



June 28, 2024

Child Care Manual Transmittal Letter No. 167

TO: All Child Care Manual Holders

FROM: Kara B. Wentz, DCY Director
Matt Damschroder, ODJFS Director

SUBJECT: Five Year Review and New Rating Model for the Step Up To Quality Rating and Improvement System

Background

The Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY) and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) have amended the Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) rules contained in Chapter 5101:2-17 of the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) for the five-year review.

The state of Ohio adopted a statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) for licensed child care providers in 2006, called Step Up to Quality (SUTQ), which was initially a tiered 3-star rating system for ODJFS licensed child care centers and Type A family child care providers.

A cross-agency collaboration between ODJFS and Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) expanded SUTQ into a tiered 5-star rating system for all early learning programs in 2013. The SUTQ program was also expanded at that time to include preschool and school age programs licensed by the DEW and ODJFS licensed Type B family child care providers.

The progression of SUTQ can be attributed to the continual examination of the results of validation studies and compliance data, legislative exemptions and changes, and input from child care providers, Ohio parents, early care and education stakeholders, and other interested parties.

The most recent review of SUTQ came from a Joint Study Committee on Publicly Funded Child Care and Step Up To Quality initiated by members of the Ohio General Assembly.

An essential task of the committee was to review the existing SUTQ standards to identify areas of improvement and make changes to enhance child outcomes and remove unnecessary administrative barriers for child care and early learning programs. The committee held in-depth discussions with stakeholders involved in Ohio's child care and early learning communities.

Ohio Department of Children and Youth

Kara Wentz, Director
246 N. High Street
Columbus, OH 43215 U.S.A

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

Matt Damschroder, Director
30 E. Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43215 U.S.A.

Common themes surrounding the discussions were to find ways to increase staff/child interactions and impact kindergarten readiness; provide flexibility in the standards for programs; and to increase accessibility to SUTQ for licensed child care programs.

A final report was released by the committee on December 14, 2022. Several of the committee's recommendations for SUTQ were enacted in Amended Substitute House Bill 33 of the 135th General Assembly.

New Quality Rating Model for SUTQ

The new model:

- Reduces the number of benchmarks to eliminate administrative burdens and to focus on the benchmarks that should result in better child outcomes
- Replaces the 5-tiered star rating system with a 3-tiered rating system of bronze, silver, and gold
- Maintains the building block approach
 - Must meet bronze requirements AND silver requirements to be rated a silver;
 - Must meet bronze requirements and silver requirements AND gold requirements to be rated a gold
- Enhances early learning by requiring programs at all quality ratings to implement a curriculum
- Eliminates a requirement to assess professional development hours at initial rating
- Removes the requirement for administrators, family child care (FCC) program owner, lead teachers, and assistant teachers to obtain a Professional Development Certificate
- Eliminates required forms
- Replaces Appendices A-D for child care centers and Appendices E-H for family child care providers into a single Appendix A for both program types
- Creates a new "Staff Child Interactions" Standard
- Removes the "Transitions (T)" Sub-Domain
- Removes the "Communication and Engagement (CE)" Sub-Domain
- Eliminates an additional points system for programs to become four and five star rated; and
- Requires that for the gold rating 40% of classrooms in center-based programs, serving infants through school age, meet specific ratio and group size requirements

Chapter 17 SUTQ Rules:

Rule 5101:2-17-01 "Step Up To Quality (SUTQ): program standards" outlines the definitions and standards for SUTQ. This rule has been amended to make the following changes:

- Added "definitions" to the rule title
- Clarified general language throughout the rule
- Added a new paragraph (A)(1)(d) for administrator
- Replaced "ODJFS and ODE" with "the Ohio department of children and youth (DCY)" to paragraph (A)(2)(a)
- Added "lead teacher" in paragraph (A)(4)(c) pursuant to rule 3301-37-01 of Administrative Code
- Added new paragraph (A)(4)(d) pursuant to rule 3301-32-03 of Administrative Code
- Removed "ODJFS" from paragraphs (A)(5)(a) and (A)(5)(b)

- Added "time the group is in session or entire group operates" for instructional time in paragraph (A)(6)(d)
- Added "licensed" in paragraph (A)(8)
- Removed "ODJFS licensed" from paragraph (A)(8)(b)
- Removed "ODE licensed" from paragraph (A)(8)(c)
- Removed "ODE licensed" from paragraph (A)(8)(d)
- Reinstated the definition of "substitute" in paragraph (A)(9)
- Added "awarded bronze, silver or gold" in paragraph (B)
- Added "any required" to desk review in paragraph (B)(1)
- Removed "ODJFS licensed child care centers, ODE licensed preschools and ODE licensed school child" in paragraph (B)(2)
- Added "licensed" in paragraph (B)(2)
- Added "listed in appendix A to this rule for the rating requested at registration and maintains the standards on an ongoing basis" in paragraph (B)(2)
- Removed appendices A, B, C, and D from paragraph (B)(2)
- Added "listed in appendix A to this rule" and "maintains the standards on an ongoing basis" in paragraph (B)(3)
- Removed paragraph (B)(3) as this is redundant
- Removed paragraphs (B)(4), (B)(5), (B)(6), and (B)(7) due to the elimination of the additional points system for programs to become four and five star rated

Appendix A to rule 5101:2-17-01 replaces rescinded Appendices A, B, C, and D for child care centers and Appendices E, F, G, and H for family child care homes and outlines the new program standards and requirements for SUTQ.

