

Summary

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF) believes the YoungStar quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) helps to ensure many of Wisconsin's children from low-income families have an opportunity for success by creating:

- Affordable access - YoungStar provides increased access (through the Wisconsin Shares subsidy program) to higher quality child care for more children.
- Increased quality - Improving quality by building the supply of 4- and 5- Star child care centers across the state.

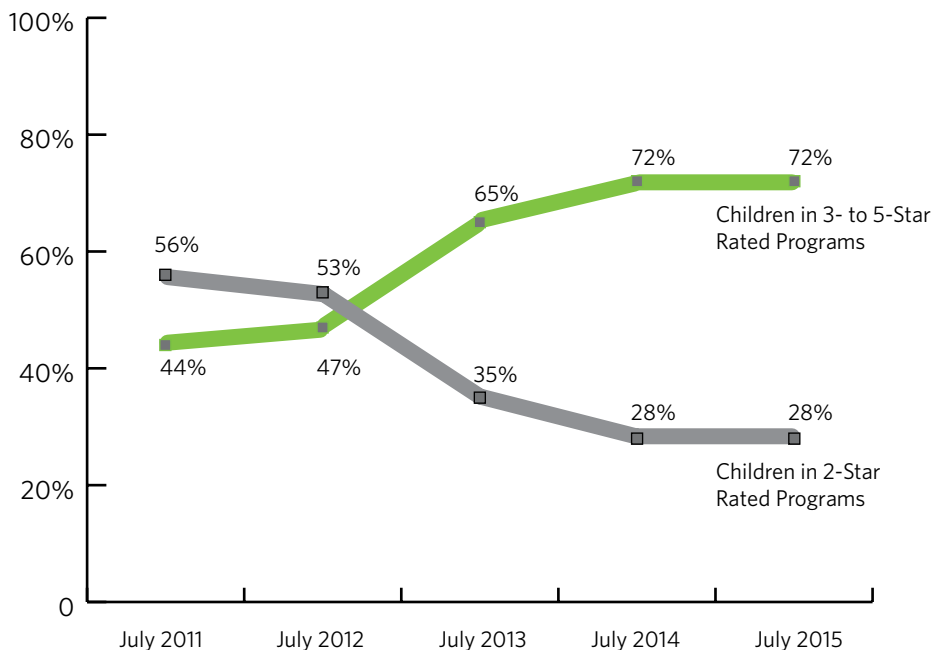
Ready to Start Kindergarten?

This fall, YoungStar is turning five years old and has had a great deal of success.

Here are some highlights:

- Seventy-two percent (72%) of Wisconsin Shares children are served in programs rated 3-Star or higher on a 5-Star scale.
- The percent of children served by 3- to 5-Star rated programs increased from 47% to 72% from July 2012 to July 2015, an impressive gain of 25 percentage points of children in higher-quality settings.
- A total of 31,302 children served by Wisconsin Shares were in 3- to 5-Star programs in July 2015.

Percent of Wisconsin Shares-Funded Children by Star Ratings Over Time



However, we have several concerns about the long term sustainability of YoungStar:

1. There has been a dramatic decline in the number of children served by Wisconsin Shares over the past six years.
2. The cost of quality to maintain a 4- or 5-Star program is not covered by current reimbursement rates.
3. Changes to Wisconsin Shares, including implementation of an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) system, threaten to further undermine the stability of high quality child care centers.

There is a Solution

We endorse implementing the recommendations under consideration from the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) to, **"Provide funding to double the number of children in 4-Star or 5-Star programs over the next 5 years. Build on the progress made in the first 5 years of YoungStar."**