



Parent Aware – Minnesota’s Quality Rating and Improvement System Year 4 Evaluation Report

June 2016



Statewide Expansion of Parent Aware Ratings: Year 4 Report

Reporting Period: January – December 2015

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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 is 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 was addressed in the Validation Report (Tout, et al.).
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 was addressed in the Validation report.
4. **How effective are the quality indicators and rating structure used in Parent Aware Ratings?** Child Trends conducted a validation of the Parent Aware indicators and rating structure to assess the extent to which Parent Aware is capturing program quality accurately and reliably. This question has been addressed for different components of the Parent Aware Rating Tool in the Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4 annual reports.
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 has been addressed in the Year 3 annual 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.

Evaluation reports are produced each year. The annual report will provide an overview of activities and outcomes while smaller reports or memos are produced to address high priority topical issues (such as provider perceptions of Parent Aware or quality improvement supports).

Reports are available at www.pasrmn.org.

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.

How do parents learn about Parent Aware Ratings?

When a program earns a Star-Rating, it is posted at parentaware.org, a statewide search engine. Parents can search for Rated (and non-rated) programs in their area using a variety of search criteria.

Purpose of the Report

Parent Aware is Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System for early care and education programs. After a gradual expansion that began in 2012, Parent Aware recently completed its first full year as a statewide initiative to support quality improvement and ultimately, young children's school readiness. The purpose of the Year 4 Parent Aware Evaluation report is to describe and analyze the current status of programs and their experiences over time in Parent Aware. Specifically, the report provides updated information about how program ratings change upon re-rating and how program characteristics, motivations and experiences differ by Star rating. The report is structured in five sections:

- Section 1 provides information about the context of Parent Aware implementation in the fourth year of statewide rollout.
- Section 2 contains an analysis of program re-ratings and how program ratings change over time.
- Section 3a contains an examination of fully-rated providers' perceptions of Parent Aware by program type and by Star-rating.
- Section 3b provides information about Accelerated Pathway to Rating (APR) programs' perceptions of Parent Aware and difference by APR program type.
- Section 4 contains information about program characteristics and their associations with program quality.
- Section 5 includes a summary and implications of the findings for ongoing statewide implementation of Parent Aware.

This is the fourth annual report conducted by Child Trends about the statewide rollout of Parent Aware. Funding is provided by Parent Aware for School Readiness (PASR), the Greater Twin Cities United Way (GTCUW), and Minnesota's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant (RTT-ELC). In addition to the annual reports, Child Trends has produced a series of three reports about providers' perceptions of Parent Aware. Child Trends also produced an Initial Validation Report (finalized in 2016) examining the extent to which Parent Aware ratings are fair, accurate and meaningful.

Throughout the report, a convention is used to describe findings in a consistent and succinct manner. The following key defines the terms align with response percentages.

Key:

- Almost no = 0-5%
- Few = 5-20%
- Some = 20%-50%
- A quarter = ~25%
- A third = ~33%
- Less than half = <50%
- A majority = >50%
- Two thirds = ~66%
- Many = 70-80%
- Three quarters = ~75%
- Most = 80-95%
- Almost all = 95-100%

Section 1. Parent Aware Description and Context¹

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 and ending in December 2016. Funding for Parent Aware is also provided by federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) dollars and state funding committed to Parent Aware in the 2015 legislative session. Private and local investment in Parent Aware has exceeded \$15 million since the beginning of statewide expansion. 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 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 responsible for recruiting and communicating with Head Start, Early Head Start, Early Childhood Special Education, and School-Based Pre-Kindergarten programs meeting School Readiness program requirements (a program run by school districts and offered to children ages three through five and meeting eligibility requirements defined by Minnesota Statutes 124D.15). Local Child Care Aware agencies conduct recruitment and offer the services of Quality Coaches, CLASS 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 contracted to conduct observations for non-accredited licensed child care centers seeking Three- or Four-Star 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 the Department of Human Services, where staff contracted through Child Care Aware of Minnesota perform the scoring. All information to determine ratings for School-Based Pre-Kindergarten programs, Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Childhood Special Education programs is sent to MDE. Child

¹ The annual reports from 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 2015.

¹ 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.

Care Aware of Minnesota and MDE make the initial determinations and recommendations for rating level, and DHS issues the final ratings.

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 of Parent Aware.
- Greater Twin Cities United Way supports the Child Care Accreditation Project (CAP) at the Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children (MnAEYC). CAP 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 of Parent Aware.
- The Minnesota Licensed Family Child Care Association, with funding from DHS, provides a hotline 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, with funding from DHS, provides technical and operational support for the professional development features in Develop, Minnesota’s Quality Improvement and Registry Tool. Develop also supports an online application process for programs participating in Parent Aware.

[The Parent Aware Rating Process](#)

Programs that are interested in Parent Aware have different options for enrollment to receive a full Rating. Non-accredited licensed child care 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 coaching from 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. These programs receive technical assistance support from a Quality Coach (up to 15 hours) and a Professional Development Advisor, and have access to low-cost

training. 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 Early Learning Scholarships and Child Care Assistance.

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 completed 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. 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.² The number of points earned determines whether a program achieves a Three- or Four-Star Rating. Parent Aware indicators are grouped into four categories:

- Physical Health and Well-Being
- Teaching and Relationships
- Assessment of Child Progress
- 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 Scholarships, 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 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

² 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.

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: 1) complete training or receive coaching on children's developmental disabilities, special health care needs, and/or behavioral challenges, 2) complete training or receive coaching on key aspects of child development, or 3) demonstrate the ability to communicate with parents in their primary language or complete 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 levels are also required indicators. The indicators were revised in July 2014.

Teacher Training and Education

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).

ParentAware.org

Parents and other consumers can access Parent Aware ratings on parentaware.org, a web-based search tool that contains entries for all early care and education programs, regardless of whether they have a Parent Aware rating. To facilitate the selection of Parent

Aware-rated programs, Parent Aware programs are listed first in search results. In addition, parents and consumers can filter their searches by program rating, program type, and a variety of other search criteria. The Year 3 Evaluation Report included an analysis of initial website activity on parentaware.org (Cleveland et al., 2015).

Important Developments in 2015

The fourth year of statewide expansion included a number of noteworthy activities and events that shaped Parent Aware implementation:

- The statewide rollout was completed in January 2015 when Parent Aware became available to all non-accredited child care programs. The timeline of Parent Aware statewide expansion is important to consider when reviewing details about Parent Aware implementation and outcomes. For example, ECE program participation rates in Parent Aware are higher in counties that were included in the initial wave of Parent Aware expansion in 2012 and 2013 compared to those included in the 2014 expansion (11% compared to 5%, respectively).³
- Since statewide rollout of Parent Aware began in 2012, private funders and local government entities have invested in Parent Aware-related initiatives, including evaluation, marketing the system to parents, and more intensive quality improvement supports for programs volunteering for rating. By the end of 2015, nearly \$15 million had been contributed.
- Throughout 2015 and early 2016, enhancements continued to be made to parentaware.org. The most significant change was that content tailored for providers was integrated into the site, so that providers do not have to access a separate website for information about participating in Parent Aware. A tab “for programs” was added that includes step-by-step directions for earning a rating in Parent Aware. Contact information and photos of the district recruiters are also available on the site to facilitate outreach with providers.
- The Parent Aware Indicator Review process facilitated by DHS was proceeding in 2015 to gather input and analyze the existing structure of the Parent Aware indicators and rating process. The purpose of this process is to develop recommendations for possible changes to the Rating Tool in five priority areas: structure of the rating tool; observations; cultural responsiveness, appropriateness, and sensitivity; health; kindergarten transitions; and, training. Recommendations

³ Participation in Parent Aware Ratings Across Minnesota, retrieved from <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfs/Server/Public/DHS-7086-ENG>

will be reviewed in the spring and summer of 2016, and final changes will be implemented beginning July 2017.

- State and federal legislative context:
 - Parent Aware funding from the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant received a no-cost extension through June 2016 for most activities, and some through December 2016.
 - DHS drafted the Child Care and Development Fund State Plan for 2016 – 2018 and received comments in late 2015. The plan was submitted in March 2016. Legislative support for changes required by the Child Care and Development Block Grant reauthorization is being sought in 2016.
 - Parent Aware received its first appropriation from the state’s general fund in 2015, totaling \$3.5 million for State Fiscal Years 2016-2017 and \$1.75 million in future years.
 - Early Learning Scholarships received an additional \$48.25 million in state general fund appropriations in 2015 for the 2016-2017 biennium.

Finally, with the ending of the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant and the current state and federal funding for Parent Aware, DHS expects that some quality improvement supports (pre- and post-rating grants) will be limited beginning July 1, 2016. It will be important to track how these and other changes to Parent Aware impact recruitment and retention of ECE programs.

Section 2: Analysis of Re-Ratings in Parent Aware

Purpose of this section: This section describes change over time in the ratings that fully-rated Parent Aware programs receive. Understanding patterns of improvement on the ratings is useful for estimating the resources needed to issue ratings and to plan for changes to the statewide supply of ECE programs with different levels of quality.

Key Findings:

- Over a quarter of fully-rated programs have received a second rating.
- About 5% of fully-rated programs with an initial rating have dropped out of Parent Aware.
- Initial Star-ratings don't differ by whether a program chooses Building Quality or direct entry to Parent Aware.
- Programs increase their Star-rating over time.
- Programs are likely to achieve their goal rating. For family child care providers, the likelihood of receiving a rating lower or higher than the goal is increasing slightly at each re-rating.
- At re-rating, about a quarter of programs receive the same Star-rating. The majority of programs increase their rating by at least one Star.
- The majority of programs receive a new rating within one year of their most recent rating.

Introduction

Analysis of whether and how ratings change over time provides insights into how programs are navigating the rating process. In Parent Aware, patterns of rating changes also can be used to estimate the timeline and number of programs that will reach higher ratings (Three- and Four-Star ratings) that make them eligible to serve children receiving Early Learning Scholarships. This section describes the initial ratings and the changes in ratings over time that Parent Aware fully-rated programs receive. The first analysis of fully-rated Parent Aware re-ratings was conducted on 127 programs and was reported in the Year 3

Evaluation Report.⁴ The analysis showcased in this section includes more programs and documents the increases and decreases in ratings over time. Findings presented include the distribution of ratings of fully-rated programs and the distribution of ratings over time.

Methods

Data from Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool were obtained from the Minnesota Department of Human Services. The dataset contained all Parent Aware enrollment data collected from programs at the time of their application and all rating and indicator data issued since the launch of the statewide rollout in 2012 (including the most recent ratings issued as of December 31, 2015).

Analysis of Full Ratings in Parent Aware

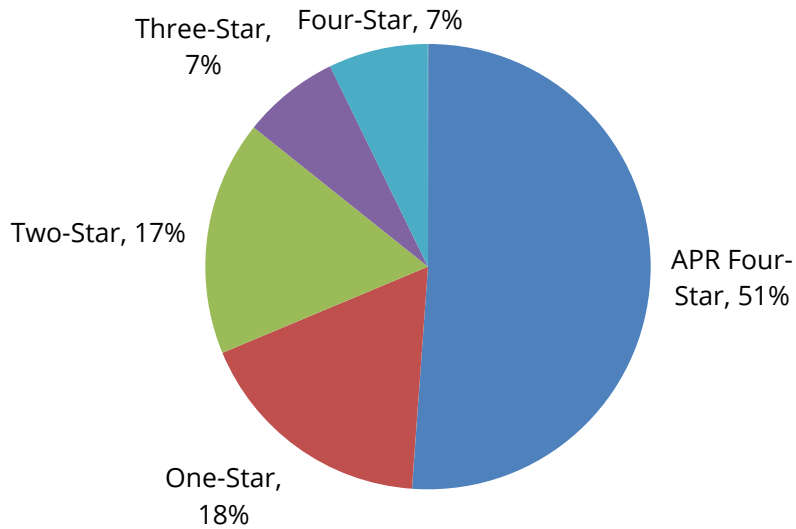
Figure 1 displays the Star-ratings for 2,682 programs in both the full-rating pathway and in the Accelerated Pathway to Rating (APR) as of January 2016. In the Year 3 evaluation report, 1,892 programs had active ratings, which means that the number of rated programs increased by 42% in 2015. The majority of programs (58%) have a Four-Star rating.

Over the third and fourth years of statewide implementation, the proportion of programs with different ratings has shifted. Whereas 63% of programs had APR ratings at the end of 2014, just over half (51%) had APR ratings at the end of 2015.⁵ Just over one-third of programs have a One- (17%) or a Two-Star (18%) rating. Three-Star ratings (7%) are issued less frequently than the other ratings, though the percentage of Three-Star ratings in 2015 is a slight increase from 2014 (when 4% of programs had a Three-Star rating).

⁴ Cleveland, J., Starr, R., Friese, S., Sosinsky, L., Li, W., Beckett, A., & Tout, K. (2015). *Statewide Expansion of Parent Aware Ratings: Year 3 Report*. Minneapolis, MN: Child Trends.

⁵ Cleveland, J., Starr, R., Friese, S., Sosinsky, L., Li, W., Beckett, A., & Tout, K. (2015). *Statewide Expansion of Parent Aware Ratings: Year 3 Report*. Minneapolis, MN: Child Trends.

Figure 1. Star ratings of Parent Aware rated programs as of January 26, 2016 (n=2682)



Source: Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

By the end of 2015, 333 fully-rated programs have received two ratings, 31 fully-rated programs have received three ratings and one program had received its fourth Star rating. Though an issued rating is valid for up to two years, fully-rated programs can apply to be re-rated as soon as six months after they receive their rating.

As shown in Table 1, 1,201 full ratings have been issued to date and of those, 1,118 ratings are currently active. Among fully-rated programs with a current rating, the majority (63%) have an initial (first) rating, 28% have received a second rating and 3% have received a third rating. A small group of programs no longer has an active Parent Aware rating. Most of these programs have let their rating expire and have not pursued a second rating (5%). A small number of programs ceased operating (1%) or the program's license was revoked (<1%).