Rule 5101:2-17-02 "Step Up To Quality (SUTQ): eligibility for registration" outlines the eligibility requirements for SUTQ. This rule has been amended to make the following changes:

- Clarified general language throughout the rule
- Combined paragraphs (A)(1) and (A)(2) into a new stand-alone paragraph for any licensed program pursuant to rule 5101:2-17-01 (A)(8) of Administrative Code
- Replaced "star rating" with "bronze, silver, or gold rating" in paragraph (B)
- Added a new paragraph (B)(1) for a license revocation
- Moved stand-alone paragraph for a suspended license to a new paragraph (B)(2)
- Moved paragraph (C)(5) to a new paragraph (B)(3) for active enforcement
- Replaced "star rating" with "bronze, silver, or gold rating" in paragraph (C)
- Updated the weblink for the Ohio child licensing and quality system (OCLQS) in paragraph (C)(1)
- Added "any required" to paragraph (C)(2)
- Added "for whom the program is receiving compensation" in paragraph (C)(3)
- Removed "star" from rating in paragraph (C)(4)
- Replaced "appendices" with "appendix A" in paragraph (C)(4)
- Updated the weblink for the Ohio professional registry (OPR) in paragraph (C)(4)(a)
- Added a new paragraph (C)(4)(b) for "Ensure the administrator on-site or family child care provider meets the educational requirements for professional development"
- Restructured paragraph (C)(5) to state "The center or family child care (FCC) provider is not to have an accumulation of twenty-four moderate and/or serious risk non-compliance

points within the previous twelve months or for a preschool or school child program a six-point serious risk non-compliance."

Rule 5101:2-17-03 "Step Up To Quality (SUTQ): desk reviews, onsite verification visits and star rating awards"(rescinded) outlines the process for completing the desk reviews, onsite verification visits and the star rating process. This rule has been rescinded and replaced with a new rule 5101:2-17-03 "Step Up To Quality (SUTQ): desk reviews, on-site verification visits and bronze, silver, or gold rating awards".

New Rule 5101:2-17-03 "Step Up To Quality" (SUTQ): desk reviews, on-site verification visits and bronze, silver, or gold rating awards" (new) replaces rescinded rule 5101:2-17-03 "Step Up To Quality" (SUTQ): desk reviews, verification visits and star rating awards", and outlines the processes for completing desk reviews, onsite verification visits, and quality ratings. This rule has been amended to make the following changes:

- Changed rule title to "Step Up To Quality" (SUTQ): desk reviews, on-site verification visits and bronze, silver, or gold rating awards."
- Removed "conducted by the Ohio department of job and family services (ODJFS), the county agency or the Ohio department of education (ODE)" in paragraph (A)
- Added "bronze, silver or gold rating" to paragraph (B)
- Removed "if the program confirms at a one-star, two-star or three-star rating" from paragraph (B)(1)
- Removed four-star rating language in paragraph (B)(2)
- Removed "star" from rating in new paragraph (B)(2)
- Moved language for how long a star rating lasts in paragraph (C) to a new paragraph (E)
- Added "electronic" to paragraph (C)(1)
- Removed "at time of the annual report" from paragraph (C)(1)
- Removed "star" from rating in paragraph (C)(2)
- Added "program's bronze, silver, or gold rating" in paragraph (D)
- Added "award of bronze, silver, or gold" to stand-alone paragraph in paragraph (D)
- Added a new paragraph (D)(3) for a focused review and a deferral
- Removed paragraph (D)(4) for annual report review
- Added a new paragraph (F) for full on-site verification visits
- Added "obtain a specialized rating" in paragraph (G)
- Updated the weblink for the Ohio Child licensing and quality system (OCLQS) in paragraph (G)(1)
- Replaced "have a star rating" with "are rated a bronze, silver, or gold" in paragraph (G)(2)(a)
- Replaced "three, four or five star rating" with "are rated a silver or gold" in paragraph (G)(2)b)
- Replaced "of the three, four or five star rated programs" with "of the silver and gold rated program" in paragraph (G)(3)
- Replaced "appendices" with "appendix A" in paragraph (G)(3)(a)
- Removed "star" from rating" in paragraph (G)(3)(a)
- Restructured paragraph (G)(3)(b) to clarify curriculum and formal child assessment requirements
- Removed "star" from rating" in paragraph (G)(4)
- Replaced "star" with "bronze, silver, or gold" in paragraph (G)(5)

- Changed "initial" to "ongoing" in paragraph (G)(5)(a)
- Added "bronze, silver, or gold" to paragraph (H)(1)
- Replaced "currently rated program" with "bronze, silver, or gold rating" in paragraph (H)(1)(a)
- Replaced "rated" with "awarded" in paragraph (H)(1)(a)
- Replaced "rating" with "bronze, silver, or gold rating award" in paragraph (H)(2)
- Replaced "appendices" with "appendix A" in paragraph (H)(2)(a)
- Restructured paragraph (H)(2)(b) to clarify curriculum and formal child assessment requirements
- Removed "star" from rating in paragraph (H)(3)
- Removed "star" from rating in paragraph (H)(4)
- Changed "initial" to "ongoing" in paragraph (H)(4)(a)
- Removed all references to "star" in paragraph (I)
- Removed all references to "star" in paragraph (J)
- Added "with a bronze, silver, or gold" to paragraph (J)
- Removed "star" from rating in paragraph (K)
- Changed "ninety days" to "one hundred eighty" days in paragraph (K) for temporary closure to mirror Chapter 12 rules of Administrative Code
- Added new paragraph (K) that a program is no longer required to request reinstatement of their rating when reactivating their child care license
- Updated language in paragraphs (K)(1), (K)(2), and (K)(3) to specify the requirements for continuing a rating after reinstatement
- Replaced "ODJFS, ODE or the county agency determine" with "licensed" in paragraph (L)
- Replaced "appendices" with appendix (L)
- Removed language for displaying marketing materials in paragraph (L)
- Replaced "ODJFS, ODE or the county agency" with "licensing entity" in paragraph (L)(2)

Rule 5101:2-17-04 "Step Up To Quality (SUTQ): changes, renewals, removals or requests to withdraw a SUTQ rating" outlines the process for updating or changing current ratings. This rule has been amended to make the following changes:

