



Media Room

For Immediate Release

Friday, January 22, 2010

Laura Smith, Office of the Governor, 608-261-2162

Governor Doyle Announces Five-Star Child Care Quality Rating System YoungStar to Improve Child Care, Give Parents Tools, and Help Prevent Fraud

MILWAUKEE – Governor Jim Doyle announced today details on a new five-star quality rating and improvement system for child care in Wisconsin. The program, YoungStar, will help improve the quality of child care, link provider quality to payments from the Wisconsin Shares program, and help guide parents in choosing a provider.

"Today, we are taking another major step forward to improve child care in Wisconsin, link quality to state payments and give working parents peace of mind that their kids are at a quality child care center," Governor Doyle said. "Research shows that high-quality child care is one of the best ways to prepare kids for success in school. I've proposed a quality rating system three times and am proud that my most recent budget allows us to get this program in place."

YoungStar sets a five-star rating system for child care providers based on education, learning environment, business practices and the health and well being of children. Through this rating system, the state will address several key issues in Wisconsin's child care system. YoungStar will:

- Improve the overall quality of child care;
- Create a clear, understandable tool for parents to choose quality child care;
- Create incentives for providers to improve services, particularly for low-income children;
- Link the quality of child care providers to Wisconsin Shares payments; and
- Help prevent fraud in the Wisconsin Shares system.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) will also create a website using the new five-star rating system to help parents see how providers score and why. The tool will be a helpful guide for parents choosing a child care provider.

Payments through the \$400 million Wisconsin Shares program will be linked to a provider's quality with the best providers receiving the most funding. This creates an incentive for providers to improve. Training, technical assistance and micro-grants will be available to help providers improve and ensure every parent and every child has access to quality care.

DCF will submit the final plan for YoungStar to the Joint Finance Committee in the coming weeks. Governor Doyle has proposed a quality rating and improvement system in three different budgets.

Since taking office, Governor Doyle has made improving early childhood a top priority. The Governor created DCF to improve child care in Wisconsin, and prevent the fraud and abuse that have been prevalent in the Wisconsin Shares program since it was created in mid-1990s. Wisconsin has also ensured every child has access to health care, doubled the number of parents with access to four-year-old kindergarten, expanded school breakfast programs, strengthened the foster care system, and invested nearly \$40 million to better

ensure the safety of children receiving care from the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare.

Printed: 1/26/2010