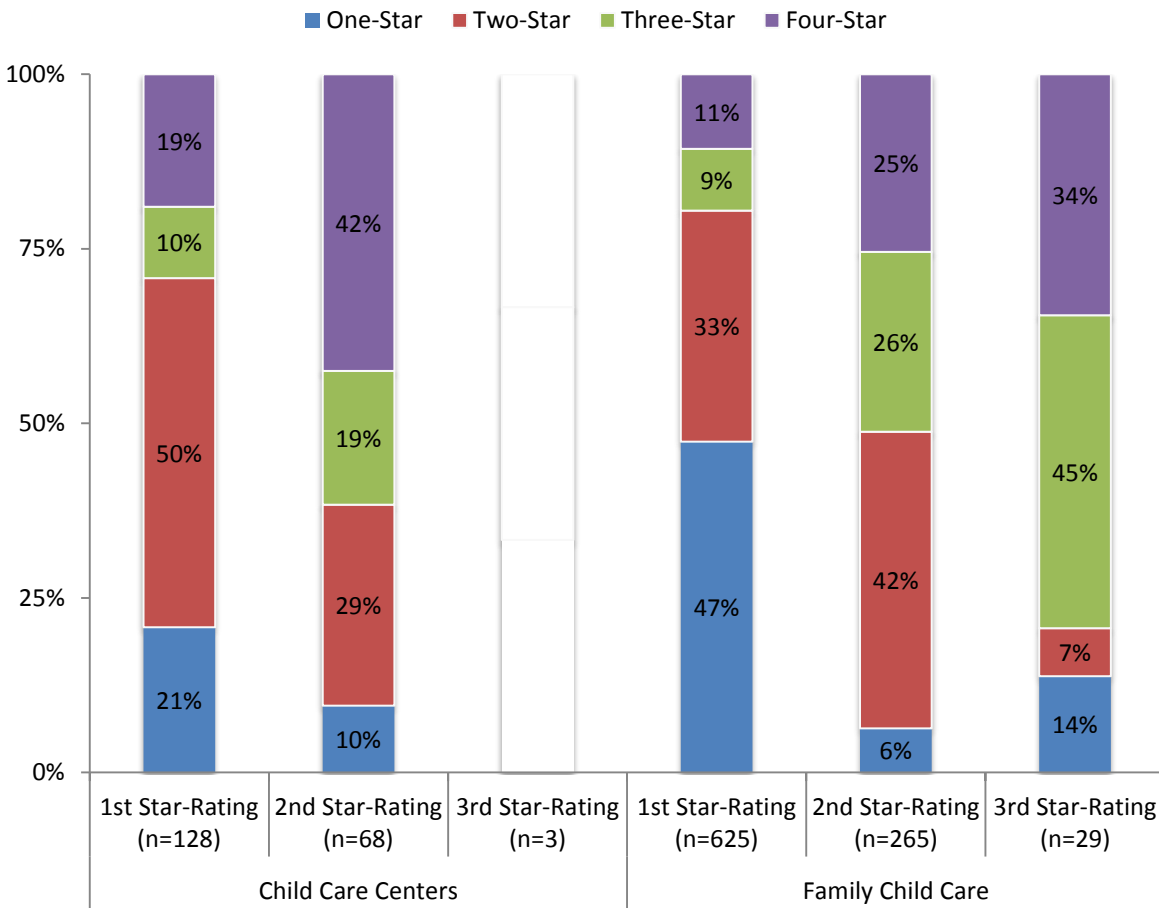
Table 1. Current Star-rating status for fully-rated child care centers and family child care providers as of January 31, 2016.

Current Star-Rating Status		Child Care Centers	Family Child Care	Total
Currently Rated	Received 4th Star-Rating	1	0	1 (~0%)
	Received 3rd Star-Rating	2	29	31 (3%)
	Received 2nd Star-Rating	68	265	333 (28%)
	Initial rating still valid	128	625	753 (63%)
Attrition	Haven't updated Star-Rating (license status still "active")	16	47	63 (5%)
	Program ceased operating	1	12	13 (1%)
	License revoked or negative action issued which made program ineligible	0	6	6 (~0%)
	Missing	0	1	1 (~0%)
Total		216	985	1201

Source: Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

In addition to calculating the number of programs that have been re-rated, it is important to examine the distribution of ratings to determine how fully-rated programs' ratings change from the first rating cycle to the next. Figure 2 displays the Star-ratings programs receive by rating cycle and by program type. For child care centers and family child care programs, the proportion of programs with One- and Two-Star ratings decreased as programs earned their second and third ratings. While Three- and Four-Star ratings increased by the time programs received their third Star-rating, there was also an increase in the percentage of programs that received One-Star at their third rating (though note that only 29 family child care programs had received a third rating).

Figure 2. Star-rating distribution by rating cycle and program type (fully-rated programs only).



Source: Develop, Minnesota’s Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Programs enrolling in Parent Aware through the full-rating process can enroll in Building Quality (which includes pre-rating supports) or directly into Parent Aware (see Section 1 for details about the enrollment options). Table 2 examines whether there is a difference in initial Star-rating of programs depending on the enrollment pathway selected. No significant differences in initial Star-rating were noted by enrollment pathway (Table 2).

Table 2. Initial Star-ratings of programs by Parent Aware enrollment pathway (fully-rated only).

	Child Care Centers			Family Child Care		
	Direct entry to Parent Aware	Building Quality	Total	Direct entry to Parent Aware	Building Quality	Total
One-Star	24%	19%	21%	46%	48%	47%
Two-Star	55%	48%	50%	33%	33%	33%
Three-Star	11%	10%	10%	7%	9%	9%
Four-Star	11%	23%	19%	14%	9%	11%
Total	100% (75)	100% (141)	100% (216)	100% (281)	100% (704)	100% (985)

Source: Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Another feature of the full-rating process in Parent Aware is declaration of a rating goal shortly after enrolling. Quality Coaches and providers weigh various factors (e.g., ability to achieve quality indicators at different levels) to determine the goal rating best suited to each program. Table 3 provides a comparison between fully-rated providers' goal rating and the rating they earned. Findings are broken down by program type and rating cycle. Very few programs, regardless of rating cycle or program type, earned a Star-rating higher than their goal. The most frequent outcome is earning a Star-rating equal to the goal. However, for child care centers, nearly a quarter (22%) of programs earned a rating lower than their goal at the first and second rating. For family child care providers, a small percentage of providers earned a rating lower than their goal at the time of their first and second rating (7% and 10% respectively) while 17% earned a rating lower than their goal when their third rating was issued. Overall, family child care providers receive a rating equal to their goal more frequently than child care centers, across all rating cycles.

Table 3. Comparison between goal and actual Star-rating achieved (fully-rated only).

	Child Care Centers			Family Child Care		
	1 st Rating	2 nd Rating	3 rd Rating ⁶	1 st Rating	2 nd Rating	3 rd Rating
Rated higher than goal	0% (0)	3% (2)		1% (13)	3% (9)	7% (2)
Rated equal to goal	78% (169)	75% (55)		92% (907)	87% (259)	76% (22)
Rated lower than goal	22% (47)	22% (16)		7% (65)	10% (31)	17% (5)

Source: Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

⁶ Only three child care centers have been re-rated twice in Parent Aware. The data have been excluded from the table due to the small sample size and potential instability of the distributions.

Table 4 displays the change in the two most recent ratings by program type. The most frequent change was a one Star increase. More family child care providers (60%) increased one Star rating compared to child care centers (41%); however more child care centers (22%) increased by two Stars compared to family child care providers (11%). Similar percentages of child care centers (29%) and family child care providers (24%) earned the same Star-rating during their most recent re-rating cycle.

Table 4. Change in the two most recent ratings by program type (fully-rated only).

Change in Star-Rating	Child Care Centers (n = 73)	Family Child Care (n = 299)
Decreased by three Stars	3% (2)	0%
Decreased by two Stars	0%	0%
Decreased by one Star	4% (3)	2% (7)
No change	29% (21)	24% (72)
Increased by one Star	41% (30)	60% (180)
Increased by two Stars	22% (16)	11% (33)
Increased by three Stars	1% (1)	2% (6)

Source: Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Table 5 displays child care centers' Star-ratings by changes across the most recent two rating cycles. The most frequent occurrence for child care centers was to increase from a Two-Star to a Four-Star (n=15), followed by programs that increased from a One-Star to a Three-Star (n=13), and programs that increased from One-Star to Two-Star (n=12). Twenty programs maintained their rating (including 11 programs retaining a Four-Star rating and 9 programs retaining a Two-Star rating). A smaller number of programs decreased Star levels (n=5) or increased from One-Star to Three-Star or from One-Star to Four-Star rating.

Table 5. Child care centers' Star-ratings by changes in the most recent two Star-ratings (fully-rated only).

Child Care Center Changes (n = 73)	The most recent Star-rating				Total
	One-Star	Two-Star	Three-Star	Four-Star	
Decreased by three stars	2				2
Decreased by two stars	0	0			0
Decreased by one star	3	0	0		3
No change	1	9	0	11	21
Increased by one star		12	13	5	30
Increased by two stars			1	15	16
Increased by three stars				1	1
Total	6	21	14	32	73

Source: Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Table 6 displays the changes in Star-ratings across the two most recent rating cycles for family child care providers. Among family child care providers who experienced no change in Star level, 31 remained Four-Star and 23 providers remained Two-Star. A smaller number of providers remained One-Star (n=13) or Three-Star (n=5). The most frequent change among family care providers was to increase by one Star level (n=180). A smaller number of providers increased by two Star levels (n=33). Six providers increased by three Star levels.

Table 6. Family child care Star-ratings by changes in the most recent two Star-ratings.

Family Child Care Changes (n = 299)	The most recent Star-rating				Total
	One-Star	Two-Star	Three-Star	Four-Star	
Decreased by three stars	1				1
Decreased by two stars	0	0			0
Decreased by one star	7	0	0		7
No change	13	23	5	31	72
Increased by one star		90	67	23	180
Increased by two stars			12	21	33
Increased by three stars				6	6
Total	21	113	84	81	299

Source: Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Parent Aware ratings are valid twenty-four months after the date they are issued, but programs can apply for a rating as soon as six months after they received their rating (which would result in a new rating 12 months after the first). Table 7 displays the time in between the two most recent Star-ratings programs received. Notably, 77% of family child care providers and 63% of child care centers applied for a re-rating before they were required to do so. The most frequent occurrence was for programs to receive a new rating 12 months after their most recent rating was issued.

Table 7. Time between the two most recent Star-ratings (fully-rated only).

Time Between Star-ratings	Child Care Centers (n = 73)	Family Child Care (n = 299)
12 months	51% (37)	68% (203)
18 months	11% (8)	9% (28)
24 months	38% (28)	22% (66)

Source: Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Examining changes in ratings is possible at a more granular level by conducting an analysis of indicator-level changes between the two most recent Star-ratings. Programs with a goal rating of a Three- or Four-Star must first meet all the indicators at the One- and Two-Star rating level and then earn points at Three- and Four-Star rating levels. To earn a Three-Star rating, programs must achieve eight indicator points; to earn a Four-Star rating, programs must achieve 15 indicator points. Table 8 displays the changes in the indicator points by rating tool category and by program type. Overall, programs gained more points in the quality domains on which they scored lower at the first rating. About half of child care centers (49%) and family child care providers (55%) scored no points in the Physical Health and Well-Being category. In contrast, in the Teaching and Relationships category, most child care centers (53%) and family child care providers improved their scores (47%). Likewise, most child care centers (73%) and family child care providers (64%) increased their scores in the category of Assessment of Child Progress. In the Teacher Training and Education quality domain, most child care centers (61%) increased their score. Among family child care providers, 50% experienced no change in points and 41% increased their score. A small number of child care centers and family child care providers experienced a loss of points in the category scores.

Table 8. Change in Parent Aware rating tool category scores by program type (fully-rated only).

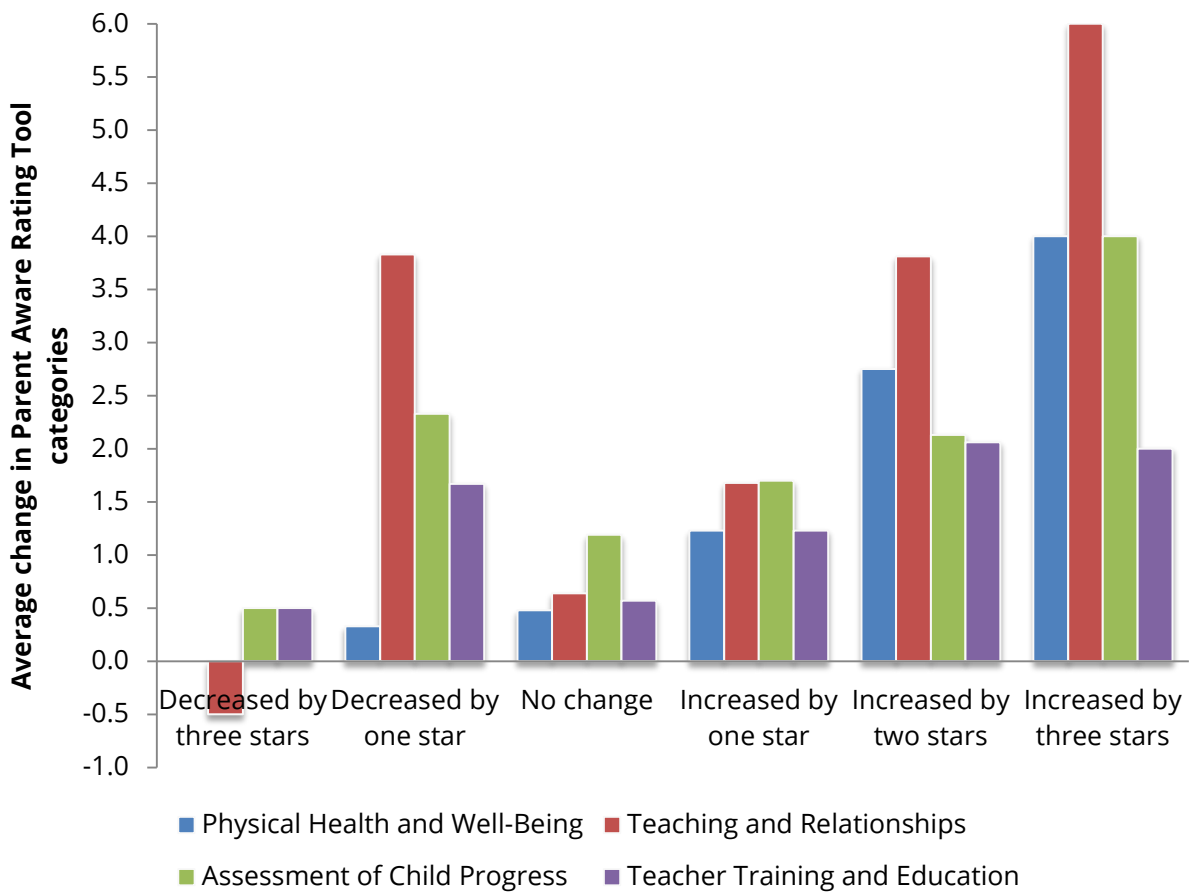
Rating Tool Category	Program Type	Loss of points	No change	Gain of .5 to 2 points	Gain of over 2.5 points
Physical Health and Well-Being (4 pts)	Child Care Centers (n = 73)	3% (2)	49% (36)	16% (12)	32% (23)
	Family Child Care (n = 299)	4% (13)	55% (164)	18% (54)	23% (68)
Teaching and Relationships (6 pts CCC or 5 pts FCC)	Child Care Centers	18% (13)	29% (21)	11% (8)	42% (31)
	Family Child Care	2% (5)	51% (153)	23% (70)	24% (71)
Assessment of Child Progress (4 pts)	Child Care Centers	8% (6)	19% (14)	40% (29)	33% (24)
	Family Child Care	11% (34)	25% (74)	56% (168)	8% (23)
Teacher Training and Education	Child Care Centers	14% (10)	26% (19)	36% (26)	25% (18)

Rating Tool Category	Program Type	Loss of points	No change	Gain of .5 to 2 points	Gain of over 2.5 points
(6 pts CCC or 7 pts FCC)	Family Child Care	9% (26)	50% (150)	18% (55)	23% (68)

Source: Develop, Minnesota’s Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Figure 3 displays the average change in quality domain scores by child care centers’ change in Star-rating level. As expected, the more points centers earned, the higher rating level they earned. However, programs that increased by three Stars did so by maximizing the points earned in Physical Health and Well-Being, Teaching and Relationships, and Assessment of Child Progress. Though six points are available for Teacher Training and Education, the average increase was two points for centers that increased their rating by three Stars.