- Changed rule title to "Step Up To Quality": changes, renewals, or requests to withdraw a bronze, silver, or gold rating."
- Added "bronze, silver, or gold" to paragraph (A)
- Updated the weblink for the Ohio child licensing and quality system (OCLQS) in paragraph (A)(1)
- Removed paragraphs (B), (C), and (D) as an annual report is no longer required
- Removed paragraph (E) as ratings are continuous
- Removed "star" from rating in paragraph (B)
- Changed "Programs licensed by ODJFS" to "For centers and FCC providers" in paragraph (B)(1)
- Removed "star" and "from ODJFS" in paragraph (B)(1)(a)
- Removed "star" and "ODJFS or the county agency" in paragraph (B)(1)(b)
- Replaced "ODE" with "preschool and school age programs" in paragraph (B)(2)
- Removed "star" from rating in paragraph (B)(2)
- Replaced "ODJFS" and "ODE" with "the Ohio department of children and youth (DCY)" in paragraph (B)(3)
- Removed "star" from rating in paragraph (B)(3)

- Replaced "appendices" with "appendix A" in paragraph (B)(3)
- Removed "star" from rating in paragraph (C)(1)
- Removed paragraph (C)(2) as ratings are continuous
- Removed "star" from rating in paragraph (C)(2)
- Removed "and when does it become effective" in paragraph (F)
- Replaced the paper process for submitting the JFS 01556 "Request to Withdraw from Step Up To Quality" with requesting the withdrawal in OCLQS in paragraph (F)(1)

Rule 5101:2-17-05 "Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)": request for review outlines the process for requesting a review. This rule has been amended to make the following changes:

- Removed all references to "star" in paragraph (A)
- Removed form "JFS 01155 "Request for Review for Licensing and Step Up To Quality" from paragraph (B) as the process is determined by the licensing agency
- Replaced "JFS 01155" with "request for review"
- Removed all references to "star" in paragraph (C)
- Added "award" to paragraph (C)(3)
- Removed paragraph (D) because this is redundant

Rule 5101:2-17-06 "Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)": county agency responsibilities outlines the responsibilities for county agencies. This rule has been amended to make the following changes:

- Clarified general rule language throughout the rule
- Removed "Ohio department of job and family services (ODJFS)" from paragraph (A)(3)
- Removed "to ODJFS" from paragraph (A)(4)

Forms:

Sample forms to support programs to meet the new quality rating standards will be available on the DCY website at a later date: [Step Up To Quality | Department of Children and Youth \(ohio.gov\)](https://www.ohio.gov/step-up-to-quality)

While the system functionality is being updated, providers will be required to submit the following forms in order to:

- Withdraw the program from participation in SUTQ, using the JFS 01556 "Request To Withdraw from Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)"
- Submit a request for review, using the JFS 01155 "Request For Review For Licensing and Step Up To Quality"

Implementation:

The rules will be effective on **July 7, 2024**.

From **April, 16, 2024** until **July 6, 2024** registrations will not be accepted.

Implementation guidance:

Registrations and Rating Levels	
I currently have a specialized rating that will expire after April 15, 2024 . When can I register if the new registration won't be available until July 7, 2024 .	Programs with specialized ratings expiring between April 15, 2024 and August 3, 2024 will be extended until August 4, 2024 . Programs will need to submit a registration between July 7, 2024 and August 4, 2024 to maintain the specialized rating.

I am currently rated, when can I register for a different rating using the new standards and requirements?	Programs who are currently rated can submit a new registration on July 7, 2024 for the new rating standards.
I am currently rated, what will my new rating be in the new system? For programs currently rated as of July 6, 2024 the rating will automatically transition to the following rating on July 7, 2024 :	
Current Rating	New Rating
1	BRONZE
2	
3	SILVER
4	GOLD
5	
Professional Development Requirements for Currently Rated Programs	
For programs that have been continuously rated since May 31, 2023 or before, the below professional development (PD) requirements are to be met for any of the following that have been in a SUTQ role since May 31, 2023 or before:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrators fulfilling the on-site role • FCC program owners • Lead and assistant teachers 	
Have a completed a PD certificate in the July 1, 2021 to July 30, 2023 biennium or the July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2025 biennium; OR Completed 10 hours of Ohio approved training in the current or previous state fiscal year.	

Monitoring and Assessment:

For programs that were rated prior to July 6, 2024, a transition year from **July 7, 2024-June 30, 2025** will be in effect. Currently rated programs will receive technical assistance during this transition year. The only programs that will be assessed based on the new standards will be programs who register for a rating or want to change their rating.

Beginning July 7, 2025, all rated programs will be assessed on the new standards which include the professional development training requirements.

The two professional development topics referenced in Appendix A to rule 5101:2-17-01 will not be required between July 7, 2024 and June 30, 2025 while the Ohio Professional Registry (OPR) is updated.

Questions: Please contact the Family and Customer Support Center at childcarepolicy@childrenandyouth.ohio.gov or 1-877-302-2347, option 4, if you have any questions.

5101:2-17-01 "Step Up To Quality" (SUTQ): program definitions and standards.

(A) What are the ~~step up to quality (SUTQ)~~SUTQ definitions for the purposes of implementing Chapter 5101:2-17 of the Administrative Code?

(1) "Administrator" means the following:

- (a) ~~Ohio department of job and family services (ODJFS) licensed~~ A child care center administrator as described in rule 5101:2-12-07 of the Administrative Code.
- (b) ~~ODJFS licensed~~ A family child care provider as described in rule 5101:2-13-07 of the Administrative Code.
- (c) ~~Ohio department of education (ODE) licensed preschool~~ A director as defined in rule 3301-37-01 of the Administrative Code.
- (d) An administrator as defined in rule 3301-32-01 of the Administrative Code.
- (d) ~~ODE licensed staff member as described in rule 3301-32-02 of the Administrative Code.~~

(2) "Approved related fields" means the following:

- (a) Early childhood education teacher approved related fields include: early childhood education, child development, family studies, human ecology, human development, child and family community studies, elementary education, early intervention (ECE or special education), elementary, middle or secondary education, physical education, elementary intervention, and school counselor, or other degrees as approved by ~~ODJFS and ODE~~ the Ohio department of children and youth (DCY).
- (b) Approved related child development fields include psychology, and recreation management if twelve semester or eighteen quarter hours of child development coursework, with a grade of C or better from an accredited institution of higher education, is completed.

