



Recognizing Quality Care & Learning

Dear Colleague,

Welcome to BrightStars!

Your program is about to join a growing number of child care centers and preschools demonstrating their commitment to quality and care and learning by joining BrightStars.

Enclosed you will find the BrightStars *Child Care Center and Preschool Quality Framework*, application instructions and forms, and information on local and national quality improvement resources.

We are here to answer any questions you may have about the BrightStars rating process, application materials, or resources for quality improvement. Please visit our website, [www.BrightStars.org](http://www.BrightStars.org), or contact us by phone or email.

Sincerely,

Tammy Camillo  
Director

**For more information about  
BrightStars contact:**

**Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children**  
655 Main Street, Suite 201, East Greenwich, Rhode Island 02818  
p: (401) 398-7605 f: (401) 398-7604 [www.BrightStars.org](http://www.BrightStars.org)



**Information for  
Child Care Centers and Preschools**

May 2010

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# Welcome to BrightStars!

Rhode Island has developed BrightStars, a voluntary quality rating and improvement system, to improve family access to high quality child care and early learning programs across the state. Quality rating and improvement systems exist in many states across the country and are a proven strategy to systematically improve the quality of child care and early learning programs.

BrightStars is a 5-level quality rating and improvement system. Programs participating in BrightStars demonstrate a strong commitment to continuous quality improvement.

BrightStars assesses child care and early learning programs across six quality domains:

- Child's Daily Experience
- Teaching and Learning
- Staff-Child Ratio and Group Size
- Family Communication and Involvement
- Staff Qualifications
- Program Management

BrightStars is led by a steering committee including representatives from all sectors of the early learning and child care field. BrightStars is a public-private partnership managed by the Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children. BrightStars partners include the United Way of Rhode Island, Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Rhode Island Department of Health, and Rhode Island KIDS COUNT.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### *What is a Quality Rating and Improvement System?*

BrightStars is a five-level quality rating and improvement system (QRIS). QRIS initiatives exist in many states across the country, and although each state model is unique, all QRIS programs are designed to rate the quality or level of a child care program, identify areas for improvement, inform consumers about levels of quality, and target technical assistance.

### *Why is a Quality Rating and Improvement System Important?*

QRIS programs benefit children, families, and child care and early learning programs by emphasizing the importance of quality care and giving parents information to make choices about their children's care.

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A BrightStars quality rating provides accurate, reliable information about program quality to families and the community. Child care and early learning programs participating in BrightStars can use the rating system to develop benchmarks, guide improvement, and access quality improvement tools and resources.

### *Who can participate in BrightStars?*

Licensed child care centers, RI Department of Education approved preschools, and licensed family child care homes in Rhode Island are welcome to participate in BrightStars. Centers/preschools seeking participation in BrightStars must have either a valid, full license issued by the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) or a preschool approval letter issued by the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE). For multi-site or “chain” programs, just as each site requires a separate license, each site will require a separate BrightStars application and will be rated individually.

### *What are the benefits/incentives for joining BrightStars?*

Many child care and early learning programs in Rhode Island are already providing a level of care above what licensing requires. *BrightStars is an opportunity to be recognized for that effort.*

Programs participating in BrightStars are featured on [www.BrightStars.org](http://www.BrightStars.org). Parents and others accessing the website are able to search for participating programs in their city/town of residence or work and by other program characteristics important to families.

Programs participating in BrightStars also receive support to use their rating to market their program to parents and to educate parents and the community about why quality matters.

Participating programs receive a comprehensive, objective program assessment as well as feedback on program strengths and challenges. Programs can use this information to develop benchmarks and strategies to guide improvement and incorporate best practices.

BrightStars participants receive priority status for participation in quality initiatives such as the RI Early Learning Standards, LISC/RI Child Care Facilities Fund, and the RI Early Childhood Education and Training Project at CCRI.

### *What is the difference between BrightStars and state licensing?*

State licensing requirements establish the foundation for operating child care and early learning programs. These regulations specify the minimum standards that must be met to operate legally and are the first step in a quality rating and improvement system. QRIS programs such as BrightStars recognize child care and early learning programs for exceeding basic licensing standards and implementing practices that research shows are best for children.

### *What is the difference between BrightStars and National Accreditation?*

BrightStars recognizes the value of and incorporates national accreditation into its quality standards. For child care centers and preschools, BrightStars incorporates NAEYC Accreditation.

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For family child care, NAFCC Accreditation. Programs seeking a BrightStars rating may be rated at one of the five star rating levels, and may progress through levels. Accreditation systems generally award one level of highest recognition.

### *What are the expectations of participating programs?*

BrightStars supports program quality improvement over the *long-term*. Programs considering participation in BrightStars should have a commitment to continuous quality improvement.

Programs should first review the BrightStars *Child Care Center and Preschool Quality Framework*. The framework describes the standards and criteria BrightStars uses to assign a star rating.

Next, programs should complete and submit the application forms and supporting documentation.

After your application has been reviewed and site visit(s) completed, a BrightStars staff member will meet with you to review your assessment and rating.

Programs participating in BrightStars must post their BrightStars rating certificate in their program. Participating programs must also consent to allow program information (contact information, hours, ages served etc.), the program's overall star rating, and the level achieved for each BrightStars standard to be posted on [www.BrightStars.org](http://www.BrightStars.org).

Programs rated 2 Stars or higher must submit a Quality Improvement Plan to BrightStars within three (3) months of receiving their star rating. All programs participating in BrightStars must submit annual reports at the first and second anniversary of their initial rating.

