# Parent Aware – Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System

## Year 3 Evaluation Report

April 2015

# Statewide Expansion of Parent Aware Ratings:

# Year 3 Report

## Reporting Period January – December 2014

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# The Parent Aware Evaluation

Parent Aware is Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). The Parent Aware evaluation is designed to provide information about the implementation and effectiveness of Parent Aware in promoting children's optimal development and school readiness. Parent Aware uses a two-pronged strategy that (1) provides information about early care and education program quality to parents and other consumers, and (2) supports quality improvement of early care and education programs.

Child Trends, a nonpartisan, nonprofit research organization is conducting the evaluation from 2012-2016. The Parent Aware Evaluation is funded by Parent Aware for School Readiness (PASR), Greater Twin Cities United Way, and Minnesota's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant.

**The evaluation addresses six primary research questions:**

1. **How is implementation proceeding?** Child Trends will study the implementation of Parent Aware, including the marketing campaigns and tools, quality improvement supports for programs, recruitment and retention of programs and the rating process. Perceptions of how Parent Aware is working for participants and families from the perspective of early care and education providers and Parent Aware staff will be collected through surveys and interviews. This question will be addressed in each annual report.
2. **Is quality improving in Parent Aware-Rated programs?** Observations measuring the quality of the environment and teacher-child interactions will be conducted in Rated programs to understand how program quality is changing over time and whether these changes are aligned with improvements on the Parent Aware indicators and ratings. This question will be addressed in a Validation Report produced in the third quarter of Year 4.
3. **How is children's development related to Parent Aware Ratings?** Children in observed classrooms will be recruited to participate in a fall and spring school readiness assessment aimed at measuring Kindergarten readiness patterns in four year-old children attending Parent Aware programs at all Rating levels. This question will be addressed in the Validation report.
4. **How effective are the quality indicators and rating structure used in Parent Aware Ratings?** Child Trends will conduct a validation of the Parent Aware indicators and rating structure and assess the extent to which Parent Aware is capturing program quality accurately and reliably. This question will be addressed for different components of the Parent Aware Rating Tool in the Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4 annual reports and in the Validation report.
5. **What are parents' perceptions of Parent Aware Ratings?** Child Trends will survey parents with children in Parent Aware-Rated programs to assess their experiences with Parent Aware. This question will be addressed in the Year 3 annual report and the Validation Report.
6. **How is Parent Aware contributing to Minnesota's early care and education system?** The evaluation will address the role of Parent Aware and the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant in supporting Minnesota's early care and education system. This question will be addressed in each annual report.

# Parent Aware Ratings At a Glance

**What is Parent Aware Ratings?**
Parent Aware is Minnesota's Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) for early care and education programs. It is available to all licensed child care centers and family child care providers, Head Start and Early Head Start programs, School-Based Pre-K programs and Early Childhood Special Education programs.

**How do programs receive a Rating?**
Parent Aware has two Rating pathways. Licensed, non-accredited child care centers and family child care providers rated under the *full-rating* pathway submit program documentation in four areas of quality.

- Physical Health and Well-Being
- Teaching and Relationships
- Assessment of Child Progress
- Teacher Training and Education

Reliable raters review documentation and award a One- to Four-Star Rating. Parent Aware requires that programs meet all quality indicators at the One- and Two-Star levels before being able to achieve a Three- or Four-Star Rating. Center-based programs aiming for a Three- or Four-Star Rating receive a preschool classroom observation using the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS). Programs eligible for the full-rating process participate in a rating cohort. Ratings earned under the full-rating process are awarded two times per year: June 30th and December 31st.

A second option for rating is the *Accelerated Pathway to Rating (APR)* process. Accredited child care centers, accredited family child care providers, Head Start, Early Head Start, Early Childhood Special Education and School-Based Pre-K programs are eligible for the APR process and can apply for a Parent Aware rating at any time during the year. Because the standards for these programs are aligned with Parent Aware standards, APR programs are eligible for a Four-Star Rating after submitting documentation for a small number of indicators related to curriculum and assessment.

**What is the timeline for statewide expansion of Parent Aware Ratings?**
Parent Aware is available statewide to programs eligible for APR. Parent Aware began a gradual statewide expansion in 2012 to all other types of programs - licensed, non-accredited child care centers and family child care providers. On December 31, 2013, Parent Aware was available to licensed, non-accredited programs in 22 counties and 7 Reservations. On January 1, 2014, Parent Aware rolled out to an additional 23 Minnesota counties and 1 additional Reservation. As of January 1, 2015, Parent Aware is available statewide.

**What supports do programs receive as part of Parent Aware Ratings?**
Fully-rated programs receive support in the form of a Quality Coach who provides coaching and assists with assembling the documentation needed to apply for a rating. Programs eligible for Building Quality (a pre-rating support process) receive $500 in pre-rating quality improvement supports, additional time to prepare for the rating, and additional coaching time. Programs that earn a One-, Two-, or Three-Star Rating receive up to $1,000 in post-rating quality improvement supports. After being Rated, a program also receives marketing materials to promote their Rating.

# Overview and Purpose of Report

Parent Aware, Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for early care and education programs, marked its third year of statewide expansion at the end of 2014. Parent Aware was available in 45 counties and 8 reservations and enrolled more than 500 new programs (nearly doubling the number of Rated, non-accredited child care centers and family child care programs) in its most productive year since launching the pilot program in 2007. Parent Aware continued toward its stated goal of supporting young children's development and school readiness through increased access to high quality early care and education. Parent Aware uses two primary approaches that include (1) promoting information about early care and education quality to parents and other consumers and (2) providing support for quality improvement through the provision of coaching, improvement funds and other program supports. Parent Aware is nationally known for its marketing efforts and system resources targeted to support parent decision-making about early care and education.

The Parent Aware evaluation supports Parent Aware operations by conducting independent research to inform decisions about system design and revisions, monitor successes and challenges and provide details about implementation and outcomes to stakeholders. The evaluation produces information required as part of Minnesota's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant awarded for 2012-2015 including a validation study of the Parent Aware Rating Tool that will examine how program Ratings are linked to children's school readiness. Evaluation findings on implementation, quality improvement supports, parents' perceptions of Parent Aware and the role of Parent Aware in Minnesota's early care and education system are also shared. An overview of the Parent Aware evaluation and a timeline for addressing key research questions is included at the beginning of this report.

The purpose of this report is to analyze Parent Aware activities and outcomes from the third year of statewide expansion. The findings in this report include an analysis of the Parent Aware indicators as well as a first look at how programs are being re-rated in Parent Aware. The report includes findings presented in six sections. Research question numbers in parentheses refer to the questions listed in the Evaluation overview (as found on page viii).

- Section 1 provides information about the context of Parent Aware implementation in the third year of expansion and a brief overview of details about how Parent Aware is structured.
- Section 2 provides an update on patterns of enrollment and Ratings, including the density of program participation in different geographic areas. (Research Questions 1 and 6)
- Section 3 presents initial data on parents' perceptions of Parent Aware and their experiences in Parent Aware-Rated programs. (Research Question 5)
- Section 4 analyzes the newly launched Parent Aware website and provides insights into the ways parents are using the website to search for care. (Research Questions 1 and 5)
- Section 5 analyzes patterns of scoring on the Parent Aware indicators to inform decision-making about the design of the Parent Aware Rating Tool. (Research Question 4)
- Section 6 presents the first analysis of program re-ratings and how programs are improving their quality over time. (Question 2)
- Section 7 provides a synthesis of key themes and recommendations for how the findings can support continuous quality improvement and implementation of Parent Aware.

This is the third annual report from the evaluation of Parent Aware being conducted by Child Trends with funding from Parent Aware for School Readiness, Greater Twin Cities United Way and Minnesota's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant. In addition to the annual reports produced by the evaluation team, mid-term reports are available which include reports from 2013 and 2014 on providers' perceptions of Parent Aware (see www.pasrmn.org to download the reports). An initial analysis of the Parent Aware indicators and scoring process and a report on Quality Coaching in Parent Aware were also completed in 2014 and shared with stakeholders. A forthcoming report in the third quarter of 2015 will address questions related to Parent Aware validation. Finally, surveys of providers will be repeated for the third time in 2015 so that trends in provider opinion and perceptions can be analyzed and tracked.

# Section 1. Parent Aware Description and Context [1]

Parent Aware was a pilot program from 2007-2011 and began statewide expansion in January 2012. The Parent Aware statewide expansion is supported through Minnesota's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant awarded at the end of 2011. The RTT-ELC grant provides a primary context for Parent Aware implementation as Minnesota works to achieve the goals outlined in the grant application of creating a sustainable, high quality system that supports children's development, particularly those living in poverty. The goals in RTT-ELC related to Parent Aware include targets for program enrollment and ratings and specify that children with high needs will be served increasingly in high quality (highly rated) programs.[2] As required by the RTT-ELC grant, Minnesota's plan for Parent Aware also includes a schedule and framework for assessing (and revising) the Parent Aware indicators and for analyzing the validity of the Parent Aware rating tool.

The RTT-ELC grant is managed by the Office of Early Learning, which brings together staff from the Minnesota Departments of Education, Human Services and Health. The Minnesota Department of Education serves as the lead agency for the grant. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) has primary responsibility for administering Parent Aware. DHS contracts with Child Care Aware of Minnesota to manage and coordinate Parent Aware recruitment, quality improvement services, and communications for licensed child care programs. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is primarily responsible for recruiting and communicating with programs who are licensed by MDE, such as Public School Pre-Kindergarten Programs, Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Childhood Special Education. Local Child Care Aware agencies conduct recruitment and offer the services of Quality Coaches, Professional Development Advisors and Grants Administrators to licensed child care centers and family child care programs. The Center for Early Education and Development (CEED) at the University of Minnesota is

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[1] The annual reports from Years 1 and 2 of the Parent Aware evaluation include a detailed description of Parent Aware implementation and Minnesota's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant. The information is repeated in this section to facilitate easy access and to provide context for the report. The text has been updated to reflect changes that occurred in 2014.
[2] Children with high needs are defined in the RTT-ELC grant as children from low-income families or children with disabilities or developmental delays, who are English learners, who reside on Indian lands, who are migrant, homeless or in foster care, or have some other characteristics defined by the State.

contracted to conduct observations for select programs seeking Ratings. All information to determine Ratings for licensed child care centers and family child care programs (including accredited child care centers and accredited family child care programs) is sent to staff housed at the Department of Human Services who performs the scoring. All information to determine ratings for Public School Pre-Kindergarten Programs, Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Childhood Special Education programs is sent to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). Child Care Aware of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Education make the initial determinations and recommendations of the Rating level. Then, the Department of Human Services issues the final Ratings for the aforementioned programs.

Implementation of Parent Aware involves several additional partners:

- Parent Aware for School Readiness (PASR) is a nonprofit organization with a mission to "promote and protect" Parent Aware Ratings by supporting marketing and communications activities and by funding evaluation.
- Greater Twin Cities United Way supports the Accreditation Facilitation Project (AFP) at the Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children (MnAEYC). AFP provides consultation, training, support and reimbursement of fees for programs located in the Twin Cities' nine-county metropolitan area seeking national accreditation. Programs with national accreditation are eligible for the Accelerated Pathway to Rating process. Greater Twin Cities United Way also provides funding for evaluation.
- The Minnesota Licensed Family Child Care Association, with funding from DHS, provides supports for accreditation of family child care programs.
- First Children's Finance, with funding from DHS, offers training and supports on business development and practices for Parent Aware participants.
- The Center for Inclusive Child Care, with funding from DHS, offers coaching to Parent Aware participants on best practices in caring for children with special needs.
- The Minnesota Center for Professional Development provides technical and operational support for the professional development features in Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool.

## The Parent Aware Rating Process

Programs that are interested in Parent Aware have different options for enrollment to receive a full Rating. Programs that serve children with high-needs are eligible to enroll in Building Quality, a six-month process that prepares programs for entering Parent Aware. The Building Quality pre-rating support process offers the services of a Quality Coach, a

Professional Development Advisor who assists with professional development planning, quality improvement funds (up to $500), and access to low-cost training.

Programs not eligible for or interested in Building Quality supports enroll directly into Parent Aware. Parent Aware-only programs receive support from a Quality Coach and a Professional Development Advisor, but overall it is a less intensive model of support than what is received than if the program also participated in Building Quality. Many programs entering directly into Parent Aware have access to low-cost trainings as well. After receiving a Full-Rating, programs that are awarded a One-, Two-, or Three-Star Rating receive up to $1,000 post-rating quality improvement supports. This grant is available to programs regardless of whether they participated in Building Quality. Parent Aware encourages all programs to continuously improve their quality. Grants were prioritized for programs earning a One-, Two-, or Three-Star Rating based on the assumption that Four-Star Rated programs have access to other financial supports such as Scholarships and Child Care Assistance differentials in order to sustain quality.

Programs enter Parent Aware at two time-points each year in groupings called "cohorts." One cohort begins in January, and one cohort begins in July. The process from the time of enrollment to the time of a Ratings designation takes approximately six months.

Nationally accredited child care centers and family child care programs as well as Head Start, Public School Pre-Kindergarten Programs, and Early Childhood Special Education programs enter Parent Aware via the Accelerated Pathway to Rating (APR) on a rolling basis (not in cohorts). APR programs have a streamlined process to achieve a Four-Star Rating once they demonstrate that their curriculum tool aligns with the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress. APR programs must also demonstrate that they use an approved assessment tool or must submit their assessment tool for approval. All lead teachers in APR programs must document that they have achieved 8 hours of training, coaching, consultation, or mentoring on implementing curriculum as well as 8 hours of training, coaching, consultation, or mentoring on authentic child assessment. APR programs do not have access to the quality improvement supports available to programs that receive a Full-Rating. However, APR programs do have access to low-cost trainings, similar to Fully-Rated Programs and they do have access to technical assistance from MDE (for Public School Pre-Kindergarten Programs, Head Start, and Early Childhood Special Education programs) or from Child Care Aware (for accredited child care centers and accredited family child care programs) to help them determine which professional development events meet the curriculum and authentic assessment requirements put in place for APR programs. Accredited programs seeking accreditation can receive additional support through the Accreditation Facilitation Project at MnAEYC (for center-based

programs in the nine-county metropolitan area) or MLFCCA (for family child care programs).

## The Parent Aware Rating Tool

Parent Aware is a hybrid rating system with four levels. In Parent Aware, programs going through the Full-Rating process declare a "goal" Rating.  A goal Rating is the Star-Rating level programs are seeking in Parent Aware. Programs seeking a Full-Rating in Parent Aware must meet all of the indicators at the first star level (or block) in order to earn a One-Star Rating. To earn a Two-Star Rating, programs must also meet all of the indicators at the Two-Star level (or block). Programs must meet all indicators at the One- and Two-Star levels before their application is considered for a Three- or Four-Star Rating. To earn a Three- or Four-Star Rating, programs must earn points on additional indicators and meet specific requirements.[3] The number of points earned determines whether a program achieves a Three- or Four-Star Rating. Parent Aware indicators are grouped into four categories:

1. Physical Health and Well-Being
2. Teaching and Relationships
3. Assessment of Child Progress
4. Teacher Training and Education

The quality indicators in these categories are nearly identical for family child care programs and center-based programs. Major differences in indicators across the two program types are noted below in the Teaching and Relationships category and the Teacher Training and Education category.

### Physical Health and Well-Being

The Physical Health and Well-Being category includes indicators for providing families with contact information for services such as: health and screening (dental, mental health, special education, and early childhood screening) (at One-Star level); and for information about family support services such as the Child Care Assistance Program, Early Learning Scholarship,  public health services, among others (at Two-Star level). The Two-Star level also requires a self-assessment of the environment and goal setting for the program. To earn a Three- or Four-Star Rating, programs must meet at least one additional Physical

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[3] To earn a Three- or Four-Star Rating, center based programs must score 2.5 on the Instructional Support sub-scale of the CLASS, use a curriculum aligned with the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress in all classrooms, have all lead teachers trained on curriculum implementation and score at least one point in each category. Requirements are similar for family child care providers except that they are not assessed on the CLASS.

Health and Well-Being indicator, such as providing additional assistance to help families get the supports they need, participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, or teacher training on child nutrition and obesity prevention along with providing samples of menus used in the program.

## Teaching and Relationships

To earn a One-Star Rating, programs must provide families with contact information for local family education options, such as Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE), and lead teachers and family child care providers must complete 8 hours of training in child development. For a Two-Star Rating, programs must hold an orientation for new families and discuss preferences including family traditions. Programs must also use lesson plans and a daily schedule. Lead teachers and family child care providers must have 8 hours of training on the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs). To earn a Three- or Four-Star Rating, programs must use a curriculum aligned with the ECIPs and all lead teachers/family child care providers must have training on implementing curriculum. In addition, programs must meet at least one additional indicator such as training or coaching on special needs, developmental disabilities and behavioral challenges along with, training or coaching on key aspects of child development, and demonstrated ability to communicate with parents in their primary language or have completed training in working with families from different cultures and socio-economic levels. Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) observations are required for center-based programs with preschool classrooms to earn a Three- or Four-Star Rating.

## Assessment of Child Progress

To earn a One-Star Rating, lead teachers/family child care providers must complete two hours of training on authentic observation practices and must observe children regularly and record information monthly. For a Two-Star Rating, programs must share the authentic observation summaries with families. To earn a Three- or Four-Star Rating, programs must conduct child assessments with an approved tool, lead teachers/family child care providers must be trained on authentic child assessment, and the program must earn at least one additional point. Points can be earned for assessing children in all domains of child development, conducting assessments at least twice per year, and for providing families with assessment results and using child assessment information to design goals and guide instruction for individual children. Some points earned at the Three-Star and Four-Star rating level are also required indicators[4]. The indicators were revised in July 2014.[5]

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[4] For a complete list of indicators, including which ones are required, see Section 5 of this report.

To earn a One-Star Rating, lead teachers/family child care providers must submit their training and professional development credentials. At a Two-Star level, lead teachers/family child care providers must have professional development plans. Points to reach a Three- or Four-Star Rating are earned based on the education level of the director (for center based programs) and by teachers'/family child care provider's level on the Career Lattice (the average level is used for center-based programs).

## Important Parent Aware Developments in 2014

### Statewide Roll-out

The Parent Aware statewide roll-out began in early 2012 and included Parent Aware pilot areas as well as Becker, Clearwater, Mahnomen, and Itasca counties. These areas include a focus on four Transformation Zones: White Earth Reservation, which includes Mahnomen county and parts of Becker and Clearwater counties, Itasca County, Saint Paul's Promise Neighborhood, and the Northside Achievement Zone in Minneapolis. In 2012, Parent Aware also became available statewide to programs eligible for the Accelerated Pathway to Rating. Expansion continued in 2013 to encompass 14 more counties and 7 reservations and in 2014 with 23 additional counties and 1 reservation. As of January 1, 2015, Parent Aware is available statewide for all Rating pathways (Figure 1).

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[5] The first set of statewide indicators applied to programs that joined Parent Aware and received ratings between June 2012 and June 2014.  The revised set of indicators applies to programs that began in July 2014 and were rated in December 2014 and to programs that began in January 2015.

**Figure 1.** Parent Aware Ratings Rollout Plan



Parent Aware Ratings Rollout Plan
(For Non-Accredited, Licensed Child Care)
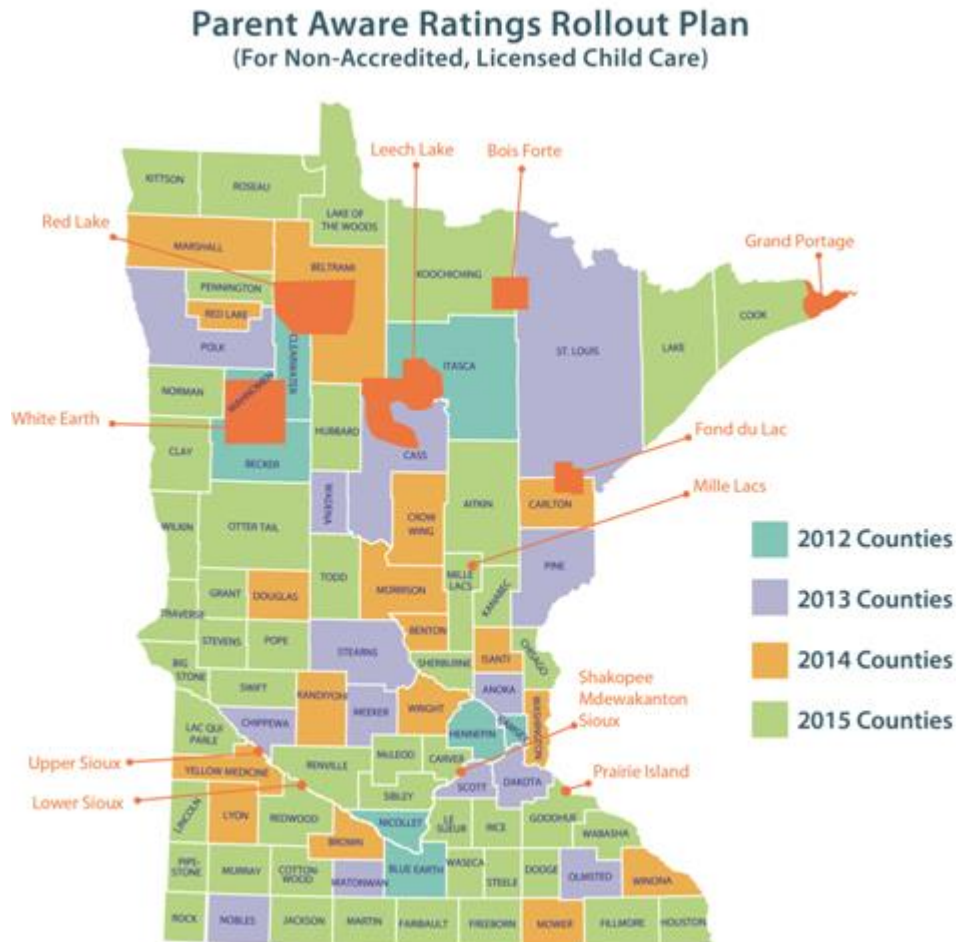
**Source:** Child Care Aware of Minnesota, February 2015

## Recruiting Programs into Parent Aware

Drawing on stakeholder interviews and analysis of Parent Aware program data, the Year 2 report from the Parent Aware evaluation documented recruitment of non-accredited programs as a key challenge for implementation. Beginning in calendar year 2014, the Minnesota Department of Human Services redirected Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant funds to fund five full-time equivalent recruiters across the state whose purpose is to recruit providers eligible for the Full-Rating pathway into Parent Aware. Before this shift, Quality Coaches were responsible for recruiting providers into Parent Aware while simultaneously supporting and coaching providers through the Rating process. Many Coaches did not have the time to devote to both activities and some Coaches did not have marketing and community organizing skills that could support the recruitment of providers into Parent Aware. Reorganizing the structure of the recruiter

position within the implementation of Parent Aware along with redefining the statewide approach to program recruitment put a renewed focus toward increasing enrollment into Parent Aware.

The recruitment reorganization broke down into a three-tier approach: Statewide-level, Community-level, and Program-level. Statewide, Parent Aware implementation partners are leveraging existing relationships to raise awareness and provide outreach tools to statewide and centralized organizations. At the community-level, the new Parent Aware Recruiters have been successful at building and strengthening old and new partnerships. Additionally, Recruiters host community events and attend events and conferences. They also present Information Sessions for programs interested in learning more about Parent Aware. At the program level, coaches are continuing to build relationships with individual programs.