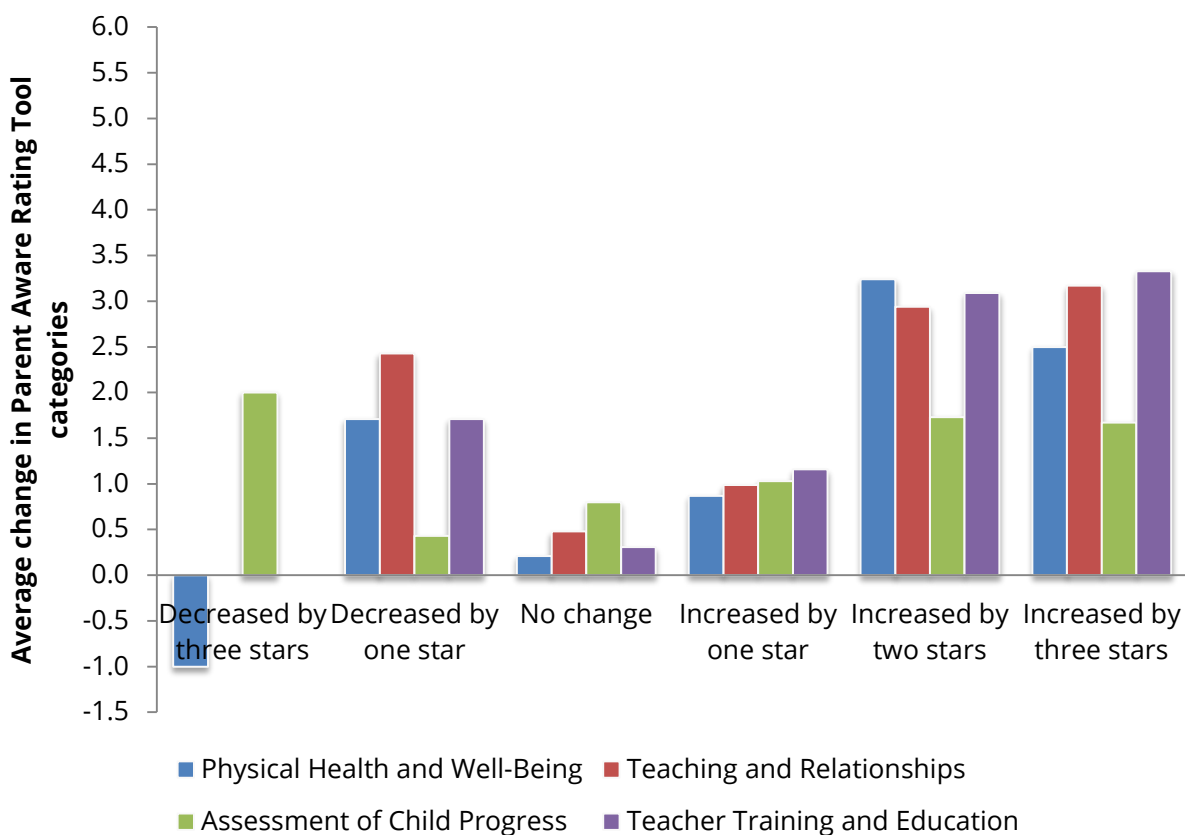
Figure 3. Average change in rating tool category scores by change in Star-rating in child care centers (fully-rated only).



Source: Develop, Minnesota’s Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Figure 4 displays the average change in rating tool category scores by family child care providers' change in Star-rating level. For family child care providers, there is not as much variation in the distribution of points earned as seen for child care centers. There is also a difference in the rating tool category family providers choose to earn their points in. Family providers more frequently increase Star levels by earning more points in Physical Health and Well-Being, Teaching and Relationships, and Teacher Training and Education. Family child care providers earn fewer points in Assessment of Child Progress, compared to child care centers.

Figure 4. Average change in rating tool category scores by change in Star-rating in family child care (fully-rated only).



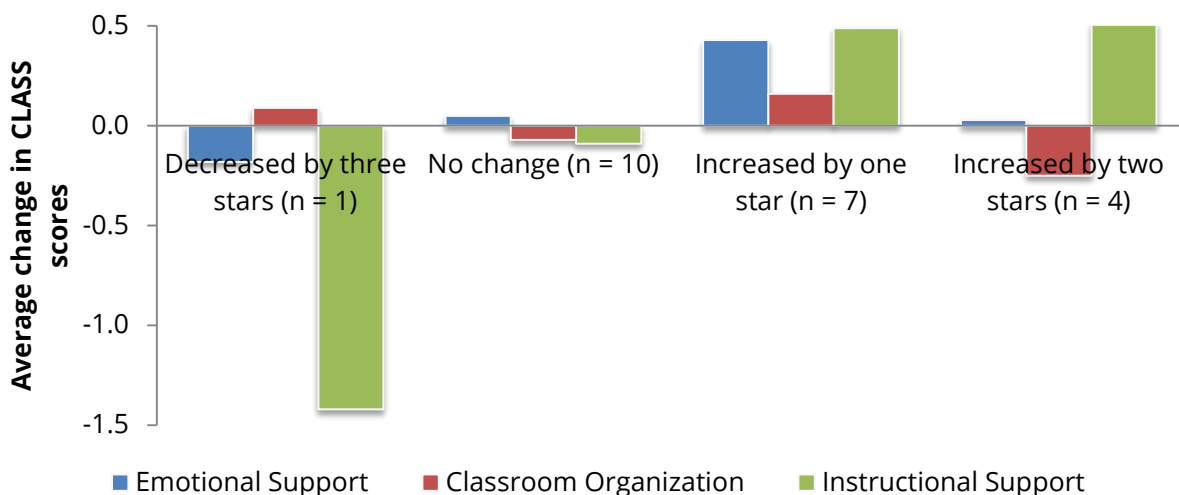
Source: Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Child care centers with a goal of a Three- or Four-Star rating receive a CLASS observation as part of their rating determination.⁷ During the months preceding their CLASS observation,

⁷ CLASS is conducted in one-third of preschool and preschool/toddler classrooms. All classrooms that are observed must score at least a 2.0 on Instructional Support to be eligible for a Three-Star rating or a 2.5 on Instructional Support to be eligible for a Four-Star rating. Points are earned for each CLASS domain and calculated as part of the

these programs receive support from a Parent Aware CLASS Coach. CLASS coaching supports are available at a program’s initial rating, as long as the goal rating is a Three- or Four-Star. It is helpful to examine how CLASS scores are changing over time among programs that have received more than one CLASS observation, and how CLASS scores relate to changes in Star-rating. Figure 5 displays the average change in CLASS domain scores by change in program Star-rating.⁸ Half of the centers (n=11) that received two CLASS observations increased their Star rating. On average, centers that increased their Star rating also increased their score on Instructional Support by 0.5. The other 10 centers did not change their Star rating and had only very small changes on their CLASS scores. The one center with a decreased Star-rating had a 1.4 decrease on Instructional Support.

Figure 5. Average change in CLASS domain scores by change in Star-rating (fully-rated child care centers only).



Source: Develop, Minnesota’s Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Summary

Since Parent Aware began rolling out as a statewide initiative in 2012, roughly 750 programs have been issued at least one rating through the full-rating process. These programs submit documentation, and some child care centers receive a CLASS observation as part of their rating determinations. Over a quarter of these programs have gone on to receive a second rating, while a small percentage have dropped out of Parent Aware (5%). The majority of fully-rated programs increase their rating over time, climbing through the Star levels, while about a quarter of programs receive the same Star-rating upon their

Teaching and Relationships rating category score. Up to three points can be earned (with zero, .5 or 1 point assigned for each CLASS domain depending on the score achieved).

⁸ Note that this analysis is conducted only with programs that had CLASS scores at both rating cycles.

second rating. There does not appear to be a distinction in ratings issued for programs that received extra supports and time through their participation in the Building Quality initiative, compared to programs that did not receive these extra supports and extra time.

Section 3a: Examination and Analysis of Program Characteristics

Purpose of this section: This section describes the characteristics of fully-rated programs in Parent Aware using survey data collected from providers in 2015.

Key Findings:

- Few significant associations were noted between provider characteristics and Star-rating level achieved.
- Programs most frequently reported making changes to their learning environment as a direct result of participating in Parent Aware. This type of change was followed by changes in teaching practices, changes to programs' approaches to training and professional development, changes to child assessment practices, changes to business administration practices, and changes about best practices in serving diverse families.
- Child care centers reported making more changes related to business administration practices compared to family child care providers; whereas family child care providers reported making more changes related to learning environment and child assessment practices compared to child care centers.
- Financial reasons were the number one ranked reason for joining Parent Aware among half of lower Star-rated child care centers, almost three-quarters of higher Star-rated child care centers, and almost half of lower Star-rated family child care providers. Only one-third of higher Star-rated family child care providers chose financial reasons as their primary motivation for joining.
- The most frequent activity fully-rated providers reported working on with their Quality Coach was completing the QDP.
- Higher Star-rated child care directors report with the most frequency that they believe Parent Aware is useful to programs and families and that parents should consider a program's Parent Aware rating when choosing child care for their child, compared to family child care providers and lower-rated child care center directors.

Introduction

For the third year in a row, Child Trends conducted a survey of fully-rated Parent Aware programs and other programs, and reported findings in the Parent Aware Provider Perceptions Report,⁹ released in March 2016. The purpose of the analyses presented in this section is to extend the findings from the Provider Perceptions Report by examining the characteristics and perceptions by program type (i.e. family child care provider, child care center) and by Star level (One- and Two-Star rating, Three- and Four-Star rating) of fully rated child care programs.

Method

Fully-rated family child care providers and directors of fully-rated child care centers with an active Parent Aware rating as of May 2015 received an email invitation from Child Trends requesting participation in a survey about their experiences and perceptions of Parent Aware. Respondents' email addresses were used to link survey data with the respondents' Star-level obtained from Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool.¹⁰ Survey data were also linked with observation data collected for the Parent Aware Initial Validation Study.¹¹

Star-Ratings of Survey Respondents

The Star-ratings of fully-rated child care centers and family child care programs survey respondents are shown in Table 9. Star-ratings of fully-rated survey participants (administered May 2015) by program type. Among child care centers (n = 59), 20% of programs had a One-Star rating, 42% had a Two-Star rating, 14% had a Three-Star rating, and 24% had a Four-Star rating. Among family child care programs (n = 200), 38% of programs had a One-Star rating, 33% had a Two-Star rating, 9% had a Three-Star rating, and 21% had a Four-Star rating. The distributions generally align with the Star-ratings of all fully-rated Parent Aware programs.

⁹ Cleveland, J., Bultinck, E., & Tout, K. (2016). *Provider Perceptions of Parent Aware: Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System*. Minneapolis, MN: Child Trends.

¹⁰ Additional details about survey administration, response rate and findings from the survey are available in Cleveland, J., Bultinck, E., & Tout, K. (2016). *Provider Perceptions of Parent Aware: Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System*. Minneapolis, MN: Child Trends.

¹¹ See Tout et al., 2016 for details about the Parent Aware observation sample.

Table 9. Star-ratings of fully-rated survey participants (administered May 2015) by program type.

Star-rating	Child Care Centers	Family Child Care
One-Star	20% (12)	38% (75)
Two-Star	42% (25)	33% (66)
Three-Star	14% (8)	9% (17)
Four-Star	24% (14)	21% (42)
Total	100% (59)	100% (200)

Source: Develop, Minnesota’s Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Provider Characteristics and Differences by Star-Rating

This section presents an analysis of whether and how provider characteristics differ by Star-rating and program type. The characteristics examined include: director/family child care provider experience in current role, experience in the early care and education field, highest level of education attained, and whether a provider has a Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate.

Respondents were asked how long they had been in their current role and how long they have spent in the early care and education field since they were 18 years old (Table 10). Across program type and rating level, the average levels of experience of Parent Aware directors and family child care providers in their current role exceeded 10 years, and approached 20 years in the ECE field. No statistically significant differences in years in current role or years of ECE experience were found by rating level. Respondents were asked about their highest level of education attained and whether it included a focus in Early Childhood or a related field. A majority of directors in child care centers had a Bachelor’s degree or graduate degree, and the proportion was similar across directors in lower and higher Star-rated centers (69% and 68% respectively). Among family child care providers, 41% and 47% of lower and higher Star-rated providers respectively had a high school degree. No statistically significant differences in level of education attained were found by Star-rating. Similarly, no significant differences by Star-rating were found in whether a director or family child care provider had a major in Early Childhood or a related field, though it will be important to track this characteristic over time with a larger sample of rated programs.

Table 10. Characteristics of child care center directors and family child care providers by lower (One- and Two-Star) and higher (Three and Four-Star) ratings (fully-rated only).

Characteristics of providers	Child Care Centers			Family Child Care		
	Lower Star-rating (n = 35-37)	Higher Star-rating (n = 22)	Test statistic	Lower Star-rating (n = 136-141)	Higher Star-rating (n = 56-59)	Test statistic
Average length of time in role, Years (SD)	14.2 (11.4)	11.7 (7.1)	t = 0.92	13.6 (9.3)	15.3 (9.4)	t = 0.23
Average length of time in ECE, Years (SD)	19.8 (10.6)	20.0 (7.2)	t = -0.10	18.3 (10.4)	19.1 (8.9)	t = -0.50
High school or some college	11% (4)	23% (5)	$\chi^2 = 2.13$	41% (58)	47% (27)	$\chi^2 = 1.73$
Two-year degree	19% (7)	9% (2)		23% (33)	28% (16)	
Four-year degree or higher	69% (25)	68% (15)		36% (50)	26% (15)	
ECE major (all levels of education)	56% (20)	41% (9)	$\chi^2 = 1.81$	25% (35)	35% (20)	$\chi^2 = 4.82$
CDA (all levels of education)	9% (3)	9% (2)	$\chi^2 < .01$	13% (18)	29% (16)	$\chi^2 = 6.40^{**}$

Source: Fully-rated provider survey, 2015, Child Trends and Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Respondents were also asked about attainment of a Child Development Associate certification (CDA). In child care centers, only 5 directors reported earning a CDA, and no differences were noted among rating levels (9% in lower Star-rated programs and in higher Star-rated programs). In family child care, 34 providers reported having a CDA. Fewer family child care providers with lower Star-ratings (13%) had a CDA than providers with higher Star-ratings (29%) (see Table 11).