(3) "Assistant teacher" means a child care ~~care~~ staff member who works under the supervision of a lead teacher. Assistant teachers may work independently in a lead teacher's absence, but for the majority of time the assistant teacher works directly with the lead teacher in the same space with the same children.

(4) "Child care staff" means:

- (a) ~~ODE licensed~~ A child care center staff member as described in rule 5101:2-12-08 of the Administrative Code.
 - (b) ~~ODE licensed~~ A family child care provider staff member as described in rule 5101:2-13-08 of the Administrative Code.
 - (c) ~~ODE licensed~~ A preschool staff member and lead teacher; ~~head teacher, teacher, and non-teaching employee~~ as defined in rule 3301-37-01 of the Administrative Code.
 - (d) A staff member as described in rule 3301-32-03 of the Administrative Code.
- (5) "Family child care provider" means:
- (a) ~~ODE licensed type~~ Licensed type A home provider.
 - (b) ~~ODE licensed type~~ Licensed type B home provider.
- (6) "Instructional time" means the time the group spends with the lead teacher each day, excluding nap or rest time.
- (a) The lead teacher ~~shall~~ is to interact with children a minimum of three and one-half hours daily for at least half the days of each week the program operates.
 - (b) If a group requires two or more child care staff members to meet ratio, there ~~shall~~ is to be a lead teacher and an assistant teacher present. Co-lead teachers may be used to meet this requirement.
 - (c) The assistant or co-lead teacher ~~shall~~ is to meet this requirement the other days of the week.
 - (d) If a program or group operates less than three and one-half hours daily, the lead teacher ~~shall~~ is to be present for ~~the entire day~~ time the group is in session or entire time group operates.
 - (e) School-age programs ~~shall~~ are to have a lead teacher for the duration of either a total of three and one-half hours, the complete before school session, or the complete after school session. On non-school days, the program ~~shall~~ is to meet the three and one-half hour requirement as stated in paragraph (A)(7) to this rule.
- (7) "Lead teacher" means the adult who has primary responsibility for the group of children. The lead teacher ~~shall~~ is to meet the three and one-half hour minimum

instruction time daily, not including nap or rest, for more than half of the days in operation each week. The lead teacher is responsible for activity planning and implementing the curriculum and child assessment requirements related to the current ~~star rating level~~.

(8) "Program" means any of the following licensed:

- (a) Family child care provider.
- (b) ~~ODJFS licensed child~~ Child care center.
- (c) ~~ODE licensed preschool~~ Preschool program.
- (d) ~~ODE licensed school~~ School child program.

(9) "Substitute" means the following:

- (a) A child care staff member who replaces an assigned staff member for fewer than ninety days.
- (b) What if the substitute is providing care for more than ninety days?

The substitute ~~shall~~ is to become the lead teacher or assistant and meet the requirements of the lead or assistant pursuant to this chapter.

(B) What are the standards that ~~shall~~ are to be met to be ~~star-rated~~ awarded bronze, silver or gold?

- (1) The program ~~shall~~ is to comply with the desk review and ~~the~~ any on-site verification visit.
- (2) ~~ODJFS licensed child care centers, ODE licensed preschools and ODE licensed school child~~ Licensed programs shall are to meet all of the standards listed in appendix A to this rule for the rating requested at registration and maintain the standards on an ongoing basis for the star rating requested at registration as listed in appendices A, B, C, and D to this rule.
- (3) ~~Family child care providers shall meet all of the standards for the star rating requested at registration as listed in appendices E, F, G and H to this rule.~~
- (4) ~~Programs who register for a four or five star rating may be awarded points based on the verification of the three star rating requirements and their ability to earn additional points as outlined in appendices D and H to this rule.~~

~~(5) A program shall obtain at least one point in each of the following domains in order to achieve a four or five star rating:~~

~~(a) Learning and development.~~

~~(b) Administrative and leadership practices.~~

~~(c) Staff qualifications and professional development.~~

~~(d) Family and community partnerships.~~

~~(6) How many points shall be earned to achieve a four star rating?~~

~~(a) ODJFS licensed child care centers and ODE licensed preschool or licensed school child programs shall score thirty-five to fifty-five points. Points are indicated in appendix D to this rule.~~

~~(b) Family child care providers shall score thirty to forty-five points. Points are indicated in appendix H to this rule.~~

~~(7) How many points shall be earned to achieve a five star rating?~~

~~(a) ODJFS licensed child care centers, ODE licensed preschools and licensed school child programs shall score fifty-six to seventy-nine points. Points are indicated in appendix D to this rule.~~

~~(b) Family child care providers shall score forty-six to sixty-four points. Points are indicated in appendix H to this rule.~~

Effective: 7/7/2024

Five Year Review (FYR) Dates: 4/18/2024 and 07/07/2029

CERTIFIED ELECTRONICALLY

Certification

06/24/2024

Date

Promulgated Under: 119.03

Statutory Authority: 5104.29

Rule Amplifies: 5104.29

Prior Effective Dates: 07/01/2009, 08/01/2010, 11/10/2011, 10/01/2013,
07/20/2014, 09/28/2015, 06/26/2016, 12/31/2016,
01/06/2019