Recruiters were hired between April and July 2014. As many of the recruiters had backgrounds in marketing, communications, and sales – and not necessarily early childhood – the orientation and training period for the recruiters focused on early childhood education and development along with Parent Aware Ratings and QRIS. Over the course of the past several months, recruiters have been the primary force behind building partnerships, identifying gaps in recruitment and messaging strategies, and leveraging existing activities within and across agencies.

## Develop: Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool

Develop is Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool (https://www.developtoolmn.org/). It replaced the Professional Development Registry and also contains new features to support both professional development and quality improvement.  Develop has impacted Parent Aware in three ways.  First, early learning programs can apply for a Parent Aware Rating through Develop. Through the first two years of statewide expansion, programs had to submit all of their Parent Aware documentation by mail. Beginning in July 2014, all programs were eligible to upload and submit documentation for each indicator online.  An advantage of this approach is programs are able to monitor and track their applications' progress. For lead staff in child care programs, having an individual membership in Develop (including a Learning Record and Career Lattice Step) is a first step toward earning a Parent Aware rating. Before 2014, child care programs had to print Learning Records for each lead teacher (from the Registry) and mail those records to DHS as part of their Parent Aware documentation. Now, Parent Aware Raters access Learning Records directly from Develop during the rating process, thus reducing paperwork for programs. In the July 2014 cohort, 88% of programs

registered their organization in Develop and 35% submitted their Quality Documentation Portfolio online.

Second, Develop has become the data system used by Parent Aware Rating staff to manage the rating process and document rating decisions. Develop provides raters with a system and queue for managing workflow and tracking the progress of individual programs within that workflow. Develop has also automated some communications with programs, including the ability to alert a program when documentation is incomplete and allow the program to submit additional documentation. Since moving the rating process to Develop, processing time per rating has decreased by 33%.

Third, Develop has become the data system used by Quality Coaches, CLASS Coaches, and Professional Development Advisors for Parent Aware case management. When applications are received, coaches and advisors are assigned to programs. Coaches and advisors can then a) access the Learning Records of program staff, b) monitor the program's progress toward rating, and c) document their coaching activities by entering information about those activities into Develop.

Develop is still in its early phases of development and all of its functions are not yet enabled. However, even at this early stage, Develop has changed the capacity of the Minnesota Department of Humans Services (DHS) and Parent Aware implementation and evaluation partners to engage in critical program monitoring and research activities. For example, Develop is able to produce administrative reports about Parent Aware implementation, including participation rates by region of the state, county, program type, and rating status. DHS has used Develop data to provide quarterly reports to stakeholders and to track key implementation issues in "real time."

### Private Investments in Quality Improvement Efforts

When Minnesota submitted the Race-to-the-Top Early Learning Challenge Grant in 2011, a proposed approach to statewide implementation of Parent Aware included support from both public and private partners. One arm of support is from philanthropic organizations, while another source of funding comes from non-profit organizations. Together, these organizations work in tandem supporting the implementation of Parent Aware. Their primary objective is to foster programs' quality improvement and to support programs as they work toward achieving higher ratings.

In order to learn more about supports for Parent Aware contributed by philanthropies and private funders, a survey was conducted on behalf of Learn Together MN in 2014, with funding from Greater Twin Cities United Way and the McKnight Foundation to examine the

types of projects throughout the state launching quality improvement efforts with providers. The results of the survey were shared at a meeting with stakeholders in the spring of 2014 and are listed below. Representatives from the various initiatives were asked to describe their project's goals and the strategies they employ to meet the intended goals.[6]

- MN Department of Human Services/Child Care Aware Parent Aware Recruitment Initiative
- Bloomington-Richfield Community Provider Alliance
- Blue Cross/Blue Shield & Think Small
- ELL Access to Parent Aware through Child Care Aware Minnesota
- GreaterThanMN through First Children's Finance
- Increasing Quality of Care (Hennepin County)
- Minnesota Reading Corps/Think Small Licensed Family Child Care Partnership
- Parent Aware Pathway Initiative (Saint Louis and Carlton counties)
- Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (various counties)
- West Central Initiative (various counties)
- Willmar Children's Cabinet Quality Improvement Project

## Marketing of Parent Aware

The marketing and branding of Parent Aware underwent its biggest shift to date in 2014. In August of 2014, the new Parent Aware website was launched. An analysis of the user traffic and search patterns of the new website is explored in Section 4 of this report. In 2014, Parent Aware became the official "parent-facing brand" for parents and consumers looking for information about early care and education. Prior to the new website launch, parents looking for information about child care and early education options could not access all of the critical pieces of information in one place. Parent Aware Ratings were not available alongside licensing information and important health and safety information. The new Parent Aware website includes a search tool of Rated and non-Rated programs, information about the Ratings, and information about kindergarten-readiness best practices. The site also includes information on how to select a program that is the best fit for your child.

Parent Aware for School Readiness (PASR) and Child Care Aware of Minnesota lead the communications and marketing efforts for Parent Aware. Parent Aware for School

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[6] Further information is available at: http://unitedfrontmn.org/learntogethermn/files/2014/06/LFCC-in-PA-Summary-LTMN.pdf

Readiness, created in 2012, is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to improve children's school readiness by supporting the rollout of Parent Aware statewide. With the launch of the new Parent Aware online search tool in 2014, PASR embarked on a robust marketing campaign, consisting of radio ads, paid search recommendations, social media placements, and a television marketing campaign, targeting women with children under the age of six. The marketing efforts reached the majority of counties throughout the state where Parent Aware had expanded to Fully-Rated Programs. The purpose of the marketing campaign was to drive parents and other consumers to the new online Parent Aware search tool and to generate awareness of the Ratings as a tool that supports parents in making informed choices about their children's early care and education setting.

Another effort from 2014 to highlight is the new marketing kit materials distributed to Parent Aware Rated programs. Together, PASR and Child Care Aware of Minnesota designed and distributed a kit of materials congratulating programs and providers on their Star-Rating. The kit included a yard sign, flag or banner, window cling, a poster, and postcards to share with parents. The message of the materials declared "Proud to be Parent Aware Rated!" in front of or alongside a large gold star.

### State and Federal Legislative Context
A number of developments at the state and federal level were relevant to Parent Aware implementation in 2014 and beyond.

- ### State Early Learning Scholarships
  Forty million dollars were allocated in 2013 (with a total appropriation of $46 million per biennium) to fund Early Learning Scholarships (a maximum of $5000) for young children with high needs and their siblings. The purpose of the scholarships is to increase access to high quality early care and education. The Minnesota Department of Education estimates that the scholarships can serve 5,000 children annually (10% of the eligible population). Scholarships are provided for a 12 month period and continue until the child enters kindergarten. Scholarships are provided in two ways. Pathway I scholarships stay with the child and can be used in any program with a Parent Aware Rating or with a signed Parent Aware participation agreement. By July 2016, Pathway I scholarships must be used in Three- or Four-Star Rated Programs only. Pathway II scholarships are provided to families through eligible Four-Star

Rated Programs. These include APR programs as well as fully rated programs in specific geographic areas.[7]

- State Training Requirements for Family Child Care Providers
  New training requirements for family child care providers that emphasize health and safety, CPR and Sudden Unexpected Infant Death and Abuse Head Trauma prevention became effective July 2014. In addition to the training content requirements, the overall annual in-service training requirement for Minnesota child care licensing for family child care providers was increased from 8 hours to 16 hours.

- Tiered Reimbursement and Parent Aware
  New higher rates for quality for child care programs serving children receiving child care assistance became available in March 2014. Programs with a Three-Star Rating receive up to a 15% increase above the maximum Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) rate, not to exceed the providers' charge. Programs with a Four-Star Rating receive up to a 20% increase above the maximum CCAP rate, not to exceed the provider's charge. Accredited programs and family child care providers with certain credentials that have not enrolled in Parent Aware receive up to a 15% increase above the maximum CCAP rate, not to exceed the provider's charge.

- Provisions to Increase Continuity of Care in CCAP
  The Weekly Authorization for High Quality Providers policy began in August, 2014. Under this policy some children attending high quality providers can be authorized for more hours and their providers can be paid up to the applicable weekly maximum rate, not to exceed the provider's charge. Children ages zero to five who qualify for at least 30 hours of care per week can be authorized for 50 hours of care with a high quality provider.  High quality providers are defined as providers with a Three- or Four-Star Rating, providers accredited by certain organizations, and family child care providers with certain credentials.

- The Child Care and Development Block Grant
  The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) was reauthorized through the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014. The changes to CCDF mark an "historic re-envisioning" of the law in an effort to achieve the dual goals of family

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[7] Retrieved from the Minnesota Department of Education's overview of Early Learning Scholarships
http://www.education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/EarlyLearn/EarlyLearnScholarProg/index.html

economic self-sufficiency and children's school readiness.[8] The expanded scope of reauthorization aims to increase the safety and stability of child care and to help parents and other consumers better understand the options available to them. The law sets an explicit goal to increase the number and percentage of low-income children in high quality care. Among the many new provisions:

- o The law requires criminal background checks, monitoring and inspection of all CCDF providers.
- o States must provide "transparent" consumer education by making information about child care providers available via electronic means and websites and reporting on deaths, injuries and abuse.
- o Family involvement in child care is a new explicit goal of CCDF, and states must provide consumer education that includes information about the importance of family engagement in early care and education. More explicitly, states must now provide consumers with information about the quality of early learning programs, most commonly in the form of a QRIS rating if a QRIS is in place.
- o The law increases the quality set-aside to 9% (in phases over five years with 3% required for activities related to quality for infants and toddlers), and States must track and evaluate their quality activities.
- o The law provides a new list of quality activities for states to consider.
- o States must establish professional development and training requirements for CCDF providers.
- o The law requires new "provider friendly" payment practices, a market rate survey (or alternative method for setting provider rates) and a description of how rates take into account the cost of providing higher quality.
- o States must improve access to child care for underserved populations (including homeless children, infants and toddlers, children with special needs and children in underserved areas) and must engage in "supply-building" activities.
- o The law requires subsidy eligibility policies that will support children's stability in child care, including extending the redetermination eligibility to 12 months.
- o The law sets new tribal-specific provisions.

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[8] Language retrieved from an overview of reauthorization prepared by the Office of Child Care: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/occ_reauthorization_webinar.pdf

Minnesota has made progress already toward a number of the new CCDF provisions. Nevertheless, development and implementation of a new CCDF plan for Minnesota (due March 1, 2016) will involve significant planning and dedication of agency resources that coincide with managing the final year of the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant.

Taken together, a variety of early care and education initiatives have emerged that are relevant to and coordinated with Parent Aware and aimed at supporting young children's participation in high quality settings. In addition, legislative action in 2015 will shape Parent Aware operations and resources after the federal Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant funding ends in December, 2015. Each of these developments will pose implementation challenges and opportunities. The evaluation will continue to track these activities and the implications for Parent Aware in the final year of statewide expansion.

# Section 2a. Program Participation and Ratings

**Purpose of this section:** This section provides an overview of participation in Parent Aware and program Star-Ratings at the end of the third year of implementation, as of December 31st, 2014.

**Key Findings:**

- Nearly 1,900 early care and education programs (1,892) had a Star-Rating as of December 31st, 2014.

- Among Rated programs, 63% received their Rating through the Accelerated Pathway to Ratings process and 37% completed the Full-Rating process.

- Around half of Rated programs (48%) were from the East Metro and West Metro districts. Metro programs may be overrepresented because they became eligible in 2012, while many programs in other districts did not become eligible until more recently.

- Among programs that participated in the Full-Rating process, 32% earned a One-Star Rating, 38% earned a Two-Star Rating, 10% earned a Three-Star Rating, and 20% earned a Four-Star Rating.

- Nearly one in five programs (19%) eligible for Parent Aware in 2014 had a current Star-Rating. Three-quarters (75%) of programs eligible for APR had a Star-Rating, while 8% of programs eligible for a Full-Rating had a Star-Rating.

## Introduction

This section provides an overview of participation and density rates in Parent Aware at the end of the third year of statewide expansion. For the purposes of this report, participation in Parent Aware is defined as having a current Star-Rating as of December 31st, 2014. Density of participation is calculated as the number of currently Rated programs divided by the number of eligible programs in the Parent Aware service area. In this section, data are presented on currently Rated Parent Aware programs, the distribution of ratings across star levels, and the density of participation in Parent Aware. Understanding the extent to which eligible programs are participating in Parent Aware is useful to monitor the effectiveness of program implementation for different program types and state regions. Participation and density can also be used to track implementation over time. In addition to

participation and density data in this section, data collected from the 2014 Provider Survey are included to provide a snapshot of some important program characteristics.

## Methods

Data about program participation and Ratings originate from Develop, the Quality Improvement and Registry Tool used by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). A spreadsheet of data downloaded from Develop as of December 31, 2014 was emailed to Child Trends from DHS on January 6, 2015. The spreadsheet contained demographic and Ratings data on all currently participating Parent Aware programs. In addition, several tables were created by DHS, which are indicated in the source information presented with each table in this section.

## Rated Programs in Parent Aware

The number of programs rated in Parent Aware at the end of each year of implementation is presented in Figure 2 and Table 1. As of December 31, 2014, 1,892 early care and education programs or sites in Minnesota had a Parent Aware Rating. The largest percentage increases in Ratings since 2013 were for non-accredited child care centers and non-accredited family child care programs (i.e., Fully-Rated Programs). The number of Fully-Rated centers nearly doubled and the number of Fully-Rated family child care programs more than doubled in 2014. The number of programs rated through Accelerated Pathway to Ratings stayed largely the same, with the exception of about 100 additional Public School Pre-Kindergarten programs receiving Ratings (Table 1). Parent Aware reached 72% of Minnesota's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant goal for total number of Rated programs by the end of 2014. The goals were not met for non-accredited family child care programs and child care centers.

**Figure 2.** Number of currently Rated programs at the end of each year of implementation
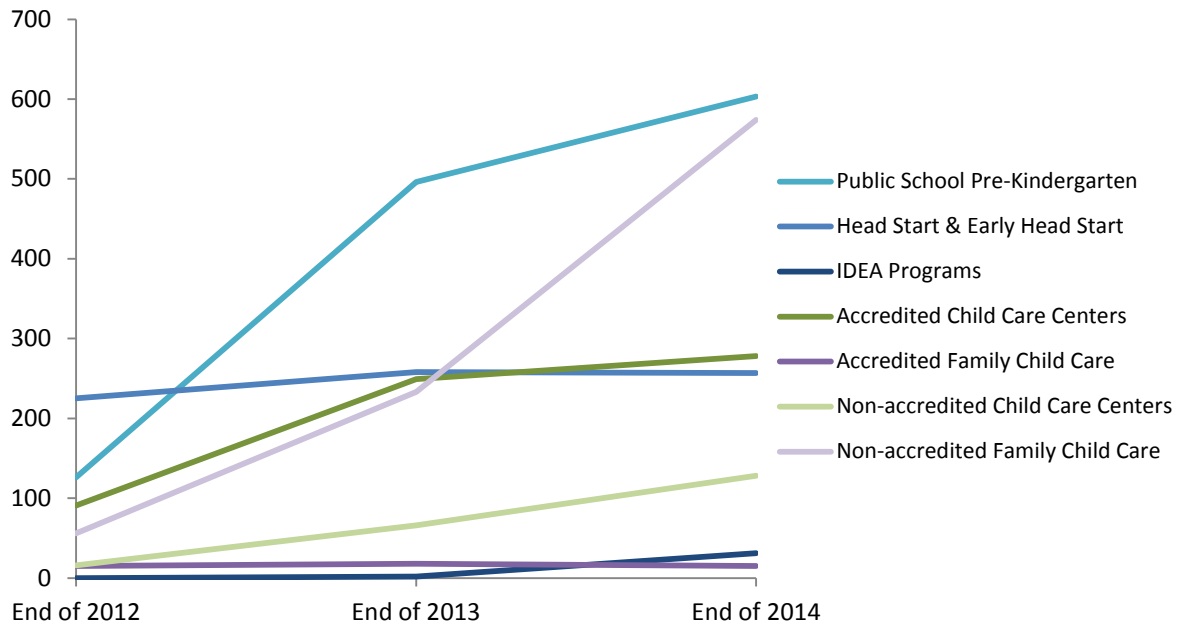


**Source:** Develop: Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, DHS.

**Table 1.** Number of currently Rated programs at the end of each year of implementation

| Program Type | Rated Programs | | | Minnesota's Goal for rated programs by end of 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **End of 2012** | **End of 2013** | **End of 2014** | |
| Public School Pre-Kindergarten | 126 | 496 | 603 | 255 |
| Head Start & Early Head Start | 225 | 258 | 257 | 212 |
| IDEA Programs | 0 | 2 | 37 | 212 |
| Accredited Child Care Centers | 91 | 249 | 278 | 176 |
| Accredited Family Child Care | 15 | 18 | 15 | 14 |
| Non-accredited Child Care Centers | 16 | 66 | 128 | 339 |
| Non-accredited Family Child Care | 56 | 233 | 574 | 1402 |
| **TOTAL** | **529** | **1322** | **1892** | **2610** |

**Source:** Table (with modifications) provided by DHS, based on data from Develop: Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, DHS.

A breakdown of currently Rated programs by program type and district is presented in Table 2. Child Care Aware uses six different districts across the state to deliver services: Southern, Northeast, Northwest, East Metro, West Metro, and West Central. The majority of rated programs are APR programs from the East Metro and West Metro. These districts

have been eligible for Parent Aware since 2012 and have a higher number of child care programs available.

**Table 2.** Number of Rated programs by Child Care Aware district as of December 31, 2014

| Program Type | Southern | Northeast | Northwest | East Metro | West Metro | West Central | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Public School-Pre-Kindergarten | 103 | 104 | 52 | 108 | 156 | 80 | **603** |
| Head Start & Early Head Start | 38 | 64 | 61 | 21 | 20 | 53 | **257** |
| IDEA Programs | 9 | 15 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 8 | **37** |
| Accredited Child Care Centers | 8 | 5 | 2 | 95 | 163 | 5 | **278** |
| Accredited Family Child Care | 2 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 7 | 1 | **15** |
| Non-Accredited Child Care Centers | 20 | 24 | 5 | 24 | 24 | 31 | **128** |
| Non-Accredited Family Child Care | 75 | 82 | 60 | 145 | 137 | 75 | **574** |
| Total | **255 (13%)** | **294 (16%)** | **183 (10%)** | **398 (21%)** | **509 (27%)** | **253 (13%)** | **1892** |

**Source:** Data downloaded from Develop January 6, 2015, the Quality Improvement and Registry Tool used by Minnesota Department of Human Services and emailed to Child Trends on January 23, 2015.

## Star-Ratings

Figure 3 and Table 3 display current Star-Ratings across all program types as of December 31, 2014. Over half of Rated programs (63%) received a Four-Star Rating through the Accelerated Pathway to Ratings. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of APR programs were either Head Start or Public School Pre-Kindergarten Program sites, and 23% were accredited child care centers.[9] The percentage of programs in Parent Aware that received a Rating through

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[9] The remaining 4% of APR programs are IDEA programs and accredited family child programs.

the APR process is decreasing steadily over time: APR programs comprised 86% of all Rated programs at the end of 2012, 77% at the end of 2013, and 63% at the end of 2014.

The remaining 37% of programs received their Rating through the Full-Rating process: 12% received a One-Star Rating, 14% received a Two-Star Rating, 4% received a Three-Star Rating, and 7% received a Four-Star Rating. The majority of Fully-Rated Programs (82%) were family child care providers. For Fully-Rated Programs, Two-Star was the most commonly received Rating and Three-Star was the least commonly received Rating. Over half of Fully-Rated Programs (71%) received either a One- or Two-Star Rating.

**Figure 3.** Star-Rating of Parent Aware Rated programs as of December 31, 2014 (n = 1892)
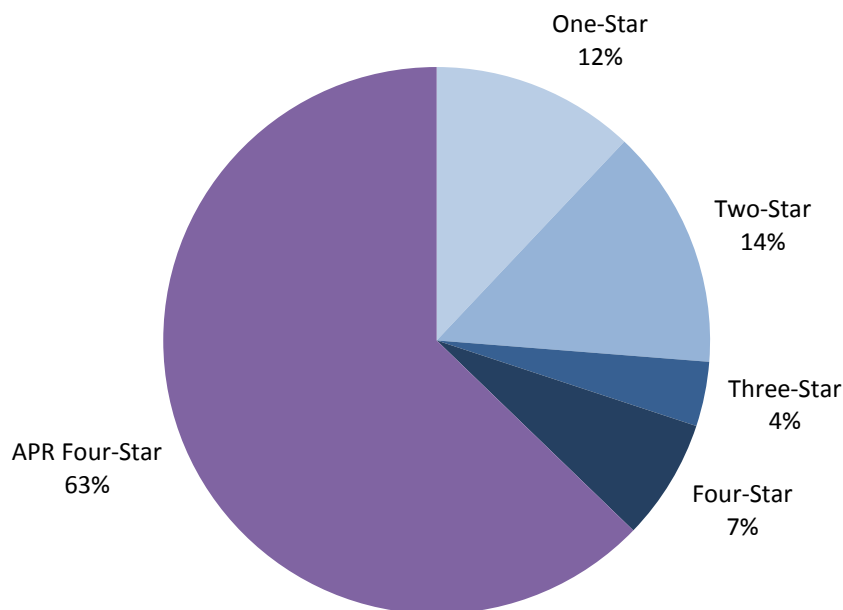
**Table 3.** Number of Rated programs by program type, pathway and Star-Rating as of December 31, 2014

| Program Type | APR | | Full-Rating | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Four-Star | One-Star | Two-Star | Three-Star | Four-Star | | |
| Public School Pre-Kindergarten | 603 | - | - | - | - | | **603** |
| Head Start & Early Head Start | 257 | - | - | - | - | | **257** |
| IDEA Programs | 37 | - | - | - | - | | **37** |
| Accredited Child Care Centers | 278 | - | - | - | - | | **278** |
| Accredited Family Child Care | 15 | - | - | - | - | | **15** |
| Non-Accredited Child Care Centers | - | 23 | 60 | 13 | 32 | | **128** |
| Non-Accredited Family Child Care | - | 204 | 208 | 59 | 103 | | **574** |
| **Total** | **1190** | **227** | **268** | **72** | **135** | | **1892** |

**Source:** Data downloaded from Develop January 6, 2015, the Quality Improvement and Registry Tool used by Minnesota Department of Human Services and emailed to Child Trends on January 23, 2015.

Data were analyzed to examine any differences in Star-Ratings between programs that went through Building Quality and programs that entered Parent Aware directly. The distribution of Ratings received by programs that went through Building Quality or Parent Aware only is shown in Figure 4. [10] Programs that went through Building Quality were more likely to receive a One-Star Rating than those that went directly to Parent Aware, and programs that went directly to Parent Aware were more likely to receive a Three- or Four-Star Rating than those participating in Building Quality.

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[10] In order to qualify for the Building Quality pathway, programs must meet certain eligibility requirements: at least 25% of enrolled children at child care centers must be considered "high needs"; for family child care programs, providers who enroll between 1 and 6 children must serve at least one child who is considered "high needs"; providers who enroll between 7 and 14 children must serve at least two children who are considered "high needs." The definition of high needs is defined by the federal government as "children from birth until kindergarten entry who are from low-income families or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, including children who have disabilities, or developmental delays, who are English Language learners, who reside on "Indian lands", who are migrant, homeless, or in foster care and other children as identified by the State." If allotted slots to the Building Quality pathway are not filled by eligible programs, programs that do not meet the eligibility standards may be allowed to participate.