Program Characteristics and Differences by Star Rating

Next, we examined whether select characteristics of child care centers and family child care programs differed by Star rating. The characteristics examined include: profit status, affiliation/sponsorship, program location, whether program enrollment is reported as full, whether the program has a waiting list, and whether the program serves children with high needs.

Table 11 contains details about program characteristics by program type and Star-rating. No significant differences were found by Star-rating. Across Star-rating levels and program type, it is notable that the majority of programs report being full, having a waiting list and serving children with high needs.

Table 11. Program demographics by lower and higher Star-rating (One- and Two-Star versus Three- and Four-Star).

Characteristics of programs	Child Care Centers			Family Child Care		
	Lower Star-rating (n = 35-37)	Higher Star-rating (n = 21-22)	Chi-square	Lower Star-rating (n = 140-141)	Higher Star-rating (n = 58-59)	Chi-square
For profit	36% (13)	57% (12)	2.38	N/A	N/A	N/A
Church-sponsored	22% (8)	23% (5)	0.70	N/A	N/A	N/A
Program is currently full	50% (18)	59% (13)	0.45	70% (98)	81% (47)	2.76*
Has a waitlist	54% (19)	68% (15)	1.44	58% (81)	64% (38)	0.58
Serves children with high-needs ¹²	89% (33)	96% (21)	0.70	62% (88)	68% (40)	0.52

Source: Fully-rated provider survey, 2015, Child Trends and Develop, Minnesota’s Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Analysis of changes made as a direct result of participating in Parent Aware

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions about the changes they may have made to their program or practices as a direct result of participating in Parent Aware. For one set of survey questions (21 questions), respondents answered “Yes” or “No” reflecting on whether they had made the change. For the second set of survey questions (12 questions), respondents reflected on the degree to which they may have made a change. Respondents could respond “Yes, I have made this change,” “Partial, I have started to make this change, but it is not complete,” “No, I have not made this change yet, but I plan to,” and “No, I did not make this change and I do not plan to.” For analytical purposes, we combined the “Yes” and “Partial” responses” in order to examine the differences among providers across all 33 possible change items using the same yes/no scale (see Appendix A for a listing of all change items).

¹² 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. This data source was from Develop. A program that reported serving at least one child with high-needs is classified as a program serving high-needs children for the purposes of this variable.

Almost all fully-rated programs reported making at least one change as a direct result of participating in Parent Aware. Higher Star-rated programs made more changes than lower Star-rated programs. All providers with lower Star-ratings and higher Star-rated child care centers reported making at least one change as a result of participating in Parent Aware. The mean number of reported changes for lower Star-rated child care centers was 11.1 (SD = 6.2) while the mean number of reported changes for higher Star-rated child care centers was 13.6 (SD = 6.4). Almost all providers with One- and Two-Star ratings and family child care providers with Three- and Four-Star ratings reported making at least one change as a result of participating in Parent Aware (98% and 100%). The mean number of reported changes for lower Star-rated family child care providers was 11.4 (SD = 5.7) while the mean number of reported changes for higher Star-rated family child care providers was 12.5 (SD = 6.0).

In order to understand the types of changes programs made and how changes may have differed between program type and Star level, the 33 change items were coded into six categories: Learning environment, intentionality of teaching practices, staff training/professional development, child assessment, business administration, and serving diverse families. Next, we examined whether the conceptual grouping of items we had created functioned as a scale using Cronbach’s alpha statistics.¹³ Two items were moved after the analysis to create a better fit. Table 12 displays the six change categories and the Cronbach’s alpha for each scale (note that an alpha of .70 is considered good for analytic purposes, (Nunnally, 1978)). For a breakdown of which items are contained within each category description, see Appendix A.

Table 12. Categories of provider changes and the Cronbach’s alpha for each scale

Category of type of change made	Cronbach’s Alpha
Serving diverse families (5 items)	.67
Business administration (6 items)	.67
Intentionality of teaching practices (5 items)	.79
Staff training/professional development (4 items)	.82
Learning environment (9 items)	.58
Child assessment (4 items)	.95

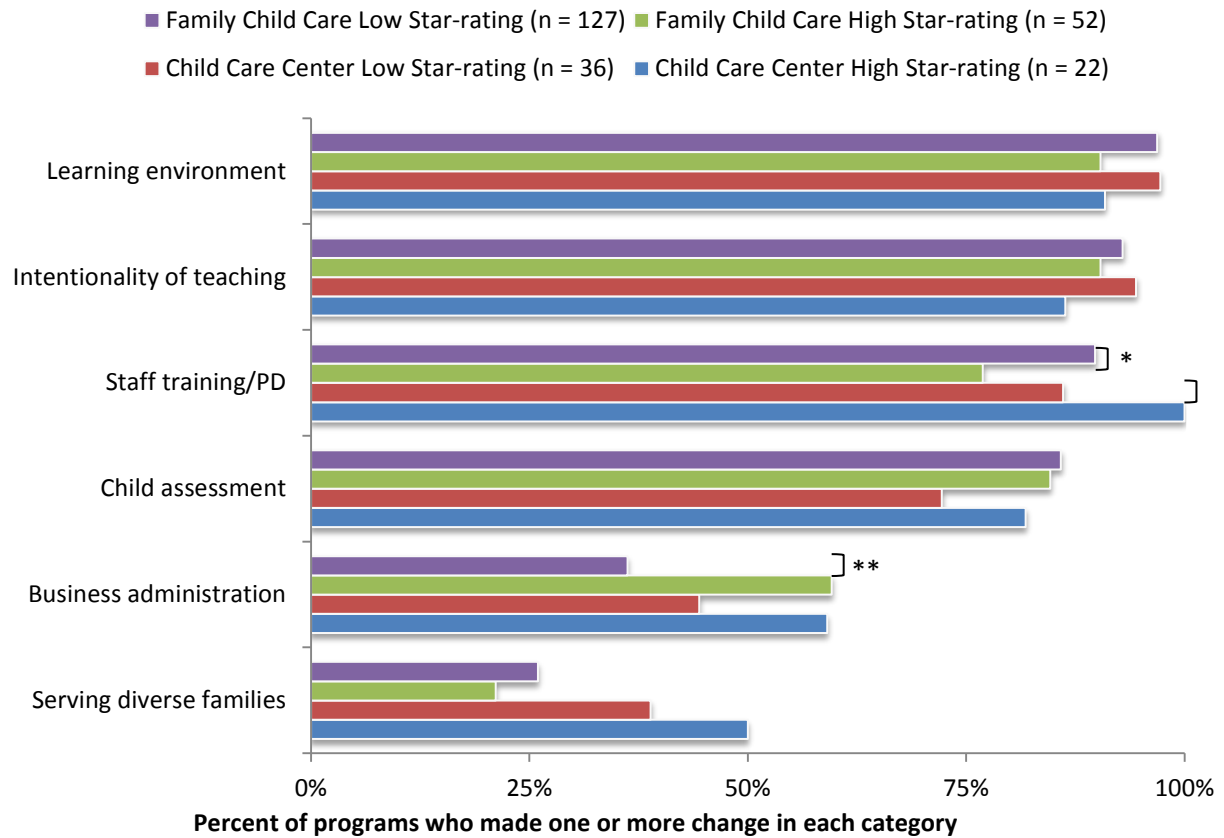
Source: Fully-rated and APR provider survey, 2015, Child Trends.

¹³ Section 3b of this report highlights survey findings of respondents who completed the survey about their perceptions and experiences with Parent Aware as part of the Accelerated Pathway to Rating (APR) process. APR participants were asked to respond to 25 change items in their survey. For the purposes of the Cronbach’s alpha analysis, responses from both the fully-rated sample and the APR sample were combined.

The percentage of programs that reported making at least one change in each of the six categories, analyzed by program type and Star level, is shown in Figure 6. The order shows the category of changes made most often to the category of change made least often. In total, almost all programs (94%) made at least one change related to learning environment. In child care centers, most lower Star-rated programs (97%) and higher Star-rated programs (91%) made changes related to their learning environment (for example, making changes to the physical space and materials). Similarly, in family child care programs, most lower Star-rated programs (97%) and higher Star-rated programs (90%) made changes related to their learning environment. Most (91%) programs made changes related to intentionality of teaching practices. These types of changes were similar across lower Star-rated programs (child care center = 94%; family child care = 93%) and higher Star-rated programs (child care center = 86%; family child care = 90%). Most (88%) programs made changes related to staff training or professional development. In child care centers, higher Star-rated programs (100%) and lower Star-rated programs (86%) made changes to one or more items related to staff training and professional development. Higher Star-rated family child care providers (77%) were less likely than lower Star-rated family child care providers (90%) to make changes related to training and professional development.

Most (81%) programs made at least one change related to assessment of children's progress. The percentage of programs that made at least one change related to child assessment was similar across program type and Star level for child care centers (72% and 82%) and family child care (86% and 85%). Half (50%) of all programs reported making at least one change related to the category of business administration. Lower Star-rated child care centers (44%) and higher Star-rated child care centers (59%) made one or more change related to business administration. Changing one or more practice related to business administration was more common among higher Star-rated family child care programs (60%) compared to lower Star-rated family child care programs (36%). Finally, about a third (34%) of all programs reported making one or more change related to serving diverse families. Higher Star-rated child care centers (50%) and lower Star-rated child care centers (39%) made one or more changes related to serving diverse families. This pattern was similar in family child care, where lower-rated providers (26%) reported a similar likelihood of making one or more changes in serving diverse families as higher Star-rated providers (21%).

Figure 6. Percent of programs by program type and Star-rating level that made one or more change by change category.

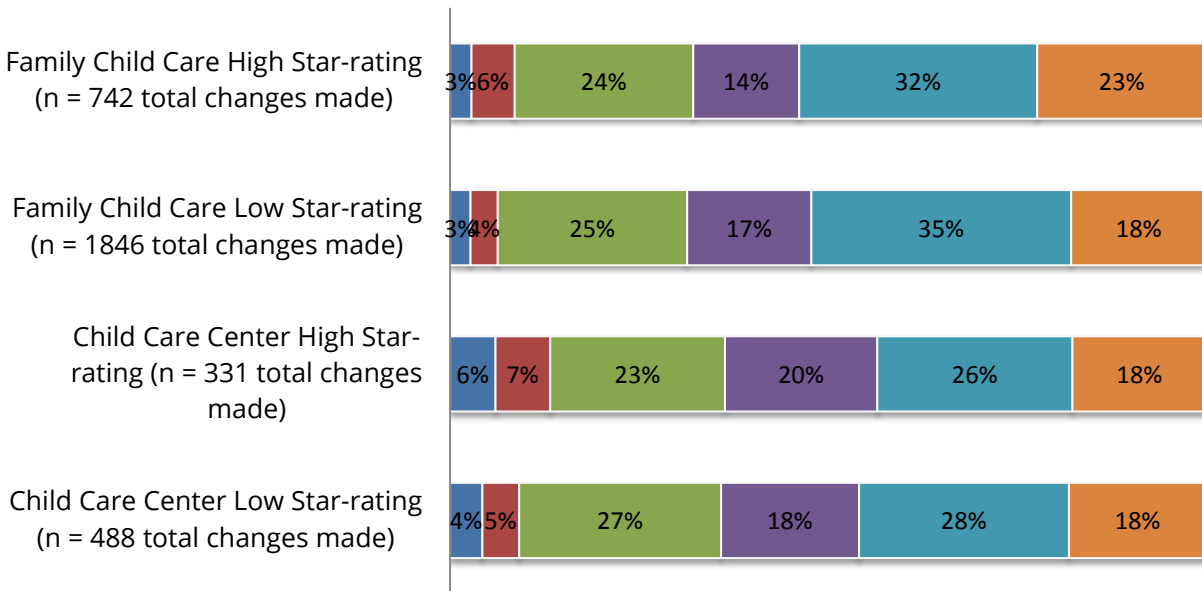


Source: Fully-rated provider survey, 2015, Child Trends and Develop, Minnesota’s Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Next, we examined the distribution of changes programs made by change construct. As seen in Figure 7, the distribution of changes programs reported making by change category were nearly identical across program type and Star level.

* p < .05 | ** p < .01 | *** p < .001

Figure 7. Distribution of changes made by program type and Star-rating level across change category.



	Child Care Center Low Star-rating (n = 488 total changes made)	Child Care Center High Star-rating (n = 331 total changes made)	Family Child Care Low Star-rating (n = 1846 total changes made)	Family Child Care High Star-rating (n = 742 total changes made)
■ Serving diverse families	4%	6%	3%	3%
■ Business administration	5%	7%	4%	6%
■ Intentionality of teaching	27%	23%	25%	24%
■ Staff training/PD	18%	20%	17%	14%
■ Learning environment	28%	26%	35%	32%
■ Child assessment	18%	18%	18%	23%

Source: Fully-rated provider survey, 2015, Child Trends and Develop, Minnesota’s Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Motivations for joining Parent Aware

The Provider Perceptions Reports have documented providers’ motivations for joining Parent Aware. However, to date the responses have not been compared by program type and Star rating. Respondents were asked to rank thirteen reasons in the order that motivated them to join Parent Aware. We created variables that included respondents’ number one ranked reason and number two ranked reason and coded twelve of the reasons (excluding “other reason not listed”) into four categories: Financial reasons (pre-

and post- rating dollars, Early Learning Scholarships, and higher CCAP rates), Professional reasons (attracting families, professional development, being part of a cutting-edge initiative), Access to Training/Coaching reasons (free or low-cost trainings, quality coaching, or CLASS coaching), and External reasons (required to participate or peers are participating). The percentages presented are calculated using the programs with the number one (or two) reason ranked as the numerator and the total programs with any number one (or two) reason as the denominator.

Financial reasons were the number one ranked reason for joining Parent Aware by half (50%) of lower Star-rated child care centers, almost three-quarters (73%) of higher Star-rated child care centers, and almost half (48%) by lower Star-rated family child care providers (see Table 15). In contrast, one-third (29%) of higher Star-rated family child care providers chose financial reasons as their primary motivation for joining and almost half (49%) of higher Star-rated family child care providers cited professional reasons as their primary motivation for joining Parent Aware (see Table 15), Specific primary reasons that were reported by respondents, split by program type and star level, are shown in Table 13.

Table 13. Primary motivation for joining Parent Aware by program type and Star-rating level (fully-rated programs only).