Appendix A to Rule 5101:2-17-01

Learning and Development			
Standards	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Curriculum and Assessment	<p>CA1 Obtain and implement for all infant, toddler, and preschool aged children a comprehensive research-based curriculum that is aligned with the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) and the Science of Reading.</p> <p>School age: Classrooms provide activities that are aligned with the Ohio K-12 Learning Standards.</p>	<p>CA2 Complete a comprehensive formal child assessment aligned to the ELDS for all infant, toddler and preschool aged children twice annually.</p>	<p>CA3 Provide intentional and purposeful activities as determined from child assessments.</p> <p>Utilize assessment results to adjust and refine instruction.</p>
Requirements	<p>Maintain onsite:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • verification that the curriculum is aligned from the verified list. • the availability of curriculum materials for lead teachers/FCC Providers. • documentation of current activity/lesson plans that support children's development and learning and include experiences from the verified curriculum for all hours of instructional time. • Activity/lesson plans are required for infant, toddler, and preschool age. School-age activity/lesson plans are required and follow the K-12 standards. 	<p>Maintain onsite:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • verification that the assessment tool is aligned from the verified list. • documentation demonstrating that the tool is completed twice annually and that results are shared with families. • documentation of the evidence gathered to complete the formal tool. <p>Lead Teachers/FCC Provider is to explain the child assessment process, including the methods used, how the results are shared with families.</p>	<p>Maintain onsite:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • documentation of intentional and purposeful activities and experiences determined from the child assessment results. <p>Lead Teachers/FCC Provider is to explain the child assessment process, including the methods used, how the results are shared with families, and how results are used to plan, adjust or refine instructional strategies.</p>

	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Child Screening Exempt from standard: school-age children or children with a current Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).	CS1 Administer or confirm completion of a comprehensive screening tool within sixty days of enrollment for newly enrolled children and annually for all children. Share or confirm results with families within thirty days following the completion of the screening.	CS2 Refer families, whose child had an identified need, within sixty days from the date of the completed screening.	CS3 Follow-up with families within thirty days from date of referral to determine if the child's needs are being met for services.
Requirements	Maintain onsite: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> documentation of completed screening tools and documentation that results were shared with families. 	Maintain onsite: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> documentation of the referral process and the referrals made to families. 	Maintain onsite: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> documentation of the follow up process and the follow ups with families to determine if needs were met.
Administration & Leadership Practices			
Standards	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Staff: Child/Adult Interactions	SCI1 Centers: Complete an annual self-assessment for each group of children. Family Child Care: Complete an annual self-assessment using a tool that measures the learning environment for the program.	SCI2 Ohio Classroom Observation Tool (OCOT) standards are met through observation by Department of Children and Youth staff. Centers: Self-assessments for each group of children are used to determine the area of focus and to set a goal for improvement. Family Child Care: The environment assessment is used to determine the	SCI3 Ohio Classroom Observation Tool (OCOT) standards are met through observation by Department of Children and Youth staff.

		area of focus and to set a goal for improvement.	
Requirements	Lead teacher(s)/FCC provider is to maintain documentation of the completion of an assessment for each age group of children. The tool is to be developmentally appropriate to age groups served and completed annually.	Lead teacher(s)/FCC provider is to maintain documentation of the area of focus and a goal for improvement. Documentation is to include teacher's name, group, date completed, name of tool used, goal, action steps and timeframe. Update annually.	
Continuous Improvement	CI1 Develop a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) completed annually that includes two program goals and two action steps.	CI2 Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) includes at least one additional goal and action step based on input from staff and families.	CI3 Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) includes at least one additional goal and action step related to creating, maintaining or expanding ongoing community partnerships.
Requirement	Maintain onsite the Continuous Improvement Plan.	Maintain onsite documentation of input gathered from staff and families annually.	Maintain onsite documentation of at least one newly created/ongoing/expanding community partnership activity, function, or meeting annually.
Staff Qualifications & Professional Development			
Standards	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Staff Education	SE1 Child Care Centers/School Based Programs: On-site Administrator meets licensing requirements.	SE2 On-site Administrator AA*, or CPL 3, or SA Administrator Professional Endorsement (if only serving school-age children), or Administrator Credential 2	SE3 On-site Administrator has AA*, CPL 3, or SA Administrator Professional Endorsement (if only serving school-age children), or Administrator Credential 2
	FCC Provider has CDA, or CPL 1 or SA Administrator Professional Development Endorsement (if only serving school-age children)	FCC Provider has CDA, or AA*, or CPL 2, or SA Administrator Professional Endorsement (if only serving school-age children), or Administrator Credential 2	FCC Provider has CDA, or AA*, or CPL 2 or SA Administrator Professional Endorsement (if only serving school-age children), or Administrator Credential 2

	Center/School Based Programs: 50% of lead teachers have CDA or CPL2, or one lead teacher has a minimum of AA*, CPL 3, or School Age (SA) Lead Teacher Professional Endorsement (if school-age only group)	Child Care Centers/School Based Programs: 25% of lead teachers have a minimum of AA*, CPL 3, or SA Lead Teacher Professional Endorsement (if school-age only group)	Child Care Centers/School Based Programs: 50% of lead teachers have a minimum of AA*, CPL 3, or SA Lead Teacher Professional Endorsement (if school-age only group)
	FCC Lead teacher (if not the provider) has CDA, or CPL 1 or SA Lead Teacher Professional Development Endorsement (if only serving school-age children)	FCC Lead teacher (if not the provider): has CDA or CPL 2 or SA Lead Teacher Professional Endorsement (if school-age only group)	FCC Lead Teacher (if not the provider): has AA*, CPL 2, or SA Lead Teacher Professional Endorsement (if only serving school-age children)
	*In an approved related field	*In an approved related field	*In an approved related field
	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Professional Development	<p>PD1 All administrators, leads, assistants and FCC Provider obtain 10 hours of Ohio Approved training annually. PD Topics must include at least <u>two</u> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma • Developmental Milestones • Critical Conversations • Behavior/Classroom Management • Family Engagement • Curriculum & Assessment • Science of Reading • Inclusion <p>NOTE: <i>Approved college coursework related to the field may be used to meet training requirements.</i></p>	<p>PD2 Administrators or FCC Provider only: 12 hours annually. Professional’s Choice of OA training on the additional 2 hours.</p>	<p>PD3 Administrators or FCC Providers only: 15 hours annually. Professional’s Choice of OA training on the additional 5 hours.</p>

Family & Community Partnerships			
Standards	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Family Partnerships/ Community Resources	FCP1 Program utilizes a tool that identifies the needs of the whole family within 30 days of enrollment and then annually.	FCP2 Program follows up with those families, with identified needs, with referral within 30 days.	FCP3 Program offers two annual educational trainings, workshops or events for families. Follow-up with families on referrals provided, within 30 days from the date of referral, to determine if needs are being met for services.
Requirements	Maintain onsite documentation of the completed tool that identifies family needs in at least three areas; including developmental or educational needs, health needs, and resource needs (such as food, utility assistance) and what resources were provided to the family.	Maintain onsite documentation of the referral process and the referrals made to families.	Maintain onsite documentation of the two annual opportunities. Maintain onsite documentation of the follow-up process and the follow ups with families to determine if needs were met.