**Figure 4.** Star-Rating of Fully-Rated Programs – Building Quality versus Parent Aware only, as of December 31, 2014 (n = 702)
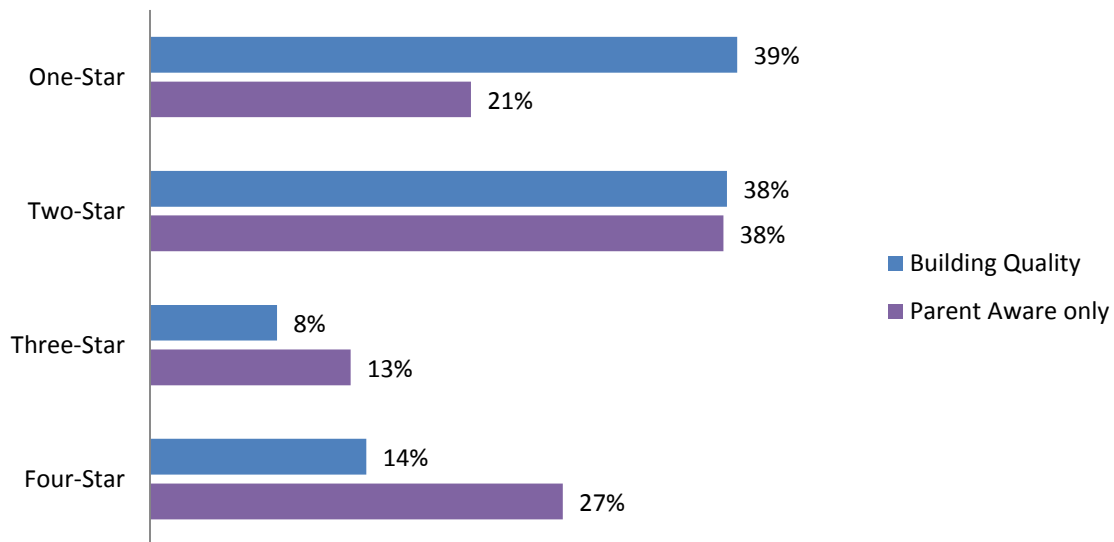
## Density of Program Participation

Density of program participation in Parent Aware was examined for all program types by calculating the percentage of programs that were currently Rated out of all programs eligible for Parent Aware participation in 2014. During 2014, Parent Aware was available statewide for accredited programs, Public School Pre-Kindergarten Programs, and Head Start programs, and available in 45 counties for non-accredited programs.[11] Eligible programs were then considered to be all accredited programs, Public School Pre-Kindergarten Programs, and Head Start programs statewide and all non-accredited programs from selected counties. The participation densities by program type are shown in Figure 5 and Table 4.

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[11] The Full-Rating process was available in 2014 in the following 45 counties: East Metro: Anoka, Ramsey, Washington | West Metro: Dakota, Hennepin, Scott | Northwest: Becker, Beltrami, Clearwater, Douglas, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Otter Tail, Polk, Red Lake | Northeast: Carlton, Cass, Crow Wing, Isanti, Itasca, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Pine, St. Louis, Wadena | Southern: Blue Earth, Brown, Mower, Nicollet, Olmsted, Rice, Watonwan, Winona | West Central: Benton, Chippewa, Kandiyohi, Lincoln, Lyon, Meeker, Nobles, Stearns, Swift, Wright, Yellow Medicine.

**Figure 5.** Percent of Parent Aware eligible programs that were rated as of December 31, 2014 (n = 1892)
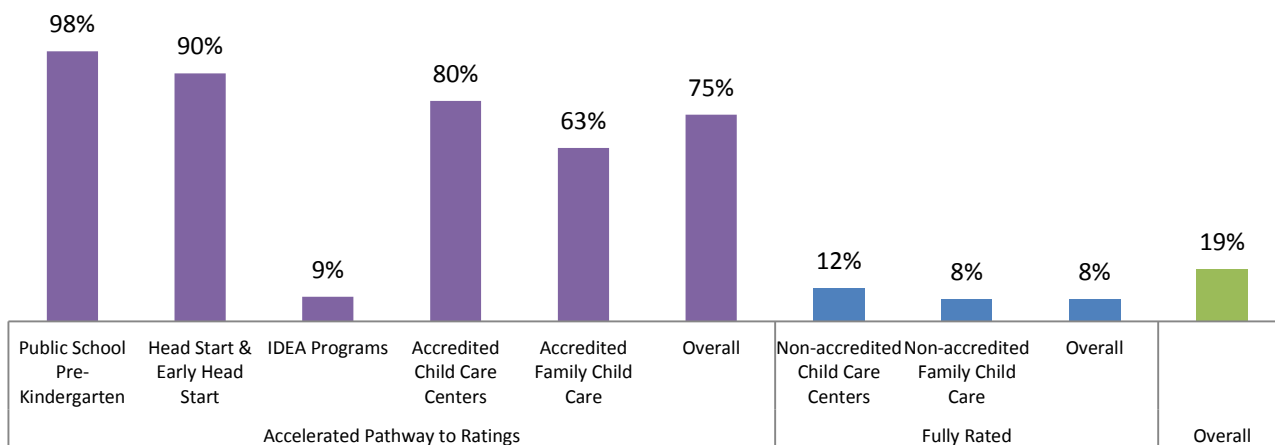
**Table 4.** Percent of eligible programs for Parent Aware 2014 rollout that were Rated as of December 31, 2014

| Pathway | Program Type | Programs Rated in Parent Aware | Eligible Programs in 2014 | Percent Rated |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **APR** | Public School Pre-Kindergarten | 603 | 618 | 98% |
| | Head Start & Early Head Start | 257 | 286 | 90% |
| | IDEA Programs | 37 | 424 | 9% |
| | Accredited Child Care Centers | 278 | 346 | 80% |
| | Accredited Family Child Care | 15 | 24 | 63% |
| | **Overall** | **1190** | **1589** | **75%** |
| **Fully-Rated** | Non-accredited Child Care Centers | 128 | 1078 | 12% |
| | Non-accredited Family Child Care | 574 | 7328 | 8% |
| | **Overall** | **702** | **8406** | **8%** |
| | **Total** | **1892** | **9995** | **19%** |

Based on the estimated number of Public School Pre-Kindergarten Programs and Head Start sites that exist in Minnesota (as reported in Minnesota's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application), almost all Public School Pre-Kindergarten Program sites and 90% of Head Start sites were Rated in Parent Aware as of December 31, 2014. In

addition, 80% of accredited child care centers and 63% of accredited family child care providers throughout Minnesota were Rated in Parent Aware. Overall, 75% of accredited programs throughout Minnesota were Rated in Parent Aware through the third year of implementation.

In comparison, participation of eligible non-accredited programs is much lower than accredited programs, but has improved since the end of the second year of implementation. By December 31, 2014, 12% of eligible non-accredited child care centers and 8% of eligible non-accredited family child care providers were Rated (compared to, respectively, 9% and 4% in the last year). Overall, 8% of eligible non-accredited programs (located in counties where Parent Aware was available in 2014) were Rated. Looking across statewide eligibility for both APR and Full-Ratings, 19% of all eligible programs were Rated in Parent Aware at the end of 2014.

## Program Participation and Attrition by Rollout Year

The percent of eligible child care centers and family child care providers that are currently Rated or participating from counties where Parent Aware was implemented in 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 are shown in Figure 6. For counties that became eligible in 2012, 17% of licensed child care centers and family child care providers are currently Rated, and an additional 5% are going through the Rating process. 12% of eligible programs beginning in 2012 have achieved a high quality Rating of Three- or Four-Stars. Enrollment in Parent Aware has continued steadily; for counties that became eligible in 2013 and 2014, respectively, 13% and 9% of licensed programs are currently Rated and an additional 3% and 4% are participating in the Rating process. Parent Aware will be available statewide in 2015. For the new counties that became eligible in January 2015, 10% of licensed programs signed a participation agreement in the fall of 2014 for their Rating process to begin in January. The new programs that enrolled through the APR process (3%) are currently Rated.

**Figure 6.** Density of Program Participation by Year of Full Implementation
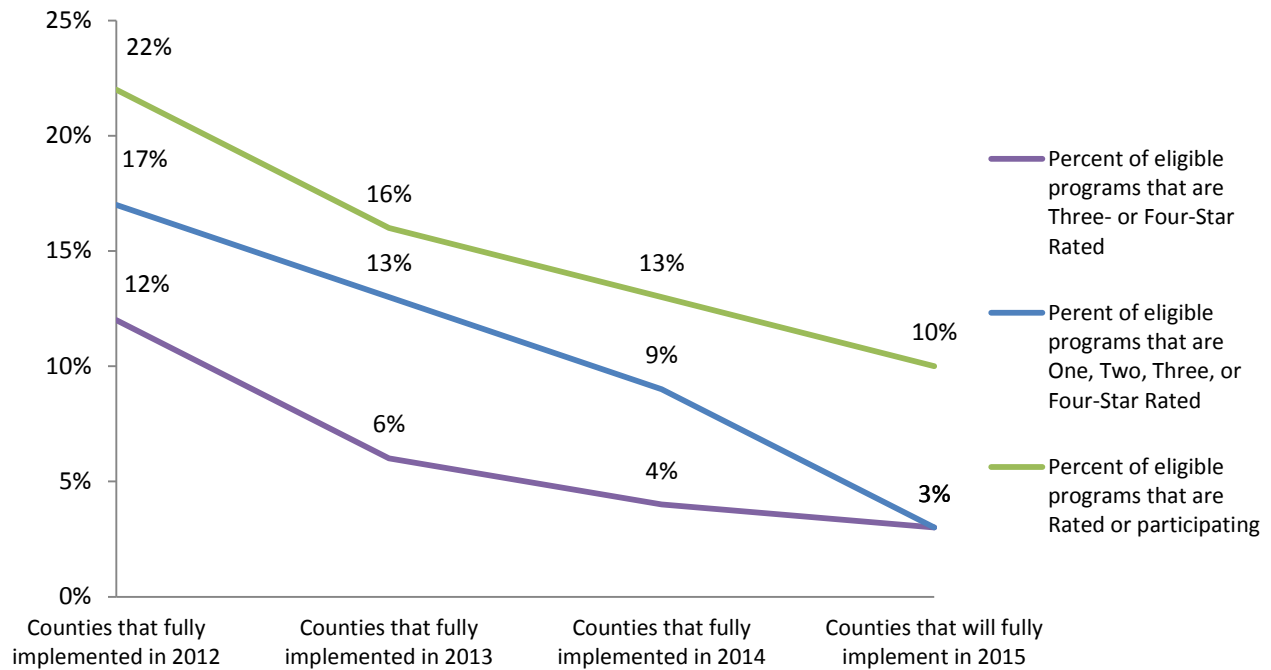


**Source:** Figure (with modifications) provided by DHS, based on data from Develop: Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, DHS.

The number of programs that received Ratings during the first year of implementation in 2012 is shown in Table 5. These Ratings were set to expire in December 2014. The majority of programs (89%) chose to continue participating in Parent Aware and received a second Rating, as of December 31, 2014. The re-rating process for Fully Rated programs is more closely analyzed in Section 6. Of the sites that were not re-rated, 40 closed, 6 were disqualified, and 14 were eligible but did not pursue a second Rating. The number of Head Start slots has not been impacted by site closures; sites were either consolidated into larger locations or moved locations.

**Table 5.** Attrition of Accelerated Pathway to Ratings programs by program type

| Program Type | Rated as of December 31, 2012 | Percent still rated as of December 31, 2014 | Rating expired and did not pursue second Star-Rating | Program ceased operating | License revoked, accreditation expired, or partnership terminated |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Public School Pre-Kindergarten Programs | 126 | 94% | 0 | 8 | 0 |
| Head Start & EHS | 225 | 90% | 1 | 19 | 2 |
| IDEA Programs | 0 | NA | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Accredited child care centers | 91 | 93% | 0 | 5 | 1 |
| Accredited family child care | 15 | 67% | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Non-accredited child care centers | 16 | 88% | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Non-accredited family child care | 56 | 70% | 9 | 6 | 2 |
| **Total** | **529** | **89%** | **14** | **40** | **6** |

**Source:** Table (with modifications) provided by DHS, based on data from Develop: Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, DHS.

## Children with High Needs Served in Parent Aware

Annual Performance Reports documenting progress on the performance indicators in the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant (2012-2015) are submitted by Minnesota each February of the grant period. One set of indicators tracked annually is the number and percentage of children with "high needs" served by Three- and Four-Star Rated Programs in Parent Aware, shown in Table 6. In 2014, Minnesota exceeded its targets for the percentage of children with high needs served in Public School Pre-Kindergarten Programs and Head Start/Early Head Start programs. Notably, Minnesota also exceeded its targets for the percentage of children receiving Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) funding served in Three- and Four-Star Rated Programs.[12] In 2014, 5,261 (31%) of 17,233 children receiving CCDF were in a program with a Three- or Four-Star Rating.

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[12] Details about the methodology used to develop baseline and annual estimates of children served in different program types are beyond the scope of this report. Further details and full tables of performance can be found at http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/performance.html.

**Table 6.** Percent of high-needs children statewide served by Parent Aware Three- or Four-Star Rated programs as of December 31, 2014

| Program Type | Children served by early care and education programs statewide | RTT-ELC target for children served in Three- or Four-Star rated programs by end of calendar year 2014 | Children served by Three- or Four-Star rated programs |
|---|---|---|---|
| Public School-Pre-Kindergarten Programs | 26,238 | 50% | 95% (24,818) |
| Head Start & Early Head Start | 12,435 | 73% | 94% (11,743) |
| IDEA Programs (Parts B & C) | 16,525 | 25% | 8% (1,353) |
| Programs receiving CCDF funds | 17,233 | 30% | 31% (5,261) |

**Source:** Annual Performance Report Data provided to Child Trends by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (not yet available on the U.S. Department of Education website at the time of this report)

## Summary

Program participation in Parent Aware is strong among programs eligible for the Accelerated Pathway to Ratings process. Participation in the Full-Rating process among non-accredited programs is lower than the APR programs but improved in 2014. The number of Fully-Rated centers nearly doubled and the number of Fully-Rated family child care programs more than doubled between 2013 and 2014. Because the majority of Rated programs are APR programs, the distribution of program Ratings is skewed toward the highest Rating, with 70% of the 1,892 rated programs earning a Four-Star Rating. However, the proportion of Rated programs that completed the APR process is decreasing over time as more Fully-Rated Programs enter Parent Aware. In 2012, 86% of all Rated programs were APR programs compared to 63% in 2014. Enrollment in Parent Aware has been steady with each year of implementation. For counties that became eligible in 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015, respectively, 22%, 16%, 13%, and 10% of licensed programs are currently Rated or participating. The majority of programs (89%) that were rated in 2012 are still Rated as of the end of 2014. Attrition has been minimal for this cohort and mostly due to consolidating Head Start sites and licensing violations.

# Section 2b. Program Characteristics

**Purpose of this section:** The purpose of this sub-section is to describe characteristics of programs participating in Parent Aware.

**Key Findings:**

- Fewer family child care providers report serving children receiving child care assistance, compared to other types of programs in Parent Aware.

- There is no distinction by Star-Rating level among programs serving children receiving child care assistance.

- Head Start respondents reported with the greatest frequency that their program is currently full and that they have a waiting list, followed by family child care providers.

- Program enrollment capacity does not differ among Star-Rating level; however, One- and Two-Star Rated programs report having a waiting list more frequently than Three- and Four-Star Rated programs.

## Introduction

One of the central goals of Parent Aware is to increase the number of high quality early care and education programs available to low-income families and their children. This section provides a brief report on features of accessibility that are particularly important for low-income families, including the extent to which programs report serving children receiving subsidies through the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and whether programs have a waiting list. These data supplement information about Parent Aware accessibility presented recently by the Minnesota Department of Human Services.[13]

## Methods

Child Trends conducted a survey of Parent Aware Rated programs as of December 31, 2013. The survey was open from April through June 2014 and contained questions about program characteristics as well as many questions about providers' perceptions and experiences with Parent Aware. Data about providers' perceptions were analyzed and

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[13] Accessibility Report: http://mn.gov/dhs/images/Parent_Aware_Accessibility_Report.pdf

written into a [Report](#) and a [Summary](#).[14] Additional findings from the survey are included here for the first time.

## Sample Description

Head Start grantee directors, Public School Pre-Kindergarten Program district coordinators, accredited community-based child care center directors, and accredited family child care providers with a current Parent Aware Rating achieved through the Accelerated Pathway to Ratings (APR) process were sent a link to the online APR Survey. In total, 265 of 556 respondents completed the survey. The response rate was 48%. The breakdown of respondents includes:

- Head Start directors (n=21)
- Public School Pre-Kindergarten Program district coordinators (n=136)
- Community-based child care center directors (n=101)
- Licensed family child care providers (n=6)
- unknown (n=1)

Fully-Rated community-based child care center directors and Fully-Rated family child care providers were sent a link to the online Fully-Rated Survey. In total, 97 of 232 respondents completed the survey. The response rate was 42%.The breakdown of respondents includes:

- Community-based child care center directors (n=28)
- Licensed family child care providers (n=67)
- unknown (n=2)

For the purposes of this report, the sample was also broken down by Star-Rating level. The breakdown of One- and Two-Star Rated Programs includes: *(note: Star-Rating was missing for 3 programs)*

- Community-based child care center directors (n=16)
- Licensed family child care providers (n=36)
- Unknown program type providers (n=2)

The breakdown of Three- and Four-Star Rated Programs includes:

- Fully-Rated community-based child care centers (n=11)
- Fully-Rated family child care providers (n=29)

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[14] Child Trends. (2014). *Provider Perceptions of Parent Aware.* Minneapolis, MN

- APR-Rated community-based child care centers (n=101)
- APR-Rated family child care providers (n=6)
- APR-Rated Head Start Grantee level programs (n=21)
- APR-Rated Public School Pre-Kindergarten district programs (n=136)
- Unknown (n=1)

## Findings

Respondents were asked if they currently served children 5-years old or younger who are receiving CCAP (subsidies through the Child Care Assistance Program). Results indicate that approximately one-third of family child care providers and one-third of Public School Pre-Kindergarten Program respondents report serving children who receive CCAP (Table 7). A larger percentage of Head Start programs (43%) and child care centers (58%) report serving children receiving CCAP. Note that Head Start programs and Public School Pre-Kindergarten Programs are likely reporting on children served in classrooms that partner with a child care program for wrap-around services (given that the Head Start services and some Pre-Kindergarten services are free for eligible families). While these data are limited by the sample size and the response rate of the providers who completed the survey, it is useful to note the relatively lower proportion of family child care providers serving children receiving CCAP compared to child care centers.

**Table 7.** Percent of Rated Programs serving children receiving child care assistance (CCAP)

| Program Type | No | Yes |
|---|---|---|
| Child care center (n=129) | 42% | 58% |
| Family child care (n=73) | 70% | 30% |
| Head Start (n=21) | 57% | 43% |
| Public School Pre-Kindergarten (n=136) | 71% | 29% |

**Source:** Provider survey 2014, Child Trends

Examining the data by Star-Rating level indicates that about 60% of programs at both the lower and higher tiers of Parent Aware report serving children receiving CCAP (Table 8). These data are important to track over time to understand any influence of the CCAP tiered-reimbursement rate for Parent Aware programs rated at the Three- and Four-Star level. Beginning in March 2014, Three- and Four-Star Rated Programs serving children receiving CCAP received a reimbursement differential of up to15 percent above and up to 20 percent above, respectively, the reimbursement rate of non-rated providers.

**Table 8.** Percent of Rated Programs by Star level serving children who receive child care assistance

| Star-Rating | No | Yes |
|---|---|---|
| One- and Two-Star (n=54) | 59% | 41% |
| Three- and Four-Star (n=305) | 60% | 40% |

**Source:** Provider survey 2014, Child Trends

A second index of accessibility is whether programs are at their enrollment capacity and whether they have a waiting list. Survey respondents answered questions about enrollment and waiting lists. Results are displayed in Table 9 and Table 10. Nearly all Head Start respondents reported that their program is currently full and that they have a waiting list. Nearly three-quarters (71%) of family child care providers reported that their program is full and two-thirds (64%) reported that they have a waiting list. Public School Pre-Kindergarten Programs and child care centers report full enrollment and waiting lists to a lesser extent than Head Start and family child care programs (Table 9 and Table 10).

**Table 9.** Percent of Rated Programs by type at capacity

| Program Type | No | Yes |
|---|---|---|
| Child care center (n=128) | 57% | 43% |
| Family child care (n=73) | 29% | 71% |
| Head Start (n=20) | 5% | 95% |
| Public School Pre-Kindergarten (n=136) | 35% | 65% |

**Source:** Provider survey 2014, Child Trends

**Table 10.** Percent of Rated Programs by type with a waiting list

| Program Type | No | Yes | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|
| Child care center (n=129) | 50% | 50% | 0% |
| Family child care (n=72) | 35% | 64% | 1% |
| Head Start (n=21) | 5% | 91% | 5% |
| Public School Pre-Kindergarten (n=134) | 67% | 30% | 3% |

**Source:** Provider survey 2014, Child Trends

Examining the breakdown of enrollment capacity by Star-Rating level indicates no differences among One- and Two-Star Rated Programs compared to Three- and Four-Star Rated Programs (59% versus 60% respectively; Table 11). One- and Two-Star Rated Programs do report having a waiting list more frequently than Three- and Four-Star Rated Programs, (61% versus 45%; see Table 12).

**Table 11.** Percent of Rated Programs by Star level reporting full enrollment

| Star-Rating | No | Yes |
|---|---|---|
| One- and Two-Star (n=54) | 41% | 59% |
| Three- and Four-Star (n=303) | 40% | 60% |

**Source:** Provider survey 2014, Child Trends

**Table 12.** Percent of Rated Programs by Star level with a waiting list

| Star-Rating | No | Yes | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|
| One- and Two-Star (n=54) | 37% | 61% | 2% |
| Three- and Four-Star (n=303) | 54% | 45% | 2% |

**Source:** Provider survey 2014, Child Trends

## Conclusion

Accessibility of early care and education programs for low-income families is determined by many factors. This section presents initial analyses of three program features that could be tracked over time to provide insights into the accessibility of Parent Aware programs. Notably, just under one-third (30%) of family child care providers who completed the survey report serving a child who receives child care assistance. Family child care programs also are more likely than child care centers to report being full and having a waiting list. It will be important to understand whether and how these patterns shift over time as programs become aware of incentives such as tiered reimbursement and scholarships for low-income families and as states must develop strategies to increase access to child care for underserved populations as required by the Child Care and Development Block Grant.

# Section 3. Parent Perceptions of Parent Aware

**Purpose of this section:** The purpose of this section is to describe parents' experiences and perceptions of Parent Aware among cohorts of parents interviewed in the first two and a half years of statewide expansion.

**Key Findings:**

- The parents who completed the interview are largely White/Caucasian (78%) and more than half (57%) have a Bachelor's degree or higher. This makes their education level as a group higher than the Minnesota adult population in general (33%).

- Parents most commonly heard of their child's care arrangement through a friend/family member or neighbor (30%) and the internet (12%).

- A program's quality was the top reason that parents (34%) selected their child's care arrangement followed by its proximity to their home (11%). These were the top reasons during the Parent Aware pilot parent interview (25% and 16%, respectively) but now more parents list quality as their top reason.

- Prior to the launch of the new ParentAware.org website, most parents (71%) reported knowing about a website where they can find a list of child care providers, but fewer (41%) knew of a website that provides information about child care quality.

- Of the 39 parents interviewed who had used the ParentAwareRatings.org website, 95 percent found it extremely or somewhat helpful and 84 percent found it very or somewhat easy to use.