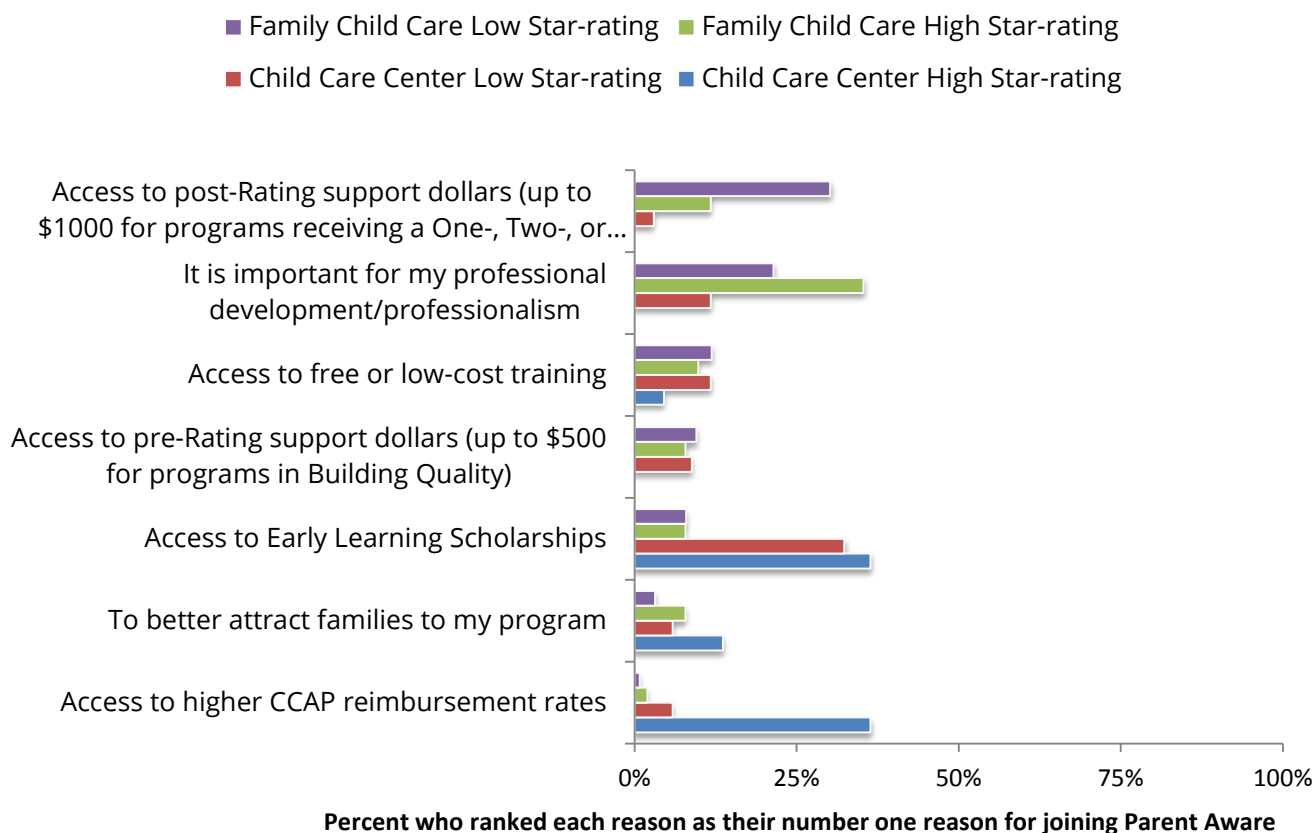
Primary (#1) motivation for joining Parent Aware	Child Care Centers			Family Child Care		
	Lower Star-rating (n = 34)	Higher Star-rating (n = 22)	Chi-square	Lower Star-rating (n = 126)	Higher Star-rating (n = 51)	Chi-square
Financial motivation (Pre- and Post- rating dollars, Early Learning Scholarships, and higher CCAP rates)	50% (17)	73% (16)		48% (61)	29% (15)	
Professional motivations (attracting families, professional development, being part of a cutting-edge initiative)	24% (8)	18% (4)		29% (37)	49% (25)	
Training/Coaching motivations (free or low-cost trainings, quality coaching, or CLASS coaching)	18% (6)	5% (1)	3.88	14% (18)	14% (7)	7.10
External motivations (required to participate or peers are participating)	6% (2)	5% (1)		2% (3)	2% (1)	

Primary (#1) motivation for	Child Care Centers		Family Child Care	
	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count
Other reason not listed	3%	(1)	0%	0
			6%	(7)
			6%	(3)

Source: Fully-rated provider survey, 2015, Child Trends and Develop, Minnesota’s Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Figure 8. It is notable that lower Star-rated family child care providers most often cited access to post-rating supports, while higher Star-rated family child care providers most often cited that Parent Aware is important for their professionalism. Child care centers, regardless of Star-rating, were more likely than family child care providers to cite access to Early Learning Scholarships as a primary motivation for joining Parent Aware, while higher- (but not lower-) Star-rated child care centers cited access to higher CCAP reimbursement rates as a primary motivation.

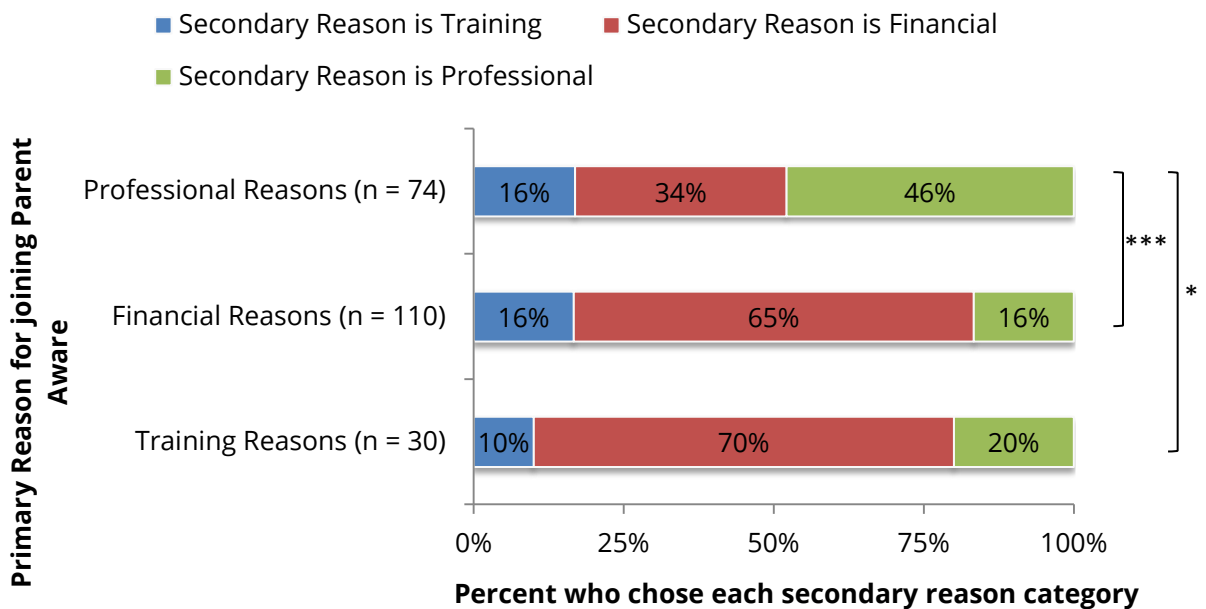
Figure 8. Primary motivation for joining Parent Aware by program type and Star-rating level.



Source: Fully-rated provider survey, 2015, Child Trends and Develop, Minnesota’s Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

To examine the extent to which providers were motivated by one or multiple reasons for joining Parent Aware, we calculated whether providers reported their top two reasons for joining Parent Aware within the same “motivation category” (see Figure 9). Percentages are presented for the entire sample because results were consistent across program type. A majority (65%) of respondents who reported that their primary reason (#1 ranked reason) for joining Parent Aware was financial also cited a secondary financial reason. Almost half (46%) of providers who reported a professional reason as their primary motivation for joining Parent Aware said their second reason for joining was also related to their professionalism. Among providers reporting that access to free training was their primary reason for joining Parent Aware, almost three-quarters (70%) reported that their second reason for joining was financial. The motivation patterns (looking jointly at primary and secondary reasons in Figure 9) were significantly different depending on the primary motivation for joining Parent Aware.

Figure 9. Secondary motivation for joining Parent Aware by primary motivation.



Source: Fully-rated provider survey, 2015, Child Trends and Develop, Minnesota’s Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Perceptions of Parent Aware marketing and communication approaches

Respondents were asked to rate how much they agree with statements pertaining to Parent Aware marketing and communication strategies on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neutral, somewhat agree, strongly agree). The percentage of

providers that somewhat agreed or strongly agreed with each statement is presented in Table 16 by program type and Star-rating.

Overall, few significant differences were noted by Star-rating. The majority of programs agreed that they tell families in their program about Parent Aware and display marketing materials given to them by Parent Aware. Over three-quarters (77%) of directors in higher Star-rated child care centers agreed that families were more likely to choose their program because they joined Parent Aware compared to about half of directors at lower Star-rated child care centers (47%), a statistically significant difference. About half of family child care providers regardless of Star-rating (lower Star-rated = 45%; higher Star-rated = 52%) agreed that families choose their program because of Parent Aware. When asked if Parent Aware has been beneficial to the families they serve, over three-quarters (77%) of directors at higher Star-rated centers agreed and over two-thirds (69%) of directors at lower Star-rated child care centers agreed. Two-thirds (67%) of higher Star-rated family child care providers and over half of family providers with lower Star-ratings (57%) agreed that Parent Aware is beneficial.

When asked if Parent Aware ratings are useful to early care and education programs, the majority of programs agreed (regardless of Star-level). A similar pattern emerged when respondents were asked if Parent Aware ratings are useful to parents. Finally, respondents were asked whether parents should consider a program's quality and a program's Parent Aware rating when choosing child care for their child. A majority of providers at all program type and Star-rating levels agreed that parents should consider a program's quality when choosing child care for their child (see Table 14).

Overall, on every survey item related to marketing and families, directors in centers with higher Star ratings reported more positive responses when compared with other groups.

Table 14. Program/provider marketing and communication approaches by program type and Star-rating level.

Perceptions of Parent Aware marketing and communication (percent that agree)	Child Care Centers			Family Child Care		
	Lower Star-rating (n = 35-36)	Higher Star-rating (n = 21-22)	Chi-square	Lower Star-rating (n=125-127)	Higher Star-rating (n = 51-52)	Chi-square
We tell families in our program about Parent Aware	78% (28)	91% (19)	0.56	86% (104)	90% (47)	0.54
We display the marketing materials given to us by Parent Aware	86% (31)	86% (18)	<.01	68% (86)	69% (36)	0.04
Families are more likely to choose our program because we joined Parent Aware	47% (17)	77% (17)	5.08*	45% (57)	52% (27)	0.66
Parent Aware has been beneficial to the families we serve	69% (25)	77% (17)	0.42	57% (72)	67% (35)	1.73
Parent Aware Ratings are useful to early care and education programs	74% (26)	86% (19)	1.19	66% (83)	71% (37)	0.38
Parent Aware ratings are useful to parents	67% (24)	86% (19)	2.76	61% (77)	69% (36)	1.17
When choosing child care for their child, parents should consider a program's quality	92% (33)	100% (22)	1.93	91% (115)	94% (49)	0.45
When choosing child care for their child, parents should consider a program's Parent Aware Rating	66% (23)	86% (19)	2.97	64% (80)	71% (36)	0.81

Source: Fully-rated provider survey, 2015, Child Trends and Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Quality Coaching

Respondents were asked two questions about their Quality Coach. A majority of providers in all program types and Star-rating levels rated their Quality Coach as "extremely helpful" or "somewhat helpful" (see Table 15), and there were no differences between star levels.

Directors (lower Star-ratings =75%; higher Star-ratings=64%) and family providers (lower Star-rating = 74%; higher Star-rating = 73%) agreed that their Quality Coach spent a sufficient amount of time with them.

Table 15. Perceptions of Quality Coaches by program type Star-rating level.

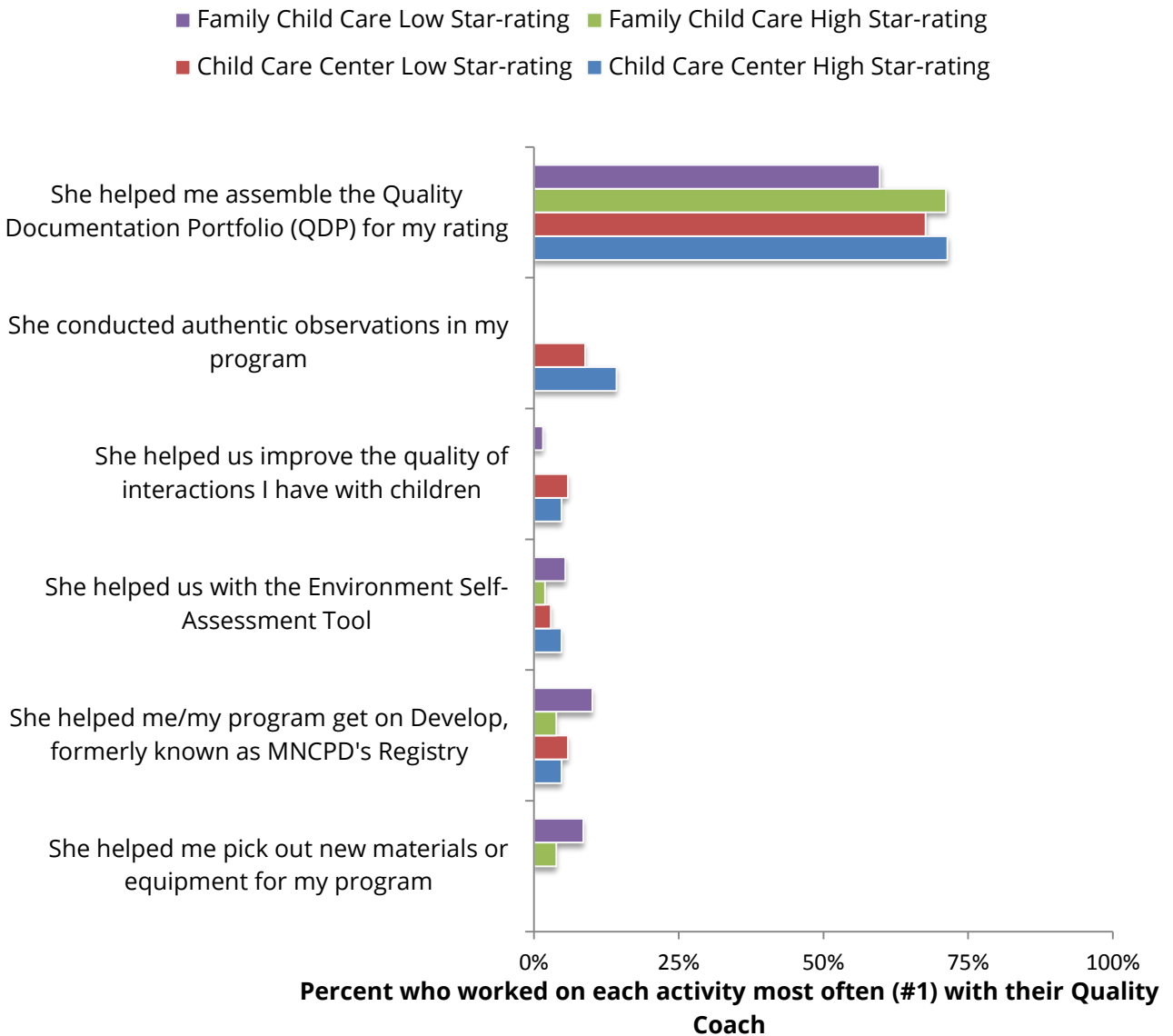
Perceptions of Quality Coaches	Child Care Centers			Family Child Care		
	Lower Star-rating (n = 36)	Higher Star-rating (n = 22)	Chi-square	Lower Star-rating (n =129-135)	Higher Star-rating (n = 52-54)	Chi-Square
My Quality Coach was a helpful support	89% (32)	86% (19)	0.08	91% (123)	91% (49)	<.01
The time my Quality Coach has to work with me is sufficient	75% (27)	64% (14)	0.85	74% (96)	73% (38)	0.03

Source: Fully-rated provider survey, 2015, Child Trends and Develop, Minnesota’s Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Respondents were also asked to rank activities they worked on with their Quality Coach, starting with the activity they worked on most frequently. We created variables that included respondents’ number one ranked activity and number two ranked activity. Therefore, the percentages presented in Figure 10 and Figure 11 are calculated as the number of providers that ranked each activity as their most (or second most) frequently worked on with their Quality Coach as the numerator and *all* providers who ranked a most (or second most) commonly worked on activity with their Quality Coach as the denominator.

