

The Virginia Star Quality Initiative

A voluntary system to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education settings that families consider for their children.



Information for Classroom-Based Programs

The Virginia Star Quality Initiative (VSQI) offers a way to help you improve the quality of your early childhood services and demonstrate this quality to parents.

When you choose to participate in this voluntary quality rating and improvement system, your program will be awarded one of five star levels of increasing quality.

Participation and the award of a one-star or higher rating reflects your program's choice to raise the bar in commitment to quality beyond expectation or requirement.

A program with a star rating:

- is on a quality improvement path
- distinguishes itself for exceeding standards required of it
- assures parents of its focus on producing a high quality experience for children
- reflects a culture of commitment to excellence among staff.

Your program will be assessed by a documentation review process and by on-site classroom observations by trained and experienced Star Quality Raters, who are regularly rated themselves for consistency and reliability.

The four standard areas – 1) education, qualifications, and training; 2) interactions; 3) structure; and 4) environment and instruction – have indicators that must be achieved at each star level.

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Why VSQI?

- ★ defines standards and creates a framework for accountability
- ★ sets an early childhood program on a quality improvement path
- ★ establishes a network of support and outreach for early childhood professionals
- ★ provides incentives linked to achieving and maintaining quality standards
- ★ acts as a consumer education tool to improve the information available to families



VSQI is a partnership between the Office of Early Childhood Development and the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation.

Visit www.SmartBeginnings.org/VSQI

For more information:
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The rating is only the first step of the VSQI process. After receiving a rating, you and your program staff will meet with a Star Quality Mentor to develop and implement a quality improvement plan based on the rating report.

Mentors will regularly work with you to help guide the improvement process and discuss specific strategies to aid in demonstrably improving your quality of services—and your star level—when the program is rated every two years.

*“They’re not here to grade us...
They’re here to help us.”*

This user friendly rating is also a powerful consumer education tool, informing families about the importance of quality as they consider options for their children’s earliest learning experiences.

As a program participant, you can proudly display your star rating certificate to families as well as a “Star Rated” window decal to signify your commitment to continuous quality improvement.

In short, the Virginia Star Quality Initiative is much more than a rating; it recognizes provider achievements and improvements in quality and rewards success. As participating director Tony Zontini said, “They’re not here to grade us, per se. They’re here to help us.”

