Toll Free: (877) 680-5866  
TTY: Dial 711 (Maine Relay); Fax: (207) 287-5282

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Early Care and Education Programs

**From:** Office of Child and Family Services

**Date:** February 09, 2023

**Subject:** **Quality Rating and Improvement System: Rising Stars for ME Transition Plan**

---

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) announces the adoption of the Quality Rating and Improvement Rules: **Rising Stars for ME**.

Maine has operated a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for child care providers and other early care and education programs since 2008. Two studies conducted by independent consultant groups (in 2014 and another in 2016) recommended many of the changes in the revised QRIS. In the summer of 2020, a pilot project was launched with 41 participants across program types that included licensed child care facilities, family child care and licensed facilities serving only school-aged children. During the Rising Stars for ME Pilot, programs received the revised standards. The program owner, director, or designated staff person provided feedback to guide additional revisions to the system. OCFS appreciates the pilot participants for their work and input in support of this effort. OCFS also thanks the public for providing comments during the public comment period and public hearing to further guide changes to the rule.

OCFS would like to notify Maine's Early Care and Education and School Age programs of the transition plan OCFS and our partners at Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network (MRTQ PDN) have in place with the promulgation of the rules.

The transition from Quality for ME into Rising Stars for ME will occur automatically on the evening of March 26, 2023. The **Child Care Choices** website will be updated accordingly. Rising Stars for ME certificates will be sent to each program via regular mail on March 27, 2023.

Programs will automatically be categorized into the Star Rating equivalent to current Step Level:

- Step 1 programs will become a 2 Star program
- Step 2 programs will become a 3 Star program
- Step 3 programs will become a 4 Star program
- Step 4 programs will become a 5 Star program

All programs will have six months to meet all new standards to maintain their new Star Rating. The new Rising Stars for ME certificates will reflect necessary updated certificate expiration dates. Programs that do not meet the new standards after the six-month timeline will be moved to the Star Rating that reflects the standards that the program has met.

OCFS and MRTQ PDN will be providing outreach, support, and technical assistance to all programs prior to the transition into the new Rising Stars for ME system. Programs may also contact OCFS or MRTQ PDN for individual support as needed.

The rules and additional information and resources can be found on [Quality Rating and Improvement System \(QRIS\) | Department of Health and Human Services \(maine.gov\)](#)

If you have any questions, please contact Amber Taurasi, Early Childcare and Education Quality Specialist, at (207) 626-8684 or [Amber.Taurasi@maine.gov](mailto:Amber.Taurasi@maine.gov)