## Introduction

The following section summarizes data from an interview of parents that was administered between January 2013 through July 2013 and to a new group of parents from October 2013 through April 2014.[15] The purpose of this section is to provide preliminary insights into

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[15] Survey administration the first year of the evaluation did not begin until January 2013 as the survey instrument was in its final stages of development and was submitted for approval to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) during the fall of 2012.

parents' experiences with Parent Aware in the first two years of statewide expansion. The timing of the parent interviews presented here pre-date the extensive changes to the Parent Aware website. This provides us the opportunity to compare the findings presented here with the parent interview findings from the 2014 to 2015 cycle, which followed the launch of the new site.

A final round of parent interviewing will take place in spring of 2015. This final round of parent interviews will include more parents with children in other types of care arrangements like Head Start, Public School Pre-Kindergarten Programs, and licensed family child care programs. It is expected that this group will include more low-income parents than the sample of parents whose findings are presented here. Data from this final round of interviewing with be analyzed and presented in the final Parent Aware validation report in combination and comparison to the data presented here.

Topics covered by the interview included child and health development; parental health and support; child care arrangements and resources; marketing and public awareness of resources; parent involvement; and demographics. The findings presented here will focus on a select number of questions in the child care arrangements, marketing, and demographics portions of the interview. Data from the additional sections of the interview will be analyzed more fully in the final Parent Aware evaluation report.

## Methods

Information about the parents' of children enrolled in Parent Aware programs was collected through an interview conducted by Wilder Research. Data were collected from January 2013 through July 2013 (n=98) and again from October 2013 through April 2014 (n=206). Families were recruited from classrooms serving preschool-aged children in center-based programs and family child care programs that had received a Parent Aware Rating within a year of the interview. Parents of preschoolers (those entering Kindergarten the following fall) were targets because those were the children who participated in evaluation assessments. Low-income families were also targeted. Up to six children from each center-based program and two children from each family child care program were selected to participate in the Parent Aware evaluation, and the parents of those children were asked to participate in the parent interview. In total, approximately 83 percent of parents who were contacted to participate in the parent interview completed it.

## Demographics

Most of the survey respondents were the child's biological mother (88%) followed by the biological father (10%). Of the 304 parents interviewed, over three-quarters (78%) were

White/Caucasian, 12% were Black/African American, and 6% were Asian. There were fewer White/Caucasian and more Black/African-American families in the sample than in the general Minnesota population (86% and 12%, respectively).[16] Approximately 92 percent of parents speak English in the home; Hmong (4%) was the second-most common language reported.

The mean age of the mothers was 34 years and fathers 42. Approximately 57 percent of respondents had a Bachelor's degree or higher, which is above the percentage of adults in Minnesota ages 25-64 with a Bachelor's degree (33%)[17].

Table 13 provides a complete breakdown of respondents' education levels. Their annual incomes varied widely from $1,500 to $950,000 with a mean of $95,433. It is expected that families included in the 2015 interviews will have lower incomes and education levels as enrollment into the evaluation during the final year included more families from Head Start and Public School Pre-Kindergarten programs.

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[16] U.S. Census, State & County Quick Facts. (2013). Accessed on April, 1 2015 from: http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/27000.html
[17] U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts. Data derived from Population Estimates, American Community Survey, Census of Population and Housing, State and County Housing Unit Estimates, County Business Patterns, Nonemployer Statistics, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, Building Permits. Accessed from: http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/27000.html on February 12, 2015.

**Table 13.** Question: What is the highest grade or year of school you have ever completed?

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Never attended school | 5 | 1.6 |
| High school or less | 14 | 4.6 |
| High school diploma | 31 | 10.2 |
| Vocational or Associate's degree | 31 | 10.2 |
| Some college | 50 | 16.4 |
| Bachelor's degree | 103 | 33.9 |
| Some graduate school | 11 | 3.6 |
| Graduate degree | 59 | 19.4 |
| **Total** | **304** | **100** |

**Source:** Child Trends' Parent Interview 2012 to 2014

## Child Care Arrangements

Interview respondents were asked a series of questions related to their choice of child care arrangements, how they learned of them, and the cost of the arrangements. Most parents first learned of their child's program through a friend, co-worker, or neighbor (30%), followed by the internet (11%) and a relative (9%) (Table 14). In this early cohort of parents in the Parent Aware evaluation, none had first learned about their program through Parent Aware.

**Table 14.** Question: How did you first learn about the child care arrangement your child attends?

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Friends/co-workers/neighbors | 91 | 30.0 |
| Internet | 35 | 11.6 |
| Relative | 28 | 9.2 |
| Newspaper/advertisement/yellow pages | 18 | 5.9 |
| Program provides care for another child | 15 | 5.0 |
| Public or private school | 12 | 4.0 |
| Workplace/employer | 6 | 2.0 |
| Home Visitor/Parent Mentor/Social Worker/Case Worker | 6 | 2.0 |
| Church, synagogue or other place of worship | 6 | 2.0 |
| Child care resource and referral network | 4 | 1.3 |
| Parent Educator | 1 | 0.3 |
| Parent Aware (Minnesota's Quality Rating System) | 0 | 0.0 |
| Other | 81 | 26.7 |
| **Total** | **303** | **100** |

**Source:** Child Trends' Parent Interview 2012 to 2014

The primary reason that parents selected their child's arrangement was because they heard from someone that it was high quality or they thought it was high quality (34%) (Table 15). The second and third most common reasons were that the arrangement was close to home (11%) and that it matched their work schedule (6%). The most common "Other" responses were an internet search and seeing it when driving/walking by. These results are similar to those from the evaluation of the Parent Aware pilot[18] in that quality

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[18] Tout, K., Starr, R., Isner, T., Cleveland, J., Soli, M. & Quinn, K. (2010b). *Evaluation of Parent Aware: Minnesota's Quality Rating System pilot: Year 3 evaluation report*. Minneapolis, MN: Child Trends.

and proximity are the top two reasons (25% and 16%, respectively), but a higher percentage of parents in the 2012-14 round of interviews listed quality as the primary factor impacting their care decision. Slightly less than half (45%) listed another main reason and these reasons varied widely. Some of these included: seeing the program in the neighborhood, being referred by another program, or hearing about it at a school choice fair, in addition to many others.

**Table 15.** Question: What was the main reason you chose the child care arrangement your child attends?

| | Parent Aware Pilot Evaluation (2010) N (%) | Parent Aware Statewide Evaluation (2012-2014) N (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Someone told me it was a high quality program OR I thought it was high quality | 82 (25%) | 102 (34%) |
| Close to home | 51 (16%) | 34 (11%) |
| Matched my work schedule | 6 (2%) | 17 (6%) |
| Affordable cost | 8 (2%) | 7 (2%) |
| A caregiver or provider who speaks family's native language with my child | 4 (1%) | 5 (1%) |
| Only option for my child (due to cost, transportation, schedule, etc.) | 6 (2%) | 2 (1%) |
| My child has special needs | 2 (<1%) | 1 (<1%) |
| Other reasons | 158 (49%) | 136 (45%) |
| **Total** | **320 (100%)** | **304 (100%)** |

**Sources:** Child Trends' Parent Interview 2012 to 2014; Year 3 Evaluation Report, November 2010)

Parents pay a wide range of out-of-pocket expenses for their child's care. The amounts they reported paying ranged from $0 to $24,000, per year, with a mean of $5,596. The most common type of child care assistance parents reported receiving was a child care tax credit (35%) followed by support from a county Child Care Assistance Program (12%). Approximately 60 percent of parents reported that paying for child care is very or somewhat easy while 33 percent report that it is somewhat or very difficult. About 7 percent of parents do not pay anything for child care.

Most parents (95%) report that their child's current care arrangement is the one that they prefer. Of those whose children are not in their preferred arrangement, the most common preferred arrangement is a child care center, preschool, or school-based program. Despite most parents' reports that their current arrangement is their preferred one, one quarter of parents (25%) still report that in some ways they had to "take whatever they could get" when choosing child care.

Finally, parents were asked how long it takes them to travel from home to their child care arrangement (Table 16). For more than half (58%) of parents, it takes ten minutes or less. Only a small percentage (2%) of parents must travel more than 30 minutes from home to their child's care arrangement.

**Table 16.** Question: How long does it take to go one way from child's home to child care arrangement?

|  | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
|---|---|---|
| A couple of minutes (next door or across the street) | 26 | 8.6 |
| 5 minutes or less (1 or 2 blocks) | 75 | 24.7 |
| More than 5 but less than 10 minutes | 75 | 24.7 |
| 10 to 20 minutes | 101 | 33.2 |
| 21 to 30 minutes | 20 | 6.6 |
| More than 30 minutes | 7 | 2.3 |
| **Total** | **304** | **100** |

**Source:** Child Trends' Parent Interview 2012 to 2014

## Knowledge of Parent Aware

Parents were asked a series of questions about their knowledge of Parent Aware, its outreach efforts including its website, and the usefulness of information they received about Parent Aware in influencing their decision-making. In the fall of 2014, Parent Aware launched a new website (parentaware.org) to provide information about the child care programs in Minnesota.  The new website differed from the previous one by providing information about *all* of the licensed programs in the state, both rated and unrated, using data collected through Parent Aware, the annual Provider Business Update (conducted by Child Care Aware), and the Minnesota Department of Human Services' Licensing Lookup database. The questions in the parent interview were administered prior to the launch of

the new Parent Aware website and do not reflect the impact of any outreach efforts that have occurred since then. Any mentions of the Parent Aware website in this section are referring to the previous iteration of the site.

Thirty-nine parents (13%) report having used the Parent Aware website to access information about the quality of child care programs. Thirty-six percent of these parents ended up using a program they found through Parent Aware. While another interview question revealed that no parents had first heard of their child's care program through Parent Aware, some parents are using Parent Aware to learn more about programs they already know of and to help them guide their ultimate choice of program. Most (95%) found the site extremely or somewhat helpful. Seventy-six percent thought that the number of programs they found information about on the Parent Aware website was the right amount, not too many or too few. Around 84 percent of parents said that it was very or somewhat easy to find the information they needed using the Parent Aware website. A similarly high percentage (92%) of parents report that overall they were very or somewhat satisfied with Parent Aware.

Table 17 summarizes parents' knowledge of the Parent Aware Star-Rating for their child's care arrangement. Slightly more than a third (36%) of parents were aware of their program's Star-Rating. More than half (62%) of parents indicated that the Star-Rating of their child's care arrangement was very or somewhat important to them in their decision-making process to choose a provider. Likewise, 80 percent of parents noted that a program's star level would be very or somewhat influential in their decisions about their child's care arrangement. Slightly over half (53%) said that they would pay more for child care if the program had a higher Parent Aware rating.

**Table 17.** Parents' knowledge and use of their child's program's Parent Aware Star-Rating

|  | Yes   N= (%) | No   N= (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Are you aware of child care arrangement's current Parent Aware Star level? | 102 (36%) | 182 (64%) |
| Would you be willing to pay more for child care, if the provider had a higher Parent Aware Rating? | 135 (53%) | 120 (47%) |

**Source:** Child Trends' Parent Interview 2012 to 2014

## Summary

The data presented in this section of the report represents only a small subset of the full set of questions asked of parents during their interview and presents a preliminary view of

their experiences. In early 2015, a final round of parent interviewing will take place, nearly doubling the sample size of parents from the one in this report. It is expected that this group will include more low-income parents as more low-income families are recruited into the Parent Aware evaluation. The final evaluation report for Parent Aware will provide a more comprehensive analysis comparing parent perceptions and experiences across all three years of survey administration. The final round of interviewing will follow the launch of the new Parent Aware website and will provide an opportunity to examine the impact on parents' understanding of Parent Aware and their choice of child care arrangements.

# Section 4. Analysis of the New Parent Aware Website and Online Search Tools

**Purpose of this section:** The purpose of this section is to analyze how the new Parent Aware website and search tools are being used.

**Key Findings:**

- Users visited [www.parentaware.org](http://www.parentaware.org) from across Minnesota but primarily from urban areas.

- The majority of visitors were women aged 25-44.

- Visitors prioritized distance and Star-Ratings in their searchers on the Parent Aware website. Other search terms were also used (including hours of care, ages, and schedule) though less frequently than distance and Star-Ratings.

## Introduction

Since 2007, consumers in Minnesota have been able to find information about Parent Aware-Rated programs through the Parent Aware website[19]. In 2012, after Minnesota won the Race-to-the-Top – Early Learning Challenge grant, the online search tool underwent a facelift. The changes to the website were primarily cosmetic to improve the experience for website visitors. A limitation of both iterations of the early Parent Aware websites was that it contained information only about *Rated* programs. Information about non-rated licensed child care programs was available through Child Care Aware (formerly Child Care Resource and Referral), while data about licensed programs' health and safety record was available through the Minnesota Department of Human Services. Information about Head Start and Public School Pre-Kindergarten Programs was available through the Minnesota Department of Education.

To improve the search process for families and to bring information about early care and education programs into one place, Parent Aware for School Readiness (PASR), the

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[19] Parents may also have found information about Parent Aware Ratings by visiting the Child Care Aware of Minnesota website.

Minnesota Department of Human Services (MN DHS), Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), and Child Care Aware of Minnesota worked together in a private-public partnership. The partnership combined PASR resources with data provided by the state of Minnesota. These data allowed website visitors to review licensing status and health and safety records of programs as well as programs' Parent Aware Ratings.

The new website, www.parentaware.org, launched in August 2014 with a robust marketing campaign. Website visitors can visit the site and perform searches based on the name of a program, the location of a program, or request a list of programs that fit certain search criteria, such as distance from their home or programs' Star-Ratings. In order to better understand how the website is used by visitors, an analysis of website visits was conducted using Google Analytics, a service offered by Google that generates detailed statistics about a website's visitors and their behaviors. The analysis examined data between August 10th, 2014, and February 10th, 2015, and provided information about the geographic location and some demographic characteristics of people using the website, the types of programs that were searched most often, and how people used the search filters. This section highlights key findings of the analysis, including a geographic map of visitors, demographic characteristics of visitors, search preferences, locations, and technology usage of Minnesota visitors to the Parent Aware website.

## Geographic Distribution of Website Visitors

Google Analytics tracks website visitors and provides visitors' locations by city. Knowing the locations of website visitors provides insights into how the website usage in Minnesota is geographically distributed. Website data were analyzed to examine where people were when they visited www.parentaware.org, with a visit being defined as a session of browsing and interaction with the website until there is a period of 30 minutes of inactivity on the website. The analysis revealed that there were over 80,000 visits to the website between August 10th, 2014, and February 10th, 2015, with at least one visit from many countries around the world, and from every state in the United States. However, as would be expected, the majority of visits occurred in Minnesota (67,251). Figure 7 presents the geographic distribution of Minnesota visitors to the website.

**Figure 7.** Locations of Website Visitors in Minnesota
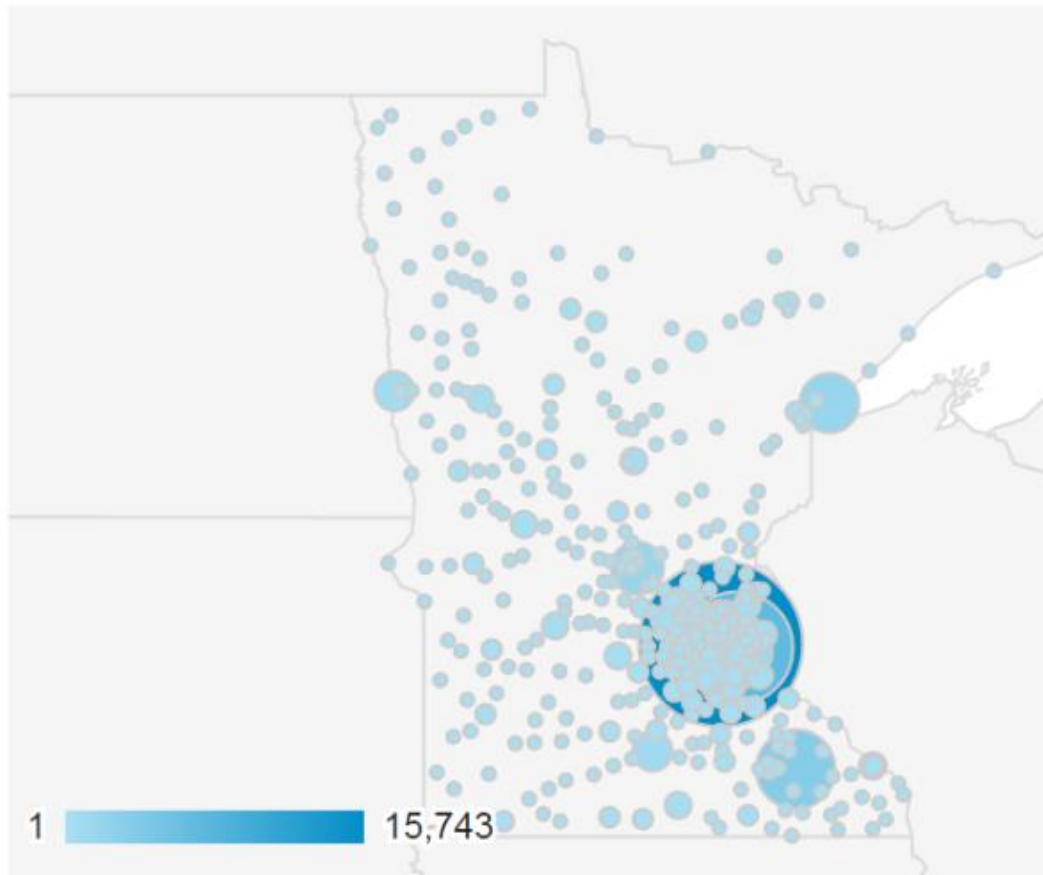
The circles indicate city locations, circle size indicates city population, and circle color indicates the number of website visits from that area (the lighter blue indicates fewer visits in that area and the darker blue indicates more visits in that area). As Figure 7 shows (with slightly darker blue circles), a large proportion of visits to the website occurred from cities with larger population sizes such as Minneapolis (15,743 sessions, 23% of total Minnesota sessions), Saint Paul (6,970, 10%), Rochester (3,396, 5%), Duluth (1,810, 3%), and Saint Cloud (1,693, 3%). It is important to note that Google may not define the city boundaries of cities such as Minneapolis and St. Paul the same as Census data. Visits from "Minneapolis" may also include some surrounding areas. In addition, many visits from outside of the larger cities occurred in suburbs within the Greater Twins Cities Metropolitan Area. See the Appendix B. Number of Visits to www.parentaware.org by City in Minnesota for the number of visits for each city/town throughout Minnesota. Website visits occurred from throughout the state, with clusters of visits aligning with population differences.

## Demographic Characteristics of Website Visitors

Examining the demographic characteristics of website visitors can provide insights into who is using the website and how future marketing efforts could be targeted. Visitor demographic information was analyzed for the time period between January 7th and February 10th, 2015.[20] During this period of time, 14,300 visits to the website occurred. Gender and age were able to be deduced in 9,173 of those visits (includes duplicates).

Figure 8 presents the gender and age distribution of the 9,173 identified visitors between Jan 7, 2015 and Feb 10, 2015. This figure shows that visits by men (green bars on the left, 21%) were much less frequent than visits by women (purple bars on the right, 79%). In addition, about half of the sessions were conducted by visitors who were between 25 and 34 years old and about 24% were between 35 and 44 years old. The gender and age data suggest that it is primarily mothers who are using the Parent Aware website though more than one in five visitors was likely a father[21]. In the remainder of this section, we use the term "website visitor" to represent those who used the site.

**Figure 8.** Gender and Age Group of Website Visitors
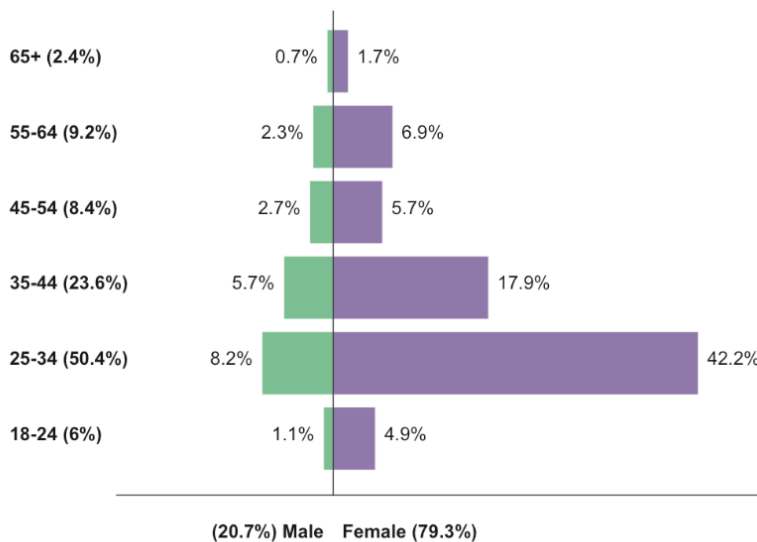


**Source:** Google Analytics between January 7th, 2015 and February 10th, 2015

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[20] The function to analyze demographic characteristics in Google Analytics became available on January 7th. Gender and age of a visitor is estimated based on his or her activity on other websites. See https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/2580383?hl=en&utm_id=ad for details.

[21] Others, such as Parent Aware staff, partner agencies, and providers also use the site. These other users are likely a small percentage of the total visitors, and while readers may infer that the majority of website visitors are parents, we refer to users of the online search tool as "website visitors" instead of "parents."

## Website Visitor Search Preferences

The new Parent Aware website offers a variety of features to support the search process. Data were analyzed to understand how website visitors use the features available to them in the search process and respond to the results they receive from the search. Two indices were examined.

The first index was based on filters that website visitors can use when refining their search results on the Parent Aware website. When searching for early care and education programs based on location, visitors see a section on the page that says "Narrow your search" and are allowed to specify one or multiple filter options. The analyses revealed that during the 14,300 visits that occurred between January 7th and February 10th, 2015, the filter option was used 63,731 times, or an average of about four times per visit. Figure 9 presents the frequencies for the use of each filter (website visitors could choose multiple filters for each search). The most frequently used filters were distance (used in 90% of visits) and Star-Ratings (used in 70% of visits). Other filter options (hours, schedule, and ages) were used in less than half of searches. It is notable that certain filters (yearly schedule, environment, languages spoken, and accepts CCAP) were used in over 40% of visits even though these filters are not visible on the site until website visitors click "more search options." Thus, while distance and Star-Ratings appear to be the highest priorities in the search process, other characteristics of the programs are still salient to website visitors in their search.