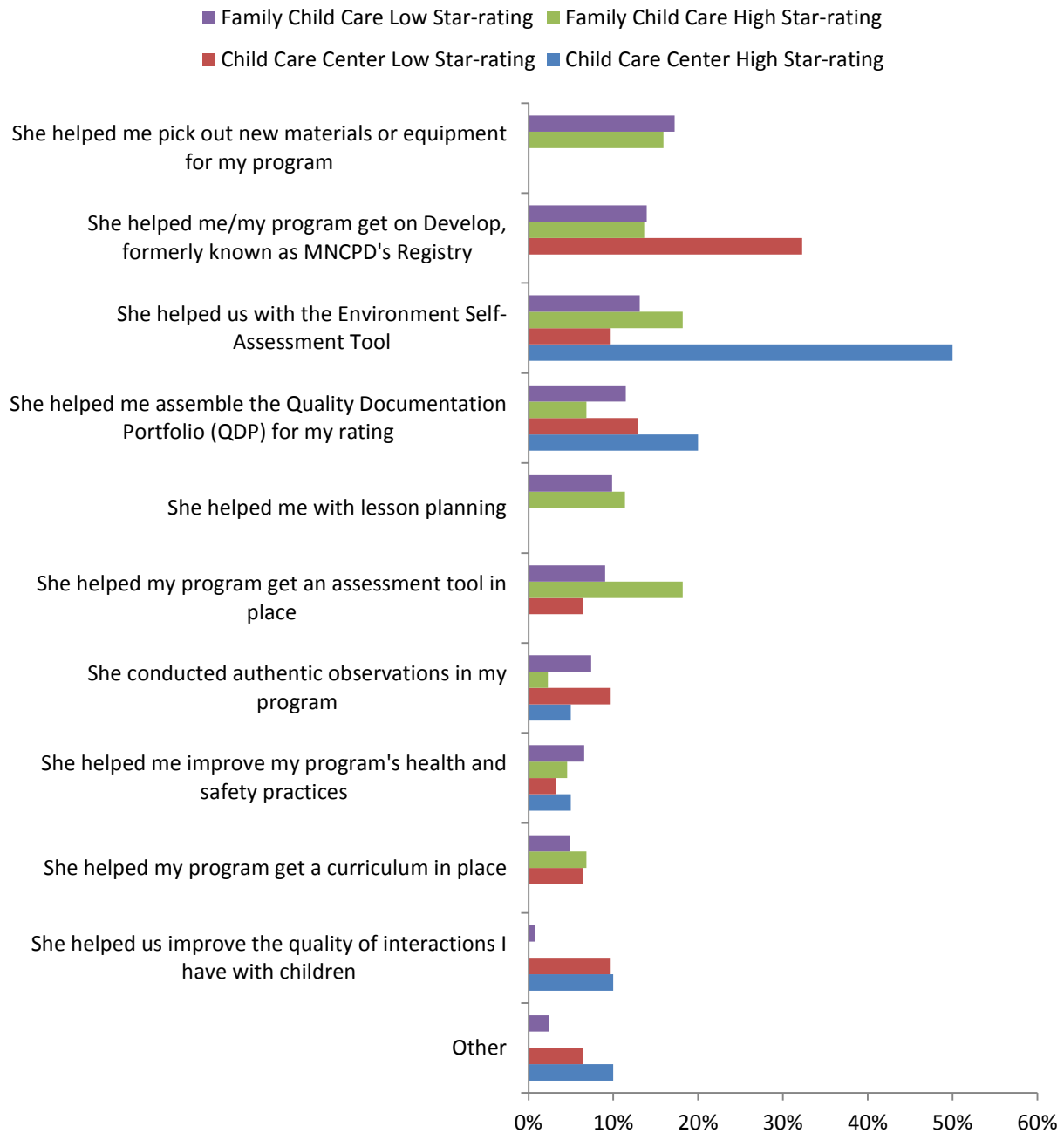
A majority of respondents in child care centers and family child care providers across Star-rating levels reported the primary activity they worked on with their Quality Coach was filling out their Quality Documentation Portfolio (QDP; see Figure 10), while the activity they ranked doing second most often varied across the options (see Figure 11). The activity that was ranked as number one did not differ by Star-level in child care centers or family child care respondents. In addition, the activity that was ranked as number two did not differ by Star-level in child care centers or family child care respondents.

Figure 10. Respondent-reported activity worked on most often (ranked #1) with Quality Coaches by program type and Star-rating level.



Source: Fully-rated provider survey, 2015, Child Trends and Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Figure 11. Respondent-reported activity worked on second most often (ranked #2) with Quality Coaches by program type and Star-rating level.

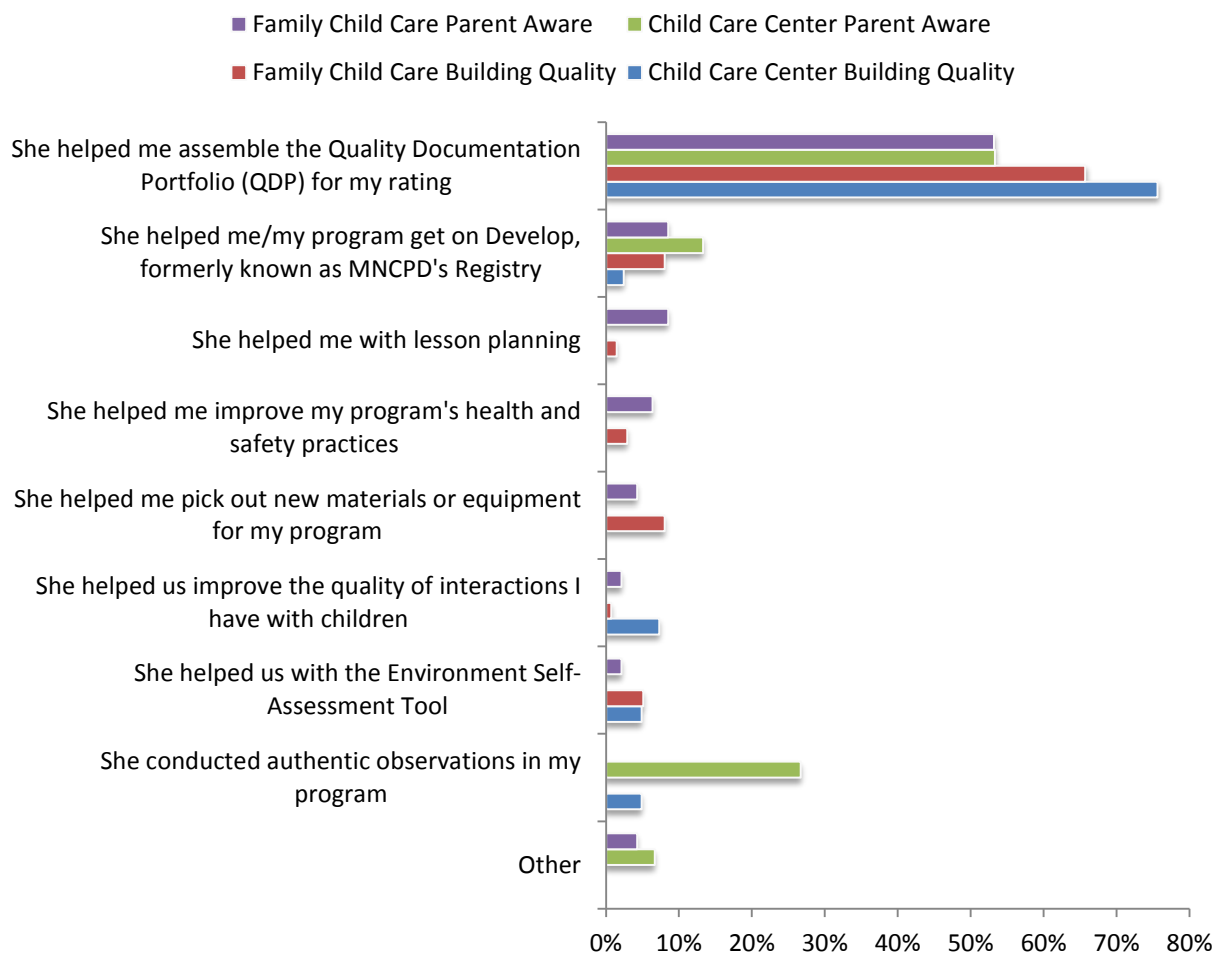


Source: Fully-rated provider survey, 2015, Child Trends and Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

We also examined the number one ranked activity Building Quality respondents and Parent Aware-only respondents reported working on with their Quality Coach. The activities that were ranked as number one did not differ between Building Quality and

Parent Aware. Over three-quarters (76%) of child care center directors in Building Quality and two-thirds (66%) of family providers in Building Quality reported that filling out the QDP was the primary activity they worked on with their Quality Coach. Less commonly, but still the majority (53% and 53%) of providers in Parent Aware-only child care centers and family child care providers reported that the QDP was their primary activity. Notably, over a quarter (27%) of directors in Parent Aware-only child care centers reported that their Quality Coach primarily worked with them by conducting an observation in their program, compared to very few (5%) directors in Building Quality child care centers.

Figure 12. Provider-reported activity worked on most often (ranked #1) with Quality Coaches by full-rating eligibility type (Building Quality versus Parent Aware).



Source: Fully-rated provider survey, 2015, Child Trends and Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Summary

Child care directors and family child care providers experience and perceive Parent Aware differently. Consistent with findings from the Provider Perceptions Report, programs join Parent Aware primarily for financial motivations; however, professional reasons were the primary motivator for a sub-set of family child care providers. Programs most frequently reported making changes to their learning environment as a direct result of participating in Parent Aware. This change was followed by changes in teaching practices, changes to programs' approaches to training and professional development, changes to child assessment practices, changes to business administration practices, and finally, changes about serving diverse families. Higher-rated programs made more changes in business administrative practices and to serving diverse families compared to lower-rated programs.

Section 3b: Accelerated Pathway to Rating (APR) Program Characteristics

Purpose of this section: This section describes characteristics of programs in Parent Aware that earned their rating via the Accelerated Pathway to Rating (APR) process. Survey data collected from providers in 2015 are examined by program type.

Key Findings:

- Most APR programs reported making at least one change in practices in their program as a direct result of participating in Parent Aware.
- Accredited child care and school-based Pre-K programs reported making more changes than Head Start programs did.
- The most frequent change APR programs reported making were changes about the intentionality of teaching practices.
- Programs also reported making changes to their learning environment, child assessment practices, and changes about teacher training and professional development.
- Programs reported making the fewest changes in serving diverse families and business administration practices.

Introduction

Programs eligible for the Accelerated Pathway to Rating (APR) enter Parent Aware through an expedited process. Eligible programs must have an active accreditation status through an approved accrediting body, operate under the auspice of a Head Start grantee and relevant federal Head Start Performance Standards, or operate under laws such as Minnesota Statutes 124D.15 for School-Based Pre-Kindergarten programs. Though these programs achieve Parent Aware rating status through the same mechanism, their experiences and perceptions may vary based on their program type. Examining characteristics of these programs offers an opportunity to better understand these programs.

Methods

The APR survey was distributed to providers who had an active Parent Aware rating through the APR pathway. Email addresses were obtained through Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool. The APR application process allows a Head Start grantee to apply for a rating to be assigned to all of the sites under the auspice of that grantee. Similarly, for school districts, a rating is assigned to all School-Based Pre-Kindergarten sites within the jurisdiction of the district. Therefore, respondents representing Head Start and School-Based Pre-Kindergarten programs are reporting experiences and perceptions across multiple sites. Respondents for Head Start and School-Based Pre-Kindergarten programs are different from the directors of accredited child care centers and providers in accredited family child care programs who describe perceptions and experience for the one site they represent.

