



**Oklahoma Department of Human Services
Child Care Services**

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www.okdhs.org/childcare



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Dear Family Child Home Provider:

Oklahoma's Reaching for the Stars program began in 1999 and was the first Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) in the United States. The foundation of the Stars program is compliance with licensing requirements with the additional focus on quality child care practices. Many other states have followed Oklahoma's efforts to increase the quality of care for our youngest children and have created their own QRIS systems.

In order to continue to strive toward the highest quality of care, we have assessed our QRIS program, researched currently known best practice in the field of early care and education, and worked with our partners to refine our Stars criteria. Enclosed is a grid highlighting the Star criteria that will become effective July 1, 2012. These refinements include clarification in wording, practice and new criteria. Please review the attached information as well as the full wording in the enclosed *Reaching for the Stars Family Child Care Homes* resource book to determine how the new Star criteria may affect your program.

The new Star criteria is effective July 1, 2012. Processes are in place to assist programs with transitioning into compliance. Additional time frames will be given for compliance with: primary caregiver and assistant caregiver membership on the Oklahoma Professional Development Registry (OPDR), and primary caregivers' required training in the Early Learning Guidelines (ELG) and are as follows:

- 1) Membership on OPDR: verification of registration will occur as licensing reviews professional development records for compliance with training criteria. Registration for primary and assistant caregivers employed prior to July 1, 2012 will be due by the end of the month of their employment year. Registration for staff employed on or after July 1, 2012 will be due by the end of their 12th month of their first year of employment. (To register, go to <https://okregistry.org>).
- 2) ELG training: primary caregivers will have until 1/1/14 to receive training in Oklahoma Early Learning Guidelines for Infants, Toddlers and Twos and/or Oklahoma Early Learning Guidelines for Children Ages Three to Five. [ELG resource books are available at www.okdhs.org (providers) or from an OCCS staff; please see attached approved coursework list].

"Assuring Oklahoma's families have access to licensed, affordable, quality child care"

As we move forward together in our efforts to continually improve the quality of care for Oklahoma's young children, we understand that all changes can cause challenges. If you have questions or need assistance in implementation, please contact one of our QRIS staff (listed in the enclosed *Reaching for the Stars Family Child Care Homes* resource book) or your Licensing Specialist.

Sincerely,

Lesli Blazer
Director of Oklahoma Child Care Services