**Figure 9.** Filters Used When Website Visitors Were Asked to "Narrow Your Search"
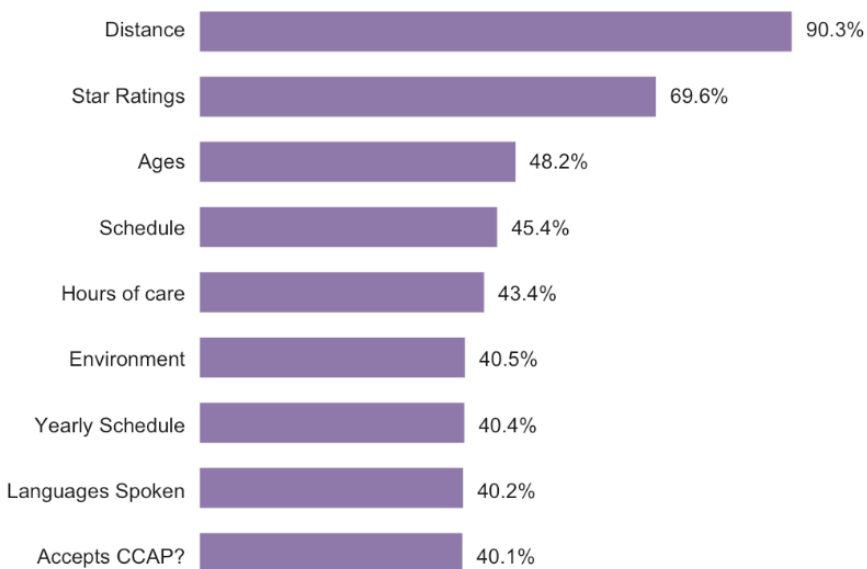


**Source:** Google Analytics between January 7th, 2015 and February 10th, 2015

## Locations of Website Visitors Using the Search Function

The primary method used to search for programs on the Parent Aware website is for website visitors to enter their own address and search for programs within a certain radius of that location. This method allows for an investigation into the geographic location of website visitors searching for care providers. The data recorded 3,087 valid street addresses that were used for searches between January 7th and February 10th, 2015, which were converted into points on maps.

Figure 10 presents the geographic distribution of website visitors searching by their location throughout Minnesota. Website visitors were clustered in the urban areas, primarily in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area.

**Figure 10.** Geographic Distribution of Street Addresses Website Visitors Used as Criteria to Search for Providers on the Parent Aware Website
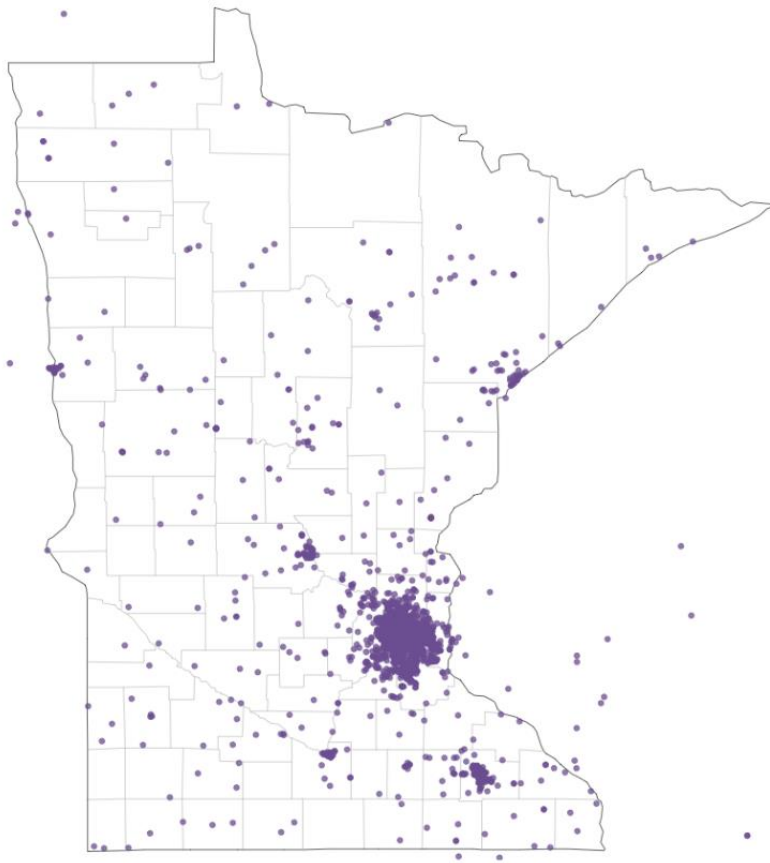


**Source:** Google Analytics between January 7th, 2015 and February 10th, 2015 and Google Maps

Figure 11 represents Minneapolis and surrounding areas and Figure 12 shows St. Paul and surrounding areas. Generally speaking, south Minneapolis had more website users than north Minneapolis, and there are also higher clusters of users in some parts of St. Paul and surrounding areas than in other parts.

**Figure 11.** Geographic Distribution of Street Addresses Website Visitors Used as Criteria to Search for Providers in Minneapolis on www.parentaware.org
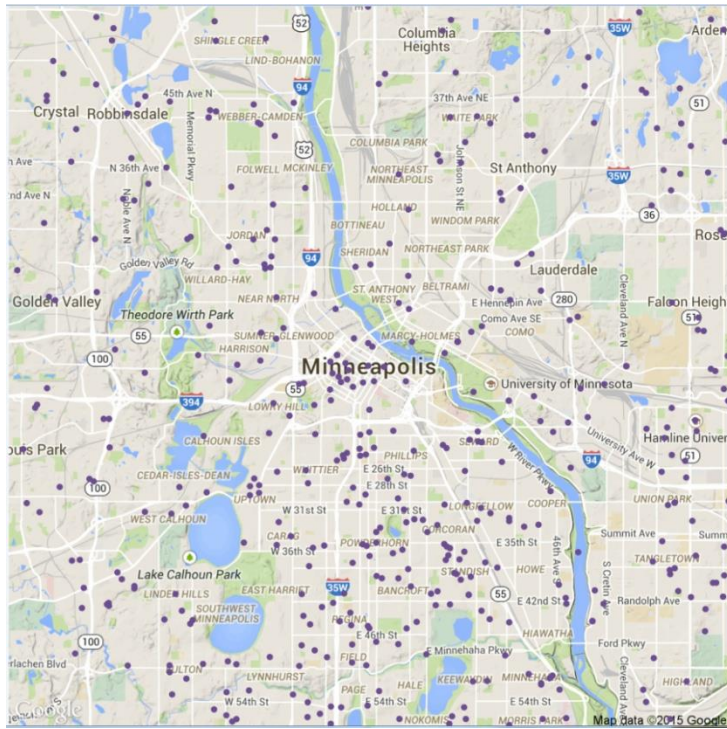


**Source:** Google Analytics between January 7th, 2015 and February 10th, 2015 and Google Maps

**Figure 12.** Geographic Distribution of Street Addresses Website Visitors Used as Criteria to Search for Providers in Saint Paul on www.parentaware.org
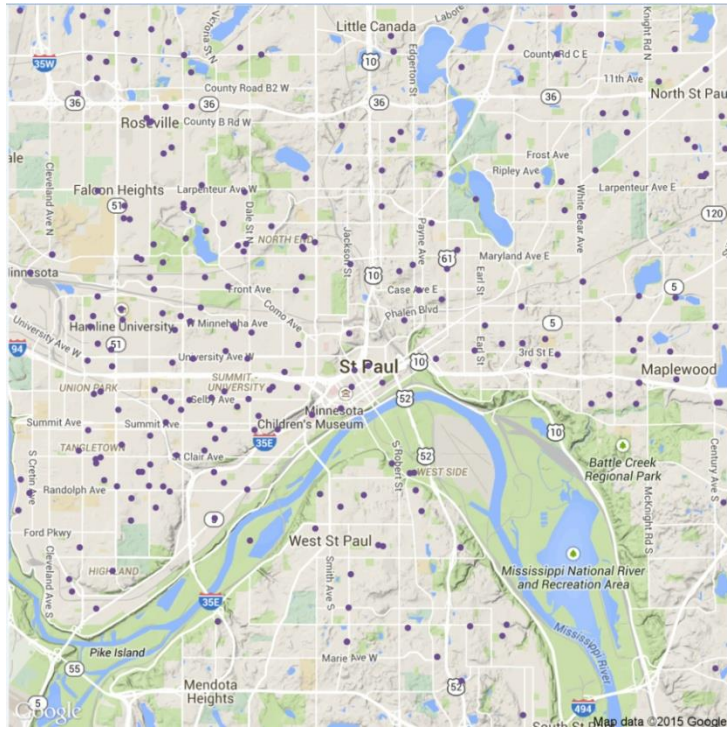


**Source:** Google Analytics between January 7th, 2015 and February 10th, 2015 and Google Maps

The distribution of users is important in that it can provide information on how Parent Aware might perform outreach in areas where website visitors are showing less use of the website. For example, are there characteristics of the communities where the website is used less frequently that can help us understand how to increase their access? It will be important to continue to track the distribution of website users over time as an indicator of the success of outreach to communities where the website is used more infrequently.

## Technology Usage of Website Visitor

The Parent Aware website is available on a variety of platforms/devices, therefore attention must be paid to website functionality and accessibility across all methods. The analyses identified the platforms that website visitors used to access the Parent Aware website (Figure 13). More than half (54%) of the website visitors used a Windows system, while 11% accessed the website from a Macintosh computer. Mobile device users comprised over one third of the website visitors, with more using Apple's iOS system (22%) than Google's Android system (13%). The communications team and website designers must ensure that any bugs related to device type (i.e. using a Mac computer vs. Windows) are addressed. Similarly, it is important that the website be easily accessed on mobile devices of all kinds.

**Figure 13.** Operating Systems Used to Browse Parent Aware Online Search Tool
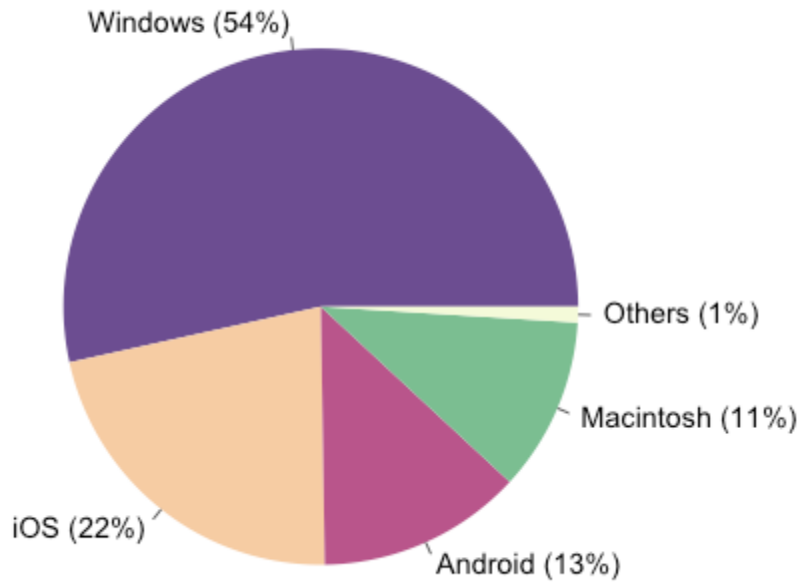
## Conclusion

The website is a vital part of Parent Aware marketing and communications and acts as the access point for website visitors to use Parent Aware to help find early care and education programs for their children. As such, it is helpful to examine patterns of use by looking at the frequency of visits to the website, the locations of people visiting and searching on the website, and how people are using the website for searches.

The analyses showed that there were over 80,000 visits to www.parentaware.org between August 10th, 2014 and February 10th, 2015. Visits were primarily from Minnesota, and primarily from urban areas. Visitors tended to be women aged 25-44 (i.e. mothers), and they conducted searches for care programs that prioritized distance and Star-Ratings. Website visitors using the search function were located primarily in urban areas. Finally, website visitors used a variety of platforms/devices to access the Parent Aware website.

# Section 5. Indicator Analysis

**Purpose of this section:** The purpose of this section is to analyze patterns of scoring for family child care program and child care centers that went through the Full-Rating process by the end of the third year of statewide expansion.  The analysis focuses in particular on programs that set a goal Rating of a Three- or Four-Star to identify how programs are achieving higher Star Ratings.

**Key Findings:**

- Most programs (88%) earned the goal Rating they set or higher when they applied for Parent Aware.   The most frequently selected goal Rating for family child care programs and child care centers was a Two-Star.
- The majority of programs received the maximum amount of points possible for indicators in the Physical Health and Well-being category.  Fewer programs earned maximum points on indicators in the Assessment of Child Progress category.
- More family child care programs than centers earned maximum possible points on indicators in the Teaching and Relationships category and the Teacher Training and Education category.
- The individual indicators least likely to be met by family child care programs were in the Assessment of Child Progress category and one indicator in the Teaching and Relationships category.
- The individual indicators least likely to be met by centers were related to the director's credential and one other indicator in the Teacher Training category, plus indicators in the Assessment of Child Progress category.

## Introduction

Understanding how programs score on quality indicators in a QRIS and analyzing the implications of different scoring patterns for the effectiveness of the QRIS rating tool  are important  QRIS validation activities  (Zellman & Fiene, 2012[22]). In this section, we analyze

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[22] Zellman, G. L. & Fiene, R. (2012). Validation of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems for Early Care and Education and School-Age Care, Research-to-Policy, Research-to-Practice Brief OPRE 2012-29. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/val_qual_early.pdf

the points and Ratings earned by Parent Aware-Rated programs that went through the Full-Rating process as of December 31, 2014. We examine the proportion of centers and family child care programs that set different Rating goals when they applied to be Rated or re-Rated in Parent Aware, the proportion of programs that earned different Star-Ratings, and the proportion of programs that earned their goal Rating. Then, for programs with a goal Rating of Three- or Four-Stars, we examine programs' points earned overall, points earned within categories of quality indicators, and points earned on individual indicators. Of note, the indicators in the category regarding Assessment of Child Progress were revised in 2014; we analyze the indicators that applied to each program at the time that it was rated. Details on the indicator revisions are provided next in the description of the Parent Aware Rating Tool.

## The Parent Aware Rating Tool

As mentioned in Section1, Parent Aware is a hybrid rating system, comprised of *block-indicators* at the One- and Two-Star Rating level and *indicators-for-points* at the Three- and Four-Star Rating level. This means participating programs must meet a set of indicators at the One- and Two-Star Rating level before being considered to earn points at the Three- and Four-Star Rating level. In total, Parent Aware includes 27 indicators of quality for family child care programs and 30 indicators of quality for centers. Programs going through the Full-Rating process must meet all six of the indicators at the first Star level (block) in order to earn a One-Star Rating. Programs seeking a Two-Star Rating must meet the One-Star block plus all seven of the indicators at the Two-Star level (block). In order to earn a Three- or a Four-Star Rating, programs must earn at least one point in each of the four quality indicator categories and at least 8 points across categories to receive a Three-Star Rating and at least 15 points to receive a Four-Star Rating, out of a possible maximum of 20 points on the remaining indicators. Additionally, some of the *indicators-for-points* are required in order to earn a Three-Star Rating.[23] Some indicators are scored either 0 points ("unmet") or 1 point ("met"), while other indicators have a range of points available. When programs submit their Quality Documentation Portfolio (QDP), they check a box for each Three- and Four-Star level *indicator-for-points* and whether they are "opting-out" of that indicator or whether they would like to be rated on it. Raters only review indicators on which programs have declared they want to be scored. If a program did not set a Three- or a Four-Star Rating goal, the program is not scored for any of the *indicators-for-points*.

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[23] In order to earn a Three-Star Rating, programs must also meet specific indicators, including TR3a and AC3a. Programs must at least partially meet indicators AC3b, AC3c and AC3d. Family child care providers must also have earned at least Step 2 on the Career Lattice.

Parent Aware indicators are grouped into four categories:

      1. Physical Health and Well-Being

      2. Teaching and Relationships

      3. Assessment of Child Progress

      4. Teacher Training and Education

The indicators in each quality category are nearly identical for family child care programs and child care centers. A description of the categories and indicators are included on the Parent Aware Ratings website.[24] The major differences in indicators across the two program types, noted below, are in the Teaching and Relationships category and the Teacher Training and Education category. The indicators in the Assessment of Child Progress category were revised in 2014 to provide further clarity to programs (not to introduce substantive changes to the indicators). Under the revised indicators, training on authentic child assessment and use of approved child assessment tool(s) are required and not scored with points, and other elements of child assessment were broken out into a different point structure (number of domains completed in the assessment tool(s), frequency of assessment, providing families with assessment results, and using child assessment information to design goals and guide instruction for individual children). The maximum total amount of points remained the same in the revision. . The most recently Rated group of programs was scored using the revised indicators for Assessment of Child Progress (programs that began in July 2014 and received their Rating December 31, 2014). All programs rated in June 2014 or earlier were scored using the first set of statewide indicators for Assessment of Child Progress.

### Methods

In this section, we present findings from analyses of the 770 programs that went through the Full-Rating process and received a rating as of December 31, 2014. Programs that were Rated as part of the Accelerated Pathways to Rating (APR) were excluded because they are Rated under different criteria. Analyses include 641 programs that received a first Rating

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[24] Indicators and Scoring – Full-Rating for Family Child Care Programs:
http://parentawareratings.org/files/file_attachments/Parent%20Aware%20Indicators%20and%20Scoring%20For%20FCC.pdf
Indicators and Scoring – Full-Rating for Child Care Centers:
http://parentawareratings.org/files/file_attachments/Parent%20Aware%20Indicators%20and%20Scoring%20for%20CCC.pdf

and 129 programs that received a second Rating. Only the current Rating is analyzed in this section for the 129 re-Rated programs in order to look at the largest number of programs setting goals at the higher Rating levels under the current scoring system. (Analysis of change in program Ratings over time is presented in Section 6). Data about Parent Aware Ratings were collected from Develop, the Quality Improvement and Registry Tool used by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. A spreadsheet of data downloaded from Develop was emailed to Child Trends from DHS on January 23, 2015. The spreadsheet contained demographic, Rating, and indicator data on all assigned Parent Aware Ratings as of January 6, 2015.

Specifically, this section addresses the following questions:

   (a)  What were programs' Star-Rating goals, and what were their earned Star-Ratings?
   (b)  For programs with a goal Rating of a Three- or Four-Star, what were the total points earned overall and the number of points earned within each of the four categories?
   (c)  For programs with a goal Rating of a Three- or Four-Star, how many programs met or did not meet each indicator and, where relevant, how many points did they earn on each indicator?

## Ratings and Points Earned in Parent Aware

### What were programs' Star-Rating goals, and what were their earned Ratings?

As shown in Table 18, 631 family child care programs and 139 centers went through the Full-Rating process, and 98% received a Rating. Among family child care programs, 69% set a goal of a One- or Two-Star Rating, and 31% set a goal of a Three- or Four-Star Rating. Seventy percent of family child care programs earned a One- or Two-Star Rating, and 27% earned a Three- or Four-Star Rating. Among centers, 53% set a goal of a One- or Two-Star Rating, and 47% set a goal of a Three- or Four-Star Rating. Sixty-three percent of centers earned a One- or Two-Star Rating, and 37% earned a Three- or Four-Star Rating. Most programs met their goal Rating, but not all; excluding the 17 programs that exceeded their goal Rating, 12% of programs of either type earned a Star-Rating below their goal.

**Table 18.** Programs' most recent goal ratings and earned ratings by program type

| | | Earned Rating | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **No rating** | **One-Star** | **Two-Star** | **Three-Star** | **Four-Star** | **Total** | | **Met or Exceeded Goal Rating** |
| **Family Child Care Goal Rating (n=629):** | | | | | | | | |
| One-Star | 8 | 189 | 1 | - | - | **198** | | **96%** |
| Two-Star | 7 | 18 | 206 | - | - | **231** | | **89%** |
| Three-Star | - | 5 | 11 | 53 | 15 | **84** | | **81%** |
| Four-Star | - | 6 | 4 | 8 | 95 | **113** | | **84%** |
| **Total** | **15** | **218** | **222** | **61** | **110** | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| **Child Care Centers Goal Rating (n=141):** | | | | | | | | |
| One-Star | - | 17 | - | - | - | **17** | | **100%** |
| Two-Star | 1 | 6 | 50 | - | - | **57** | | **88%** |
| Three-Star | - | - | 2 | 8 | 1 | **11** | | **82%** |
| Four-Star | - | 2 | 10 | 5 | 37 | **54** | | **69%** |
| **Total** | **1** | **25** | **62** | **13** | **38** | | | |

**Source:** Data downloaded from Develop January 6, 2015, the Quality Improvement and Registry Tool used by Minnesota Department of Human Services and emailed to Child Trends on January 23, 2015.

## How many points are programs earning through the Full-Rating process?

After a program meets the requirements to be eligible to earn a Three- or Four-Star Rating, the number of points earned contributes to their Rating. A program must receive at least 8 points to earn a Three-Star Rating and at least 15 points to receive a Four-Star Rating. An analysis of the total points earned by programs with a Three- and Four-Star Rating goal was conducted to examine the distribution of programs across all the available points (0-20). Figure 14 depicts the percentages of programs with a Three-Star Rating goal with total points in each range received and Figure 15 shows percentages of programs with a Four Star Rating goal with points earned in each range.

The majority of programs with a Three-Star goal Rating received points in the 8-14.5 range (Figure 14); some programs with a Three-Star goal Rating earned enough points for a Four-

Star Rating.  The majority of programs with a Four-Star goal rating received points in the 15-20 range (Figure 15).

**Figure 14.** Total points received by programs with a goal Rating of Three-Star (minimum 8 points)
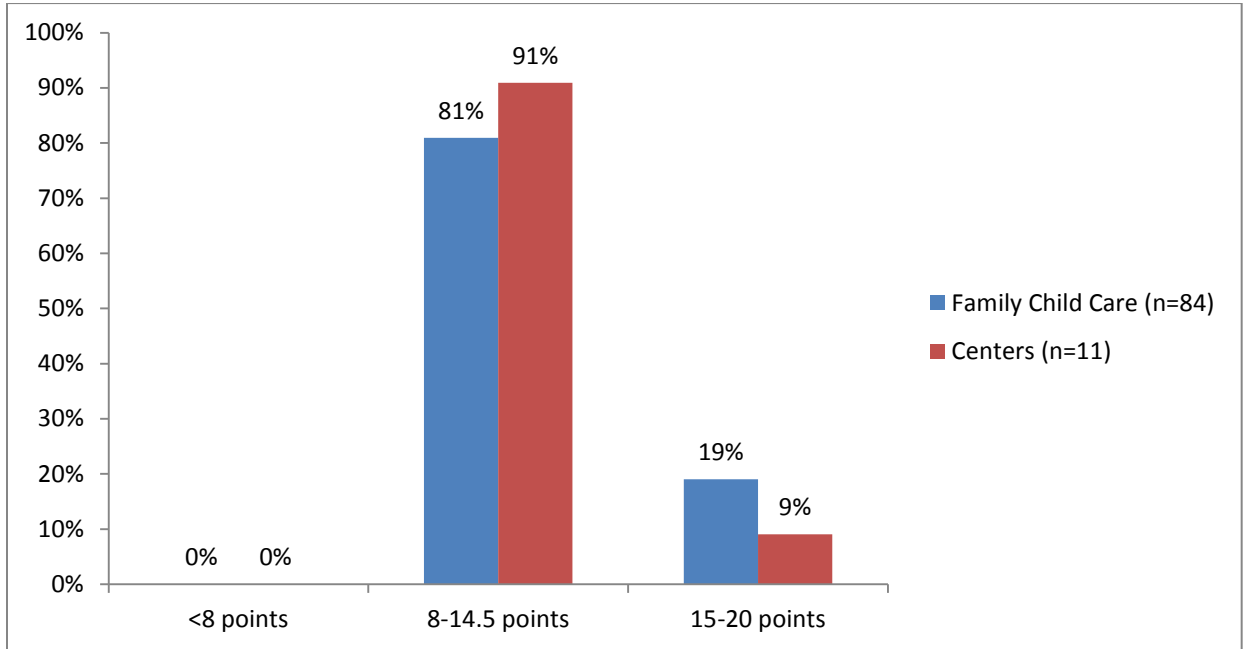


**Source:** Data downloaded from Develop January 6, 2015, the Quality Improvement and Registry Tool used by Minnesota Department of Human Services and emailed to Child Trends on January 23, 2015.