### *Can programs increase their star rating?*

Programs may request an increase to their star rating annually. Requests are submitted with the program annual report.

### *What if I don't agree with the star rating?*

Programs that believe their rating is incorrect, or that feel the rating granted is not accurate, may appeal the rating.

### *Will my program's information be kept confidential?*

A program's star rating, the level achieved for each BrightStars standard, and other basic program information (address, phone number, ages served, etc.) will be made available on the BrightStars website. All other information submitted as part of your BrightStars application will be kept confidential.

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*What if I need more information before deciding to apply?*

BrightStars staff are available to answer any questions you may have. Please contact us at (401) 398-7605 or email [info@BrightStars.org](mailto:info@BrightStars.org). In addition, BrightStars offers general information sessions to provide information and materials to interested programs. Visit our website, [www.BrightStars.org](http://www.BrightStars.org), for more information.

## Contact Information

Questions about BrightStars? Visit our website, [www.BrightStars.org](http://www.BrightStars.org), or contact us by mail, phone, or email.

**Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children**

**655 Main Street, Suite 201**

**East Greenwich, RI 02818**

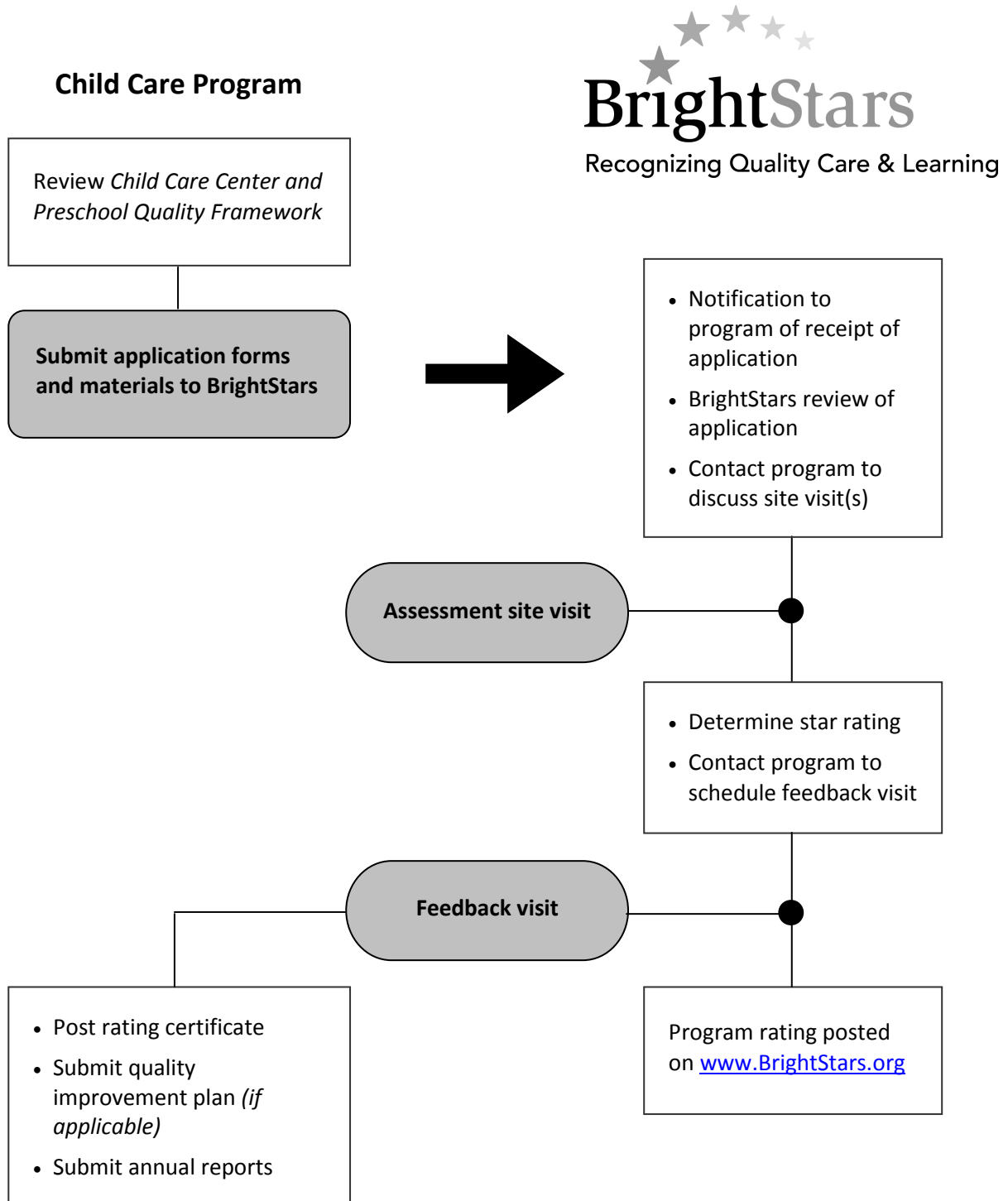
**p: (401) 398-7605**

**f: (401) 398-7604**

**[info@BrightStars.org](mailto:info@BrightStars.org)**

# BrightStars Process

The following describes the process of joining and participating in BrightStars.