Ratio requirements for Gold Rating – Centers Only : 40% of classrooms, serving infants through school age, meet lower ratios and group sizes.

Staff/Child Ratios	
Age	Requirement for Gold Rating
Infants	Birth to 12 months 2:10 (Group Size only)
	12 to 18 months 1:5 or 2:10
Toddlers	18 to 30 months 1:6 or 2:12 and
	30 to 36 months 1:7 or 2:14

Preschool	36 months to <48 months 1:11 or 2:22 and 48 months to < school age 1:13 or 2:26
School Age	Kindergarten to age 14 years 1:17 or 2:34
FCC	Exempt from lower ratio requirement.

5101:2-17-02

"Step Up To Quality" (SUTQ): eligibility for registration.

- (A) Who may register to participate in ~~step up to quality (SUTQ)~~, SUTQ, Ohio's tiered quality rating and improvement system?

Any licensed program as referenced in paragraph (A)(8) of rule 5101:2-17-01 of the Administrative Code.

~~(1) A program licensed by the Ohio department of job and family services (ODJFS).~~

~~(2) A program licensed by the Ohio department of education (ODE).~~

- (B) Which programs are not eligible to register for ~~a star rating~~ a bronze, silver, or gold rating?

(1) A licensed program with a license in the revocation process.

(2) A licensed program with a currently suspended license.

(3) A licensed program with an active enforcement status.

~~A licensed program with a currently suspended license is not eligible to register for a star rating.~~

- (C) What are the requirements for a licensed program to be eligible for a ~~star rating~~ bronze, silver, or gold rating?

The program ~~shall~~ is to do all of the following:

(1) Log onto the Ohio child licensing and quality system (OCLQS) at ~~https://oclqs.force.com~~ https://oclqs.my.site.com, to electronically submit the ~~initial~~ rating registration.

(2) Comply with the desk review, including documents returned for revision, and with ~~the~~ any on-site verification visit.

(3) Have children for whom the program is receiving compensation enrolled and attending the program at time of the on-site verification visit.

(4) Meet all of the program standards for the registered ~~star~~ rating as listed in ~~the appendices~~ appendix A to rule 5101:2-17-01 of the Administrative Code including:

(a) Ensure that the administrators, lead teachers and assistant teachers complete and have verified their education and professional development

through the Ohio professional registry (OPR) at ~~ocerra.org/opr~~<https://www.ocerra.org>.

(b) Ensure the administrator on-site or family child care provider meets the educational requirements for professional development.

~~(b)~~(c) Ensure staff roles, schedules and hire dates are accurate and that the staff are linked to the program prior to the registration and maintained in the OPR.

~~(e)~~(d) Not falsifying any documentation required to meet the standards. Falsified documentation ~~shall~~is to be cited in accordance with Chapters 5101:2-12, 5101:2-13, 3301-32 and 3301-37 of the Administrative Code.

~~(5) Not have an active enforcement case.~~

~~(6)~~(5) The center or family child care program ~~shall~~is not to have an accumulation of twenty-four moderate and/or serious risk non-compliance points within the previous twelve months ~~if licensed by ODJFS, or for a preschool or school child program~~ a six-point serious ~~risk~~risk non-compliance ~~if licensed by ODE.~~

(a) Moderate and serious risk non-compliances are listed in appendix A to rule 5101:2-12-03 of the Administrative Code for child care centers and appendix A to rule 5101:2-13-03 of the Administrative Code for family child care providers.

(b) Serious risk non-compliances are listed in rule 3301-37-02 of the Administrative Code for preschools and rule 3301-32-11 of the Administrative Code for school child programs.

(c) The accumulation of points ~~shall~~are not to be within the previous twelve months prior to the registration date and between the registration date and the ~~star~~ rating effective date.

(d) If a licensing inspection has not occurred within twelve months, the most recent licensing inspection ~~shall~~is to be considered.

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5101:2-17-03

"Step Up To Quality" (SUTQ): desk reviews, on-site verification visits and bronze, silver, or gold rating awards.

(A) What programs qualify for a desk review?

Programs who are eligible pursuant to rule 5101:2-17-02 of the Administrative Code and have submitted a completed registration.

(B) How is the bronze, silver, or gold rating awarded?

(1) The program is not to be awarded a rating higher than was confirmed by the program during the registration process.

(2) A program is not to be awarded a rating, or a lower rating may be assessed, if at the desk review or on-site verification visit the program does not meet the standards for the rating the program confirmed at registration.

(C) How is a deferral issued?

(1) A deferral may be issued at the conclusion of the electronic or on-site verification visit if the program cannot demonstrate it is meeting the standards.

(2) If the program cannot meet the deferral requirement within the time frame given, a lesser rating may be awarded.

(D) When is a program's bronze, silver, or gold rating effective?

The rating award of bronze, silver, or gold is to be effective:

(1) The Sunday following the thirtieth day after the completion of the on-site verification visit.

(2) If a deferral was issued, the Sunday following the thirtieth day after the end of the deferral period.

(3) The Sunday following the thirtieth day after the focused review or the deferral due date.

(4) The Sunday following approval or license begin date, whichever is later, after:

(a) The desk review;

(b) A rating is awarded pursuant to paragraph (G) of this rule.