Analysis of changes made as a direct result of participating in Parent Aware

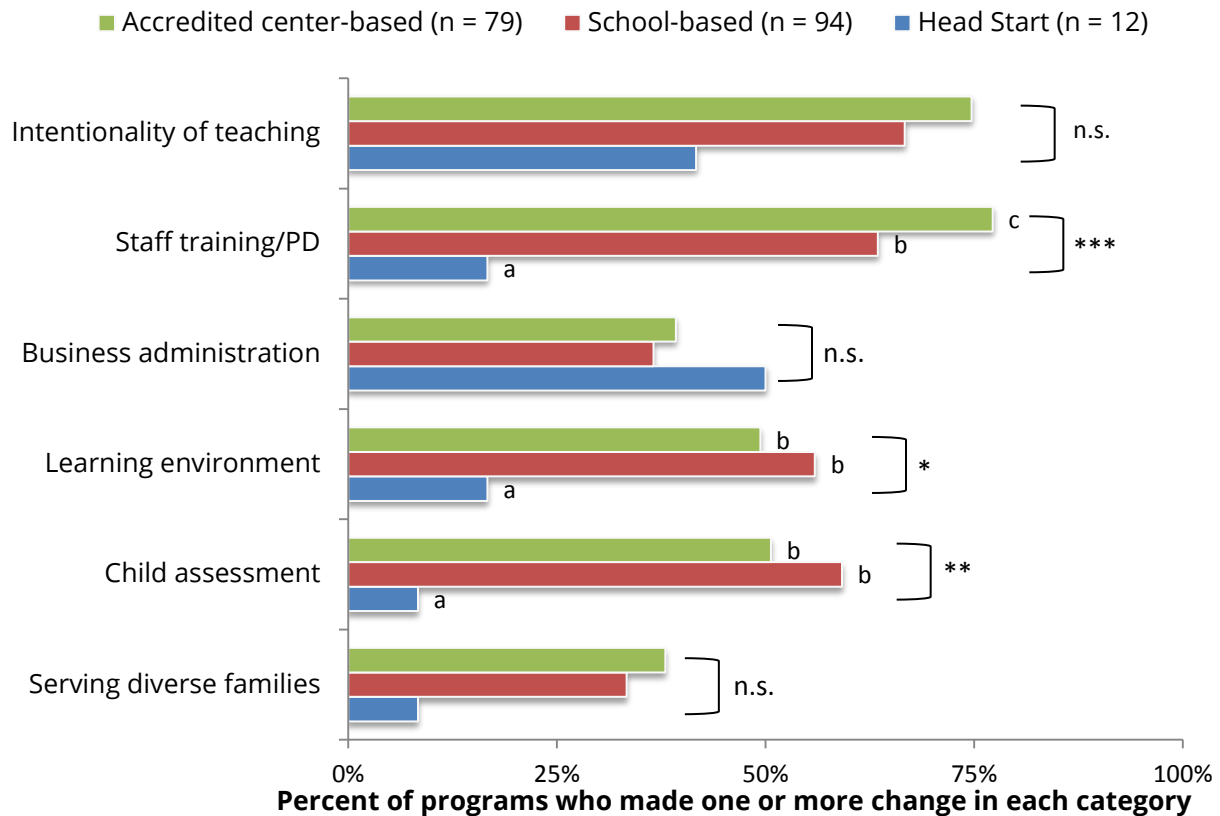
Respondents were asked about two series' of changes they may have made as a direct result of participating in Parent Aware. For the first set of change items (13), respondents answered "Yes" or "No." For the second set of change items (12), respondents reflected on the degree to which they may have made a change. Respondents could respond, "Yes, I have made this change," "Partial, I have started to make this change, but it is not complete," "No, I have not made this change yet, but I plan to," and "No, I did not make this change and I do not plan to." For analytical purposes, we combined the responses "Yes" and "Partial" responses in order to examine the differences among providers across all 25 possible change items using the same yes/no scale.

In general, most APR programs reported making at least one change (out of a possible 25) as a direct result of participating in Parent Aware. Accredited center-based programs and school-based programs made at least one change as a result of participating in Parent Aware more often than Head Start programs (89%, 82%, and 75%, respectively). Accredited center-based programs ($M = 7.9$, $SD = 6.1$) and school-based programs ($M = 6.5$, $SD = 5.6$) made on average more changes than Head Start programs ($M = 2.8$, $SD = 4.2$).

The method used to group the items into the six change categories displayed is detailed in section 3a of this report. The percentage of programs that made at least one change in each of the six categories, split by program type, is shown in Figure 13 in order from the change category made most often to the change construct made least often. In total, two thirds (61%) of programs made any change related to intentionality of teaching practices (see Appendix B for a detailed table), but there were no significant differences by program type. Changes made related to staff training and professional development (accredited

child care = 77%; school-based programs = 63%; Head Start = 17%) differed between program types. Changes related to business administration did not differ significantly by program type, while changes related to learning environment and child assessment practices differed significantly between program types.

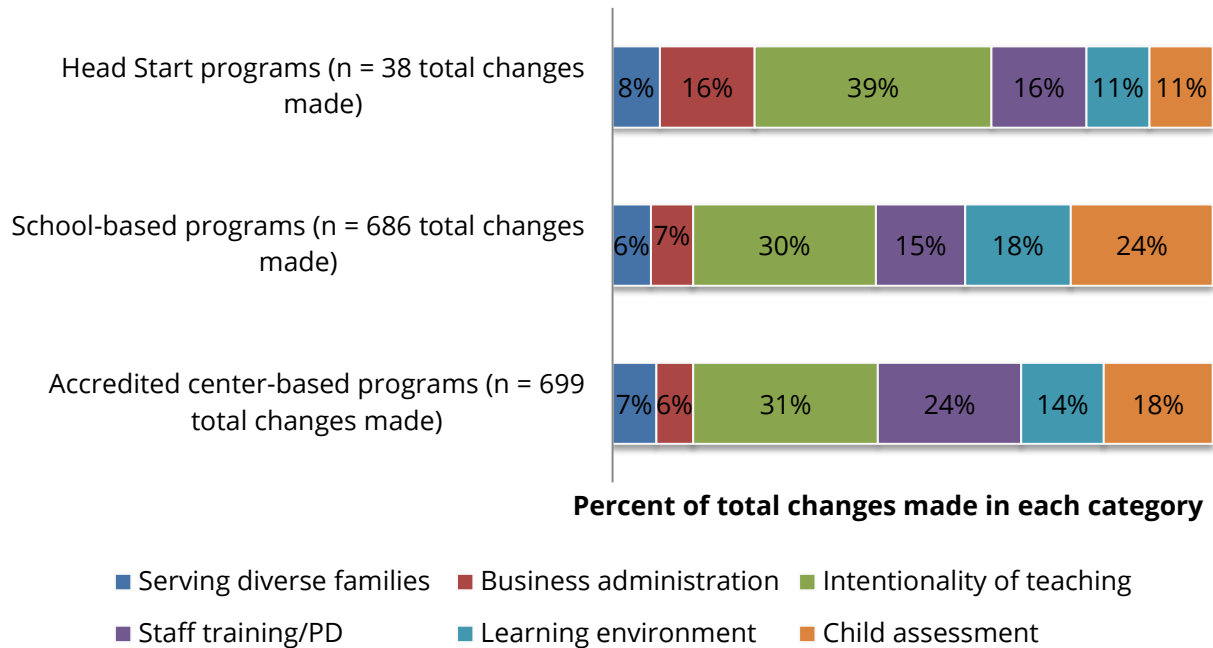
Figure 13. Percent of APR programs by program type that made one or more change by change construct category.



Source: Fully-rated provider survey, 2015, Child Trends and Develop, Minnesota’s Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016. Brackets indicate the significance of the main Chi-square statistic, while different letters indicate the significant differences between the post-hoc Chi-square tests.

Next, we examined the distribution of all of the changes that programs made into the six change categories. As seen in Figure 14, in Head Start programs, most (39%) of the changes made fall into the category of intentionality of teaching practices. Notably, more of the changes Head Start programs made were categorized as business administration (16%) than other program types (7% and 6%). Furthermore, the changes that accredited child care made fell into the category of staff training and professional development (24%) more often than other program types (16% and 15%).

Figure 14. Distribution of total changes made by APR survey respondents among change categories by program type.



Source: Fully-rated provider survey, 2015, Child Trends and Develop, Minnesota’s Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, January 2016.

Summary

Though most APR programs reported making changes as a result of participating in Parent Aware, the types of changes they made and the frequency with which different program types made changes varied. Programs eligible for the APR pathway already meet standards known to be important in promoting high quality environments for young children; therefore, it is not unexpected that they reported making fewer changes as a result of Parent Aware when compared to fully-rated programs (see Figure 7). However, APR programs *did* report making changes as a direct result of participating in Parent Aware, especially changes related to curriculum and child assessment practices. APR programs reported fewer changes in the areas of business administration and serving diverse families.

Section 4: Predictors of Program Quality

Purpose of this section: The purpose of this section is to describe the characteristics of fully-rated and Accelerated Pathway to Rating (APR) programs in Parent Aware that relate to observed quality.

Key Findings:

- The Career Lattice indicator documenting lead teacher education and training is related to observed quality of teacher-child interactions.
- Overall, small sample sizes limited the indicator analyses and few associations were found.

Introduction

One purpose of QRIS validation strategy described in the Initial Validation Report is to assess the accuracy of the ratings by examining the degree to which the rating aligns with external measures of program quality. A related validation strategy is to conduct analysis of the indicators that comprise the overall rating and to examine how the individual indicators are correlated with measures of observed quality. Parent Aware is a “hybrid” Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Hybrid means that its structure is comprised of “block indicators” at the One- and Two-Star level and “indicators-for-points” at the Three- and Four-Star level. Block indicators mean that programs must meet all of the indicators (or standards) at the One-Star level before being allowed to earn points at the Two-Star level. They also must earn all the indicators at the Two-Star level before being eligible to earn points at the Three- and Four-Star level. After a program meets all the indicators at the block levels, they can begin choosing which indicators to earn at the Three- and Four-Star level. Programs must earn at least one point in each Parent Aware rating category in order to earn a Three- or Four-Star rating. Only programs going through the full-rating process earn and are awarded indicator points. Indicator points are documented in Develop, Minnesota’s Quality Improvement and Registry Tool. In this section, we present analyses documenting the associations between Parent Aware indicators at the Three- and Four-Star fully-rated level and observed measures of quality. The analysis may inform ongoing discussions about revisions to the Parent Aware indicators. For more background on the

Parent Aware indicators and how programs score on indicators of quality see the Year 3 Parent Aware Report.¹⁴

Methods

Indicator data were obtained from Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool. Observed quality scores were obtained for the initial validation study and included a sample of child care centers and family child care programs with scores on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R, centers only), the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R, family child care programs only), the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Extension (ECERS-E, centers and family child care homes), and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS, centers only). To understand the relationship between quality indicators and observed quality, a regression analysis was conducted to identify which Parent Aware indicators were associated with the observed quality scores. It is important to note that indicator data are only available for fully-rated programs setting goal ratings of Three- or Four-Stars, which limits the generalizability of the analyses. Particular indicators hypothesized to correlate with global quality were selected for analysis. Indicators selected include the following:

- **TT3c** (center): Staff training and education are recorded and documented through Develop (Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool) (<http://www.developoolmn.org>)

Points are awarded based on the steps achieved in the Career Lattice. For each lead teacher, points are awarded as follows: 1 point awarded for step 1, 2 points for step 2, and so on through 10 points awarded for step 10 or higher, then averaged:

- Average score is 5.00 or less
- Average score is between 5.01 and 6.00
- Average score is between 6.01 and 7.00
- Average score is between 7.01 and 9.00
- Average score is between 9.01 and higher

Definition of "lead teacher:" A lead teacher is the highest-qualified teacher who works in a classroom during at least 50% of the program's operating hours.

- **AC3d** (center & family child care): Uses approved assessment tool(s) at least *once per year* **OR** Uses approved assessment tool(s) at least *twice per year*
- **AC3f** (center & family child care): Uses child assessment information to design goals and guide instruction for individual children

¹⁴ Cleveland, J., Starr, R., Friese, S., Sosinsky, L., Li, W., Beckett, A., & Tout, K. (2015). Statewide Expansion of Parent Aware Ratings: Year 3 Report. Minneapolis, MN: Child Trends.

- **TT3b** (center): Director has a director’s credential
- **TR3d** (family child care): Demonstrates ability to communicate program information in parents’ primary language (for example, through on-site staff, qualified volunteers, an interpreter service or translated materials) OR All lead child care providers have completed at least 6 hours of training in working with families from different cultures and socio-economic levels

Parent Aware Indicators and Observed Quality

Tables 16, 17, and 18 display the results of analyses regressing individual indicator items on observational scores. Significant findings are bolded.

Points earned on Assessment of Child Progress (AC3d: Uses child assessment information to design goals and guide instruction for individual children) were significantly related to scores on the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R) (see Table 16). The FCCERS-R is an observation of global quality that is only conducted with family child care providers. In center-based programs the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) is used to measure global quality; however none of those associations were significant.

Table 16. Results of indicator analyses predicting ECERS-R and FCCERS-R

Indicator	ECERS-R			FCCERS-R		
	n	B	p	n	B	p
TT3c	(n=18)	0.26	0.21	-	N/A	N/A
AC3d	(n=18)	0.43	0.11	(n=24)	0.55	0.0025
AC3f	(n=5)	-0.52	0.13	(n=3)	0.38	0.64
TT3b	(n=18)	0.50	0.40	-	N/A	N/A
TR3d	(n=18)	-0.41	0.5	(n=24)	0.27	0.15

Source: Child Trends Parent Aware observation data and Develop, Minnesota’s Quality Improvement and Registry Tool.

Table 17 displays the results of Parent Aware indicators regressed on three sub-scales from the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Extension (ECERS-E) tool (Literacy, Mathematics and Planning for Individualized Needs). The ECERS-E is an extension of the Environment Rating Scale suite of tools used to capture more detail about teaching and curricular practices. The ECERS-E observation is conducted alongside the ECERS-R or FCCERS-R; it can be administered in both center-based programs and in family child care

homes. Points earned on Teaching and Relationships (TR3d: Demonstrates ability to communicate program information in parents' primary language (for example, through on-site staff, qualified volunteers, an interpreter service or translated materials) are significantly related to scores on the ECERS-Extension literacy subscale.

Table 17. Results of indicator analyses predicting ECERS-E subscales

Indicator		ECERS-E Literacy		ECERS-E Math		ECERS-E Individualizing Needs	
		B	p	B	p	B	p
TT3c	(n=18)	0.20	0.41	0.35	0.34	0.61	0.31
AC3d	(n=42)	0.32	0.19	-0.01	0.97	0.56	0.17
AC3f	(n=8)	-0.45	0.57	-0.21	0.70	0.5	0.8
TT3b	(n=18)	0.61	0.66	1.16	0.26	-0.65	0.72
TR3d	(n=42)	0.59	0.03	-0.04	0.91	0.56	0.58

Source: Child Trends Parent Aware observation data and Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool.

Table 18 displays the results of Parent Aware indicators regressed on CLASS domain scores. Points earned on Teacher Training (TT3c: Staff training and education are recorded in Develop) predict scores on CLASS Classroom Organization and Emotional Support. Findings for TT3c Instructional Support are marginally significant.

Table 18. Results of indicator analyses predicting CLASS

Indicator		CLASS - Classroom Organization		CLASS - Instructional Support		CLASS - Emotional Support	
		B	p	B	p	B	p
TT3c	(n=72)	0.22	0.0008	0.15	0.09	0.17	0.02
AC3d	(n=72)	-0.19	0.13	-0.08	0.63	0.06	0.68
AC3f	(n=40)	-0.17	0.29	0.01	0.95	-0.21	0.25
TT3b	(n=72)	-0.12	0.51	-0.16	0.49	0.12	0.53
TR3d	(n=72)	-0.18	0.63	0.13	0.55	0.09	0.61

Source: Child Trends Parent Aware observation data and Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool.

[Analysis of associations of reported program practices and observed quality](#)

Correlations were conducted to examine associations between program characteristics and program practices that center-based directors and family child care providers self-reported

in the survey Child Trends administered and scores on ERS and CLASS. The analysis resulted in few significant associations.