# BrightStars Policies

## Participation Requirements

The following are requirements for participation in BrightStars (after receipt of initial rating):

- A program's BrightStars rating certificate must be posted in a conspicuous place in the program. Ideal locations for posting certificates include the main entrance used by families or a reception area.
- Program information will be posted on [www.BrightStars.org](http://www.BrightStars.org) and may be provided to the media. Public information will be limited to a program's star rating, the level achieved for each BrightStars standard, contact information, and other general program information.
- Programs must notify BrightStars in writing within ten (10) days of any change to their DCYF licensing or RIDE approval status or a change in their NAEYC accreditation status.
- Programs rated at 2 Stars or higher must complete a quality improvement plan within three (3) months of their rating.
- Programs must complete annual reports to BrightStars.
- Programs agree to participate in BrightStars for a three-year period. At the end of the three-year period, programs may choose to continue or terminate participation without penalty. If a program chooses to terminate participation *during* the three-year participation period, the program will not be allowed reentry into BrightStars for a period of 24 months from the date of termination.

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## BrightStars Rating Overview

BrightStars is a 5-level quality rating and improvement system. BrightStars assesses child care centers and preschools using six quality domains, nine quality standards, and 22 quality criteria. Detailed information on the domains, standards, and criteria is available in the BrightStars *Child Care Center and Preschool Quality Framework*.

In order to achieve a specific rating level (star rating), programs must meet all criteria in that level for each of the nine standards. For example, to achieve a 3 Star rating, a program must meet all criteria in Level 3 for Standard 1, all criteria in Level 3 for Standard 2, etc.

BrightStars ratings are valid for three (3) years from the date of the rating. To maintain their rating, programs must submit annual reports to BrightStars. Programs may request an amendment to their star rating annually, and as a result of the requested assessment, the program's star rating may be increased, decreased, or remain at the original level.

## **Notification of Change to Licensing, Approval, and/or Accreditation Status**

Programs must notify BrightStars in writing within ten (10) days of any change to their DCYF licensing or RIDE approval status. If a program's license or approval status changes or is revoked, BrightStars will suspend the program's participation. The program will be removed from the BrightStars website and will not be publically identified as a participating program.

Programs must also notify BrightStars in writing within ten (10) days of any change to their NAEYC Accreditation status. All BrightStars programs applying for a 3 Star rating or higher will have one or more Environment Rating Scale assessments administered in a random selection of groups or classrooms. For NAEYC accredited programs, the scores of the Environment Rating Scale assessments are not calculated into the program star rating. If a program loses or chooses not to renew their NAEYC accreditation, BrightStars will calculate the Environment Rating Scale scores into the program's star rating. The program's final star rating may change based on the results of the Environment Rating Scale assessments.

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## **Request to Amend Rating**

BrightStars supports continuous quality improvement and knows that many programs participating in BrightStars will seek to increase their star rating.

Programs may request a review of their rating at the time of their annual report. For example, a program receiving an initial rating of 2 Stars in January 2009, can request a 3 Star or higher rating at the time of their first annual report (January 2010) and/or their second annual report (January 2011). Evidence and documentation of meeting all of the requirements of the new, desired rating must be provided. Requests are made via the "Request to Amend Star Rating" form.

When a program requests an amendment to their star rating, BrightStars will re-assess only the BrightStars standards (and their related criteria) that are requested for review. For example, a program may request a review of lead group teacher qualifications in order to increase their star rating. In this instance, BrightStars will assess only lead group teacher qualifications.

Based on BrightStars reassessment of the requested standard(s) and related criteria, one of the following will occur:

- The program's star rating is increased
- The program's star rating remains the same (the assessed criteria did not meet the requirements of the level requested)
- The program's star rating is decreased (the assessed criteria did not meet the requirements of the level requested nor the requirements of the program's current star rating)

BrightStars works with programs to achieve their desired star rating. We encourage all programs to review the *Child Care Center & Preschool Quality Framework* before requesting an

amendment to their current star rating. BrightStars staff are always available to answer any questions about amendments to star ratings.

In some cases, programs may need to achieve higher scores on the Environment Rating Scales (ECERS-R, ITERS-R) in order to improve their star rating. BrightStars will only accept one request for ECERS-R/ITERS-R reassessment during the three-year rating period. Programs may request ECERS-R/ITERS-R reassessment with their first or second annual report.

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## Annual Reporting

BrightStars ratings are valid for three (3) years from the date of the rating. To maintain their rating, programs must submit annual reports to BrightStars. Annual reports are due on the first anniversary and second anniversary of the program's rating.

BrightStars will provide participating programs with annual report materials and forms. In general, programs will be asked to provide the following information and documentation:

- Current contact and program information
  - Current DCYF license and most recent Child Care Center Monitoring Report or RIDE Approval
  - NAEYC Accreditation certificate (if applicable)
  - Updated quality improvement plan (if applicable)
- 

## Assessment Visit

Programs applying for a rating of 2, 3, 4, or 5 Stars will receive one or more assessment site visits. Assessment site visits will be unannounced. However, BrightStars will work with programs to ensure that site visits do not occur during planned field trips, special events, etc.

*If for any reason a BrightStars assessor is not allowed access to the program and/or classrooms at the time of an assessment visit, BrightStars will deny the program's application for participation and will not accept a new application from the program for a period of 24 months.*

Upon arrival at the program on the day of assessment, the BrightStars assessor will ask to see the center director or designee and will review assessment procedures with him/her. The content of assessment site visits will vary by program due to differences in program size, age group(s) served, and star rating requested.

