



Dear Colleague,

Welcome to BrightStars!

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

Enclosed you will find the BrightStars *Family Child Care 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 process, application materials, or resources for quality improvement. Please visit our website, 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



Information for Family Child Care Homes

May 2010

Table of Contents

Welcome to BrightStars	3
Frequently Asked Questions	3
Contact Information	6
BrightStars Process	7
BrightStars Policies	8

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.

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.

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. Family child care programs seeking participation in BrightStars must have a current, valid license issued by the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF).

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. 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 also supports programs in accessing local and national resources that support quality. BrightStars participants receive priority status for resources, training, and technical assistance offered by 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. For family child care, NAFCC Accreditation. Programs seeking a BrightStars rating may be rated at

one of the five star 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 *Family Child Care 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 completed, a BrightStars staff member will meet with you to review your assessment and rating.

Family child care 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.

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 who do not feel the rating granted is accurate, may appeal the rating by requesting a review.

Will my program's information be kept confidential?

A program's star rating 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.

What if I need more information before deciding to apply?

BrightStars offers general information sessions to provide information and materials to interested programs. Visit our website, www.BrightStars.org, for a schedule and to register. Or, please contact us anytime by mail, phone, or email.

Contact Information

Questions about BrightStars? Visit our website, 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

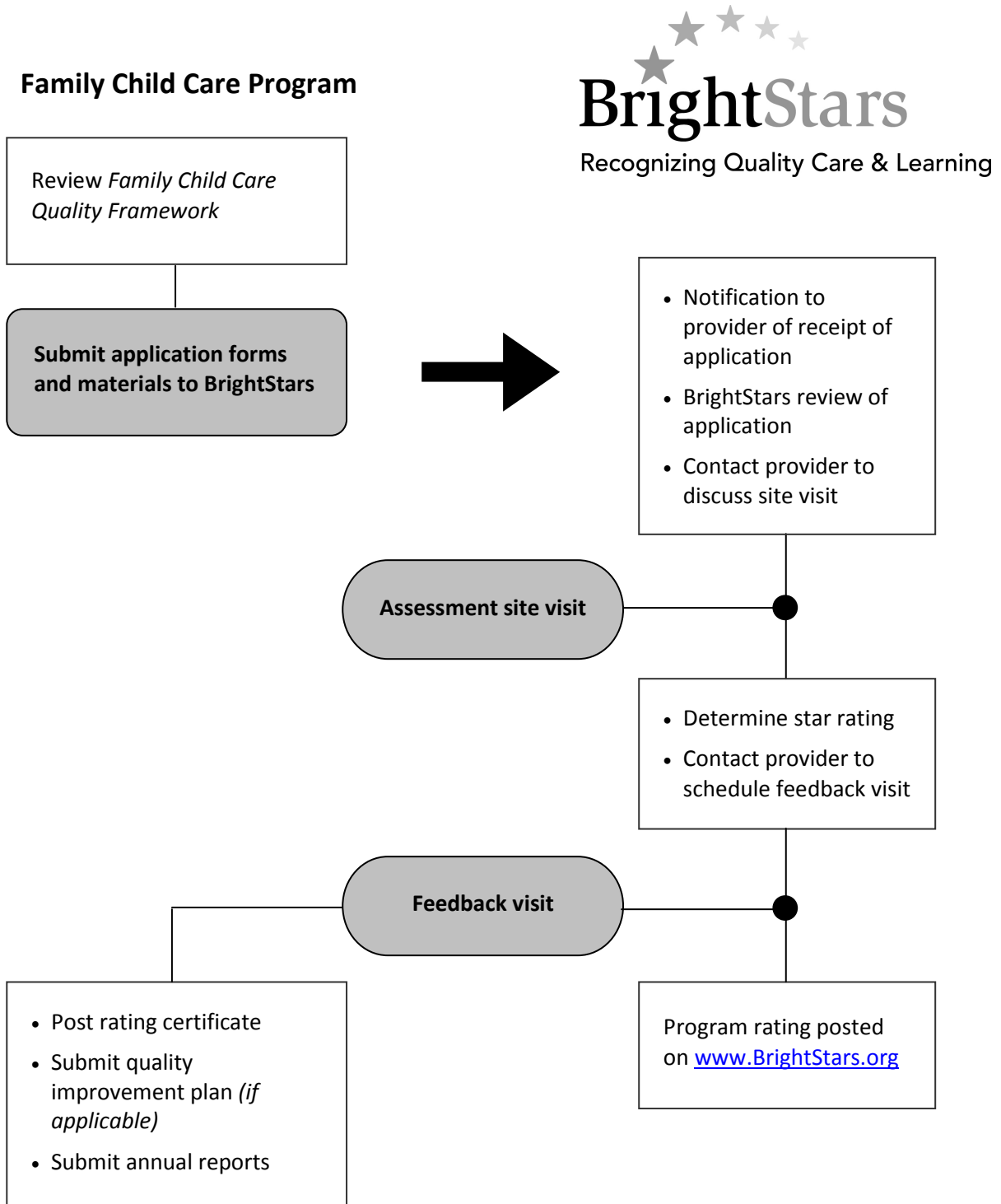
p: (401) 398-7605

f: (401) 398-7604

info@BrightStars.org

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 entrance used by families or a reception area.
- Program information will be posted on 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 general program information.
- Programs must notify BrightStars in writing within ten (10) days of any change to their DCYF licensing status or a change in their NAFCC 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.