**Figure 15.** Total points received by programs with a goal Rating of Four-Star (minimum 15 points)
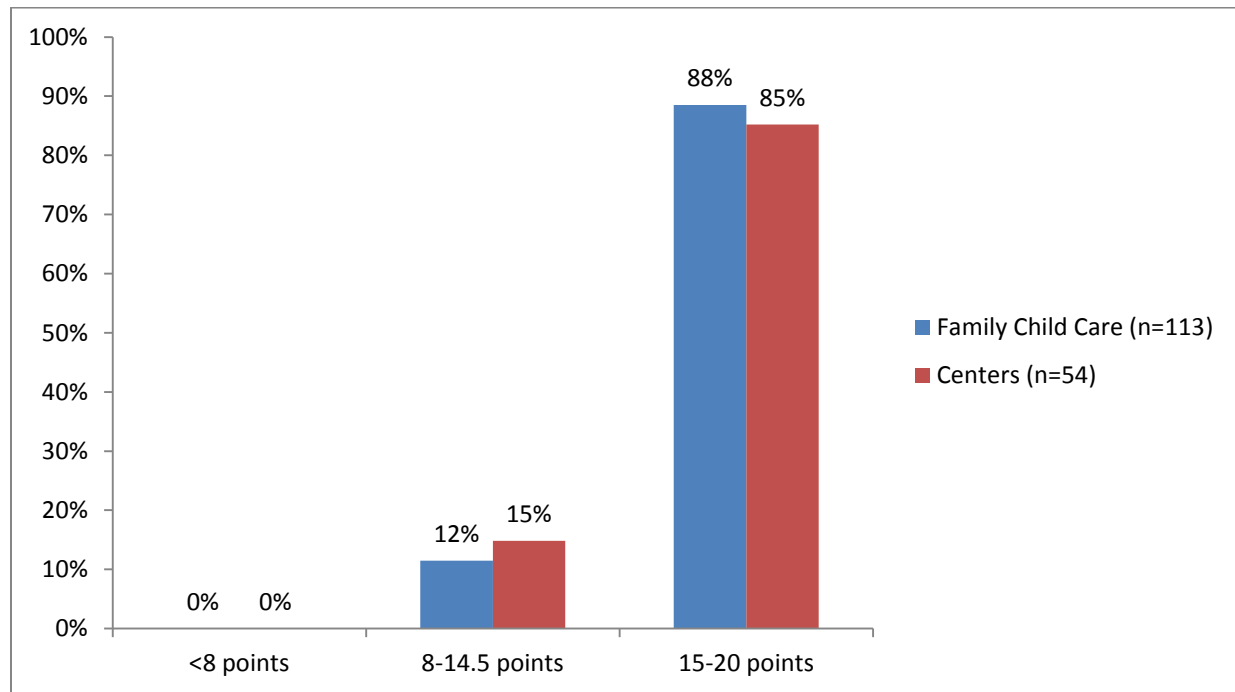
## How are programs' points distributed across the different quality categories?

Analyzing how programs score across categories reveals whether programs are scoring more or fewer points in particular content areas. As previously described, the Parent Aware Rating Tool has four categories: Physical Health and Well-Being (abbreviated PH), Teaching and Relationships (TR), Assessment of Child Progress (AC), and Teacher Training and Education (TT). Different numbers of points may be earned in each category.

Figure 16 shows the percentage of programs that received the maximum number of points in each category (Appendix C presents the points earned in each category by all programs). The majority of programs with a Three- or Four-Star Rating goal received all points available in the Physical Health and Well-Being category (69% of family child care programs and 85% of child care centers). Nearly two-thirds of family child care programs (62%) received the maximum of 5 points for Teaching and Relationships, and almost half of child care centers (48%) received the maximum number of points for Teaching and Relationships (6 points). Few programs received the maximum number of points on Assessment of Child Progress. Under the first version of the indicators, 15% of family child care programs and 23% of centers received the maximum number of points. Under the revised indicators, 25% of family child care programs and 29% of centers received the maximum number of points.

Four in ten (43%) of family child care programs earned the maximum of 7 points in Teacher Training and Education, while 8% of centers earned the maximum of 7 points.[25]

**Figure 16.** Percent of programs with goal Ratings of Three- or Four-Star earning maximum points within each quality category
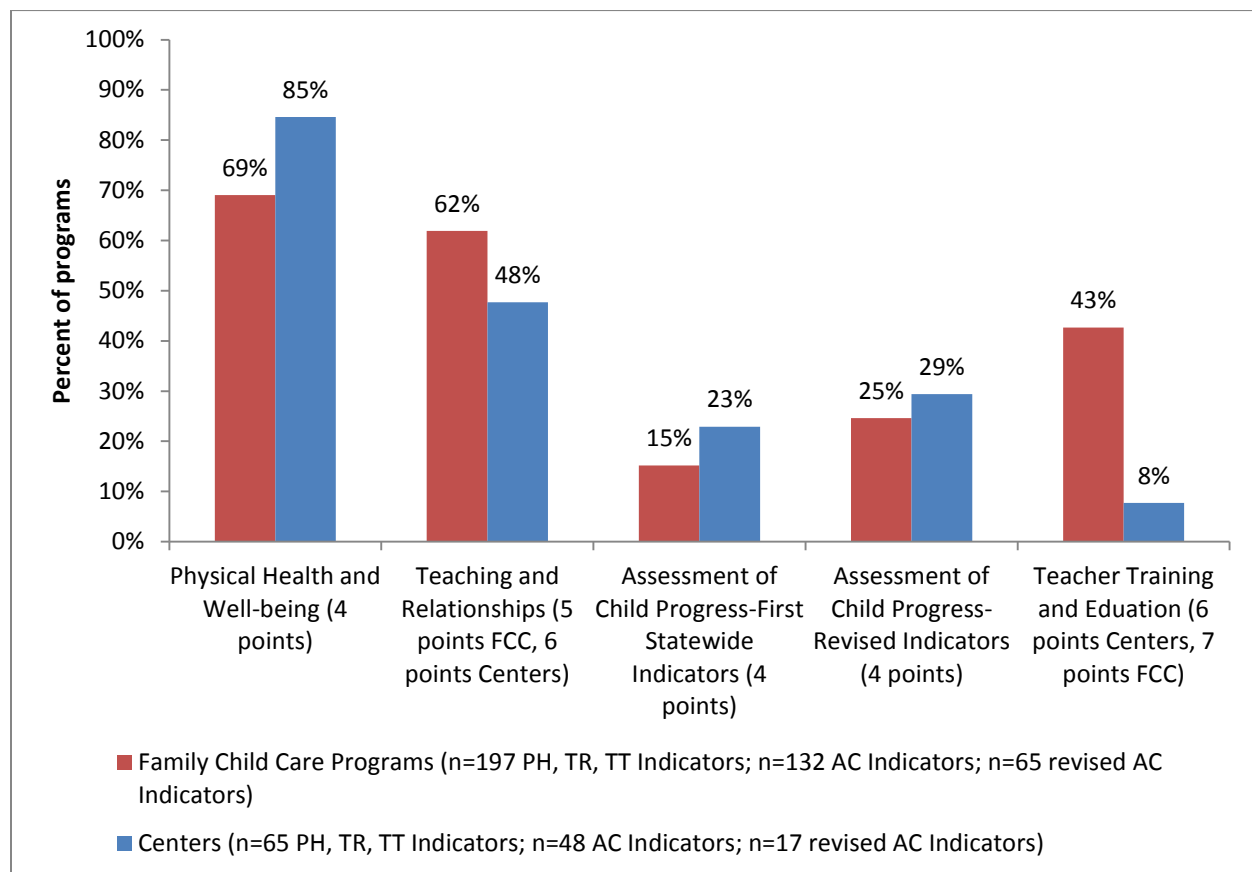


**Notes:** FCC=Family Child Care Programs; PH=Physical Health and Well-Being; TR=Teaching and Relationships; AC=Assessment of Child Progress; TT=Teacher Training and Education.

The Assessment of Child Progress indicators were revised in 2014. The first set of statewide indicators applied to programs rated prior to June 2014. The revised indicators applied to programs that began in June 2014 and received their rating on December 31, 2014.

**Source:** Data downloaded from Develop January 6, 2015, the Quality Improvement and Registry Tool used by Minnesota Department of Human Services and emailed to Child Trends on January 23, 2015.

To understand patterns for programs that missed their goal Rating, Figure 17 presents the total points earned within each category for the 53 programs that did not receive their goal

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[25] For an in-depth examination of the total points family child care programs received in each quality indicator category by programs with goal Ratings of Three- or Four-Star, see Appendix C

Rating: 18 programs that missed their Three-Star goal Rating (2 centers and 16 family child care programs) and 35 programs that missed their Four-Star goal Rating (17 centers and 18 family child care programs). (Patterns of scoring on individual indicators for all programs – those that did and did not earn their goal rating – are presented in the following sections). There was no consistent pattern indicating why programs did not earn their goal Rating of a Three- or Four-Star, but examining gaps between earned points and maximum possible points within category may be useful to understand where programs may need more support. Among the 53 programs that missed their goal Ratings, the gap between earned points and maximum possible points was greatest in Assessment of Child Progress. On average, programs that missed a Three-Star goal Rating earned one point in this category, and programs that missed a Four-Star goal Rating earned less than two points in this category (out of a possible 4 points).

**Figure 17.** Total points earned within category by programs that missed goal Ratings of a Three- or Four-Star
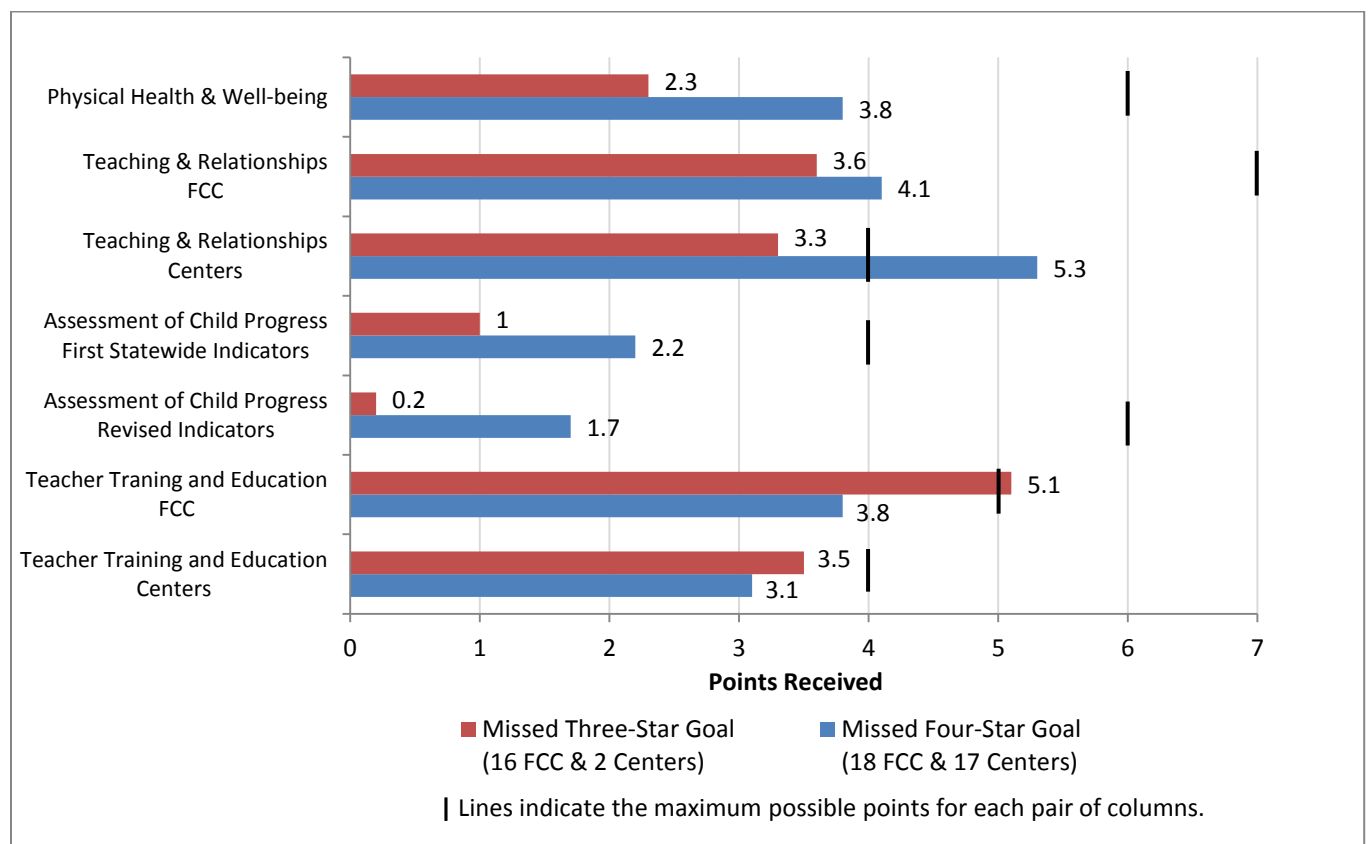


Note: The Assessment of Child Progress indicators were revised. The first set of statewide indicators applied to programs rated prior to June 2014. The revised indicators applied to programs that began in June 2014 and received their rating on December 31, 2014.

## Which indicators are programs earning points for at the Three- and Four-Star levels?

Analyzing patterns of scoring on individual indicators for programs with a Three- or Four-Star goal Rating provides information about how the structure and requirements of the Parent Aware Rating Tool are functioning at the higher Rating levels. The 197 family child care programs with a goal Rating of Three-Star (84 programs) or Four-Star (113 programs) received points for most indicators[26]. However, the following indicators were more likely than others to be unmet: demonstrates the ability to communicate program information in parent's primary language (TR3d; 29% did not meet this indicator), and several Assessment of Child Progress indicators. Specifically, almost half of programs scored under the first set of indicators did not earn a point for using child assessment information to develop lesson plans and individual goals for all children (49% missed AC3d under the old criteria), and, similarly, over half of programs did not earn a point for using child assessment information to design goals and guide instruction for individual children under the revised indicators (63% missed AC3f under the revised criteria). Over one-third of programs scored under the first set of statewide indicators did not meet the indicator regarding providing families with assessment results (35% did not meet AC3c under the old criteria), and nearly half of programs scored under the revised indicators did not meet the indicator regarding providing families with child assessment results (49% did not meet AC3e under the revised indicators). The majority of programs scored under the revised indicators did not meet the indicator regarding frequency of use of approved assessment tool(s) (65% did not meet AC3d under the revised set of indicators).

Child care centers (n=65) with goal Ratings of Three- (n=11) or Four-Star (n=54) received points for most of the indicators[27]. The most commonly unmet indicator was related to the director's credential, with 79% of programs not achieving this indicator (TT3b).  About one-third of centers did not meet the criteria of having an education coordinator, director or lead administrator holding a bachelor's degree with at least 24 early childhood-related credits (TT3a; 35% did not meet this indicator). Among the Assessment of Child Progress indicators, about one-third of centers did not meet the indicator related to using child assessment information to develop lesson plans (27% of programs scored under the first

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[26] For a table of frequencies and percentages of indicators met and unmet at the Three- or Four-Star levels by family child care programs with goal Ratings of Three- or Four-Star, see Appendix D.
[27] For a table of frequencies and percentages of indicators met and unmet at the Three- or Four-Star levels by child care center programs with goal Ratings of Three- or Four-Star, see Appendix E.

set of statewide indicators did not meet AC3d, and 41% of programs scored under the revised indicators did not meet AC3f).  Nearly one-quarter of programs scored under the first set of indicators did not earn a point for providing families with child assessment results (23% did not earn AC3c); fewer programs missed the similar indicator under the revised indicators (18% did not meet AC3d under the revised indicators).

## Scores on CLASS Instructional Support

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is an observational tool measuring the quality of interactions among the teacher(s) and children in a preschool classroom.[28] Currently, CLASS observations are conducted in Fully-Rated child care centers whose goal Rating is a Three- or Four-Star. CLASS scores factor into the Rating determination for these programs. A CLASS score is comprised of scores on three domains: Emotional Support, Instructional Support, and Classroom Organization. Research studies on the CLASS document linkages between CLASS domains, particularly Instructional Support, and children's academic and language outcomes (e.g., Mashburn, 2008).[29] Instructional Support is important to examine closely given the challenges programs have reaching  higher scores in this domain and the resulting low range of scores on Instructional Support noted in numerous research studies. Using previous research and recommendations from the CLASS developers, cut-scores on the CLASS domains were identified for Fully-Rated child care centers.  The Instructional Support cut-point was revised for programs that began in July 2014 and received their Rating December 31, 2014; the earlier cut-point was a minimum of 2.5 on Instructional Support to be considered for at least a Three-Star The revised cut-point was a minimum of 2.0 on Instructional Support to be considered for at least a Three-Star and a minimum of 2.5 on Instructional Support to be considered for a Four-Star. These scores were examined to determine the extent to which CLASS scores impacted Fully-Rated child care centers' Star Ratings.

CLASS observation data were available for 62 child care centers. About three-quarters of centers scored under the earlier criteria (77%) met the minimum Instructional Support cut-point of 2.5 or higher to be considered for at least a Three-Star Rating. Nearly all centers scored under the revised criteria met the minimum Instructional Support requirement of

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[28] At this time, only the CLASS – Pre K version is used as part of the Full-Rating process in Parent Aware. There is a Toddler version and an Infant version of CLASS, though those are not used in Parent Aware.
[29] Mashburn, A. J., Pianta, R. C., Hamre, B. K., Downer, J. T., Barbarin, O. A., Bryant, D., & Burchinal, M. (2008). Measures of classroom quality in pre-kindergarten and children's development of academic, language, and social skills. *Child Development*, 79(3), 732–749.

scoring at least 2.0 or higher to be considered for a Three-Star Rating (94%) and most (82%) earned at least 2.5 points to be considered for a Four-Star Rating. Three out of 19 centers that missed a Three– or Four-Star Rating goal had enough total points, but had CLASS Instructional Support scores that fell below the minimum to be considered for a Three- or Four-Star Rating.  The range of CLASS scores on Instructional Support is presented in Figure 18.

**Figure 18.** Percent of programs scoring in specific ranges on CLASS Instructional Support
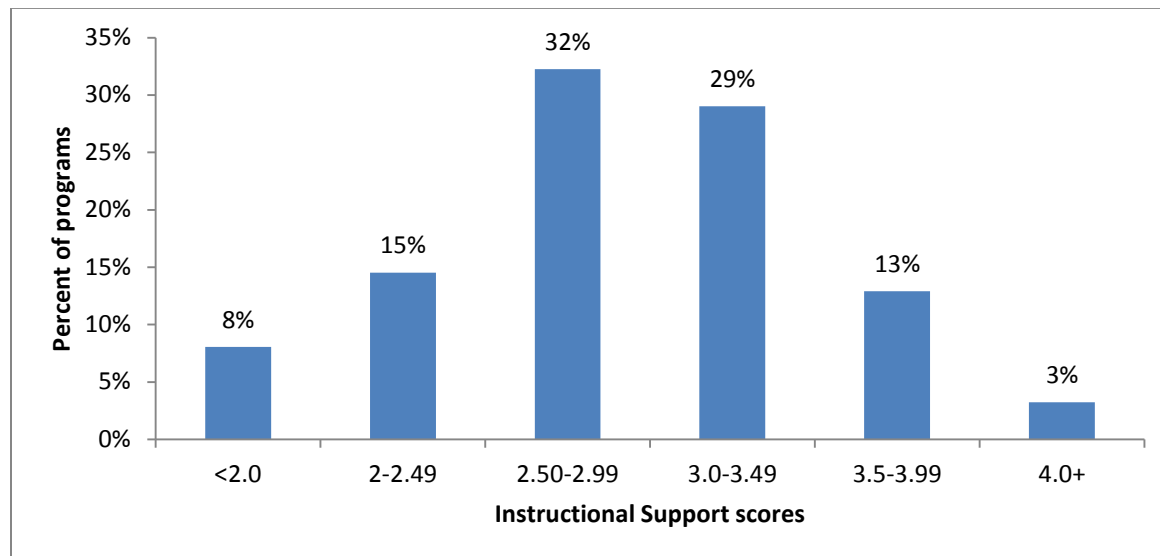
## Summary

Understanding scoring patterns for programs that go through the full Parent Aware Rating process provides important information about programs' goal Ratings and earned Ratings, as well as the content areas and individual indicators that family child care programs and child care centers are more likely to meet. The majority of Parent Aware programs achieve their Star-Rating goal. As programs enter Parent Aware, the majority set goals at the One-Star and Two-Star levels. Few programs set a goal of or receive a Three-Star Rating. Most programs setting Three- and Four-Star Rating goals gain enough points to meet their goal Rating, but certain indicators are more likely to be missed. For example, few programs achieve all available points in the Assessment of Child Progress category.  Programs, especially family child care programs, are likely to miss indicators related to conducting child assessments and using child assessment information to develop lesson plans and guide instruction for individual children. Programs are also likely to miss indicators related to providing child assessment information to families.

Some differences on indicators and patterns of scoring between family child care programs and centers suggest that the indicators are working somewhat differently across types of settings.  Child care centers met all of the points within the Physical Health and Well-Being category more frequently than family child care programs. Family child care programs were more likely than centers to meet all Teaching and Relationships indicators and to earn the maximum points for Teacher Training and Education. Notably, these are the two categories with differences in indicators for family child care programs and centers.  (The Teaching and Relationships category includes CLASS observation scores for centers, but not for family child care programs.  Similarly, the Teacher Training and Education category includes several indicators for centers, including a director's credential and the average of the career lattice levels across teachers in centers, while it only includes the career lattice level for family child care providers.)  The details presented in this section provide information about how the scoring structure is functioning in practice, especially at the higher Rating levels, and may inform efforts to support programs as they set goals and work toward achieving individual indicators and goal ratings.

# Section 6. Re-Ratings

**Purpose of this section:** This section describes changes in Ratings for child care centers and family child care providers who had completed the Full-Rating process twice by the end of the third year of statewide expansion.

**Key Findings:**

- As of December 31, 2014, 127 Fully-Rated child care centers and family child care providers have been Rated twice.

- Overall, programs are greatly improving their Ratings, as 29% of child care centers and 22% of family child care providers earned a Three- or Four-Star Rating for the first cycle, while 62% and 54%, respectively, earned a Three- or Four-Star Rating for the second cycle.

- The majority of programs (89%) earned their goal Rating for the first cycle. There is more variation between programs' goal and received Ratings for the second cycle.

- Over 70% of programs improved their Star-Rating between the first and second cycles.

- Among the small number of programs seeking Three- or Four-Star Ratings at both cycles, the majority of child care centers improved their scores among the four Indicator categories. Family child care providers improved their scores to a lesser extent. Child care centers experienced the least amount of growth in the Assessment of Child Progress category, while family child care providers experienced the most amount of growth in the Assessment of Child Progress category.

## Introduction

This section analyzes the degree to which programs are sustaining their participation in Parent Aware and making changes in their Star-Ratings. Data are presented on the distribution of Star-Ratings for Fully-Rated Programs that have been Rated twice, the difference between programs' goal and received Star-Ratings, the patterns of change between Star-Ratings, and how category scores from the Parent Aware Rating Tool changed between Ratings. Understanding how Ratings change is important to assess how Parent Aware helps child care and early education programs improve their quality.

## Methods

Data about Parent Aware Ratings originated from Develop, the Quality Improvement and Registry Tool operated by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. A spreadsheet of data as of December 31, 2014 downloaded from Develop was emailed to Child Trends from DHS on January 6, 2015. The spreadsheet contained demographic, Ratings, and indicator data on all assigned Parent Aware Ratings.