All assessment site visits will include direct observation of a sample of classrooms or groups. Some classroom observations may include administration of the Environmental Rating Scales (ECERS-R, ITERS-R). ECERS-R and ITERS-R assessments consist of a three-hour classroom observation, followed by a 15 to 30 minute interview with one classroom teacher. All BrightStars assessors administering the Environment Rating Scale assessments have completed the appropriate training. In addition, BrightStars has policies and procedures in place to ensure the ongoing reliability of assessors.

In addition to classroom observations, BrightStars may request to review documentation generally found in child and staff files.

Complete assessment visit procedures and activities will be provided to the center director or designee prior to the visit.

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## **Appeals**

It is common for programs to have questions about their rating. It is our goal to answer any questions you may have about your rating and help you understand how your rating was determined. In many cases, questions can be addressed at your feedback visit or through follow-up communication with BrightStars staff.

Programs that believe their rating is incorrect, or who do not feel the rating granted is accurate, may appeal the rating. Appeals must be made in writing and received within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the rating. Appeals should include a complete description of the concern(s). Appeals will be reviewed within sixty (60) days by a committee comprised of individuals who are not employees/contractors of BrightStars.



## Application Instructions & Forms for Child Care Centers and Preschools

### Application Overview

Congratulations! By choosing to participate in BrightStars you are demonstrating a commitment to quality care and learning for young children.

The following forms are included in this application packet:

- Program Overview
- Classroom Summary
- Standard 1 – Child’s Daily Experience
- Standard 3 – Curriculum and Assessment
- Standard 6 – Family Communication
- Standard 7 – Lead Grp Teacher Qualifications
- Standard 8 – Center Director Qualifications
- Standard 9 – Program Management
- Program Observation Information
- Checklist and Signature

Each form begins with instructions that will assist you in completing the forms and preparing application materials.

### General Instructions

Please complete all forms in full before submitting your application to BrightStars. Application materials should be attached (by paperclip, staple) to the corresponding form. Binders or other special presentation materials are not necessary or recommended. For each standard, the *required* documentation to achieve each level is noted. However, programs may submit any listed documentation and BrightStars will review it. Note that no information or documentation is needed regarding BrightStars Standards 2, 4 and 5. BrightStars will assess these standards by observation. More information on how these standards will be assessed can be found in the *BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Quality Framework*.

### Application Submission

Complete applications may be mailed or hand delivered to:

**Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children**  
**655 Main Street, Suite 201**  
**East Greenwich, RI 02818**

# BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Application

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

**THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED WITH YOUR APPLICATION**

**1. Program name:** (full legal name)

**2. Physical location:**

|        |            |     |
|--------|------------|-----|
| Street | Unit/Suite |     |
|        |            |     |
| City   | State      | Zip |
|        |            |     |

**3. Operating information:**

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Primary Business Phone   | Website |
| (      )      —  |         |
| Operating Hours  |         |
| _____ am/pm to _____ am/pm (M– F)      Evening/weekend? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |         |

**4. Primary contact:**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Primary Contact Name  | Primary Contact Role:  |
|                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Director <input type="checkbox"/> Owner |
| Primary Contact Phone | Fax  |
| (      )      —       | (      )      —  |
| Email                 |  |
|                       |  |

**5. Business type:** (check one)     For profit     Not for profit

**6. This program offers:**     Head Start     Early Head Start     School Age Care

**7. Languages spoken by program:**     English     Spanish     \_\_\_\_\_     \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Does this program accept DHS child care subsidies:** (check one)     Yes     No

**9. Capacity and enrollment:** (enter a number in each box)

| Age Group                   | Licensed Capacity | Current Enrollment | # DHS subsidy |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Infants (birth-18 months)   |                   |                    |               |
| Toddlers (19-36 months)     |                   |                    |               |
| Preschool (37 mos.-K entry) |                   |                    |               |
| School Age                  |                   |                    |               |

**10. This program is applying for the following BrightStars rating:** (check one)

1 Star       2 Star       3 Star       4 Star       5 Star

# BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Application

## CLASSROOM SUMMARY

**THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED WITH YOUR APPLICATION**

**Instructions:** Use this form to report information about classrooms/groups<sup>1</sup> of children in your program. Enter information only for groups of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers; do not include information about groups of kindergarten or school-age children. For each group, enter the highest number of children allowed in the group *at any one time* and the name of the lead group teacher. Enter only one lead group teacher per group. If your program has more than 10 groups, make a copy of this form and continue listing additional groups.

|     | Group/Class Name | Primary Age of Group<br>( <i>infant, toddler, or preschool</i> ) | Maximum Number Allowed in Group <sup>2</sup> | Lead Group Teacher |            |
|-----|------------------|--|--|--------------------|------------|
|     |                  |  |  | Last Name          | First Name |
| 1.  |                  |  |  |                    |            |
| 2.  |                  |  |  |                    |            |
| 3.  |                  |  |  |                    |            |
| 4.  |                  |  |  |                    |            |
| 5.  |                  |  |  |                    |            |
| 6.  |                  |  |  |                    |            |
| 7.  |                  |  |  |                    |            |
| 8.  |                  |  |  |                    |            |
| 9.  |                  |  |  |                    |            |
| 10. |                  |  |  |                    |            |

<sup>1</sup> "Group" refers to children that occupy an individual classroom or other well-defined space *at any one time*. Groups are separated to prevent intermingling.

<sup>2</sup> **DCYF Child Care Center Regulations maximum group size: Infant (0-18 mos.)=8; Toddler (18-36 mos.)=12; 3 year-old=18; 4 year-old=20; 5 year-old=24**

# BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Application

## STANDARD 1 – CHILD’S DAILY EXPERIENCE

### **Instructions & Definitions**

#### **Licensing Compliance**

All programs that are licensed by DCYF must submit a copy of their regular license; provisional or probationary licenses are not accepted. In addition, the program must submit their most recent DCYF Child Care Center Monitoring Report. The report must indicate that the program is in compliance with each of the nine items listed on the report.