(E) How long does a rating award last?

A program's rating award will be continuous from their effective date except for programs with specialized ratings. Programs wishing to change their rating are to submit an ongoing registration.

(F) When does a program receive a full on-site verification visit to review all quality standards?

(1) A bronze rated program will receive a full on-site verification visit every other year.

(2) A silver or gold rated program will receive a full on-site verification visit every three years.

(G) What are the requirements to obtain a specialized rating if a program owner, with multiple rated programs, wants to have a new program's rating expedited?

(1) The program is to request the rating in the Ohio child licensing and quality system (OCLQS) at <https://oclqs.my.site.com> during the application process or within the first thirty days of the provisional license period.

(2) The program's owner is to own multiple licensed programs that include the following:

(a) At least fifty per cent of the owner's programs are rated a bronze, silver, or gold; and

(b) Two or more of the programs are rated a silver or gold.

(3) The rating awarded is equal to the lowest rating of the silver and gold rated program if the program meets the following:

(a) All administrator and staff qualifications are to be met pursuant to appendix A to rule 5101:2-17-01 of the Administrative Code for the rating to be awarded.

(b) The program implements a verified written, researched-based, comprehensive curriculum and formal child assessment pursuant to appendix A to rule 5101:2-17-01 of the Administrative Code.

(4) If the program is unable to meet the requirements of paragraph (G)(3) of this rule, a lesser rating may be awarded.

(5) In order to continue the bronze, silver, or gold rating, the program is to:

(a) Submit an ongoing registration within one hundred twenty days of the rating begin date; and

(b) Comply with a desk review including documents returned for revision and the on-site verification visit.

(6) If the new program fails to comply with paragraph (G)(5) of this rule, the rating is to be discontinued one hundred twenty days after the rating begin date.

(H) What are the requirements to continue a rating if the program's owner changes?

(1) An initial program applicant may be awarded a bronze, silver, or gold rating when the owner is changing if the following requirements are met:

(a) The bronze, silver, or gold rating has been awarded for the previous thirteen months.

(b) The new program requests the rating in OCLQS during the application process or within the first thirty days of the provisional license period.

(2) The bronze, silver, or gold rating award is to equal the current rating if the program meets the following:

(a) All administrator and staff qualifications are to be met pursuant to appendix A to rule 5101:2-17-01 of the Administrative Code for the rating to be awarded.

(b) The program implements a verified written, researched-based, comprehensive curriculum and formal child assessment pursuant to appendix A to rule 5101:2-17-01 of the Administrative Code as set forth by the verification process.

(3) If the program is unable to meet all of the requirements of paragraph (H)(2) of this rule, a lesser rating may be awarded.

(4) In order to continue the rating, the program is to:

(a) Submit an ongoing registration within one hundred twenty days of the rating begin date; and

(b) Comply with a desk review including documents returned for revision and the on-site verification visit.

(5) If the program fails to comply with paragraph (H)(4) of this rule, the rating is to be discontinued one hundred twenty days after the rating begin date.

(I) Will the rating continue if a program changes its location?

Yes the rating will be continued provided the change is done in accordance with rules 5101:2-12-02, 5101:2-13-02, 3301-37-02, and 3301-32-11 of the Administrative Code.

(J) If a rated family child care provider with a bronze, silver, or gold changes from a licensed type A home to a licensed type B home or from a licensed type B home to a licensed type A home, will the rating continue?

Yes the rating will be continued.

(K) Will the rating be reinstated if a program was previously rated and the rating was discontinued due to the program being in temporary closure status for more than one hundred eighty days pursuant to rule 5101:2-12-02 or 5101:2-13-02 of the Administrative Code?

A program's rating will automatically be reinstated to the previous rating when the license is reactivated. The new rating effective date will be the Sunday following the Ohio department of children and youth (DCY) approval.

(1) Once the reinstated rating has been awarded, in order to continue the rating, the program is to:

(a) Submit an ongoing registration within sixty days of the rating begin date.

(b) Comply with a desk review including documents returned for revision and the on-site verification visit.

(2) What if the program fails to comply with paragraph (K)(1) of this rule?

The rating is to be discontinued sixty-one days after the rating is reinstated.

(L) What if a licensed program is determined not to be meeting any of the standards outlined in appendix A to rule 5101:2-17-01 of the Administrative Code?

The program is to:

(1) Comply with any desk reviews or on-site verification visits.

(2) Submit any documents requested by the licensing entity.

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5101:2-17-04

"Step Up To Quality" (SUTQ): changes, renewals, removals, or requests to withdraw a SUTQ bronze, silver, or gold rating.

(A) ~~What shall~~ How does a program ~~do to~~ request a rating change from bronze, silver, or gold?

The program ~~shall~~ is to:

- (1) Log onto ~~https://oclqs.force.com~~ https://oclqs.my.site.com to complete an ongoing rating registration.
- (2) Electronically submit the registration.

(B) ~~What is the process to submit an annual report?~~

- ~~(1) A program shall complete and submit an annual report at https://oclqs.force.com thirty days prior to the anniversary date of the initial star rating.~~
- ~~(2) The annual report shall contain updated information as described in the appendices to rule 5101:2-17-01 of the Administrative Code for a three, four or five-star rated program.~~
- ~~(3) An annual report is not required if a change in rating registration is submitted before the deadline for the annual report.~~

(C) ~~What if the annual report is not completed and submitted?~~

~~The star rating shall be discontinued on the anniversary date of the star rating.~~

(D) ~~What if the rated program does not meet the program standards based on the information provided in the annual report?~~

~~The star rating may be reduced or removed pursuant to paragraph (F)(3) of this rule.~~

(E) ~~What is the process to submit a rating renewal?~~

- ~~(1) A program shall request to renew its rating by logging onto https://oclqs.force.com ninety days prior to the star rating expiration date to complete and submit an ongoing registration.~~
- ~~(2) If the program does not submit a rating renewal, the rating shall be discontinued on the rating expiration date.~~

(F) (B) ~~When can a star~~ rating be reduced or removed?