## Analysis of Re-Ratings in Parent Aware

The number of child care centers and family child care providers who have ever received a Full-Rating, and their current status in the Rating process, are shown in Table 19. As of December 31, 2014, 756 programs had gone through the Full-Rating process and 127 of these programs (17%) have undergone the Rating process twice[30]. Programs can begin the re-rating process as soon as six months after receiving their initial Rating; however, a new Rating cannot be issued until one year after the first Rating was issued. Among the programs that have not received a second Rating: the first Rating for the majority of programs (77%) had not expired yet, 20 programs (3%) had their first Rating expire and had not yet pursued a second Rating, and 27 (3%) were no longer eligible because the program ceased operating or there was a licensing violation. Throughout this section, the first Rating cycle refers to the first Star-Rating a program received, and the second Rating cycle refers to the second Star-Rating a program received.

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[30] It should be noted that 129 programs began the re-rating process, however only 127 programs received a re-rating. Two programs received no rating.

**Table 19.** Current Star-Rating status for Fully-Rated child care centers and family child care providers as of December 31, 2014

| Current Star-Rating Status | | Child Care Centers | Family Child Care | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Currently Rated** | Received second Star-Rating | 21 | 106 | **127 (17%)** |
| | Initial rating still valid | 107 | 475 | **582 (77%)** |
| **Attrition** | First Star-Rating expired and have not yet earned a second Star-Rating | 7 | 13 | **20 (3%)** |
| | Program ceased operating | 2 | 20 | **22 (3%)** |
| | License revoked or negative action issued which made program ineligible | 1 | 4 | **5 (~0%)** |
| | Total | **138** | **618** | **756** |

**Source:** Data downloaded from Develop January 6, 2015, the Quality Improvement and Registry Tool used by Minnesota Department of Human Services and emailed to Child Trends on January 23, 2015.

Distributions of Star-Ratings for the first and second Rating cycles are shown in Figure 19. The distributions are similar for child care centers and family child care providers, though child care centers tend to receive higher Star-Ratings overall. For the first Rating cycle, child care centers were most likely to receive a Two-Star Rating (51%) and family child care providers were most likely to receive a One-Star Rating (41%). For the second rating cycle, child care centers were most likely to receive a Four-Star Rating (43%) and family child care providers were equally likely to receive a Two-Star Rating (37%) or a Four-Star Rating (37%). Both types of programs experienced an improvement in Star-Rating between the first and second Rating cycles. Over half of child care centers (62%) and family child care providers (54%) received Three- or Four-Star Ratings for the second cycle.

**Figure 19.** Star-Rating distribution by Rating cycle and program type
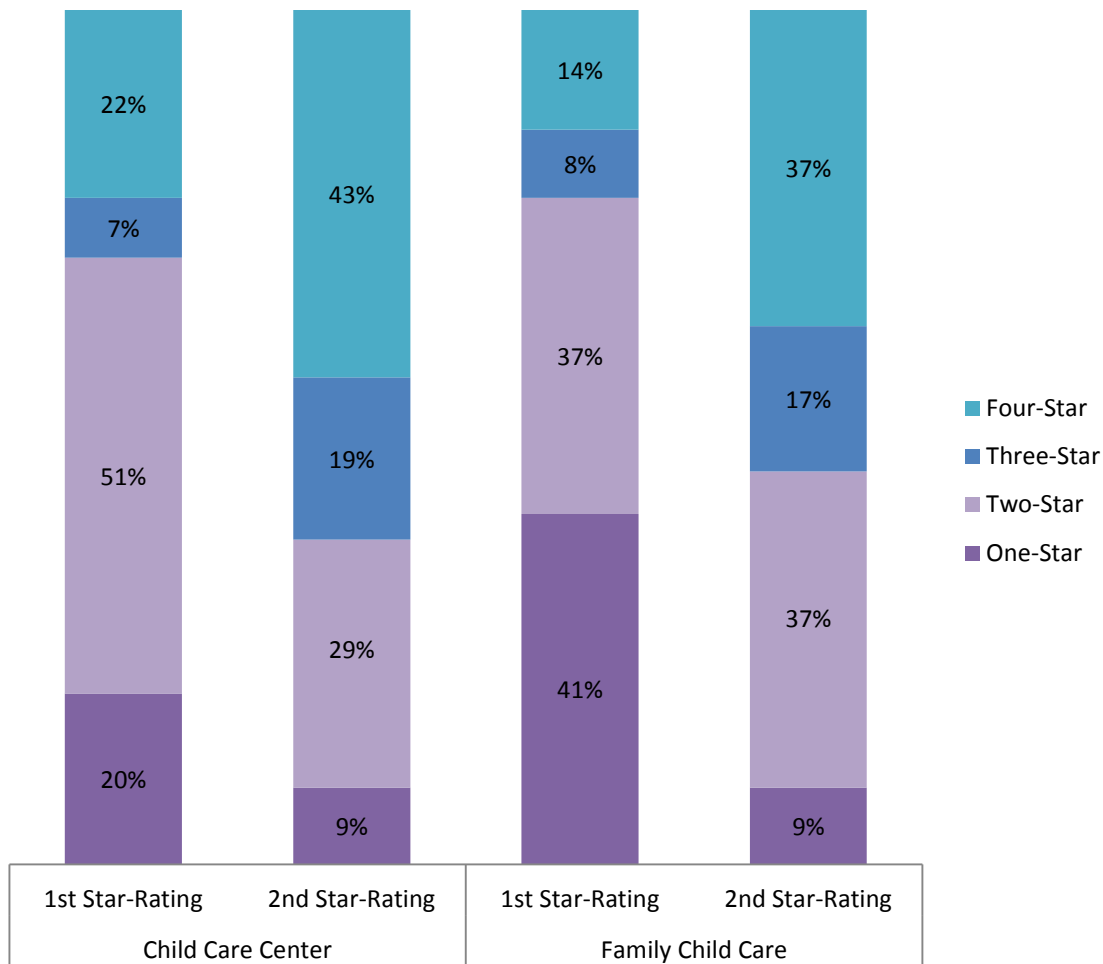


Legend:
- Four-Star
- Three-Star
- Two-Star
- One-Star

Child Care Center:
- 1st Star-Rating: 22% Four-Star, 7% Three-Star, 51% Two-Star, 20% One-Star
- 2nd Star-Rating: 43% Four-Star, 19% Three-Star, 29% Two-Star, 9% One-Star

Family Child Care:
- 1st Star-Rating: 14% Four-Star, 8% Three-Star, 37% Two-Star, 41% One-Star
- 2nd Star-Rating: 37% Four-Star, 17% Three-Star, 37% Two-Star, 9% One-Star

Programs completing the Full-Rating process indicate which Star-Rating they are applying for. The differences between programs' goal Rating and actual Star-Rating for both Rating cycles are shown in Table 20. For the first Rating cycle, the majority of child care centers (81%) and family child care providers (91%) received the same Star-Rating as their goal. At the second Rating cycle, the percentage of child care centers and family child care programs that received Ratings higher than their goal increased by around 5% while the percentage of programs that received Ratings lower than their goal increased by around 10%. Overall, these findings indicate that the supports programs receive through Parent Aware coaching are helping providers understand the Rating tool and what they need to do to achieve their goal Star-Rating.

**Table 20.** Comparison between goal and actual Star-Rating

| | Child Care Centers | | Family Child Care | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1st Rating** | **2nd Rating** | **1st Rating** | **2nd Rating** |
| Rated higher than goal | 0% | 5% (1) | 2% (10) | 7% (7) |
| **Rated equal to goal** | **81% (112)** | **67% (14)** | **91% (564)** | **75% (80)** |
| Rated lower than goal | 19% (26) | 28% (6) | 7% (44) | 18% (19) |

**Source:** Data downloaded from Develop January 6, 2015, the Quality Improvement and Registry Tool used by Minnesota Department of Human Services and emailed to Child Trends on January 23, 2015.

Patterns of changes in Star-Rating between the first and second Rating cycles are shown in Table 21. Over half of child care centers and family child care providers (71%) increased their Star-Rating between the first and second Rating cycles. The most common change in Star-Rating for child care centers was an increase by one star (33%) or two stars (33%), while the most common change for family child care providers was an increase by one star (54%). Several programs (24%) experienced no change in their Star-Rating, including 1 child care center and 12 family child care providers that maintained a Four-Star Rating. For both program types, around 4-5% of programs decreased their Rating by one star. A few family child care providers (2%) decreased their Rating by three stars, likely due to missing criteria required to achieve at least a Two-Star Rating.

**Table 21.** Change in Star-Rating by program type

| Change in Star-Rating | Child Care Centers (n = 21) | Family Child Care (n = 106) |
|---|---|---|
| Decreased by three stars | 0% | 2% (2) |
| Decreased by two stars | 0% | 0% |
| Decreased by one star | 5% (1) | 3% (3) |
| No change | 24% (5) | 24% (26) |
| Increased by one star | **33% (7)** | **54% (57)** |
| Increased by two stars | **33% (7)** | 12% (13) |
| Increased by three stars | 5% (1) | 5% (5) |

**Source:** Data downloaded from Develop January 6, 2015, the Quality Improvement and Registry Tool used by Minnesota Department of Human Services and emailed to Child Trends on January 23, 2015.

For Three- and Four-Star Ratings, the Parent Aware Rating Tool uses point scores from four categories: Physical Health and Well-Being, Teaching and Relationships, Assessment of Child Progress, and Teacher Training and Education. For programs with a goal Star-Rating of Three- or Four-Star, Table 22 shows how programs' quality category scores changed between Rating cycles. This analysis is limited, as only 29 programs had a goal Rating of Three- or Four-Star for both Rating cycles. It will be important to continue looking at

changes in Rating Tool scores as more programs receive multiple Ratings to better understand how programs improve their quality Rating. Around half of child care centers (50-83%) improved their scores for all four categories. Child care centers experienced the least amount of growth in the Assessment of Child Progress category. Family child care providers, overall, did not improve their category scores as much as child care centers. Over half of providers (52%) improved their scores for Assessment of Child Progress. Around half of family child care providers (44-70%) did not change their scores for the other three categories. Some family child care providers (4-22%) lost points for all categories.

**Table 22.** Change in Parent Aware Rating Tool category scores by program type

| Rating Tool Category | Program Type | Loss of points | No change | Gain of .5 to 2 points | Gain of over 2.5 points |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Physical Health and Well-Being (4 pts) | Child Care Centers (n = 6) | 0% | 33% (2) | 17% (1) | **50% (3)** |
| | Family Child Care (n = 23) | 9% (2) | **70% (16)** | 22% (5) | 0% |
| Teaching and Relationships (6 pts CCC or 5 pts FCC) | Child Care Centers | 0% | 17% (1) | 33% (2) | **50% (3)** |
| | Family Child Care | 4% (1) | 44% (10) | **48% (11)** | 4% (1) |
| Assessment of Child Progress (4 pts) | Child Care Centers | **33% (2)** | 17% (1) | 17% (1) | **33% (2)** |
| | Family Child Care | 22% (5) | 26% (6) | **43% (10)** | 9% (2) |
| Teacher Training and Education (6 pts CCC or 7 pts FCC) | Child Care Centers | 17% (1) | 17% (1) | **67% (4)** | 0% |
| | Family Child Care | 4% (1) | **48% (11)** | 39% (9) | 9% (2) |

**Source:** Data downloaded from Develop January 6, 2015, the Quality Improvement and Registry Tool used by Minnesota Department of Human Services and emailed to Child Trends on January 23, 2015.

Figure 20 displays the average change in Rating Tool category scores for the patterns of change in Star-Rating. Programs that increased their Star-Rating by more than one star, on average, improved by over 2 points for Teaching and Relationships, and around 1 point for the other categories. Programs that decreased their Star-Rating, on average, still improved on two category scores, but decreased for Assessment of Child Progress by .25 points and did not change for Teacher Training and Education.

**Figure 20.** Average change in Rating Tool category scores by change in Star-Rating (n = 29)
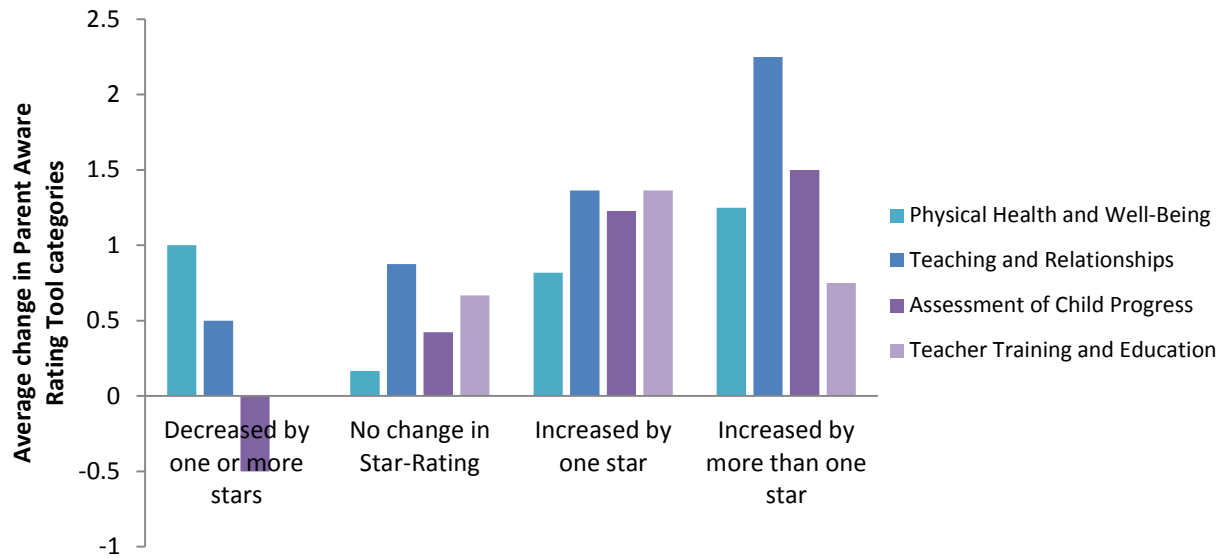


Source: Data downloaded from Develop January 6, 2015, the Quality Improvement and Registry Tool used by Minnesota Department of Human Services and emailed to Child Trends on January 23, 2015.

## Summary

As of the end of the third year of statewide expansion of Parent Aware, 756 programs have ever received Star-Ratings through the Full-Rating process. The majority of Fully-Rated programs (77%) have not had their first Rating expire yet, while 17% of Fully-Rated programs have already received a second Star-Rating. Only 3% of programs had their first Rating expire and did not pursue a second Rating. Programs are most commonly Rated One- or Two-Stars for their first Rating and Three- or Four-Stars for their second Rating. Over 70% of programs improved their Star-Rating between the first and second cycles. The majority of programs earned their goal Star-Rating for the first cycle, but the percentage earning their goal Rating decreased in the second cycle, as programs tended to have a higher goal for their second Rating. The majority of child care centers improved their scores for all Rating Tool categories; family child care providers improved their scores to a lesser extent. Child care centers experienced the least amount of growth in the Assessment of Child Progress category, while family child care providers experienced the most amount of growth in the Assessment of Child Progress category.

# Section 7. Summary and Implications

The purpose of this report is to provide a review and analysis of Parent Aware activities and outcomes in 2014, the third year of statewide expansion. The report includes details about enrollment and Ratings, an examination of the Parent Aware indicators, an analysis of parentaware.org, and initial findings related to parent perceptions of Parent Aware in the early years of implementation. The findings are intended to support discussion and decision-making in the final year of statewide expansion. Key themes presented in this report include:

- **New early care and education initiatives aligned with Parent Aware and reauthorization of CCDF create opportunities and implementation challenges**. In 2014, state scholarships and tiered reimbursement provided new opportunities to improve access to high quality programs. Provider surveys and parent interviews to be conducted in 2015 will provide insights into how these initiatives are working for programs and for families. Decisions made for the CCDF Plan due March 2016 and legislative activities in winter and spring of 2015 will shape Parent Aware operations and resources in 2016 and beyond.

- **Recruitment and Rating efforts in 2014 resulted in larger numbers of non-accredited programs earning Star-Ratings than in previous cohorts.** Nearly 1,900 early care and education programs (1,892 or 19%) have a Parent Aware Rating as of December 31st, 2014, including over 445 newly enrolled licensed family child care programs and child care centers. The proportion of APR-Rated Programs is decreasing as a percentage of Rated Programs in Parent Aware as more programs earn a rating through the Full-Rating Pathway. The majority of programs using the Full-Rating pathway achieve One- or Two-Star Rating.

- **Parent Aware monitoring and tracking improved with Develop.** The new data system implemented to support quality improvement and professional development in Minnesota became fully operational in 2014. Develop has improved the ability of the Minnesota Department of Human Services to produce "real-time" data about Parent Aware implementation and greatly increases the capacity of DHS to produce reports for key stakeholders.

- **The density of program participation is increasing.** Nearly one in five programs (19%) eligible for a Parent Aware Rating in 2014 had a current Rating. Three-quarters (75%) of programs eligible for APR had a Parent Aware Rating, while 8% of programs eligible for a Full-Rating had a Rating. Around half of Rated Programs (48%) were from the East Metro and West Metro districts.

- **Continued efforts are needed to promote families' access to Parent Aware-Rated programs.** Findings from a recent report from the Minnesota Department of Human Services indicate that over one-third of children receiving CCAP are served in Parent Aware-Rated programs. Provider survey data from the Parent Aware evaluation indicate that fewer family child care providers (30%) report serving children receiving child care assistance, compared to other types of programs in Parent Aware. Family child care providers also are more likely than child care centers to report that their program is full and that they have a waiting list. These access and supply issues will be especially critical to analyze in Greater Minnesota in 2015 as Parent Aware is available in every county.

- **In the first two and a half years of statewide expansion, parents report limited familiarity with the Parent Aware website but are interested in using it.** Most parents (71%) report knowing about a website where they can find a list of child care providers, but fewer (41%) know of a website that provides information about child care quality. A majority of parents report that they would use a Star-Rating when making an early care and education decision and report being willing to pay more for a program with a higher Rating.

- **The new Parent Aware website provides website visitors with new opportunities for early care and education searches.** Parents visiting the website prioritized distance of programs from their homes and Star-Ratings. Other search terms were used (e.g., schedule) but on fewer visits. Tracking website activity over time will provide useful information to support enhancements to the site and to understand how to target outreach efforts for both parents and providers.

- **Most programs earn their goal Rating at the initial and second Rating.** Programs are most likely to set a One- or Two-Star Rating goal for their initial Rating. Programs appear to set realistic Rating goals with the support of their Quality Coach. More programs aim for and achieve Three- and Four-Star Ratings at the second Rating, and over 70% of programs improved their Star-Rating between the first and second cycles. To date, however, only 129 programs have received a second Rating. Re-rating patterns will be clearer after the January and July cohorts are Rated in 2015.

- **Different patterns of scoring are evident across the Parent Aware rating tool.** Indicators related to Assessment of Child Progress are less frequently met when programs seek an initial Three- or Four-Star Rating. In contrast, the majority of programs received the maximum amount of points in Physical Health and Well-Being. It is notable that family child care providers seeking a Three- or Four-Star Rating at two Rating cycles earned the most points in Assessment of Child Progress

at the second Rating. It will be important to understand if these improvements are a result of new practices or whether programs are able to spend more time in the second Rating completing the documentation needed to achieve the assessment indicators. Coaching and training related to Assessment of Child Progress continue to be a vital support needed for Parent Aware programs.

Overall, implementation of Parent Aware in 2014 proceeded smoothly as progress was made toward recruitment targets and nearly one in five early care and education programs in Minnesota had a Star-Rating. A Validation Report to be produced in the third quarter of 2015 will provide information about the effectiveness of Parent Aware in producing Ratings that are meaningful for programs and whether Ratings are related in expected ways to supporting children's developmental progress.

# Appendix A: Data Sources

Data for the Evaluation are collected from a variety of sources. Short descriptions of each data source and organizations responsible for data are provided.

| Data | Description of Data | Data Source |
|---|---|---|
| **Parent interview** | Parents of children enrolled in the evaluation are asked to participate in a one-time phone interview during the fall data collection period. Data presented in this report were collected from January 2013 through July 2013 and again from October 2013 through April 2014. | *Wilder Research (under subcontract with Child Trends)* |
| **Develop** | The Minnesota Department of Human Services houses Develop, which contains data about all Parent Aware programs, their Star-Ratings, points earned for each quality indicator, teachers' and providers' professional development information, and Quality Coach case management data. Develop also receives information from the state of Minnesota and tribal child care licensing and NACCRRAware. | *Minnesota Department of Human Services* |
| **Provider Survey** | Child Trends conducted web-based surveys of providers participating in Parent Aware. Data were collected from April 2014 through June 2014. | *Child Trends* |
| **Google Analytics** | Google Analytics is a service offered by Google that generates detailed statistics about a website's traffic and traffic sources. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Analytics Data presented in this report were collected between August 2014 and February 2015. | *Google* |