Programs not licensed by DCYF must submit a preschool approval issued by the RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

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#### **Learning Environment**

The learning environment is assessed through evidence of self-assessment (see Standard 9), through the Environmental Rating Scales (ECERS-R, ITERS-R), or through evidence of NAEYC Accreditation. For programs applying for 3 Stars or above, a BrightStars staff member will visit your program to administer the Environmental Rating Scales. The ECERS-R will be completed on a random selection of 33% of your preschool groups/classrooms; the ITERS-R will be completed on a random selection of 33% of your infant and toddler groups/classrooms.

# BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Application

## STANDARD 1 – CHILD’S DAILY EXPERIENCE

**THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED WITH YOUR APPLICATION**

| If you are applying for...   | Attach to this form <i>(check all attached)...</i>  |
|--|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">★ <b>1 Star</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">★★ <b>2 Stars</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> copy of your DCYF license</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> copy of your most recent DCYF Child Care Center Monitoring Report</li> <li style="padding-left: 40px;">- <b>both of the above or</b> -</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> copy of your preschool approval from RIDE</li> </ul>   |
| <p style="text-align: center;">★★★ <b>3 Stars</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">★★★★ <b>4 Stars</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">★★★★★ <b>5 Stars</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> copy of your DCYF license</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> copy of your most recent DCYF Child Care Center Monitoring Report</li> <li style="padding-left: 40px;">- <b>both of the above or</b> -</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> copy of your preschool approval from RIDE</li> <li style="padding-left: 40px;">- <b>and</b> -</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> copy of your NAEYC Accreditation Certificate (if your program is currently accredited by NAEYC)</li> </ul> |

# BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Application

## STANDARD 3 – CURRICULUM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT

### **Instructions & Definitions**

#### **Curriculum**

At Level 2 and Level 3, curriculum is assessed through evidence of self-assessment (see Standard 9).

*Curriculum aligned with the RI Early Learning Standards:* Beginning at Level 4 and continuing at Level 5, programs must demonstrate that their preschool curriculum is aligned with the RI Early Learning Standards. Programs should submit a copy of their preschool approval issued by RIDE or submit curriculum/lesson plans for a recent two-week period for one preschool classroom/group. To meet the Level 4 and Level 5 criteria, the curriculum/lesson plans must include all of the eight domain names of the RI Early Learning Standards or learning goals from each of the eight domains.

*Curriculum framework aligned with the RI Early Learning Standards:* At Level 5, programs must demonstrate that their preschool curriculum framework is aligned with the RI Early Learning Standards. Programs should submit a copy of their preschool approval issued by RIDE or submit their written curriculum framework. More information on curriculum frameworks can be accessed from the RI Early Learning Standards website, in the document titled *Developing a Comprehensive Preschool Curriculum Framework*. RIDE staff will review the program's written curriculum framework to determine whether the program meets this criterion.

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#### **Developmental Screening Info**

To meet this criterion, programs must demonstrate that they provide written information to all parents about Early Intervention (if the program serves infants and/or toddlers) and Child Outreach (if the program serves preschoolers).

Programs should submit one of the following: recent letter(s) to parents about EI/Child Outreach, recent announcement(s) in newsletter about EI/Child Outreach, directory of resources that includes EI/Child Outreach, EI/Child Outreach program brochures distributed to parents, or other documentation of meeting this criterion.

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#### **Child Assessment**

Beginning at Level 4 and continuing at Level 5, BrightStars measures Child Assessment through a review of assessment information in child files. See Program Observation Information for more information on this criterion.

# BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Application

## STANDARD 3 – CURRICULUM AND CHILD ASSESSMENT

**THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED WITH YOUR APPLICATION**

| If you are applying for...           | Attach to this form <i>(check all attached)...</i>  |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <p>★ 1 Star</p>                      | <p><input type="checkbox"/> n/a</p>   |
| <p>★★ 2 Stars</p> <p>★★★ 3 Stars</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> written information provided to parents about Early Intervention (if you serve infants and/or toddlers)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> written information provided to parents about Child Outreach (if you serve preschoolers)</p>  |
| <p>★★★★ 4 Stars</p>                  | <p><input type="checkbox"/> written information provided to parents about Early Intervention (if you serve infants and/or toddlers)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> written information provided to parents about Child Outreach (if you serve preschoolers)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>- and, if you serve preschoolers -</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> curriculum/lesson plans that include the RI Early Learning Standards</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>- or -</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> copy of your preschool approval from RIDE</p>   |
| <p>★★★★★ 5 Stars</p>                 | <p><input type="checkbox"/> written information provided to parents about Early Intervention (if you serve infants and/or toddlers)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> written information provided to parents about Child Outreach (if you serve preschoolers)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>- and, if you serve preschoolers -</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> curriculum/lesson plans that include the RI Early Learning Standards</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> preschool curriculum framework document</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>- both of the above or -</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> copy of your preschool approval from RIDE</p> |

# BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Application

## STANDARD 6 – FAMILY COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT

### Instructions & Definitions

#### Family Communication

To meet the Family Communication criterion, programs must demonstrate that they offer two of the following:

- Monthly newsletter
- Family meeting, social event, or workshop four times per year
- Ideas and suggestions to support learning at home four times per year
- Annual family survey

Programs choosing to demonstrate *monthly newsletters* should submit three recent program newsletters; the newsletters must show the date the newsletter was published or distributed.

