

# Overview and Resources

## *Rising Stars for ME*

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Maine's New Quality Rating and Improvement System

*MRTQ PDN Technical Assistance Team*  
*Updated March 2023*





*Rising Stars for ME* is Maine's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

There are two sets of standards:

- [Facility Standards](#) (for programs of 12+ children)
- [Family Childcare Standards](#) (for family child care programs and small centers for 12 or fewer children).

More Information about *Rising Stars for ME* can be found on the website for Maine's Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services:

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/support-for-families/child-care/qris>

# What is *Rising Stars for ME*?

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# Acronyms

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Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network

**MRTQ PDN**

Maine Department of Health and Human Services,  
Office of Child and Family Services

**DHHS, OCFS**

Quality Rating and Improvement System

**QRIS**

Child Care Subsidy Program

**CCSP**





Support programs to better understand *Rising Stars for ME*.

Support providers to access the *Rising Stars for ME* Standards for Facilities and Family Child Care Programs.

Understand the application process.

Gain access to resources that will support programs' successful participation in the *Rising Stars for ME*.

Learn how to go up in your star rating and support staff to move up the career lattice.

# Goals

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# Terminology



## Child Care Facility

*A house or other place in which a person maintains or otherwise carries out a regular program, for consideration, for any part of a day providing care and protection for three (3) or more children under thirteen (13) years of age.*

## Child Care Provider/Practitioner

*A Provider who can receive a Child Care Subsidy under this rule and is either a Child Care Provider licensed under the Department's Children's Licensing or Investigation Services' rules, a Child Care or a License-Exempt Child Care Provider as defined in this rule.*

## License-Exempt Child Care Provider

*A Child Care Provider not required to be licensed to provide Child Care Services for no more than two (2) Children, eighteen (18) years of age or older, a Maine resident, and does not reside in the same household.*

