



How to Earn the 3-Star Rating

Directors can guide child care facilities to earn the 3-Star rating in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System by meeting the requirements for the 2-Star rating *plus* the following requirements.

- The Checklist for 3-Star Rating is an optional tool that you can use to keep track of the steps.

Basic Staff Qualifications

All staff members must be eighteen (18) years of age or older and hold either a GED or high school diploma. Documentation of each employee's birth date (copy of driver's license or birth certificate) must be on file for the Quality Step System monitor to review.

Increase Staff Professional Development Hours

This step is crucial for earning your facility's stars!

For a 3-Star rating, all full-time teachers (6 hours per day) must receive **10** hours of training on topics related to their age groups and **8** hours of training on general topics such as CPR or first aid. Your teachers must receive these training hours before your Quality Step monitor visits your facility.

Important: Training of teaching staff by the director does not count for Quality Step ratings. All training must be by trainers

approved by the Child Care Licensure Bureau of the Mississippi Department of Health. Ask a workshop provider to show her approval letter before your employees sign up, or check the list of approved trainings in the Child Care Licensure manual.

- Use the Child Care Center Professional Development Plan to determine the best schedule for attending workshops and courses.

Complete the Course in Child Care as a Business

The Mississippi State University Extension Service offers the three-day course "Child Care As a Business" several times a year. See the calendar of workshops on the web site of the Quality Step System. Go to:

qualitystep.msstate.edu/workshops.htm

The course completion certificate is valid for four years.

Complete Director's Session on the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines

The Mississippi State University Extension Service offers an approved series of workshops on the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines. See the calendar of workshops on the web site of the Quality Step System. Go to:

qualitystep.msstate.edu/workshops.htm



As the director, you must complete the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines session *for directors*.

Earn a Credential or Degree

As the director, if you already have earned the OCY Director's Credential or credential approved by MDHS/OCY, an associate or bachelor degree in child development, early childhood education, or a related field, you are ahead! If not, you will need to complete the requirements for *one of these* in order for your center to earn the 3-Star rating.

The OCY Director's Credential

This credential is awarded by the state Office for Children and Youth upon successful completion of the course offered by the Mississippi Forum on Children and Families. The credential is valid for four years. See the calendar of workshops on the web site of the Quality Step System.

qualitystep.msstate.edu/workshops.htm

Associate of Arts or Associate of Science

A two-year degree in child development, early childhood education, or a related field meets this requirement for the 3-Star rating. This two-year degree is available at several two-year colleges in Mississippi. For more information, see the booklet *Education Options for Early Childhood Careers; A Guide to Early Childhood Programs in Mississippi*. Go to:

earlychildhood.msstate.edu/articulationbooklet.pdf

Bachelor of Art or Bachelor of Science

A four-year degree in child development, early childhood education, or a related field will meet this requirement for the 3-Star rating. Ten universities in Mississippi offer four-year degrees in early childhood education. For a list and contact information, see the booklet *Education Options for Early Childhood Careers; A Guide to Early Childhood Programs in Mississippi*. Go to:

earlychildhood.msstate.edu/articulationbooklet.pdf

Official transcripts and certificate must be on file for the Quality Step System monitor to review.

Begin Monthly Staff Development Meetings

To earn the 3-Star rating, your facility must have monthly staff meetings on professional development topics.

Staff development meetings are an important time for relaxed communication with your staff. Each meeting should include the following:

- A clear beginning and ending time
- A presentation on important topic, such as setting up learning centers or making lesson plans
- A period for discussion of the main topic
- A period for employees to raise other concerns



You might ask some employees to give presentations on workshops they have attended, or “tours” of the learning centers in their classrooms.

- The Child Care Facility In-Service Schedule is an optional form you can use to plan staff development meetings.

You must show your Quality Step System monitor sign-in sheets and/or agendas or minutes for all meetings. The meetings must begin upon if not prior to enrollment in the Quality Step System.

- The Child Care Facility In-Service Sign-In Sheet is a sample form.

Add a Child Development Associate to Your Staff

For your facility to earn the 3-Star rating, at least one teacher, not including the director, must earn the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.

The CDA credential is awarded by the Council for Professional Recognition. This credential indicates an individual’s teaching competence.

You may be able to get financial help earning the CDA from the Mississippi Child Development Associate Scholarship Program. This program provides scholarships for recipients to take three required college courses and provides mentors to help recipients complete the CDA process. For

more information, go to:

earlychildhood.msstate.edu/initiatives/scholarships.htm.

Earn Higher ECERS-R and ITERS-R Scores

For your facility to earn the 3-Star rating, you will have Environmental Rating Scale Assessments of two classrooms. The average of the classrooms’ scores must be at least **3.6-4.0**.

The Partners for Quality Child Care program of the Mississippi Department of Human Services, Office for Children and Youth, may be able to help you and your teachers succeed on these assessments.

For more information about Partners for Quality Child Care, go to:

earlychildhood.msstate.edu/initiatives/partners.htm

Receive Caregiver Interaction Scale Assessments

The Caregiver Interaction Scale Assessment is used to assess teacher behavior toward the children or class. The 26-item scale deals with four factors: positive interaction, punitiveness, permissiveness, and detachment, and with the teacher’s encouragement of child self-help.

Quality Step System evaluators will assess classroom teachers who had ECERS-R or ITERS-R evaluations. Each teacher who is



assessed must receive a score of at least **2.5-3.0**.

Establish a Memorandum of Understanding with Another Agency

To earn the 3-Star rating, your facility must show it has made some effort to link children who need screening or intervention services to those services. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a document that shows that your facility and another agency have agreed to work together. The other agency probably will have a standard MOU form it will prepare for your signature. You must provide documentation that at least one referral or child assessment has occurred.

One good agency is the First Steps program in your area. You can contact the Mississippi Department of Health (601-576-7427) for the First Steps program in your area.

- The First Steps Early Intervention Referral Form is the form you would use to refer a child to First Steps.

Another option is to contact a local civic group that provides services. The Lions Club in your community may provide vision screenings for children.

Start Weekly Notes to Parents

You can increase your communication with parents by sending home a one-page note each week. You may include

information from each classroom. The second or third week's notes can include the center calendar for the next month.

You must also have on file how you send the notes and calendars to parents. (Example: "Parents pick up the notes every Friday when they get their child from the program.") The notes must begin on or before the center's enrollment in the Quality Step System.

Hold Annual Parent Workshops

Workshops for parents, guardians, and even grandparents can be a wonderful way to spend some relaxed time with families while sharing valuable parenting ideas.

To earn the 3-Star rating, your facility must offer at least one parent workshop per year. You might use a manila envelope as a "Suggestion Pouch" on the bulletin board with a sign: "Wanted: Workshop Ideas!" In your newsletters, encourage parents to drop their ideas for workshop topics in the pouch.

If you can, serve some refreshments and plan for child care during the workshop. Keep the program short and to the point; parents' time is precious!

You must keep a parent sign-in sheet for your Quality Step System monitor to see.

- The Child Care Facility Parent Workshop Sign-In Sheet is a sample form.



Create a Lending Library for Parents

A lending library for parents at the facility makes it very easy for parents to get more support from “experts” in child development guidance and ways children can learn skills that will prepare them for school. The Mississippi

Department of Human Services has provided all licensed centers with a starter library. The following authors of parenting advice are also good resources: David Elkind, Bill Cosby, Becky Bailey, Pam Schiller, Madelyn Swift, Pat Phipps and Thomas Moore. Songs and DVDs for children could also be part of the library.