Programs choosing to demonstrate *family meeting*, etc. should submit documentation of four such events in a recent 12-month period. Possible documents include: sign-in sheets, letters of invitation, flyers, agendas, or announcements in program newsletter.

Programs choosing to demonstrate *ideas and suggestions to support learning at home* should submit documentation of four such activities provided to families in a recent 12-month period. Possible documents include: flyer/instruction relating to the activity or a description of the activity in program newsletter.

Programs choosing to demonstrate *annual family survey* should submit one of the following: blank family survey form (must show date survey was conducted) or report of results from family survey (report must be dated).

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#### Parent-Teacher Conference

Beginning at Level 3 and continuing at Level 4 and Level 5, programs must demonstrate that they *offer* parent-teachers conferences to families two times per year. Programs should submit documentation showing that families were invited to schedule or attend two conferences. All documentation should be dated within a recent 12-month period. Possible documents include: letter/flyer, announcement in program newsletter, or conference sign-up schedule, policy in program handbook.

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#### Advisory Board

At Level 5, programs must submit documentation demonstrating that they have an advisory board that includes families that meets four times in 12-month period. Possible documents include: schedule of meetings, meeting agendas, meeting minutes, or sign-in sheets.

## BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Application

### STANDARD 6 – FAMILY COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT

**THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED WITH YOUR APPLICATION**

| If you are applying for... | Attach to this form <i>(check all attached)...</i>  |
|----------------------------|---|
| ★ 1 Star                   | <input type="checkbox"/> n/a  |
| ★★ 2 Stars                 | <p><b>Documentation of <u>two</u> of the following:</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> monthly newsletters (3)<br><input type="checkbox"/> family meeting, social event, or workshop (4)<br><input type="checkbox"/> ideas/suggestions to support learning at home (4)<br><input type="checkbox"/> annual family survey |
| ★★★ 3 Stars                | <p><b>Documentation of <u>two</u> of the following:</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> monthly newsletters (3)<br><input type="checkbox"/> family meeting, social event, or workshop (4)<br><input type="checkbox"/> ideas/suggestions to support learning at home (4)<br><input type="checkbox"/> annual family survey |
| ★★★★ 4 Stars               | <p style="text-align: center;">- and -</p> <input type="checkbox"/> parent-teacher conferences <u>two</u> times per year  |
| ★★★★★ 5 Stars              | <p><b>Documentation of <u>two</u> of the following:</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> monthly newsletters (3)<br><input type="checkbox"/> family meeting, social event, or workshop (4)<br><input type="checkbox"/> ideas/suggestions to support learning at home (4)<br><input type="checkbox"/> annual family survey |
|                            | <p style="text-align: center;">- and -</p> <input type="checkbox"/> parent-teacher conferences <u>two</u> times per year  |
|                            | <p style="text-align: center;">- and -</p> <input type="checkbox"/> advisory board meetings <u>four</u> times per year  |

# BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Application

## STANDARD 7 – LEAD GROUP TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

### **Instructions & Definitions for Standard 7**

*The Lead Group Teacher is the individual with primary responsibility for a group of children who occupy an individual classroom or well-defined space. The Lead Group Teacher must spend the vast majority of time with one group of children who attend at the same time rather than divide time between classrooms or float between groups.*

*To meet the “vast majority of time” requirement, the Lead Group Teacher must be engaged with her assigned group for a minimum of five (5) hours per day or 50% of the time the class is in operation.*

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### **Professional Development**

Beginning at Level 2 and continuing at Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5, BrightStars assesses this criterion through a review of lead group teacher individual professional development plans. This criterion is assessed through observation at the site visit. See Program Observation Information for information.

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### **Formal Education**

Complete one Lead Group Teacher Qualifications form for each lead group teacher listed on the Classroom Summary form.

All programs applying for BrightStars must provide information related to the education of the program’s lead group teachers. Beginning at Level 3 and continuing at Level 4 and Level 5, programs must also submit documentation of formal education. See the *Child Care Center and Preschool Quality Framework* for specific educational requirements at Levels 3-5.

BrightStars recognizes degrees and credits appearing on transcripts issued by any college/university whose accreditation has been verified by the U.S. Department of Education. For more information about college/university accreditation, visit the Department of Education’s website, <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/>.

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### **Preschool Preparation**

All programs applying for BrightStars must provide information related to their lead group teacher’s preschool preparation.

At Level 4 programs must submit documentation demonstrating that 50% of their preschool lead group teachers have a RI Early Learning Standards certificate (Level 2 or higher) or have a RI Early Childhood Teaching Certificate. At Level 5 programs must submit documentation demonstrating that 100% of their preschool lead group teachers have a RI Early Learning Standards certificate (Level 2 or higher) or have a RI Early Childhood Teaching Certificate.

# BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Application

## LEAD GROUP TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

**THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED WITH YOUR APPLICATION**

**Instructions:** Use this form to report information about your program's lead group teachers. Complete one form for each lead group teacher listed on the Classroom Summary form.