## Family Child Care

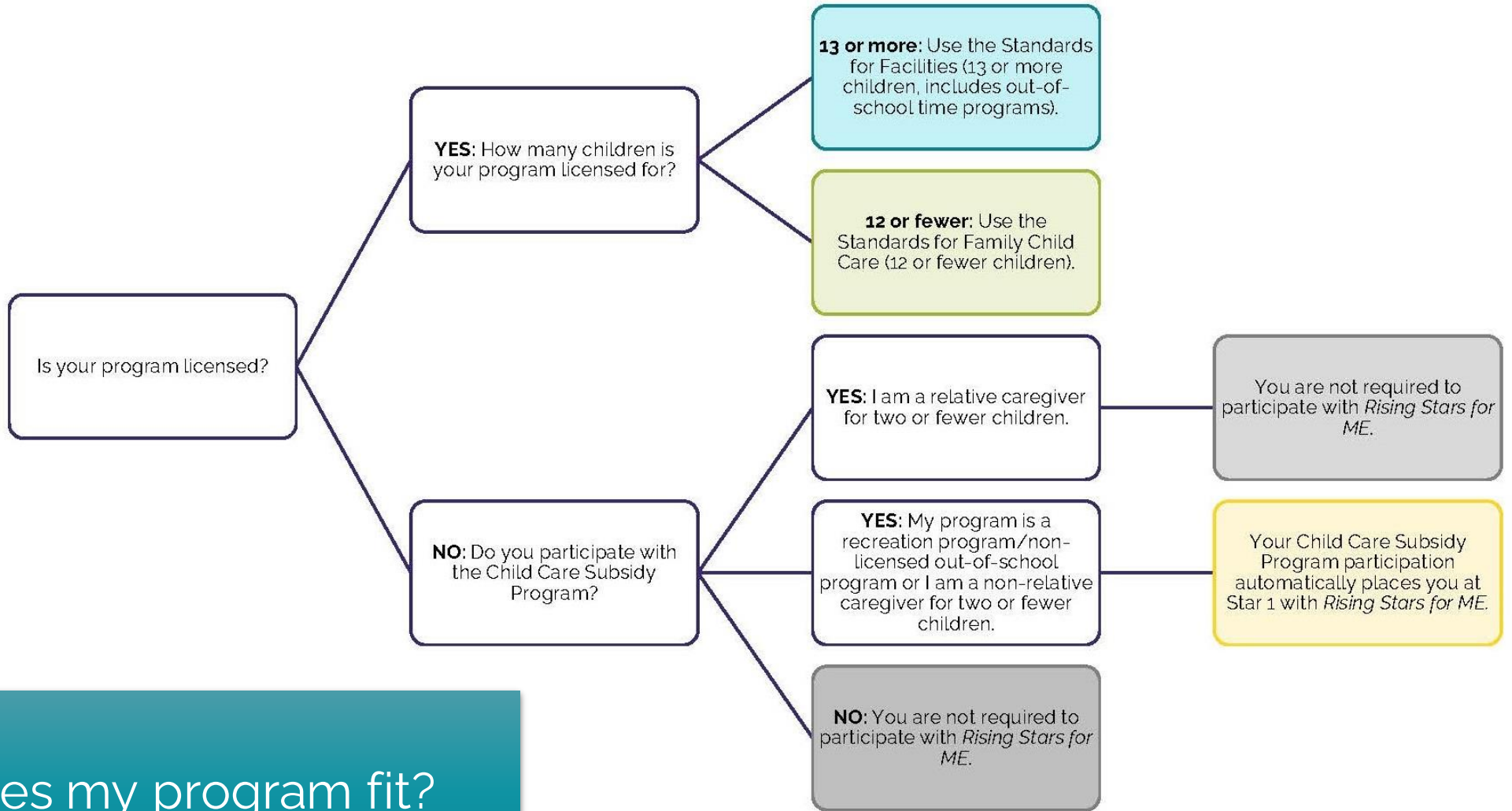
*Programs that operate within a private home and often serve multiple age groups. In Maine, if an individual is providing child care for more than two children who are unrelated to them, that person(s) must be licensed by Maine's Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services. The maximum number of children allowed in a family child care home in Maine is 12; depending on the number and ages of children, additional staff may be required.*



# Jumping into *Rising Stars for ME*







Where does my program fit?

# Prerequisites

*This replaces the Compliance and Licensing History Standard.*

"A **licensed** program applying to *Rising Stars for ME* must be in compliance with licensing regulations... A program will **not** meet the prerequisites if the program has a Conditional License.

A program not meeting the *Rising Stars for ME* prerequisites will be temporarily moved to **Star 2 Restricted Status.**"

The requirement for a program to be in compliance with licensing regulations is no longer time-limited, allowing programs to work with Child Care Licensing to regain their Star rating as soon as possible.





# Standard Areas

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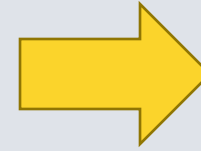
1. Learning Environment/Developmentally Appropriate Practice
2. Program Evaluation
3. Staff Qualifications and Professional Development
4. Administration and Business Practices
5. Family Engagement and Partnership
6. Child and Youth Assessment
7. Health, Safety, Nutrition and Physical Activity



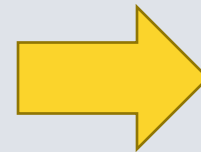
# 1. Learning Environment/ Developmentally Appropriate Practice

*Supporting children's learning*

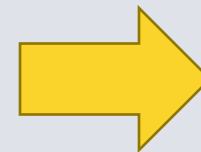
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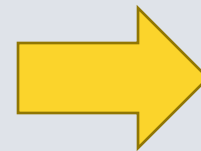
The program plans activities and experiences based on an understanding of the developmental domains, as well as knowledge of children's individual interests and abilities.



Directors/owners and staff are familiar with Maine's Early Learning and Development Standards appropriate to the ages of the children in the program. The Infant and Toddler Maine Early Learning and Development Standards training has been added.