BrightStars Rating

BrightStars is a 5-level quality rating and improvement system. BrightStars assesses family child care programs using six quality domains, seven quality standards, and 15 quality criteria. Detailed information on the domains, standards, and criteria is available in the BrightStars *Family Child Care Quality Framework*.

In order to achieve a specific rating level (star rating), programs must meet all criteria in that level for each of the seven 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 increase 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 and/or Accreditation Status

Programs must notify BrightStars in writing within ten (10) days of any change to their DCYF licensing status. If a program's license status is changed or 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 NAFCC Accreditation status. All BrightStars programs applying for a 3 Star rating or higher will have a Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale assessment administered in their program. For NAFCC accredited programs, the score of the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale assessment is not calculated into the program's star rating. If a program loses or chooses not to renew their NAFCC accreditation, BrightStars will calculate the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale score into the program's star rating. The program's final star rating may change based on the results of the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale assessment.

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 September 2009 can request a 3 Stars or higher rating at the time of their first annual report (September 2010) and/or their second annual report (September 2011). Evidence and documentation of meeting all of the requirements of the new, desired rating must be provided with the annual report. 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 provider qualifications in order to increase their star rating. In this instance, BrightStars will assess only the provider 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 *Family Child Care 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 Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS-R) in order to improve their star rating. BrightStars will only accept one request for FCCERS-R reassessment during the three-year rating period. Programs may request FCCERS-R reassessment with their first annual report.

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 Family Child Care Home Monitoring Report
 - NAFCC 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 an assessment site visit. The assessment site visit will be unannounced. However, BrightStars will work with providers to ensure that the site visit does not occur during planned field trips, special events, etc.

If for any reason a BrightStars assessor is not allowed access to the program 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 review assessment procedures with the family child care provider.

All assessment site visits will include direct observation of the family child care program. Some assessment visits may include administration of the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS-R). A FCCERS-R assessment consists of a three-hour observation, followed by a 15 to 30 minute interview with the provider. All BrightStars assessors administering the FCCERS-R have completed the appropriate training. In addition, BrightStars has policies and procedures in place to ensure the ongoing reliability of assessors.

In addition to program observation, BrightStars may request to review documentation generally found in child and provider files.

Complete assessment visit procedures and activities will be provided to the family child care provider prior to the visit.

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 Family Child Care Homes

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
- Standard 1 – Child’s Daily Experience
- Standard 3 – Curriculum and Assessment
- Standard 5 – Family Communication
- Standard 6 – Provider Qualifications
- Standard 7 – 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 and 4. BrightStars will assess these standards by observation only. More information on how these standards will be assessed can be found in the BrightStars *Family Child Care 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 Family Child Care Application PROGRAM OVERVIEW

THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED WITH YOUR APPLICATION

1. Provider name: (as it appears on DCYF license)

2. Program name: (if different than Provider name)

3. Contact information:

Street	Apt#/Suite	
City	State	Zip
Business Phone	Fax	
() —	() —	
Email		

4. Program information:

Website

Operating Hours

_____ am/pm to _____ am/pm (M– F)	<i>Evening/weekend?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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5. Ages groups you care for: (check all that apply)

- Infants Preschool
 Toddlers School Age

6. Does this program accept DHS child care subsidies: (check one)

- Yes No

7. Languages spoken by program: English

- Spanish _____ _____

8. 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			

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

- 1 Star 2 Star 3 Star 4 Star 5 Star

BrightStars Family Child Care Application

STANDARD 1 – CHILD’S DAILY EXPERIENCE

Instructions & Definitions

Licensing Compliance

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

Learning Environment

The learning environment is assessed through evidence of self-assessment (see Standard 7), through the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS-R), or through evidence of NAFCC Accreditation. For programs applying for 3 Stars or above, a BrightStars staff member will visit your program to administer the FCCERS-R.

BrightStars Family Child Care 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;">★ 1 Star</p> <p style="text-align: center;">★★ 2 Stars</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> copy of your DCYF license<input type="checkbox"/> copy of your most recent DCYF Family Child Care Home Monitoring Report
<p style="text-align: center;">★★★ 3 Stars</p> <p style="text-align: center;">★★★★ 4 Stars</p> <p style="text-align: center;">★★★★★ 5 Stars</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> copy of your DCYF license<input type="checkbox"/> copy of your most recent DCYF Family Child Care Home Monitoring Report<li style="text-align: center;">- and -<input type="checkbox"/> copy of your NAFCC Accreditation certificate <i>(if your program is currently accredited by NAFCC)</i>

BrightStars Family Child Care 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 7).

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 curriculum/lesson plans for a recent two-week period that is used with a group of preschool children. 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 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.