- (1) ~~Programs licensed by ODJFS~~ For centers and family child care providers:

- (a) The ~~star~~ rating ~~shall is to~~ be removed if the program receives a letter of intent to revoke a license ~~from ODJFS~~.
- (b) The ~~star~~ rating may be reduced or removed if ~~ODJFS or the county agency determines if it is determined~~ that the program has an accumulation of twenty-four moderate and/or serious risk non-compliance points or a six-point serious risk non-compliance within the previous twelve months as listed in appendix A to rule 5101:2-12-03 of the Administrative Code for child care centers and appendix A to rule 5101:2-13-03 of the Administrative Code for family child care providers.
- (2) For preschool and school child programs ~~licensed by ODE~~, the ~~star~~ rating may be reduced or removed if ~~ODE determines it is determined~~ that the program has a six-point serious risk non-compliance as shown in rule 3301-37-02 of the Administrative Code ~~for preschools~~ and rule 3301-32-11 of the Administrative Code ~~for school child programs~~.
- (3) The ~~star~~ rating may be reduced or removed if ~~ODJFS, ODE~~ the Ohio department of children and youth (DCY) or the county agency determines the program is not meeting any of the standards outlined in ~~the appendices~~ appendix A to rule 5101:2-17-01 of the Administrative Code.
- ~~(G)~~(C) What are the requirements following a rating reduction pursuant to paragraph ~~(F)~~ (B) or ~~(F)~~(2) of this rule?
- (1) The program ~~shall is~~ not ~~to~~ be awarded a ~~star~~ rating for six months after the new rating begin date; this includes a reduction to a zero rating.
- ~~(2) The new rating awarded will expire twelve months after the new rating begin date.~~
- ~~(3)~~(2) Paragraph (C)~~(6)~~(5) of rule 5101:2-17-02 of the Administrative Code ~~shall is~~ to only apply to inspections completed after the effective date of the reduction of a ~~star~~ rating.
- ~~(H)~~(D) What are the requirements following a rating removal pursuant to paragraph ~~(F)~~ (B) or ~~(F)~~(2) of this rule?
- (1) The program ~~shall is~~ to not be awarded a ~~star~~ rating for twelve months from the date of removal.
- (2) Paragraph (C)~~(6)~~(5) of rule 5101:2-17-02 of the Administrative Code ~~shall is~~ to only apply to inspections completed after the effective date of the removal of a ~~star~~ rating.

~~(E)~~(E) How can a program with an agreement to provide publicly funded child care (PFCC) avoid a gap in PFCC services when its SUTQ exemption pursuant to Chapter 5101:2-16 of the Administrative Code is expiring or no longer exists?

- (1) If a program is currently meeting a time-limited exemption pursuant to Chapter 5101:2-16 of the Administrative Code and does not submit a registration for SUTQ between one hundred eighty days and ninety days prior to the expiration of the exemption, the program may have a gap in PFCC services. Time-limited exemptions are a reduction or removal pursuant to paragraph ~~(F)~~(B) of this rule as well as a program at the end of its provisional license period.
- (2) If a program no longer meets any of the other exemptions pursuant to Chapter 5101:2-16 of the Administrative Code and does not submit a registration for SUTQ within thirty days of no longer meeting the exemption criteria, the program may have a gap in PFCC services.

~~(F)~~(F) How does a program withdraw from SUTQ ~~and when does it become effective?~~

- (1) A program that has submitted a registration for SUTQ or that has a current SUTQ rating may withdraw from SUTQ by requesting a withdrawal at <https://oclhs.my.site.com> completing and submitting the JFS 01556 "Request to Withdraw From Step Up To Quality".
- ~~(2) The effective date of the program's withdrawal from SUTQ shall be the date requested on the JFS 01556 or thirty days from the date of the signature on the JFS 01556, whichever is later.~~

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5101:2-17-05

"Step Up To Quality" (SUTQ): request for review.

(A) What are the reasons a program may request a review of a rating decision?

- (1) Denial of a ~~star~~ rating.
- (2) The award of a lesser ~~star~~ rating.
- (3) The removal or reduction of a ~~star~~ rating pursuant to rule 5101:2-17-04 of the Administrative Code.

(B) How does a program submit a request for review?

A program ~~shall~~is to complete and submit the JFS 01155 "Request for Review for Licensing and Step Up to Quality" (12/2016) with all applicable documentation~~follow the process as outlined by the licensing agency.~~

(C) When may a program submit a ~~JFS 01155~~request for review?

Within seven business days of the following:

- (1) Notification of the denial of the ~~star~~ rating.
- (2) Notification of the ~~star~~ rating award.
- (3) Date of the letter indicating the removal or reduction of the ~~star~~ rating award.

~~(D) When is a program not permitted to request a review?~~

~~The program may not request a review of a discontinued star rating as a result of the program failing to submit an ongoing registration to renew the star rating or an annual report.~~

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5101:2-17-06

"Step Up To Quality" (SUTQ): county agency responsibilities.

- (A) What are the responsibilities of the county agency ~~staff~~ for "~~Step Up To Quality~~" (SUTQ)SUTQ?

The county agency ~~shall~~staff are to:

- (1) Utilize the Ohio child licensing and quality system (OCLQS) to support SUTQ.
 - (2) Follow all requirements contained in Chapter 5101:2-17 of the Administrative Code.
 - (3) Follow the ~~Ohio department of job and family services (ODJFS)~~ policies and procedures for all SUTQ responsibilities as assigned.
 - (4) Recommend rating actions ~~to ODJFS~~ for approval.
- (B) May the county agency have additional requirements that exceed the SUTQ standards in Chapter 5101:2-17 of the Administrative Code?

The county agency ~~shall~~is not to have additional requirements for SUTQ.

- (C) May the county agency contract out the SUTQ responsibilities?

The county agency may contract out the SUTQ responsibilities but ~~shall~~is to ensure that the requirements of this chapter are met.

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