Summary

The Parent Aware indicators are intended to serve as a concise assessment of the practices that are most important for supporting young children's development. In this exploratory analysis (due to small sample sizes), associations between Parent Aware indicators and measures of observed quality were examined. The most robust finding to emerge from the analysis is significant associations between the indicator representing points earned on the Career Lattice and scores on all domains of the CLASS. It is noteworthy that a relatively blunt measure of lead teacher education and training (i.e., the measure averages the Career Lattice steps across lead teachers) is tapping aspects of teacher qualifications that are related to practices in the classroom. The findings indicate that the Career Lattice indicator is functioning reasonably well, though further analyses of the Career Lattice indicator with a larger sample is warranted.

Section 5: Summary and Implications

Purpose of this section: This section provides a summary of key findings from the report and describes how the findings can inform Parent Aware implementation.

Key Findings:

- Fully-rated programs increase their rating level over time.
- A majority of programs are applying for a re-rating at least 12 months before they are required.
- Participation in Building Quality pre-rating supports is not associated with achieving different initial Star-rating levels than programs entering Parent Aware directly. Further study is needed to understand whether and how Building Quality helps programs in reaching a higher level of quality than they would have achieved otherwise.
- There are some differences in programs' experiences with and perceptions of Parent Aware based on program type and between lower- and higher-rated programs.

In 2015, over 2,400 programs were rated in Parent Aware, representing 19% of eligible programs in Minnesota. Since launching statewide expansion, Parent Aware has experienced increases in participation across each of the different types of providers that are eligible. The descriptive and comparative analyses in this report illuminate important features of Parent Aware that have implications for implementation. Key findings and implications include:

- **Fully-rated programs improve their rating level over time.** By the second and third ratings, the majority of programs move into Three and Four-Star ratings. This improvement provides a wider range of higher Star-rated programs for families to choose from and may result in more children attending higher-rated programs over time. Costs for CCAP may increase as more children attend programs eligible for CCAP's higher rates for quality. It is important to continue monitoring initial rating and re-rating statuses to identify new patterns. It is possible, for example, that the trend of upward mobility will slow over time as more providers enroll with characteristics that differ from those currently enrolled.

- **A majority of programs receive a re-rating at least 12 months before they are required.** It is possible that programs in the January 2016 cohort applied for re-rating relatively early so that they could take advantage of quality improvement grants that may be unavailable beginning in July 2016. Another possible reason programs may have applied for re-rating may be that programs were trying to achieve a Three- or Four-Star rating before July 2016, when eligibility requirements are scheduled to take effect for the Early Learning Scholarships. As of July 1, 2016 programs must have a Three- or Four-Star rating in order to continue receiving Early Learning Scholarships. Tracking the pace of re-rating will be useful since frequent re-rating that extends beyond 2016 may have significant costs for Parent Aware that weren't anticipated.
- **Fully-rated programs' primary motivations for joining Parent Aware are related to financial incentives.** Yet motivations varied, and higher Star-rated family child care providers were more likely to cite professional motivations for joining Parent Aware. With uncertain funding of quality improvement grant dollars, it will be important to track any changes in program participation in Parent Aware that are impacted by reduced or limited funding for quality improvement.
- **The Career Lattice indicator documenting lead teacher education and training is related to observed quality of teacher-child interactions.** One finding from recent analysis of Parent Aware indicators indicates that a simple average of points assigned for different levels of lead teacher qualifications is related to CLASS domain scores. Though more analysis with a larger sample size is warranted, it is useful to document concurrent validity of the Career Lattice indicator. This and other findings may be useful when considering possible changes to the Parent Aware indicators. When feasible, additional indicator analyses will be helpful to include in the evaluation plan. With the re-rating findings noted earlier, more programs are receiving Three- and Four-Star ratings and will have indicator data available that can be analyzed to inform continuous improvement of Parent Aware.

Appendix A: Fully-Rated Tables

Change Category	Changes made as a direct result of joining Parent Aware	Child Care Center		Family Child Care	
		Lower Star-rating (n = 33-36)	Higher Star-rating (n = 21-22)	Lower Star-rating (n = 121-127)	Higher Star-rating (n = 51-52)
Staff training / professional development	I changed our program's approach to professional development.	80%	86%	60%	55%
	I (or my staff) took more hours of training than in previous years.	76%	82%	76%	61%
	I (or my staff) joined Develop for the first time (and received a Career Lattice Step).	76%	95%	72%	58%
	I (or my staff) joined a professional association or became more active in a child care provider association.	29%	45%	40%	31%
Intentionality of teaching practices	I think of myself (or my program) as critical to Kindergarten Readiness.	89%	73%	80%	85%
	I (or my staff) am/are more committed to the early care and education field.	77%	77%	74%	71%
	I (or my staff) pay more attention to how interactions among children and adults promote children's learning.	76%	77%	78%	65%
	I (or my staff) am/are more intentional about how planned activities and the environment impact children's learning.	86%	76%	80%	66%
	I (or my staff) improved my relationships with my families (e.g. newsletter, website)	51%	50%	61%	61%
Learning environment	I changed the daily routine of my program.	39%	27%	56%	50%
	I added or improved outdoor play equipment.	25%	32%	55%	35%
	Our program made changes to the building or physical space.	31%	27%	35%	35%
	I purchased additional supplies, games, books, or materials for my program.	77%	77%	93%	75%
	I purchased materials specifically for children with special needs.	18%	27%	24%	22%

Changes made as a direct result of joining Parent Aware		Child Care Center		Family Child Care	
	I added an enrichment program for children to my program (e.g. art, storyteller).	20%	9%	25%	29%
	I (or my staff) started making lesson plans.	60%	50%	73%	69%
	I (or my staff) started using a curriculum.	51%	59%	74%	71%
	My approach to classroom/environment organization has changed.	69%	82%	74%	73%
Serving diverse families	I serve more children who speak a language other than English.	3%	9%	5%	15%
	I serve more children who receive county child care assistance (CCAP).	19%	41%	10%	10%
	I serve more children with special needs.	11%	18%	6%	4%
	I changed the food served in my program.	14%	18%	9%	4%
	I (or my staff) participated in Inclusion Coaching through the Center for Inclusive Child Care.	11%	5%	9%	8%
Business administration	I charge higher rates.	6%	32%	14%	31%
	I increased my or my staff's wages.	19%	36%	4%	8%
	Our program has opened a new classroom (for child care centers only).	6%	5%	N/A	N/A
	I extended my program's hours of operation.	8%	5%	4%	6%
	I decided to pursue NAEYC or another national accreditation.	3%	0%	9%	13%
	I (or my staff) participated in business coaching through First Children's Finance.	9%	23%	5%	10%
Child assessment	I (or my staff) started measuring children's progress with a child assessment tool.	69%	68%	66%	85%

Changes made as a direct result of joining Parent Aware	Child Care Center		Family Child Care	
I (or my staff) started sharing children's assessment results with parents.	57%	55%	62%	80%
I (or my staff) started using children's assessment results to guide individualized or group instruction.	63%	64%	60%	77%
I (or my staff) started observing and documenting children's development.	69%	82%	79%	83%

Primary reason (#1) for joining Parent Aware	Child Care Center		Family Child Care	
	Lower Star-rating (n = 34)	Higher Star-rating (n = 22)	Lower Star-rating (n = 126)	Higher Star-rating (n = 51)
Access to pre-Rating support dollars (up to \$500 for programs in Building Quality)	9%	0%	10%	8%
Access to free or low-cost training	12%	5%	12%	10%
Access to Early Learning Scholarships	32%	36%	8%	8%
Access to post-Rating support dollars (up to \$1000 for programs receiving a One-, Two-, or Three-Star Rating)	3%	0%	30%	12%
Access to higher CCAP reimbursement rates	6%	36%	1%	2%
Access to quality coaching	6%	0%	2%	4%
Access to CLASS coaching (applicable to child care centers only)	0%	0%	0%	0%
To better attract families to my program	6%	14%	3%	8%
It is important for my professional development/professionalism	12%	0%	21%	35%
To be part of a cutting-edge early childhood initiative	6%	5%	5%	6%
Someone else in my organization required my program to participate	3%	5%	0%	0%
My peers and colleagues are participating in Parent Aware	3%	0%	2%	2%
I joined Parent Aware for another reason not listed	3%	0%	6%	6%

Secondary reason (#1) for joining Parent Aware	Child Care Center		Family Child Care	
	Lower Star-rating (n = 34)	Higher Star-rating (n = 22)	Lower Star-rating (n = 126)	Higher Star-rating (n = 51)
Access to free or low-cost training	3%	0%	11%	13%
Access to pre-Rating support dollars (up to \$500 for programs in Building Quality)	9%	9%	21%	19%
Access to post-Rating support dollars (up to \$1000 for programs receiving a One-, Two-, or Three-Star Rating)	9%	5%	26%	9%
Access to Early Learning Scholarships	15%	36%	6%	9%
Access to higher CCAP reimbursement rates	21%	14%	2%	11%
Access to quality coaching	6%	5%	6%	4%
Access to CLASS coaching (applicable to child care centers only)	0%	0%	2%	0%
To better attract families to my program	15%	14%	6%	11%
It is important for my professional development/professionalism	9%	5%	11%	11%
To be part of a cutting-edge early childhood initiative	15%	0%	6%	13%
Someone else in my organization required my program to participate	0%	5%	0%	2%
My peers and colleagues are participating in Parent Aware	0%	9%	0%	0%
I joined Parent Aware for another reason not listed	0%	0%	2%	0%

Primary (#1) reason for joining Parent Aware by Secondary (#2) reason for joining Parent Aware	Secondary (#2) reason				
	Financial reasons	Internal reasons	Training/Coaching reasons	External reasons	Other reason
Financial reasons (Pre- and Post-rating dollars, Early Learning Scholarships, and higher CCAP rates) (n = 110)	16%	66%	16%	1%	1%
Internal reasons (attracting families, professional development, being part of a cutting-edge initiative) (n = 74)	16%	34%	46%	3%	1%
Training/Coaching reasons (free or low-cost trainings, quality coaching, or CLASS coaching) (n = 30)	10%	70%	20%	0%	0%
External reasons (required to participate or peers are participating) (n = 6)	33%	33%	17%	17	0%
Other Reason (n = 10)	30%	50%	20%	0%	0%

Primary (#1) activity worked on with Quality Coach	Child Care Center		Family Child Care	
	High Star-rating (n = 34)	Low Star-rating (n = 21)	High Star-rating (n = 129)	Low Star-rating (n = 52)
She helped me improve my program's health and safety practices	0%	0%	4%	3%
She helped me assemble the Quality Documentation Portfolio (QDP) for my rating	71%	68%	71%	60%
She helped me pick out new materials or equipment for my program	0%	0%	4%	9%
She helped my with lesson planning	0%	0%	4%	2%
She helped my program get a curriculum in place	0%	3%	2%	4%
She conducted observations in my program	14%	9%	0%	0%

Primary (#1) activity worked on	Child Care Center		Family Child Care	
She helped my program get an assessment tool in place	0%	0%	0%	2%
She helped me program get my families more involved	0%	0%	2%	0%
She helped me/my program get on Develop, formerly known as MNCPD's Registry	5%	6%	4%	10%
She helped us with the Environment Self-Assessment Tool	5%	3%	2%	5%
She helped us improve the quality of interactions I have with children	5%	6%	0%	2%
I/My program did not work on anything with my Quality Coach	0%	3%	4%	3%
Other	0%	3%	4%	0%

Second activity (#2) worked on with Quality Coach	Child Care Center		Family Child Care	
	High Star-rating (n = 31)	Low Star-rating (n = 20)	High Star-rating (n = 122)	Low Star-rating (n = 44)
She helped me improve my program's health and safety practices	5%	3%	5%	7%
She helped me assemble the Quality Documentation Portfolio (QDP) for my rating	20%	13%	7%	11%
She helped me pick out new materials or equipment for my program	0%	0%	16%	17%
She helped my with lesson planning	0%	0%	11%	10%
She helped my program get a curriculum in place	0%	6%	7%	5%
She conducted observations in my program	5%	10%	2%	7%

Second activity (#2) worked on	Child Care Center		Family Child Care	
She helped my program get an assessment tool in place	0%	6%	18%	9%
She helped me program get my families more involved	0%	0%	0%	2%
She helped me/my program get on Develop, formerly known as MNCPD's Registry	0%	32%	14%	14%
She helped us with the Environment Self-Assessment Tool	50%	10%	18%	13%
She helped us improve the quality of interactions I have with children	10%	10%	0%	1%
I/My program did not work on anything with my Quality Coach	0%	3%	2%	2%
Other	10%	6%	0%	2%

Appendix B: APR Tables

Change Category	Changes made as a direct response to joining Parent Aware	Accredited child care (n = 73-79)	School-based Pre-K (n = 88-94)	Head Start (n = 11-12)
Staff training / professional development	I changed our program's approach to professional development.	66%	51%	17%
	I (or my staff) took more hours of training than in previous years.	56%	44%	8%
	I (or my staff) joined Develop for the first time (and received a Career Lattice Step).	64%	7%	9%
	I (or my staff) joined a professional association or became more active in a child care provider association.	38%	11%	17%
Intentionality of teaching practices	I think of myself (or my program) as critical to Kindergarten Readiness.	65%	57%	42%
	I (or my staff) am/are more committed to the early care and education field.	57%	49%	25%
	I (or my staff) pay more attention to how interactions among children and adults promote children's learning.	57%	41%	25%
	I (or my staff) am/are more intentional about how planned activities and the environment impact children's learning.	61%	48%	25%
	I (or my staff) improved my relationships with my families (e.g. newsletter, website)	36%	31%	8%
Learning environment	I changed the daily routine of my program.	16%	30%	0%

Change Category	Changes made as a direct response to joining Parent Aware	Accredited child care (n = 73-79)	School-based Pre-K (n = 88-94)	Head Start (n = 11-12)
	I (or my staff) started making lesson plans.	32%	24%	8%
	I (or my staff) started using a curriculum.	35%	36%	8%
	My approach to classroom/environment organization has changed.	44%	43%	17%
Serving diverse families	I serve more children who speak a language other than English.	10%	16%	8%
	I serve more children who receive county child care assistance (CCAP).	32%	11%	8%
	I serve more children with special needs.	12%	12%	8%
	I changed the food served in my program.	12%	9%	0%
Business administration	I charge higher rates.	15%	4%	0%
	I increased my or my staff's wages.	27%	8%	0%
	Our program has opened a new classroom (for child care centers only).	9%	16%	25%
	I extended my program's hours of operation.	4%	26%	25%
Child assessment	I (or my staff) started measuring children's progress with a child assessment tool.	53%	53%	8%
	I (or my staff) started sharing children's assessment results with parents.	38%	38%	8%

Change Category	Changes made as a direct response to joining Parent Aware	Accredited child care (n = 73-79)	School-based Pre-K (n = 88-94)	Head Start (n = 11-12)
	I (or my staff) started using children's assessment results to guide individualized or group instruction.	39%	47%	8%
	I (or my staff) started observing and documenting children's development.	42%	40%	8%

References

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