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, a directory of resources that includes EI/Child Outreach, EI/Child Outreach program brochures distributed to parents, or other documentation of meeting this criterion.

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 Family Child Care 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;">- and, if you serve preschoolers -</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> curriculum/lesson plans that include the RI Early Learning Standards</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;">- and, if you serve preschoolers -</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>

BrightStars Family Child Care Application

STANDARD 5 – 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).

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 two documents showing that families were invited to schedule or attend a conference. Both documents should be dated within a recent 12-month period. Possible documents include: letter/flyer, announcement in program newsletter, or conference sign-up schedule.

BrightStars Family Child Care Application

STANDARD 5 – 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>
<p>★ 1 Star</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> n/a</p>
<p>★★ 2 Stars</p>	<p>Documentation of <u>two</u> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> monthly newsletters (3) <input type="checkbox"/> family meeting, social event, or workshop (4) <input type="checkbox"/> ideas/suggestions to support learning at home (4) <input type="checkbox"/> annual family survey
<p>★★★ 3 Stars</p>	<p>Documentation of <u>two</u> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> monthly newsletters (3) <input type="checkbox"/> family meeting, social event, or workshop (4) <input type="checkbox"/> ideas/suggestions to support learning at home (4) <input type="checkbox"/> annual family survey <p style="text-align: center;">- and -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> parent-teacher conferences <u>two</u> times per year
<p>★★★★ 4 Stars</p>	
<p>★★★★★ 5 Stars</p>	

BrightStars Family Child Care Application

STANDARD 6 – PROVIDER QUALIFICATIONS

Instructions & Definitions

Professional Development

Beginning at Level 2 and continuing at Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5, BrightStars assesses this criterion through a review of the provider's individual professional development plan. See Program Observation Information for information.

Formal Education

All programs applying for BrightStars must provide information related to the education of the family child care provider; no information on assistants is needed.

Beginning at Level 2 and continuing at Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5, programs must submit documentation of formal education. See the *Family Child Care Quality Framework* for specific educational requirements at Levels 2-5.

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/>.

Preschool Preparation

At Level 4 and Level 5 programs must submit documentation demonstrating that the provider has a RI Early Learning Standards Certificate (Level 2 or higher) or has a RI Early Childhood Teaching Certificate.

BrightStars Family Child Care Application

PROVIDER QUALIFICATIONS

THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED WITH YOUR APPLICATION

Instructions: Use this form to report information about the primary family child care provider.

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. Check the highest level of formal education completed:

<input type="checkbox"/> High School/GED	<input type="checkbox"/> attach copy of diploma for highest level of education completed
<input type="checkbox"/> Associate's Degree	- or -
<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree or higher	<input type="checkbox"/> attach copy of <u>college</u> transcript indicating <i>date and type</i> of degree conferred
<input type="checkbox"/> No diploma/degree	

3. Does the provider have college credits in ECE/related¹?

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

4. Does the provider have any of the following valid certificates (check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Child Development Associate (CDA)	<input type="checkbox"/> attach copy of CDA certificate
<input type="checkbox"/> RI Early Learning Standards (Level 2 or higher)	<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

¹ 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 Family Child Care Application

STANDARD 7 – 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 written 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 Context¹
6. Curriculum² (*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.

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 (number each section according to the format below):

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.

¹ Learning context is the materials, routines, and activities that promote play and learning. See page 6 of the *Family Child Care Quality Framework*.

² See page 7 of the *Family Child Care Quality Framework*.

BrightStars Family Child Care Application

STANDARD 7 – 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 Family Child Care Application

PROGRAM OBSERVATION INFORMATION

Programs applying for a rating of 2 Stars, 3 Stars, 4 Stars, or 5 Stars will receive an assessment site visit. 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. Assessment site visits will be unannounced and will include direct observation of the family child care program. 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 Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS-R) will be administered in the family child care program. The assessment consists of a three-hour observation, followed by a 15 to 30 minute interview with the provider.

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 the family child care program. Staff-child ratio will be observed and recorded periodically during the observation. Staff-child ratio must meet minimum requirements throughout the observation, with few lapses. To meet this criterion, the program must meet the ratio requirements on page 8 of the *Family Child Care Quality Framework*.

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 the family child care home. The ratio information may be indicated on the provider's DCYF license. If the assessor observes that the license is posted conspicuously, this meets the criterion.

Standard 6: Provider 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 plan of the provider. To meet this criterion the family child care provider must have a current individual professional development plan.

BrightStars Family Child Care Application

CHECKLIST AND SIGNATURE FORM

THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED WITH YOUR APPLICATION

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

- Program Overview
- Standard 1 form/attachments
- Standard 3 form/attachments
- Standard 5 form/attachments
- Standard 6 form/attachments
- Standard 7 form/attachments
- Checklist and Signature form

Rights and Responsibilities

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

- I have read the BrightStars *Information for Family Child Care Homes*. 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 agree to notify BrightStars in writing within 10 days of a change to my program's license or accreditation status.

Signature

Date

Printed Name