### 1. General information:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Last Name  | First Name  |
| <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>  |
| Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY)   | Last 4 Digits of Social Security Number   |
| <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> |

### 2. Does this teacher have a valid Child Development Associate (CDA)?

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> attach copy of CDA |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No  |   |

### 3. Check the highest level of formal education completed:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate's Degree | <input type="checkbox"/> attach copy of diploma  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree  | - or -   |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> attach copy of transcript indicating <i>date and type</i> of degree conferred |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No degree          |  |

### 4. Does this teacher have college credits in ECE/related<sup>1</sup>?

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> attach copy of transcript(s) with ECE/related courses highlighted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No  |  |

### 5. Does this teacher have the following preschool preparation?

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> RI Early Learning Standards             | <input type="checkbox"/> attach copy of certificate (must show Level 2, Level 3, or "Implementing a Standards Based Program") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> RI Early Childhood Teaching Certificate | <input type="checkbox"/> attach copy of Teaching Certificate  |

<sup>1</sup> Early Childhood Education/Related Field (ECE/related): Specialized coursework in Early Childhood Education or a related field is required. Related fields include Human Development, Psychology, Sociology, Social Work, Education, Pediatric Nursing, Home Economics/Family & Consumer Science, Recreation, and Child and Family Studies.

# BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Application

## STANDARD 8 – CENTER DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS

### **Instructions & Definitions for Standard 8**

*The center director is the person responsible for the program with decision-making authority for the program.*

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#### **Formal Education**

All programs applying for BrightStars must provide information on the director's education by completing the Center Director Qualifications form.

Beginning at Level 3 and continuing at Level 4 and Level 5, programs must submit documentation demonstrating that the center director has a Bachelor's Degree or higher and 18 credits in Early Childhood Education/related field.

BrightStars recognizes degrees and credits appearing on transcripts issued by any college/university whose accreditation has been verified by the U.S. Department of Education. For more information about college/university accreditation, visit the Department of Education's website, <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/>.

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#### **RI Early Learning Standards Training**

At Level 5 programs must submit documentation demonstrating the center director has a RI Early Learning Standards Level 3 certificate.

# BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Application

## CENTER DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS

**THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED WITH YOUR APPLICATION**

**Instructions:** Use this form to report information about the program's center director.

### 1. General information:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Last Name  | First Name  |
| <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/>  |
| Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY)   | Last 4 Digits of Social Security Number   |
| <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> |

### 2. Does the director have a Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, or higher?

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree         | <input type="checkbox"/> attach copy of diploma  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Master's Degree or higher | - or -   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No                        | <input type="checkbox"/> attach copy of transcript indicating <i>date and type</i> of degree conferred |

### 3. Does the director have college credits in ECE/related<sup>1</sup>?

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> attach copy of transcript(s) with ECE/related courses highlighted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No  |  |

### 4. Does the director have a RI Early Learning Standards Level 3 certificate?

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> attach copy of certificate (must show Level 3 or "Administrator's Role in Implementing a Standards Based Program") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No  |   |

<sup>1</sup> Early Childhood Education/Related Field (ECE/related): Specialized coursework in Early Childhood Education or a related field is required. Related fields include Human Development, Psychology, Sociology, Social Work, Education, Pediatric Nursing, Home Economics/Family & Consumer Science, Recreation, and Child and Family Studies.

# BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Application

## STANDARD 9 – PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

### Instructions & Definitions

#### Program Self-Assessment

Beginning at Level 2 and continuing at Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5, programs must demonstrate that they have completed a comprehensive self-assessment within the past year. Programs should submit a *summary* of the self-assessment. The summary should be no longer than five typed pages and should include the following items (number each section according to the format below):

1. Date of Self-Assessment (*provide the date the self-assessment was completed*)
2. Introduction (*provide a brief overview of the self-assessment*)
3. Indoor and Outdoor Space
4. Health and Safety Practices
5. Learning Context<sup>1</sup>
6. Curriculum<sup>2</sup> (*must include all age groups and reference the RI Early Learning Standards*)
7. Family Communication and Involvement
8. Cultural/Linguistic Competence and Respect for Diversity

For items 3-8, please provide information on both the **tools and/or methods** used in the self-assessment and a description of the assessment **findings**. BrightStars provides information about self-assessment and a template with the application packet.

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#### Quality Improvement Plan

Programs receiving a BrightStars rating of 2 Stars, 3 Stars, 4 Stars, or 5 Stars, must submit a quality improvement plan no later than three months after their feedback visit.

The quality improvement plan should be no longer than five typed pages and should include the following items:

1. Date of Quality Improvement Plan (*provide the date the plan was completed*)
2. Indoor and Outdoor Space
3. Health and Safety Practices
4. Learning Context
5. Curriculum
6. Family Communication and Involvement
7. Cultural/Linguistic Competence and Respect for Diversity

Programs do not need to identify quality improvement goals/activities for all items listed above. For each item (2-7 above) that the program has selected as an area for improvement, the quality improvement plan summary should include **goals, activities, and timelines**. A Quality Improvement Plan template is provided to programs at the feedback visit.

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<sup>1</sup> Learning context is the materials, routines, and activities that promote play and learning. See page 6 of the *Child Care Center and Preschool Quality Framework*.

<sup>2</sup> See page 7 of the *Child Care Center and Preschool Quality Framework*.

# BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Application

## STANDARD 9 – PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

**THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED WITH YOUR APPLICATION**

| If you are applying for...  | Attach to this form <i>(check all attached)...</i>              |
|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">★ 1 Star</p>   | <p><input type="checkbox"/> n/a</p>                             |
| <p style="text-align: center;">★ ★ 2 Stars</p> <p style="text-align: center;">★ ★ ★ 3 Stars</p> <p style="text-align: center;">★ ★ ★ ★ 4 Stars</p> <p style="text-align: center;">★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 5 Stars</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Program self-assessment summary</p> |

## BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Application

### PROGRAM OBSERVATION INFORMATION, Page 1 of 2

Programs applying for a rating of 2 Stars, 3 Stars, 4 Stars, or 5 Stars will receive one or more assessment site visits. Assessment site visits will be unannounced. The content of assessment site visits will vary by program due to differences in program size, age group(s) served, and star rating requested. However, all assessment site visits will include direct observation of a sample of classrooms or groups. Items assessed at the time of the site visit are listed below.

#### **Standard 1: Child's Daily Experience, Learning Environment**

#### **Standard 2: Context and Process of Learning, Teaching and Interaction**

Beginning at Level 3 and continuing at Level 4 and Level 5, the Environment Rating Scales will be administered in a random selection of 33% of preschool groups/classrooms (ECERS-R) and 33% of infant and toddler groups/classrooms (ITERS-R). For each classroom selected, the ECERS-R/ITERS-R assessment consists of a three-hour classroom observation, followed by a 15 to 30 minute interview with one classroom teacher.

#### **Standard 3: Curriculum and Child Assessment, Child Assessment**

Beginning at Level 4 and continuing at Level 5, BrightStars will review documentation relating to child assessment. During the site visit, a random selection of child files/folders will be reviewed. To protect confidentiality, no identifying information will be collected or recorded. To meet this criterion, a minimum of 75% of files reviewed must contain documentation of child assessment. Examples of documentation include completed child observations, checklists, family surveys/interviews, standardized tools, or other assessment tools.

#### **Standard 4: Minimum Staff-Child Ratio, Staff-Child Ratio, Staff-Child Ratio Posted**

*Staff-Child Ratio:* Beginning at Level 2 and continuing at Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5, BrightStars will observe staff-child ratio in a random selection of 33% of groups/classrooms. Staff-child ratio will be observed and recorded periodically during the observation of each group/classroom. Staff-child ratio must meet minimum requirements throughout the observation, with few lapses. To meet this criterion, all groups/classrooms observed must meet the ratio requirements on page 8 of the *Child Care Center and Preschool Framework*. At Level 2 and Level 3, the age of the majority of children in the group is used to determine ratio. At Level 4 and Level 5, the age of the youngest child in the group is used to determine ratio.

*Staff-Child Ratio Posted:* Beginning at Level 2 and continuing at Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5, BrightStars assessors will observe whether the minimum staff-child ratio is posted in a random selection of 33% of groups/classrooms. To meet this criterion, all groups/classrooms observed must have the minimum staff-child ratio posted.

## BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Application

### PROGRAM OBSERVATION INFORMATION, Page 2 of 2

#### **Standard 5: Maximum Group Size, Group Size, Group Dividers, Group Size Posted**

*Group Size:* BrightStars assesses group size through self-report and observation. On the Classroom Summary form, the program must self-report the highest number of children allowed in a group *at any one time*. The group size reported must meet the group size requirements on page 9 of the *Child Care Center and Preschool Framework*. Beginning at Level 2 and continuing at Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5, BrightStars will observe group size in a random selection of 33% of groups/classrooms. To meet this criterion, all groups/classrooms observed must meet the group size requirements on page 9 of the *Child Care Center and Preschool Framework*. At Level 2 and Level 3, the age of the majority of children in the group is used to determine group size. At Level 4 and Level 5, the age of the youngest child in the group is used to determine group size.

*Group Dividers:* Beginning at Level 2 and continuing at Level 3 and Level 4, BrightStars will observe evidence of physical barriers separating groups of children so they do not intermingle in a random selection of 33% of groups. At Level 5, BrightStars will observe evidence that only one group of children occupies a room at any one time in a random selection of 33% of groups. To meet this criterion, all groups/classrooms observed must meet these requirements.

*Group Size Posted:* Beginning at Level 2 and continuing at Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5, BrightStars assessors will observe whether the maximum group size is posted in a random selection of 33% of groups/classrooms. To meet this criterion, all groups/classrooms observed must have the maximum group size posted.

#### **Standard 7: Lead Group Teacher Qualifications, Professional Development**

Beginning at Level 2 and continuing at Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5, BrightStars will review documentation relating to the individual professional development plans of the program's lead group teachers. During the site visit, a random selection of staff files will be reviewed. To meet this criterion, a minimum of 75% of files reviewed must contain individual professional development plans.

# BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Application

## CHECKLIST AND SIGNATURE

**THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED WITH YOUR APPLICATION**

Please make sure your application includes all of these required items:

- Program Overview
- Classroom Summary
- Standard 1 form/attachments
- Standard 3 form/attachments
- Standard 6 form/attachments
- Standard 7 form/attachments (*one for each lead group teacher*)
- Standard 8 form/attachments
- Standard 9 form/attachments
- Checklist and Signature form

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### Rights and Responsibilities

By signing this BrightStars application, I verify/agree to the following (*please check all*):

- I have read the BrightStars *Information for Child Care Centers and Preschools*. I understand this information and have asked all questions I have at this time.
- All of the information contained in this application is accurate and true.
- I will post my BrightStars rating certificate in my program in a place highly visible to parents and the public.
- My program's overall star rating, level achieved for each standard, and program contact information will be posted on the BrightStars website and may be provided to the media.
- I have the right to appeal my program's star rating. Appeals must be made in writing and received within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the rating.
- I will notify BrightStars in writing within 10 days of a change to my program's license, approval, or accreditation status.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name and Title