# Appendix B. Number of Visits to www.parentaware.org by City in Minnesota

| City or Zip Code | Sessions |
|---|---|
| Ada | 16 |
| Adams | 3 |
| Aitkin | 9 |
| Albany | 39 |
| Albert Lea | 19 |
| Albertville | 34 |
| Alexandria | 252 |
| Andover | 106 |
| Annandale | 65 |
| Anoka | 132 |
| Anoka County | 8 |
| Apple Valley | 1,135 |
| Appleton | 10 |
| Arden Hills | 18 |
| Arlington | 2 |
| Ashby | 5 |
| Atwater | 4 |
| Audubon | 11 |
| Aurora | 4 |
| Austin | 152 |
| Avon | 4 |
| Backus | 1 |
| Badger | 5 |
| Bagley | 36 |
| Barnesville | 13 |
| Barnum | 18 |
| Battle Lake | 10 |
| Baudette | 2 |
| Baxter | 13 |
| Bayport | 8 |
| Becker | 29 |
| Belle Plaine | 120 |
| Bemidji | 184 |

| City or Zip Code | Sessions |
|---|---|
| Benson | 7 |
| Bertha | 5 |
| Big Lake | 129 |
| Blackduck | 2 |
| Blaine | 733 |
| Blooming Prairie | 3 |
| Bloomington | 1,490 |
| Blue Earth | 118 |
| Braham | 3 |
| Brainerd | 377 |
| Brandon | 3 |
| Breckenridge | 10 |
| Breezy Point | 8 |
| Brooklyn Center | 102 |
| Brooklyn Park | 886 |
| Browns Valley | 2 |
| Buffalo | 240 |
| Burnsville | 823 |
| Byron | 25 |
| Caledonia | 11 |
| Cambridge | 122 |
| Canby | 3 |
| Cannon Falls | 65 |
| Carlton | 1 |
| Carver | 1 |
| Cass County | 1 |
| Cass Lake | 80 |
| Center City | 22 |
| Champlin | 255 |
| Chanhassen | 197 |
| Chaska | 389 |
| Chatfield | 26 |
| Chisago City | 119 |
| Chisholm | 4 |
| Chokio | 1 |
| Circle Pines | 5 |
| Clara City | 13 |

| City or Zip Code | Sessions |
| --- | --- |
| Clarissa | 4 |
| Clarkfield | 1 |
| Clear Lake | 2 |
| Clearbrook | 10 |
| Clearwater | 39 |
| Cloquet | 135 |
| Cokato | 15 |
| Cold Spring | 21 |
| Cologne | 9 |
| Columbia Heights | 65 |
| Cook | 3 |
| Coon Rapids | 583 |
| Cottage Grove | 112 |
| Cottonwood | 2 |
| Crookston | 32 |
| Crosby | 25 |
| Crosslake | 3 |
| Crystal | 41 |
| Dakota | 2 |
| Dassel | 3 |
| Dawson | 4 |
| Dayton | 2 |
| Deer River | 7 |
| Delano | 52 |
| Detroit Lakes | 213 |
| Dilworth | 1 |
| Dodge Center | 29 |
| Duluth | 1,810 |
| Eagan | 1,629 |
| Eagle Bend | 2 |
| East Grand Forks | 6 |
| Eden Prairie | 761 |
| Eden Valley | 19 |
| Edgerton | 1 |
| Edina | 470 |
| Elbow Lake | 19 |
| Elk River | 368 |

| City or Zip Code | Sessions |
|---|---|
| Elko New Market | 39 |
| Ely | 34 |
| Emily | 5 |
| Erskine | 1 |
| Esko | 10 |
| Evansville | 8 |
| Eveleth | 2 |
| Excelsior | 4 |
| Fairmont | 107 |
| Falcon Heights | 20 |
| Faribault | 90 |
| Farmington | 95 |
| Fergus Falls | 184 |
| Fertile | 21 |
| Foley | 17 |
| Forest Lake | 328 |
| Fosston | 16 |
| Frazee | 6 |
| Fridley | 319 |
| Gaylord | 12 |
| Glencoe | 69 |
| Glenville | 1 |
| Glenwood | 15 |
| Glyndon | 27 |
| Golden Valley | 714 |
| Goodhue | 14 |
| Graceville | 1 |
| Grand Marais | 5 |
| Grand Meadow | 10 |
| Grand Rapids | 134 |
| Granite Falls | 16 |
| Greenbush | 2 |
| Grey Eagle | 1 |
| Grove City | 9 |
| Grygla | 2 |
| Hallock | 1 |
| Ham Lake | 19 |

| City or Zip Code | Sessions |
| --- | --- |
| Hamel | 1 |
| Hancock | 3 |
| Harmony | 4 |
| Hastings | 229 |
| Hawley | 15 |
| Hector | 2 |
| Hennepin County | 7 |
| Henning | 1 |
| Hermantown | 42 |
| Heron Lake | 2 |
| Hibbing | 97 |
| Hills | 5 |
| Hinckley | 16 |
| Hopkins | 191 |
| Houston | 11 |
| Howard Lake | 10 |
| Hugo | 4 |
| Hutchinson | 243 |
| International Falls | 48 |
| Inver Grove Heights | 304 |
| Isanti | 15 |
| Isle | 14 |
| Jackson | 22 |
| Janesville | 2 |
| Jordan | 108 |
| Karlstad | 2 |
| Kasson | 72 |
| Kenyon | 9 |
| Kimball | 17 |
| La Crescent | 7 |
| Lake City | 13 |
| Lake Crystal | 2 |
| Lake Elmo | 21 |
| Lake Park | 18 |
| Lakefield | 4 |
| Lakeville | 668 |
| Lamberton | 2 |

| City or Zip Code | Sessions |
| --- | ---: |
| Lancaster | 1 |
| Lanesboro | 4 |
| Laporte | 2 |
| Le Center | 15 |
| Le Roy | 10 |
| Le Sueur | 13 |
| Lester Prairie | 2 |
| Lewiston | 5 |
| Lindstrom | 46 |
| Lino Lakes | 48 |
| Litchfield | 30 |
| Little Falls | 70 |
| Long Prairie | 36 |
| Longville | 2 |
| Lonsdale | 32 |
| Luverne | 37 |
| Madelia | 5 |
| Madison | 8 |
| Mahnomen | 4 |
| Mahtomedi | 12 |
| Mankato | 756 |
| Mantorville | 8 |
| Maple Grove | 1,121 |
| Maple Lake | 14 |
| Maple Plain | 15 |
| Maplewood | 365 |
| Marshall | 206 |
| Mayer | 12 |
| Mazeppa | 1 |
| McGregor | 5 |
| McIntosh | 1 |
| Medford | 2 |
| Medina | 35 |
| Melrose | 16 |
| Menahga | 27 |
| Mendota Heights | 146 |
| Mentor | 2 |

| City or Zip Code | Sessions |
| --- | --- |
| Milaca | 50 |
| Mille Lacs County | 3 |
| Minneapolis | 15,743 |
| Minneota | 4 |
| Minnetonka | 761 |
| Minnetrista | 2 |
| Montevideo | 119 |
| Montgomery | 10 |
| Monticello | 105 |
| Montrose | 16 |
| Moorhead | 710 |
| Moose Lake | 12 |
| Mora | 40 |
| Morgan | 5 |
| Morris | 75 |
| Morristown | 6 |
| Mound | 154 |
| Mounds View | 12 |
| Mountain Iron | 3 |
| Mountain Lake | 10 |
| Nashwauk | 1 |
| New Brighton | 365 |
| New Hope | 96 |
| New London | 25 |
| New Prague | 168 |
| New Ulm | 132 |
| New York Mills | 17 |
| Newfolden | 4 |
| Nicollet | 7 |
| North Branch | 57 |
| North Saint Paul | 2 |
| Northfield | 71 |
| Northome | 1 |
| Norwood Young America | 5 |
| Oakdale | 371 |
| Ogilvie | 1 |

| City or Zip Code | Sessions |
|---|---|
| Oklee | 5 |
| Olivia | 18 |
| Onamia | 19 |
| Orono | 34 |
| Oronoco | 15 |
| Ortonville | 24 |
| Osakis | 18 |
| Osseo | 4 |
| Otsego | 19 |
| Ottertail | 11 |
| Owatonna | 206 |
| Park Rapids | 84 |
| Parkers Prairie | 12 |
| Paynesville | 38 |
| Pelican Rapids | 6 |
| Pequot Lakes | 35 |
| Perham | 52 |
| Pierz | 1 |
| Pine City | 130 |
| Pine Island | 39 |
| Pine River | 5 |
| Pipestone | 18 |
| Plainview | 41 |
| Plummer | 2 |
| Plymouth | 1,026 |
| Preston | 10 |
| Princeton | 28 |
| Prior Lake | 172 |
| Ramsey | 28 |
| Ramsey County | 55 |
| Randolph | 3 |
| Raymond | 3 |
| Red Lake | 1 |
| Red Lake Falls | 16 |
| Red Wing | 85 |
| Redwood Falls | 31 |
| Remer | 3 |

| City or Zip Code | Sessions |
|---|---|
| Rice | 40 |
| Richfield | 669 |
| Richmond | 5 |
| Robbinsdale | 112 |
| Rochester | 3,396 |
| Rockford | 7 |
| Rogers | 22 |
| Roseau | 13 |
| Rosemount | 75 |
| Roseville | 1,587 |
| Rothsay | 2 |
| Royalton | 1 |
| Rush City | 18 |
| Rushford | 15 |
| Russell | 3 |
| Sacred Heart | 2 |
| Saint Charles | 6 |
| Saint Cloud | 1,693 |
| Saint Francis | 19 |
| Saint James | 18 |
| Saint Joseph | 23 |
| Saint Michael | 147 |
| Saint Paul | 6,970 |
| Saint Paul Park | 19 |
| Saint Peter | 86 |
| Sandstone | 14 |
| Sartell | 76 |
| Sauk Centre | 43 |
| Sauk Rapids | 27 |
| Savage | 292 |
| Sebeka | 6 |
| Shakopee | 512 |
| Shoreview | 462 |
| Shorewood | 40 |
| Silver Bay | 5 |
| Slayton | 7 |
| Sleepy Eye | 20 |

| City or Zip Code | Sessions |
| --- | --- |
| South Saint Paul | 234 |
| Spicer | 19 |
| Spring Grove | 7 |
| Spring Lake Park | 3 |
| Spring Park | 3 |
| Spring Valley | 9 |
| Springfield | 7 |
| St. Louis Park | 1,491 |
| Stacy | 15 |
| Staples | 50 |
| Starbuck | 12 |
| Stephen | 2 |
| Stewartville | 8 |
| Stillwater | 274 |
| Thief River Falls | 52 |
| Twin Valley | 6 |
| Two Harbors | 29 |
| Tyler | 2 |
| Ulen | 3 |
| Underwood | 2 |
| Upsala | 2 |
| Victoria | 63 |
| Virginia | 114 |
| Wabasha | 16 |
| Wabasso | 5 |
| Waconia | 98 |
| Wadena | 120 |
| Waite Park | 9 |
| Walker | 36 |
| Walnut Grove | 8 |
| Warren | 6 |
| Warroad | 3 |
| Waseca | 38 |
| Washington County | 2 |
| Watertown | 26 |
| Waterville | 16 |
| Waubun | 6 |

| City or Zip Code | Sessions |
|---|---:|
| Wayzata | 41 |
| Wells | 243 |
| West Saint Paul | 124 |
| White Bear Lake | 657 |
| Willmar | 334 |
| Windom | 20 |
| Winona | 660 |
| Winsted | 8 |
| Winthrop | 8 |
| Woodbury | 1,217 |
| Worthington | 104 |
| Wrenshall | 2 |
| Wyoming | 11 |
| Zimmerman | 69 |
| Zumbrota | 20 |
| 55934 | 11 |
| 56001 | 5 |
| 56401 | 1 |
| 56589 | 4 |
| (not set) | 40 |
| (not set) | 13 |
| | 67,251 |

## Appendix C. Total points received in each category by programs with goal ratings of Three- or Four-Star (n=262)

| Total Points Received in Each Category | Family Child Care Programs (n=197 for PH, TR, and TT Indicators; n=132 for AC Indicators)[1] | Family Child Care Programs (n=65 for revised AC Indicators)[1] | Child Care Centers (n=65 for PH, TR, and TT Indicators; n=48 for AC Indicators)[1] | Child Care Centers (n=17 for revised AC Indicators)[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Physical Health and Well-Being (4 points) | | | | |
| 0 points | 1% (1) | | 0% (0) | |
| 1 point | 5% (10) | | 3% (2) | |
| 2 points | 11% (22) | | 6% (4) | |
| 3 points | 14% (28) | | 6% (4) | |
| 4 points | **69% (136)** | | **85% (55)** | |
| Teaching and Relationships (5 or 6 points) | | | | |
| 0 points | 1% (1) | | 0% (0) | |
| 1 point | 1% (1) | | 0% (0) | |
| 2 points | 4% (7) | | 2% (1) | |
| 2.5 points | - | | 2% (1) | |
| 3 points | 10% (19) | | 5% (3) | |
| 3.5 points | - | | 5% (3) | |
| 4 points | 24% (47) | | 6% (4) | |
| 4.5 points | - | | 3% (2) | |
| 5 points | **62% (122)** | | 9% (6) | |
| 5.5 points | N/A | | 22% (14) | |
| 6 points | N/A | | **48% (31)** | |
| Assessment of Child Progress (4 points)[1] | | | | |
| 0 points | 6% (8) | 11% (7) | 0% (1) | 0% (0) |
| 0.5 points | 2% (2) | N/A | 2% (7) | N/A |
| 1-1.5 points | 30% (40) | 34% (22) | 15% (7) | 29% (5) |
| 2-2.5 points | 20% (26) | 17% (11) | 29% (14) | 6% (1) |
| 3-3.5 points | 27% (36) | 14% (9) | 31% (15) | 35% (6) |

| Total Points Received in Each Category | Family Child Care Programs (n=197 for PH, TR, and TT Indicators; n=132 for AC Indicators)[1] | Family Child Care Programs (n=65 for revised AC Indicators)[1] | Child Care Centers (n=65 for PH, TR, and TT Indicators; n=48 for AC Indicators)[1] | Child Care Centers (n=17 for revised AC Indicators)[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 points | **15% (20)** | **25% (16)** | **21% (10)** | **29% (5)** |
| Teacher Training and Education (6 or 7 points) | | | | |
| 0 points | 2% (4) | | 2% (1) | |
| 1 points | 1% (2) | | 3% (2) | |
| 2 points | 11% (22) | | 8% (5) | |
| 3 points | 8% (16) | | 15% (10) | |
| 4 points | 14% (28) | | 38% (25) | |
| 5 points | 13% (25) | | 26% (17) | |
| 6 points | 8% (16) | | **8% (5)** | |
| 7 points | **43% (84)** | | N/A | |

**Note:** PH=Physical Health and Well-Being; TR=Teaching and Relationships; AC=Assessment of Child Progress; TT=Teacher Training and Education.

[1] The Assessment of Child Progress (AC) indicators were revised in 2014. The first set of statewide indicators applied to programs rated prior to July 2014. The revised indicators applied to programs that began in July 2014 and received their rating on December 31, 2014.

**Source:** Data downloaded from Develop January 6, 2015, the Quality Improvement and Registry Tool used by Minnesota Department of Human Services and emailed to Child Trends on January 23, 2015.

# Appendix D. Frequencies and percentages of indicators met and unmet at the Three- or Four-Star levels by family child care programs with goal Ratings of Three- or Four-Star (n= 197)

| Indicator | Points | Met | Unmet | Met | Unmet |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | (n=197 for PH, TR, and TT Indicators; n= 132 for AC Indicators) [1] | | (n=65 for revised AC Indicators) [1] | |
| **PH3a:** Assists families in getting supports they identify as needed | 1 point | 80% (158) | 19% (30) | | |
| **PH3b:** All lead teachers have completed at least 3 hours of training on child nutrition or the program participates in MN CACFP | 1 point | 93% (184) | 5% (8) | | |
| **PH3c:** All lead teacher have complete at least 3 hours of training on obesity prevention | 2 points | 86% (170) | 17% (28) | | |
| **TR3a:** Uses a curriculum that is aligned with MN ECIPS and all lead teachers have completed at least 8 hours of training on implementing the curriculum | 2 points | 97% (192) | 5% (8) | Required[31] 100% (28) | 0% (0) |
| **TR3b:** All lead teachers have at least 4 hours of training on children's special needs | 1 point | 85% (168) | 18% (29) | | |
| **TR3c:** All lead teachers have at least 4 hours of training on | 1 point | 91% (179) | 11% (17) | | |

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[31] This is an example of a **required** indicator at the Three-Star and Four-Star Rating level.

| | Points | Met | Unmet | Met | Unmet |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Indicator** | | | | | |
| specified domains of child development | | | | | |
| **TR3d**: Demonstrates the ability to communicate program information in parent's primary language | 1 point | 71% (139) | 35% (57) | | |
| **AC3a First Indicator Set**: Conducts assessment using an approved tool, with all children at least twice per year, in at least the following domains: social–emotional development, language and literacy, mathematical thinking, and physical development; AND all lead teachers have completed eight hours of training on authentic child assessment (1 point) <br> **AC3a Revised Indicator**: All lead child care providers have completed at least 8 hours of training, coaching, consultation or mentoring on authentic child assessment (Required) | 0 points <br> 0.5 points <br> 1 point <br> 2 points | -- <br> 8% (10) <br> 60% (79) <br> 19% (25) | 17% (22) <br> -- <br> -- <br> -- | 100% (65) | 0% (0) |
| **AC3b Revised Indicator**: Uses approved child assessment tool(s) with all children in at least one age group <br> OR <br> Uses approved assessment tool(s) with all children in all age groups | 0 points <br> 0.5 points <br> 1 point <br> 2 points | | | Required 100% (65) | 0% (0) |
| **AC3c First Indicator Set:** Provides families with | 0 points <br> 0.5 points | -- <br> 3% (4) | 31% (41) <br> -- | | |

| Indicator | Points | Met | Unmet | Met | Unmet |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| assessment results and with IEP/IFSP team if relevant with family's permission | 1 point | 67% (82) | -- | | |
| **AC3e Revised Indicator**: Provides families with child assessment results AND If a child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP), shares assessment results with team with family's permission | 1 point | | | 51% (33) | 49% (32) |
| **AC3c Revised Indicator:** Completes at least two domains in approved assessment tool(s) used OR Completes all domains in approved assessment tool(s) used | 1 point | | | 85% (55) | 15% (10) |
| **AC3d First Indicator Set:** Uses child assessment information to develop lesson plans and individual goals for all children in the program. If program is using an approved assessment tool with some but not all age groups, partial credit is given (1 point for full credit, .5 point for partial credit). | 0 points 0.5 points 1 point | -- 5% (6) 47% (62) | 49% (64) -- -- | | |
| **AC3f Revised Indicator**: Uses child assessment information to design goals and guide instruction for | 1 point | | | 37% (24) | 63% (41) |

| Indicator | Points | Met | Unmet | Met | Unmet |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| individual children | | | | | |
| **AC3d Revised Indicator:** Uses approved assessment tool(s) at least once per year OR Uses approved assessment tool(s) at least twice per year. | 1 point | | | 35% (23) | 65% (42) |
| **TT3a:** Provider training and education are recorded and documented through the Registry | 0 points | -- | 2% (4) | | |
| Step 2 in the MN Career Lattice | 1 point | 1% (2) | -- | | |
| Step 3 in the MN Career Lattice | 2 points | 11% (22) | -- | | |
| Step 4 in the MN Career Lattice | 3 points | 8% (16) | -- | | |
| Step 5 in the MN Career Lattice | 4 points | 14% (28) | -- | | |
| Step 6 in the MN Career Lattice | 5 points | 13% (25) | -- | | |
| Step 7-8 in the MN Career Lattice | 6 points | 8% (16) | -- | | |
| Step 9 or higher in the MN Career Lattice | 7 points | 43% (84) | -- | | |

**Note:** PH=Physical Health and Well-Being; TR=Teaching and Relationships; AC=Assessment of Child Progress; TT=Teacher Training and Education.

[1] The Assessment of Child Progress indicators were revised. The first set of statewide indicators applied to programs rated prior to June 2014. The revised indicators applied to programs that began in June 2014 and received their rating on December 31, 2014.

**Source:** Data downloaded from Develop January 6, 2015, the Quality Improvement and Registry Tool used by Minnesota Department of Human Services and emailed to Child Trends on January 23, 2015.

## Appendix E. Frequencies and percentages of indicators met and unmet at the Three- or Four-Star levels by child care centers with goal ratings of Three- or Four-Star (n=59)

| Indicator | Points | Met | Unmet | Met | Unmet |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | (n=57 for PH, TR, and TT Indicators; n=47 for AC Indicators) [1] | | (n=11 for revised AC Indicators) [1] | |
| **PH3a:** Assists families in getting supports they identify as needed | 1 point | 92% (60) | 8% (5) | | |
| **PH3b:** All lead teachers have completed at least 3 hours of training on child nutrition or the program participates in MN CACFP | 1 point | 95% (62) | 5% (3) | | |
| **PH3c:** All lead teacher have complete at least 3 hours of training on obesity prevention | 2 points | 92% (60) | 8% (5) | | |
| **TR3a:** Uses a curriculum that is aligned with MN ECIPS and all lead teachers have completed at least 8 hours of training on implementing the curriculum | Required | 100% (65) | 0% (0) | | |
| **TR3b:** All lead teachers have at least 4 hours of training on children's special needs | 1 point | 88% (57) | 12% (8) | | |
| **TR3c:** All lead teachers have at least 4 hours of training on specified domains of child development | 1 point | 89% (58) | 11% (7) | | |
| **TR3d:** Demonstrates the ability to communicate program information in parent's primary language | 1 point | 88% (57) | 12% (8) | | |
| **TR3e:** CLASS scores – Total | 0 points | -- | 0% (0) | | |

| Indicator | Points | Met | Unmet | Met | Unmet |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| points earned (preschool and preschool/toddler classrooms only)[2] | .5 points<br>1 point<br>1.5 points<br>2 points<br>2.5 points<br>3 points | 0% (0)<br>0% (0)<br>2% (1)<br>8% (5)<br>31% (19)<br>59% (36) | --<br>--<br>--<br>--<br>--<br>-- | | |
| **AC3a First Indicator Set**: Conducts assessment using an approved tool, with all children at least twice per year, in at least the following domains: social–emotional development, language and literacy, math-ematical thinking, and physical development; AND all lead teachers have completed eight hours of training on authentic child assessment (1 point)<br><br>**AC3a Revised Indicator**:  All lead child care providers have completed at least 8 hours of training, coaching, consultation or mentoring on authentic child assessment | 0 points<br>0.5 points<br>1 point<br>2 points | --<br>4% (2)<br>46% (22)<br>35% (17) | 15% (7)<br>--<br>--<br>-- | Required 100% (17) | 0% (0) |
| **AC3b First Indicator Set:** Uses approved child assessment tool(s) with all children in at least one age group<br>OR<br>Uses approved assessment tool(s) with all children in all age groups | | | | Required 100% (17) | 0% (0) |
| **AC3c First Indicator Set:** Provides families with assessment results and with IEP/IFSP team if relevant with family's permission | 0 points<br>0.5 points<br>1 point<br>2 points | --<br>4% (2)<br>0% (0)<br>73% (35) | 23% (11)<br>--<br>--<br>-- | | |

| Indicator | Points | Met | Unmet | Met | Unmet |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AC3e Revised Indicator:** Provides families with child assessment results AND If a child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP), shares assessment results with team with family's permission | 1 point | | | 82% (14) | 18% (3) |
| **AC3c Revised Indicator:** Completes at least two domains in approved assessment tool(s) used OR Completes all domains in approved assessment tool(s) used | 1 point | | | Required 82% (14) | 18% (3) |
| **AC3d First Indicator Set:** Uses child assessment information to develop lesson plans and individual goals for all children in the program. If program is using an approved assessment tool with some but not all age groups, partial credit is given (1 point for full credit, .5 point for partial credit). | 0 points 0.5 points 1 point | -- 6% (3) 67% (32) | 27% (13) -- -- | | |
| **AC3f Revised Indicator:** Uses child assessment information to design goals and guide instruction for individual children | 1 point | | | 59% (7) | 41% (7) |
| **AC3d Revised Indicator:** Uses approved assessment tool(s) at least once per year OR Uses approved assessment tool(s) at least twice per year. | 1 point | | | 41% (7) | 59% (10) |

| Indicator | Points | Met | Unmet | Met | Unmet |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **TT3a:** Education coordinator, director or lead administrator has a bachelor's degree with at least 24 early childhood-related credits | 1 point | 65% (42) | 35% (23) | | |
| **TT3b:** Director has a director's credential | 1 point | 22% (14) | 79% (51) | | |
| **TT3c:** Staff training and education are recorded and documented through the Registry. | | | | | |
|     Average score is 5 or less | 0 points | -- | 5% (3) | | |
|     Average score is between 5.1 and 6 | 1 point | 3% (2) | -- | | |
|     Average score is between 6.1 and 7 | 2 points | 12% (8) | -- | | |
|     Average score is between 7.1 and 9 | 3 points | 38% (25) | -- | | |
| Average score is between 9.1 and higher | 4 points | 42% (27) | -- | | |

[1] The Assessment of Child Progress indicators were revised. The first set of statewide indicators applied to programs rated prior to June 2014. The revised indicators applied to programs that began in June 2014 and received their rating on December 31, 2014.

[2] All preschool and toddler classrooms must receive a CLASS score of 2 or higher in the Instructional Support category of the CLASS to achieve a 3-Star Rating, and 2.5 or higher to achieve a 4-Star Rating. Programs that do meet the minimum Instructional Support score then receive up to 3 points for their scores on Instructional Support, Emotional Support, and Classroom Organization; see http://parentawareratings.org/tools-providersearly-educators for full scoring criteria.

**Source:** Data downloaded from Develop January 6, 2015, the Quality Improvement and Registry Tool used by Minnesota Department of Human Services and emailed to Child Trends on January 23, 2015.