The program has a policy addressing suspension and expulsion and supports available for families.



The program has an articulated approach to learning.

# Standard 1 Resources



[Research-Based Curricula](#)

[Curriculum Frameworks](#)

[What does Developmentally  
Appropriate Practice mean?](#)

[MELDS/IT MELDS](#)

[Preventing Expulsion in Early Care  
Settings](#)



## 2. Program Evaluation

*Continuous quality improvement*

The *Rising Stars for ME* Inclusive Practices Checklist is designed to help early childhood and out-of-school time staff become aware of indicators of quality and to use the ratings from the Checklist to identify their current strengths and needs related to equitable and inclusive practices.

The program uses multiple evaluation tools to write and implement a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Plan.

- Family Surveys
- Staff Surveys (if applicable)
- Self-assessment Tools (e.g. accreditation standards)
- *Rising Stars for ME* Inclusive Practices Checklist



# Standard 2 Resources



[How Program Evaluation  
Can Help You](#)

[Inclusive Practices Checklist  
and User Guide \(Video\)](#)

[Annual Program Evaluation  
Checklist](#)

[Program Evaluation Report  
Checklist](#)

### 3. Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

#### *Understanding the Career Lattices*

- MRTQ Registry membership is now required by Child Care Licensing; all direct care practitioners will be assigned a Level on the Career Lattice.
- Education, Credentials, and experience contribute to an individual's Level.
- Specific training or course work related to leadership, management, and administration are required at Star 3.
- Staff must create an annual Professional Development Plan addressing their training and education goals at Star 4.





# Standard 3 Resources



[Career Lattices](#)

[Professional Development  
Plan Outline](#)

[MRTQ PDN Training  
Calendar](#)

## 4. Administration and Business Practices

*Operating a quality program*



Changed from "Administration Policies and Procedures."

Focuses on basic business practices, including training (e.g. *Child Care Leadership Institutes I, II, or III*) and continuous quality improvement using tools like the [Business Administration Scale](#) (BAS).

Staff should be evaluated at least annually.

License-exempt providers/programs should have current agreements with both the CCSP and families.

# Standard 4 Resources



[Sample Job Description and Sample of Staff Responsibilities](#)

[Family Child Care Association of Maine \(FCCAM\) business website tool](#)

[Child Care Staff Evaluation Tips](#)

[How to Join and Use the MRTQ PDN Registry \(Registry FAQs\)](#)

[MRTQ PDN Registry Resources](#)



## 5. Family Engagement and Partnership

### *Welcoming all types of families*

This standard combines "Family Resources" and "Parent/Family Involvement."

The program recognizes the unique needs of all families and communicate in ways that support varied literacy levels, languages, and family culture.

The program offers families opportunities for conferences.

There is a policy addressing the program's approach to Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) at Star 4.



# Standard 5 Resources



[NAEYC Principles of Effective Family Engagement](#)

[Family Engagement On Demand Training](#)

[Coaching Teachers for Family Engagement Webinar](#)

[Family Conference Support](#)

[IFSP and IEPs in Child Care Settings](#)

# 6. Child and Youth Assessment

## *Observation to inform curriculum*

At Star 3, at least once per year, the program collects and summarizes evidence of children's development in the following areas:

- ✓ Social/Emotional;
  - ✓ Cognitive;
  - ✓ Physical (gross and fine motor; self-help skills);
  - ✓ Language/Communication Skills;
  - ✓ Approaches to Learning;
- and incorporates this evidence into curriculum planning.

At Star 4, evidence is collected and summarized twice per year.





# Standard 6 Resources



[Assessment Basics: From Observation to Instruction](#)

[Maine Early Learning and Development Standards](#)

[Infant Toddler Maine Early Learning and Development Standards](#)

[Planning and Observation Template](#)

## 7. Health, Safety, Physical Activity, and Nutrition

*Healthy bodies and minds*

This is a new Standard.

Programs can choose goal(s) related to health, safety, physical activity, and nutrition using tools like:

- Go NAP SACC
- Let's Go! 5-2-1-0

At Star 3, a program chooses one goal. At Star 4, a program chooses two goals.



# Standard 7 Resources



[Go NAPSACC](#)

[Best Practices for Physical Activity](#)

[Sample Program Healthy Eating & Physical Activity Policy](#)





# The Application and E-Portfolio



# Rising Stars for ME Application

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The application is similar to the past *Quality for ME* application; it will be online and will require the program's license number and an MRTQ Registry login.

The application will continue to collect a combination of administrative and self-report data.

*Rising Stars for ME* is a BLOCK SYSTEM, meaning that to move to a higher Star, the program must meet all requirements of the lower Star(s). Programs will receive a "Star Status Report" that will show its rating for each Standard.

The renewal period will be TWO years.







# What Is an E-Portfolio?

- The E-Portfolio is the program's demonstration of the self-reported Requirements listed in the Standards.
- Documents will be uploaded using a secure portal as part of the *Rising Stars for ME* Application.
- Contents of the E-Portfolio will be reviewed *randomly* by staff at DHHS, OCFS.







Support from MRTQ PDN

# What's the difference between *Rising Stars for ME* and Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network?

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<p><i>Rising Stars for Me</i> is a system for the PROGRAM.</p>	<p>The MRTQ Registry is a system for INDIVIDUALS.</p>
<p><i>Rising Stars for ME</i> is developed and mandated by the Maine State Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS).</p>	<p>MRTQ PDN is contracted by OCFS to provide support to early childhood practitioners and programs, including support around participation in <i>Rising Stars for ME</i>.</p>
<p><i>Rising Stars for ME</i> uses program data on specific Standards to give PROGRAMS a rating from 1 to 5 Stars.</p>	<p>The MRTQ Registry uses education, training, and experience to assign INDIVIDUALS to a Level on their chosen <a href="#">Career Lattice</a>.</p>
<p>Enrollment with <i>Rising Stars for ME</i> must be renewed every two years.</p>	<p>Registry membership should be updated regularly, but never expires.</p>

You can learn more [here](#).





Maine Roads to Quality PDN *does not* rate programs, distribute certificates, or monitor compliance with *Rising Stars for ME*.

MRTQ PDN does support programs with the application process and meeting the Requirements of *Rising Stars for ME*.

Contact Technical Assistance Manager, Lee Lingelbach, for more information or to find out about how you can receive free consultation and support for your quality needs:  
[lee.lingelbach@maine.edu](mailto:lee.lingelbach@maine.edu), 207-626-5203

### Supports available through MRTQ PDN:

- **Registry Support**, including Director of Record Access to help Directors/Owners manage their staff list in the MRTQ Registry and access the Rising Stars for Me application portal.
- **Career advising** to assist individuals in moving up the Career Lattice.
- **Training** to meet *Rising Stars for ME* Requirements:
  - *Maine Early Learning and Development Standards* and *Infant and Toddler Maine Early Learning and Development Standards*
  - *Supporting Inclusion: Laws and Practices*
  - *Child Care Leadership Institutes I, II, and III*
- **Technical Assistance** (Support to meet you and your program's particular needs):
  - Phone and email support
  - On-site or virtual consultation
  - Support for Accreditation
  - And more...please reach out today!





Looking for more  
resources?

**Quality Improvement Toolkits (QITs)** are available On-Demand and include a wide variety of useful resources targeted to assist you with your journey with Rising Stars for ME.

For more information, visit our website:

<https://www.mrtq.org/training/>

To go directly to on-demand training, you can visit:

[https://mrtq-registry.org/secure/online\\_training](https://mrtq-registry.org/secure/online_training)

**Questions? Contact MRTQ PDN today!**

**1-888-900-0055**

**[mrtq.contact@maine.edu](mailto:mrtq.contact@maine.edu)**